

**Policy | 2014**

# State Services

## HIGHLIGHTS

### Labour will:

- Conduct a Royal Commission into the State Sector with a view to revisiting the principles underlying an effective state sector.
- Ensure that the public service core capacity is rebuilt to enable it to do the quality job it needs to do.
- Ensure that all core public servants are paid a Living Wage.
- Ensure that all organisations bidding for government service contracts are good employers paying fair wages and respecting the right of their employees to join a union and bargain collectively.
- Implement a plan to increase government procurement from New Zealand manufacturers by \$200 million a year and from SMEs by \$300 million a year.

### Our vision

- A public service which is valued for its role in an active participatory democracy, that is, serving the democratically elected government of the day with free and frank advice, and protecting NZ citizens from the excessive use of Executive power.
- A public service which consists of equally paid women and men with skill and experience to advise Ministers on the implications of their decisions and deliver constant improvement in services to the public.
- A public service with institutional memory, capacity and capability to serve Ministers and the public efficiently with high quality policy advice and effective administration.
- A public service which is always open to change and modernisation for the sake of better public service delivery, is responsive to diversity, and recognises that the users of public services are entitled to the best customer services and respect.
- A public service which is characterised by integrity, courage, a sense of self-worth and a clear understanding of the importance of their role in protecting and delivering on services which underpin our care of citizens.

### Review of the State Sector

The current structure of New Zealand's public service sets up independent agencies that may not integrate to meet complex needs of individuals and families. In addition, it is too often the case that public service agencies are not pursuing a clearly defined set of goals. A range of approaches is required to tackle these issues.

**Labour will:**

**conduct a Royal Commission into the State Sector with a view to revisiting the principles underlying an effective state sector.**

**review the state sector legislative framework (State Sector Act and aspects of Public Finance Act) with a view to enhancing collaboration and outcomes across the public sector.**

**ensure that the public sector develops coordination mechanisms for implementing goals that ensure agencies work together.**

## **Defend public services**

The current government's indiscriminate cuts to services and the public service are hurting lots of New Zealanders. They are also demoralising and stripping capability from a group of people who have a huge amount to contribute to building a better New Zealand. Public services are critical in the building and rebuilding of resilient communities and should be available to all, irrespective of wealth.

**Labour will ensure that the public service core capacity is rebuilt to enable it to do the quality job it needs to, with the resources and the ability to draw on whatever expertise is needed.**

## **Building a career public service**

Working in public service should be an exciting, satisfying and rewarding experience that attracts the best and brightest young New Zealanders, giving them a way of expressing their support for and belief in New Zealand and its people.

**Labour will work with public service leadership, workers and unions to facilitate career path development both within and across agencies, including encouraging secondments, sabbaticals and other professional development opportunities.**

Part of developing a quality, career public service is making sure that working conditions are at a suitable level to retain skilled people and that they have the chance to develop successful careers.

The Partnership for Quality, negotiated between the PSA and the Government last decade, recognised the leadership role the public service has to offer in terms of quality of employment, in quality of community and public services, in health and safety employment practices, in family friendly workplace practices, and in procurement and contracting practices. It also recognised that this leadership role can only be exercised if there is a genuine commitment to partnership between the government and the PSA.

**Labour will:**

**negotiate a new tripartite approach, between the Government, State Services Commission and Public Service Association, to improve the career public service.**

**put in place a comprehensive programme to address the gender pay gap within the state sector.**

**ensure that adequate investment is made in training and lifelong learning for those working in the public service and recognise the leadership role the Government as employer has in this area.**

## **Women's participation and representation**

**Labour will:**

reinstate the 50% goal for women on state sector boards.

require the State Services Commission to ensure compliance with EEO and to advise the Government on strategies to advance employment equity.

## **Living wage in the public sector**

Labour supports the Living Wage campaign for New Zealanders.

**Labour will:**

take the lead by ensuring that all core public servants are paid a Living Wage.

over time and as funding permits, extend the Living Wage and seek to use the purchasing power of the Crown to assist in moving the wages of the lowest paid, commencing with core public service contracting.

progressively address inequities in the pay of the publicly-funded aged care and disability care workforce and non-teaching staff in state and integrated primary and secondary schools.

## **Responsible contracting**

State agencies have a role in setting the example of good practice, not just with their own employees, but also with those organisations they contract for services.

**Labour will:**

ensure that all organisations bidding for government service contracts are paying fair wages and respecting their employees' right to join a union and bargain collectively.

require state agencies to consider other benefits such as health and safety systems and training opportunities when comparing tenders.

## **Government Purchasing**

New Zealand firms deserve the right to bid for large government contracts without locking them out on the basis of lowest price in favour of overseas companies. The benefits of keeping New Zealanders in work include the fact they pay income tax, GST, contribute to our skill base and the community as a whole. It shouldn't just be about looking at the bottom line.

We must own our own future by keeping Kiwis in work instead of favouring offshore firms.

**Labour will:**

implement a modern, sustainable, WTO-compliant, procurement regime with the aim of increasing procurement from New Zealand manufacturers by \$200 million a year and increasing procurement from SMEs by \$300 million a year.

require government departments and agencies to undertake a wider (economic) analysis of the impact of its preferred provider on the domestic economy, rather than a narrower (financial) analysis when making procurement decisions.

require government departments and agencies to consider the design, size, and sequencing of contracts to ensure they do not unnecessarily disadvantage Kiwi firms.

require the production of an Industry Participation Plan (IPP), which sets out how Kiwi companies can play a bigger role for contracts over \$50 million.

## **Statistics**

Labour will ensure the professional gathering and communication of statistical information with an emphasis on accessibility, political neutrality, comprehensiveness and transparency as well as responding to and measuring emerging trends. Labour will ensure this fairly and thoroughly includes environmental, social wellbeing, economic, population, health and safety, labour market, poverty and public health information, and monitors and communicates situations and trends.