

# PUBLICSECTOR

Rāngai Tūmatanui

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## KEEPING INTEGRITY STRONG IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

**THE DREAM JOB: CARING FOR THE LIVING MEMORY**



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Doing the right thing



Caring for the living memory

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By IPANZ President Dr Jo Cribb

When I started work in a government department, we put printouts of budget bids in two envelopes and walked them over to other departments for their comments. We had phones on our desks and answered our neighbour's one if it rang when they weren't there. We even had pads of "When you were out" notes to jot down the message. These basics of how we do simple office tasks have changed markedly over the past decades.

And so much more change should be expected. At an ANZSOG lecture last year, Professor Genevieve Bell argued that the future is already here and governments need to address the loss of privacy, the increasing power of data and algorithms, and the growth in automation. She said the future would be messy, and the rise in data, robots, and decisions made by algorithms without human intervention would create new challenges.

The basic integrity of our systems, structures, and behaviours may be increasingly challenged.

Are we, as a public service, preparing ourselves to be effective in this context?

Traditionally, change has been managed within the public service through large reviews that may take a year to come to a conclusion. Actions are put on hold pending the outcome of reviews, and in the meantime, the context changes while the review is undertaken.

There is one current review that many of us are watching with interest, that of the State Sector Act. The State Sector Act is the constitutional foundation for the public service and as such sets the

"tone" for all of us. It is the basis of our integrity; the backbone for what we do.

After a short period of consultation last year, where many struggled to find time to provide comment on the high-level document, all has gone quiet. A small group of academics has been engaged to test the policy thinking. All are capable, thoughtful thinkers about the public management system. All are European, older men. All, I am sure, would say that there are a wide variety of experts who have not been included in the design of our future state sector – those, for example, who are reliant on health services or who struggle to access services. They have also become experts in the strengths and weaknesses of the current system and have aspirations for it.

*What* the public service works on will change, but *how* we operate and behave will also need to change if we are going to remain respected by the public, be trusted in our actions, and be considered of high integrity.

Opportunities to improve the effectiveness of how we work and behave are many. Listening to the voices that are currently missing from discussion and debate – younger New Zealanders, Māori, Pacific people, ethnic communities, and new migrants – needs to happen now. There are many platforms available for collaborative work, co-design, and knowledge-gathering to enable this to happen. But let's not have a review in the traditional sense to work this one out.

**Jo Cribb, President**



**An introduction to the new Executive Director**

Tēnā koutou katoa

Let me briefly introduce myself. I am honoured to have been appointed as the new Executive Director of IPANZ. I have worked for much of my career in the public service across many departments and sectors. This includes the social sector, the Department of Building and Housing, the Ministry for Women, the Department of Conservation, and the State Services Commission, to name just a few. I know how much dedicated work takes place every day by intelligent and compassionate public servants. I know that it can be tough at times and that the people of New Zealand may not always perceive the spirit of service that is so core to public servants.

I have also managed and undertaken governance roles in the not-for-profit sector, been a director in a large consultancy firm, and worked in some Crown entities in the wider state sector. Some of the most rewarding work has been alongside Māori, from whom I have learnt more than I can say. It excites me to anticipate

connections for the public service across all these boundaries where mutual learning and shared action can offer so much.

I am spending the month of June gathering ideas from many conversations and reading and of course drawing on the valuable experience of IPANZ staff and board members. We will be developing ideas on how IPANZ can strengthen the voice of public servants; how IPANZ could bring even more debates and information to public servants; how to have stronger public services; how to advocate for things that matter to public servants; and how to ensure that the *Public Sector* journal is compelling reading for all public servants, whether in policy work or at the frontline.

I am away in July, but in August, I plan to firm up these ideas into an initial work plan. I look forward to meeting and talking to you in the next months.

Ngā mihi mahana  
**Shenagh Gleisner**

# DOING THE RIGHT THING

**When it comes to integrity, the Police are one organisation that the public want complete trust in. So how are they doing? Anna Jackson talks to SIMON MINTO about how she sees it.**

## A different organisation

An officer starts in the Rotorua CIB. She's looking forward to her new job. One day, she hears two detectives talking about a woman who's just finishing making a statement. She says she was sexually assaulted and wants the perpetrator charged. The detectives discuss it in the office after taking the statement. "Do you think it's a legitimate complaint? Might be dodgy."

The young officer is appalled. Thirty-four years later, that officer is now Superintendent Anna Jackson, and she's the National Manager of Police Professional Conduct. "Instead of investigating it, treating it as a legitimate complaint unless the evidence suggested otherwise, they decided to shortcut the whole thing. A thorough investigation would have told them whether she was telling the truth." Fortunately, she can now say such attitudes are in the distant past. "Now all cases are reviewed very thoroughly."

I'm here to talk to Anna about integrity in the Police, and it's fair to say she's seen integrity from all sides. After all, one of her bosses in Rotorua was John Dewar, who was imprisoned for covering up sexual offending by other Police officers.



**Anna Jackson**

It may be tough to describe integrity and what it means in reality, but Anna has no trouble – a police officer with integrity is one who "does the right thing". And doing the right thing means observing the values of the Police and the code of conduct. These are now core to the Police – but things weren't always so clear.

## Commission of inquiry

Many changes have been made since the 2007 Commission of Inquiry into Police Conduct. And it's clear that the Police is a very different organisation since that inquiry. For example, all complaints above a certain level must go through the Independent Police Conduct Authority (IPCA). Complaints can come from many different places: from the website, over the phone, or directly to an officer. Although Police generally investigate complaints, almost every investigation must be reviewed by the IPCA, unless considered low level. The IPCA has its own investigators to look into more serious allegations, and it's now mandatory for certain issues to be referred directly to the IPCA.

Interestingly, most complaints about the Police are not ones involving high-profile issues like excessive force and deaths in custody. "Most complaints are about service and the failure to give the service that people expect," says Anna. "We often find the problem was communication. We simply didn't tell people what we'd done."

## A POLICE OFFICER WITH INTEGRITY IS ONE WHO "DOES THE RIGHT THING".

The level of public trust in the Police has increased over recent years. In the latest survey, public trust and confidence in the Police is sitting at 80 percent. Anna is clear about why she thinks that's the case. "We've developed a track record of holding ourselves to account. The public can have faith in us."

### Speaking up

An initiative introduced in the last few years is a programme called Speak Up. This allows officers to anonymously report behaviour that has made them uncomfortable. These reports are investigated and followed up. What this does is establish a culture that doesn't tolerate unethical behaviour. If someone doesn't feel able to make a formal complaint, they can do it through Speak Up and know that the matter will be investigated and their identity protected.

**Would your decision pass the test?**

**consider**

**S** Would your decision withstand scrutiny? Community Police Service Media

**E** Will your decision ensure compliance? Code of Conduct Policy General Instructions

**L** Is your decision lawful? Laws Regulations Rules

**F** Is your decision fair? Community Colleagues Your family Others

*before you decide.*

**Unethical decisions affect us all**

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## CONTRIBUTIONS PLEASE

Public Sector journal is always happy to receive contributions from readers.

If you're working on an interesting project in the public sector or have something relevant to say about a particular issue, think about sending us a short article on the subject.

While we will always look at well-written pieces on any public sector subject, it would help if your article touched on or related to one of the journal's quarterly themes.

Themes for 2019 are:

**September:** The future public service and how we get there

**December:** Open issue

Contact the editor Simon Minto at [simon.g.minto@gmail.com](mailto:simon.g.minto@gmail.com)

Staff still have the option of reporting behaviour directly to their supervisor.

### Past shortcomings

In spite of the changes, there have been a few recent cases that haven't always shown Police in a great light. "After the Roast Busters case, a lot of work had to be done to reassure the public." The message that Police want to give is that they are open about looking at their behaviour. "Often in the past, the usual response was to close up in the face of criticism. Now we want to hold ourselves to account." There are professional conduct officers in all districts. "We've put a lot of resource into this. And we're very open to examining our actions and processes when we get things wrong." The Police admitted the investigation into the Roast Busters case wasn't what it should have been, and they made changes and told the public what those changes were.

### Unique pressures

Many police officers are often in situations where they don't have on-the-ground support when making decisions. This is particularly true in rural districts where they might be the sole officer within a hundred kilometres. Judgment can be difficult when help is far away and the situation being faced is critical. "This is when TENR applies, which stands for Threat Exposure Necessity Response. This is an operational threat assessment an officer can access to help them do the right thing and make the best decision possible. Often they have to make a decision in just a few seconds."

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## YOUR MOUTH IS THE BEST TOOL.

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Another threat, particularly in smaller centres, is possible conflicts of interest. "The police officer is a member of the community and may find themselves investigating someone who sits with them on the school board of trustees or whose children play on the same sports team." There are clear rules around passing on investigations to someone outside the area when issues like this arise. "The main thing is that officers must manage that conflict of interest."

This is also true for Police involved in investigations in any district. All officers must be conscious of conflicts of interests, and all officers investigating complaints against Police are required to make a statement to confirm there is no conflict of interest. These processes give all Police officers the constant message that acting with integrity is embedded into their jobs.

When an officer is facing a difficult situation, processes are there to minimise any possible compromise to the officer's



*Pressure situations can challenge Police integrity*

integrity. "The language you use, the force you use are all addressed in processes." For example, all officers are familiar with the AWOCA process, where officers Ask the subject to do what it is they want them to do, explain Why they have been asked to do something, outline the Options that the subject has (good and bad), Confirm the subject understands the request, and then decide how to Act. There's an appreciation that often it's not the equipment or the back-up that's missing, but it's actually clear and simple communication that's needed. Some officers even consider it a failure to go to their belt that holds their tactical equipment. As Anna says, "Your mouth is the best tool on your belt."

### Small changes with big effects

If there's one thing that sums up the changes in Police processes concerning complaints, it's openness. "We are far less defensive." Changes have also been made to employment relations so issues are treated transparently and fairly with staff. There is now also a database of "Lessons Learnt". This records exactly what happened in an anonymised format and records what should perhaps have happened. These lessons are shared with staff and have proved extremely helpful for complainants, in that they feel as if they have contributed to making a change. There's far more flexibility around resolving complaints. They seldom result in prosecution. The complainant may simply want a sincere apology and an acknowledgment of failure.

If there is a difficult situation where force was used, then "staff must justify the force, and they must write a report on it," says Anna. "Decisions that are made in a split second will be examined for months later. Officers must be aware of that."

There is now monitoring to allow early intervention. Factors such as the number

of complaints received about an officer, the amount of sick leave, the number of tactical options (use of force) reports, and the number of arrests are carefully tracked. This can alert superiors to possible problems, which allows them to intervene. "When it's discussed with the officer, they often don't realise they had been using more force or getting more complaints than the average officer or have been making a lot more arrests."

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## WE ARE FAR LESS DEFENSIVE.

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There are often reasons behind the figures. There may be issues in the station or issues at home. Knowing the problem means it can be dealt with before a small problem becomes a bigger one. This approach has proved highly successful. "We've saved careers and improved performance. It allows people to self-reflect. I remember one officer acknowledging that he had no idea he was being perceived in such a negative way by others and he made positive changes. It ensures that staff don't fall by the wayside."

In a recent case, she was particularly proud of two officers who reported a colleague's behaviour to their supervisor. "It was something they weren't comfortable about, and they acted on it." It involved the treatment of someone being held in the police cells. "It would have been a very difficult thing to do. In some places, it's an unwritten rule not to nark on your mates. But our values and code are such that it's important to do the right thing, and that was more important to them." It reflects that the expectation of speaking up is having an effect. Raising concerns about a fellow

officer would have been rare just a few years ago. “There is now a high level of accountability.”

### The public face

Most people have little contact with the Police, so when Police face the public, Anna wants it to be positive. This is particularly so during emergencies. “We want to provide reassurance to people. Following the Christchurch shootings, the Commissioner fronted the media and we were as open as possible, so people felt they could trust us and were safe.”

While this has public relations benefits, it also means that the public are more likely to trust the Police when they need their help.

### International position

Every six months, Anna participates in an Australasian integrity forum, where representatives from the Australian states, which all have different jurisdictions, and New Zealand get together and talk integrity. She finds these forums very useful, and they give her an insight into how well New Zealand is doing compared with others. She’s happy to quietly admit that New Zealand is actually doing extremely well.

Some Police forces in other parts of the world have major issues. There are famous cases of police being penetrated by organised crime, and corruption is a problem for many countries. “Most countries have problems with that, and we have to be cognisant of the potential dangers here.” Anna notes that these issues don’t threaten the New Zealand Police at the moment, but she concedes there’s no reason why they won’t. She sees organised crime in particular as a possible threat. The answer to keeping Police integrity at the highest level

possible is continual vigilance.

### Strict rules

The code of conduct has tight rules around behaviour that might compromise integrity, such as what gifts can be accepted, and there are strict rules about who can access the Police database and for what reason. This is strictly monitored. “We intend to run a campaign to remind people about accessing the computer records. We have a lot of information at our disposal, a huge amount, and people expect us to deal with it appropriately.”



**WE’RE A FAR BETTER REFLECTION OF OUR COMMUNITY THAN WHEN WE RECRUITED FROM RUGBY TEAMS, AS MY HUSBAND SAYS.**

### Values and empathy

To show the change in Police since she started, Anna advises me to go to a

graduation. “It’s like the United Nations. We’re a far better reflection of our community than when we recruited from rugby teams, as my husband says.” They make sure the values are highly visible. “They’re all over the Police College. They emphasise that this is the way we do things.” They also want to instil empathy. “We use the byline ‘Walking a mile in their shoes’ to give them the idea that we need to understand others to do our job well.”

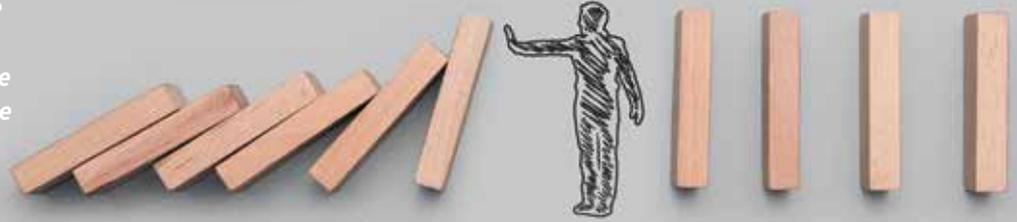
It’s very clear that Anna is a national manager in a Police force that’s very different from that one in Rotorua all those years ago.



New recruits at last year’s graduation

# INTEGRITY IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

*It could be argued that trust is perhaps the primary currency of the public service. When trust is lost, the entire system grinds to a halt. CARL BILLINGTON sat down with Catherine Williams, Michael Macaulay, Suzanne Snively, Pauline Barnes, and Julia McCook-Weir to explore how we're building integrity across the public service and what it takes to keep it there.*



## Integrity, transparency, and wholeness

There is almost no action and no decision in the public service that does not in some way affect the wellbeing of the individuals, organisations, and communities that make up this country.

Catherine Williams, Deputy Commissioner Integrity, Ethics & Standards at the State Services Commission, puts this into perspective in a way we can all relate to.

“I have been engaging with the hospital system quite a bit recently with my mother going in for a number of operations. You check in and you're made to sign a whole heap of forms, then they take the person you care about, put them on a gurney in a hospital gown, and wheel them through the double doors into a room full of power tools. That requires huge trust in the system.

“As a public service, we place people in that position every day. We exercise powers and responsibilities that directly affect their lives. It's their trust and confidence that allows us to do our jobs.”



**Catherine Williams**

Inspiring public confidence and maintaining public trust in the integrity of our public administration system is critical. Alongside the actions of individuals, it also needs to take shape in the systems,

processes, and culture that make up the public sector as a whole.

“This is where we need integrity and transparency. Integrity is about doing the right thing even when nobody is watching. Transparency confirms people were doing the right thing when nobody was looking,” Williams explains.

Michael Macaulay, Professor of Public Administration at the Victoria University School of Government, expands on this.

“Integrity is the bridge between morality and ethics. It measures the degree to which our values and beliefs (our morals) line up with how we put those beliefs into action (our ethics). It's the bridge that connects them.

## INSPIRING PUBLIC CONFIDENCE AND MAINTAINING PUBLIC TRUST IN THE INTEGRITY OF OUR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION SYSTEM IS CRITICAL.

“Integrity is about wholeness as in the idea of an *integer* – a whole number. That's a great way to think about the public sector and how we connect and unite it as a whole system of people, processes, and culture,” Macaulay adds.

### Social norms seen through fresh eyes

“There's no perfect end state where we've built a high-integrity environment and we're done. It's constantly in motion as our social values keep evolving,” Macaulay argues.

“Corporal punishment was phased out

while I was still at school, and with it, a whole attitude towards what a child was and how hierarchal power should work was phased out as well – that attitude is one we find unfathomable today.



**Michael Macaulay**

“It's not that previous generations think terrible thoughts and are later exposed as horrible people. It's that norms they grew up with, things they never thought to question, are being considered through a different lens.

“We can see this today with changes to prevailing norms towards bullying and sexual harassment.”

Macaulay's and Williams's perspectives have important implications. Understanding integrity as the degree of alignment between values and actions means that what we really want across the public sector is not just *personal* integrity, but integrity *within* a system that *is built on ethical values*.

### Our most trusted professionals

One area of the public service that has focused very consciously on the issue of underlying values is the education sector, particularly the teaching profession.

School teachers are consistently ranked among the most trusted people in New Zealand. During 2017, the Teaching Council, an independent statutory body

that oversees the profession, set out to develop a new code of responsibility and new professional standards with teachers.

Pauline Barnes, General Manager Professional Services for the Council, describes the focus on values: “When teachers came together to develop ... a code, the place they wanted to start was values – really considering what we’re here for and what we value that’s unique to us as teachers.

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## THERE’S NO PERFECT END STATE WHERE WE’VE BUILT A HIGH-INTEGRITY ENVIRONMENT AND WE’RE DONE.

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“These values – *whakamana*, *manaakitanga*, *pono*, and *whanaungatanga* – became the underpinning essence that every teacher could relate to and buy into as we set the expectations of our behaviour and practice as a profession together.



**Pauline Barnes**

“The systems we’ve developed are very much framed around the concept of being a *profession*. In any profession, you have a group of people with specialised knowledge who also have a specialised relationship with people that requires trust and confidence.

“Part of being a profession also means you must have a transparent system of self-management and self-review that enables you to earn that trust, as well as a system of ongoing professional development,” explains Barnes.

When the Teaching Council developed their new code, they also created an *Examples in Practice* booklet. The booklet is designed to prompt conversations about how to apply the code in some of the tricky situations teachers face every day.

Julia McCook-Weir, the Council’s Senior Manager Professional Responsibility,

explains, “That’s been received extremely well. I don’t know how many times in the last six months I’ve had people say that this is the document they use all the time. It’s become the ‘go-to’ tool when situations crop up people are unsure about. The key thing we encourage is having the conversation together.

“Things are rarely black and white. There are lots of grey areas, and there’s lots of power involved and potential for misunderstanding. Every decision involves judgment, and the more you can talk about these things, the more diverse views you hear, then the better you understand how people may be affected and the better decisions you can make. That can’t happen unless there’s a conversation,” McCook-Weir adds.

Pauline Barnes agrees: “Conversations at the level of values can help you see things from the system level again and clarify the bigger picture of what we’re trying to do here.

“It can clarify situations where people feel uncomfortable but haven’t been able to put their finger on why. It also raises those bigger systemic questions about how we’re valuing democracy and whether we’re doing things as an agency that contribute to open government or things we’d be reluctant to make transparent.

“But if you don’t create an environment where people feel confident with these conversations, you can’t impact change at a system level,” Barnes adds.

“In a way, the teaching profession is a microcosm of what the public sector does on a larger scale. The public sector has responsibility beyond just the people it employs, and the need for public trust and confidence is paramount. They need processes that maintain their competency and signal when things go wrong, allowing them to respond transparently and make any required changes.

“Teaching is quite a good model for thinking about this at a system level.”

### Speaking out

New Zealand public servants are regarded worldwide for their ethics and integrity, consistently placing in the top positions of anti-corruption indices.

Catherine Williams observes: “We start from a really strong position when it comes to public trust and confidence. We have this incredible natural asset in our reputation. We need to do everything we can to protect and nurture it.”

Part of that is having clear processes to encourage people to raise concerns and then protect them when they do so – an issue Victoria University’s School of Government has been exploring recently. Michael Macaulay explains:

“We’ve just done a huge piece of work on internal reporting and whistleblowing. The first key finding is that, even though there’s been numerous policies and initiatives put in place, the repercussions of reporting an issue still end up more heavily and more negatively on the person who makes the report than on the person whom the report is about.

“The second key finding was that, of all the outcomes that result when an issue or incident is reported, the least likely outcome was any form of sanction or punishment against the person being reported.”

These findings suggest we may still have some way to go in creating a culture that comfortably discusses and addresses inappropriate behaviour and makes it worthwhile for people to speak up.

“The most common situation is not that these signposts are missed, it’s that the reports they generate can be ignored. Accusations about a person are often surprising and hard to credit, particularly about someone who is highly admired. That’s part of the problem.”

According to Macaulay, the most common factor that causes reports to be ignored is when they’re dispersed – when there isn’t

### Trust you can count on

- Number of teachers with a current practising certificate: **102,800**.
- Number of complaints about teachers referred to the council: **619** (0.6%).
- Number of conditions placed on teachers as a result: **100** (0.1%).
- Number of teacher registrations cancelled as a result: **26** (0.025%)

Of over 100,000 teachers, less than 1 percent have complaints against their practice, and of those who are the subject of a referral to the disciplinary company, an even smaller portion require any disciplinary action. As a profession, over 99 percent of New Zealand teachers maintain the trust and confidence of the New Zealand public they serve. Consequently, when something does go wrong, it tends to get a lot of media coverage, perhaps precisely because it is so rare.

*All figures taken from 2018 statistics. 2017 figures were equally consistent.*

a clear process for making a report or clear systems for receiving them and generating investigations.

“You see this with Harvey Weinstein and Jimmy Saville. Issues were reported, but they never went anywhere. In Weinstein’s case, reports were dismissed, bought off, or coerced. In Saville’s case, there were multiple reports but they all went to different, isolated sources, and it wasn’t corroborated until far too late.

“One of the things the Me Too movement has helped achieve is that it’s collectivised what were previously dispersed, frequently ignored, experiences. It turned Twitter into an accountability tool and highlighted the power of being able to co-ordinate claims,” Macaulay explains.

“When a report is received, the first step should be to ask whether this mirrors any other information we have. Being able to draw on different sources of information for that is absolutely critical because it’s far too easy for one individual to be sidelined.”

This is an area the State Services Commission have focused strongly on – with the introduction of the Protected Disclosures Act 2000, an investigation into the treatment of Ministry of Transport whistleblowers in 2017, and the more recent 2018 consultation on the Protected Disclosures Act 2000, seeking feedback on how well the current systems and processes are working.

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## YOU SEE THIS WITH HARVEY WEINSTEIN AND JIMMY SAVILLE. ISSUES WERE REPORTED, BUT THEY NEVER WENT ANYWHERE.

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The message from the State Services Commission has been clear and public: “It is vital that public servants can raise concerns about suspected wrong-doing safely and without fear of punishment or reprisal.” (SSC media statement, 20 July 2017)

### The “squiggle”

So where do we start? Perhaps by paying closer attention to what Catherine Williams describes as “squiggles”.

“A squiggle is my way of explaining that if something doesn’t feel right, most people will get a signal – feeling a bit sick in the tummy, feeling antsy, a headache. The really important thing is that if you experience a squiggle, if you

feel something is not right, go and have a conversation with somebody and test it out.

“Speaking up is so important. There’s very little benefit in saying you knew something wasn’t quite right after the fact. People need support to have those conversations, and they need to be taken through to their appropriate conclusion, whatever that appropriate conclusion might be – even though it might be difficult or inconvenient,” Williams explains.

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## IT IS VITAL THAT PUBLIC SERVANTS CAN RAISE CONCERNS ABOUT SUSPECTED WRONG-DOING.

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“If we want to continue to have a high-integrity system, then that’s a responsibility we all need to take quite seriously.”

Similar to the Teaching Council’s booklet *Examples in Practice*, the State Services Commission have issued a number of “model standards” that set out a series of practical measures for public sector organisations.

“The point is that, over time, it should end up with every agency coming up to at least that standard. It’s also part of how we continue to learn and refine our approach. We recently updated the Speaking Up Standards after identifying some areas they didn’t cover as well as people need.

“The standards are a great tool for those conversations about where we want to get to as a system.

“We’ll continue to lift the bar from the SSC perspective and look for opportunities to increase the support across the whole system, but each and every one of us needs to sign up to the importance of keeping that trust and confidence.

“And we also need to remember to pause occasionally and celebrate the fact that we’re actually doing quite well,” Williams adds.

### The economics of integrity

“We’ve got a really impressive suite of anti-corruption, organised crime legislation that was passed in 2015 and implemented in 2016,” says Suzanne Snively, Chair of Transparency International New Zealand. “The public sector has moved far more rapidly in strengthening their integrity systems than I ever imagined possible when we began auditing integrity processes in 2013.

“Now you can talk about corruption and fraud without someone swearing at you,” she reflects.

“As we began working with more organisations and conducting more audits, not only did we get better at finding instances of fraud, we also got better at managing it. In some ways, it felt a bit like we were opening Pandora’s box, but out of the box also came a whole range of solutions. Increasingly people are coming to see these conversations as opportunities, not just risks to manage.”

Transparency International New Zealand has identified seven key tools that help protect against corruption and seven key factors that help develop an integrity system. These are being incorporated into two assessment frameworks, a National Integrity Systems Assessment and a Financial Integrity System Assessment, that New Zealand organisations can participate in as a way of independently validating their integrity processes and securing our reputation among potential partners and investors.



**Suzanne Snively**

“If you don’t have corruption, you’ve got lower costs right through the system because you don’t have anyone clipping the ticket that isn’t directly related to the provision of services. We can borrow money at more favourable rates and on better terms and attract the best staff, contractors, and suppliers. All of these factors lead to greater productivity and higher quality goods and services for the public,” Snively adds.

“People become territorial or aggressively expansionist in response to the lack of economic wellbeing in their own countries. New Zealand has a great window of opportunity at the moment and is well placed to demonstrate that it doesn’t need to be that way – that every country has the potential to create this sort of positive spiral.”

It’s an area New Zealand has been leading the way in for many years. Let’s help ensure we continue to do so. Having these sorts of conversations together is a great start.

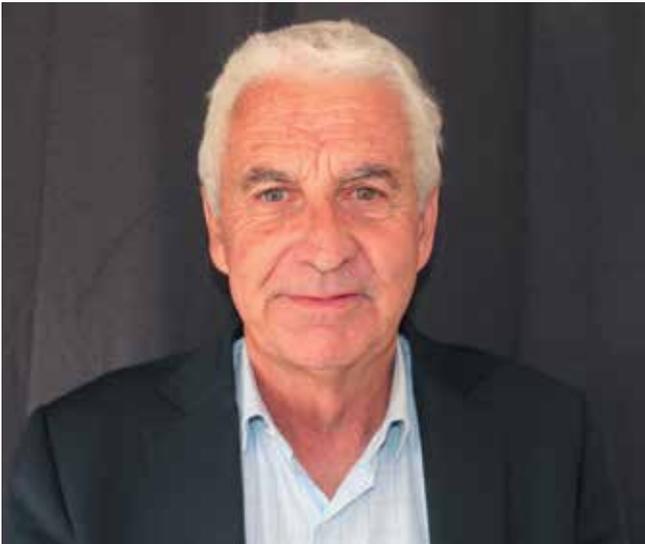
# Seeing it from all sides

*A conversation with Alan Johnson*

***Until very recently, Alan Johnson has been the man behind the annual State of the Nation reports from the Salvation Army. He spent 14 years there as a social policy analyst. He's undertaken somewhat of a career change, starting about a month ago, as Principal Policy Advisor at the Ministry for the Environment. BRIAR EDMONDS caught up with Alan to find out more about the twists and turns of his career and his thoughts on integrity in the public service, having worked both in and out of it.***

## **What gets you out of bed every day?**

Fundamentally for me, it's the idea of making the world a better place. I honestly believe that what makes a difference in the world are individuals: their efforts, their ambitions, and their imagination. I just want to contribute to making that difference. Particularly thinking about the position and the future of the most vulnerable in our society – especially our children.



*Alan Johnson*

## **How did you start off in your career?**

I started off as a land surveyor. When I left uni in the early '80s, I was unable to find a job as a surveyor, so I retrained as a town planner. During that time, I came across economics and got really interested in it so started studying that too.

When I graduated from town planning, I spent some time working in a community housing project while continuing to study economics. I ended up with a master's degree in economics. I did a bit of surveying and then fell into local government and worked at Auckland City Council for seven years. I went from being a junior planner to being a strategic development manager for the council – so I shifted from doing Resource Management Act stuff to corporate policy.

After that, I drifted around a bit and did some work for NGOs, worked in housing advocacy, and worked at Unitec for a few years as a lecturer in housing and social policy. After that, I went back to the Auckland Regional Council doing strategy work for about three years, and after that, I went off to the Salvation Army, where I stayed for 14 years. So my career has been partly in government and partly in NGOs.

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**I HONESTLY BELIEVE THAT  
WHAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN  
THE WORLD ARE INDIVIDUALS.**

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It's been a career that I've never regretted. I've always been passionate about getting out of bed and going to work doing the things I've done.

## **What's been a real highlight of your career?**

First, the work I did as a lecturer was really fulfilling. I loved interacting with students. I still see students to this day that I taught. It's gratifying to have been able to help contribute to the people they have become and the contribution they in turn have made to society. In many respects, teaching – especially when you're talking about sociology and social policy – is about opening new doors for people. I could see that some of the ideas I introduced them to changed the way they saw the world, and their lives, and I'm grateful to have been part of that.

The other highlight was the work my team and I did on the State of the Nation reports for the Salvation Army. The State of the Nation reports' purpose was being a witness for the issues that affect vulnerable New Zealanders by measuring things like unemployment, child poverty, people going to jail, and homelessness.

I wrote 12 of those reports over 11 years. They got to a point, I think, where they were seen by the media and politicians and many members of the public as being an event in the calendar that marked our progress. That was always the intention. I think the value of that whole initiative was in being able to measure social progress in a meaningful and consistent way. And to try to reframe political debate around social progress and not just economic progress.

## **What's been the most challenging part of your career?**

I think sometimes in policy work you can end up not necessarily being as truthful as you should be. I feel there's a degree of obscurity in the things that get done and said in public. That's a shame.

I also think there's somewhat of a culture of managerialism in the public sector. Effectively, public servants work for the chief executive and the chief executive works for the minister. But the ideal of truly serving the public, I feel, is a bit more distant than perhaps it was a generation ago.

My feeling is that if we're going to have a society that's decent and honest and corruption free, we need a high level of honesty in the public service, and I'm not sure that's always the case. I'm certainly not suggesting it's an issue in my current workplace. It's more an overall theme I've observed.

## TRY TO REFRAME POLITICAL DEBATE AROUND SOCIAL PROGRESS AND NOT JUST ECONOMIC PROGRESS.

I've seen on occasion in my career that public agencies don't always collect certain information, usually because it doesn't suit their purposes. An example I can think of is when I was with the Salvation Army, we sought information from a government agency under the Official Information Act on how many people had approached the agency for housing assistance. The agency couldn't provide the information because they hadn't collected it. I think it could be argued that it's a kind of wilful ignorance. I think collecting certain information might open up difficult truths and conversations for the public service to grapple with that perhaps they don't want to.

### How well is the public sector doing in maintaining integrity?

I'm proud of and encouraged by the fact New Zealand has one of the most non-corrupt, open, honest, and transparent societies in the world. I'm certain we could get better at it, of course, but I feel that the people who work in the public sector are by and large doing so with the best of intentions. I include our politicians in that too; I think most people in parliament want to do the best for the public.

I think where we do sometimes have a problem is that we probably don't see our own biases very well. We see the world in terms of our own experiences and struggle to understand what it would be like to be in someone else's shoes. I think that sometimes shows up in a lack of understanding from public-sector agencies. Sometimes even with a lack of empathy. But overall, I think the public sector's got integrity and people are there for the right reasons.

### If you could wave a magic wand and change one thing about the public sector, what would it be?

If I could wave a magic wand, I'd get rid of managerialism. I'd love to look at developing some form of code of practice and agreement on principles of what public service means. I'm not certain if that would be legislated or would simply be a statement of values. But it would be good if the public could appreciate that every public servant works for *them* and if public servants had that as a foundational idea.

## IF I COULD WAVE A MAGIC WAND, I'D GET RID OF MANAGERIALISM.

If you look at the delivery of public services, sometimes the attitudes of people on the frontline can be very unhelpful. It would be great if we could change the ethos of the public service to be very much about servant leadership.

### What do you think the public sector gets right?

While we have areas to work on, I think we're honest and trustworthy overall. I think we probably struggle as Kiwis to understand how corrupt the public sector can be in other countries! We are a society that does trust government and the public sector overall, and that's a really good thing.



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## PUTTING INTEGRITY AT THE CENTRE

**Two roles that are central to ensuring public-sector integrity are the Privacy Commissioner and the Ombudsman. MARGARET MCLACHLAN caught up with them to see how they see the state of integrity in the public sector.**

### Keeping it private

The day I visit, Privacy Commissioner John Edwards is fronting the media. He's come out against the practice of Ministry of Social Development (MSD) fraud investigators obtaining third-party records about beneficiaries.

"The investigations are not complying with the rule of law and that undermines the integrity of the system," Edwards boldly states.



*John Edwards*

It's also the week of the Paris Christchurch Call summit. After the 15 March attack in Christchurch, Edwards was publicly critical of how Facebook allowed the live-stream of the massacre to circulate and their lack of response after it became known.

Edwards says, "What our prime minister has done is astutely achievable. There remains a lot of work to be done in the social-media space in terms of openness and transparency. Social-media companies use their market dominance, and the echo chamber effect nudges people to extreme views, undermining democratic institutions.

"Governments worldwide are grappling with this issue. The Christchurch Call was a little bite of the elephant, but it might serve as the thin end of a larger wedge. With Facebook, we've seen some action on live-streaming. It's sad and sobering that they've taken these measures since 15 March, which if done earlier, may have prevented the live-streaming being shared."

### Privacy and the public sector

It's against this background of national and international privacy issues that our conversation turns to privacy and the public sector. Edwards says the public sector has to maintain the trust of the community to maintain its social licence to operate. It has to act with integrity and uphold the privacy of the public it serves.

The Privacy Commissioner supports this relationship between the public sector and its community. The office has three areas of activity: considering the policy for government agencies in dealing with private information, dealing with complaints when people feel their privacy has been breached, and investigating areas that warrant further inquiry.

**SOCIAL-MEDIA COMPANIES USE THEIR MARKET DOMINANCE, AND THE ECHO CHAMBER EFFECT NUDGES PEOPLE TO EXTREME VIEWS, UNDERMINING DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS.**

"We don't set out to undermine the public sector, but to support it. For example, in the Intelligence and Security Review in 2016–17, we found the improvements were well designed and that it was a legitimate government objective," Edwards says.

However, he will call out agencies if warranted. He cites the issue a few years ago when MSD changed their terms for funding non-government organisations, requiring them to obtain personal information from clients.

"This was ultimately undermining the trust of the very people most in need of community services. The first thing they'd see, when arriving at a women's refuge, for example, is that their personal details were required."

Edwards recommended MSD review this policy – and the agency reversed it.

"If MSD had consulted non-government organisations in a more open way, they could have achieved what they wanted," he says.

### Privacy in an open world

His office can make recommendations to agencies, and MPs and the media often use his findings to hold agencies to account.

"I think we've been effective; our measures are practical and implementable. We're nudging things along every day, like suggesting amendments to Cabinet papers, and our larger inquiries often have immediate results."

Edwards says society needs open government. Data sets are public assets – used by academics and researchers as well as the public sector. "But there are risks; if you get this stuff wrong, it undermines public confidence."

The Privacy Commissioner is keen to upskill the public sector. There is a series of learning modules available on the office's website – the latest is Privacy for Policy Analysts.

Edwards says while the public needs to take some responsibility for their own privacy, particularly with online services, it's asking a lot for people to engage with privacy issues.

“Agencies should give people privacy-friendly choices. They should say, ‘Here are the services, and here are the consequences of giving us that information.’”

### **A quiet passion for justice**

The Chief Ombudsman, Peter Boshier, comes across as a gentleman, every inch the lawyer and judge he once was.

He speaks in a very considered way, taking time to absorb each question and carefully chooses how to frame his response and the words he uses. “Ombudsman opinions are tabled in parliament. I’m independent, and I don’t need to ask to investigate if I have concerns. I’ve got the freedom to say what I think.”



**Peter Boshier**

Yet beneath his calm exterior lies a passion for the work he does and a crusade to use his role to uncover injustice. He cites a current investigation into the Ministry of Health’s oversight of facilities and services for intellectually disabled people.

“There’s been an inquiry into mental health, but people with intellectual disabilities are largely forgotten,” Boshier says.

He’ll also be investigating the quality of data about deaths of disabled people in care to find out the pressure points and suggest improvements. “I’m interested in the capacity of the health system to meet the needs of some of society’s most vulnerable people.”

He goes on to say that open government depends on accountability and transparency. New Zealand ranks second in the world on the Transparency International Index.

“The notion of any public body being accountable through the Official Information Act (OIA) means they’re more likely to be disciplined. My office and that of the auditor-general help to maintain that integrity – otherwise people lose trust in the public sector.”

### **Dealing with complaints**

The Office of the Ombudsman, which Boshier has headed since December 2015, has made huge strides in improving its efficiency. For one thing, it has cleared the backlog of Ombudsmen Act (OA) and OIA complaints, which were stifling its ability to be responsive, and it publishes half-yearly data on the number of OIA complaints it deals with. The March release showed a 34 percent rise in complaints received since the data was first published in 2016.

Boshier explains, “I want us to be relevant and used, so I’m fine with this upward trend as long as we’re resolving them quickly. It doesn’t mean public sector laxity. People know that complaining to us is worthwhile, and there’s increased willingness on behalf of agencies to co-operate. Most agencies have almost 100 percent compliance with the OIA.”

In around September this year, the office will be publishing data on complaints it receives about local government in relation to responses to LGOIMA information requests (the local government equivalent to the OIA).

“I’ll be doing a table for each of the 78 city, district, unitary, and regional councils. People will be able to see what complaints have been made and size up what their council is doing. You’ll see a sea change from local government, who have been a bit slow in their response to official information requests.”

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## **MY OFFICE GAVE A STRONG REBUKE AND ASKED FOR AN APOLOGY.**

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### **Working with the public sector**

The Office of the Ombudsman has been proactive in working with the public sector. It provides advice and guidance to agencies before they make decisions or develop new policies and processes.

Boshier has clarified the timing of the “free and frank” convention – when advisors can offer advice to ministers without fear of it being made public.

“It’s a continuum, but generally, the first third of policy development is safe [from public view], and the last third would be harder to justify non-release. As you approach a decision, more public consultation is expected, but if you make it public too soon, good advice can be prematurely shot down.”

Boshier is pleased to see agencies proactively releasing information. He says it saves agency time in responding to requests, and information is more available to journalists and the public. New Zealand is one of the few countries to have Cabinet papers released 30 business days after they’re presented, and Minister’s diaries are published, which provides accountability about whom they’re meeting.

### **When things go wrong**

There are still times when public-sector agencies get things wrong.

“We criticised the Ministry of Education for the way it handled school closures in Christchurch. They purported consultation while developing proposals to close schools – and doing it behind closed doors.

“My office gave a strong rebuke and asked for an apology. I think the public felt supported [by that finding] as the attitude of the agency added to their grief about school closures.”

Changes in practice have occurred as a result of the Ombudsman’s reports, for example, the Department of Corrections stopped using tie-down beds to restrain prison inmates, and the Minister of Education banned the use of seclusion rooms in schools.

Boshier says he’s working hard to improve public awareness of his office and to get the OIA working effectively.

“If there’s one thing I could change, it would be [public servants use of] the 20 working day rule to comply with an OIA request. It should not be the target time period.”

The Office of the Ombudsman is a vitally important watchdog. Don’t expect Peter Boshier to silence his voice any time soon.

## CARING FOR THE LIVING MEMORY

**Across New Zealand, from city cemetery to rural urupā to remote farm hilltop, are thousands of war graves and memorials. Every single one of them is cared for, in perpetuity, by Manutū Taonga, the Ministry for Culture and Heritage. For the staff responsible, it is an important task – and an honour. “So they will never be forgotten” is their motivating mantra. KATHY OMBLER caught up with two dedicated people from the ministry.**

### Dream role

Trudging over a muddy farm paddock to a lonely hilltop grave, chatting with whānau or a local historian to “get to know” a chap who died more than 100 years ago, discussing cleaning and restoration options with a stone mason, discovering a headstone dislodged by tree roots and getting it fixed: it’s all in a day’s work for Becky Masters-Ramsay.

She calls it her dream role.

“We care for these graves, and we ensure their inscriptions are never lost so that the people, and what they died for, are never forgotten.”

Masters-Ramsay is an advisor, Memorials and Taonga, for Manutū Taonga, the Ministry for Culture and Heritage. The ministry cares for New Zealand war graves and monuments on behalf of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC). This includes the graves of anyone who died in New Zealand and some Pacific Islands, of whatever cause, while enlisted in either the First or Second World War. According to the CWGC, “true” war graves are those of enlisted men and women who died between 4 August 1914 and 31 August 1918, and 3 September 1939 and 31 December 1947, and they should be maintained in perpetuity.

A total of 3,478 New Zealand casualties are commemorated in 433 sites throughout New Zealand.

Also on the Ministry’s “care-list” are historic graves and monuments. A large number of these originate from the New Zealand Wars of 1840 to 1872. National

### The Tangiwai Memorial at Karori Cemetery



Becky Masters-Ramsay checking a war grave

monuments erected by the New Zealand government, for example, the 1953 Tangiwai Disaster Memorial in Karori Cemetery, are also included.

Masters-Ramsay is often on the road, inspecting graves wherever they may be. Depending on her findings, she develops a programme of maintenance for each one. “This involves working with specialists, for example, stone masons or heritage conservators, to ensure the graves and memorials are maintained at the standard they should be.”

### It can be quite convoluted

“When the stone needs cleaning, we must consider what chemicals to use. We might have to clean them by hand because this is the best way to preserve as much as

we can, and we don’t want to waterblast a rare stone that can’t be replaced. Some sandstone headstones wear away easily, so we replicate the information on a new headstone to ensure the information isn’t lost.”

While the maintenance programme generally runs on a three-year cycle, urgency is sometimes required. “Problems can occur if the grave is under trees that drop branches or if the roots have lifted a headstone.

“As well as personally travelling to the sites, we keep in touch with the local community and council staff. They are our eyes and ears and let us know if any urgent maintenance is needed,” she adds.

Graves? Broken masonry? Dream job? Absolutely says the enthusiastic Masters-Ramsay.

“I found my way into the heritage sector by coincidence. Earlier I studied photography and did a photo essay at Karori Cemetery, and it’s now one of my favourite places. It’s so peaceful, and the headstones there, they tell so much history – I never expected this.”

One of the highlights of the job for Masters-Ramsay is visiting remote parts of New Zealand. “I meet some real Kiwi characters, like the guy who offered to maintain the blackberry around a grave and in return give me some blackberry jam. I always chat with the locals; that’s

where you find the stories and the knowledge.

“I’m also learning so much about the New Zealand Wars; there is a lot to know of our own history that we didn’t learn at school.”

Protocol is followed when visiting Māori graves. “We don’t just charge into the urupā. It’s best to get to know the person we are looking after, so we will meet with their whānau to get an understanding of who the person is. We also research what we can before we go, visit the iwi authority, and apply common sense.”

The same applies for European graves if there is still family around. “Or often there’s a local historian who has a personal interest, and knowledge, and we respect and embrace that. These connections are very important.

“Quite a few of the graves are in remote places, so it’s not unusual to catch a ride with a local on his four-wheeled drive and cross a few paddocks to the urupā. Or you might have to walk across pretty rough ground. Often a grave is placed with a beautiful view at the top of a hill so you also have to have some fitness.”

Health and safety obligations ensure that Masters-Ramsay doesn’t travel alone to these remote sites. “It makes sense. I could fall over and break my leg, and there might be no phone reception. It’s also a professional development opportunity for other Ministry staff to come out and learn about these people and our work.”

New Zealand war graves in the Pacific Islands are also under the care of Manatū Taonga. “Generally they are looked after by embassy staff on our behalf, although we do employ a gardener to tend the Bourail New Zealand War Cemetery in New Caledonia.”

Just months into her role, Masters-Ramsay is still learning. “My last road trip was to Featherston Cemetery. In 1918, in a four-day period, 150 enlisted people at the Featherston Camp, including two nurses, died from influenza. This was a hard moment for me to see so many graves in one place.”

Conversely, in May she travelled to

Hanmer Springs to check the single grave of Corporal Neil Donald Little, who died of disease in 1918, aged 23. “It seems like a long way to go for just one grave, but no one should be forgotten.”



*The grave of Corporal Little in Hanmer Springs*

### Caring for national memorials

National memorials, for wars or national disasters, are also cared for by Manatū Taonga. Taking responsibility for these is Sonia van Ree, senior advisor in the Memorials and Taonga team. As with the war graves, national memorials are about ensuring the memories are carried on, she says.

“They are about recognition and about giving the family members and all visitors a place to reflect and grieve.”

Van Ree’s involvement began with the installation of international memorials in Pukeahu National War Memorial Park in Wellington. “To date we have memorials for Australia, Turkey, France, Belgium, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The embassies chose their own designs, and now New Zealand is helping to establish a Pacific Island Memorial, which will be dedicated in early 2020.”

The park is evolving and maturing, she says. “The gardens have grown, it’s a harsh windy spot, and we’ve learned that we need hardy natives that will survive. It’s essentially a sculpture park, and we find that people who visit either love or hate some of the designs. We also know that many, especially kids, are fascinated by the stories behind the memorials.”

Van Ree is also now focused on the National Erebus Memorial, which is to be built in Auckland’s Parnell Rose Gardens to remember the 257 people who died when an Air New Zealand plane crashed on Mt Erebus, Antarctica, in 1979.

The project began with consultation with the families of victims, she says. “That consultation became quite a focus for those families, providing them with an opportunity to have their say on the feel and setting for the memorial.”

It will provide a tangible place for the relatives to visit and grieve, and that’s important, she says.

“Since Erebus happened, they have had no place to go to acknowledge their lost ones. When the Oī Manawa Canterbury Earthquake Memorial was built, it gave people a place where they could touch the name of the loved ones they had lost. The Erebus families realised that’s what they had been needing; to touch their relative’s name on a memorial.”

We are halfway through the project, says van Ree. “We ran a design competition, and in March announced *Te Paerangi Ataata – Sky Song*, created by Wellington firm Studio Pacific Architecture, as the winner. We are now in the design development process, and the memorial is due for completion in 2020. It will be located in Auckland because this is where most of the crew and passengers came from.”

Van Ree says there are no specific qualifications for the work carried out by her and Masters-Ramsay.

“Becky and I come from totally different backgrounds, but what we do need are strong administration and project management skills. We’re juggling a lot of things, and we work with many different agencies: government departments, embassies, local government, and iwi authorities. We are also managing sensitive material; we must be sensitive towards people’s feelings, and we need to be articulate.

“For me, one of the very special moments in my work is the mauri-stone-laying ceremony. Before the foundation of a memorial is laid we place stones beneath it. This is a significant iwi ritual. These stones are the mauri; they embody the spirit of the memorial. People from the embassies have brought stones from their own country to Pukeahu for the ritual. They also find the ceremony very moving.

“Essentially, what motivates both Becky and me is that we’re both really interested in the graves and memorials, the history around them, and our New Zealand history and culture,” says van Ree.

“We call it living memory; and we have to keep it going,” adds Masters-Ramsay.



*One of the graves at Featherston*



*A tree sculpture at Pukeahu*



## BEYOND 2022 - IRELAND SETS OUT TO RECLAIM PART OF ITS HISTORY

***In the early days of the Irish Civil War (1922–1923), one of the biggest explosions to ever take place in Dublin razed the Public Record Office Ireland (PROI). To mark the centenary of this devastating event, an interdisciplinary team is virtually reconstructing the PROI and many of its records – some of which go back to the thirteenth century. SHELLY FARR BISWELL investigates this major cultural project.***

There is a universal shudder when a people’s cultural heritage is lost. Consider the international response to the fire at Notre-Dame cathedral in April this year. As a *Guardian* opinion piece noted, “It feels as though the very heart of France and the soul of Europe have been suddenly and viciously ripped out.”



While cultural heritage has often been lost through accidents (such as the Notre-Dame cathedral fire), natural disasters, environmental conditions, and neglect, much has also been lost through acts of terrorism and war. As former UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova has stated, “The deliberate destruction of heritage is a war crime – it has become a tactic of war to tear societies over the long term, in a strategy of cultural cleansing.”

In recognition of this, there have been attempts to stop the wilful destruction of cultural heritage during times of armed conflict. The first international treaty on this issue was the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, which was signed in 1954 in response to the cultural atrocities committed during the Second World War. More recently, in 2017, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2347, which formally recognises the intentional destruction of cultural heritage as being similar to other threats to international peace.

But in 1922, when the Irish Civil War began, Europe was still grappling with the fallout from the First World War. The destruction of the PROI was recognised as a tragedy at the time, but it was also seen as a single-line item in a very long list of cultural destruction.

### Ireland’s lost cultural heritage

There’s still a lot of contention about how the explosion in the PROI occurred and who was responsible. What isn’t up for debate, however, is that millions of Irish records over a 700-year period were obliterated that day.



*The PROI (1914). NAI Mills Album. Courtesy of National Archives of Ireland*

Ironically, in the lead up to the civil war, the six-storey, stone building that housed the PROI, which was located in Dublin’s Four Courts building complex, was considered one of the most secure places in Ireland to store records. For that reason, many churches and local authorities had moved their records there for safekeeping. Tragically, some records had arrived just days before the explosion.



*Interior of the PROI (1914). NAI Mills Album. Courtesy of National Archives of Ireland*

Dr Ciarán Wallace, a postdoctoral research fellow at Trinity College Dublin, says that the records that were blown up that day fell like rain across the city.

“We know the wind was coming from the south-west that day because fragments blew as far north as the coastal town of

Howth – about 18 kilometres away from where the Public Record Office had stood,” he says.

In the aftermath of the explosion, PROI staff salvaged charred and damaged fragments from the rubble. In addition, the government asked the public to return anything they found, but over the days, months, and years that followed, very little was recovered.



*The scene after the explosion (1922). Courtesy of Irish Architectural Archive*

In the midst of the human loss and chaos of that period, the demise of public records was seen as the “birth pang of a new state”, Wallace says. Some believed that the lost records were just “English” records. “That’s quite reductive reasoning, though. They were records about our people, our society, our land.”

### Reconstructing what was lost

How do you digitally reconstruct something that seems to have been irretrievably lost? Because only a relatively small collection of documents survived the explosion, the main task for the Beyond 2022 team is to hunt for copies, transcripts, and indexes of lost originals scattered in libraries and archives across the globe. To do this, Wallace says collaboration, funding, and an interdisciplinary approach are essential.

Beyond 2022 represents a collaboration between Trinity College Dublin and its archival partners: National Archives of Ireland, the National Archives (UK), the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, and the Irish Manuscripts Commission. The project is funded by the Irish Research Council and is supported by Trinity's ADAPT Centre, the Trinity Association and Trust, and the Making Ireland Research Theme. The Beyond 2022 project team is in negotiations with the Irish government for the longer-term support of the project.



**Legal records from 1743 damaged in the fire of 1922. Courtesy of National Archives of Ireland**

Even with significant support, filling the virtual 9,300 square metres of shelving with the records that were lost or damaged has presented a formidable challenge. Fortunately, Herbert Wood, Ireland's chief archivist at the time of the 1922 explosion, had compiled and published a catalogue of Ireland's public records in 1919. Entitled *A Guide to the Records Deposited in the Public Record Office of Ireland*, Wood's work has meant that the project team can ascertain what was held within the PROI up to 1919. The *Guide* has served as a blueprint for the Beyond 2022 project team to create a searchable list of contents and to know where each set of documents was located before the explosion.

Using the *Guide* has also meant that the team can work with other national and international institutions – libraries, museums, churches, archives, private collections – to identify possible references or substitute sources to reconstruct some of the records.

“We've had good support from libraries and archives all around Ireland and the world in terms of locating substitute sources, and, in some cases, fragments of documents that were in the PROI at the time of the

explosion,” Wallace says. “When we first started the project, we'd get disbelieving headshakes from people. But after we describe what we're doing, people get inspired by the possibilities.”

### Creating a virtual archive

Wallace says the team has learned through earlier digital humanities projects that it's crucial to get computer scientists, designers, historians, librarians, and archivists around the table at the very beginning of a project.

“The digital technology experts are an integral part of the team. They often come at problem solving from a different angle, and that's been invaluable when considering everything from how people will search for records to what users will see when they come to the site.”

For the building, for example, computer scientists are using virtual-reality technology and working with the architect's original plans, as well as rare photographs and drawings, to reconstruct the Victorian building.

When completed, a researcher will be able to “enter” the building, go up to the reference desk, and request a record. From there, the researcher will be taken to the floor, the bay, and sometimes even the shelf where the record was held and will be able to see any surviving parts of the record, as well as link to any substitute sources and references that are available in other libraries and archives. Researchers will be able to do complex searches too so they can see, for example, other records from the same year or on the same topic.

### Standing on shoulders

While these archives were generally overlooked in the decades following the Irish Civil War, through the years since, there have been organisations and individuals doing the painstaking work to recover some of the collections. Building on this work, several exciting projects were underway in Ireland by the 2000s.

In 2007, the National Archives of Ireland put both the 1901 and 1911 census records online (those census records had been held at the Registrar General's Office during the civil war and were not destroyed). The databases are searchable, free to use, and extremely popular, particularly in light of Ireland's significant diaspora.

During the same period, Trinity College Dublin initiated several interdisciplinary projects that brought digital

technologies and the humanities together in new ways. One project, CIRCLE: A Calendar of Irish Chancery Letters, c. 1244–1509, reconstructed the medieval Irish chancery records that had been destroyed in the 1922 explosion. The CIRCLE project showed what might be possible for Beyond 2022.

Then in 2017, the National Archives of Ireland, in partnership with the Irish Manuscripts Commission, began a survey of archival material that was salvaged following the 1922 explosion. The collection contains 378 brown-paper parcels that hadn't been opened since they were recovered by PROI staff in the days after the explosion.

Conservators opened each parcel to assess, document, and photograph the records inside. Currently, conservators are taking steps to repair and conserve the records. It's an intricate, time-consuming process, but already nearly 3,000 pages of paper and 1,000 sheets of parchment from the first 28 of the parcels have been treated and are ready to be listed by archivists and included in Beyond 2022.

### Reclaiming the past

Piece by piece, Beyond 2022 is reclaiming a part of Ireland's written history.

As Dr Peter Crooks, principal investigator for the project and an assistant professor of medieval history at Trinity College Dublin, has previously stated, “Cultural atrocity is a subject with a deep history and enormous contemporary resonance. Think of Sarajevo in 1992, Baghdad in 2003, Palmyra in 2015 ... But just as important is the story of recovery, of how societies deal with cultural trauma.”

For Ireland, Beyond 2022 reflects an important part of that recovery. The virtual resource is expected to be unveiled in mid-2022. In the lead up to the unveiling, the Beyond 2022 project team is hosting a number of lectures and events to encourage a national conversation on the value of Ireland's cultural heritage.

To learn more, visit <https://beyond2022.ie/>



**Counting rolled leaves of parchment from the fire in 1922. Courtesy of National Archives of Ireland**

# KEEPING INTEGRITY STRONG IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

Columnist and playwright **DAVE ARMSTRONG** looks at some specifics around integrity in the public service.

## Integrity fail

A concerned Christchurch resident goes to a meeting about the slow progress being made on their earthquake claim. They don't realise they are being secretly recorded by a security company hired by Crown-owned company Southern Response. Outrageous!

A beneficiary runs into a family member who lets slip that the beneficiary is being investigated for benefit fraud. An official asked the family member about the beneficiary's sex life. It's the first the beneficiary knew about it. Terrible!

A senior social worker for a government department attempts suicide and suffers two strokes after being repeatedly bullied. Politicians and academics agree that workplace bullying is under-reported. Appalling!

An expensive court case sees a benefit fraudster sentenced to prison for benefit fraud while a wealthy tax evader gets a small fine for evading far more in tax. Inexcusable!

## Isolated or systemic

All these scenarios are real, and none of them reflect particularly well on the integrity of the public service. However, perhaps the question we should be asking is whether they are isolated incidents or are they symptoms of a systemic failure of integrity when it comes to our public service?

Every public service has its problems, but ours should be aspiring to be a best-practice organisation when it comes to integrity. A big question, though, is exactly how far away are we from achieving this "gold standard"? If we are not there yet, how do we get there?

Most of the time, New Zealanders seem reasonably pleased with their public service. Commentators regularly trumpet our reputation for being an efficient and almost corruption-free society – near the top of many world rankings.

*Dominion Post* columnist Phil Quin recently pointed out that roughly twice the number of New Zealand voters are optimistic about the future than pessimistic, with optimism rarely dipping below 50 percent.

After an encounter with the mental health system that left Quin "full of admiration and gratitude for the coalface public servants who made it possible", he believes his positive experience is reflected in State Services Commission (SSC) data, which shows that in 2017, trust in public services based on personal experience was high, at 79 percent in 2017, 12 points higher than a decade earlier. Overall satisfaction in our public sector rose from 68 to 76 percent over the same period.

When you think of all the current discontent in Europe and the United States, then those numbers look pretty good. As British comedian Matt Lucas pointed out after the recent divisive European elections, "Fifty percent of British people think that the country is divided." Sure, we have our problems, but we don't seem to have the negative environment of many countries.

But can we believe the SSC data on trust in the public service? As a recent media investigation into bullying in the public service showed, the public service is not necessarily the best body to survey the integrity of the public service.

The *Stuff* investigation found that public service staff were not always reporting workplace bullying and harassment, "with bad behaviour likely to be much more common than official figures portray".

Bullying in the workplace is certainly not limited to the public sector,

but it is an area that needs improvement if the integrity of the public service is to remain high. If staff can't treat each other with respect, how will they effectively treat those whom they deal with? According to the *Stuff* report, State Services Commissioner Peter Hughes is working on new standards over bullying that will soon be issued to all government agencies. "We can do better in the area," said Hughes, "and we will. The bottom line is that everyone working in the public service is entitled to work in a safe and inclusive workplace."

COMMENTATORS REGULARLY  
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## Pleasing the minister, not the people

According to Victoria University of Management Senior Lecturer Dr Geoff Plimmer, the real issue is "addressing the weakness of people management. If you look at the evaluation of the government departments," says Plimmer, "they are consistent at managing up and pleasing the minister but poor at managing people and culture and dealing with poor performance."

So a happy minister means an unhappy workplace? I'm not so sure, but Plimmer makes an interesting point. Could managers be so focused on keeping their respective ministers happy that they might cut a few ethical corners, inadvertently allow bullying or drop the ball on other areas of management?

According to a recent study from the University of California, if the senior staff of a company are getting away with unethical behaviour, the chances are that other employees are too. Titled *Blame the Shepherd Not the Sheep*, the paper – a compilation of five studies by Professor Bauman and his team from UC Irvine – found that: "Observers were less apt to blame and punish people who imitated a higher-ranking member of their organisation who did something unethical compared to when people imitated a peer in the organisation or broke rules that no one else had recently broken."

Put simply: "If the boss does it, who cares if I do it, too?"

## Moments of truth and moments of integrity

When I worked for various commercial organisations many years ago, a popular customer service buzz-phrase was "moments of truth". Originally coined by Swedish airline CEO Jan Carlzon, the theory was that every encounter a customer had with your organisation was a moment of truth, which determined the customer relationship. In the case of an airline, buying a ticket, putting your luggage on board, taking off, your in-flight meal, landing, and your baggage pick-up are equally important moments of truth. A slip-up on any of these moments means that the airline's reputation in the minds of the customers is lowered.

It is a good philosophy as it shows that baggage handlers, for example, contribute to a good airline experience just as much as "customer service" staff like airline attendants.

Our public service is not always dealing in commercial areas, so perhaps should instead focus on “moments of integrity”. For example, if an unemployed person is made to feel humiliated for honestly applying for a benefit or if a grumpy insurance recipient finds out they have been secretly spied on by a proxy for a government agency, then these “moments of integrity” are gradually going to erode the fine reputation of the public service. If the CEO of the department gives inspiring press conferences or the minister praises their department, that will do little to change the minds of those at the bottom who’ve had a negative experience. Have enough of these negative moments, and you can expect to see a big loss of confidence in public organisations.

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## HAVE ENOUGH OF THESE NEGATIVE MOMENTS, AND YOU CAN EXPECT TO SEE A BIG LOSS OF CONFIDENCE IN PUBLIC ORGANISATIONS.

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One of the worst recent examples of the lack of integrity in a public service was the secret and possibly illegal recording of meetings by the Thompson and Clark security firm, who were contracted to Southern Response, a Crown-owned company. State Service Minister Megan Woods said that secretly infiltrating private meetings of insurance claimants and recording conversations was “wrong, plain and simple”. State Services Commission head Peter Hughes apologised “unreservedly to those individuals whose privacy has been intruded on by state servants or their contractors” and laid a complaint with police over the recordings. At his behest, Thompson and Clark were dumped from MBIE’s list of preferred government suppliers.

Though there were many negative “moments of integrity” over this issue, it was the State Services Commission who ordered an inquiry and its CEO who apologised. As any restaurant manager will tell you, if you give a free drink to a customer after you’ve stuffed up their order, they’ll have a higher opinion of your restaurant than if you’d never stuffed up in the first place. Then again, Christchurch accountant Cam Preston, who was spied on at one of the meetings, was unconvinced by the inquiry. To him, what he saw as the attempted cover-up by Southern Response was as bad as the spying.

### Evading integrity

But despite these isolated incidents, surely every public organisation tries to treat its staff and clients equally and with the utmost

integrity? Of course, but what happens if the sheep look up and see the shepherd, in the form of politicians or senior managers, displaying a lack of integrity?

For example, you could argue that every dollar of taxpayers’ money should be treated with the same respect, whether it’s in the form of income tax or welfare payments. Why then, according to Associate Professor Lisa Marriott, from Victoria University’s Business School, is tax evasion treated by our public services more gently than benefit fraud?

According to Marriott, for an average level of offending of \$76,000, 67 percent of welfare fraudsters received a prison sentence. Yet for an average level of offending of \$229,000, only 18 percent of tax evaders received a prison sentence. So benefit fraudsters – who actually number fewer than many people think – get treated four times as harshly for cheating a third of the amount of tax evaders.

During the period of Marriott’s research, senior politicians were talking of beneficiaries needing a “kick in the pants” yet said little about tax evaders.

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## BUT WHAT HAPPENS IF THE SHEEP LOOK UP AND SEE THE SHEPHERD, IN THE FORM OF POLITICIANS OR SENIOR MANAGERS, DISPLAYING A LACK OF INTEGRITY?

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It’s not a good look when both beneficiaries and taxpayers have had “moments of integrity”. However, it is also true that the MSD (Ministry of Social Development) is reviewing how it investigates benefit fraud, following criticism from various quarters. “People only find out they’re being investigated for fraud when an acquaintance or a family member notifies them that somebody from the MSD popped by,” said Ricardo Menendez March from Auckland Action Against Poverty.

MSD has recently promised to work with the Privacy Commissioner and advocacy groups to balance people’s privacy with its responsibility to carry out benefit-fraud investigations.

So where to now? If various surveys are to be believed, the integrity of our public service, despite some not so great “moments” in recent times, is seen as high. I suspect that if state sector leaders focus on the quality of their leadership, and then lead by example, and look to keeping their staff and clients happy rather than solely keeping their ministers happy, they may end up keeping everyone happy.

## It’s Business Time

With a new budget fuelling government initiatives, there is strong demand for policy and communications professionals across a number of sectors including social services, health, housing and the primary sector.

Tight deadlines and ambitious Ministers means a fast-moving contract market with a demand for seasoned Policy Contractors who can turn their hands to a range of complex policy issues.

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# SOMEBODY'S ALWAYS WATCHING

## HOW THE OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR-GENERAL KEEPS WATCH OVER THE INTEGRITY OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE

***New Zealand's public service typically rates among the least corrupt in the world, but in this time of dramatic social and technological change, it doesn't pay to get complacent. JACQUI GIBSON catches up with Auditor-General John Ryan to understand how he keeps agencies on the straight and narrow.***

In April, the *New Zealand Herald* called it a “lightning rod for controversy”. Opposition MPs darkly warned it could be exploited by government ministers for so-called pork barrelling or buying votes.

Whether the \$3 billion Provincial Growth Fund warrants either concern is, in part, in the hands of Auditor-General John Ryan. John is looking into the administration, management, governance, and evaluation of the fund and will report back to parliament in October. Done well, it's a job that will contribute to the smooth running of the fund and put the minds of the public at rest.

It may also give government agencies welcome insight into how to manage multi-agency budgets and how to work together to achieve mutual outcomes. John explains: “Let's not forget, there is an attempt here by the public service to be innovative. The world's changing. We need new ways of doing things. I'm not here to act as a hand brake to innovation. But with innovation comes risk that needs to be well managed. And three billion dollars is a lot of money in anyone's books.”

### **Innovation vs risk in the public sector**

The Provincial Growth Fund was set up in 2017 to improve regional productivity. Today, it's run by a unit within the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) and staffed and funded by agencies such as the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) and the Ministry of Transport.

John says the Provincial Growth Fund presents several risks: It's been set up very quickly, and it uses unconventional systems and processes to manage the fund. Then there's the risk of unappropriated expenditure.

## NEW ZEALANDERS CAN BE VERY PROUD OF OUR PUBLIC SERVICE.

Already, his office has advised MBIE to improve the way it manages the fund, following an initial audit carried out last year. More recently, his office recommended MBIE put in place an evaluation framework to gather the right baseline data to measure change.

“I'm sure people think it's a thrill for an auditor to find something after the fact,” says John. “But it's actually much better that we get ahead of the issues and give agencies information they can use and respond to. What's the point in coming in later and saying here's a long list of things you should've done differently?”

### **The job of the Auditor-General**

John took up his seven-year term as Controller and Auditor-

General last year, following nearly four years as Deputy Director-General of Corporate Services with MPI.

His appointment followed the untimely resignation of his predecessor, Martin Matthews, after it was found a senior manager within the Ministry of Transport committed fraud during Matthew's tenure there as chief executive.



*John Ryan*

He is the twentieth auditor-general in New Zealand in a role that dates back to 1846.

After studying commerce at Victoria University and strategic leadership at Oxford University in the United Kingdom, John has worked at the senior level in both the private and public sectors and is a fellow of the New Zealand Institute of Chartered Accountants.

So, what exactly is his role if not to point the finger and catch people out? “There is an element of that,” he says. “But the truth is that's not the only task we perform.

“New Zealanders can be very proud of our public service. On any metric, on any world scale, we do well. Our public service is well led. It's got integrity. People are trying to do their best every day. Saying that, it doesn't pay to be complacent. These things do need constant attention.

“I'm also interested in learning more about outcomes and passing on what we're learning about good practice in the public sector. To me, that's another way we help maintain the integrity of the system.”

### **Safeguarding the system**

Maybe that's why, in the last few months alone, John and his team have waded into debates on topics as varied as data and information sharing to cyber security and fraud to managing large-scale change.

In May, John published a letter to all government departments and Crown entities outlining the common issues from the office's annual audits in the 2017–2018 financial year. Top of the list were performance reporting, leadership, and the need for agencies to follow the appropriate principles and practices for dealing with public money, even when under pressure to deliver.

For Privacy Week this year, Karen Smith, the office's Research and Development Group director, published a three-part series of privacy-related issues on YouTube.

Every month, someone from John's office blogs about topics of interest to the public service, publishing their views on LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook.

To date, staff have blogged about how to value heritage assets, the team's role in the Pacific, and New Zealand's second-place rating on the international Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI).

## How New Zealand measures up on corruption

Every year, Transparency International publishes the CPI, a ranking of countries based on how corrupt their public sector and judiciary are perceived to be by experts and business executives.

Latest figures show New Zealand ranks as having one of the least corrupt public sectors in the world, coming second after Denmark.

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**IN NEW ZEALAND, MY ROLE IS COMPLETELY INDEPENDENT. THAT'S NOT ALWAYS THE CASE IN OTHER COUNTRIES.**

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"New Zealand's CPI score goes to the heart of our perceived integrity as a nation," says John, who chaired the Leaders Integrity Forum for Transparency International New Zealand in February. "It tells the world we have a strong, working democracy, a reputation for respecting human rights, a merit-based public service, strong and enforceable laws, and an independent ombudsman and auditor-general."

### An independent office

But when it comes to independence, he says, not all auditors-general are created equal.

"In New Zealand, my role is completely independent. That's not always the case in other countries. I report to parliament, not to a government minister. There are very few things people can tell me to do. I set my own work plan, I set my own standards for auditing, and my priorities are entirely my own."

That said, John draws on all kinds of information from all kinds of sources to plan his annual work programme. He relies on the public writing in with their views and what's reported in the media, as well as the raft of reports, research, and data available from within the public service and from parliament.

This year, John and his team of approximately 385 permanent staff and contract auditors will audit the books of 3,500 agencies. Where needed, they will also look into individual cases of agency spending.

### When public spending is called out

In March, for example, the office was asked by members of the public to inquire into Westland District Council's decision to spend \$1.3 million on a new stopbank at Franz Josef.

The office found poor decision making and poor procurement practice, but no corruption. "Looking back, I think that report actually landed really well. While the motivation of those involved was good, we did find things that should've been done much better to protect the interests of ratepayers.

"To me, reports like that show the power of this office to settle a debate and to draw the line under what is acceptable and what isn't."

This year, the office also will carry out 10 performance audits, specialist audits based on the office's work plan. Last year's topic was water management, which included a performance audit of the stormwater management of Dunedin City, Porirua City, and Thames-Coromandel district councils.

For 2019, the topic is procurement, representing \$42 billion of government spending, which includes the Provincial Growth Fund.

Throughout the year, the office will give feedback on reform proposals. Its April submission on the reform of vocational

education, for example, cites concerns about topics such as the timetable for reform and the limited information available on the financial implications of the proposals.

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**REPORTS LIKE THAT SHOW THE POWER OF THIS OFFICE TO SETTLE A DEBATE AND TO DRAW THE LINE UNDER WHAT IS ACCEPTABLE AND WHAT ISN'T.**

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The office will publish good-practice guidelines on themes such as conflict of interest and will continue to publish letters, blogs, and articles on other topics of interest to the public.

All that, however, is not enough in a fast-changing world, says John.

### Investing in integrity

In February, he asked parliament for an annual funding boost of \$6 million in a Budget 2019 paper called *Investing in Integrity*.

"Look around, there's huge social and demographic change going on, rapid technology advancement, and the significant challenges of climate change," he says. "In the public sector, we have large-scale transformation projects under way and reform of the State Sector Act. Constant change is the new norm."

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**I'D LIKE TO SEE MY TEAM HELP AGENCIES BETTER UNDERSTAND HOW THEY CAN ACHIEVE OUTCOMES LIKE REDUCED FAMILY VIOLENCE AND CHILD POVERTY.**

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And while the latest Public Trust Survey, published by Victoria University, shows greater trust in government by New Zealanders (65 percent in 2018 compared with 48 percent in 2016), the times ahead are still challenging, says John.

"I'd like to see this office do more. I'd like to see my team help agencies better understand how they can achieve outcomes like reduced family violence and child poverty. Do I think we've a critical role to play in that sense? Yes, absolutely. And I think New Zealanders' ongoing belief in the integrity of their public service relies on it."

### Who watches the watchdog?

The auditor-general is held to account by two committees, the Officers of Parliament Committee, chaired by the Speaker, and the Finance and Expenditure Committee.

Every year, a private sector auditor is contracted to review the auditor-general's financial and service performance.

# INTEGRITY IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

## A NEW PROFESSIONALS' PERSPECTIVE

**ASHLEIGH BYWATER-SCHULZE, co-convenor of the IPANZ New Professionals, takes a look at what integrity looks like for someone new to the public sector and how they can manage competing demands.**

It is becoming progressively clear that as the new and younger workforce grows, so do the moral and ethical archetypes that come with it. The ways that young people are changing consumerism outside the workplace is astonishing – the drive towards buying ethical products and choosing options with authentic branding is changing the market. These same ideals are driving young engagement with politics and policy change; issues like climate change and social justice are becoming a real matter of contention in political conversations. It's safe to say that the younger workforce have high levels of personal integrity and ethics.



*Ashleigh Bywater-Schulze*

Integrity is a key value that employers look for when hiring, especially in the public sector. So what does integrity look like to new professionals working in the public sector? How do we connect our individual integrity to the unique workforce that we find ourselves in? Are we challenged, and where do we find the freedom to uphold personal integrity?

### Challenge of the public sector workforce

The biggest pressure-point for joining the millennial workforce is reflected in the equation: experience + qualifications = job. For most new professionals, the challenge to get both qualifications and experience is hard fought. The decision to go to university means there is limited time to get practical and relevant work experience, and those who choose not to attend university are usually shunned for graduate positions or professional advancement. This highlights one of the areas where integrity plays a huge part for new professionals: recruitment. The other is workplace culture. This is where a lot of new professionals can find the public sector challenging and where they feel their integrity is potentially compromised.

As a new professional, these challenges have become very apparent. When we look for a job, we want to know that the workplace is safe, positive, and supportive. Yet this is something that we take a gamble on every time we put our hand up for a new position. There are enough examples to show that there is a bullying culture in many parts of the public sector. Some organisations have a good reputation, but that is not system-wide, and there is a risk that moving within the public sector could mean trading an unexceptional culture for a worse one. On top of this, new professionals do not always have the luxury to turn down professional development as we are usually lacking work experience or formal qualifications, both being a driving force for moving into a new position.

**INTEGRITY IS A KEY VALUE  
THAT EMPLOYERS LOOK  
FOR WHEN HIRING.**

### Observing the code

The code of conduct is something that we are all familiar with – we either get briefed about it or we go through an online learning module, but as we have all experienced at least once or twice in our careers, the code is not always upheld by colleagues, managers, or even general managers. When internal culture is compromised, organisations are also compromising the mental health of their staff, their development, and their productivity. Integrity in workplace culture is fundamental and necessary across the system, creating a wider network of protection that promotes career movement, development, and mental safety. When integrity isn't discernible, it is often enough to make some want to move on, but if we do not have the experience or background to feel confident about moving, we can become stuck.

**FOR MOST NEW PROFESSIONALS,  
THE CHALLENGE TO GET  
BOTH QUALIFICATIONS AND  
EXPERIENCE IS HARD FOUGHT.**

### The battle for personal integrity

As public servants, we often find ourselves in the middle of policy changes, reviews, and changes of government. These changes can often conflict with our personal beliefs. This

challenges the apolitical integrity we have to uphold when we enter the public service. How do we tame the inner social-justice warrior, and where can we find the freedom to express it? It's natural that we stick to the ideals that we hold close to us but sometimes we must surrender our identity. This is sometimes necessary and can be a challenging aspect to government work. The standards around political neutrality can reach into our personal lives and limit our use of social media in relation to law, policy, and government changes. The fundamental requirement is to keep your job out of their politics and keep their politics out of your job.

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## FOR A LOT OF US, WE ENJOY WHAT WE DO AND HAVE PICKED OUR AREA OF EXPERTISE FOR A REASON.

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We are moving towards a time where new professionals are advocating for natural transparency, as the age of “leaving your personal life at home” is ending and we are moving forwards with mental wellbeing and freedom of expression. When we are able to express who we are, we are able to put more of ourselves into our jobs. In a lot of senses, we actually become our jobs, and when we talk about ourselves, we all naturally lean towards talking about work. For a lot of us, we enjoy what we do and have picked our area of expertise for a reason, but it is natural that there are some aspects that challenge us from time to time.

### Ways of keeping integrity intact

There are many ways we can express our inner ethics when at work while still adhering to the code of conduct and observing political neutrality. We have the option to join unions such as the PSA; they help us back our rights as employees. This may resonate with people who consider themselves advocates for people and fairness within their organisation. For women, there is a high likelihood that your organisation has a Government Women's Network (GWN) that you can get involved in. And for new professionals, there are many groups based in Wellington

that get together regularly, for example, the IPANZ New Professionals. When you start to dig deeper, there are ways to express self-identity at work without compromising the grounds of your employment. For the rest of our social-justice values, we may need to keep to “leaving your personal life at home” and make sure that we express those opinions away from the workplace.

### Finding the balance

When talking about the challenges around integrity, some natural correlations start to appear and we are able to connect them further. The more we bring our whole selves to work, the more we are able to connect to the work that we do. Most of us want to feel proud in our work and the changes we make doing it. While we work for the public service, we also work for ourselves. We are connected to the projects we deliver and the papers we write, even if that connection is in challenge and opportunity. We chose our profession for a reason. While we cannot express our political beliefs at work, our interests and what we choose to involve ourselves with express some of that for us. We must find equilibrium between integrity in our job and integrity in who we are as individuals. Organisations that carry a good culture seem to understand this need and help us foster that connection to our work. The need for system-wide integrity in workplace culture is essential. Without it, we are losing bright new talent to firms who offer the security of a positive environment.

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## WE MUST FIND EQUILIBRIUM BETWEEN INTEGRITY IN OUR JOB AND INTEGRITY IN WHO WE ARE AS INDIVIDUALS.

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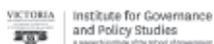
Our work in the public sector is meaningful; we enable change and are a driving force in New Zealand. Finding that association to our sense of identity and being able to bring that to our work may keep us from getting caught in the public-sector crossroads when it comes to personal integrity and our jobs.

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## THE BIG ISSUES FACING THE FUTURE OF WORK FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR

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Location: Intercontinental Hotel, Wellington



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Chief Ombudsman



**Dr Amohia Boulton**  
Whakauae Research  
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**Jitinder Kohli**  
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# INTEGRITY AND KEEPING THE NATION'S RECORDS

**Having sound and accessible records is a key part of a healthy democracy. DAVID LARSEN caught up with the Chief Archivist Richard Foy and Paul Stone of the Open Data Programme to find out how they see integrity working in record keeping.**

## A world without records

In the year 2022, an electromagnetic pulse incident called the Blackout destroys most commercial and public digital records. The consequences are far-reaching. Richard Foy, New Zealand's Chief Archivist, suggests that this fictional event, part of the backstory to the film *Blade Runner 2049*, encapsulates some useful lessons for our increasingly digital era.

“When you think about what happens when a business or a nation loses large swathes of its records, it's disastrous. You effectively lose national identity, but with that, you also lose accountability and good governance. That's why when authoritarian regimes invade countries, the first thing they do is destroy the libraries and the archives.”

Good record keeping, Foy says, is a core aspect of the integrity of the public service: once your records are

corrupted, pristine ethics and a strong professional ethos can only take you so far. “The reason we maintain the record of government is so that New Zealanders – so anyone – can hold government accountable for its actions. Any state possesses vast powers and has vast authority; government has a huge impact on the lives of citizens.” The record of government is therefore an important body of evidence around key decisions, obligations, and commitments. “You can think of Te Tiriti o Waitangi as a set of promises and obligations. Having a public record of that is incredibly important from a democratic accountability perspective, which is why I'm the person who has the statutory responsibility for looking after Te Tiriti.”

## Keeping government accountable

Under the Public Records Act 2005, the Chief Archivist's role is “to exercise a leadership role in record keeping in public offices and in the management of public archives in New Zealand”. As Foy puts it, “The Act gives me statutory independence around record keeping and making determinations in particular around the disposal of records. One of the challenges we have as a national archive is helping people understand that we're a central part of the constitutional architecture of New Zealand. Part of the democratic fabric, as opposed to being a culture and heritage institution. I'm not disputing that many of the

records and archives we hold have deep cultural significance, especially to Māori, because they relate directly to their whakapapa, where they're from, where they belong, who they're part of. But first and foremost, the archives provide a record of the business of government, and therefore, they're part of providing evidence of accountability of government back to citizens.”

**ONCE YOUR RECORDS  
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Foy's responsibilities loosely divide into two parts: ensuring public agencies create accurate records in the first place, and then ensuring those records are maintained in secure and accessible form for as long as necessary, which in some cases will mean forever. The national archives oversees a system of regular ten-yearly audits of public agencies, with a new round due to start next year. But before you set out to check that people are keeping the records they ought to be keeping, the initial step is to *define* which records they ought to be keeping. This is less straightforward than it sounds.

## Choosing the right records

“We have a formal selection statement listing the set of categories that we define as likely to move from current business-day usage to being of long-term value. Things that relate to our national identity, things that may relate to determinations on the Treaty of Waitangi, things that affect people's rights and entitlements, things that contribute to mātauranga Māori. A few other things; it's changed over time.” Foy stresses that the selection statement does not function as a simple algorithmic filter, reliably supplying a yes or no answer to the question “Do we need to preserve this record?” Instead, the system relies on the informed professional judgment of records managers and information specialists.



Richard Foy

“And making these calls is something that we need to get better at as we move into the digital age. Because so much data is being created now! And the problem actually is that most people don’t delete anything, they just hold on to it forever. They become digital hoarders.”

Foy estimates that Archives New Zealand only holds between 3 and 5 percent of all the public records that get created. “The majority are actually okay to be destroyed. Except in those rare cases where every last detail needs to be preserved for some reason – as an example, take the Royal Commission of Inquiry into historic abuse in state care and faith-based institutions. As Chief Archivist, I issued a moratorium on disposal of any records that may be of relevance to that commission.”

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## THE ARCHIVES PROVIDE A RECORD OF THE BUSINESS OF GOVERNMENT, AND THEREFORE, THEY’RE PART OF PROVIDING EVIDENCE OF ACCOUNTABILITY OF GOVERNMENT BACK TO CITIZENS.

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In preserving this sort of evidence until it can be properly assessed, Foy relies heavily on the professional ethos and ethics of public servants, particularly records managers and information specialists. “They’re scattered across the public sector, and they’re particularly valuable to us because information is their job and their business, and a lot of them belong to professional bodies who uphold the values of good record keeping. Quite often people will bring to our attention things that need investigation or inspection. We’re blessed in New Zealand with public servants who do follow the spirit of service and will draw to the attention of the authorities any inappropriate behaviour around record keeping or information management.”

Integrity in a public record-keeping sense, therefore, depends on a broader public service integrity. But there is another meaning to integrity for archival work, and that is the one used in the term “data integrity”. What does Foy understand by this phrase? “From an archives perspective, it’s partly about non-corruption – in terms of a written record, being able to be certain that no one has scratched out or rewritten any of it, or

that the paper or the ink hasn’t decayed to the point of being illegible. In terms of digital data, it’s knowing that the bits are the bits and they don’t change, whether by the malfeasance of a bad actor or by degradation or entropy.”

### Data and its whakapapa

There are a range of best-practice measures for safeguarding data integrity, from protection from fire and humidity for paper records to off-site backups, cybersecurity regimes, and automated anti-corruption checks for digital ones. But in archival usage, Foy says, the integrity of a piece of data also has to do with its provenance. “The context of how the record is created and who handled it. Where did it come from, why was it made, who were the parties involved?” That’s almost as important as the content itself. That metadata, the information about how the record came into our hands and what’s happened to it since that time – the whakapapa of the data, if you like – the more information you can have around that the better; and that information all needs to be protected as well. It’s similar to indexing. We have all these records, but if we can’t tell you where the one you want is, they’re not much use ... so the current location is another important part of a record’s context, and tracking that is an important part of its data integrity.”

### The critical role of public access

Paul Stone, head of the New Zealand Government Open Data Programme, holds similar views. Government records can be as accurate and provenance-pristine as the world’s most exacting information specialist could wish, but meaningful integrity in record keeping requires an emphasis on public access. He notes that this is explicit government policy and has been since 2011, when Cabinet approved the *Declaration on Open and Transparent Government*. This states, “Building on New Zealand’s democratic tradition, the government commits to actively releasing high value public data ... We release it to enable the private and community sectors to use it to grow the economy, strengthen our social and cultural fabric, and sustain our environment.”

“I don’t like the bit about high-value data,” Stone adds. “It’s very subjective. What’s valuable to you may not be valuable to me, and what might seem useless today, suddenly tomorrow, someone might find a great use for it. When we engage with people and try to get an idea of demand for data, we usually ask, What data do you want? And what we find is, they turn around and say, Well, what data have you got?”

By proactively releasing data and licensing it for reuse, Stone argues, public agencies can achieve two worthwhile goals that are

in addition to the principle that citizens should have access to public information. First, people will put the data to use in creative and unexpected ways, which is why attempting to classify data as “high value” is pointless. “The biggest tool I have in getting people to change their thinking,” Stone says, “is stories about how data has already been used. That makes the lights come on.”



Paul Stone

Second, when data is given back to the people who generated it, it can create a virtuous data integrity feedback loop. One example Stone gives is what happened when the Christchurch City Council chose to stop charging for access to its property sales data. “They’re the only council that have taken this step so far. Companies like Trademe and homes.co.nz and a few others will pay for that data, and on the face of it, it looks like a lot of income, though in terms of total council income it’s only a very small percentage – and it’s all information that was paid for by ratepayers in the first place. When Christchurch made it freely available, homes.co.nz as a goodwill gesture said, actually the data we get from you has all sorts of errors, we have to clean it before we can use it; we’d happily return that clean data to you.”

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## WHEN DATA IS GIVEN BACK TO THE PEOPLE WHO GENERATED IT, IT CAN CREATE A VIRTUOUS DATA INTEGRITY FEEDBACK LOOP.

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So by opening up their books, Christchurch City Council have gained a chance to improve the quality of their public records: well-managed data stewardship feeding an ongoing enhancement of data accuracy. That, says Stone, sums up data integrity in a nutshell.



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