

TE TAUNAKI
Public Service Census
2021



**Te Kāwanatanga
o Aotearoa**
New Zealand Government

Transgender Deep Dive

August 2023



Te Kawa Mataaho
Public Service Commission

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Diversity and inclusion in the Public Service

Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) is an essential part of the Public Service. We want our Public Service workplaces to value, reflect and understand the communities that we're here to serve. The Public Service Act 2020 supports our D&I commitments with requirements on leaders to promote diversity and inclusiveness within our workforce and workplaces. Everyone in the Public Service is entitled to work in a safe and inclusive workplace, where people treat one another with respect.

For more than five years Te Kawa Mataaho has been focused on building a diverse and inclusive Public Service. We have made some significant gains in that time, but we know that there is still work to do. We value the voices and experiences of our people and collect the data to help give us a better picture of the experience of public servants and ideas of how our workplaces can be more welcoming and inclusive of a wide range of communities.

We are committed to doing more work and Te Taunaki provides an important benchmark and deeper understanding of where the focus needs to be. Today, the Public Service has a comprehensive approach to achieving diversity, equity and inclusion which includes three main work programmes.

- The [Papa Pounamu](#) work programme sets priorities for growing Public Service diversity and inclusion capability;
- the [Kia Toipoto](#) and [Pay Equity](#) work programmes provide plans to address pay gaps and workplace inequities;
- the [Positive and Safe Workplaces](#) programme helps agencies to create work environments where people enjoy working, are respected and can contribute to their potential.

About the survey

Te Taunaki | Public Service Census 2021(Te Taunaki) captured information across a range of demographic and job dimensions, allowing us to explore characteristics of transgender public servants and how included that community felt in the workplace. Understanding this helps us to gain a better picture about what's working well and where we need to do more to be an employer of choice for all of our workers.

Te Taunaki was New Zealand's first Public Service Census. About 60,000 public servants working in 36 agencies (departments and departmental agencies) were asked questions focusing on diversity, inclusion and wellbeing at work, a unified Public Service, and strengthening Māori Crown relationships. The final overall response rate was 63.1%, representing the views and experiences of about 40,000 public servants. New Zealand's first Public Service Census started on 11 May and closed in early June 2021.

About the deep dive reports

Cross-agency Employee-led Networks (ELNs) were an important stakeholder of Te Taunaki Public Service Census and Te Kawa Mataaho engaged with them in the development and planning stage, consulting on the survey, and they helped increase response rates of members of their communities. After Te Taunaki was completed, we reached out to ELNs to see what questions we could answer for them based on the data that had been gathered in Te Taunaki or the Workforce Data. This proactive approach to information ensured that there was benefit for the ELNs in continuing to be involved in Te Taunaki.

The deep dive research papers that have been produced as part of this process present reporting on topics of interest to ELNs. Te Kawa Mataaho has now completed deep dive research for: We Enable Us (WEU), the Cross-Agency Rainbow Network (CARN), and Government Women's Network (GWN). The research covers the experiences reported in Te

Taunaki by disabled public servants, and public servants who are transgender, intersex or of multiple/another gender/s or different sexual identities, and women in the Public Service.

Te Taunaki gives us just a start at understanding the effects of intersectionality on feelings of inclusion, but further work is needed to explore the combined effects of diversity dimensions. We are continuing to learn from what this data tells us, and the experiences of different communities and are working with the cross-agency ELNs on plans and initiatives for the future and to help us achieve our goal of improving inclusion in our workplaces and for New Zealand's public servants.

From the Cross-Agency Rainbow Network (CARN)...

We know that without data, we cannot be counted. As the Cross-Agency Rainbow Network, representing rainbow public servants across the motu, we want to see data being collected about us that paints a picture of the state of the public sector when it comes to rainbow inclusion. We want to see our successes, the challenges we face and where we as a community and the public sector can do more.

CARN aims to create a wide, deep and sustainable shift in strengthening the participation, representation and respect of people with diverse SOGIESC (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression and Sex Characteristics) throughout the public sector. As a network, CARN endeavours to be accessible, inclusive, welcoming and representative of all SOGIESC-diverse communities. CARN stands by members of our rainbow communities, and strives to promote the dignity, respect, and safety of these people in our network, across our public sector, and in the communities we serve.

The key to building a diverse and inclusive Public Service, is building data and information. That's why we were excited to collaborate with Te Kawa Mataaho to produce these four deep dives focussed on the rainbow community. The experience of rainbow public servants is not uniform across groups, and without analysing the data in more detail, we aren't able to see the full picture. We were able to work alongside the teams at Te Kawa Mataaho to identify that separate deep dives were needed, focussing on sexual identity, and public servants who were trans, intersex, or of multiple/other genders.

We note also the importance of intersectionality and the range of experiences for different communities within our broader rainbow whānau.

We hope these deep dives will be a valuable resource to draw on as the Public Service takes a focussed approach to rainbow inclusion going forward.

For this report on transgender public servants, the relevant questions or topic areas from Te Taunaki that were socialised with CARN were:

- How representative is the Public Service of the wider community/communities in New Zealand? (and what aggregate of communities would be useful?)
- How many people from these communities are working in the Public Service?
- More information on number of people for groups within the communities (i.e., intersectionality with iwi, ethnicity, etc)
- How are these communities represented across regions within the Public Service?
- What kinds of roles do these communities have? Any over representation in occupational grouping?
- Are members of these communities well represented in leadership positions?
- Are these communities paid what others in the Public Service are? (by age / tenure median pay band)
- Do members of these communities have access to training and career development opportunities?
- Why did members of these communities join the Public Service? Why do they stay?
- Do members of these communities feel included at work? If not, what would they like to have their agency do (based on the qualitative questions in the Census)?
- Do members of these communities feel satisfied with their job?
- What differences in experience across age / tenure are there within these communities and between others?
- How similar/different are the barriers/enablers/positives described by these communities?

Under the rainbow umbrella

Te Taunaki | Public Service Census 2021 collected information on experiences of working in the Public Service for people in rainbow communities. Rainbow is a broad umbrella term that covers a diversity of sexual identities as well as gender identities and expressions, and sex characteristics.¹

Te Taunaki results indicate that rainbow communities make up 9.4% of Public Service staff, and that the experience of working in the Public Service can be less positive for some people within these communities, including those who are transgender.

Prior to Te Taunaki, the [WeCount 2019 survey](#) was developed to address a lack of available workforce data about the New Zealand Public Service Rainbow community and is a useful further source for more specific information around rainbow experiences in the New Zealand Public Service.

Transgender

Te Taunaki asked if people were transgender; transgender refers to a wide variety of people whose gender is different to the sex assigned at their birth and who may be binary or non-binary.²

Te Taunaki results indicate that 0.5% of the Public Service are transgender, with about 1 in 10 transgender people (9.4%) indicating they were also intersex.

StatsNZ has released June 2020 data from the Household Economic Survey (HES) which combines other genders with indications of a person being transgender to provide a single figure for 'transgender and non-binary' people. This is 0.8% of the New Zealand adult population. This aligns with the figure for Public Service staff from Te Taunaki. It is worth

¹ The information collected for rainbow communities in Te Taunaki followed the Stats NZ standards for sex, gender, sexual identity, and for variations of sex characteristics.

² The way that transgender was defined for respondents in the questions used for Te Taunaki can be found in Q11c in [Questionnaire-Te-Taunaki-Public-Service-Census-2021.pdf \(publicservice.govt.nz\)](#)

noting that Te Taunaki was conducted via an online survey compared with the HES being conducted via in-person interviews and while the gender question itself was the same, the accompanying text was different.³ Te Taunaki also asked a separate transgender question. As well as this, those eligible for the HES were those 15 years old and over in the selected households, compared with the Public Service of working age. Both of these aspects (or a number of others) may alter the likelihood of an individual to self-identify in either of the surveys. Further, CARN's engagement in developing and promoting Te Taunaki may have encouraged a greater proportion of people in rainbow communities to take part, and so any comparisons between Te Taunaki and other sources in this report need to be considered with these potential differences in mind.

The experiences of people who are transgender are the focus of this report, with further publications looking at other rainbow groups.

Reading this report

How to read the charts in this report

The charts in this report show the way transgender public servants are distributed across groups in various key areas such as demographics, qualifications, and feelings of inclusion. This means that for each section of the graph, the different coloured bars will show what proportion of transgender public servants are in that group so that comparisons can be made to those not in that group. For example, in Figure 1 below, the light purple bar shows the proportion of transgender public servants in each age group, where the dark grey bars show the proportion of those public servants who are not transgender in each age group for comparison. This shows that the smallest proportions

³ The HES questionnaire asks 'What is your gender?' And adds the note 'A person's gender may be different from their sex at birth. Gender refers to a person's social and personal identity as male, female, or another gender such as non-binary' with the response options 'Male;', 'Female', 'Another gender' [with space to specify]. Te Taunaki did not include a note about the definition for gender with the gender questions but did for the transgender question: 'Transgender is an umbrella term that refers to people whose gender is different to the sex recorded at their birth. Identities that may fall under this include trans, non-binary genders, transsexual, takatāpui, fa'afafine, gender, queer, and many more. Some people who come under this umbrella term as it is defined may not use the term transgender to describe themselves.'

of each group are in the youngest and oldest age groups and there is a noticeable spike in the 25 to 34 years age group.

In some charts, variables are missing. This is because either there is no-one in the grouping or the number of people is too small to pass our confidentiality requirements and maintaining the privacy of respondents to Te Taunaki was vitally important for the integrity of the survey. For example, in the ethnicity chart, no figures are included for the MELAA or Other ethnicity groupings – in both cases the numbers are either zero or fail the test for confidentiality.

Open text responses

Te Taunaki gave respondents two open-ended questions. One was what the ‘agency/department could do to make you feel more comfortable about being yourself at work?’. There was also an opportunity to identify if there was ‘anything else about your experience of working for the New Zealand Public Service you would like to comment on?’. A total of 173 comments were made by transgender public servants across the two questions. Where possible we have included quotes and summaries of the comments in the sections below.

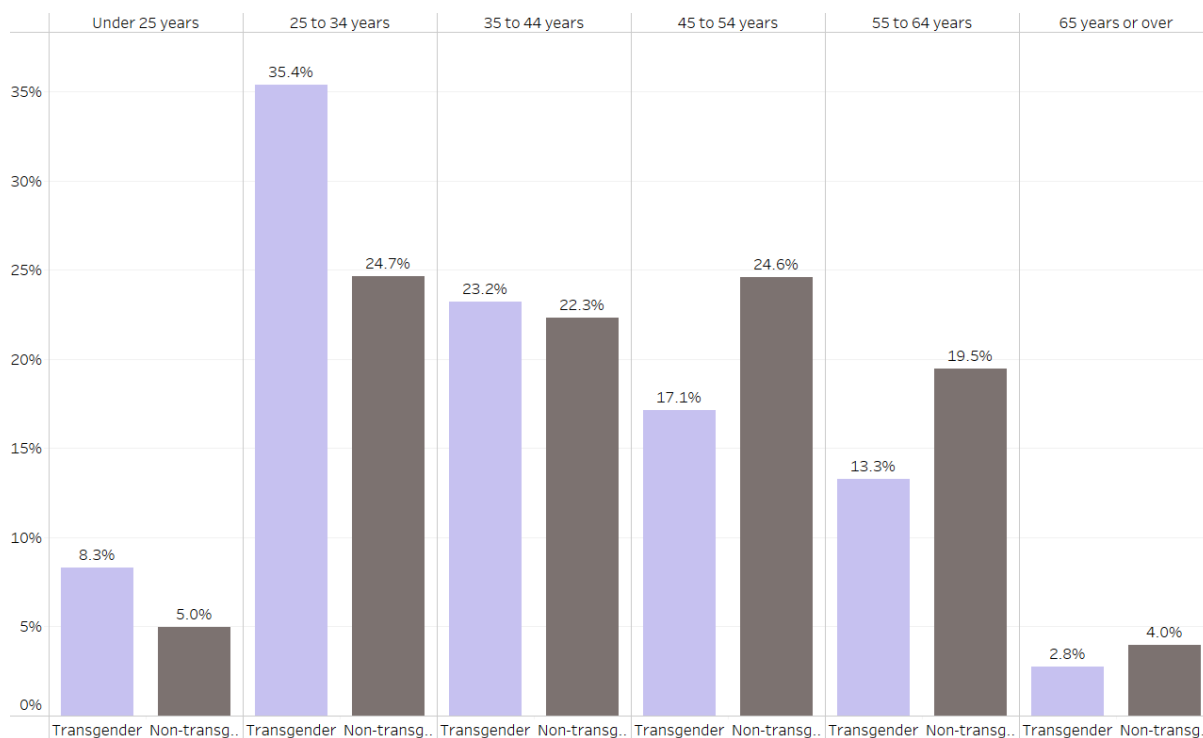
The results in this report represent the responses from those trans public servants who responded to the survey. Where their answers differ from trans public servants who did not participate, the results are biased away from what they would have been if everybody responded. As such, the results in this report should be seen as representative of those who completed the survey, and only indicative of all public servants.

Section One: Demographics of transgender people in the Public Service

Age

Transgender people in the Public Service tended to be younger than their non-transgender colleagues. This is similar to what is seen in Aotearoa’s LGBT+ population overall ([Stats NZ](#)). The largest proportion of transgender public servants were in the 25 to 34 age group, with over a third of trans public servants in this group compared to a quarter of non-trans public servants.

Figure 1: Age groups by transgender/non-transgender

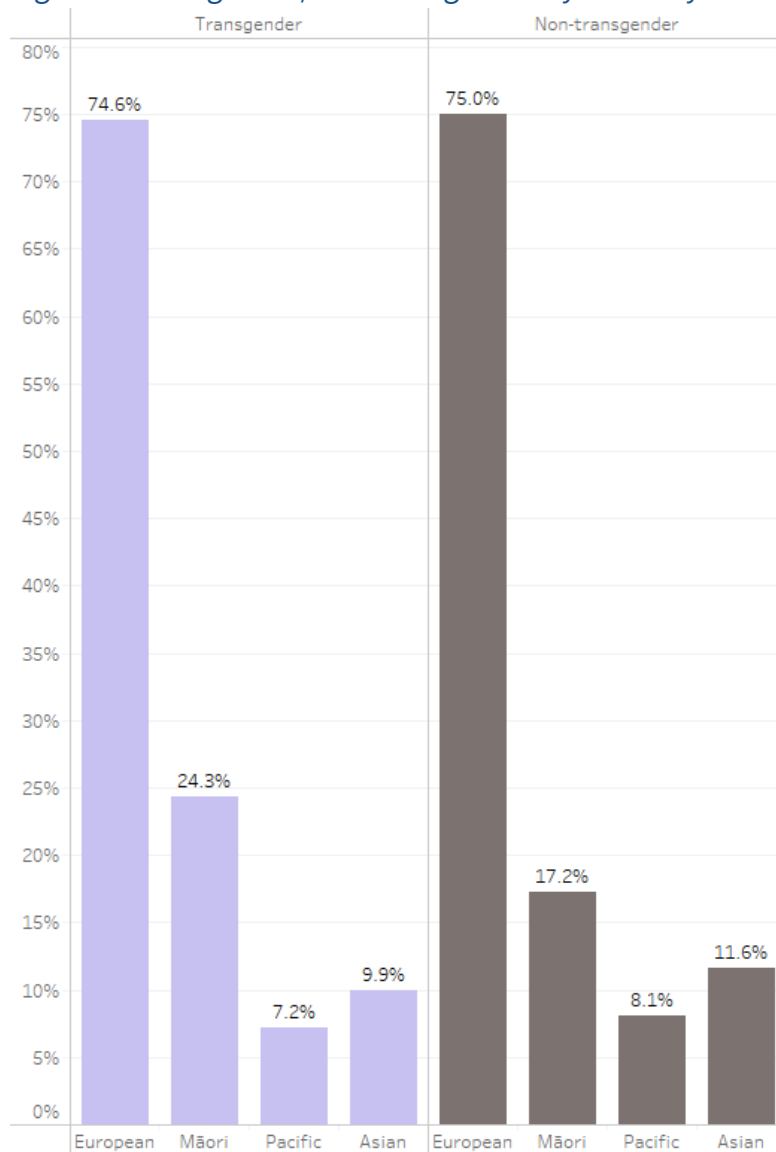


Ethnicity

The distribution of ethnicity was broadly similar between transgender and non-transgender public servants. The notable exception is in the proportion of people who were Māori: at 24.3% of transgender public servants, this was considerably higher than the proportion of their non-transgender colleagues (17.2%).

No figures are included for the MELAA or Other ethnicity groupings, as numbers are either zero or too small to pass confidentiality requirements.

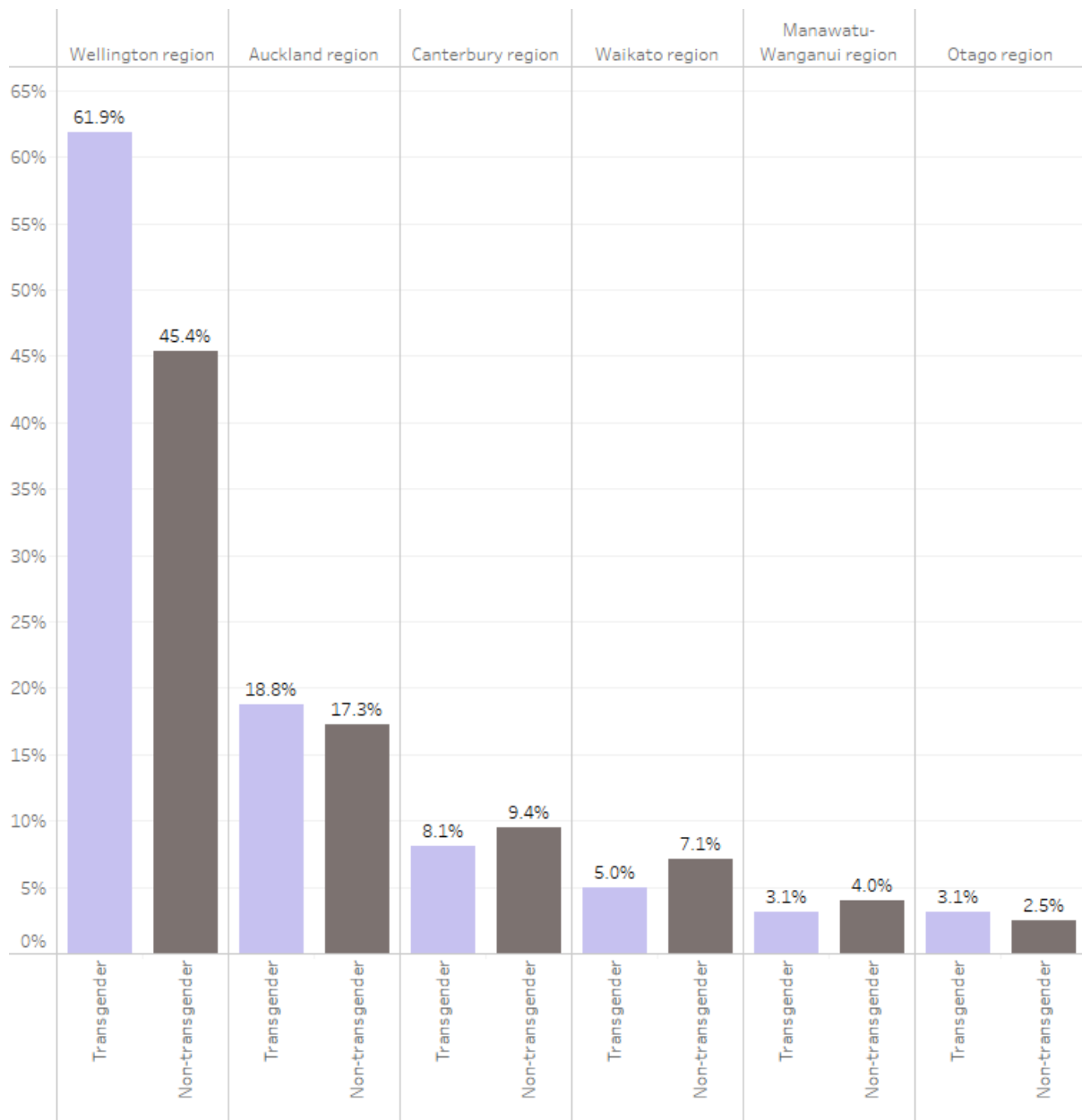
Figure 2: Transgender/non-transgender by ethnicity



Region

The Wellington region was identified by [Stats NZ in 2020](#) as having the highest proportion of LGBT+ people in New Zealand relative to its population, a finding that was also echoed in Te Taunaki with 61.9% of transgender public servants working in Wellington, compared to 45.4% of their non-transgender colleagues. Transgender staff were nearly all based in the five regions with the highest concentration of public service staff – Wellington, Auckland, Canterbury, Waikato and Manawatu-Wanganui – with most regions not having any transgender staff or too small to pass confidentiality requirements.

Figure 3: Transgender/non-transgender by region



Section Two: Occupations, leadership, and remuneration for transgender public servants

Occupations

When it came to occupations, the highest proportions of transgender public servants were Information Professionals (17.5%), Social, Health and Education Workers (14.4%), and Inspectors and Regulatory Officers (14.4%), the same three biggest categories for non-transgender staff.

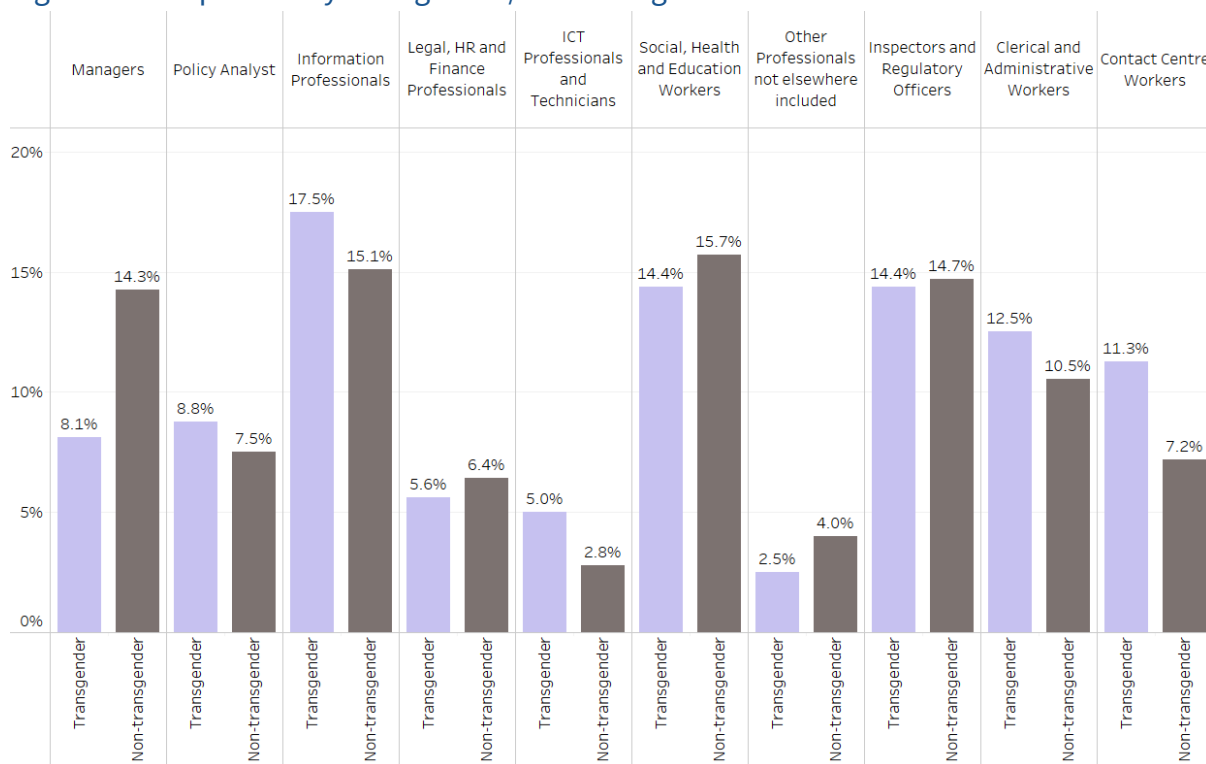
When it came to the distribution of transgender vs non-transgender public servants by occupation, the biggest differences were:

- Managers (8.1% of transgender staff compared to 14.3% of non-transgender staff)
- Contact Centre Workers (11.3% of transgender compared to 7.2% non-transgender)

The younger age profile of transgender public servants is likely contributing to some of these differences. For example, we know from the Workforce Data collected by Te Kawa Mataaho that managers are the oldest occupational group in the Public Service.⁴

⁴ <https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/research-and-data/workforce-data-diversity-and-inclusion/workforce-data-age-profile/>

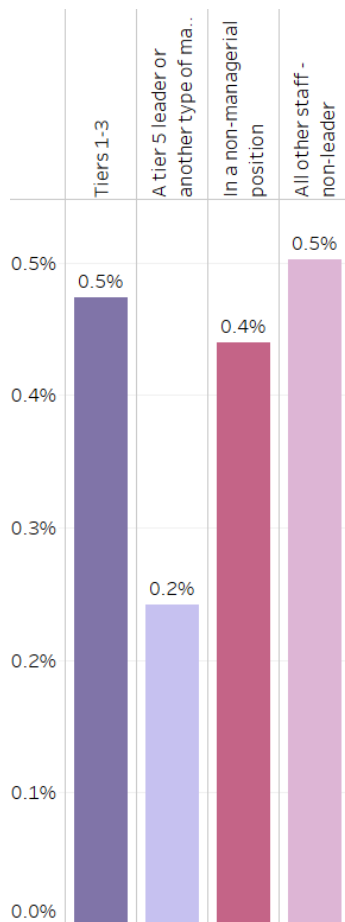
Figure 4: Occupations by transgender/non-transgender



Leadership

In terms of representation through leadership, 0.5% of senior leaders (tiers 1 to 3) were transgender, the same as the proportion of transgender people in the Public Service overall (also 0.5%). The number of transgender staff across leadership positions were low and so information is not available for all categories, but the figure below shows that transgender representation at tier 5 was lower than the Public Service overall. Combined, this puts transgender representation at 0.3% of management positions.

Figure 5: Proportions of leadership roles held by transgender public servants



Remuneration

As pointed out by [Stats NZ](#) in their 2021 Household Economic Survey (HES), incomes tend to increase as people age and the openly LGBT+ community tend to be younger (see also Section One above). However, the mean personal disposable income for transgender and non-binary adults in New Zealand in this data also tended to be lower than that of cisgender people across all age groups measured.⁵

In Te Taunaki, the average full-time equivalent annual salary for transgender public servants was \$80,800 compared to \$90,000 for non-transgender public servants. The small size of the group makes more in-depth analysis difficult, however salary differences for trans people reduced or reversed for older age groups. In the 45 to 54 years age group, the average salary for trans people was \$100,200, compared to \$100,300 for non-trans, while

⁵ Stats NZ uses cisgender to refer to people whose gender is the same as the sex recorded at their birth.

in the 55 to 64 age group, the trans average was \$113,300 compared to \$97,300 for non-trans).

Section Three: Transgender public servants' reasons for joining and staying in the Public Service

The five most popular reasons given⁶ by transgender public servants for being initially attracted to working in the Public Service were:

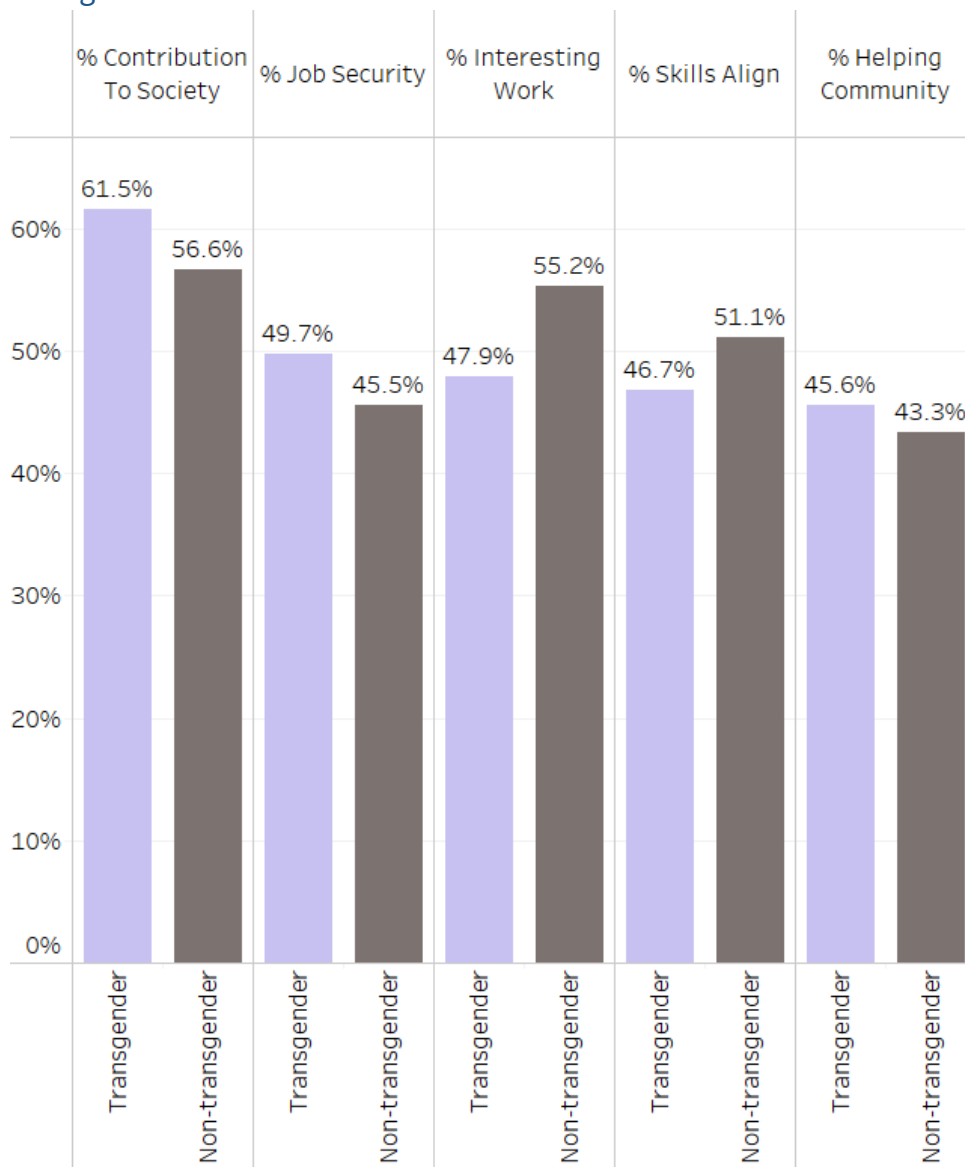
- It's work that contributes positively to society (61.5%)
- There's job security (49.7%)
- It's interesting work (47.9%)
- The work is aligned with their job skills, experience or training (46.7%)
- It's work that helps people in their community (45.6%)

While these were also the top five reasons given by non-transgender public servants, higher proportions of transgender public servants were attracted to it being work that contributed positively to society (61.5% vs 56.6% non-transgender) and provided job security (49.7% vs 45.5% non-transgender).

Other notable differences were in the attraction of an inclusive work environment (23.7% vs 14.1% non-transgender) and level of remuneration (29.0% vs 19.9% non-transgender).

⁶ Respondents could select as many of the reasons as they felt were applicable.

Figure 6: Top five reasons why people joined the Public Service by transgender/non-transgender



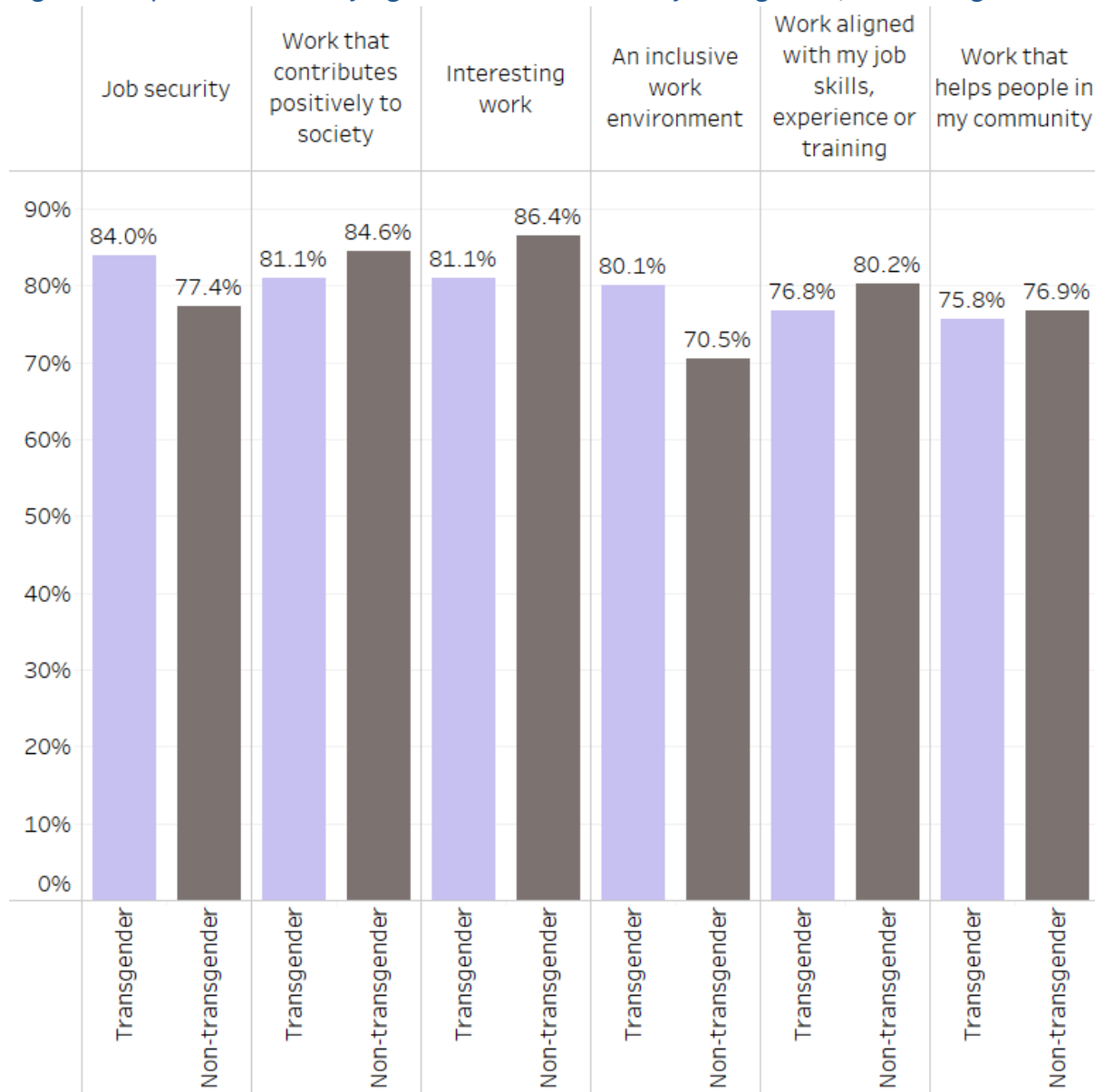
When it came to reasons for staying in the Public Service, transgender public servants placed high importance on the same five things that had attracted them in the first place:

- Job security (84.0%)
- Work that contributes positively to society (81.1%)
- Interesting work (81.1%)
- Work aligned with my job skills, experience or training (76.8%), and
- Work that helps people in my community (75.8%)

In addition, an inclusive work environment was added into this group as the fourth most important reason for staying in the Public Service. This was the reason where the views of

transgender staff differed most from non-transgender, at 80.1% considering it important vs 70.5% of non-transgender public servants. The second biggest difference was in the importance of the quality of leadership and management (considered important by 67.1% of transgender vs 74.6% non-transgender public servants).

Figure 7: Top reasons for staying in the Public Service by transgender/non-transgender

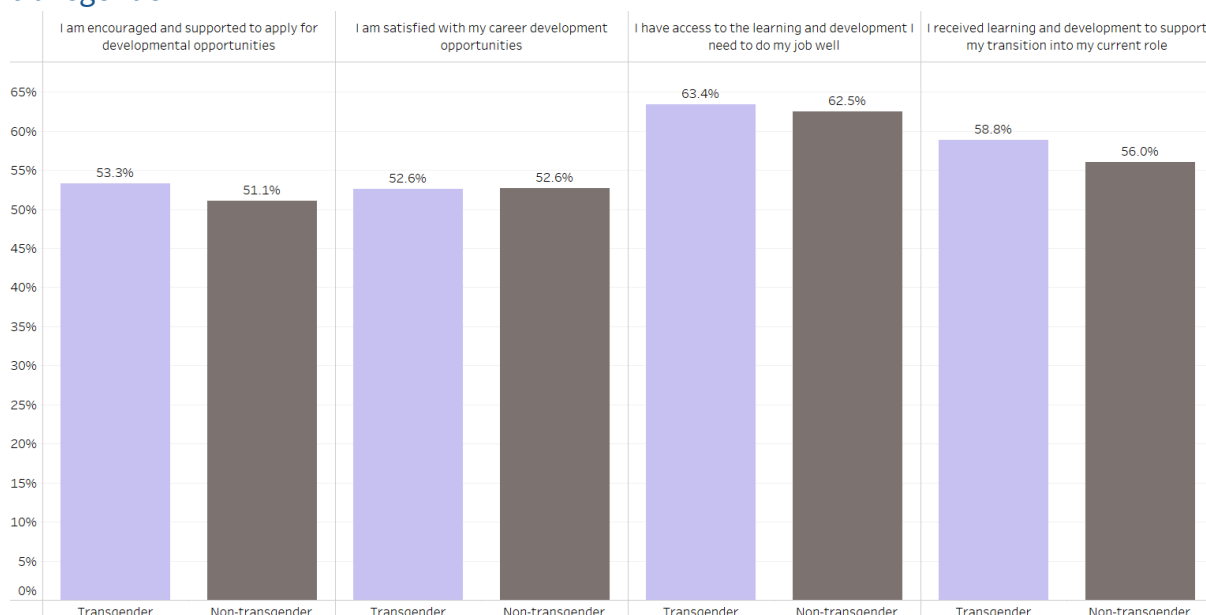


Section Four: Development opportunities and satisfaction with work for transgender public servants

Development opportunities

There were minimal differences between transgender and non-transgender public servants when it came to agreement with statements about development opportunities. The differences that did exist all indicated transgender staff felt slightly more positive about their development opportunities. For example, just over half of transgender public servants (53.3%) agreed that they were encouraged and supported to apply for developmental opportunities, compared to 51.1% for non-transgender public servants.

Figure 8: Proportion agreement with development opportunities by transgender/non-transgender



Satisfaction with work

While almost two-thirds (63.6%) of transgender public servants agreed that they felt satisfied with their work, this was lower than for their non-transgender colleagues (69.1%).

Section Five: Inclusion for transgender public servants

Feelings of inclusion

When asked if their colleagues gender them correctly at work, that is, use the correct name, pronouns and nouns for them, 63.8% of transgender public servants said that everyone or most people do. This is better than the experience of people of another or multiple genders (52.9%) but doesn't compare favourably with the experience of male and female public servants, 97.4% of whom feel gendered correctly at work.

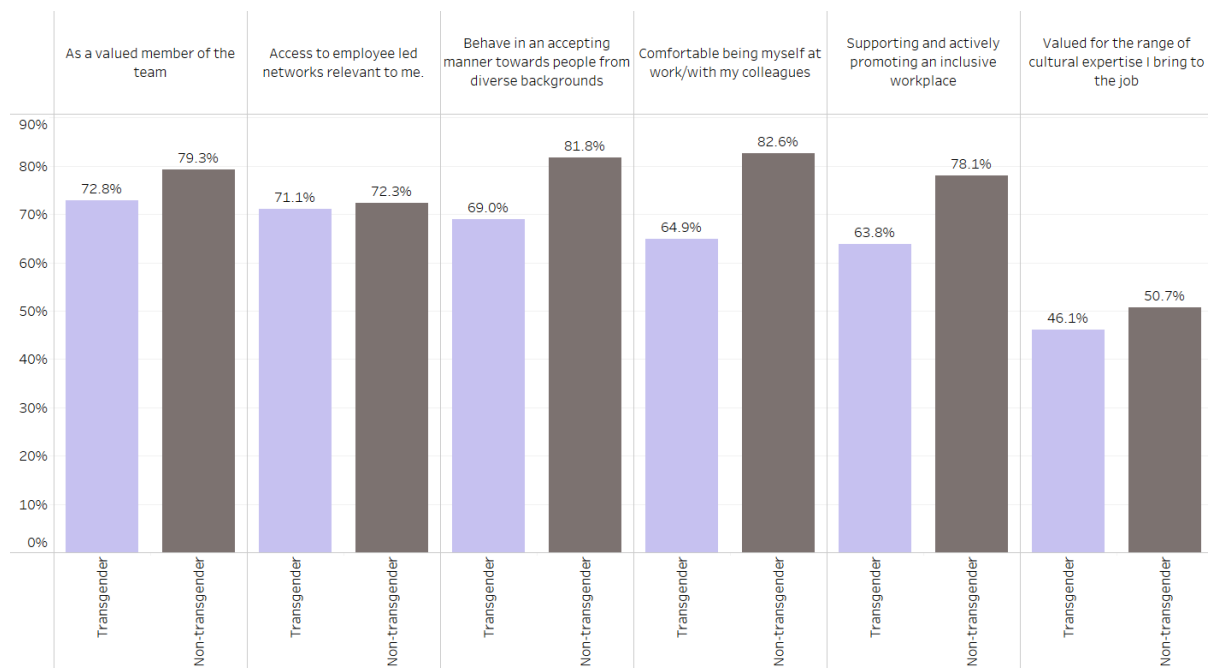
“I would like my colleagues to use the appropriate pronoun (they) when speaking about me.”

“I've had 'they/them' pronouns criticised and dismissed by workmates, which is an alienating and discriminatory experience. In response, I've added my preferred pronouns to my signature at work which does make me feel uncomfortable as I feel it can create unwanted impressions.”

Transgender public servants had similar access to Employee-led Networks (ELNs) (71.1%) relevant to them as their non-transgender colleagues (72.3%). For the other measures of inclusion, transgender public servants reported a less inclusive experience. The two most notable differences were in the extent to which transgender public servants felt comfortable being themselves at work/with their colleagues (64.9% compared to 82.6% for non-transgender), and that the agency they worked for supported and actively promoted an inclusive workplace (63.8% compared to 78.1% for non-transgender).

Te Kawa Mataaho has published an in-depth look into [inclusion](#) in the Public Service, which includes looking at it by demographics such as being transgender.

Figure 9: Proportion of agreement with inclusion statements by transgender/non-transgender



Improving inclusion at work

In Te Taunaki, participants were also asked what more their agency could do to make them feel comfortable being themselves at work. The main themes in the comments from transgender participants were around improving training, gender neutral toilets, acceptance of correct pronouns, dress codes, support for transitions, gender neutrality in policy, leadership support, and mental health support. All comments quoted in this section are from transgender public servants.

Training

Additional training for managers, senior leaders, and all staff members about transgender issues would help trans public servants feel more comfortable being themselves at work.

“Mandate rainbow training for everyone but especially people leaders, training that is specific to roles and not just on workplace inclusion but also on how trans and other experiences relate to people's jobs so I don't have to educate people all the time. “

“Encouraging education on pronouns in the workplace.”

“Inclusivity and diversity training for people leaders at every level”

“Having seminars on specific issues of marginalised groups (i.e. a talk by a transgender individual from an LGBTQ organisation)”

“More initiatives to educate people on interacting with transgender/nonbinary people, including proper pronoun use and being mindful of trans issues and sources of discomfort i.e. not airing personal opinions on trans people/trans issues in the workplace as this can be distressing. It's hard for trans people to be able to assert their pronouns, especially among the older generation so I think some improvement on educating people can be done.”

Leadership and support

Visible support from leadership for transgender public servants would be a strong signal that the community is welcome.

“Management could declare that they support and value transgender people at work. A variety of trans people could feature on our staff intranet as positive role models.”

“Hire people or consult with paid experts on trans-related issues facing the public, rather than just consulting the nearest person from the rainbow community.”

Mental health

Mental health support was raised as an area that could be improved.

“Ensure appropriate mental health providers are available to employees. Myself and many others have found EAP counsellors unable to assist with gender-related mental healthcare. If EAP doesn't work for us, why do we still have it? Our community is in particular need of mental health support.”

“I would also like to see more training and a better understanding of mental health from the [Agency].”

Physical work environment

Access to gender neutral toilets, showers, and changing rooms was a key enabler of inclusion for transgender public servants.

“Far more universal non gendered bathrooms”

“Gender neutral bathrooms (that are not also disabled bathrooms)”

“Provide gender neutral bathrooms, showers and changing rooms other than just accessible toilets.”

Gender neutral language

Language is an important signal of acceptance from an organisation.

“Active divestment from binary gendered language and assumptions (e.g. they instead of he/she on documentation).”

“Ensure policy language is gender neutral (i.e. they instead of he/she).”

Support for transition

Having clear and accessible policies that support transition helps transgender public servants.

“Have a policy on trans inclusion in the workplace, including on transitioning in the workplace.”

“Allow me to have my correct name in the computer system.”

“I am not sure what or how I would go about being 'more comfortable' at work i.e. if I was to come out and dress as a member of the opposite sex, what would the process be to make this possible and make others around me more aware and accepting? I get that not everyone will agree with that change and have their own opinions. However, I wouldn't want to spring this change on everyone and expect them to be happy about it. So in conclusion, what is the correct process to 'come out and dress as a member of the opposite sex'?”

Safety and coming out

Some transgender public servants raised concerns about feeling safe to be out in their workplace, and in New Zealand more broadly.

“I believe the changes required to make me feel more comfortable apply to NZ society as a whole and not just [Agency]. Being transgender, I rarely feel comfortable disclosing this especially in a work environment. The discrimination and violence my fellow community experience in everyday life is a deterrent for me to be open and comfortable. For this reason, I do not fully disclose my full self at work.”

“I've experienced colleagues (who should know better, since they are always trumpeting diversity and inclusion) making fun of transgender

people in front of me, being completely oblivious to the fact that I am one of those people myself.”

“More pathways for employees to raise issues/discuss about co-workers that isn't punitive (so that they can get clarity about the next steps for them and it can be factored in to efforts/training that champion for a healthy work environment) for example where managers make inappropriate jokes or comments are inappropriate and personal.”

Clothing/dress codes/uniforms

Being able to choose clothing that feels comfortable is an enabler of workplace inclusion.

“I'd like to note that my workplace has allowed for me to express myself through dress without it being called attention to, which I really do appreciate. My workplace has slightly more relaxed views around dress which has meant that clothing I feel more comfortable in e.g. male-fitted clothing or otherwise less form fitting clothing has been accepted.”

“Dress standards need to not be so strict.”

Conclusion and next steps

The Public Service has had a dedicated diversity and inclusion programme in place since 2017. Significant progress has been made across the system, with the Public Service more diverse now than ever before. With strong leadership commitment to ensuring diversity and inclusion across the system, agencies are more focused and connected as they plan and deliver a range of diversity and inclusion initiatives at pace.

The data we have tells us that the diversity of the Public Service workforce is increasing, and most public servants feel included in their workplace. But alongside this, it also shows that people from some communities within our workforce, do not. This cannot be overlooked.

Papa Pounamu continues to develop its work programme based on Te Taunaki and deep dive data and insights (and new insights as they arise). Te Kawa Mataaho also continues to work in partnership with agencies to increase the quality of the data collected and our employee-led networks to help understand it. High-quality data and insights are critical to understanding public servants and their experiences, where progress is being made and where our collective focus should be.

Over a two-year period from 2023-2025, the Papa Pounamu co-leads and Te Kawa Mataaho will work with CARN, Rainbow Chief Executives (i.e. chief executives who champion rainbow inclusion across the system) and agencies on a focused approach to rainbow inclusion.

With a strong system foundation in place, we are well positioned to place collective focus on inclusion for public servants from these communities. Papa Pounamu is committed to supporting agencies to collect and understand their workforce data and to planning and delivering initiatives to effect change.

This approach will focus on increasing the quality and breadth of rainbow data, increasing the numbers and visibility of rainbow public servants and leaders and removing inequities and barriers to inclusion for rainbow public servants. We are ambitious and committed to doing the work we need to, in collaboration with our cross-agency ELNs.

Te Taunaki 2024 will give us more data and insights and enables us to measure the progress we make.

For more information:

- [Papa Pounamu priority areas](#)
- [Te Taunaki Public Service Census 2021](#)
- [Te Taunaki Public Service Census: Inclusion deep dive](#)
- [Workforce data](#)
- [Cross Agency Rainbow Network](#)

- [Employee Led Networks](#)
- [Rainbow inclusive language guide](#)
- [Transitioning and Gender Affirmation in the New Zealand Public Service](#)
- [Pronoun use](#)