

EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND WELLBEING SURVEY

National Environment Service -
Overview Report

PRESENTED TO

National Environment Service

PRESENTED BY

Office of the Public Service
Commissioner

Te Puna Vai Mārama

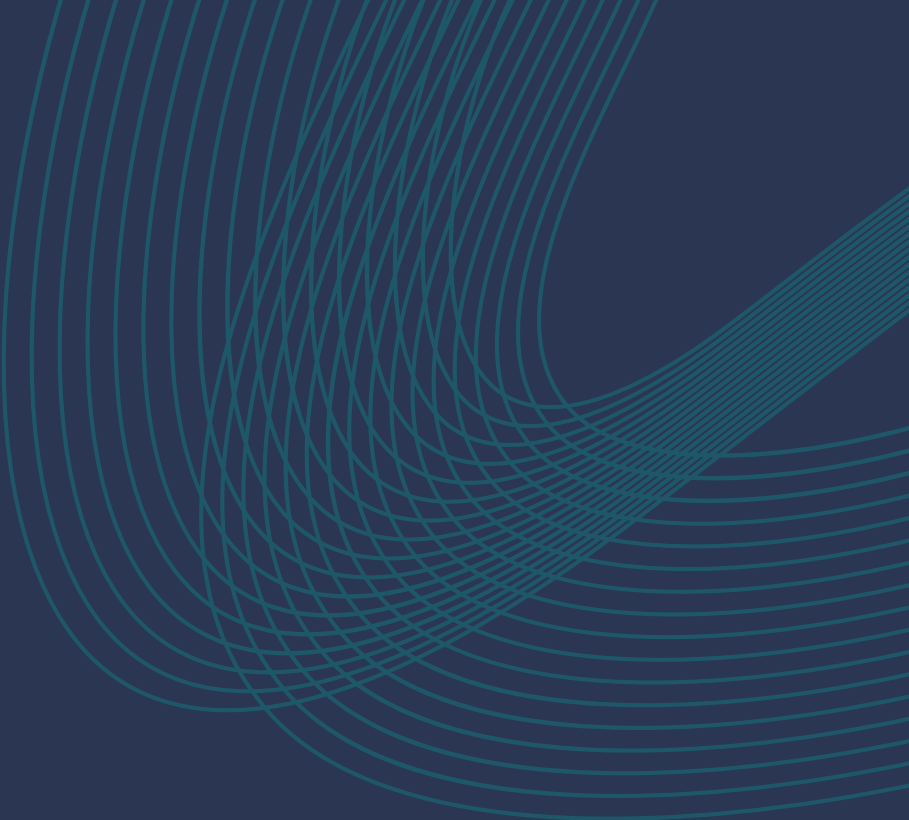


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SUMMARY

The Health & Wellbeing Employee Engagement Survey is designed to support Public Sector agencies to build positive workplace cultures that reflect the Public Sector values of Honesty, Impartiality, Service, Transparency, Accountability, Respect, Effectiveness and Efficiency.

The first survey was launched on 7 June 2022 and this year it was launched on 14 May 2025. The survey results provide Agencies with a snapshot on employee satisfaction and workplace culture. In total, including the Pa Enuā, 835 employees participated.

Only agencies that have a response rate of 25% or higher receive individual reports. In survey reporting particularly for workplace health and wellbeing a minimum of 5-10 respondents are typically considered necessary to preserve confidentiality and avoid deductive disclosure (i.e., being able to guess who said what). In line with internationally recognized confidentiality standards (e.g. U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Australian Bureau of Statistics, NZ Ministry of Education), individual agency reports are also only provided for agencies that have both a response rate greater than or equal to 25% and have at least 10 respondents per agency to avoid any risk of identifying individuals.

KEY DEMOGRAPHICS

Total staff: 35

Respondents: 35 (100%) response rate

Overall sentiments

To protect the confidentiality of respondents, quotes have been paraphrased to remove any potentially identifying details. Additionally, only sentiments expressed by 10 or more staff have been included to ensure no individual can be singled out.

"In this survey the Director of NES, Halatoa, is consistently recognized for always putting staff's wellbeing and any concerns first and always being open to discuss things that may require further support or consideration. The sentiment is that while he encourages staff to be ambitious in his leadership and holds the team accountable, he balances this with empathy, flexibility, and brings a positive workplace culture that focusses on family and personal needs side by side with a high performing public sector service. It's easier to balance the high demands of the job knowing he is supportive of staff's wellbeing needs."

WORKPLACE VALUES AND CULTURE

Values and Culture	Always	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely
Reflection of Public Sector Values ¹	53%	36%	11%	0%
Work-life balance ²	58%	25%	14%	3%
Idea Acceptance ³	42%	42%	17%	0%

¹Reflection of Public Sector Values: How well do your agency's actions reflect the core Public Sector values of honesty, accountability, impartiality, respect, service, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency?

²Work-life balance: To what extent are you able to carry out your role while maintaining a healthy work/life balance.

³Idea Acceptance: How often do you feel that your ideas are accepted in the workplace?

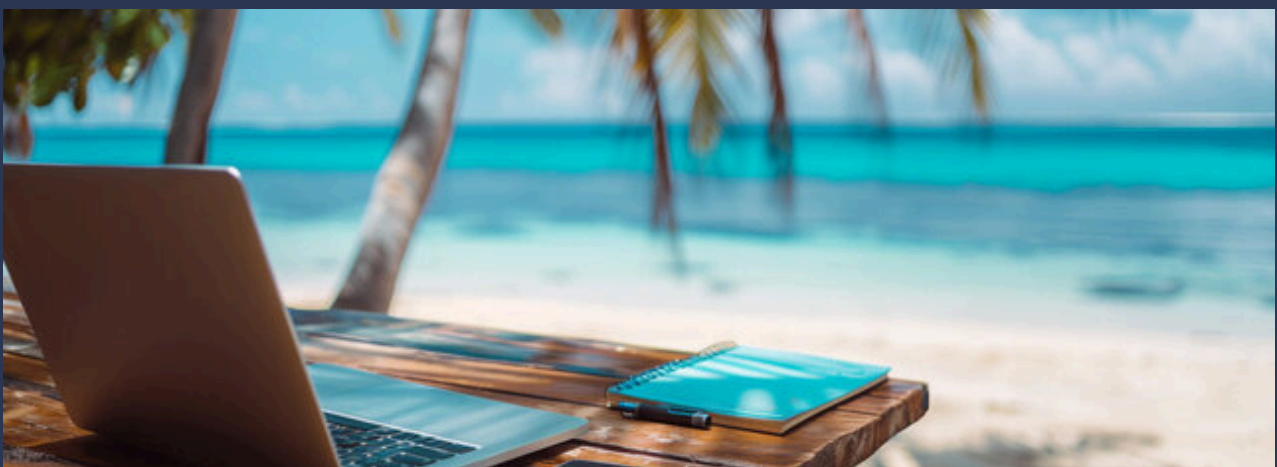
WHAT SUPPORTS WORK-LIFE BALANCE?

Top strategies used by staff:

- Workout daily, ensure to do exercise during breaks, no work after 4pm and weekends, permanently turn off email notifications on mobile phone, plan each week, spend time at home and doing things around the health, take sick leave for mental health days when needed, constant communication with team and manager.

Agency initiatives mentioned:

- Flexible work arrangements (e.g., rostering, remote work), lunch is encouraged to be taken offsite, understanding to personal circumstances, mental health days are encouraged, strategy days that focus on mental health, staff are encouraged to be active daily, open door policies, weekly meetings, providing transparent opportunities and support, KT Social club, foul language and rudeness is not welcomed, swiftly approves leave requests, encouraged full use of leave balances and sick leave.



BARRIERS TO WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Top Challenges

- 01 Heavy Workload
- 02 Short time frames on work
- 03 Family and personal responsibilities
- 04 Burnout
- 05 After hour work/ work during breaks

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

The most commonly desired supports
for improving work-life balance are:

01

Policy guidelines

*Employee policy
refreshers, staff
well-being policy,
policies to ensure
that staff
members are
encouraged to
maintain work-life
balance*

02

Staffing and administrative support

*More help sent
over for Pa Enua
staff, re-
allocate admin
tasks to support
offices, focus on
core work*

03

Flexible working hours

*Remote work
availability,
flexible work
hours, 2 hour
lunch breaks for
exercise then
eating, sports
days*

04

Mental health and well- being initiatives

*Wellbeing
policies, access
to counselling or
mental wellness
services, mental
health days*

"Access to counseling or mental wellness services, even if just a monthly check-in, paid wellness days separate from sick leave, to recharge or prevent burnout, mindfulness breaks or encouraged downtime (e.g. after stressful field visits or community confrontations), Clear Guidelines for Support Offices. Change in the Leave Policy to recognize Uniform Organization National and International Country Representation. Having a support system that will cater for travelling and coming back to ongoing work. There is just always a lot of work to be done and I know this is the same across government. I appreciate the flexibility and understanding our Director provides alongside the provisions of the existing government policies. "

WORKPLACE SENTIMENT

	How often would you recommend your workplace to others	How often have you thought about leaving your workplace
Always	83%	3%
Occasionally	14%	17%
Rarely	3%	80%

Disputes

11%

Of the employees that took part in the survey have experienced an Employment dispute in the past 12 months.

Grievances

14%

Of the employees that took part in the survey have experienced a Grievance in the past 12 months.

FINAL COMMENTS

Leadership and management

“ *Inability of some managers to implement, act upon, and be assertive in their ability to lead by example. Decision making should be made with confidence by management. Management should always be concurrently communicating and applying support to those families who have members of the ministry working abroad. Management to fully support and understand the impacts of "breach of SAFETY" status. Must have in place a documented Safety protocol/ procedures/ emergency action plan, made and readily available to personnel in field operations. Contract details to individuals should be fully explained to each individual. Every clause of the contract should be fully explained in terms where the individual should be made aware of every aspect before signing. Managers must not overstep and ask staff from other divisions to do work when it was not requested by their own manager* ”

Workplace environment and culture

“ *NES is the best work environment space within the Cook Islands due to the best Director. NES is a great workplace with wonderful people. Staff are energetic and are wanting change. NES leadership should continue to provide these opportunities to keep the staff engaged. I have very great relationships with my managers within my department at NES in Stewardship. A good leader will always make time for everyone.* ”

Salary and job satisfaction

“ *I think about leaving more so due to the low income across government in general. Salary review, I don't believe the salary band my role sits in is fair. I work for the public sector for the love of my people and made a conscious decision to move here knowing I could be paid more abroad.* ”