



The Water Services Authority – Taumata Arowai

Pay Gaps Action Plan

Te Mahere Mahi Rerekētanga Ira Tāngata

2025 – 2026

Aug 2025

Context

Launched in November 2021, Kia Toipoto - Public Service Pay Gaps Action Plan 2021–2024 has three goals.

1. Make substantial progress towards closing gender Māori, Pacific and ethnic pay gaps.
2. Accelerate progress for Māori, Pacific women, and women from ethnic communities.
3. Create fairer workplaces for all, including disabled people and members of rainbow communities.

Kia Toipoto identifies clear milestones.

1. **Transparency** Te Pono
2. **Equitable pay outcomes** Ngā hua tōkeke mō te utu
3. **Leadership and representation** Te whai kanohi i ngā taumata katoa
4. **Effective career and leadership development** Te whakawhanaketanga i te aramahi
5. **Eliminating all forms of bias and discrimination** Te whakakore i te katoa o ngā momo whakatoihara, haukume anō hoki
6. **Flexible working.**

The Authority Pay Gaps Action Plan 2025-26

The Water Services Authority – Taumata Arowai (The Authority) was established in 2021 as the water services regulator for New Zealand. We are committed to ensuring all communities have access to safe and reliable drinking water every day. We also have an oversight role in relation to environmental performance of public drinking water, wastewater and stormwater networks.

Being a young organisation has given us an opportunity to implement equitable and inclusive practices from the outset. Our aim is to employ a diverse range of employees and to provide our people with fair pay, learning and development opportunities.

We are committed to meeting our obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti o Waitangi) and its principles. Upholding this commitment supports us to build an organisational culture which will benefit our employees and the communities we serve.

The development of our initial 2023-24 Pay Gaps Action Plan was informed by the perspectives and experiences of our employees and relevant diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging resources. Our 2025-26 Pay Gaps Action Plan is a continuation of this work.

What our workforce data tells us

As a small organisation, our pay gaps are strongly influenced by each appointment, the impact of which is seen in our workforce data below.

Our gender data shows

- We employ more women than other genders across our organisation.
- We employ more women than other genders across our lower pay grades.
- Since February 2024, our pay gap has increased from 0.21% to 3.53% which is above our target of +/-2%, but lower than the public service average of 6.1%.
- We have maintained 50% minimum representation of women in senior leadership.
- Across our lower bands, men are paid at a higher point in range compared to other genders.
- Across our mid to high-range bands all genders are paid at a similar point in range.



73

67.6% of workforce are women



35

32.4% of workforce are men



108

Total employees

65%

At 65%, Pākehā / European is the most represented ethnicity in our workforce.

22%

22% of our workforce identify as NZ Māori for their primary ethnicity.

67%

At 67%, Pākehā / European is the most represented ethnicity in our high-range bands.

2.78%

Our Māori Pay Gap has increased by 2.78% since February 2024.

Our ethnic data shows

- Our most represented ethnicity is Pākehā / European.
- Our most ethnically diverse cohorts are our entry level and advisor roles.
- We have diverse ethnic representation across four of our five business groups.
- We have no Pacific representation.
- We have diverse ethnic representation across our mid-range salary bands with 51% identifying as Pākehā / European and 31% as Māori.
- We have diverse representation across our high-range salary bands, with 67% identifying primarily as Pākehā / European.
- Since February 2024, our Māori pay gap has increased from 3.29% to 6.07% which is above the public service average of 4.8%.

The Authority Pay Gaps Action Plan

2025 – 2026

Transparency

Te Pono

Kia Toipoo focus area

- Agencies/entities publish annual action plans based on gender and ethnicity data and union/employee feedback.
- Agencies/entities ensure easy access to Human Resources (HR) and remuneration policies, including salary bands.

The Authority current state

- We monitor and record demographic data (gender, ethnicity, disability) and remuneration.
- We have published a revised Position Description and Salary Range page on our intranet.
- Our policies are available for all employees to view on our intranet.
- We communicate changes to our employment agreements, policies, procedures and forms to our employees.
- We consult with our employees on relevant policy and procedure updates.
- Our Pay Gaps Action Plans are accessible on our webpage.

The Authority actions

- Continue consulting and communicating relevant policy and procedure reviews and changes with employees and the Public Service Association as a part of collective bargaining processes.
- Monitor our employees' understanding of pay relativity, career and remuneration progression within our organisation and the broader public service.

Equitable pay outcomes

Nga hua tōkeke mō te utu

Kia Toipoo focus area

- Entities ensure that starting salaries and salaries for the same or similar roles are not influenced by bias.
- Agencies monitor starting salaries and salaries for the same or similar roles to ensure gender and ethnic pay gaps do not reopen.
- Pay equity processes are used to address claims and reduce the impact of occupational segregation.

The Authority current state

- We apply a capability focused approach to job design to enable equitable pay outcomes.
- We calculate the impact of starting salaries on our pay gaps during the recruitment and selection process and communicate this data to our hiring managers prior to appointment.
- All employees receive an annual wellbeing payment, which is paid equally to people who work part-time, full-time and to those on parental leave.
- We use a variety of recruitment platforms to promote our vacancies to a wide audience.
- We are transparent with salary during the recruitment process, beginning with advertising.

The Authority actions

- Review the way we share our pay gap data to ensure cohesion with our HRIS.
- Publish our pay gaps on our intranet monthly to improve transparency for employees
- Review and improve the monitoring and reporting of our workforce demographic data and pay gaps.
- Review our remuneration policy.
- Continue to work with the Public Services Association to finalise our remuneration approach.

Leadership and representation

Te whai kanohi i ngā taumata katoa

Kia Toipoo focus area

- By the end of April 2023, agencies/entities have plans and targets to improve gender and ethnic representation in their work force and leadership.
- By the end of 2024, the Public Service workforce and leadership are substantially more representative of society.

The Authority current state

- We have published two Pay Gap Action Plans under the Kia Toipoto guidance.
- Our Ngā Mahi Careers page shares stories from diverse employees to encourage all people to apply for our roles.
- We use multiple recruitment platforms to ensure our recruitment advertising reaches a diverse range of people.
- Our workforce is comprised of a diverse pool of people with high female representation.
- We have processes in place to mitigate bias during recruitment.
- We have learning modules to support our employees to understand bias and discrimination.
- We are reviewing our website against the Web Accessibility Standards and Accessibility Charter.

The Authority actions

- Continue to focus on attracting, recruiting and retaining diverse employees
- Transfer our relevant learning modules to our new learning system to ensure accessible training continues to be available to our people.
- Review our monitoring and reporting of demographic data and pay gaps to our people, focusing on people leaders and senior leadership.
- Continue to work on redeveloping our website focussing on resolving the remaining accessibility items. We expect this work to be completed by the end of 2025.

Effective career and leadership development

Te whakawhanaketanga i te aramahi

Kia Toipoo focus area

- By mid-2023, agencies/entities have career pathways and equitable progression opportunities that support women, Māori, Pacific, and ethnic employees to achieve their career aspirations.

The Authority current state

- We support employees to develop and progress their careers through opportunities including acting arrangements, internal and interagency secondments.
- Our people leaders hold development budgets to support their people with development opportunities.
- We provide clear performance and development guidance to support our people to set goals and nurture their capability.
- We provide leadership training and coaching opportunities to support our people leaders.
- We implemented an operational training programme to support the development of our frontline employees

The Authority actions

- Continue to work with people leaders to support development and coaching opportunities.
- Continue to offer opportunities that support employees to progress their careers.

Eliminating all forms of bias and discrimination

Te whakakore i te katoa o ngā momo whakatoihara,
haukume anō hoki

Kia Toipoo focus area

- By the end of 2023, agencies/entities have remuneration and HR systems, policies and practices designed to remove all forms of bias and discrimination.
- Agencies/entities embed and monitor the impact of bias-free HR and remuneration policies and practices.
- Agencies/entities ensure leaders and employees learn about and demonstrate cultural competence.

The Authority current state

- We have designed systems and processes to mitigate bias and discrimination.
- We promote both gender and ethnic diversity on our interview panels.
- We have online learning modules to facilitate learning on equity, diversity and inclusion.
- We encourage employee-led networks and initiatives to sustain an inclusive workplace.
- We celebrate a variety of cultural events such as Matariki and Te Wiki o Te Reo Māori.
- We support our people to learn and use reo Māori and apply tikanga in the workplace.
- Our employees can access a range of EAP services including Rongoa Māori.

The Authority actions

- Continue to monitor and review key practices, systems and policies to mitigate bias and discrimination.
- Encourage uptake of our equity and diversity learning through our online learning system.
- Continue to encourage employees to participate in, and lead out on events of cultural significance.
- Continue to promote a culture of inclusion through all organisational activities, policies, values and behaviors.
- Run an employee engagement survey and analyse results related to cultural capability and belonging to identify areas for development.
- Identify areas where we can strengthen alignment across the organisation to promote, and ensure a diverse, inclusive and safe workplace.

Flexible working

Kia Toipoo focus area

- By the end of 2024, agencies/entities offer equitable access to flexible working and ensure it does not undermine career progression or pay.

The Authority current state

- Our employees view flexible working as one of their strongest employee benefits.
- We offer a range of flexible working arrangements that all employees can request.
- Most employees have a flexible working arrangement in place.

The Authority actions

- Continue to review our Flexible Working Policy with an expectation to publish revised guidance later this year to reflect the updated Flexible Working (working from home) guidance from the Public Service Commission (Te Kawa Mataaho).
- Continue to support all employees regardless of gender, age, ethnicity to access flexible working options as outlined in the new policy.
- Review our new Flexible Working Policy and process after six months to ensure it provides equitable opportunities and outcomes without hindering career development or pay.
- Improve how we capture, record and monitor flexible working arrangements in line with our new flexible working policy.
- Regularly review flexible working arrangements and analyse against workforce demographics.