Government Structure

and Key Roles

(Accessible Version)

**December 2024**

# {Start Module}

# Module 1 - The Branches of Government

New Zealand’s system of government is known as the Westminster model. Under the Westminster model, government is organised into three separate branches.

The three branches of government are:

* Parliament (The Legislature)
* Government (The Executive)
* Judges and Courts (The Judiciary)

Each of these branches are separate and independent. This separation makes sure that each branch acts as a balance check on the power of the other branches.

## The Legislature

The Parliament (The Legislature) is the Governor General, Members of Parliament (MP’s) and Select Committee.

The Governor General is the representative of the Sovereign. They are appointed by the King on the advice of the Government of New Zealand.

Members of Parliament (MPs) include both Electorate MPs and List MPs. Electorate MPs are MPs for a certain geographical location in New Zealand and are voted in by the residents registered in that location. A list MP is someone who has been elected from a political party’s ‘party list’.

Select Committees are groups of MPs that undertake work in certain areas for the House of Representatives. Select Committees focus on big national topics like “health” or “justice”. Each one has about eight MPs from different parties in Parliament.

The role of these groups is to essentially make laws for our country

## The Executive

The Government (The Executive) is the Prime Minister and other ministers who are supported by the Public Services.

The role of the Government (Executive) is to:

* Making policy decisions
* Set the Government budget
* Propose laws by drafting bills
* Formally announce new laws
* Administer the law
* Oversee the priorities for public service
* Govern the country

## The Judiciary

Judges and Courts (The Judiciary) are Judges, Courts and Tribunals in New Zealand.

The role of a Judge is to apply the law within our legal system.

They hear and decide on cases by applying relevant law to facts and review decisions of administrative bodies.

# Module 2 - The role of the Public Service

## The role of the Public Service - Our role in the Machinery of Government

The role of the public service is to work with the government to achieve outcomes for Aotearoa New Zealand.

Whether you are a policy advisor, operational staff, program manager or tech lead, you play a part in supporting the government.

## The role of the Public Service is to:

* **Achieve outcomes** – improve outcomes through the services provided by individual organisations
* **Improve services** – to provide both face-to-face and digital services that are easy and convenient to interact with and are fully organised around people’s needs
* **Foster active citizenship and open government** – improving transparency, increasing civic participation and using new technologies to make the government more open, effective and accountable
* **Support the Crown in its relationship with Māori** – developing and maintaining the capability of the Public Service to engage with Māori and to understand Māori perspectives
* **Reflect the communities we serve** – improving diversity in the workforce and inclusiveness in the workplace

As you can see, the public service plays an important role in supporting the current, and future Governments to achieve outcomes for New Zealand. Machinery of Government is the link through which we support the government to achieve these outcomes

# Module 3 - The Relationship between the Government and the Public Service

The main point of contact between Government and the Public Service is through the public service chief executives and their minister.

The style of the relationship and frequency of contact between Minister and agency will develop according to the Minister's personal preference.

## Working with ministers

When working with their Minister, public servants are responsible for:

* Supporting ministers in carrying out their ministerial functions
* Serving the objectives of ministers by developing and implementing policy and strategy of the government
* Actively monitoring the performance of public sector organisations, government assets, and regulatory regimes within their ministers’ portfolios
* Delivering high quality and efficient public services
* Informing ministers of significant developments within their portfolios, and giving free and frank advice
* Implementing the decisions of the government of the day

# {End Module}