Ara Kaiarahitanga
Leadership Development Centre

Update
Ngā Kōrero Hou

1 July–30 September 2026

As a business unit within Public Service Commission Te Kawa Mataaho, the Leadership Development Centre is the primary vehicle for Public Service leadership development.

Our team of 22 focus on creating great leaders, united around a spirit of service and skilled in working together to achieve positive results for New Zealand. We're also developing centralised learning to support the Public Service Act. Building the key skills, capability and knowledge on those things unique to being a public servant. Our $4 million operating budget is drawn from member levies and user pay services.

The numbers (1 July–30 September 2026)

11 programmes

185 programme participants

172 leadership assessments

731 users logged in to access resources

Leadership programme highlights

Over 2,000 public sector leaders have now completed one of our transition leadership development programmes for new people leaders, new leader of leaders and new senior system leaders. These programmes support leaders during critical transition points in their career.

Te Kaihautū, our new people leader programme

Alongside the 2 cohorts we ran this quarter, new cohorts were started by ACC, Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children, Ministry for Primary Industries, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Experienced People Leader Development

Since developing the programme for agencies to deliver in 2023, we hosted our first in-house cohort of Experienced People Leader Development. The cohort included 15 people leaders from a range of public sector agencies, including Inland Revenue, NEMA, Ministry of Education and Stats NZ, who all want to develop their leadership skills and move their practice from good to great. Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children started delivery of their second in-house cohort.

Te Putanga, Leadership in Practice, our flagship programme

Feedback from the cohort 85 residential was overwhelmingly positive with a Net Promoter Score of +80, placing it in the 'Excellent' category. Many leaders agreed it has had a direct impact on their self-awareness as a leader.

"Looking forward to the next 6 months. Really appreciated practical, actionable steps to sit alongside deep reflection."

"Retreat was exceptional - loved every minute and has had life changing consequences."

Te Putanga, Leadership in Practice
Residential evaluation feedback

Executive talent

Work continued to strengthen the Public Service's pipeline of future chief executives and senior system leaders. Targeted development included mentoring, experiential development opportunities and leadership learning.

Delivered 3 Elevate learning resources and launched a new Executive Deep Dive series, with the first workshop, Learning Under Pressure, scheduled for November.

System nominations

We supported 5 nominations from 4 agencies across the New Zealand public service for ANZSOG's Executive Fellows Programme, a programme for senior public service executives.

2026 New Zealand Harkness Fellowship awarded

Adam Allington, General Manager Strategy, Insights and Performance at Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children will examine how public management systems shape leadership behaviour, organisational performance, state capability, public value, trust and democratic renewal.

His fellowship will be divided between Washington D.C and Boston in the United States.



Lifting public sector capability

We've had steady engagement with our Public Service Core Learning Hub this quarter with a total of 27,364 webpage views (+1.6% from the last quarter).

Most popular areas of learning were the AI Development Series, Public Sector Induction and Integrity Essentials.



AI in the public sector

This quarter we published the AI Development Series, in partnership with the Government Digital Delivery Agency. These 16 self-paced digital learning resources support all public servants to build a basic, shared understanding of AI and public sector use.

We delivered a second cohort of the AI Development Programme with 20 participants from 11 agencies. Participant feedback to date has been positive, particularly around the value of learning alongside peers from across the system and exploring real-world public sector use cases.

There has been strong demand for this programme with cohort 3 next quarter receiving over 80 registrations.

Upcoming delivery in quarter 2

- Masterclass on safe and responsible AI and political neutrality.
- A refreshed public sector induction, a customisable learning experience for new public servants or those returning back to the public sector.
- Evaluating the executive talent service to inform future improvements. Moderation and final decisions to identify future executive talent will also be completed.
- Hosting an online session to share updates and connect with our human resources and organisational development community (approximately 200+ people).