

# STATE SECTOR ACT REFORM FACTSHEET: Employment and Workforce

STATE SERVICES COMMISSION  
TE KAWA MATAAHO



New employment and workforce provisions will help develop the Public Service workforce of the future. The changes also support the aim to build a unified public service that delivers citizen-centred services and improved wellbeing for New Zealanders.

## Major decisions

The provisions cover:

- employees being appointed to the Public Service, at the same time as being employed by departmental chief executives
- broadening the Public Service Commissioner's delegation powers for collective agreement negotiations, including pay equity
- State sector-wide government workforce policy statements that set out government expectations for example in pay equity, diversity, development, and the portability of service-related entitlements
- improving inclusiveness and workforce diversity by explicitly recognising its value, making chief executives responsible to promote appropriate workplace policies and practices, and assigning the Commissioner to lead, support and report on inclusivity and diversity
- portability of annual leave entitlements to aid career mobility across departments.

## What it means for public servants

This is about making the Public Service a more attractive and inclusive place to work, with things such as:

- fostering a common shared identity as public servants
- recognising the importance of a diverse and inclusive workplace
- supporting the sector to address pay equity and other cross-sector workforce issues
- enabling cross-public service negotiation of terms and conditions of employment
- easier career mobility between departments through portability of annual leave

## Questions and answers

### **What does being appointed to the Public Service mean?**

The intention is to encourage public servants to identify not just as employees of their agency but as part of a much bigger, unified Public Service. However, public servants will continue to be employed in their departments by their chief executive.

### **How does being appointed to the Public Service affect someone's employment in individual agencies?**

It doesn't affect any individual employment processes. The agency chief executive will still employ individual staff and will continue to have all the obligations, rights, and powers that go with being the employer.

### **Will there be any change to my rights in negotiations?**

No. The Employment Relations Act sets out the rights of employers, unions, and employees to negotiate on employment matters. The new Public Service Act would not change these rights.

### **Will there be common terms and conditions across the Public Service?**

Changes in the new Public Service Act would enable common terms and condition of employment to be negotiated, where all parties agree this is a good idea.

How this would be implemented is yet to be decided and will involve further discussions with key stakeholder groups.

### **Will there be changes to leave provisions?**

The new Public Service Act will include a change to ensure that accumulated leave – mainly annual leave – can go with public servants when they move from one department to another.

### **Would redundancy entitlements change?**

No. Options stay the same as they are now.

### **Can public servants be compulsorily moved to a new job in a different department?**

No. Public servants continue to be employed in their specific departments and any move to a new job requires their agreement.

## STATE SECTOR ACT REFORM FACTSHEET: Employment and Workforce - continued

---

### ***What impact will the pay equity provision have on me?***

Pay equity changes will make sure that pay equity claims in the Public Service are handled systematically. The content of settlements, including any changes to remuneration, are decided in the settlement of each particular claim.

### ***Why are the Public Service Commissioner's delegation powers for collective agreement negotiations being broadened to include things like pay equity?***

It's important to address pay equity across the Public Service to help guide consistent and positive outcomes. The Commissioner needs to be able to monitor and influence the way in which negotiations for pay equity settlements progress to meet Government expectations of an orderly process. The Government needs to know and plan for any pay equity implications.

### ***What changes will be made to agency workplaces because of the diversity and inclusion provisions?***

Chief executives will have a responsibility to promote diversity and inclusion in the workplace. They will be expected to build an inclusive workplace culture that attracts and promotes diversity. This will need to include removal of barriers to current recruitment and development practices to ensure all people have fair and equal access to employment opportunities and career progression.

Diverse workforce and inclusive practices help the Public Service to be responsive and engage more effectively with the communities it serves. It will be able to deliver more innovative and meaningful programmes that have a greater impact.

### ***Will public servants have individual or standardised contracts?***

This is something that will be negotiated between employers and employees.

**For more information on the State Sector Act reform, and the full series of factsheets, please visit the [SSC website](#).**