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Role of the State Services Commission

The State Services Commission leads the Public Sector to make a positive difference for New Zealand and New Zealanders. We set the course, role model what good looks like, and lead the system to provide the results and services that improve New Zealanders’ lives.

Our purpose is to lead the State Services while protecting and enhancing the standards of integrity and conduct that are at the heart of what public servants do. Working with us is about being part of a small agile team, with a big ambition. We enable our people to push the boundaries and strive for better outcomes, while encouraging our colleagues in agencies to do the same.

Our Role

The Integrity, Ethics and Standards team leads State Services agencies in promoting and protecting open government and trusted, high-integrity public services.

To do this we support public service values, promote open government, provide guidance and advice on a broad range of integrity matters and set standards of conduct and behaviour. Where necessary, we undertake inquiries into matters of integrity and conduct. To recognise and promote a spirit of service we run a Public Sector awards and recognition programme.

What we look for

We look for people who are talented in many ways and can influence and inspire those around them. We are looking for people who embody the spirit of service and can support agencies to deliver for New Zealand. We offer exciting career opportunities to gain breadth of experience through work that reaches across the sector.
Catherine Williams, Deputy Commissioner, Integrity Ethics and Standards

Catherine first supported the public service as a teenager when she helped NZ Police organise discos in her community.

After a varied career, including trans-Atlantic banking, Catherine held senior leadership positions at the New Zealand Qualifications Authority and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. She joined the State Services Commission in 2016.

“Integrity is crucial to the trust and confidence New Zealanders have in the Public Service. I’m proud to play a part in supporting public servants to maintain that trust and confidence.” Catherine Williams

Our Opportunity

We are a small and agile team who work across a diverse and ambitious work programme. Here’s what our members said are the best things about our work:

“We get to work with people across the State Services Commission and across the Public sector.”
“We work collaboratively and we encourage collaboration.”
“With lots of variety in our work and short deadlines, we never get bored.”
“We get to talk to New Zealanders about their aspirations for open government.”
“We learn about other countries experiences and what is working overseas.”
“We get to celebrate public services and public servants achieving amazing things.”
“We have other’s backs.”
“We have the opportunity to make a difference on issues that are in the news.”
“We experience and influence how the Public sector works.”
“Our work programme requires all our varied skills and capabilities and we work with people from a range of professional disciplines.”
New Zealanders expect the Public Service to deliver the advice, results and services that make for a better New Zealand, and to do so with integrity. We do not have their trust, confidence and respect as of right. We need to earn it. Our work across the system supports agencies to lift integrity capability and standards of conduct and behaviour.

We do this in three ways:

**Developing Model Standards and Guidance**

Model Standards contain the State Services Commissioner’s minimum expectations in key areas such as information gathering (including the use of private investigators) and supporting staff to speak up about wrongdoing.

We also develop and share guidance and provide advice on a broad range of integrity and conduct matters including managing conflicts of interest and inappropriate workplace behaviours.

**Working with agencies to grow good practice**

We work across the system with Chief executives and leaders, expert practitioners, key partners and stakeholders. We share great ideas, encourage collaboration and promote the spirit of service.

**Inquiries**

When necessary, we undertake inquiries into matters of integrity or conduct. We use what we learn from inquiries to support good practice across the system.
New Zealand is ranked amongst the top countries in global measures of integrity and transparency. We also perform well in terms of public service responsiveness to citizens. We can’t take this for granted.

Open Government involves:
- strengthening the reciprocal relationship between government and New Zealanders
- empowering people, as individuals, whānau, hapū and communities.

New Zealand is a member of the Open Government Partnership (OGP). The OGP is an international initiative designed to foster government that is more transparent, accountable and responsive to citizens. The ultimate goal is to improve the quality of governance, as well as the quality of services provided to the community.

As a member, New Zealand (government and civil society) develops and implements an OGP National Action Plan in a two year cycle. The Plan has specific, measurable commitments across four themes: promote transparency, empower citizens, prevent corruption, and use new technologies to strengthen governance.

In the spirit of multi-stakeholder collaboration, the OGP is overseen by a steering committee of governments and civil society organisations.

Resource: Open Government Partnership
The State Services Commission established this work programme to improve agencies’ official information practices. The aims of the programme also align with the Chief Ombudsman’s strategic focus on improving agency capability in the processing of official information requests, and promote and support proactive release practices to increase the amount of official information publicly available.

The work programme has three streams:

**Compliance**

Supporting agencies in their compliance with the letter and spirit of the Official Information Act. Measuring performance of agencies through the collation and publication of [Official Information Act Statistics](#) on a regular basis.

**Proactive release**

Encouraging the proactive release of official information to make more information available to New Zealanders, including Cabinet papers, to help ensure government is open and transparent and to enhance public participation.

**Building Capability**

Improving government agencies’ capability with regard to the release of official information, through advice, guidance and the sharing of best practice.
Public Service Day Awards

Public Service Day is 7 November, the day in 1912 the Public Service Act became law. The Public Service Day Awards will be presented each year on or as close as possible to this date.

There are two Public Service Day Awards. The Public Service Medal - Te Tohu Ratonga Tūmatanui o Aotearoa, was instituted by Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II to recognise meritorious service by New Zealand public servants.

The State Services Commissioner’s Commendation for Frontline Excellence - Te Tohu Amorangi a Te Kawa Mataaho, is awarded to public servants who embody a spirit of service.

The first Public Service Day Awards were presented by the Prime Minister at a ceremony in the Banquet Hall at Parliament in November 2018.

Spirit of Service Awards

The Spirit of Service Awards celebrate outstanding public services and public sector initiatives delivering great outcomes for New Zealanders. The Awards will recognise Public Sector excellence and a spirit of service to the community.

The first Spirit of Service Awards will be presented at an event at Te Papa on 12 September 2019.