

# EXCELLENCE IN AOTEAROA

*Innovation, collaboration, diversification, modernisation: the highest achievers in our public sector consistently bring on board the ‘-tions’, in their commitment to improve our public service. This year’s public sector Award winners are no exception. Collaboration, both inter-agency and internationally has featured. So too has diversification – acknowledgment of our growing diversity of population and the strengths that diversity can offer our society. As always, technology applications have been innovative and ever-changing, as agencies seek the best online and digital solutions to modernise, increase efficiencies and simply make things easier for the public they serve.*

## Prime Minister’s Award for Public Sector Excellence

### EXCELLENCE IN CROWN-MĀORI RELATIONSHIPS



#### Te Urewera

Department of Conservation (DOC) and Te Uru Taumatua – Tūhoe

*Ko te piripono te tūāpapa o te mana.*

*Honour and friendship lies under the feet of excellence.*

Overcoming more than a century of fractious relations to share the implementation of ground-breaking new legislation would never have stood a chance without the building of strong trust and confidence between Tūhoe and DOC.

The Te Urewera Act 2014, which disestablished Te Urewera National Park and granted Te Urewera its own legal identity, broke the boundaries of management of natural places. The Act’s stated intentions called for a dramatic shift in governance, a bringing together of two world views, and a healing of past hurts.

Changing a relationship described as dysfunctional and disrespectful to one of trust, goodwill and friendship has become the essence of the partnership developed between Te Uru Taumatua, the Tūhoe tribal authority, and DOC.

It’s taken time, huge courage, and ‘letting go’ from both sides, say those involved.

At the core of this new relationship is a world-first in land rights and management of natural places. The Te Urewera Act, a key part of the Treaty of Waitangi settlement negotiated between Tūhoe and the Crown, is a fundamental change to the way we see, respect and live off the land. Te Urewera will own itself in perpetuity and the Te Urewera Board (comprising representatives from Tūhoe and the Crown) will speak as its voice to provide governance and management in accordance with the principles of the Act.

The Act also recognises that Te Urewera is and has always been the homeland of Tūhoe.



**Tāmāti Kruger**

Tāmāti Kruger, chairman of both Te Uru Taumatua and the Te Urewera Board, explains the depth of the connection. “Te Urewera is where our culture and identity originates. It’s where our future will always lie. Without it, the Tūhoe people would not be. So the separation of Tūhoe from that place, through legislation and warfare and confiscation and unjust actions, is a cruelty to the soul of anyone of Tūhoe descent.”

For more than 60 years Te Urewera existed as a national park which should never have been, says Kruger. “Again during that time Tūhoe’s role was minimal and meagre; in fact one could see how Tūhoe were deliberately marginalised.

“So to go from a state where the Crown claimed one hundred percent ownership and monopolised the management and operations, to the arrangement that no-one owns it, that

no person can ever own it, that it owns itself, is nothing short of dramatic.

“The relationship now is marked by a yearning to work together, because we each love Te Urewera.”



**Mervyn English**

Achieving the current accord was not without difficulties, says DOC Deputy Director General Mervyn English. “The way to think about it is you have two world views that, at a human level, were strongly different. For DOC, this is the place we have been looking after for all these years and it matters to us. For Tūhoe, these are DOC people who come from the Crown and have been like invaders. No way was that going to be an easy path.”

*It’s taken time, huge courage, and ‘letting go’ from both sides, say those involved.*

There was no model for how to have a piece of land own itself, he adds. “Nor was there a model for how the tangata whenua could get reconnected after they’ve been alienated for more than a century, with the present carers still involved but working in partnership and having to adjust to a different point of view. The passing of the settlement legislation was only the beginning. Making it work in practice and dealing with the humans involved and their intent and achieving their acceptance all created another level of complexity.”

English says a turning point was when DOC started making decisions that actively reinforced

the intent of the legislation, which was reconnecting Tūhoe to Te Urewera.

“In the first instance we sought to merge Tūhoe into DOC to look after Te Urewera. Then we realised that wasn’t giving proper effect to the reconnection of Tūhoe to the land, so we stepped back and gave Tūhoe greater real authority. Rather than it being a merged organisation running Te Urewera, it was Tūhoe in the centre with DOC around the outside supporting them.

“These included symbolic things like rather than saying DOC would run health and safety, we said to Tūhoe it’s your place, you’re in charge of health and safety, and because we know you’ve never done this before we will help you. It’s a subtle shift.

“I think getting to that model was a really important step and that’s driven a lot of Kirsti’s and my thinking now about how we progress.”



**Kirsti Luke**

Kirsti Luke, Tūhoe Te Uru Taumatua Chief Executive, says receiving trust and confidence from DOC, in particular from English and Director General Lou Sanson, was indeed a turning point.

“First, we needed trust and confidence within ourselves to make an approach that was in the image of what we intended for Te Urewera. Then the trust and confidence held by Lou and Mervyn enabled a sharing of leadership, and with it a shift of the responsibility for Te Urewera to us. They needed to let go in order that we would have the space to step up and deliver what was intended by the Settlement and the Act.”

That was an incredibly brave thing for them to do, she says. “They would often confess that they didn’t recognise what we were thinking. There was no other way to get to the point we have today but for them to trust that we knew what we were doing.

“Today we find ourselves more capable than ever, which is the basis of a very different conversation. We’re living together.”

The leadership on both sides needed to be prepared to take a few risks and not quite know what would happen, adds English. “If you haven’t done something before and you’re in completely new territory, you need to step out a

bit and see what’s going to work.”

English says he has learned about the importance of having people who can truly connect and work in both worlds. “That’s not simple. Speaking Māori doesn’t mean you’re going to be able to work in the Māori world. More important is understanding things like their emotional connection to the land and their aspirations as a people.

“In DOC we’re now discovering these people, plus there’s been a mutual learning going on in both parties.”

Continuing the partnership: what’s next?

“We are now future-proofing around the structure of this DOC-Tūhoe relationship,” says Kruger.

“One thing we are all worried about is how do we institutionalise it? We can see that we have to do some kind of resettlement from the key personalities who have been gelling this thing together. How do we make this a contagious thing that can spread through the organisations of Te Urewera and DOC?

“We are at the early stages of understanding our differences and not being afraid of them. This is the exciting part that enriches our options. Probably a word would be interdependence, spooning around each other and moving forward together.”

Phase two of the process is actually getting formal documentation about what we’re doing, and this will have some challenges, says English. “Intuitively we know how things might work out, writing it down can often be harder.”

That said, public submissions and hearings on Te Kawa o te Urewera, the Te Urewera Board’s draft management plan for Te Urewera, have been heard and the final document is due for completion in October.

The difference that is being celebrated by us now is that we are optimistic about our chances of achieving things, says Luke. “We (Tūhoe and DOC) are living together in our relationship because we love the same thing; nature. We are attracted to, we are humbled by and we adore nature.”

Looking back, English says one of the biggest things for him in developing this Crown-Māori partnership has been the importance of mutual learning, so that everyone gains from it.

“I think New Zealanders can gain enormously from the Māori philosophy about land. The other thing is you get a sense of nation building – this is all about New Zealanders coming together and in a much more reasonable way.

“When you look at the history of Tūhoe and how they were treated, it’s worse than embarrassing. Now we’re finding a way for them to step out of that. What greater thing can you be involved in:

people finding their own place in the world?”

## EXCELLENCE IN IMPROVING PUBLIC VALUE THROUGH BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION

### Redefining Radio – the Transformation of Radio New Zealand

#### Radio New Zealand

Transformation from a traditional radio broadcaster into a savvy, innovative, multi-media organisation, drawing a steadily growing audience, has been Radio New Zealand’s (RNZ) response to the new digital media phenomena.

Even before facing digital disruption, as an independent and non-commercial public service media organisation RNZ operated in a challenging commercial environment.

Paul Thompson, RNZ chief executive, says that to stay relevant and maintain and build audiences, RNZ had to reinvent itself; redefine radio and become a multimedia organisation.

The resulting transformation encompassed comprehensive organisational change, a review of services, realignment of the organisation’s vision and purpose, and commitment to future-focused strategies designed to meet RNZ’s Charter obligations as a publicly owned media organisation.

Buy-in from all areas of the organisation was essential thus open and transparent communication with staff was a critical component of strategic planning for this project.

Understanding audience needs was also a key factor and the public was actively engaged in research conducted to inform strategic decisions.

RNZ set a target of extending its audience to one million people by 2020, at the same time pledging that editorial standards would be maintained and content would not be ‘dumbed down’ to reach wider audiences.



Checkpoint with John Campbell, a radio show delivered on-air, streaming online, on Freeview, on demand and on social media, is a leading example of the change.

Has it worked? A transformation highlight has been the surge in online audiences since 2016, when the Radio New Zealand website was re-designed to meet audience needs. Growth

is continuing to the extent that KPI targets are being revised upwards.

Thompson believes the creation of a more nimble and responsive organisation, geared to meet audience expectations, has been the key to RNZ's success.

"In this disrupted market audiences have more choice than ever before. People are accessing more of their news and entertainment through multi-media platforms and they increasingly want it delivered to mobile devices via digital and social media. RNZ deliberately set out to meet those needs."

## EXCELLENCE IN IMPROVING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVENESS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR



### Opening our eyes through blind recruitment

*The Treasury*

Focusing on diversity and flexibility, not financial acumen, has been a huge shift in the Treasury graduate recruitment process.

The shift has opened up access to a whole new talent pool, says Fiona Foster, Chief People Officer at the Treasury.

"Our leadership now has a very strong commitment to diversity and inclusion; our Chief Executive is co-leading this as part of our Better Public Services activity."

The new process includes 'blind applications', aimed at mitigating unconscious bias in graduate recruitment, Foster explains. "What we don't see on the application form is the name, the university, hometown or hobbies – the applicant could be from any background. So we can't pre-judge, and everyone has the same opportunity."

The new process also includes a range of targeted questions, as recent recruit Hannah Overton explains.

"The questions were designed so that people with diverse skills and backgrounds could show their abilities without economics jargon limiting us. Instead of asking technical questions, they wanted to know us as people.

"(For example) I answered questions on the school leaving age and raising the minimum wage because they appealed to my social

science background," says Overton, who grew up in Christchurch and Ethiopia and has spent time in Belgium.

The process has changed people's perception that you needed an economics or finance degree to build a career in the Treasury, says Foster.

"The Treasury's graduate intake is now much more diverse. Just over one-third identify as solely New Zealand-European, and qualifications range widely, from Māori studies to languages."

The new diversity promises to make the Treasury a more robust, accessible and innovative agency, and the organisation will continue to look for opportunities to make improvements, she adds.

"We have lots of ideas and we're not limiting ourselves. We are also looking at what's going on externally - there are some really bold initiatives out there in terms of graduate programmes that we can learn from."

## EXCELLENCE IN DIGITAL GOVERNMENT



### Sorted: Sorted!

*Commission for Financial Capability*

The 'sorting' of Sorted, the rebuilding of a free, online digital service designed to help New Zealanders sort their financial future, has resulted in a huge growth in use. Within six months of the launch of the new Sorted.org.nz, the number of unique browsers grew by 60,000, or 18 percent. The benefits for New Zealanders are equally as impressive.

The reboot of Sorted.org.nz will revolutionise the way New Zealanders sort their money and see their financial future, says Diane Maxwell, Retirement Commissioner.

"Sorted has been a well used and well loved home for people to get their finances into shape for years, but it needed to keep pace with changing technologies to stay relevant."

The impetus for the site's rebuild came from market research and user feedback.

"A change of tone, better rendering across all devices and a more visual approach were some of the ingredients for the improved site," says

Maxwell.

Sorted now includes a 'personal finance dashboard', designed to focus more around the individual. A significant change is a new digital solution that displays well on mobile 'phones, a vast improvement on the original resource, while increased visual insights are aimed to help users who struggled with the former calculator or spreadsheet-style visuals.

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Maxwell says the new Sorted also takes a significant step in providing graphic visuals to quickly convey important messages.

"For example, our mortgage tool now conveys the lifetime cost of the loan by visually splitting the loan amount and the interest. Users are amazed when they instantly see their \$500,000 house will actually be costing them one million dollars. By using sliders, they can see the potential savings if they increase the frequency and amount of payments."

## BUILDING TRUST AND CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT

### Community Safety Patrols

*NZ Police*

More than 200 volunteers from 43 ethnicities, speaking 56 different languages between them, are now working 'the beat' with police in Community Safety Patrols. This NZ Police initiative is aimed at building trust and confidence with traditionally hard-to-reach community groups.

The response has increased ethnic diversity in the Police, improved social cohesion and added around 500 hours per month of crime prevention activities around Auckland.

Working outside the traditional enforcement model, Community Safety Patrols enable Police to provide a more visible service and public reassurance of safety, says NZ Police Assistant Commissioner Wally Haumaha.



"They also help us remove barriers, and (mis) perceptions around the presence of bribery,

corruption and persecution. Their public visibility reassures that all communities are valued and respected, and show that Police create and support unique opportunities to work in effective partnerships to achieve safer communities.”

The volunteer patrollers, largely comprised of recent immigrants, have enabled Police to build cultural capacity and diversity, in line with its Core Values. So far, 86 former volunteers have gone on to complete recruit training, with more joining Police in civilian staff roles. The number of patrollers successfully recruited into Police is expected to reach 100 this year.

“We’ve worked innovatively for many years through our Police Districts and Police Ethnic Liaison Officers to build trust and confidence with our migrant communities and keep all communities safe from harm,” says Haumaha.

“The creation of ethnic community patrols is an excellent example of this and we’re humbled that the achievements have been recognised.”

The concept is now spreading into other regions. NZ Police is currently building and consolidating the work of Wellington and Canterbury patrol groups and expanding into Waikato. Haumaha says this will enable the development of new initiatives in conjunction with local communities, including businesses, community organisations, education institutions and local authorities.

## EXCELLENCE IN REGULATORY SYSTEMS



### Joint Electronic Verification System

*NZ Customs Service*

Increased assurance and speedier delivery of New Zealand exports to China have been achieved by a new electronic verification system, operated jointly between the two countries. New Zealand is just the second country in the world to have introduced such a system for China.

The China/New Zealand Free Trade Agreement came into force in 2008. The massive increase in volume of goods that resulted, together with a manual verification process for tariff preference (hard-copy Certificates of Origin were required, for example), led to clearance delays. To avoid these, some importers stopped claiming

the tariff preference while others, who were importing perishable goods such as dairy and seafood, faced economic risk.

The two countries’ customs agencies resolved to find a technical solution, and the resulting Joint Electronic Verification System (JEVS) was launched in 2016. Developing the system was not without its challenges, says Richard Bargh, NZ Customs Group Manager Revenue & Assurance.

“Working with another country, communicating and understanding each other’s language, was challenging. Setting up a system to operate in two parts of the world also provided technical challenges,” he says.

“Quality project management and good collaboration between the business and technical IT experts were the keys to overcoming these challenges.”

Customs Executive Board member Murray Young says the organisation is proud of the JEVS.

“The ability to verify and validate the origin of shipments immediately is saving customs officials at both ends time and effort, allowing them to focus more attention on other border risks. There is also now more certainty around clearance times, and assurance that legitimate goods will receive tariff preference under the China/New Zealand Free Trade Agreement.”

Looking ahead, he says Customs could also bring other trading partners onto this system, which would further increase assurance over exports to other markets.

## IMPROVING PERFORMANCE THROUGH LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE

### Transforming MPI by Growing Exceptional Leaders

*Ministry for Primary Industries*

A targeted leadership programme has transformed how people feel about working for the Ministry for Primary Industries. In just five years, the Ministry has moved from a dismal staff engagement rating of second lowest in the public service to an engagement level well above the state sector benchmark. However, the Ministry is not resting on its laurels, says Director-General, Martyn Dunne.

Looking back to 2012, following the establishment of MPI, Dunne says staff had little confidence in leadership and turnover was extremely high.

“Our people couldn’t see a future career for themselves with the Ministry. To address these fundamental problems, we worked on identifying and developing talent, growing our leaders and creating career pathways for all.”

The resulting programme, led and championed by the Director General, encompassed several initiatives, including a week-long induction then monthly on-boarding process, an innovative and transparent assessment process, and career boards for all leaders.

Dunne says the programme has transformed how people feel about working at MPI. “Our staff now feel valued, recognised and supported to have a meaningful career at MPI. Our engagement index sits well above the state sector benchmark, significantly improved from 60 to 72.”



He quotes the SSC 2016 PIF report that states: “Impressive gains have been made in the investment in leadership development across MPI to enhance leadership capability significantly.”

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We’re not stopping there, says Dunne. “We have just launched the last of our career pathways – the Leadership Pathway – which blends an overt focus on management elements with our leadership development offerings. We are also now applying a diversity and inclusiveness lens to all our initiatives to ensure they remain relevant and meaningful for all staff.”

## EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

### Review of Retirement Income Policies

*Commission for Financial Capability*

Seven animated videos, starring Ken, Barbie and a cast of superheroes, were a much talked-about feature of the 2016 Review of Retirement Income Policies. Dubbed ‘Toys Talk Retirement’, the videos attracted attention and helped drive a national conversation about retirement and the implications of our ageing population.

Raising public awareness on the ‘ageing’ issue was, in fact, the rationale behind the videos and other innovative communication tools used in the making of the review.

Every three years the Retirement Commissioner is required to complete a review of retirement income policies for government. Fearing that the 2016 report would be read by a small few, already familiar with the topic, the Commission opted for this new and lively approach.

Retirement Commissioner Diane Maxwell says the Review used data as a starting point, not

an end point. “We took the debate about an ageing population to New Zealanders via online channels, mainstream and social media, street activations and a roaming film crew.”

The Review was spread across seven themes and seven months and called on New Zealanders to tell us what they thought, she added. The scale and quality of public response was significant, resulting in more than 2000 media stories with a cumulative audience of 16.6 million, more than 11,000 survey responses, a Facebook reach of nearly 600,000 and just under 40,000 visitors to the Review web pages.

“We know the issues we raised made their way to the BBQ, dinner table, lunch room and beyond,” says Maxwell.

“The engagement deepened our understanding of the issues, sharpened our thinking on recommendations and lifted awareness nationally of the demographic changes ahead.”

Final recommendations to government were brought together in an interactive portal with 226 pieces of content. “The portal is dynamic, not static. It will continue to be updated and added to,” says Maxwell.



## EXCELLENCE IN ACHIEVING COLLECTIVE IMPACT

### SmartStart

Department of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Health, and Inland Revenue

Having a baby is a huge life event for many New Zealanders, one which used to involve navigation around various government agencies, searching for information and manually filling forms. Not anymore.



Cross-agency collaboration between the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA), Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Development (MSD)

and Inland Revenue has led to the development of SmartStart, an integrated digital service for new parents.

Through the SmartStart website parents can access 51 services all in one place; find information they need, complete legalities and share details of their baby’s birth across multiple agencies. These include birth registration with the DIA, accessing benefits through the MSD, and applying for an IRD number.

*Social media feedback shows that SmartStart has changed the way people think about how government serves the people.*

Partnership between the four government agencies and other service providers, in particular Plunket and the NZ College of Midwives, has helped gain wide support for the service. Since its launch in early December 2016, SmartStart has received more than 100,000 unique visitors. More than 90 percent of customers have chosen to integrate at least two services.

Social media feedback shows that SmartStart has changed the way people think about how government serves the people.

Customer-centric development has been key to the success of SmartStart, says Clare Toufexis, DIA Manager of Life Events Services. “One of the biggest things we learned early on is the role of the customer and the importance of keeping them involved in the process.”

The development of SmartStart is in its early stages; new features aimed at improving the experience for expectant parents are in the pipeline. Looking at the wider picture, SmartStart is the first of a number of planned, integrated agency digital services based around critical life events.

*For more about SmartStart, see our story ‘Turning One’s Thinking Around’ in the December 2016 issue of Public Sector journal.*

## YOUNG PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

### Genevieve Rainey

Department of Conservation

From resource management litigation to protecting dusky dolphin habitat to securing mice eradication consents for the sub-Antarctic Islands; Genevieve Rainey made an outstanding contribution to conservation as in-house solicitor for the Department of Conservation (DOC).



She also designed and implemented a new, nationwide legal compliance audit system for DOC - and encouraged managers’ participation - thus providing a robust set of data for health and safety and general legal compliance.

The legal compliance audit system is key work for the Department, says DOC Director-General, Lou Sanson.

“Genevieve was a vibrant and energetic team member and a real asset to the legal team during her two-year tenure. She showed great strengths in organisation, forward planning, quick thinking and dedication,” he adds.

Genevieve also took her resource management work to a wider audience. As well as co-ordinating the DOC RMA legal practice group, she supported regional legal and planning practitioners as co-Chair of the Wellington branch of the Resource Management Law Association. She was also a Community Law Centre volunteer.

The key things that motivate her are protection of the environment and conserving special and significant ecosystems, along with encouraging other people to do the same, says Genevieve.

“The DOC legal team has been a particularly supportive place for me to develop and thrive.”

With DOC, she counts among her most rewarding achievements as representing the Department at Environment Court and Council hearings to protect significant ecosystems in the Mackenzie Basin, and dusky dolphin habitat in the Marlborough Sounds. Designing and completing the new legal compliance survey was also right up there, she adds.

Genevieve has also contributed culturally. She has been a member of the NZ Youth Choir, the Opera Chorus for New Zealand Opera, Wellington Chamber Orchestra and she helped establish Supertonic, Wellington’s choir for young professionals.

She has now left Wellington to pursue an international career. “My goal is to continue to work in conservation or climate-change initiatives, whether for government, an international organisation or an NGO.”