

Ngā Peka Kāwanatanga  
Branches of Government  
Microbite One



New Zealand's system of government is known as a Westminster model.

Under the Westminster model, government is organised into three separate branches.

The three branches of government are:

- Parliament (The Legislature)
- Government (The Executive)
- Judges and Courts (The Judiciary)

Each of these branches are separate and independent. This separation makes sure that each branch acts as a balance check on the power of the other branches.

**Parliament (The Legislature)** is the Governor General, Members of Parliament (MP's) and Select Committee.

The Governor General is the representative of the Sovereign. They are appointed by the King on the advice of the Government of New Zealand.

Members of Parliament (MPs) include both Electorate MPs and List MPs. Electorate MPs are MPs for a certain geographical location in New Zealand and are voted in by the residents registered in that location. A list MP is someone who has been elected from a political party's 'party list'.

Select Committees are groups of MPs that undertake work in certain areas for the House of Representatives. Select Committees focus on big national topics like "health" or "justice". Each one has about eight MPs from different parties in Parliament. [Learn more about the role of Select Committees \(NZ Parliament\)](#)

The role of these groups (Parliament, - The Legislature) is to essentially make laws for our country.

**The Government (The Executive)** is the Prime Minister and other Ministers who are supported by the Public Services.

The role of the Government (Executive) is to:

- Develop policies or plans.

- Set the Government budget.
- Propose laws by drafting bills (to be approved by process below)
- Formally announce new laws.
- Administer the law.
- Oversee the priorities for public service.

**Judges and Courts (The Judiciary)** are Judges, Courts and Tribunals in New Zealand.

The role of a Judge is to apply the law within our legal system.

They hear and decide on cases by applying relevant law to facts and review decisions of administrative bodies.

Te Mahi a Ngā Minita  
The Role of Ministers  
Microbite Two



## Te Mahi a Ngā Minita | The Role of Ministers

Ministers in the New Zealand Government are members of Parliament (MPs).

Ministers are given responsibility to look after particular areas (called Ministerial portfolios) e.g., Minister of Health or the Minister of Education.



*“Like me, you may be surprised at how many Ministers there are because we usually only hear about the large Ministerial portfolios”.*

Every Public Service agency has at least one Minister responsible for their work. The Prime Minister appoints each Minister to a portfolio of work.

Ministers are responsible for:

- determining and promoting policy
- defending policy decisions
- answering in the House on both policy and operational matters

In general terms, Ministers decide both the direction of, and the priorities for, the agencies for which they hold portfolio responsibilities.

They are generally not involved in the agencies' day-to-day operations.

Ministers are accountable to the House for ensuring that the agencies they are responsible for carry out their functions properly and efficiently.

On occasion, a Minister may be required to account for the actions of an agency when errors are made, even when the Minister had no knowledge of, or involvement in, the actions concerned.

Ministers have a duty to give fair consideration and due weight to free and frank advice provided by the public service.



***“Hey Afa, what is Free and Frank Advice?”***

***“It’s about the way we provide advice to Ministers without fear or favour and using our best professional judgement”***



***“As you can see Ministers play a very key role in the Public Service delivering outcomes for New Zealanders”.***

Te mahi a Te Kawa Mataaho  
me ngā Ture Matua

The Role of the Public Service

Microbite Three



## Te mahi a Te Kawa Mataaho me ngā Ture Matua | The Role of the Public Service

**The role of the public service is to work with the government to achieve outcomes for Aotearoa New Zealand.**



- 1. Achieve outcomes** – improve outcomes through the services provided by individual organisations, and by joining up around critical issues or priorities identified by the Government.

*“As a Customs Officer, I know my agency needs to work with several other public service organisations, including Ministry for Primary Industries, Immigration New Zealand, and the New Zealand Defence Force.*

*I know that we all need to work together to ensure we are collectively stopping any dangers, hazards and threats entering New Zealand.”*

- 2. Improve services** – to provide both face-to-face and digital services that are easy and convenient to interact with and are fully organised around people’s needs.

*“I work as a receptionist at my local hospital. For me, I know I have an important role to play in providing meaningful and quality services that support New Zealanders to get the assistance they require.*

*Working directly with my community, I have the privilege of seeing first-hand the impact of an improved service on someone.”*





**3. Foster active citizenship and open government** – improving transparency, increasing civic participation and using new technologies to make the government more open, effective, and accountable.



*“As a public servant who works in a ministerial team within an agency, I know the importance of my role when I proactively release data and information that is in the public's interest, along with handling Official Information Requests.*

*For me, it is about strengthening democracy in New Zealand by ensuring citizens can contribute and influence what government does and how it does it.”*

**4. Support the Crown in its relationships with Māori** - developing and maintaining the capability of the Public Service to engage with Māori and to understand Māori perspectives.



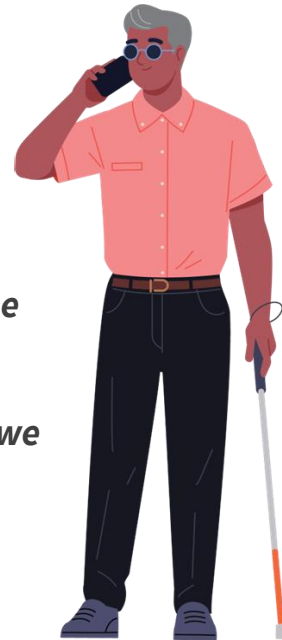
*“As a community advisor, I know the value and importance of connecting with communities and engaging with Māori to understand their needs, and to ensure better outcomes are achieved.*

*The Public Service plays an important role in supporting the Crown in its relationships with Māori under Te Tiriti o Waitangi.”*

**5. Reflect the communities we serve** - improving diversity in the workforce and inclusiveness in the workplace.


***“In my role within the justice sector, I have been able to support policy design for how we ensure we have fair and unbiased recruitment processes that strengthen the diversity of the public service.”***

***I know that to have the best public service we can, we must be representative of the communities we serve.”***



***“As you can see, the public service plays an important role in supporting the current, and future Governments to achieve outcomes for New Zealand.***

***Take a moment to reflect on how your role contributes to achieving outcomes for New Zealand”.***



Te hononga i waenga i te  
Kāwanatanga me  
Te Kawa Mataaho  
The Relationship between  
the Government and the Public  
Service  
Microbite Four

## Te hononga i waenga i te Kāwanatanga me Te Kawa Mataaho | The Relationship between the Public Service and the Government

The main point of contact between Government and the Public Service is through the public service chief executive and their Minister.

The style of the relationship and frequency of contact between Minister and agency will develop according to the Minister's personal preference.

### **When working with their Minister, public servants are responsible for:**

- supporting Ministers in carrying out their ministerial functions
- serving the objectives of Ministers by developing and implementing policy and strategy
- actively monitoring the performance of public sector organisations, government assets, and regulatory regimes within their Ministers' portfolios.
- delivering high-quality and efficient public services
- informing Ministers of significant developments within their portfolios, and giving free and frank advice
- implementing the decisions of the government of the day.

All public servants must be politically neutral in their work, serving the current Minister in such a way that they will equally be able to serve any future Minister.



*“Kia ora Jo. Why is being politically neutral important?”*

*“Political neutrality is central to the public service's ability to support the government of the day and any future government.”*

