Te Kāhui Tika Tangata
Human Rights Commission

Pūrongo ā-tau
Annual Report

For the year ended 30 June 2025

Te Kāhui Tika Tangata
Human Rights Commission

Te Tari Whakatau Take Tika Tangata
Office of Human Rights Proceedings

Te Kāhui Tika Tangata
Human Rights Commission

About Aotearoa New Zealand Human Rights Commission

Te Kāhui Tika Tangata Human Rights Commission is Aotearoa New Zealand's national human rights institution (NHRI), operating under the UN Paris Principles.

The Human Rights Commission was formed in 1977 to provide better implementation and protection of human rights in Aotearoa New Zealand. The Commission works under the Human Rights Act 1993.

The Commission is funded through the Ministry of Justice but operates independently of the New Zealand Government as an independent Crown entity.

We are the voice for human rights in Aotearoa New Zealand. Our vision is to be a credible, effective, connected and highly valued organisation that makes human rights and the human rights dimensions of Te Tiriti real and relevant. We are confident in our Tiriti-based aspiration and are working to make a positive impact for all communities, individuals, whānau, hapū, and iwi in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Re-accreditation of 'A' status under the Paris Principles

In March 2022, the Commission underwent the periodic re-accreditation process through the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) Sub-Committee on Accreditation. This review process takes place every five years and assesses NHRIs compliance with the Paris Principles. The Commission was reaccredited with 'A' status under the Paris Principles, which indicates full compliance.

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Hon. Minister of Justice

In accordance with the requirements of section 150 of the Crown Entities Act 2004, I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the Human Rights Commission for the year ended 30 June 2025.



Stephen Rainbow
Te Amokapua
Chief Commissioner

Hon. Minister of Justice

At pages 73 to 78 of this Annual Report, the Director of Human Rights Proceedings reports to the Hon. Minister of Justice on the Director's decisions for the year ended 30 June 2025, in accordance with section 92A(4) of the Human Rights Act 1993.



Greg Robins
Tumuaki Whakatau Take Tika Tangata
Director of Human Rights Proceedings

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Te Amokapua foreword

Aotearoa New Zealand continues to enjoy strong human rights foundations, with many examples of progress driven by whānau, communities, iwi, government, and civil society. At the same time, we know that not everyone experiences these rights equally, and persistent gaps require focused and sustained attention. We also recognise that human rights often require careful balancing — upholding one person's rights while ensuring others are not diminished. This means that the work of the Commission can often be contentious, and so we are committed to evidence-based approaches and to dialogue wherever possible, even if this can be challenging. There is much to be proud of, and much more to do, as we work together to ensure every person in Aotearoa can fully realise their human rights.

At its core, human rights are about how we live together, including how we see the inherent dignity of every human being, regardless of our differences. So, as my fellow Commissioners and I have taken up the baton passed on from our predecessors, we have been focused on reinforcing these foundational values and vigorously defending the freedoms that we enjoy because of the sacrifices made by our forebears.

Welcoming new commissioners

This financial year has seen much change for Te Kāhui Tika Tangata Human Rights Commission, as we farewelled one Commissioner and welcomed three new Commissioners. In November 2024, new Race Relations Commissioner Dr Melissa Derby, Equal Employment Opportunities Commissioner Professor Gail Pacheco, and I as Chief Commissioner, were warmly received with pōwhiri in both Auckland and Wellington.

Dr Derby (Ngāti Ranginui) comes from a distinguished career in early literacy and human development, having worked as senior lecturer at the University of Waikato, where she still holds an honorary position. She is the recipient of several awards, including a Fulbright Graduate Award, a SAGE Young Writer's Award, and Te Kōpūnui Māori Research Award and the Falling Walls award, both from the Royal Society of New Zealand.

Professor Pacheco brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to her role as EEO Commissioner, as a professor of economics and former Commissioner at the NZ Productivity Commission. She was also a director of the NZ Policy Research Institute, and has written and researched widely on minimum wage, gender pay gaps and health and labour issues.

My own career has encompassed a range of roles relevant to this appointment, including being an advocate for Rainbow rights for most of my adult life; as an author and lecturer; as a Wellington City Councillor for three terms and subsequently in senior management roles in city-building institutions ranging from the Wellington Waterfront to Auckland's City Rail Link, specialising in managing complex relationships with often deeply polarised stakeholders. Working in these roles to build bridges between parties who may not appear to be natural allies is a skill I want to bring to the Commission and its work.

We have also had the invaluable support of the existing Disability Rights Commissioner, Prudence Walker, and Rongomau Taketake, Dayle Takitimu (Te Whānau-ā-Apanui, Ngāti Porou), who have continued to provide their immense knowledge and experience as we have navigated our new responsibilities throughout the year.

Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care

One of my first actions as Chief Human Rights Commissioner in late 2024 was to attend an event at Pipitea Marae in Wellington led by survivors who were part of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care.

This significant occasion, which followed Prime Minister Christopher Luxon's national apology, was deeply moving for all those gathered, as we heard directly from survivors about the horrific abuse they experienced in State and faith-based care institutions.

The Royal Commission's revelations about how children were abused after being forcibly removed from families was appalling to hear and clearly one of the State's most heinous actions, with impacts still felt today. One of our key roles as a national human rights institution is to shine the bright light of justice into the darkest corners of society, and it will be one of my priorities as Chief Commissioner to hold the Government to account on implementing the recommendations of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in State Care.

Participating in GANHRI

In March, our Tatau-Uruora Kāwanatanga Chief Executive Meg de Ronde and I attended the Annual Meeting of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) at the United Nations, where we participated in the Asia Pacific Forum (APF) regional meeting. APF is one of the four regional networks of GANHRI, which included NHRIs from the Pacific to the Middle East, so it's an important forum where our Commission plays a significant role. Along with the Annual Meeting, we attended GANHRI›s Annual Conference which focused on the human rights of women and girls, as well as side events that included participating in a working group progressing a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons.

Acknowledgements

I want to acknowledge the exceptional work of our previous acting Chief Human Rights Commissioner Saunoamaali'i Karanina Sumeo. Dr Sumeo was originally appointed at the start of her term as the Equal Employment Opportunities Commissioner, but due to a number of movements within the board she held, in an Acting capacity, the Race Relations and Chief Commissioner portfolios by the end of her time with the Commission. Across her term she was a tireless advocate for marginalised communities, and she led our historic investigation into the inequitable working conditions faced by many Pacific people. This ground-breaking national inquiry into the Pacific Pay Gap also enabled the Commission to identify opportunities to close pay gaps for all workers across Aotearoa New Zealand.

As the first indigenous Pacific person to hold a Commissioner or Chief Commissioner role, she has not only strengthened the Commission's relationships with many communities who haven't always connected with our work, she also shone a light for those struggling the most in our society.

Finally, I want to thank Michael Timmins who announced his resignation as Director of the Office of Human Rights Proceedings in October 2024. Michael has been Director since 2019 and throughout this period has been a steadfast advocate for human rights in Aotearoa New Zealand. Following his resignation, he remained on as interim Director helping to navigate the Office through to the appointment of his successor Greg Robins. Greg has been with the Office for several years, bringing a wide range of experience and I look forward greatly to Greg's ongoing contribution, in this significant leadership role.

Achievements to be proud of

Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "The arc of history always bends towards justice". In these extraordinary times, as we face some of the greatest threats to our social cohesion since the end of World War II 80 years ago, it's heartening to see in this annual report signs that a future with less polarisation and division could be possible.

Seeing the inherent dignity in every human being, regardless of our differences, is the foundation of all human rights and needs to be constantly reinforced and encouraged. The achievements outlined in this document I genuinely believe are something all in Aotearoa New Zealand can be justly proud of.

Dr Stephen Rainbow
Chief Commissioner

From the Tatau Uruora | Tatau Urutahi leaders

The 2024/2025 year was one of change and growth for the Commission, alongside rapid shifts at home and globally. We welcomed a new complement of commissioners, and as operational leaders of Te Kāhui Tika Tangata, we are proud to have acted as a steadying bridge — ensuring continuity and cohesion during this period. Building on five years of excellent work from the previous Board, we are carrying this momentum into our new strategic period. We are incredibly proud of the hard mahi of our staff team, who continue to protect and uphold the rights of everyone in New Zealand through our dispute resolution services, our legal interventions, research, and engagement with communities across the country. As part of our journey to a rights-respecting Aotearoa New Zealand, we continue to embed human rights and the human rights dimensions of Te Tiriti in everything we do and work towards an Aotearoa New Zealand where all people feel safe and have a sense of belonging.

Responding to the needs of the public

This year, our Information and Dispute Resolution rōpū (IDR) responded to 8,376 people seeking assistance with human rights concerns. This represents a 74% increase from the previous year, which reflects both the growing confidence in the Commission, as well as the impact international events are having on particular communities in Aotearoa New Zealand. While the significant rise in service demand placed additional pressures on our small team and systems, we either met or exceeded the targets set by the Ministry of Justice. A comprehensive summary of the work of our IDR services is provided later in this report. The most frequently cited grounds for unlawful discrimination were disability (29%), followed by race and ethnic or national origins (25%) and sex (9%), highlighting the ongoing issues we need to address as a society to ensure we are creating an Aotearoa New Zealand where we can all thrive.

Advocating for tino rangatiratanga and human rights

The abuse in State and faith-based institutions is a dark stain on our nation's history, and it's concerning that the government has ignored recommendations for an independent redress system. Survivors want decisions about compensation to be independent of the government, but the government has ruled this out, which is a missed opportunity for meaningful justice. We will continue to hold the government to account for how it responds to survivors.

We've also been supporting our LGBTIQ+ communities, who have faced hostility and attempts to roll back protective policies, especially targeting transgender and non-binary people. We hosted a webinar on the support survivors of conversion practices need and advocated for a human rights-based approach to the Ministry of Health's puberty blocker consultation.

On the pay equity front, we were quick to express concern about the use of urgency to amend legislation that would make it harder for people to claim pay equity. Pay equity is crucial for gender equality and fairness. In an unprecedent act of advocacy, Professor Pacheco was joined by three former EEO Commissioners in calling for the release of the human rights analysis provided to Cabinet.

When it comes to law-making, we want to improve lives, especially for communities who bear the brunt of inequities. That's why we're concerned about the Regulatory Standards Bill, which prioritises individual and private interests over other human rights and ignores Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act and New Zealand's wider obligations under international law.

Over the 2024/25 year the Commission made 19 submissions, mostly to Parliamentary select committees, promoting and protecting human rights in the development of law and policy. The Commission also intervened in seven court cases concerning breaches of the Bill of Rights Act and the rights of disabled people.

Building social cohesion is key to our work. When conflicts erupt overseas, their impact is deeply felt in communities here in Aotearoa New Zealand. We have spoken out strongly to uphold everyone's right to live free from discrimination and harassment. During May, we consulted with a diverse range of groups and organisations to inform our 'shadow report' to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) Committee. We also hosted a workshop on how to submit to the committee. Race Relations Commissioner Dr Melissa Derby will present our shadow report in person to the UN CERD Committee in Geneva in 2025.

Commitment to human rights and the human rights dimensions of Te Tiriti

In our submission calling for a halt to the Treaty Principles Bill, the Commission recalled the words of Bishop Manuhuia Bennett who described Te Tiriti as "the promise of two peoples to take the best possible care of each other".

The Commission has a role to hold the government to account for its human rights and Te Tiriti commitments, and the proposed legislation raised significant implications.

We supported the views of the Waitangi Tribunal and Government officials that it would create “uncertainty, unpredictability and confusion” and “give rise to systemic racism”.

We issued research aiming to understand New Zealanders’ views on human rights and Te Tiriti, and how it should be honoured. The Horizon poll shows that most of us want respectful discussion about Te Tiriti and race relations, not political rhetoric. Nearly 90% believe it’s essential for everyone to feel a sense of belonging, and 71% think Te Tiriti should be protected in our laws.

The survey also ranked the National Library of New Zealand (44%), the Waitangi Tribunal (41%, significantly up from 36% in 2023) and Te Kāhui Tika Tangata Human Rights Commission (29% up from 25% in 2023) as the most trusted sources of information on Te Tiriti.

This further underlines the increasing profile the Commission has on the national stage and reinforces what incredible work is being done by all our kaimahi across our organisation.

Advancing human rights and harmonious relations

In April, we provided a review briefing to the Justice Committee, outlining our strategic priorities, challenges, and achievements, and reflecting on the 2023/2024 year. Looking ahead, we aspire to deliver an ambitious national human rights programme over the next four years, aligned with our legislative mandate and Statement of Intent 2025 - 2029. Our new strategic priorities are structured around three themes —connect, promote, and protect — which will underpin our forthcoming National Human Rights Action Plan through three unifying streams of work. Building on the progress reported in this Annual Report, the new strategy positions the Commission to deepen its impact and respond effectively to the challenges and opportunities ahead.



Meg de Ronde
Kāwanatanga Chief Executive



Julia Whaipooti
Tino Rangatiratanga Leader

Our Kaupapa – Our Strategy[1]

Our mission

A credible, effective, connected and highly valued organisation that makes human rights real and relevant within and outside the organisation, is confident in its Tiriti-based aspiration, and making a positive impact for all individuals, whānau, hapū, communities and iwi in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Our purpose

An Aotearoa where we respect and protect each other's mana, dignity and rights

Our values

Mana tangata
– human dignity

Māia, tika, pono
– courage and integrity

Whanaungatanga
– relationships

Strategic priorities

- **Inclusion, equality and belonging**
- **Popularising human rights and Te Tiriti o Waitangi**
- **Eliminating poverty**
- **Eliminating violence and abuse**
- **Organisational excellence**

Outcomes we seek

Outcome 1: Knowledge of Te Tiriti and human rights
Everyone in Aotearoa New Zealand knows what their Tiriti and human rights and responsibilities are and feels empowered to advocate on their own behalf.

Outcome 2: Inclusive Tiriti-based communities
Communities are welcoming, inclusive and empowered to engage with each other and with government to enhance Te Tiriti, human rights and harmonious relationships.

Outcome 3: Accountable duty-bearers
Government and other duty- bearers are held to account for improving performance against domestic and international human rights and Tiriti commitments.

Outcome 4: Effective Tiriti-based remedies
Effective remedies are available to individuals and communities for breaches of their Tiriti amd human rights.

Enablers

Financial resources; highly skilled and engaged Commissioners and staff; established relationships with tangata whenua and national and international networks; effective systems, technology and processes; and meaningful performance measures

[1] Since 1 July 2025, the Commission has begun operating under a new strategy, which sets new priorities for the years ahead.

Who we are and what we do

The first part of this section outlines the Commission's domestic and international role, as well as the composition and statutory obligations of its governing body.

Overview

As Aotearoa New Zealand's only NHRI, we are tasked with promoting and protecting human rights.[2] As an independent Crown entity, we recognise our obligation under Te Tiriti o Waitangi[3] to affirm Tino Rangatiratanga as a form of authority alongside Kāwanatanga and have committed to being a Te Tiriti o Waitangi-based organisation.

Our governance is provided by a board of Commissioners: a Chief Commissioner, and Commissioners appointed to lead the Commission's work in the areas of disability rights, equal employment opportunities (including pay equity), and race relations.

> The Commission's independence from government is protected by domestic and international requirements.

We provide expert advice to government and other duty bearers, and we actively engage with public, community, and business stakeholders to promote human rights broadly. Our work includes monitoring human rights progress and reporting on it both locally and internationally. We inform human rights decisions by Aotearoa New Zealand courts and human rights assessments by international human rights bodies, and we provide an impartial human rights information and dispute resolution service.

The Office of Human Rights Proceedings (OHRP) operates independently of the rest of the Commission. Led by the Director of Human Rights Proceedings, it provides legal representation to people wanting to bring discrimination claims in the Human Rights Review Tribunal and has a role in some privacy proceedings.

As Aotearoa New Zealand's member of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) and its Asia Pacific Forum (APF), we are accredited to speak at the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Committee as the independent voice on Aotearoa New Zealand's human rights record.

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[2] See APF, 'NHRIs uphold the rights and dignity of those who are marginalised or forgotten' available at https://www.asiapacificforum.net/members.

[3] On the basis of the contra proferentem rule (where if an agreement is ambiguous the preferred legal meaning is the one that acts against the interests of the party who provided the wording), we give primacy to the reo Māori version of the treaty: Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Independence from government

NHRIs hold a unique position in the international human rights framework "as a bridge between the government and civil society, advocating for the protection of human rights, inquiring into rights violations, and promoting awareness and education".[4] To do this credibly and effectively as an NHRI, the Commission must be independent from both government and civil society organisations.

The Commission's 2022 A-status re-accreditation,[5] reconfirmed our adherence to the Paris Principles for NHRIs[6] and required us to demonstrate our continued independence. The Commission's A-status (which we have maintained since 1999) and our international reputation enable us to contribute to relevant UN Human Rights Council and committee sessions. The Commission is due to undergo its next GANHRI re-accreditation process in 2027.

We have also been able to support the international human rights framework as a member and Chair of GANHRI's Subcommittee on Accreditation (SCA) since 2024. As the Asia Pacific representative, we are upholding global NHRI credibility by contributing to accreditation decisions for numerous countries until mid-2026.

Our Legal and Strategic Frameworks

International framework

While our domestic focus is the protection and promotion of human rights for all people in Aotearoa New Zealand, our work is positioned within the broader international human rights framework. The aspiration for an international and scrupulously protected consensus on universal human rights was in direct response to the desolation of World War II.[7] Since then, the international human rights context has evolved over decades of dedicated cooperation between States and, over time, has been codified in a progressive system of treaties, institutions, and human rights mechanisms.

> Human rights are not privileges but are inherent to our shared humanity, and our nation's safety and prosperity depend on a robust and well-functioning system of international law.

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4 See APF, 'About NHRIs' available at https://www.asiapacificforum.net/members.

5 See our 2022 GANHRI reaccreditation report (including A-status retention recommendations) available at https://ganhri.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/SCA-Report-March-2022_EN.pdf.

6 See GANHRI, 'Paris Principles'. (UN-endorsed principles outlining minimum international standards for credible and independent National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) including requiring an NHRI to be independent of government in its structure, composition, decision making, and method of operation.) Available at https://ganhri.org/paris- principles/.

7 See UN, 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights' available at https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of- human-rights.

Our effectiveness in this system relies on having a credible reputation for respecting and providing for human rights, and strong collaborative relationships with communities and with both public and private entities. These mutually respectful and productive partnerships are essential for safeguarding our reputation on the world stage.

Aotearoa New Zealand is required under international law to meet its human rights obligations as set out in the international human rights instruments to which successive governments have committed. The various treaties and declarations that establish human rights standards include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).[8]

The international framework also provides guidance on the role of businesses in relation to human rights. The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) were endorsed by the UN Human Rights Council in 2011 and reinforce obligations that States have under international human rights treaties. They provide the world's most authoritative, normative, guiding framework for businesses on responsible conduct, and on addressing human rights abuses in business operations and global supply chains.

The Commission's responsibilities to these international human rights instruments are foundational to our operations. Domestically, our role includes advocating and promoting respect for these commitments and supporting duty bearers to uphold them – including holding our government to account. Internationally, our role is as an independent voice on Aotearoa New Zealand's efforts to promote and protect human rights.[9]

Domestic Human Rights Framework

All activities carried out by the Commission must be for the purpose of fulfilling its statutory functions, which are to:[10]

a) advocate and promote respect for, and an understanding and appreciation of, human rights in New Zealand society, and

b) encourage the maintenance and development of harmonious relations between individuals and among the diverse groups in New Zealand society, and

[8] Others include: International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD); Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT); Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

[9] Our role includes participating in the periodic reviews of Aotearoa New Zealand's compliance with individual treaties, and in the UN Human Rights Committee's Universal Periodic Review process.

[10] See s 5(1) of the Act.

c) promote racial equality and cultural diversity, and

d) promote equal employment opportunities (including pay equity), and

e) promote and protect the full and equal enjoyment of human rights by persons with disabilities.

These statutory functions may be achieved through: advocacy; education; public statements; commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi;[11] preparing guidelines; consulting with communities on human rights issues; provision of dispute resolution services; intervening in court proceedings; promoting compliance with international human rights instruments; developing a national human rights action plan; and protecting rights through inquiring into, and reporting on, human rights violations.[12]

Important guiding human rights principles are also enshrined in our nation's constitutional arrangements or legislation, including Te Tiriti o Waitangi 1840, the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990, and the Crimes of Torture Act 1989.

Statutory focus of Commissioners

While the Commissioners each have specific areas of human rights focus, they operate collectively to carry out their functions as a Board. This enables more effective consideration across portfolio areas and leads to more inclusive policies that acknowledge the multifaceted ways[13] in which individuals experience human rights issues.

Chief Commissioner: The Chief Commissioner has a wide range of statutory responsibilities covering governance, strategic leadership, and day-to-day activities of the Commission. The functions of the Chief Commissioner[14] include chairing the Board and allocating spheres of responsibility to other Commissioners.[15]

Disability Rights Commissioner: The Disability Rights Commissioner champions the rights of disabled people.16 The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) affirms that disabled people have the same rights and freedoms as non-disabled people and clarifies Aotearoa New Zealand's obligations to ensuring disabled people enjoy equal rights. Disability is a prohibited ground of discrimination in the Act and the Commission receives high numbers of complaints of discrimination on

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11 See s5(2)(d) of the Act.

12 See ss 5(2)(3) of the Act.

13 This is often referred to as 'intersectionality' which recognises that individuals do not experience discrimination based solely on one aspect of their identity but rather through the interconnectedness of multiple identities. See UN Network on Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, 'Guidance note on intersectionality, racial discrimination and protection of minorities' (2022) available at Guidance note on intersectionality.pdf.

14 See s15 of the Act.

15 See ss8(1B) and 16 of the Act.

16 See s8(1A)(a) of the Act.

the grounds of disability. As a population group, disabled people experience inequity across almost every social and economic indicator with higher rates of poverty, unemployment, and inadequate housing.[17]

Equal Employment Opportunities Commissioner: The Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) Commissioner has a statutory responsibility to promote equal employment opportunities, including pay equity,[18] as one of the "primary functions of the Commission".[19] The portfolio has a strong focus on ensuring employment in Aotearoa New Zealand delivers on the Decent Work Agenda20 consistent with the UN Sustainable Development Goal 8.[21]

Race Relations Commissioner: The Race Relations Commissioner leads the Commission's work in the race relations priority area.[22] The Commission's primary statutory functions include "encourage[ing] the maintenance and development of harmonious relations between individuals and among the diverse groups in New Zealand society" and "promot[ing] racial equality and cultural diversity".[23] The portfolio focuses on eliminating racism by leading discussions for the Commission in relation to race relations, providing advice and leadership on race relations matters that arise during the performance of the Commission's functions (both when engaging in those activities and when consulted) and contributing to the public debate on race relations matters.

Rongomau Taketake Indigenous Rights Governance Partner: Aotearoa New Zealand does not currently have an Indigenous Rights Commissioner, although the Act in its current form would allow for it. To ensure Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Indigenous Rights expertise is available to the Board and the Commission, the Commissioners and staff are advised by the Rongomau Taketake, the Indigenous Rights Governance Partner. This position was strongly advocated for by the National Iwi Chairs Forum (NICF). The appointee is nominated by the NICF for appointment by the Commission and is an integral component of the Commission's commitment to strengthening and sustaining a thriving and respected Te Tiriti o Waitangi-based organisation. The current Rongomau Taketake has been formally tasked in this area by the Chief Commissioner.

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[17] See UNCRPD, 'Concluding observations on the combined second and third periodic reports of New Zealand (26 September 2022) available at CRPD/C/NZL/CO/2-3 (hyperlink only).

[18] See s 8(1A)(b) of the Act

[19] See s5(1)(d) of the Act.

[20] See International Labour Organisation, 'Decent Work' available at https://www.ilo.org/topics/decent-work

[21] See Global Goals for Sustainable Development, 'Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth' available at https://www.globalgoals.org/goals/8-decent-work-and-economic-growth/.

[22] See s8(1A)(c) of the Act.

[23] See s5(1)(b)(c) of the Act.

Torture prevention: National Preventive Mechanism

Freedom from torture and from other "cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment" is a fundamental right under the UDHR[24] and the ICCPR.[25] Aotearoa New Zealand has made comprehensive and binding commitments to uphold that right in the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)[26] and the Optional Protocol to CAT (OPCAT).[27]

Places where New Zealanders are deprived of their liberty include prisons, police cells, court cells, care and protection facilities, youth mental health facilities, youth justice facilities, intellectual disability secure and supported accommodation services, inpatient acute mental health units, aged care facilities, immigration detention facilities, and defence force penal establishments.

Aotearoa New Zealand has committed to maintaining an independent National Preventive Mechanism (NPM),[28] preventing torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment through a system of regular independent monitoring visits to these places.[29]

The Commission, as the central NPM (CNPM), facilitates collaboration between NPM agencies, engages with international bodies, and provides expert human rights advice. The CNPM's vital coordination work strengthens the overall effectiveness of OPCAT by ensuring a unified and informed approach to protecting fundamental human rights for all people in Aotearoa New Zealand by preventing torture and ill-treatment.

The Commission also publishes the NPM's annual report, a domestic and international communication tool required under the OPCAT[30] and thematic reports on CAT rights in Aotearoa New Zealand.

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[24] See UN, 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights' (Article 5) available at https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal- declaration-of-human-rights.

[25] See OHCHR, 'International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights' (Article 7) available at https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights.

[26] See OHCHR, 'Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment' available at https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-against-torture-and-other-cruel-inhuman-or-degrading.

[27] See OHCHR, 'Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT)' available at https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/optional-protocol- convention-against-torture-and-other-cruel.

[28] See s31of the Crimes of Torture Act 1989. More information available at https://tikatangata.org.nz/our-work/monitoring- places-of-detention.

[29] Under OPCAT (above).

[30] See Article 23 of OPCAT (above) and s27(c) of the Crimes of Torture Act 1989.

Our Services and Functions

Information and dispute resolution

Our human rights information and dispute resolution services contribute significantly to the Commission's key functions as Aotearoa New Zealand's NHRI.[31] These free, informal, and confidential services are available to anyone seeking information about human rights or making a complaint about unlawful discrimination or harassment.

Our information service provides clear and accessible information about the services available to support people and communities in understanding their rights and options. This includes guidance on the human rights issues we can assist with, the dispute resolution pathways available, and referrals to other agencies or services where appropriate. Our dispute resolution service, including mediation and early resolution support, provides a fair, impartial, and accessible process for resolving disputes, while also helping to identify human rights issues in Aotearoa New Zealand.

While the Commission does not have an adjudicative or judicial function, our information and dispute resolution service plays a critical role in the broader human rights framework by resolving matters at an early stage and reducing the burden on our country's judicial system. Where disputes cannot be resolved through the Commission's processes, people may take their cases to the Human Rights Review Tribunal.

Office of Human Rights Proceedings

The OHRP is an independent part of the Commission. The Director of Human Rights Proceedings (the Director) provides legal representation under the Act and brings proceedings under the Privacy Act 2020. If a complainant cannot resolve their issue through the Commission's dispute resolution service, they can apply for legal representation from the Director to take their claim to the Human Rights Review Tribunal. The Director also has a role in privacy proceedings where the Privacy Commissioner refers a complaint to the OHRP.

[31] During the 2023/24 period, the Commission closed 95% of all complaints (920) alleging unlawful discrimination within twelve months of receiving them. See the Commission's 'Annual report for the year ended 30 June 2024' available at https://tikatangata.org.nz/about-us/corporate-publications/annual-reports.

The OHRP has provided representation in many important human rights cases[32] in Aotearoa New Zealand. The OHRP covers all costs of legal representation, offering a free service to help people understand their rights and seek remedies for harm. If the Director decides not to represent someone under the Act, they provide a clear explanation of their decision, helping the person to understand the legal strength of their case.

While an independent part of the Commission, OHRP's work contributes to the core deliverables and outputs of the broader organisation. OHRP's impact leads to changes in people's understanding of their human rights and changes to their lives through access to remedies under the (Human Rights) Act and the Privacy Act 2020.

[32] Examples include high-profile sexual harassment claims, claims seeking payment for caregivers of disabled family members, and challenges to laws that are inconsistent with human rights.

Progress towards strategic objectives

The Commission operates in a complex social and economic context. Human rights treaties are many, and they encompass a broad range of issues. Prioritisation is a critical element of our annual work programme, acknowledging that our outcomes are often long-term, and achieved incrementally and in collaboration with multiple stakeholders.

Our Statement of Intent for the period 2021/22 to 2024/25 sets out our strategic priorities and the outcomes we seek:

- knowledge of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and human rights
- inclusive Tiriti and human rights-based communities
- accountable duty-bearers
- effective Tiriti and human rights-based remedies.

In reporting against the indicators, we have focused on case studies, partnerships and projects to demonstrate our performance.

Outcome 1: Knowledge of Te Tiriti and human rights

Performance expectation
• Effectively communicate and promote human rights and Te Tiriti o Waitangi. • Undertake research to inform communications and the development of targeted strategies, campaigns or guidelines. • Develop strategies, campaigns, or guidelines to foster understanding, empowerment and support advocacy efforts. • Provide education, advocacy and advice, including legal interventions and submissions to advance human rights.
What this looks like
Our research, campaigns, inquiries, guidelines, submissions, and advice: • provide clear public information on Te Tiriti and human rights issues • promote and advocate for key issues, raising awareness and encouraging action • influence decision-makers and other stakeholders, building their capacity to address human rights challenges, and those identified under Te Tiriti • are regarded as credible and useful by stakeholders, helping to drive positive outcomes in policy and practice.

How well did we do?

Our resources, services, inquiries, and campaigns are designed to reach, inform, and influence our audiences. This year we implemented several key initiatives with significant impact as follows.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)

In 2025, we made submissions to inform New Zealand's upcoming reviews under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), while supporting civil society and community engagement in these processes. These submissions helped shape the lists of themes and issues issued by the relevant UN Committees, against which the Government will report in the coming years. Preparation for the CERD review later in 2025 continued throughout the year, including targeted community engagement to guide our participation. We also initiated formal engagement with the Government's International Human Rights Governance Group to support ongoing monitoring and implementation of UN recommendations between periodic reviews.

Advancing human rights jurisprudence in Aotearoa New Zealand - Legal Interventions

The Commission intervened in seven court cases, which helped to advance the understanding of human rights law:

- *"J" v A-G* (Supreme Court), a case about the Intellectual Disability (Compulsory Care and Rehabilitation) Act 2003.
- *Chief of Defence Force v Four Members of the Armed Forces* (Supreme Court) and *Director-General of Health v New Health New Zealand Inc* (Court of Appeal), both cases dealing with how decision-makers are required to take into account New Zealand Bill of Rights Act (BORA) rights in their decision-making.
- *Putua v A-G* (Supreme Court) and *Fitzgerald v A-G* (Supreme Court), both relating to compensation for breach of BORA by the judicial branch of government.
- *Wairarapa Moana ki Pouākani Incorporation v A-G* (Court of Appeal), regarding the BORA declaration of inconsistency jurisdiction and the BORA right to access to justice.
- *Fleming v A-G* (Supreme Court), the latest in a long-running series of litigation about workers' rights and disabled people's rights in families where one family member cares for another adult family member.

- A decision was issued in one of these cases, *Chief of Defence Force*.[33] The Supreme Court engaged closely with the Commission's submissions, particularly in relation to the process to be followed when a person wants to argue that government should have taken a less rights-limiting approach.[34]
- A decision was also issued in *A-G v Chisnall*,[35] a case the Commission intervened in during the 23/24 reporting year. In Chisnall the Supreme Court majority decided to issue rare declarations of inconsistency with BORA. This case had been adjourned in 2022 to allow time for the Court to invite the Commission to intervene. The Commission's submissions were cited at numerous points in the judgment.

Shaping public policy through submissions

- Over the 2024/25 year the Commission issued 19 submissions to encourage promotion and protection of human rights when law and policy is developed. Most were to Parliamentary Select Committees, on the Oranga Tamariki (Repeal of Section 7AA) Amendment Bill, the Sentencing (Reinstating Three Strikes) Amendment Bill, the Oversight of Oranga Tamariki System Legislation Amendment Bill, the Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi Bill, the Responding to Abuse in Care Legislation Amendment Bill, the Mental Health Bill, the Oranga Tamariki (Responding to Serious Youth Offending) Amendment Bill ("bootcamps" Bill), the Employment Relations (Employee Remuneration Disclosure) Amendment Bill, the Education and Training Amendment Bill (No 2) (on freedom of expression in universities), and the Regulatory Standards Bill. Submissions to other bodies included to the Ministry of Health End of Life Choice Act statutory review, the Law Commission *Ia Tangata* review of selected Human Rights Act provisions, to the Health and Disability Commissioner Act and Code review, to the Ministry of Health consultation on the use of puberty blockers in young people with gender-related health needs and to Corrections' "Consultation on options for more transparent management of extreme threat prisoners".

[33] https://www.courtsofnz.govt.nz/cases/chief-of-defence-force-ors-v-four-members-of-the-armed-forces-

[34] See paragraphs [147]-[152].

[35] https://www.courtsofnz.govt.nz/cases/attorney-general-v-chisnall

Outcome 2: Inclusive Tiriti and human rights-based communities

Performance expectation

- Measure and report on perceptions of inclusivity and belonging.
- Develop and share guidelines and tools.

What this looks like

- Engage with communities on human rights and Te Tiriti issues.
- Provide opportunities for new audiences to consider human rights and Te Tiriti.
- Commission research to increase our understanding of human rights issues.

How well did we do?

Our education and information resources continue to enhance understanding of Te Tiriti and human rights, contributing to shifts in attitudes and behaviours.

Embedding a disability lens in family and sexual violence prevention

To amplify disabled people's voices and embed a disability lens across the work of the Executive Board for the Elimination of Family and Sexual Violence, the Commission facilitated regular engagement with a Strategic Disability Reference Group (SDRG) of disabled subject-matter experts. The SDRG reviewed new and ongoing work, advising on accessibility, effectiveness, and relevance for disabled people, while also strengthening sector capability. We introduced guidelines for effective engagement, requiring all commissioned work to apply a disability lens and draw on SDRG advice. Amplifying the voices of tāngata whaikaha Māori and other disabled people has had a tangible, positive impact on the Executive Board's programme and priorities.

Strengthening partnership with National Iwi Chairs Forum (NICF)

We strengthened our partnership with NICF through the Tūhonotanga agreement, which provides a foundation for respectful and collaborative engagement—particularly vital at a time of strained Crown–iwi relations. This partnership ensures the Commission stays connected to iwi and communities, and informed by Tangata Whenua priorities, rights, and advocacy. The Rongomau Taketake participates in NICF hui Rangatira, supporting, reporting, accountability and communication between the Commission and its partners. The partnership also supports international advocacy, including engagement with UN treaty body reviews, and the Aotearoa New Zealand Independent Monitoring Mechanism.

Outcome 3: Accountable duty-bearers

Performance expectation

- Inquire into, report on, and highlight duty-bearers' performance against commitments.
- Identify and share case studies of performance by duty-bearers.

What this looks like

- Implement our international monitoring and reporting obligations as Aotearoa New Zealand's national human rights institution.
- Respond to significant human rights concerns.
- Contribute human rights analysis to government and other duty-bearer processes.

How well did we do?

Our active engagement with UN treaty mechanisms and international organisations ensures that our analysis and recommendations contribute to meaningful progress in the realisation of Te Tiriti and human rights in Aotearoa New Zealand.

- In 2024/25, we actively engaged in UN treaty body reviews of New Zealand, including leading participation in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) review, submitting a follow-up shadow report to the Committee Against Torture, and preparing submissions for upcoming CERD and ICCPR reviews. Our contributions shaped the issues raised by UN Committees and amplified civil society voices, keeping concerns such as family violence, equal pay, treatment of Māori in the justice system, and the rights of people in detention central to international scrutiny of New Zealand's human rights record.
- We also advanced Te Tiriti and Indigenous peoples' rights through participation in the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP), raising concerns about legislative reforms affecting Tangata Whenua rights, and providing input to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples' 2025 report. A strong focus on Indigenous rights was further embedded in our CEDAW shadow report, which recommended stronger protections for wāhine Māori rights.

Outcome 4: Effective Tiriti and human rights-based remedies

Performance expectation
• Provide education, advocacy and advice on systemic issues. • Provide an effective dispute resolution service. • Provide legal representation under the Human Rights Act 1993.
What this looks like
• Provide information and advice online and in person. • Support people to act on their human rights. • Offer appropriate pathways of redress to complainants.
How well did we do?
In this reporting period: • 8,087 enquiries and complaints were closed • 793 complaints of alleged discrimination were finalised and closed. Of these, 99 were closed within 12 months (our KPI is 80% closed in 12 months) • The Director of Human Rights Proceedings granted legal representation to 9 applicants.

Our Statement of Performance presents the end-of-year results, providing an overview of our delivery against the measures set out in our Statement of Performance Expectations 2024/25. This section includes compliance with *Public Benefit Entity Financial Reporting Standard 48 (PBE FRS 48)*, ensuring transparency in reporting our service performance.

Status of human rights in Aotearoa New Zealand

Overview

Aotearoa New Zealand has a long history of steady progress towards improved human rights frameworks and outcomes, and many human rights indicators during the reporting period remain positive. Progress has stalled in some critical areas and there is a risk of things going backwards. Frequent use of urgency and passage of Bills, despite Attorney-General findings of inconsistency with the Bill of Rights Act, has limited meaningful amendment of significant legislation. Several proposed Bills and reforms risk diminishing human rights and Te Tiriti o Waitangi protections and civic participation.

People in New Zealand generally enjoy a high level of realisation of civil and political rights, but challenges remain particularly for certain groups. Progress was made on institutional monitoring and coordination, and there have been some targeted funding increases for disability support and mental health facility improvements. Systemic deficits persist for vulnerable groups — Māori, Pacific peoples, disabled people, transgender and non-binary people, and migrant workers — who continue to face disproportionate discrimination and economic disadvantage.

Human rights framework

New Zealand's human rights monitoring and implementation framework has matured over the reporting period (July 2024-June 2025), due to the government's National Mechanism for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-Up (NMIRF). The NMIRF seeks to coordinate New Zealand's implementation of human rights recommendations and streamline reporting, policy delivery and development of its international human rights obligations.[36]

Challenges to the human rights framework this year have included frequent use of urgency in the Parliamentary process, including for significant pieces of legislation[37], and proposed Bills that risk diminishing human rights protections and opportunities for democratic participation.[38] Significant policy commitments made in government coalition agreements have been progressed with limited opportunity for amendment through

[36] https://www.mfat.govt.nz/assets/OIA/OIA-2021-22/ERS-21-MIN-0047-Establishment-of-a-Human-Rights-National-Mechanism.pdf

[37] See https://newsroom.co.nz/2025/01/28/govt-smashes-record-for-laws-passed-without-select-committee-scrutiny/; https://newsroom.co.nz/2025/05/29/govt-on-record-breaking-urgency-streak-amid-flurry-of-budget-laws/; https://newsroom.co.nz/2025/05/22/regulatory-standards-bill-will-be-debated-under-urgency/; https://tikatangata.org.nz/news/is-the-use-of-urgency-and-proposed-fast-tracking-diminishing-our-human-rights-2

[38] See for example Commission's submissions on the Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi Bill https://tikatangata.org.nz/cms/assets/Documents/Submissions/2024-25-Submissions/Submission-of-Te-Kahui-Tika-Tangata-Human-Rights-Commission-on-the-Principles-of-the-Treaty-of-Waitangi-Bill.pdf; Submission on the Regulatory Standards Bill https://tikatangata.org.nz/news/regulatory-standards-bill-misleading-and-ineffectaul-says-commission

democratic processes.[39] Legislation has been passed despite the Attorney-General informing Parliament of inconsistency with the Bill of Rights Act (BORA).[40]

In preparation for the relaunch of the National Human Rights Action Plan, the Commission undertook a human rights stocktake during 2024–25. This provided critical insights to guide our strategic objectives and establish the baseline for monitoring progress throughout the year.

Ongoing limitations of the New Zealand human rights framework include the fact that the BORA is not supreme law and does not contain all the rights within the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) or any of the rights within the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).[41] New Zealand's commitment to the full spectrum of international human rights instruments remains incomplete, either because reservations remain for key treaties or the government has not become a party to key instruments over the last year.[42]

Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Indigenous Rights

He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tireni (New Zealand's 1835 Declaration of Independence) and Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Te Tiriti) are New Zealand's founding constitutional documents, defining the relationship between hapū (Māori nations) and the British Crown. However, there is a lack of constitutional protection provided for Te Tiriti, allowing Parliament to override Māori rights upheld by the courts and Waitangi Tribunal.[43]

[39] See https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/political/563636/the-regulatory-standards-bill-what-is-it-what-does-it-propose-and-what-s-next and https://newsroom.co.nz/2024/10/14/govt-to-change-or-remove-treaty-of-waitangi-provisions-in-28-laws/

[40] See below re Gangs Act under civil, political rights heading.

[41] See New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 - https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1990/0109/latest/DLM224792.html; See the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966 (ICCPR) https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) (ICESCR) https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights

[42] New Zealand retains reservations to ICCPR and the Convention Against Torture, and is not party to the International Conventions for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers, or the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on communication. See https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/treaty.aspx and https://treaties.un.org/Pages/TreatyParticipantSearch.aspx?clang=_en

[43] For example, Parliament recently enacted legislation that extinguished, without consent, active court proceedings brought by Wairarapa Māori seeking the return of lands and assets: Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa Tāmaki nui-a-Rua Claims Settlement Act 2022.

UN bodies have repeatedly recommended[44] that government progress constitutional conversations in partnership with hapū and iwi to strengthen constitutional protections for Te Tiriti and human rights.

The Treaty Principles Bill, a proposal to reinterpret foundational Te Tiriti principles, was met with widespread opposition including that the Bill was likely to cause harm to harmonious relations, social cohesion and especially impact on Māori.[45]

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) action plan has been halted[46] and steps are underway to remove references to Te Tiriti from legislation,[47] alongside other reforms affecting the constitutional status of Te Tiriti.[48] The government has also announced a review of the Waitangi Tribunal's legislated scope and mandate.[49]

Civil and Political Rights

People in New Zealand generally enjoy a high level of realisation of civil and political rights, but challenges remain for the full realisation of rights contained in the ICCPR, particularly for certain groups.[50]

The Gangs Act 2024 was passed despite the Attorney-General[51] and the Commission[52] concluding that the legislation was inconsistent with the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly. The Commission advocated for a human rights-based

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[44] UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, *Concluding Observations on the Combined Twenty-First and Twenty-Second Periodic Reports of New Zealand*, CERD/C/NZL/CO/21-22 (22 September 2017) at [13]; Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, *Concluding Observations on the Ninth Periodic Report of New Zealand*, CEDAW/C/NZL/CO/9 (30 October 2024) at [43]; Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, *Concluding Observations on the Fourth Periodic Review of New Zealand*, E/C.12/NZL/CO/4 (1 May 2018) at [6], [8], [9]; Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review – New Zealand*, A/HRC/57/4 (11 June 2024) at [132.27]–[132.33].

[45] Te Kāhui Tika Tangata (2024), *Submission on the Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi Bill*.

[46] Te Puni Kōkiri, "UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples," last updated 17 July 2025.

[47] Section 7AA Oranga Tamariki Act outlining Te Tiriti duties in relation to tamariki Māori has been repealed. Presently 23 pieces of legislation are under review to potentially change the meaning and effect of 44 Treaty clauses. Ministry of Justice "Review of Legislation Including Reference to the Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi." Last modified July 16, 2025.

[48] This includes advancing a principles-based regulatory framework that excludes Te Tiriti and repealing protections for Māori representation in local government. See Regulatory Standards Bill; Local Government (Electoral Legislation and Māori Wards and Māori Constituencies) Amendment Act.

[49] 1News, "Waitangi Tribunal Review to Begin Mid-Year – Govt," May 9, 2025, https://www.1news.co.nz/2025/05/09/waitangi-tribunal-review-to-begin-mid-year-govt/.

[50] See the Commission's submission on the ICCPR List of Issues Prior to Reporting for a more complete picture tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCCPR%2FIFR%2FNZL%2F61882&Lang=en

[51] Passed into law in September 2024, a report from the Attorney-General found that the measures proposed under the Bill would create unjustified limitations on the rights to freedom of expression, assembly and association under the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 see https://bills.parliament.nz/v/4/94070b85-6dbf-47ed-24a4-08dc3e331753

[52] https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/54SCJUST_EVI_d054c8b9-9572-438f-0895-08dc3e31559c_JUST2521/b9863a0143d72aededc048ab462af547166da797

approach to the issue with a stronger focus on prevention and early intervention within communities, and highlighted the need to address structural and socio-economic disadvantages including within the state care system.[53]

A review of the protections in the Human Rights Act for people who are transgender, non-binary, and who have innate variations of sex characteristics has been referred to Te Aka Matua o te Ture Law Commission (Law Commission).[54] The Law Commission is also reviewing the law relating to hate crime, but the review of hate speech previously on the Law Commission's work programme has been withdrawn.[55]

The Education and Training Amendment Bill No.2 passed its first reading in May 2025, and as of the end of June 2025 is being considered by Select Committee. The Bill requires universities to adopt a statement on freedom of expression, and to report on freedom of expression and academic freedom within their organisation, including ensuring a complaints process.[56] Freedom of expression, and the distinct but connected right to academic freedom, are both vital for ensuring universities are spaces of open debate, education, innovation and research. However, the Bill's proposed provisions risk creating legal uncertainty, and could unintentionally undermine human rights protections by failing to situate the right to freedom of expression alongside other relevant rights within the broader domestic and international human rights framework. The Bill's process also lacked a human rights-based approach.[57]

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Economic, social and cultural rights are an important pillar of the international human rights framework. High cost of living impacts the enjoyment of Article 11 ICESCR 'adequate standard of living' which includes the right to food, water, sanitation and a decent home. Household cost increases have eased in some areas over the past year as the inflation rate decreased, but this does not appear to be impacting pressures on New Zealanders around the cost of living.[58]

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53 https://tikatangata.org.nz/news/gang-patch-legislation-problematic-for-human-rights ; also see RCOI Abuse in State Care final report https://www.abuseincare.org.nz/reports/whanaketia

54 https://www.lawcom.govt.nz/our-work/ia-tangata/

55 Hara ngākau kino | Hate crime

56 https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/information-releases/issue-specific-information-releases/education-and-training-amendment-bill-no-2

57 See https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/54SCEDUW_EVI_8826c9d4-8f6e-4018-cdf7-08dd758b2660_EDUW5361/517673b5527d265ad5217934c850ab97cc53ca4f

58 See https://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/research-policy/social-policy-parliamentary-unit/state-nation-2025/work-and-incomes/; https://www.thepost.co.nz/business/360738303/where-it-hurts-my-back-pocket; https://www.stuff.co.nz/money/360568226/how-much-cost-living-has-increased-kiwis

Food insecurity worsened sharply over the past year, with the proportion of households with children reporting some level of food insecurity especially for Pacific families, reaching the highest level in over a decade.[59] Salvation Army services continued to see levels of need for food support that are 40% higher than pre-COVID-19, distributing more than 84,000 food parcels during 2024.[60]

Housing quality, accessibility and affordability are still key concerns in New Zealand. Inequalities in New Zealand's housing are apparent, with one-parent families, the unemployed, disabled people, Māori and Pacific peoples often experiencing poorer housing conditions, overcrowding and homelessness.[61] According to data from July 2025, 1 in every 1000 people in New Zealand is currently without shelter and 14 in every 1000 people live in housing considered uninhabitable.[62] According to Stats New Zealand's Household Disability Survey,[63] 23% of disabled people lived in a home that wasn't the right size for the people living in it, compared with 18% of non-disabled people. Even with the issues around data collection in this area, data shows homelessness has increased over the last year, impacting multiple communities.[64]

The Commission undertook a housing inquiry from 2021-2023.[65] The inquiry's final report made six recommendations to improve the right to a decent home in New Zealand, none of which have been implemented.[66]

The right to the highest attainable standard of health is not recognised in law in New Zealand. This right is currently delivered through a publicly funded healthcare system that covers hospitals, some primary care (GPs) and specialist services, with services such as maternity care and treatment for accidents being fully covered.

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59 See https://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/research-policy/social-policy-parliamentary-unit/state-nation-2025/work-and-incomes/

60 https://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/news/state-of-the-nation-2025-shows-serious-challenges-and-falling-living-standards-across-aotearoa-new-zealand/

61 See https://www.stats.govt.nz/news/aotearoas-housing-often-unsuited-to-pacific-families/#:~:text=A%20lack%20of%20suitable%20affordable,Definition%20of%20homelessness:%202015%20update; https://www.hud.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Documents/4208-Fale-mo-Aiga_Placemat-6_0.pdf; https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1177083X.2021.1920984#:~:text=The%20current%20housing%20crisis%20has%20continued%20to,with%20European%20ethnicity%20(Stats%20NZ%20Citation%202018); https://www.stats.govt.nz/reports/household-disability-survey-2023-findings-definitions-and-design-summary/; https://www.stats.govt.nz/reports/housing-in-aotearoa-new-zealand-2025/.

62 Salvation Army released data: The survey involved frontline housing and homelessness organisations across the country, including The Salvation Army, Community Housing Aotearoa, and Housing First Auckland Backbone, Kāhui Tū Kaha, Christchurch Methodist Mission, DCM and Wellington City Mission. The data also included information obtained through OIA requests and other government sources. See https://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/news/state-of-the-nation-2025-shows-serious-challenges-and-falling-living-standards-across-aotearoa-new-zealand/

63 Data was collected in 2023 but only released in 2025 https://www.stats.govt.nz/reports/household-disability-survey-2023-findings-definitions-and-design-summary/

64 https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/political/567818/we-have-a-real-problem-homelessness-increases-but-by-how-much-unclear-government-report

65 https://tikatangata.org.nz/our-work/inquiry-into-the-right-to-a-decent-home

66 https://tikatangata.org.nz/our-work/housing-inquiry-final-report

In June 2025, the Auditor General undertook a review of equitable access to planned health care treatment. The review found that treatment provided is often not equitable or timely, depending largely on geographical factors. In addition, people waiting longer for treatment are disproportionately those living in rural areas, those who experience social deprivation, Māori, Pacific peoples, and disabled people.[67] According to the Household Disability Survey 2023, 39% of disabled people described their health as fair or poor compared with 6% of non-disabled people.[68]

Te Aka Whai Ora (Māori Health Authority), which was created to help address the long-standing inequities in Māori health, was disestablished in 2024.[69] The Waitangi Tribunal is in the process of conducting an urgent inquiry as part of the wider Health Services and Outcomes Kaupapa Inquiry, into its disestablishment.[70]

The 2025 Budget invests $50 million in improving the safety, privacy and dignity of mentally distressed people at mental health facilities. This is part of a plan to lift standards at care facilities in response to safety recommendations by the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care.[71]

The latest UNICEF Innocenti Report Card on Child Wellbeing ranked New Zealand 32nd out of 36 countries for overall child wellbeing.[72] According to this report, New Zealand had the highest suicide rate for children out of the 36 OECD and European Union countries, at a rate of almost three times higher than the average.[73] New Zealand men and boys have significantly higher rates of suicide.[74]

67 https://oag.parliament.nz/2025/planned-care/overview.htm

68 https://www.stats.govt.nz/reports/household-disability-survey-2023-findings-definitions-and-design-summary/

69 https://www.legislation.govt.nz/bill/government/2024/0026/latest/whole.html

70 https://www.waitangitribunal.govt.nz/en/inquiries/kaupapa-inquiries/health-services-and-outcomes#HauoraRep

71 https://www.national.org.nz/news/20250522-mental-distress-111-calls-to-get-a-mental-health-response

72 https://www.unicef.org/innocenti/media/11111/file/UNICEF-Innocenti-Report-Card-19-Child-Wellbeing-Unpredictable-World-2025.pdf

73 https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/561037/new-zealand-has-highest-child-suicide-rate-a-survey-of-wealthy-countries-shows

74 https://mentalhealth.org.nz/suicide-prevention/statistics-on-suicide-in-new-zealand

Abuse in Care Response

The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care released its Final Report in 2024.[75] The report made 233 recommendations. The recommendations aim to address past wrongs, improve current care, and empower communities. On 12 November 2024, the Prime Minister issued a formal apology and committed to avoid repetition.[76] The apology received mixed reactions from survivors.[77]

In 2024, a Crown Response Office was established as the central government agency to coordinate, monitor and report on the government's response to the Royal Commission.[78] The UN Committee for the Convention Against Torture has found in two cases[79] that the Government failed to conduct prompt and impartial investigations, proceed with prosecutions, and provide adequate compensation and rehabilitation for the torture survivors suffered in violation of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment.[80]

Specific redress including compensation has yet to be made in these cases, however, the government has set out its plan to provide redress as a priority for Lake Alice survivors.[81] The Commission is working to hold the government to account for implementing the Inquiry's recommendations as a key priority over the next year.

Criminal Justice and Torture Prevention

Over the last year the Commission continued its role coordinating the New Zealand National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) under the Optional Protocol of the UN Convention Against Torture and, domestically, the Crimes of Torture Act 1989. The NPM is a group of five statutory bodies which have a mandate to independently and regularly monitor places where people are deprived of their liberty, to prevent torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

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75 RCOI Final_Report 'Whanaketia'. See particularly recommendations 39-87 and recommendations_111–138

76 Rt Hon Christopher Luxon, Prime Minister 'Crown apology to abuse survivors' speech delivered in Parliament, 12 November 2024.

77 Lilian Hanley *RNZ* 'Abuse in care apology called PR stunt, 'not genuine' and 'tokenistic' by some survivors' (12 November 2024).

78 https://www.abuseinquiryresponse.govt.nz/

79 Zentveld v. New Zealand (4 December 2019) Jurisprudence Database and Richards v. New Zealand (12 May 2022) Jurisprudence Database

80 https://www.abuseinquiryresponse.govt.nz/information-releases/maori-in-state-care/united-nations-committee-against-torture-reports-on-lake-alice

81 https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/torture-redress-survivors-lake-alice-unit

Despite several initiatives within the Corrections system to address the over-representation of Māori and improve outcomes for Māori offenders and their whānau,[82] Māori are still over-represented across the criminal justice system.

The 2024 budget removed targets to reduce the prison population and there were minimal increases in funding for rehabilitation programmes and legal aid.[83] The onsite prison population now exceeds 10,000 for the first time in four years.[84] New Zealand's imprisonment rate is high, at 187 per 100,000 people, making it double the rate of Canada (90 per 100,000), and higher than Australia (163 per 100,000) and England (141 per 100,000).[85] The practice of 'double bunking', where two inmates share a cell, continues in New Zealand, however, over the last year two inmates have been killed by cellmates in double bunked cells leading to further investigation into the practice.[86]

Several legislative reforms have been introduced around criminal justice over the last year. These include the removal of the requirement for Corrections to focus on improving outcomes for Māori, and of references to Te Tiriti o Waitangi from the Corrections Amendment Bill; limiting judicial discretion at sentencing; and reinstating three strikes sentencing.[87]

Disabled people are over-represented in the Corrections system and experience disparate outcomes.[88] This year, prolonged detention in a facility utilising extended seclusion, restrictive practices, and lacking expert staff and cultural advisors,[89] was challenged in the Supreme Court as being inconsistent with the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and UN CRPD.[90] At the time of publication the judgment was still pending.

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82 See Māori Pathways and Hōkai Rangi: Ara Poutama Aotearoa Strategy 2019-2024, focus on culturally responsive approaches, whānau-centered support, and strengthening connections to community and culture, see https://www.corrections.govt.nz/news/maori_pathways/about_the_pathway

83 As above

84 Adam Pearse *New Zealand Herald* 'Prison population exceeds 10,000 for first time in four years' (11 November 2024). This is compared with a total prison population of 8,513 at 30 June 2023 when the Committee against Torture undertook its most recent review of NZ. See Corrections 'Prison facts and statistics - June 2023.'

85 See https://www.prisonstudies.org/highest-to-lowest/prison_population_rate?field_region_taxonomy_tid=All; https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/on-the-inside/556381/new-sentencing-laws-will-drive-nz-s-already-high-imprisonment-rates

86 https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/566782/prisoner-deaths-in-double-bunk-cells-puts-process-under-scrutiny

87 See paragraph 7 of the Commission's November 2024 'Alternative follow-up submission on Concluding Observations from Aotearoa New Zealand's 7th Periodic Report under the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment' https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCAT%2FNGS%2FNZL%2F60511&Lang=en

88 Corrections 'Disability Action Plan 2023 – 2027' https://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/strategic_reports/disability_action_plan_2023_2027 and Ombudsman 'Kia Whaitake', at [139] ,' above , and Ombudsman 'Kia Whaitake', at [139] https://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/resources/kia-whaitake-making-difference-investigation-ara-poutama-aotearoa-department-corrections]

89 Ombudsman 'OPCAT Report: Report on an announced inspection of Pohutukawa Forensic Intellectual Disability Unit, Mason Clinic, under the Crimes of Torture Act 1989,' (September 2022), at p.9.

90 Commission 'Commission intervenes in Supreme Court disability rights case' (29 August 2024). Both this Committee (CAT/C/NZL/CO/7, 24 August 2023) at [42(b)] and the CRPD Committee (CRPD/C/NZL/CO/2-3, 26 September 2022) at [28(b)] have previously raised concerns with the IDCCR Act, although it is not on the Government's reform agenda.

Monitors of mental health and disability facilities continue to express concerns about over-occupancy, substandard material conditions, and limited specialist staff with inadequate training and varied cultural competence.[91]

Right to Work and Equal Employment Opportunities

The public service gender pay gap has decreased from 12.2 percent in 2018 to 6.1 percent in 2024.[92]

Pay disparity continues to exist across ethnic groups in New Zealand.[93] Pacific, Māori and Asian workers experience persistent pay gaps across most sectors when compared to New Zealand European workers.[94] The Commission's Pacific Pay Gap Inquiry identified discrimination as one of the contributing factors across every stage of the employment process including recruitment, retention and progression.[95]

Transgender and non-binary people tend to earn less and have higher unemployment rates than cisgender people.[96] The Public Service Commission removed separate questions about sexual orientation, gender identity, and variations of sex characteristics in Te Taunaki, the Public Service Census.[97] These questions were replaced with a single question about whether respondents identify as part of the Rainbow community meaning it is no longer possible for specific groups within the Rainbow population to be identified in public service data.

In 2025, the Government tightened the criteria and process for gender-based pay equity claims, which discontinued 33 active pay equity claims (covering sectors like nursing, teaching and social work).[98] Ongoing claims have been halted and agreed reviews have been cancelled. Future claims (including those previously cancelled) must meet stricter conditions.[99] In practice, these changes make it more difficult, and for some groups unworkable to advance a pay equity claim in a female-dominated sector or industry, even where there is evidence of historic undervaluation of female-dominated work.

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91 Concerns have been raised in successive years - Aotearoa New Zealand National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) 'Monitoring Places of Detention 2022-2023', p.28, 'Monitoring Places of Detention 2023-2024', p.18. Available at https://tikatangata.org.nz/our-work/monitoring-places-of-detention.

92 https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/system/public-service-people/pay-gaps-and-pay-equity

93 https://tikatangata.org.nz/cms/assets/Documents/Reports-and-Inquiry/Employment/Pacific-Pay-Gap-Inquiry/Voices-of-Pacific-Peoples-Pacific-Pay-Gap-Inquiry-Report.pdf eg pp21,76-78.

94 https://tikatangata.org.nz/cms/assets/Documents/Reports-and-Inquiry/Race-and-Ethnicity/Empirical-analysis-of-Pacific-Maori-and-ethnic-pay-gaps-in-New-Zealand.pdf p1.

95 Human Rights Commission, Inquiry into the Pacific Pay Gap (19 August 2021).

96 https://www.stats.govt.nz/reports/lgbtiq-population-of-aotearoa-new-zealand-2023/

97 https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/on-the-inside/568544/just-as-nz-began-collecting-meaningful-data-on-rainbow-communities-census-changes-threaten-their-visibility

98 https://www.stuff.co.nz/politics/360679022/five-things-you-need-know-about-surprise-pay-equity-change

99 https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/changes-improve-pay-equity-process

Racial Discrimination

Racism in New Zealand remains a pressing issue, manifested overtly and systemically.[100] Māori, Pacific, ethnic and religious minority communities continue to experience discrimination (both at the individual and institutional level) across several important areas of life including employment,[101] education[102] and health.[103]

The Government has been developing a National Action Plan Against Racism (NAPAR) for some years to eliminate racism in all forms experienced by Māori and other ethnic minorities.[104] Originally co-designed with Iwi leaders, the plan has been diluted, causing the Indigenous peoples' caucus to withdraw, citing government attempts to downplay colonial racism and institutional racism towards Māori.[105]

One in three complaints alleging unlawful discrimination to the Commission are about racial discrimination. However, most people who experience racism don't make a complaint.

Racist hate speech remains a significant concern for many minority groups, particularly in online spaces. Reforms to hate speech law, which were recommended by the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack on Christchurch masjidain (places of worship) on 15 March 2019 (RCOI 15 March), have been halted, with hate crime law reform being referred to the Law Commission.[106] The coordinated cross-government response to the RCOI 15 March was concluded in August 2024, despite eight recommendations not being implemented, including to establish an Advisory Group on counter-terrorism via legislation.[107]

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[100] Te Kāhui Tika Tangata Human Rights Commission, 2022. Ki te whaiao, ki te ao Mārama: Community Engagement Report for developing a National Action Plan Against Racism

[101] Tan et al "Racism and employment : a narrative review of Aotearoa New Zealand and international qualitative studies" (2024) 39-1 NZS 1-21

[102] Education Review Office. (2022). Education For All Our Children: Embracing Diverse Ethnicities. https://ero.govt.nz/our-research/category/responding-to-diverse-cultures

[103] Ministry of Health. 2023. Racial Discrimination 2011/12, 2016/17 and 2020/21: New Zealand Health Survey.

[104] NZ agreed to adopt a comprehensive national strategy to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance, including racial and religious hatred in its 2019 Universal Periodic Review see https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/nz-index follow up 2019.

[105] https://e-tangata.co.nz/comment-and-analysis/tina-ngata-why-we-walked-away/

[106] Hara ngākau kino | Hate crime.

[107] https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/march-15-coordinated-response-concludes; https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/523941/government-won-t-progress-remaining-8-recommendations-of-christchurch-terror-attack-commission

Immigration and Migration

Migrant workers experience exploitation and inadequate protection, particularly those temporarily in New Zealand under the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) or Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV) scheme.[108]

The practice of detaining asylum seekers in prisons has ceased. However, the Immigration (Fiscal Sustainability and System Integrity) Amendment Bill passed its first reading on 24 June 2025.[109] The Bill proposes to increase the time that a member of a mass arrival group (a group of more than 30 people who arrive in New Zealand by boat) can be detained without a warrant.[110]

Women's Rights

In September 2024, The Commission submitted its report on women's rights in New Zealand to the UN Committee on Eliminating All forms of Discrimination Against Women ahead of New Zealand's review in October 2024.[111] The main areas of concern highlighted in our report were Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV), online harassment and wage equality. New Zealand ranks highly globally for gender equality. We were ranked 5th out of 148 countries in the World Economic Forum Gender Gap report in 2025, with an overall gender parity score of 82.7%, marking a slight decline from its peak of 85.6% in 2023.[112] In 2025, setbacks were seen in political empowerment, parity in parliamentary representation, and wage equality (which fell below 70% for first time since 2007).[113]

[108] New review: Migrant workers being exploited in AEWV work visa scheme

[109] https://www.legislation.govt.nz/bill/government/2025/0138/latest/d7007969e2.html

[110] See Commission submission to Select Committee https://www3.parliament.nz/en/pb/sc/submissions-and-advice/document/54SCEDUW_EVI_3094698c-a5ac-419d-cdf6-08dd758b2660_EDUW6027/te-kahui-tika-tangata-human-rights-commission.

[111] https://tikatangata.org.nz/our-work/monitoring-the-declaration-on-womens-rights

[112] World Economic Forum Gender Gap Report 2025, https://reports.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2025.pdf

[113] World Economic Forum Gender Gap Report 2025, https://reports.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2025.pdf

New Zealand continues to have high rates of SGBV disproportionately affecting wāhine Māori, transgender women and women of diverse Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC), disabled,[114] ethnic, and migrant women and girls. Online SGBV continues to be of concern, with attacks on women in public-facing roles, particularly ethnic women and women of diverse SOGIESC.[115,116]

Rainbow Rights

After decades of community advocacy, Census 2023 was the first national population survey to collect data on sexual identity, gender, and innate variations of sex characteristics.[117] Among those aged 15 and over, 4.9% of the population were counted as LGBTIQ+, noting that this is an undercount for a range of reasons.[118]

According to the *Counting Ourselves* survey almost one in five trans and non-binary New Zealanders were threatened with physical violence because of their gender identity in the past four years.[119] The Commission spoke out against violent and threatening anti-Rainbow protest actions at Auckland Pride Festival events.[120]

Disability Rights

Disabled people continue to experience poorer outcomes than non-disabled people in most settings. They have lower employment participation, are less likely to have enough money to meet daily needs, and face discrimination at much higher rates than the general population.[121] For example, 53% of disabled people reported not enough or only just enough income to meet basic needs, compared with 33% of non-disabled people.[122]

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[114] https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/andrew-little-speech-united-nations-human-rights-council-third-universal-periodic-review; https://hrc-nz-resources.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/files/6016/3822/4741/Honour_the_Treaty_Protect_the_person_Violence_and_abuse_of_tangata_whaikaha_Maori_FINAL_English.pdf; https://hrc-nz-resources.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/files/6016/3822/4741/Honour_the_Treaty_Protect_the_person_Violence_and_abuse_of_tangata_whaikaha_Maori_FINAL_English.pdf; https://hrc-nz-resources.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/files/9316/3822/4755/Acting_now_for_a_violence_and_abuse_free_future_FINAL.pdf.

[115] https://static1.squarespace.com/static/65c9ceb1a6a5b72d6f280d67/t/65cc2275de3f6e051af58601/1707876983168/Dangerous-speech-misogyny-and-democracy.pdf.

[116] Amnesty reveals alarming impact of online abuse against women | Amnesty International NZ

[117] https://www.stats.govt.nz/news/2023-census-shows-1-in-20-adults-belong-to-aotearoa-new-zealands-lgbtiq-population/

[118] https://www.stats.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Reports/LGBTIQ+-population-of-Aotearoa-New-Zealand-2023/Download-data/LGBTIQ+-population-of-Aotearoa-New-Zealand-2023.pdf

[119] https://countingourselves.nz/2022-survey-report/

[120] https://tikatangata.org.nz/news/rainbow-rights-are-human-rights-and-deserve-protection

[121] https://www.stats.govt.nz/news/disabled-people-still-faring-worse-than-non-disabled-people/

[122] Stats Household Disability Survey. See footnote 28

In the May 2025 budget, funding increased for disability support services, and the freeze on flexible funding ended allowing for greater autonomy around how allowances are spent. However, there are still many disabled people not receiving adequate support to participate in community.[123]

The significantly greater experience of material hardship for disabled children and children living in households affected by disability is an ongoing concern. Data shows more disabled children than non-disabled children live in households with material hardship, and children in disabled households were 2.4 times more likely than children in non-disabled households to live in households with material hardship.[124]

In the Commission's engagements with disabled people and disabled people's organisations, including in our role within New Zealand's Independent Monitoring Mechanism (IMM)[125], disabled people express concern that there has been an erosion in the participation of disabled people in the matters that affect them.

Environment and Climate Change

New Zealand, unlike most of its international counterparts,[126] does not legally recognise the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment in law. However, New Zealand has made international commitments to environmental protection and human rights, including voting in favour of the UN resolution recognising the right.[127] A Bill proposing the addition of this right to the BORA was defeated at its first reading in 2024.[128]

In the last year, New Zealand has experienced extreme weather events including severe flooding. Māori, Pacific peoples, rural communities, older people, and disabled people are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.[129] In August 2024 the first monitoring review was undertaken on New Zealand's National Adaptation Plan 2022-2028. The review found that urgent action is needed as adaptation is not happening on the scale or at the pace that is needed.[130]

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123 https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/541821/disability-funding-changes-resulting-in-untold-distress-to-vulnerable-people-reports

124 Stats Household Disability survey, see footnote 28.

125 See for information on IMM and its role - https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/crpd/new-zealand-imm-situation

126 More than 80% of UN member states recognise the right to a healthy environment through national law, court decisions or regional treaties - https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/landmark-un-resolution-confirms-healthy-environment-human-right

127 https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/76/300

128 https://www.parliament.nz/media/9881/new-zealand-bill-of-rights-right-to-sustainable-environment-amendment-bill.pdf

129 See Ministry for the Environment, Te kimi kāinga rua ā-hapori me te tahua urutau: Ngā take me ngā kōwhiringa Community-led retreat and adaption funding: Issues and options (2023) avaialble at https:// environment.govt.nz/publications/community-led-retreat-and-adaptation-funding-issues-and-options/

130 Climate Change Commission delivers first national adaptation plan progress assessment » Climate Change Commission

Te Tiriti o Waitangi-based organisation

The Commission's statutory mandate to promote human rights and the human rights dimensions of Te Tiriti, recognises the strong alignment and interrelationship between our founding treaty and the globally agreed human rights framework. The rights and responsibilities set out in Te Tiriti are also human rights, with corresponding human rights obligations. Human rights standards, most significantly the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, provide valuable guidance on how the promises of Te Tiriti can be achieved.

Promoting and protecting these human rights is not only a core part of the Commission's role as an Independent National Human Rights Institution. As an Independent Crown Entity, the Commission is mindful of its own Tiriti and human rights obligations. We are committed to upholding the human rights standards and responsibilities we promote to others, and to 'walking the talk' by putting Te Tiriti into practice within our own organisation.

Since 2015, the Commission has been on a journey to become a Te Tiriti o Waitangi based organisation, committed to upholding our Te Tiriti responsibilities at every level of the organisation and across all areas of our work. The transformation has involved building capability and capacity across the organisation, realigning our structures and processes to ensure our effectiveness, strengthening partnerships with Tangata Whenua, and ensuring we are promoting Te Tiriti and Indigenous peoples' rights in our work.

This year has been pivotal for Te Tiriti and Indigenous peoples' rights, with a raft of legislative proposals posing a risk to decades of progress, and hundreds of thousands of people mobilising through public action and submissions to defend them. Our work to become a Te Tiriti-based organisation and to strengthen our capacity and expertise in this area, has positioned the Commission to respond effectively to this context and provide a clear human rights lens for Aotearoa New Zealand.

Promoting law reform that affirms Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Indigenous peoples' rights

- Ongoing efforts to strengthen organisational capability on human rights and the human rights dimensions of Te Tiriti positioned the Commission well to respond to the significant volume of legislative reform in 2024/25. The Commission submitted on numerous Bills with significant implications for Tangata Whenua rights, including the Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi Bill, the Regulatory Standards Bill, the Oranga Tamariki (Repeal of Section 7AA) Amendment Bill, and legislation on Māori wards and constituencies. These submissions reflect the Commission's collective expertise and commitment to Indigenous rights law, ensuring a strong and credible voice on Te Tiriti and human rights. This credibility is critical in a context where human rights language has often been misused to cast Te Tiriti-based measures as contrary to human rights, despite their essential role in realising those rights.

Engaging in international advocacy on Te Tiriti and Indigenous peoples' rights

- In line with its mandate to promote and monitor New Zealand's compliance with international human rights, the Commission engaged with a range of UN human rights bodies and experts, reporting on developments and highlighting areas of concern. This included participation in the 17th annual session of the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) in Geneva, where the Commission highlighted concerns about recent legislative reforms' impact on Tangata Whenua rights - an intervention that was reported in national media.
- A strong Tiriti and Indigenous rights analysis and focus was also reflected in input to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples' 2025 report on recognition of Indigenous peoples, and in the Commission's Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) shadow report, which made several recommendations on strengthening recognition and protection for wāhine Māori rights.

Continuing to grow our partnership with the National Iwi Chairs Forum

- This Commission continues its partnership with the National Iwi Chairs Forum (NICF) through the Tūhonotanga agreement, which provides a foundation for respectful and collaborative engagement - particularly important at a time when Crown-iwi relations face challenges. Through this partnership, the Commission receives important insight into Tangata Whenua priorities, rights, and advocacy, and is able stay connected to a broad network of iwi and communities. This includes the Rongomau Taketake attending NICF hui rangatira, providing important listening, reporting back and accountability functions between the Commission and its partners. The Commission and NICF also collaborated on a range of international advocacy, including engagement with EMRIP, international human rights treaty body reviews, and support for the Aotearoa New Zealand Independent Monitoring Mechanism.

Strengthening foundational knowledge and application of Te Tiriti across the organisation

- Building kaimahi capability across the organisation was also a focus this year, with the launch of internal training modules covering tikanga and kawa, te reo Māori, and the significance of Te Tiriti to the Commission's human rights mandate. Internal tikanga guidelines were introduced to sit alongside a range of tools, including new quality assurance and monitoring and evaluation frameworks. Further support for staff is provided through a cross-team network for the sharing of good practice and problem-solving.

Sharing our journey internationally

Interest in the Commission's Te Tiriti journey remains strong internationally. This year the Commission shared its experiences and insights at the 29th Asia Pacific Forum General Meeting and at the Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions' Biennial Conference.

Spotlight on impact: Case studies in action

The following case studies illustrate the impact of our strategic priorities. Each case study showcases our commitment to advancing human rights and fulfilling our obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi. By examining these success stories, we gain valuable insights into how our initiatives have empowered individuals and communities, addressed pressing issues, and fostered accountability among duty-bearers. Together, they represent a testament to our dedication to promoting social justice and equality for all in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Upholding dignity and decent work for the people we invite to live and work in Aotearoa New Zealand

Workers invited to live and work in Aotearoa New Zealand on temporary visas come from across the world, bringing different cultures, new skills and perspectives. No matter where they come from, they all deserve to experience dignity and belonging in their work and have opportunities to create a better life for themselves and their families.

Unfortunately, many people who come to work and live in our communities are forced to pay large illegal premiums for jobs, may be sold non-existent jobs or they are not paid for their work. Some are forced to work in dangerous conditions and face bullying or sexual harassment.

These problems can be caused by or contributed to by our government's policy decisions. For example, many people who are invited to work and live in our communities from overseas are tied by government policy to a single employer through their visa. Tied visas set the stage for exploitation, making it easy for abuse to happen and hard for people to escape it.

Influencing policy

Our theory of change for addressing migrant exploitation involved three strands:

The first strand involved a focus on policy. The aim was to produce a high-quality human rights review that could support meaningful community engagement and promote credible, rights-based and Te Tiriti-centred solutions to migrant exploitation.

We published an Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV) human rights review in August 2024, informed by engagements with migrant workers who had experienced exploitation, as well as with advocates, immigration experts and employers. The review aimed to provide robust human rights analysis and solutions along with a platform for advocacy. The development of the review led to significant engagements from officials working on policy within the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) and also resulted in a meeting to discuss policy settings with the Immigration Minister.

The review received widespread domestic attention, including being featured in communications from the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions and Caritas, and across national news media. Then EEO Commissioner, Saunoamaali'i Karanina Sumeo, also appeared on *Q+A* about its release. Internationally, the report has been referenced in an Australian law review and in Labour Migration Policy case studies. It has since become a prominent resource for those concerned with migrant worker exploitation and human rights, downloaded 298 times to end June 2025. (The review announcement on our website was viewed 3,000 times).

In November 2024, the EEO Commissioner featured in a TVNZ segment on the immigration policy for temporary migrant workers in the horticulture and viticulture sectors. Her commentary in the piece directly led to the Commission receiving an anonymous complaint concerning potential migrant exploitation. The complaint was escalated by Commission staff and subsequently investigated by the appropriate authorities.

Sharing insights and building capability

Our second strand focused on community connection and building capability and capacity. In October 2024, we held a well-attended webinar with 184 registrants. The webinar focused on our AEWV review and the broader issue of migrant exploitation. The event featured the EEO Commissioner, a migrant union advocate, an immigration advisor, and our own Rongomau Taketake. The aim was to share insights from the AEWV review and build capability by educating interested people and organisations on human rights and Te Tiriti-based responses to migrant exploitation.

On 2 July 2025, our Senior Human Rights Advisor to the EEO Commissioner presented on our migrant exploitation advocacy to a group of influential stakeholders. This was through a meeting of the Oceania Freedom Network who are a collaborative alliance of faith groups, NGOs, and governments across Oceania committed to ending modern slavery and human trafficking.

Shifting public opinion

Our third strand focused on building community capacity while developing effective narratives to support human rights and Te Tiriti-based solutions to migrant exploitation. The underlying theory is that well-crafted narratives can help "move the rock" of public opinion, shifting what is seen as politically and socially possible and laying the foundation for human rights and Te Tiriti-based policy reform.

To support this work, we established a Champions of Change network comprising a diverse group of interested parties, including modern slavery experts, migrant worker unions, community representatives, and migrant worker advocates. A key focus was ensuring broad and inclusive representation of affected communities.

During this period, we produced a literature review analysing international approaches to communicating migrant worker issues and related topics such as immigration. We also undertook training in narrative writing and development and have now created a set of draft narratives. These are being tested through external surveys to assess their effectiveness and may also be subject to interview testing.

We are confident that the narratives we have developed will provide a strong foundation for communicating rights-based and Te Tiriti-consistent solutions to migrant exploitation. We are now planning how this work can be advanced.

A leading voice on migrant exploitation

The project has resulted in deeper understanding of the problems and solutions to affected community, advocates and the general public. The Commission has constructed and socialised credible solutions to uphold the human rights of migrant workers in Aotearoa New Zealand. We are now seen as a leading voice on migrant exploitation in Aotearoa New Zealand and have been invited by leading academics in Aotearoa New Zealand to join an international project on Liberating Migrant Labour.

Our extensive media work, endorsement by stakeholders referencing our work, and our own speaking events including the webinar and the Oceania Freedom Network, are all examples of work that has built capability within affected communities and human rights stakeholders.

As well as supporting community capacity, the establishment of the Champions for Change group contributes to sustaining and growing the Commission's capacity to have effective communications with the public. It has also deepened relationships and developed narrative skills within the Commission and advocacy communities. The narratives we have generated will provide a valuable resource to support ongoing advocacy in this area and we continue to explore different opportunities to present this information to advocates and interested members of the public.

Out and About: Reaching more Rainbow people around the motu

Human rights relating to Rainbow people have been hard-won and slow to bring to life in Aotearoa New Zealand. Making up at least 4.9% of the population, Rainbow people, as referred to here, include those whose sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or sex characteristics (SOGIESC) differ from majority, binary norms.

Rainbow people have been uniquely affected by rollbacks and threats to their human rights in the past year. This has been targeted and deliberate - from legislation to policy - across areas including health, education, and sport.

Rainbow communities have also been subjected to orchestrated harassment during Pride events, fuelled by transphobia and disinformation.

Te Kāhui Tika Tangata Human Rights Commission seeks a world where all people live in dignity and enjoy their human rights, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and sex characteristics. The barriers to achieving this vision include attitudes of hostility and intolerance, invisibility in data and planning, and exclusion of lived expertise in decision-making.

We intended to demonstrate that the rights of all Rainbow people are a key part of the Commission's kaupapa as a Tiriti-based national human rights institution. Through attending and hosting events, and the use of key strategic communications, we sought to disseminate our resources to those most likely to need them. We also wanted to build the profile of our Commissioner spokesperson for Rainbow rights, Prudence Walker, and that of the first out gay Chief Human Rights Commissioner, Dr Stephen Rainbow.

The Pride season is a crucial time of year for Te Kāhui Tika Tangata to reach a wide range of Rainbow people throughout the motu. We attended Pride events in-person in four cities (Ōtepoti Dunedin, Ōtautahi Christchurch, Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington, and Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland), presented at a conference, hosted an online webinar about conversion practices and a Pride panel on intersectionality, published statements, and engaged with key Rainbow groups and stakeholders throughout February-March. Our work profiled takatāpui Māori, Pacific Rainbow/MVPFAFF+ people, and disabled Rainbow people. We also prepared human rights-based submissions against the proposed changes to puberty blockers for transgender young people and the Relationships and Sexuality Education interim draft framework.

Eighty-four people attended our webinar on eliminating conversion practices, 19 people attended our Awaken Maranga Mai conference presentation on our conversion practices resources, and 30 people attended our Christchurch panel on the strength of intersectionality. Participants stated in evaluation surveys that they would take action because of attending these events, demonstrating we are deepening their understanding and building the community's capacity and confidence to act.

During Pride, we increased support for the exercise of tino rangatiratanga by Tangata Whenua. This included our own Tatau-Urutahi Tino Rangatiratanga Leader Julia Whaipooti speaking at our webinar, and the promotion of a video for, and featuring, a takatāpui Māori survivor of conversion practices.

We sought to change law, policy, and practice through our submissions, which had a particular focus on the rights of children and young people. In meetings with professional bodies, we shared our resources and encouraged them to update their website content using our research and information.

Over the year, we also significantly increased views and downloads of our key online resources including videos, guidelines, reports, and research. We improved their accessibility by providing them in alternate formats (large print, Braille, audio, NZ Sign Language, and Easy Read).

A core role of Te Kāhui Tika Tangata Human Rights Commission is to promote and protect the rights of all people in Aotearoa New Zealand. Rainbow people are among those most at risk of experiencing barriers to enjoying their human rights. To fulfil our primary function, we continue to work towards increasing our advocacy, visibility, and accessibility to Rainbow people around the motu.

Building inclusive futures: 25 years of youth empowerment through the Race Unity Speech Awards

For 25 years the Race Unity Speech Awards have provided young people with a platform to lead and contribute to the conversation on improving race relations and building a more harmonious society in Aotearoa New Zealand. Since the first awards in 2001, over 3,000 young people have shared their experiences, vision, views and ideas on how to eliminate racism, prejudice and discrimination in New Zealand. Their timing aligns with March 21, the UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

The awards provide an opportunity for young people to build their capacity to influence positive change and spread understanding and awareness of their communities' experiences and aspirations.

The Commission values the longstanding partnership we have had with the NZ Baha'i Community and involvement with the awards. The Commission contributes annually to the Awards, including supporting the Tohu Eke Panuku – Human Rights Commission Award for Impact. Our involvement also includes providing regional judges, media training for finalists and the participation of the Race Relations Commissioner on the National Finals judging panel.

We engage throughout the year with organisers and have the opportunity to influence the speech topics, questions and Hui. Regional heats are held in 15 cities and national finals are held in Auckland. Organisers are actively working on increasing the number of participating schools each year to widen their reach. The awards attract high public interest with over 300,000 views of our posts on Instagram, Facebook and TikTok this year. Speeches can be in English or Te Reo.

The Race Unity Speech Awards and hui provide us with an opportunity to hear directly from young people their stories, challenges, ideas and hopes for eliminating racism, discrimination and fostering harmonious relations. For young people, the speeches provide them with an opportunity to deepen their understanding around these issues, platform their ideas to a public audience, including leaders and influencers, and develop/strengthen important lifelong skills.

Promoting harmonious relations

Promoting harmonious relations is a core mandate of the Race Relations Commissioner. This mandate is advanced by supporting and working alongside the New Zealand Baha'i Community, as well as Muslim, Jewish, Chinese, Indian, and many more ethnic and faith communities. These relationships also enable the Commission to deepen its impact in promoting and protecting human rights, including the human rights dimensions of Te Tiriti, at the grassroots level.

In her first six months in the role, the Race Relations Commissioner, Dr Melissa Derby, witnessed first-hand the work of these diverse communities in fostering connection, community, and belonging for many people, making a crucial and valued contribution to social cohesion and harmonious relations in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi survey informs constructive public dialogue

Aotearoa New Zealand has a strong history as a human rights leader, and is a country founded on promises of belonging and mutual respect through Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Te Tiriti is not only an agreement that affirms rights, responsibilities and belonging for all New Zealanders, but is a unique part of our national identity that has shaped our nation.

Despite its significance, actual legal or constitutional protection of Te Tiriti or human rights is limited. This lack of protection means that, unlike many comparable countries, lawmakers here can override and violate citizens' rights with relative ease.

One of the Commission's roles under the Human Rights Act is to promote a better understanding of human rights and the human rights dimensions of Te Tiriti. To inform our work in this area and provide baseline data for ongoing tracking, the Commission engaged Horizon Research to conduct a nationally representative survey into New Zealanders' knowledge and understanding of Te Tiriti, human rights and our constitution.

Belief in importance of Te Tiriti

The survey highlighted New Zealanders' strong support for human rights and Te Tiriti and their legal and constitutional protection. It showed a clear belief in the importance of Te Tiriti to our history and national identity, and a strong desire for respectful discussion of Tiriti issues.

When asked about what is important for the future, most respondents (72%) agreed that harmonious race relations through honouring Te Tiriti is important. The survey indicated increasing awareness levels regarding Te Tiriti, with a growing number (65%) aware of its relationship to human rights. The survey also ranked the National Library of New Zealand, the Waitangi Tribunal and the Commission as the most trusted institutions when it comes to sources of information on Te Tiriti.

71% of NZers see protection of Te Tiriti / the Treaty as important to the country's future

65% are aware that Te Tiriti relates to people's human rights (up 16% from 2023)

78% want respectful discussion on Te Tiriti

61% feel informed about NZ's constitution

45% are aware that current checks and balances don't prevent Parliament from passing laws that breach human rights and Te Tiriti

Survey results of national interest

The survey results were of national interest and were widely reported on, with coverage in and around the lead-up to Waitangi Day highlighting the desire for respectful discussion. Reports noted the degree of public unity on issues that are often portrayed as divisive or as something to be feared.

The research findings were also used by supporters to promote human rights and the human rights dimensions of Te Tiriti. For example, the country's top judge, Chief Justice of New Zealand the Right Honourable Dame Helen Winkelmann cited the research in her speech on Waitangi Day, noting the importance placed on respectful discussion and on protection of Te Tiriti.

The research findings provide valuable baseline data which the Commission will use both to inform our monitoring, education and advocacy work, and to track changes over time.

The media coverage of the research results, feedback from stakeholders and examples of their use to date show they are already contributing to a constructive public dialogue on these issues.

Supporting public participation to protect Te Tiriti o Waitangi

The last year saw New Zealanders turn out in huge numbers to have their voices heard in relation to Government actions impacting on Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

From the thousands attending Waitangi Day celebrations, to the tens of thousands taking to the streets to hīkoi mō Te Tiriti, to the hundreds of thousands making submissions on bills, recent months have seen people of all ages and backgrounds expressing their views on how the promises of our founding document should be honoured.

The Commission has a statutory role to promote respect for and understanding of human rights and the human rights dimensions of Te Tiriti in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi Bill was one of a series of recent law reforms with major implications for human rights and Te Tiriti. Concerns about the Bill had prompted claims to the Waitangi Tribunal, which carried out an urgent inquiry. The Tribunal found multiple Treaty breaches and warned, in no uncertain terms, that the Bill was likely to cause harm – to race relations, social cohesion, to New Zealand's constitutional foundations, and especially to Māori. The Tribunal concluded that if passed, the Bill would amount to "the worst, most comprehensive breach of the Treaty/Te Tiriti in modern times".

Significant human rights issues at stake

Given the strong parallels between human rights and Te Tiriti, these Te Tiriti breaches would also amount to human rights violations. In both its substance and process, the Bill infringed both Te Tiriti and international human rights standards. With such significant human rights issues at stake, and because human rights had been cited as one rationale for the Bill, it was important for the Commission to provide a human rights analysis of the proposals.

As well as advising the Parliamentary Committee considering the Bill, one of our key aims was to help the public apply a human rights and human rights dimensions of Te Tiriti approach to their own submission. Because a flawed approach to human rights underpinned the Bill, it was important to inform and empower members of the public with an accurate understanding of human rights and the human rights dimensions of Te Tiriti.

The Commission's submission provided a detailed analysis of the human rights and Te Tiriti implications of the Bill, drawing on international and domestic authorities. We recommended halting the Bill, and instead holding a constructive, respectful, and informed national conversation on Te Tiriti, underpinned by accurate information and public education, and with Tangata Whenua at the table.

Contribution to public discussion

The Commission's submission was released two months prior to the Parliamentary deadline, to contribute to the public discussion on the Bill and support public participation in the submission process. Given the high public interest, the Commission also wrote to the Select Committee with recommendations and advice on ensuring that the submission process and timeframes maximised participation, minimised any restrictions on content, and that decisions were equitable and transparent.

As well as being shared with the Commission's 13,660 newsletter recipients, the submission was widely circulated by iwi, NGOs, lawyers, academics, school boards of trustees, community groups and networks. Our submission was also shared, supported, endorsed, used in submission-writing preparation and workshops, and cited in submissions made by others. It was also referenced in the Select Committee's report. By 30 June 2025, our full submission was downloaded 1,200 times.

We received thanks and positive feedback from submitters who said they found it helpful in supporting their preparation.

The Commission provided its submission to relevant United Nations bodies, as an update on human rights developments in Aotearoa New Zealand and to alert international human rights bodies to our concerns. One of these expert bodies, the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples followed up with a letter to the New Zealand Government expressing its deep concerns regarding the Bill. Our submission supported and contributed to an ultimately record-breaking level of public participation.

Building a violence-free future for tāngata whaikaha Māori and all disabled people

At twice the rate of their non-disabled peers, too many tāngata whaikaha Māori and other disabled people are living in fear and subject to violence and abuse. Many disabled people also face barriers to escaping or accessing help due to being ignored, disbelieved, silenced, or because of poverty and inaccessible safe havens and services.

Addressing the many barriers requires collaboration across a range of supports and systems. There is little systemic collaboration between the family violence, sexual violence and disability support services to help build each other's knowledge and therefore stronger competence in preventing and responding to violence experienced by disabled people and tāngata whaikaha Māori.

With the aim of amplifying disabled people's voices and ensuring a disability lens across the work of the Executive Board for Elimination of Family and Sexual Violence, the Commission brokered regular engagement with a Strategic Disability Reference Group (SDRG) of disabled subject matter experts. The group was able to review new and ongoing work, providing advice for enhancing accessibility, effectiveness and relevance for disabled people, including through building the knowledge and capability of sector staff.

When the application of a disability lens did not appear to be routinely applied, we developed guidelines for effective engagement which included ensuring that any work commissioned within the Executive Board should apply a disability lens and draw from advice already provided by the SDRG before engagement with them.

Amplifying the voices of tāngata whaikaha Māori and other disabled people has had a positive impact on the workplan and focus of the Executive Board's initiatives.

The Executive Board indicated that the Commission facilitating engagement with the SDRG had ensured more accessible processes and expertise within the executive board, and had provided subject matter expertise, a strategic lens and guidelines for future work.

To further amplify the voices and expertise of tāngata whaikaha Māori and other disabled people, and to support collaboration across sectors the Commission hosted an inclusive webinar, 'Building a violence free future for tāngata whaikaha Māori and all disabled people' - planned for the final week of 24/25 year but for technical reasons deferred to 1 July 2025. The webinar positioned violence as a human rights issue and shared the experiences of disabled people and barriers affecting access to support, the initiatives of the family violence, sexual violence and disability sectors to improve response and address barriers they faced to doing more. The webinar included the Executive Board speaking to initiatives designed to respond to disabled people's experiences and barriers.

The webinar garnered a great deal of interest (170 registrations) and high attendance. The recording was shared widely. All participants who provided feedback (30% of participants) said the webinar was valuable, including for:

- Subject matter expertise of speakers and gaining information
- Hearing different perspectives and the voice of disabled people/ being heard
- Collaboration and different perspectives
- Human rights and Te Tiriti analysis and amplifying need for change

The webinar also generated action or intentions to act including:

- Commit to training (staff) and making reasonable accommodations.
- Ongoing collaboration
- Spreading the webinar and information widely
- Improve data collection
- Use knowledge and link to the reports mentioned in the Webinar

Feedback also generated lots of ideas and showed willingness to continue to collaborate to free disabled people and tāngata whaikaha from the burden of violence currently carried.

Legal interventions, submissions and international reporting

The Commission makes submissions to law and policy makers at all levels on the human rights and Tiriti o Waitangi impacts of proposed legislation and policy. We also have functions under the Human Rights Act to appear and make submissions as an intervener in court cases that have implications for human rights in New Zealand, and to monitor New Zealand's obligations and reporting under international human rights treaties and instruments. The Commission's participation in these international processes is in our capacity as New Zealand's National Human Rights Institution, accredited with A status for independence under the United Nations Paris Principles.

Legal interventions

The Commission appeared as intervener in seven cases this year.

- *"J" v A-G* (Supreme Court), a case about the Intellectual Disability (Compulsory Care and Rehabilitation) Act 2003.
- *Chief of Defence Force v Four Members of the Armed Forces* (Supreme Court) and *Director-General of Health v New Health New Zealand Inc* (Court of Appeal), both cases dealing with how decision-makers are required to take into account New Zealand Bill of Rights Act (BORA) rights in their decision-making.
- *Putua v A-G* (Supreme Court) and *Fitzgerald v A-G* (Supreme Court), both relating to compensation for breach of BORA by the judicial branch of government.
- *Wairarapa Moana ki Pouākani Incorporation v A-G* (Court of Appeal), regarding the BORA declaration of inconsistency jurisdiction and the BORA right to access to justice.
- *Fleming v A-G* (Supreme Court), the latest in a long-running series of litigation about workers' rights and disabled people's rights in families where one family member cares for another adult family member.

A decision was issued in one of these cases, *Chief of Defence Force.*[131] The Supreme Court engaged closely with the Commission's submissions, particularly in relation to the process to be followed when a person wants to argue that government should have taken a less rights-limiting approach.[132]

[131] https://www.courtsofnz.govt.nz/cases/chief-of-defence-force-ors-v-four-members-of-the-armed-forces-

[132] See paragraphs [147]-[152].

A decision was also issued in *A-G v Chisnall*,[133] a case the Commission intervened in during the 23/24 reporting year. In *Chisnall* the Supreme Court majority decided to issue rare declarations of inconsistency with BORA. This case had been adjourned in 2022 to allow time for the Court to invite the Commission to intervene. The Commission's submissions were cited at numerous points in the judgment.

> *"**During the hearing it became apparent that the appeals raised important issues** as to the nature of the jurisdiction to issue declarations of inconsistency and as to matters of procedure associated with that jurisdiction. **We therefore adjourned the hearing part way through to enable Te Kāhui Tika Tangata | the Human Rights Commission to intervene at our invitation**, and also to enable the parties to file additional submissions on those and other issues. **We record thanks to the Commission for the very helpful submissions it has provided** on the many issues arising in the context of an application for a declaration of inconsistency."*
>
> - Supreme Court majority judgment in Chisnall (2024) at para 13, emphasis added.

At the end of the reporting year, the Commission was awaiting seven substantive decisions – in six of the cases listed above, and two heard in the 2023-24 reporting year (*Hoban v A-G* in the Court of Appeal and *Soapi v Pick Hawkes Bay Inc* in the Employment Court).

Submissions

Over the 2024/25 year the Commission issued 19 submissions to encourage promotion and protection of human rights when law and policy is developed. Most were to Parliamentary Select Committees, on the Oranga Tamariki (Repeal of Section 7AA) Amendment Bill, the Sentencing (Reinstating Three Strikes) Amendment Bill, the Oversight of Oranga Tamariki System Legislation Amendment Bill, the Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi Bill, the Responding to Abuse in Care Legislation Amendment Bill, the Mental Health Bill, the Oranga Tamariki (Responding to Serious Youth Offending) Amendment Bill ("bootcamps" Bill), the Employment Relations (Employee Remuneration Disclosure) Amendment Bill, the Education and Training Amendment Bill (No 2) (on freedom of expression in universities), and the Regulatory Standards Bill.

Submissions to other bodies included to the Ministry of Health End of Life Choice Act statutory review, the Law Commission *Ia Tangata* review of selected Human Rights Act provisions, to the Health and Disability Commissioner Act and Code review, to the Ministry of Health consultation on the use of puberty blockers in young people with gender-related health needs, and to Corrections' "Consultation on options for more transparent management of extreme threat prisoners".

[133] https://www.courtsofnz.govt.nz/cases/attorney-general-v-chisnall

International human rights reporting

The Commission carries out ongoing monitoring and promotion of New Zealand's compliance with human rights instruments both independently and alongside other members of the Children's Convention Monitoring Group, and the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities Independent Monitoring Mechanism. Additionally, the Commission supports the work of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Independent Monitoring Mechanism. The Commission also promotes compliance with the Convention Against Torture in its role as the Central National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) under the Crimes of Torture Act and the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OPCAT). With the four other OPCAT NPM agencies, the Commission publishes a joint annual report after the publication of each NPM agency's separate annual report.

We participate cyclically in the UN treaty bodies' programme of regular reviews of New Zealand. In October 2024, then EEO Commissioner and Acting Chief Commissioner Saunoamaali'i Dr Karanina Sumeo led the Commission's participation in the ninth periodic review of New Zealand by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), in Geneva. The Committee expressed grave concern about family violence rates, and made recommendations in that area as well as in relation to access to education, equal pay, health, migrant workers' rights, climate change and other issues.

In 2024 we also submitted a follow-up shadow report to the Committee Against Torture, who followed up on their highest priority recommendations to New Zealand from their review the previous year. We reported to the UN that most of the priority recommendations had been counteracted. Human rights concerns had increased in relation to medical services to people in detention, treatment of Māori in the justice system, detention of children, and prevention of and response to the abuse of children in State care. Mixed progress had been made in relation to a recommendation about survivors of torture at Lake Alice.

In 2025 we made submissions to inform upcoming reviews of New Zealand under the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). We also supported civil society (CSO) and community engagement in these processes. Our submissions and CSO submissions informed lists of themes, or lists of issues, issued by the relevant UN Committees. In coming years, the New Zealand government will be required to report against these lists which raise issues we identified in our submissions. At the end of the reporting year, preparation was continuing for the CERD review scheduled for later in 2025, including community engagements to inform our participation.

Human Rights enquiries, complaints and dispute resolution

Our vital role

This year, our enquiry, complaint and dispute resolution service supported a record number of people navigating complex and sensitive human rights issues, reflecting our growing relevance and impact in a shifting social context. These services play a vital part in making human rights a reality for everyone in Aotearoa New Zealand. The services are free, informal, confidential and available to anyone seeking information about human rights or wanting to raise concerns about unlawful discrimination or harassment.

While the Commission does not have an adjudicative or judicial role, our services are an essential part of Aotearoa New Zealand's wider human rights framework. By supporting early resolution of human rights matters, we help reduce pressure on the judicial system. Our focus on providing accessible information, guidance, and early support enables individuals and communities to better understand and exercise their rights, while also helping agencies, organisations, and businesses meet their responsibilities under the Human Rights Act 1993. If a dispute cannot be resolved through our processes, individuals have the option to take their case further, including to the Human Rights Review Tribunal.

The Commission's Information and Dispute Resolution rōpū supports people through two key service areas, each designed to help individuals and communities understand and exercise their human rights:

Human Rights Information and Support Services (HRISS): This team is the Commission's first point of contact. It provides accessible information and guidance on issues within the Commission's scope and links people to the right services when further support is needed.

Dispute Resolution Team (DRT): This team offers confidential and impartial support to individuals experiencing discrimination under the Human Rights Act. It works with parties to resolve complaints, often through mediation, with a focus on open communication and collaborative problem-solving.

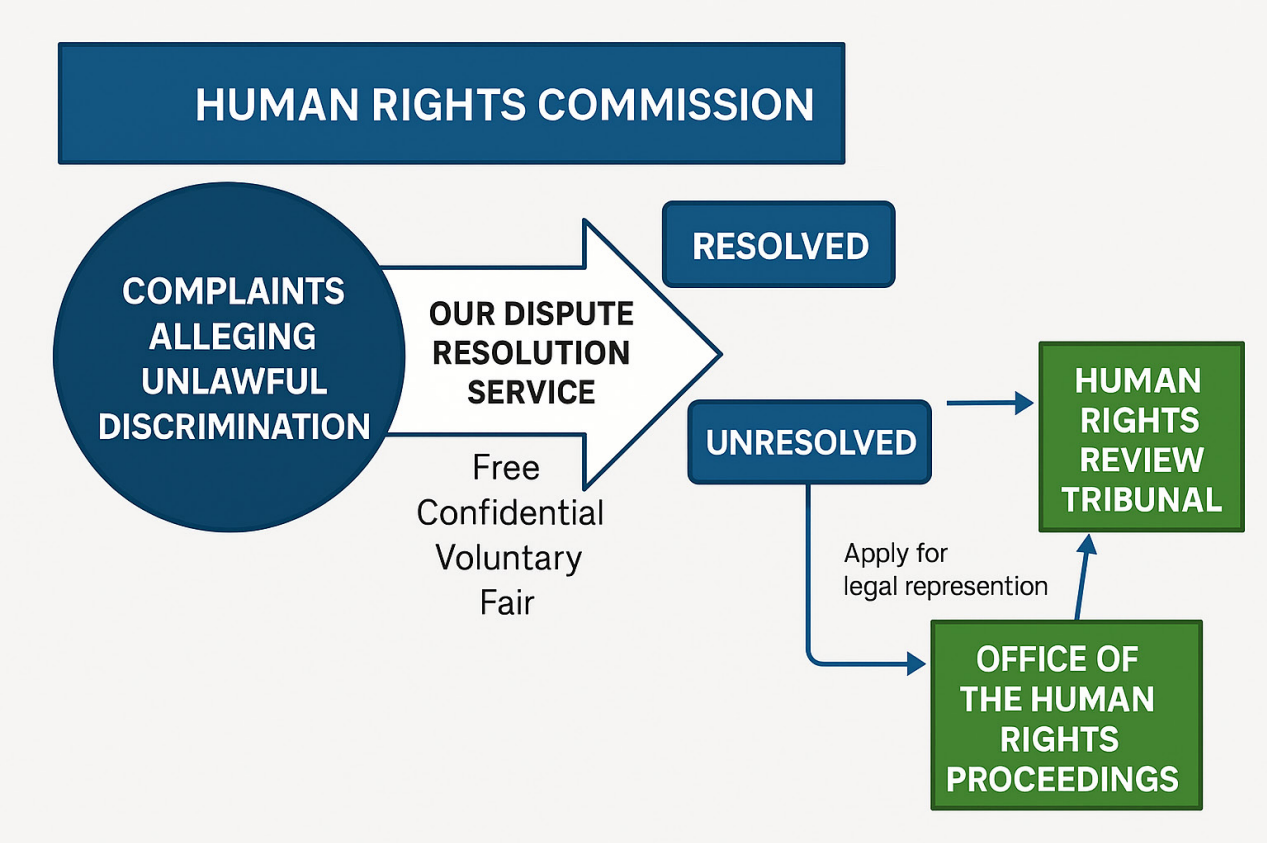
Despite operating in an environment of constrained resourcing, our enquiry, complaint and dispute resolution service has continued to deliver high-quality, accessible services to a growing number of people across Aotearoa New Zealand. We remain committed to continually improving our service and adapting to meet emerging needs, even as increasing demand and complexity test the limits of our capacity.

Pathways to resolving human rights concerns

When someone believes they have experienced unlawful discrimination, their journey often begins with Te Kāhui Tika Tangata Human Rights Commission. The Commission offers a dispute resolution process designed to help people resolve issues through conversation and mutual understanding. This process is free, impartial, voluntary, and aims to support constructive dialogue between the parties involved.

If a matter cannot be resolved through the Commission's dispute resolution process, individuals may choose to lodge a claim with the Human Rights Review Tribunal, an independent decision-making body that can make legally binding rulings. Before doing so, individuals can also apply for free legal representation from the Office of Human Rights Proceedings, a separate part of the Commission that operates independently.

This resolution pathway ensures that people have access to both support and accountability when seeking to address unlawful discrimination under the Human Rights Act.



Enquiries and complaints at a glance (2024-2025)

This year, our service responded to 8,376 people seeking help with human rights concerns. This represents a 74% increase from the previous year. This substantial increase reflects both rising public confidence in the Commission as a first port of call for human rights concerns and our role in responding to international events affecting communities in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The significant rise in service demand this year placed additional pressure on our small team and systems. While we are proud to have supported more people than ever before, the scale and pace of enquiries and complaints, coupled with staffing constraints, meant that some service users experienced delays. These challenges underscore the importance of sustainable resourcing to ensure timely, high-quality service delivery.

Here's a snapshot of our key activities and outcomes:

- Enquiries and complaints received: 8,376
  - » Enquiries and complaints closed: 8,087
- Enquiries and broader human rights complaints received: 7,724
  - » Enquiries and broader human rights complaints closed: 7,294
- Human rights information and guidance provided: 6,440
- Alleged unlawful discrimination complaints received: 652
  - » Alleged unlawful discrimination complaints closed: 793
- Dispute resolution interventions offered (includes mediations): 336
  - » Complaints that reached agreement: 136
    - Agreements that included individual remedies only: 47
    - Agreements that included individual and systemic remedies: 28
  - » Complaints unresolved:60
- Mediations held: 86
  - » Mediations that reached agreement: 66
  - » Mediations that did not reach agreement: 20

Emerging human right issues (2024-2025)

During 2024–25, the Commission received a wide range of enquiries and complaints reflecting significant shifts in the types of human rights concerns raised by the public. These patterns reflect evolving public sentiment and highlight the need for responsive and future-focused human rights practice.

The following summaries present a selection of issues people have raised with us during the year. The issues reflect differing views on the boundaries between freedom of expression, freedom of religion, and the right to be free from discrimination or harassment.

Increase in complaints about hate speech and international conflict

The Commission was contacted by many people expressing concern about hate speech, international conflict, and related social media content. The escalation of violence in Gaza and the wider Middle East region influenced how individuals and groups in New Zealand expressed their views, and how those expressions were experienced, particularly by communities with personal, cultural, or religious ties to those regions.

People raised a broad spectrum of concerns, including experiences or perceptions of discrimination, vilification, or fear of harassment. The scale and complexity of these issues highlighted the profound impact global events can have on social cohesion and human rights in Aotearoa New Zealand. They also reinforced the importance of the Commission continuing to promote respectful public dialogue, protect community wellbeing, and support the conditions needed for harmonious relations to thrive.

Public response to parliamentary suspensions

The Commission received enquiries and views relating to the suspension of Members of Parliament. We received concerns about the implications of these decisions for freedom of expression, participation in democratic processes, and cultural expression. Others raised broader issues relating to potential discrimination and consistency with Te Tiriti.

While most views were critical of the suspensions, some supported the actions taken. These differing perspectives reflect the range of opinions held across our society on political conduct, cultural identity, and the role of protest within parliamentary settings. They also highlight the importance of creating spaces where people can connect across differing viewpoints while maintaining respect and understanding.

Public demonstrations and religious expression

People contacted the Commission regarding public protests and associated commentary. Concerns were raised about the language and conduct at some events, which were perceived by some as promoting religious intolerance, expressing homophobia and transphobia, inciting hostility, or creating feelings of insecurity in public spaces.

These issues highlight the challenges involved in protecting the right to protest and freedom of expression, while also ensuring that public spaces remain inclusive and safe for all. The Commission continues to work in ways that promote mutual respect, protect individual rights, and support the conditions necessary for harmonious relations among diverse communities.

Differing views on cultural symbolism in public communications

The Commission received complaints about a regional road safety campaign shared on social media. The campaign featured a group of young people from diverse backgrounds.

Some individuals and groups expressed concern that certain visual elements could be interpreted as conveying political messages, which they considered unsuitable for a publicly funded initiative. Others, however, were more concerned about the public reaction to the campaign. In particular, some noted that online responses included commentary that appeared to single out a young person based on aspects of their visible cultural identity.

Complainants highlighted that the public discourse gave rise to harmful online commentary, including language that could be considered offensive or discriminatory.

These concerns reflect broader community perspectives on the balance between cultural expression, political neutrality, and responsible public representation. While some found the inclusion of certain symbols uncomfortable, others viewed it as a positive affirmation of cultural diversity and inclusion. A number of complainants also emphasised the importance of safeguarding children and young people from being targeted in public discussions, especially in high-profile or official online spaces.

As this was a matter that we could not help with through our dispute resolution process, we provided information about our service and other avenues to explore if wanting to pursue a complaint.

Concerns about race-based pricing and access to public events

The Commission was contacted by individuals raising concerns about a community event that used race-based ticket pricing. Some people viewed the approach as exclusionary, while others supported it to improve access for communities historically underrepresented in public spaces.

These views reflected broader questions about how to achieve equity while maintaining fairness and inclusion. The Human Rights Act prohibits discrimination in the provision of goods and services but allows for lawful measures to ensure equality where they aim to support disadvantaged groups.

The Commission acknowledged the intention behind the event and encouraged approaches that promote positive race relations, protect rights, and support harmonious relations in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The emergence of complex and often polarising issues has increased the demand for nuanced, skilled engagement. Meeting these needs with limited resources has required our service to be both agile and innovative in our approach.

Most cited prohibited grounds of discrimination and context

Each year, the Commission analyses complaints received to identify the most reported grounds of unlawful discrimination and the contexts in which they occur. Our dispute resolution service closed 793 complaints. This data provides important insight into the types of discrimination people experience in Aotearoa New Zealand and supports the Commission's ongoing work to advance human rights and promote fair treatment.

During 2024-2025, the Commission received the following most frequently cited grounds for unlawful discrimination:

- **Disability** - 29% was the most cited ground of unlawful discrimination this year. Individuals reported negative experiences primarily in employment, followed by in the provision of goods and services, and within government interactions, highlighting ongoing structural and cultural barriers affecting participation and access.
- **Race and ethnic or national origins** - 25% taken together, were the second most cited discrimination grounds. These complaints were most often reported in the provision of goods and services such as retail, hospitality, or health sectors, followed by employment, and then engagement with government agencies, reflecting the ongoing impact of racial discrimination in public-facing environments.
- **Sex -** 9% - which includes discrimination related to gender, pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding, was the third most cited ground, and was most prevalent in workplaces, with further instances occurring when engaging with government and when accessing goods and services.

These results highlight ongoing challenges people face when engaging with employment, accessing the goods and services, and engaging with government. They help shape the Commission's broader strategic priorities, including policy development, advocacy, and addressing systemic issues. A detailed breakdown of the prohibited grounds of discrimination and affected areas of life is provided below.

Grounds closed complaints F25

Grounds	Grounds Count	%
Disability	230	29
Ethnic or national origins	107	13
Race	97	12
Sex	74	9
Sexual harassment	65	8
Victimisation	47	6
Racial harassment	42	5
Age	35	4
Family status	27	3
Religious belief	21	3
Colour	17	2
Sexual orientation	10	1
Employment status	8	1
Marital status	7	1
Political opinion	7	1
Domestic Violence	4	0
Ethical belief	3	0
Racial disharmony	3	0
Conversion Practices	0	0
	804	

Areas of life closed complaints F25

Area of life	Area of Life Count	%
Employment	183	30
Provision of goods and services	146	24
Government Activity	122	20
Educational establishments	71	12
Land, housing and accommodation	32	5
Pre-employment	29	5
Places, facilities, vehicles	16	3
Professional and trade associations	6	1
Public places - racial disharmony (s61)	4	1
Qualifying bodies	3	0
Advertisements	1	0
Vocational training bodies	1	0
Partnerships	0	0
	614	

Supporting the resolution of discrimination complaints

Resolving 793 complaints fairly and effectively remained a core strength of our service this year. In 336 of these matters, we provided dispute resolution interventions, including mediation where appropriate. This service is delivered by our specialist mediators and requires the agreement of both the complainant and respondent to participate.

We achieved resolution[134] in 136 complaints (54%). Outcomes included apologies, financial compensation, staff training and policy reform remedies demonstrating the value of our dispute resolution service in achieving meaningful change through accessible and respectful processes. Mediation remains a particularly effective resolution tool. Of the 86 mediations provided this year[135], 66 (77%) resulted in full or partial resolution. Our mediators played a key role in supporting constructive and respectful engagement between parties.

While our process does not always result in resolution, dispute resolution offers an important early opportunity to address issues of discrimination. Where agreement cannot be reached, complainants retain the right to take their case to the Human Rights Review Tribunal.

[134] Includes partial resolution

[135] Requires agreement by both parties to participate

No of dispute resolution interventions offered (includes Mediations):	336
Dispute resolution interventions (including mediations) that were resolved or partly resolved:	136
Individual remedies agreed to, such as an apology, financial compensation, or other personal redress	82
Systemic remedies agreed to that addressed wider organisational improvements, such as policy or procedure changes, staff training, or public statements	13
Systemic and individual remedies agreed to	41
Provided information - No further action required	13
Dispute resolution interventions (including mediations) where both parties were unable to reach agreement (unresolved)	60
Dispute resolution intervention offered but declined by the respondent	76
Complaint withdrawn by complainant	51

Listening and learning

The Commission actively reviews feedback from people who contact us, to better understand what they value in their experience and where improvements can be made. Feedback this year underscored the importance of responsiveness, respectful communication, and resolution pathways that empower individuals and communities.

Many people described their interactions with the Commission as respectful and impartial, noting that they felt “heard and understood” during what were often difficult and complex situations. Others highlighted the clarity and usefulness of the information we provided, which helped them better understand their rights and options. The dispute resolution process, particularly mediation, was also seen as a valuable tool for exploring options, facilitating difficult conversations and achieving a sense of closure.

Some people raised concerns about delays in response times. These delays occurred in the context of sustained high demand and reduced resourcing which affected our capacity to respond as quickly as people had hoped. We acknowledge that these constraints sometimes impacted the timeliness of our responses and required us to make difficult prioritisation decisions. Despite this, our staff consistently upheld the mana and dignity of those engaging with our services.

We deeply value the voices of those who use our services. The experiences of what worked and what could be better continued to shape how we engage with individuals and communities.

In response to feedback, we are actively:

- Reviewing and strengthening our internal processes to streamline enquiry and complaint triage and enhance the efficiency of providing information and dispute resolution pathways.
- Exploring system solutions to improve communication responsiveness and data analysis, as resourcing allows.
- Prioritising enquiries and complaints that pose significant human rights risks to ensure prompt attention.

These insights directly inform our internal training, service design, and operations.

Our performance (2024-2025)

The Commission's information and dispute resolution services are measured annually by the Ministry of Justice against two specific Statement of Performance Expectation (SPE) targets. We met or exceeded both targets this year, demonstrating our commitment to quality, accountability, and continuous improvement.

Performance Measure	Target 2024/25	Actual 2024/25
SPE 7.1: The level of satisfaction expressed by service users who have engaged with our information and complaints processes.[136]	75%	**76%**
SPE 7.2: Responsive and timely resolution of complaints of unlawful discrimination closed within one year.	80%	**99%**

[136] This year, we streamlined our feedback process by replacing two separate service satisfaction surveys with a single, unified survey. Previously, we used different surveys for people engaging with our mediation services and those seeking information or support on broader human rights issues. Now, all service users who provide a valid email or postal address are invited to complete the same survey, ensuring a more consistent and inclusive approach to capturing user experience and satisfaction.

Key metrics for 2024-2025

Behind each metric is a person or whānau seeking fairness, safety, and resolution. We are proud to deliver services that are not only measurable, but meaningful. This year's data affirms the Commission's crucial role as a trusted, high volume public interface in Aotearoa New Zealand's human rights system.

Performance metrics	2024-2025 Actual	2023-2024 Comparative
Enquiries and complaints received and closed		
Enquiries and complaints received	8,376[137]	4,806
Enquiries and complaints closed	8,087	4,720
Unlawful discrimination complaints received[138]	652	887
Unlawful discrimination complaints closed	793	920
Average days to resolve a complaint alleging unlawful discrimination	173 days	130 days
Enquiries and broader human rights complaints received	7,724	3,919
Enquiries and broader human rights complaints closed	7,294	3,800
Average days to resolve enquiries and broader human rights complaints	52 days	33 days

[137] We saw a 74% increase in contacts to our service, with a doubling of human rights enquiries and a significant rise in demand relating to international conflict and hate speech

[138] A complaint alleging unlawful discrimination under the Human Rights Act 1993 refers to a claim that a person has been treated unfairly based on a prohibited ground of discrimination under section 21 of the Act. These complaints fall under Part 1A (discrimination by government or public sector bodies) or Part 2 (discrimination in areas such as employment, education, or the provision of and access to services).

Dispute resolution outcomes (Closed Matters)		
Human Rights information and guidance provided	6440	3960
Dispute resolution interventions offered (includes mediations)	336	376
Dispute resolution interventions resolved	136	158
Parties agree to individual remedies only	82	99
Parties agree to systemic remedies only	13	10
Parties agree to individual and systemic remedies	41	47
Mediations		
Mediations held	86	93
Mediations resolved	66	58
Mediations unresolved	20	31

Note: Data may vary depending on the time of reporting due to the natural lifecycle of complaint-handling. Figures can change as cases are received, assessed, reopened and closed over time.

Our performance results reflect not only the commitment of our staff but also the cumulative impact of sustained service pressure. Meeting or exceeding our targets under these conditions speaks to the resourcefulness and professionalism of our service. To maintain this performance, and meet increasing public need, ongoing investment in capability and infrastructure is essential.

Our impact

Case studies

The stories below offer a glimpse into the human side of our enquiry, complaint and dispute resolution service where early resolution, respectful processes, and shared understanding have supported people to feel heard, valued, and treated fairly. They illustrate how our service not only resolves individual concerns but also supports system-level change and accountability.

Note: *All personal information has been removed, and details adjusted to protect privacy.*

Guidance helps school resolve cultural conflict constructively

A high school principal approached the Commission seeking guidance after members of the school community raised a concern during the school's Cultural Week. A student had created a poster expressing pride in their cultural heritage. However, a group within the school community found the content of the poster politically controversial and offensive.

The principal had already sought advice through other channels but was looking for further clarity on how to manage the situation in a way that upheld human rights. She wanted to avoid escalating tensions within the school community and felt caught between two competing concerns:

- protecting the student's right to cultural expression
- responding respectfully to the concerns raised by the group.

The Commission provided early guidance grounded in a human rights framework. This included explaining the relevant context under the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act and the Human Rights Act, in particular the qualified nature of the right to freedom of expression, and the legal threshold for harmful speech under section 61 of the Act. We advised that the poster was unlikely to meet the threshold for unlawful expression and shared the benefits of having clear school policies with objective standards around harmful or offensive speech.

We also reviewed and provided feedback on the principal's draft response to the concerned group, encouraging an approach that acknowledged their discomfort while affirming the student's right to express their cultural identity.

Following this support, the principal told us she felt more confident in her response. She was able to maintain an inclusive environment at the school, supporting diverse cultural identities while upholding respectful dialogue.

Promoting inclusion through listening and accountability

A teacher approached the Commission after experiencing persistent mistreatment following her gender transition while employed at a school. Despite raising concerns with school management, she reported being repeatedly misgendered by staff and students and subjected to negative comments. She described feeling unsafe and unsupported, which significantly affected her mental health. Ultimately, she resigned and moved to a different school where she felt affirmed and welcomed.

Through our dispute resolution service, the Commission shared her concerns with the former school. In response, the school provided a heartfelt written apology, acknowledging the harm caused to the teacher and expressing a genuine commitment to building a more inclusive environment for all students and staff.

The teacher told us she felt a sense of closure. She believed that, by coming forward, she had helped raise awareness of the seriousness of what had occurred and prompted reflection and learning at the school.

Supporting informed choice and inclusion

A concerned friend contacted the Commission seeking advice on how to support a disabled person in their life. They explained that their friend relies on a support worker to get out and about but had not been able to meet up with friends or make independent decisions. The caller felt the support worker might be too controlling and wanted to understand how to help their friend.

We provided information about the rights of disabled people, including the right to participate fully in society and to make decisions about their own care. These rights are affirmed in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

We introduced the concept of supported decision-making, the principle that disabled people should be empowered to make their own decisions, and provided access to the support, information and advice they need to do this.

We acknowledged their advocacy for their friend and emphasised the importance of seeking their friend's perspective and wishes. We also provided information they could share with their friend about the Health and Disability Commissioner and the Advocacy Service, which support people with complaints about disability services. We encouraged their friend to contact us if they had questions or wanted to talk through their options with us directly.

Complaint results in company policy change and CEO commitment

Two people contacted the Commission separately after experiencing similar issues when travelling with a major transport provider. Both used mobility devices to assist with walking but were told by the company that the weight of their devices would count toward travel allowance.

One person was asked to pay an additional fee to take their device, while the other was told their device could not be taken on the journey at all. Both described feeling stressed and confused at being forced to choose between taking essential equipment and packing for their holiday. They also expressed concern about how policies like these affect the dignity and freedom of disabled travellers.

The Commission contacted the transport company to raise the concerns and share information about the Human Rights Act. The company's Chief Executive acknowledged that the policy had unintended and discriminatory consequences for people who rely on mobility devices.

As a result of our engagement, the company committed to changing the policy to ensure that mobility devices are not treated as part of a passenger's luggage allowance and can be carried at no extra cost. This change is now in place for all travellers.

Both complainants were relieved and pleased to hear that their experiences had led to a positive change. One noted that policies that overlook the needs of disabled people can make them feel invisible. They were both proud that by speaking up, they helped ensure fairer travel experiences for others in the future.

Restoring dignity after racial profiling by facial recognition technology

A customer was mistakenly identified by a store's facial recognition system as a previously trespassed shoplifter. Despite providing multiple forms of identification, she was publicly approached and confronted by staff. She described the interaction as humiliating and racially charged, leaving her feeling unsafe and distressed.

The individual contacted the Commission, raising concerns of racial profiling and discrimination based on ethnicity, issues that engage the right to be free from unlawful discrimination under the Human Rights Act 1993. The incident also highlighted the potential human rights implications of emerging technologies in public spaces.

Through the Commission's dispute resolution service, the parties took part in our voluntary mediation process. The conversation enabled a respectful exploration of the harm caused and the values of mana tangata (inherent human dignity) that underpin our human rights framework.

The mediation resulted in a confidential agreement that included a formal apology, financial redress, and a commitment from the store to provide staff training on the responsible use of facial recognition technology and on recognising and addressing discriminatory behaviour.

Job applicant's concern leads to fairer recruitment practices

A job applicant raised a concern about a potential breach of the Human Rights Act 1993 after applying for a customer service role with a large company. The application form required a date of birth, and when the applicant did not receive a response several weeks later, he questioned whether his age, 65, may have influenced the outcome.

The applicant lodged a complaint with the Commission. We contacted the employer to share the concern and provide guidance, including our pre-employment guidelines on avoiding discrimination during recruitment.

The employer explained that they had routinely collected applicants' ages to ensure legal compliance for higher risk roles requiring staff to be over 18. However, through our engagement, they recognised that this was not necessary for the customer service position in question.

As a result, the company immediately updated its recruitment process. They committed to asking only whether applicants were over 18 and only when relevant to the role. They amended their application form to include a clear explanation when such information is required. The company also clarified that the delay in responding was due to receiving a large volume of applications for the position and not related to the applicant's age. The applicant was satisfied with the company's response and the positive changes made. He expressed appreciation that his concerns were taken seriously and relief that he had not been unfairly disadvantaged.

Addressing harm from sexual harassment in the workplace

An employee contacted the Commission to share concerns about experiences of sexual harassment in her workplace. She described inappropriate and sexually suggestive comments her employer had made that left her feeling uncomfortable, distressed and unsupported. After raising her concerns directly with her employer and seeing no meaningful change, she decided to resign.

Uncertain about next steps and still affected by the experience, she agreed to engage in the Commission's mediation process. With her consent, the Commission contacted her former employer to offer mediation. He accepted, expressing a desire to put things right but acknowledging he was not sure how best to do so.

The mediator worked separately with each person to prepare them for the conversation and reduce their anxiety. The mediator helped the former employee explain what genuine acknowledgment looked like to her and provided guidance to the employer about how to make an effective apology.

The mediator helped the participants focus on understanding the impact of the employer's behaviour had been, and on repairing the harm. During the conversation, the employer acknowledged the impacts of his actions, expressed a sincere apology, and shared the steps he had taken to improve his organisation's culture and ensure staff felt safe and supported.

The parties reached an agreement that included a commitment that the behaviour would not be repeated, and financial support to assist with the former employee's counselling costs. Both individuals expressed their appreciation for the mediation process. They said it had allowed them to feel heard, supported and better able to move forward.

Volunteer raises concerns about sexism and seeks cultural change

A volunteer contacted the Commission with concerns about how she was treated after she raised issues about sexist comments made by other volunteers in the organisation. She said she was excluded from her duties after speaking up and felt the organisation had not taken her concerns seriously.

The Commission facilitated a mediation where both parties shared their experiences, asked questions, and explored possible resolutions. The organisation apologised and outlined the steps it was taking to improve its culture and respond more effectively to discrimination concerns. An offer to settle the matter was also made.

Although the mediation did not lead to a final resolution, the volunteer felt vindicated by the opportunity to share her experience and receive an apology. She said that as soon as the Commission became involved, she felt more at ease. She left the process feeling informed and empowered to take further steps, including applying to the Office of Human Rights Proceedings for free representation at the Human Rights Review Tribunal.

The organisation's representative also noted that the mediator had created a safe environment for open and constructive dialogue.

"Respectful and fair process with a real and genuine commitment to try and resolve the matter. Additional support through the mediation was provided to the other party because they did not have a support, which I'm sure was appreciated by both sides. The mediator made it easy to be open and transparent in communication in a complex and tricky situation where potential conflict could have overridden the purpose of finding common ground."

"Fantastic service!"

"Excellent support throughout the process"

"Thank you for making this a mana enhancing process for all parties, but most importantly our customer. Your professionalism and commitment to ensuring all opinions were heard and understood, and that agreed actions were followed through is appreciated."

"We found the process was well managed and suited the nature of the complaint very well. The mediator was also very professional and personable."

"Much thanks to for assisting me."

"Your staff were really friendly and helped clarify few things which was said in the meeting. Knowledgeable and helped resolve the issue. Much appreciated. Thankyou"

"I appreciate having good people like you working on these sorts of things in our communities."

"I really appreciate all the time, and dedication, trust and more from everyone. Thank you"

"Thank you so much for your calm and supportive guidance throughout the process."

"Your staff were wonderful and kind and tried their very best to find common ground between me and the organisation. I'm in awe of their humanity and wisdom. Thank you for all the effort you put in on my behalf."

"I appreciated being called before being emailed."

"Extremely helpful, compassionate, provided 100% assistance to me in all aspects of my complaint throughout this process. I felt that 'I had been heard' and that my complaint was taken seriously and that 'there is hope' at the end of this process."

"This was a very positive mediation and we appreciated the tone and environment."

"You supply a much needed service to the community, its importance cannot be understated. Thank You."

"Your staff member was so kind and considerate. Thank you so much."

"You are a voice for those whom do not have the means to hold such a powerful organisation to account with mediation. Just fantastic."

"Thank you for your assistance in bringing the parties together and guiding discussion, it was much appreciated."

"This was the most useful interaction I've had after months of trying! Thanks so much for your kindness, ideas and empathy!"

"Thank you for guiding us through what was a real unknown process for us... Thanks for making us feel comfortable to talk through what had happened and come to a resolution."

"Our mediator did a great job of keeping the conversation on track. They felt very fair and measured in their approach. Very practical and good at setting expectations ahead of the meeting."

"It was in the end the outcome we all had hoped for. I don't know how you did it! I'm so grateful to you for persisting with this request for us. We really were getting nowhere so without your help it would have had to be abandoned. I can't thank you enough"

"Thank you so much for your kindness and support. Your actions made me feel truly respected and equal."

The Office of Human Rights Proceedings

The Director of Human Rights Proceedings is required to report annually to the Minister on the Director's decisions following applications for free legal representation in the Human Rights Review Tribunal (Tribunal).[139]

Report to the Minister on the Director of Human Rights Proceedings' decisions

I am pleased to note the Office has received several groundbreaking decisions from the Tribunal in the last twelve months. In a well-publicised proceeding, we represented a young woman who was forced out of the workplace and onto parental leave, and then felt she had to resign, once she became pregnant. The Tribunal agreed she had been discriminated against because of her pregnancy and awarded nearly $100,000 in lost wages, foregone parental leave payments and for humiliation, loss of dignity and injury to feelings.[140]

In another case, our client had filed proceedings against her local Muslim association to seek better inclusion of women, particularly at its annual general meetings. That claim was settled, but our client considered the association was not living up to its promises. We filed proceedings to enforce the settlement agreement, and the Tribunal agreed the association had breached the settlement agreement. It required the association to hold two annual gatherings for its women's chapter dedicated to support and mentoring for its female members and awarded damages to mark the harm suffered by our client in pursuing her case. I hope it will serve as a useful reminder to parties to take seriously the obligations in settlement agreements.

Finally, we have received two important decisions under the Privacy Act 2020, following my intervention in proceedings brought by other parties.[141] In each, we were pleased to see the Tribunal rely on our submissions in support of the claims going ahead, and applying an access to justice model for an expansive jurisdiction for the Tribunal.

This year has also seen significant change within our Office. In late 2024 I announced my intention to step down from the role of Director. We also farewelled our solicitor, with his replacement commencing in July 2025. In a team of only four lawyers, that has meant our capacity this year has been significantly reduced, and I am very proud of our staff's ability to work to a high standard in those circumstances.

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[139] Under s 92A(4) of the Human Rights Act 1993 (HRA) the Director must report to the Minister at least once each year and, without referring to identifiable individuals concerned, on the Director's decisions under s 90(1)(a) (applications for representation in the Human Rights Review Tribunal in respect to enforcing settlement) and s 90(1)(c) (applications for representation in the Tribunal in respect to complaints under the HRA).

[140] *Doria v Diamond Laser Medispa Taupo Limited & Ors* [2025] NZHRRT 12.

[141] *Sheehan v Wilson (Appointing Representative Defendant)* [2024] NZHRRT 62 and *Steele v Commissioner of Police (Jurisdiction)* [2025] NZHRRT 21.

In the coming year, that work includes several significant sexual harassment claims, proceedings challenging benefit rates under the Social Security Act 2018 and the availability of ACC, a case about access to medication in prison and two proceedings on behalf of our transgender whānau. We also await a Tribunal decision on access to New Zealand Sign Language on television. I see our role as giving a voice to the vulnerable and seeking to uphold their rights, and I am proud of the mahi our staff undertakes every day to make that a reality. I thank them for their utmost dedication to the role and to human rights jurisprudence in Aotearoa New Zealand.

I am concerned to see that funding for three Deputy Chairpersons in the Tribunal has not been renewed. The Tribunal has been beset by delays in recent years and, in my view, requires a significant and permanent injection of resources to ensure all parties have the benefit of timely decisions and effective remedies. I hope further resources can be allocated soon.

The Tribunal performs an important constitutional function when it hears cases under Part 1A of the Human Rights Act 1993. It has the power to declare enactments as being inconsistent with the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990. This triggers a requirement for the Attorney-General to inform Parliament of the Declaration and for the responsible Minister to subsequently report to Parliament on the Government's intended response. In a country that does not have embedded human rights protections in supreme law, this is an incredibly important accountability tool. Accordingly, the Tribunal should be given the resources that match its constitutional role and importance.

Finally, this will be my last report as Director. I have been incredibly privileged to have this role. I am grateful to all of my colleagues in the Office of Human Rights Proceedings, from solicitors to law clerks, as well as the support I have received from Commissioners and the Human Rights Commission staff over the years. Since I indicated my intention to resign and reduced my hours, my Deputy, Greg Robins, has had to step up and absorb a large amount of the administrative and management responsibilities for the role. I am very grateful for him doing so. I leave the Office in good hands, with excellent human rights litigators ready to continue to litigate in the public interest. I look forward to watching the Office's continued mahi.

I would like to make special mention of an integral part of the Office of Human Rights Proceedings. Since the Office's inception in 2002, we have been fortunate to have Pamela Rowe as part of our team. Her care and dedication to her work is without peer, and she has provided an incredible public service well over two decades. She is known, with cause, as The Real Director. Thank you for your service and support, Pam.

Michael Timmins

Former Director of Human Rights Proceedings

Summary of decisions made

The Director made fifty-seven (57) decisions on applications for representation in the Tribunal. Of those, the Director decided to grant representation to nine (9) applicants: seven (7) grants were for representation in the Tribunal, and two (2) were for representation for settlement attempts.

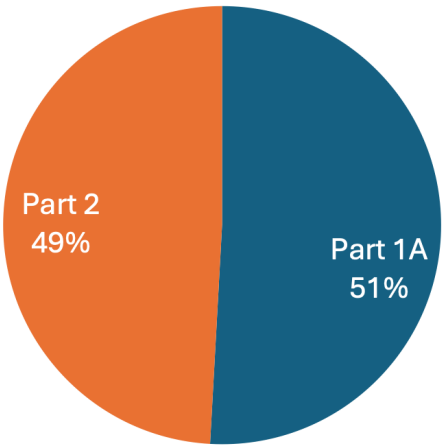
Forty-three (43) decisions were made not to provide representation; three (3) to take no further action; and two (2) were referred back to the Human Rights Commission for mediation.

Expressed as a percentage, the Director provided representation to sixteen percent (16%) of applicants overall.

The proportion of decisions for complaints made under Part 1A vs Part 2 of the Human Rights Act 1993

Some twenty-nine (29) of the decisions made concerned complaints under Part 1A of the HRA[142] as against twenty-eight (28) that concerned complaints under Part 2 of the HRA[143].

Percentage of complaints made under Part 1A and Part 2



[142] Part 1A applies to unlawful discrimination complaints against Government agencies or persons or bodies performing public acts pursuant to law (other than complaints about employment discrimination, racial disharmony, racial harassment, sexual harassment, and victimisation).

[143] Part 2 applies to complaints against private entities.

Part 1A complaints by entity, ground and decision

The table below shows the public-sector entities or type of public-sector entities complained against, the prohibited grounds of discrimination alleged in respect to those entities, and the Director's decisions.

Public Sector Entities	Ground[144]	Decision
• ACC • Department of Corrections • Department of Internal Affairs • Inland Revenue Department • Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment • Ministry of Education and/or Educational Establishment • Ministry of Health • Ministry of Social Development • Tertiary Institution • Te Whatu Ora Health New Zealand • Other bodies performing a public function, power or duty conferred or imposed by law	Disability (16) Employment Status (1) Ethnic/National Origin (2) Race (4) Racial Harassment (1) Sex (5)	No (14), Yes (1), RB[145] (1) No (1) No (2) No (4) Yes(S)[146] (1) No (1), NFA[147](1), Yes (3)

[144] Where an applicant has relied on several grounds, a single primary ground has been isolated.

[145] 'RB' denotes that the Director decided to refer the matter back to the Human Rights Commission for a dispute resolution meeting or other form of mediation designed to facilitate resolution of the complaint.

[146] 'Yes(S)' indicates the Director agreed to provided representation for settlement negotiations only.

[147] 'NFA' denotes that the Director decided to take no further action on the application.

Part 2 complaints by area, ground, and decision

The following table shows the areas of life, the prohibited grounds of discrimination alleged to be involved, and the Director's decisions in respect to applications involving complaints under Part 2 of the HRA.

Area	Ground[148]	Decision
Employment/ Pre-Employment (16)	• Disability (4) • Ethnic/National Origin (1) • Ethical Belief (1) • Race (1) • Religious Belief (1) • Sex (1) • Sexual Harassment (3) • Victimisation/Protected Disclosure (4)	• No (4) • No (1) • No (1) • RB[149] (1) • No (1) • No (1) • Yes (1), No (2) • No (2), NFA[150] (2)
Goods & services (10)	• Disability (2) • Marital Status (1) • Race (2) • Racial Harassment (1) • Sex (2) • Sexual Harassment (2)	• No (2) • No (1) • No (2) • Yes(S)[151] (1) • Yes (2) • No (2)
Other forms of discrimination (2)	• Disability (1) • Race (1)	• No (1) [No jurisdiction] • No (1) [No jurisdiction]

[148] See n 144.

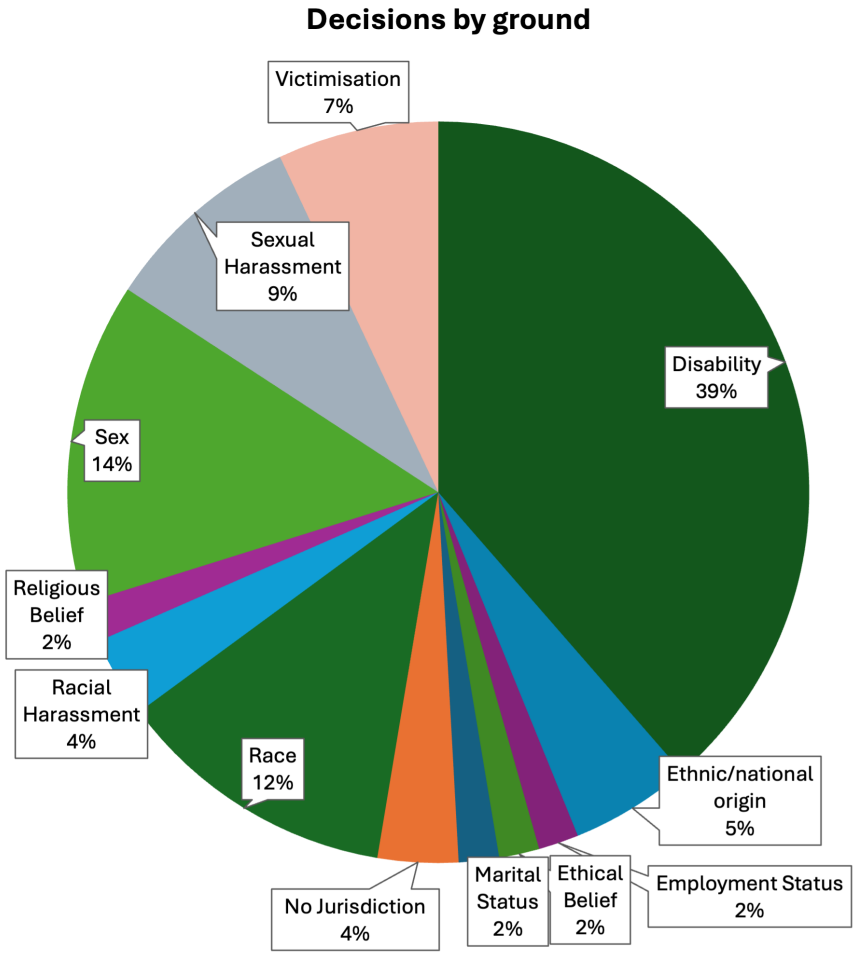
[149] See n 145.

[150] See n 147.

[151] See n 146.

Decisions by ground

The following diagram shows all decisions, whether relating to Part 1A or Part 2, made by reference to the alleged prohibited grounds[152] involved in the complaints, as a percentage.



The Director's Privacy Act functions

The Director also has statutory powers, duties and functions under the Privacy Act 2020. Significantly, the Director may bring privacy interference proceedings upon referral from the Privacy Commissioner.

The Director did not receive any referrals from the Privacy Commissioner this reporting year.

The Director made five (5) decisions on invitations to intervene in proceedings before the Tribunal pursuant to reg 14 of the Human Rights Review Tribunal Regulations 2002. No decisions were made to intervene in these matters.

[152] See n 144.

Organisational Health and Capability

We are in a new strategic phase

The work as Aotearoa New Zealand's national human rights institution is more important than ever with emerging human rights challenges nationally and internationally. In 2024/25 we are in a time of transforming with the end of warrants for a number of statutory officeholders and the appointment and arrival of new commissioners in November 2024 who bring new perspectives and expertise to the Commission. With constrained resources we have been responding to our financial reality while recognising the need for adequate resources to effectively fulfil our statutory obligations. Following on from the retrenchment action necessary in 2023-24, we have reviewed and consolidated core functions to be more efficient, focused and coordinated for collective impact.

We are focused on organisational sustainability, efficiency and effectiveness as a Tiriti-based organisation

We have a comprehensive understanding of our organisational cost drivers and continually work to improve our service delivery and responsiveness so we achieve our mandate to promote and protect human rights in Aotearoa New Zealand. We have focused action to consolidate resources, reduce cost, strengthen and sustain the Commission in 2024-25 across a number of operational areas:

- Resourcing and structural efficiencies, delivered through various organisational change processes including the consolidation of administrative functions for improved cross-team support and review of corporate services capability needs
- Recruitment and resourcing aligned to organisational priorities
- Relocation to a new Auckland office
- Streamlining business-as-usual expenditure
- Successful contract renegotiations across key suppliers
- Optimising funding revenue
- Completion and rollout of Te Tūāpapa, our human and indigenous rights staff capability programme, and development of a sector-leading, foundational Te Tiriti policy which is now aligned to a number of revised organisational policies, all part of the Commission's infrastructure.

We are supported by our Finance, Audit and Risk Committee (chaired by an external member) and our Wellbeing, Health and Safety Committee (governance and operational leaders and members) that provide an extra line of assurance for our strategic planning, financial performance and reporting, health and safety and core business policies and processes.

Our highly capable, committed team are our greatest resource

We are committed to being a good employer. Our organisational values, mana tangata, māia-tika-pono, whanaungatanga, and the principles and practice of equal employment opportunities are embedded in how we work and our organisational policies and practice.

Good and safe working conditions

- The Commission has recently undertaken a comprehensive review, development, and implementation of key policies to strengthen staff wellbeing, safety, and operational effectiveness.
- **Managing Unreasonable Conduct Policy** – Implemented to safeguard staff, ensuring physical security matters are addressed promptly and consistently.
  Wellbeing and Health & Safety Policies – Renewed to include emergency preparedness provisions and strengthen wellbeing offerings.
  Comprehensive Leave Policy – Developed and implemented to provide staff clear guidance on entitlements and related processes, and supports managers in applying the Commission's leave provisions consistently.
- Generous leave provisions and wellbeing support are available to all staff, and professional support supervision is regularly accessed by some staff.
- *Haumaru*, the Wellbeing, Health and Safety Committee has strong representation from the Board, staff and leaders, delivering a comprehensive work programme.
- A comprehensive wellbeing programme tailored to our environment occurs throughout the year, including free flu vaccinations, employee assistance programme (and alternative providers when appropriate), workstation assessments and equipment.
- First aiders and office wardens undertake regular training, and in 2024-25 a number of first responders were trained to support staff with wellbeing concerns.
- The Commission's culture promotes autonomy, personal responsibility and flexibility, supporting staff to achieve work-life balance. Working from home guidance and the flexible working policy provides clear direction for both staff and leaders.

Recognition of the aims and aspirations of Māori

- The Commission's journey to be a Tiriti-based organisation and our partnership with National Iwi Chairs Forum demonstrates recognition of the aims and aspirations of Māori with conviction and commitment.
- We have completed and rolled out Te Tūāpapa, our online professional development programme to build human rights and the human rights dimensions of Te Tiriti knowledge.
- There are active networks for tangata whenua staff, and tools and resources enable our staff to build and apply knowledge about Te Tiriti, indigenous rights and human rights.
- In our latest AskYourTeam survey our staff confirmed and valued the Commission's support for the use of te reo Māori (86%), actively values te āo Māori (85%) and Te Tiriti (80%).

Equal employment opportunities including recognition of employment requirements of cultural differences, ethnicity, disability and gender

- Following our 2023-24 results, the Commission eliminated pay gaps related to gender, ethnicity (Māori, Pacific Peoples) and disability. In 2024-25, our pay gaps further improved in favour of females, Māori, Pacific Peoples, and employees with disabilities.
- We continue to maintain an effective, trusted working partnership with the Public Service Association (PSA), meeting regularly to consult on organisational policies and working practices, wellbeing, health and safety measures, and change management.
- Our wellbeing programme is tailored to the Commission's environment and the diverse needs of our people, including access to alternative employee assistance and/or professional support providers, as well as Rongoā Māori services.
- In our latest AskYourTeam survey staff affirmed that the Commission respects their values and cultural beliefs (83%) and the Commission is culturally competent (82%) and diverse and inclusive (78%).
- Review of employee turnover and reasons for exit are analysed to identify trends and opportunities.

Impartial selection of suitably qualified people and opportunity for capability enhancement

- Robust recruitment and selection processes and policies are in place to attract a diverse range of applicants, ensure consistent decision-making, and appropriately manage conflicts of interest.
- All recruitment panels include appropriate representation of tino rangatiratanga and experienced people leaders.
- Selection processes assess the capabilities required to support the Commission's Tiriti-based organisational journey.
- Staff have access to a range of development opportunities, including projects, secondments, and higher duties.
- Active networks are in place for tangata whenua, Pacific Peoples, and people of other ethnicities.
- In our latest AskYourTeam survey our staff confirmed very positive results in people's experience of the organisation (80%) and organisational culture (74%).

Gender, ethnic and disability pay gaps have been eliminated

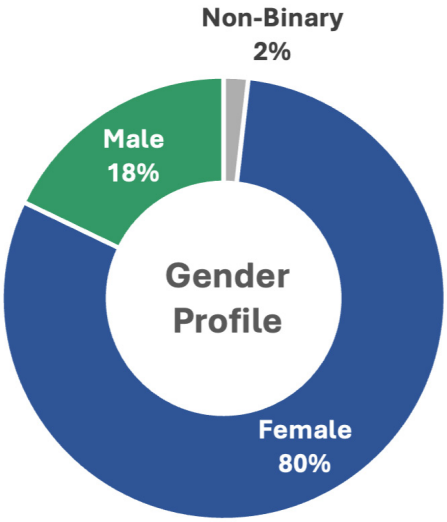
Since 2020/21, focused action to address pay gaps has resulted in their elimination by 2023/24, with further progress achieved in 2024/25. This represents significant improvement, as prior to 2020/21 the pay gaps for women and Māori pay gaps were 10.93% and 8.43% respectively. For Asian and MELAA (Middle Eastern, Latin American, African) and non-binary staff, numbers are too small to report in earlier years without compromising individual privacy.

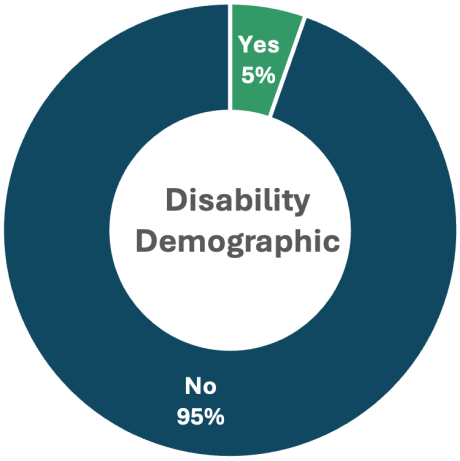
Progress to eliminate pay gaps from 2022/23 to 2024/25 is illustrated below:

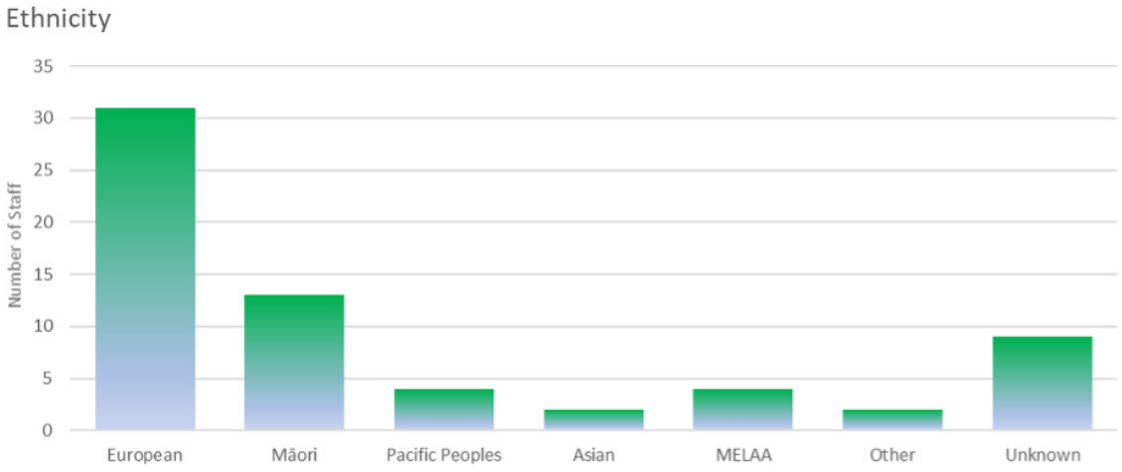
Pay gap related to	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Gender	2.00%	-0.95%	-3.79%
Māori	-0.27%	-1.79%	-3.12%
Pacific Peoples	-13.39%	-10.81%	-12.34%
Disability	-4.32%	-1.94%	-1.44%

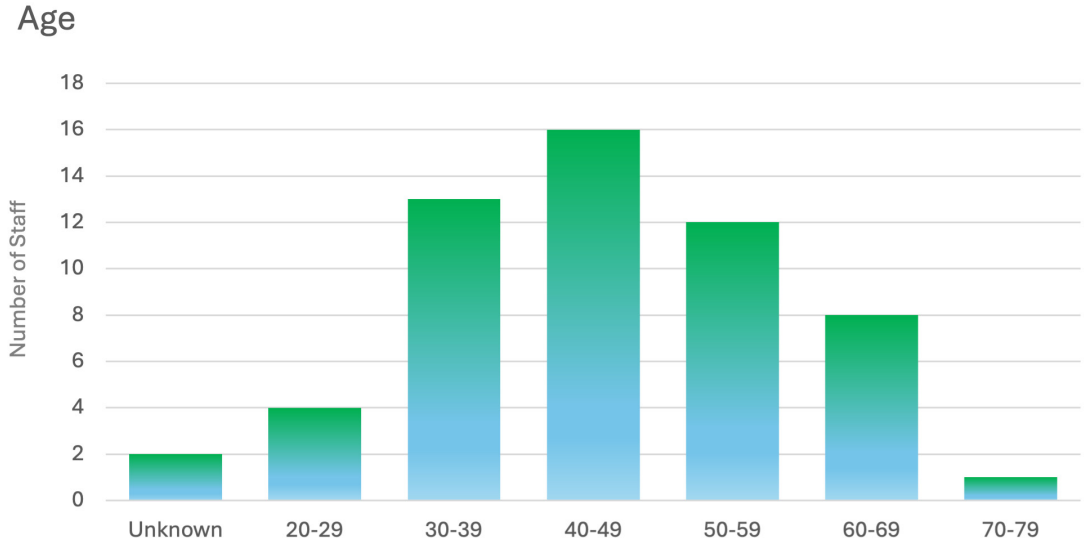
- To ensure this progress is maintained the Commission continues to work closely with the PSA to ensure there is no unjustified bias or discrimination in our systems or practices. Our recruitment and remuneration approach includes providing timely people and culture advice to managers as decisions are made. Equal pay and pay parity were also central to the 2023/24 collective bargaining process, with the agreements reached forming a cornerstone of the new Collective Employment Agreement in effect from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2025.

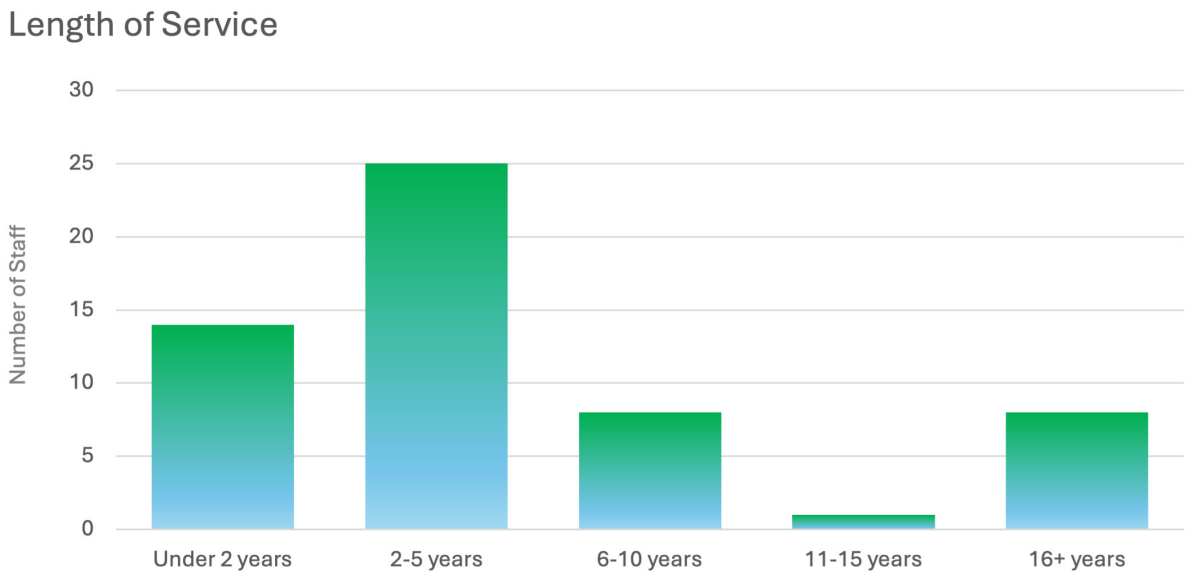
Workforce profile (including all permanent and fixed-term employees as at 30 June 2025)











Meeting our legal responsibilities

Through our governance, operational and business rules, we ensured we met our good employer requirements and our obligations under the Public Finance Act 1989, the Public Service Act 2020, the Crown Entities Act 2004 and other applicable crown entity legislation.

2025 Statutory Remuneration Disclosures

Crown entities are required under section 152 of the Crown Entities Act 2004 to disclose in the annual report the remuneration of Commissioners, committee members and employees. However, the disclosure is not required to be audited and as such these disclosures do not form part of the audited financial statements.

Commissioners' and other committee members' remuneration

Total remuneration includes all benefits paid or payable to each Commissioner, Director and Committee Member during the financial year. There was $77,322 paid out for accrued leave entitlements for one Commissioner and Director leaving the Commission during the year. (2024: $31,745 for 1 Commissioner).

Position	Member	Term started	Term ended	2025 $000	2024 $000
Chief Commissioner	Stephen Rainbow	11 Nov 24	Current	266	-
Director of Human Rights Proceedings	Michael Timmins	11 Mar 19	Current	90	282
Acting Chief Commissioner and Equal Employment Opportunities Commissioner	Karanina Sumeo	05 Nov 18	08 Nov 24	217	326
Equal Employment Opportunities Commissioner	Gail Pacheco	11 Nov 24	Current	175	-
Race Relations Commissioner	Melissa Derby	04 Nov 24	Current	179	-
Disability Rights Commissioner	Prudence Walker	19 Jun 23	Current	272	269
Audit Committee Chair	Edie Moke	23 Mar 23	Current	13	10
Audit Committee Member	Phillip Jacques	20 Jul 23	Current	3	3

Indemnity insurance

The Commission effected Directors' and Officers' Liability and Professional Indemnity insurance cover during the financial year in respect of the liability or costs of Commissioners, the Director, and employees.

Employee remuneration

As a Crown entity, the Commission is required to disclose in its annual report the number of employees receiving total remuneration of $100,000 or more per annum. Total remuneration includes end-of-contract payments such as contractual notice pay and accrued leave entitlements but excludes cessation payments. In compliance, the table below has been produced, which is in $10,000 bands to preserve the privacy of individuals. Because Commissioners and the Director are not employees of the Commission they are not included in the table.

Remuneration of employees over $100,000 per annum

	Number of employees	
Total remuneration p.a.	**2025**	**2024**
$100,000 - $110,000	5	6
$110,001 - $120,000	5	11
$120,001 - $130,000	8	8
$130,001 - $140,000	5	2
$140,001 - $150,000	4	5
$150,001 - $160,000	3	3
$160,001 - $170,000	-	1
$170,001 - $180,000	1	2
$180,001 - $190,000	-	2
$190,001 - $200,000	3	1
$220,001 - $230,000	1	1
$270,001 - $280,000	1	1
$280,001 - $290,000	1	-

Cessation payments

Cessation payment of $26,438 was paid to one employee. This employee ceased to be employed within the financial year ending 30 June 2025. (2024: $458,179).

Statement of Responsibility

Pursuant to section 155 of the *Crown Entities Act 2004*, we certify that:

- We are responsible for the preparation of these financial statements and the statement of performance and for the judgements in them.
- We are responsible for any end-of-year performance information provided by the Commission under section 19A of the *Public Finance Act 1989*, whether or not that information is included in this annual report.
- We have been responsible for establishing and maintaining a system of internal control designed to provide reasonable assurance as to the integrity and reliability of financial reporting.
- We are of the opinion that these financial statements and statement of performance fairly reflect the financial position as of 30 June 2025 and the operating results and cash flows of the Commission for the year ended 30 June 2025.

Approved on behalf of the Board of the Commission



Stephen Rainbow
Chief Commissioner
Te Amokapua



Prudence Walker
Disability Rights Commissioner
Kaihautū Tika Hauātanga

Date: 29 October 2025

Statement of Performance

Our Statement of Intent 2021/22 to 2024/25 and 2024/25 Statement of Performance Expectations provide our strategic direction and priorities. Each year, we deliver targeted mechanisms and programmes to help achieve our overall desired outcomes in human rights. To monitor our progress, we set ourselves a series of outcome measures in our Statement of Intent and report against four annual output measures in our Statement of Performance Expectations and 2024/25 Estimates of Appropriation.

Significant judgements or assumptions

There were no significant judgements or assumptions for the service performance measures. This section reports how we performed against those measures this year.

Output class statement – Services from the Human Rights Commission

	Actual 2025 $000	Budget 2025 $000	Actual 2024 $000
Revenue			
Crown	12,446	12,446	13,829
Other	534	448	220
Total revenue	**12,980**	**12,894**	**14,049**
Total expenses	**11,902**	**12,971**	**13,789**
Net surplus/(deficit)	**1,078**	**(77)**	**260**

Public Benefit Entity Financial Reporting Standard 48 Service Performance Reporting (PBE FRS 48)

Reporting Service Performance Information

The New Zealand Accounting Standards Board (XRB) issued the Public Benefit Entity Financial Reporting Standard 48: Service Performance Reporting (PBE FRS 48) in November 2017, with subsequent amendments. This Standard requires public benefit entities to report service performance information in their annual reports beginning on or after 1 January 2022.

The Commission's Service Performance Outputs for the current year are largely consistent with those of the previous year. However, some performance measures or assessment criteria has been revised to better reflect current priorities and outcomes. The nature and effect of these changes are outlined below.

Changes to Performance Measures

- Adjustments have been made to certain performance measures to improve alignment with organisational priorities and to enhance the clarity and relevance of reporting outcomes (measures 1.2, 4.3, 7.1 and 7.2)
- Assessment criteria have been refined to ensure measurable and transparent evaluation of service performance.

New Measures

The following measures were new for the current period. These new measures along with their nature and effect are outlined as follows.

Measure 1.1

The Commission's engagement is guided by the National Plan of Action for Human Rights and targets stakeholders including government agencies, iwi and hapū, community groups, NGOs, and the public. Activities include consultations, workshops, hui, surveys, and digital engagement, with feedback used to refine approaches. This ensures engagement remains relevant and effective, supporting policy advice, awareness initiatives, partnerships, and broader human rights outcomes, while continuously aligning with national priorities.

Measure 2.1

The Commission has undertaken a stocktake of recommendations from reports, inquiries, and submissions, drawing on its extensive research and human rights work. This measure is designed to ensure that the development of the National Plan of Action for Human Rights is informed by past insights, lessons learned, and evidence-based priorities. Findings are summarised to guide the Commission's strategic planning, inform policy advice, strengthen stakeholder engagement, and ensure a coordinated approach to advancing human rights across Aotearoa New Zealand.

Measure 3.2

The Commission, as the Central National Preventive Mechanism (CNPM), coordinates with other NPMs and liaises with government and the UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT) to identify and address systemic issues in places of detention. Its advocacy includes monitoring emerging issues, engaging stakeholders, providing policy advice, and promoting best practice, strengthening accountability and improving conditions for people deprived of liberty.

Measure 5.1

The Commission is undertaking baseline research to assess and track public understanding of Aotearoa New Zealand's constitutional arrangements. This work involves designing and conducting surveys and other research methods to gather insights into how people perceive constitutional structures, roles, and responsibilities. Findings will provide a foundation for monitoring changes over time, informing public education initiatives, and guiding policy advice to strengthen awareness, engagement, and understanding of constitutional matters across the country.

As acknowledged in the PBE FRS 48 Standard, the following attributes apply to the current Service Performance reporting environment:

a) Service performance reporting is an area of reporting that continues to evolve;

b) Entities may be subject to a range of Service Performance reporting requirements, including legislative requirements and may use a variety of performance frameworks; and

c) It provides flexibility for entities to determine how best to report on service performance in an appropriate and meaningful way.

The Human Rights Commission has provided the following for its Service Performance reporting:

a) Sufficient contextual information to understand what the Commission intends to achieve in broad terms over the medium to long term and how it will do this [FRS 48 para 15(a)].

b) Provided users with information about what the Commission has done during the reporting period in working towards its strategic objectives [FRS 48 para 15(b)].

c) Present its Service Performance information and its financial statements together in the Annual Report [FRS 48 para 6].

d) Present Service Performance information for the same entity and same reporting period as the financial statements [FRS 48 para 11].

e) Disclose judgements that have the most significant effect on the selection, measurement, aggregation and presentation of Service Performance information [FRS 48 para 44].

f) Provide comparative information [FRS 48 para 37].

Statement of Service Performance 2024/25

Outcome 1: Knowledge of Te Tiriti and human rights
Intervention 1: Communicate and promote Te Tiriti o Waitangi and human rights

Performance Measure		Baseline	2024/25 Target	Actual 2024/25 result	Variance explanation (target vs actual 24/25 result)	2023/24 result
1.1	An engagement plan is designed for a National Plan of Action for Human Rights	NM[153]	Engagement plan designed	Not achieved	Not delivered, due to budget cuts which limited the Commission's capacity to progress work on the National Human Rights Action Plan.	N/A
1.2	Partner and design projects with tino rangatiratanga Tiriti partners in our mahi, to achieve mutually agreed outcomes to the satisfaction of Tiriti partners	60%	70%	76% Achieved	-	73%

Intervention 2: Undertake Te Tiriti and human rights research

2.1	Undertake a stocktake of recommendations from reports, inquiries and submissions that build on our years of rights research and protection to prepare for a National Plan of Action for human rights	NM	Stocktake completed	Achieved	The stocktake is designed to identify key themes, gaps, and areas of progress across existing human rights recommendations, providing a consolidated evidence base to inform the development of a National Human Rights Action Plan.	N/A

[153] New measure

Intervention 3: Develop strategies, campaigns, guidelines and resources to support understanding, empowerment and advocacy

Performance Measure		Baseline	2024/25 Target	Actual 2024/25 result	Variance explanation (target vs actual 24/25 result)	2023/24 result
3.1	The number of community guidelines and resources produced	2	2	2 Achieved	We met our 2024/25 target of publishing two guidelines, though this is fewer than the five published in 2023/24. This year's result reflects a shift in focus towards impact and relevance.	5
3.2	Advocacy initiative on issues within the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) mandate	NM	One advocacy initiative developed	Not achieved	Not delivered due to budget constraints, which limited the Commission's capacity to progress additional initiatives. Available resources were prioritised to meet core reporting obligations under the NPM.	N/A

Intervention 4: Provide education, advocacy and advice

4.1	Access and information to human rights and our services reaches and informs relevant audiences and users	30,000	30,000 page views on news articles	70,704 page views on news articles Achieved	The Commission exceeded the performance target of 30,000 page views, achieving a total of 70,704 views. This increase is attributed to heightened public interest in Te Tiriti o Waitangi and broader human rights issues, particularly in response to proposed legislative changes.	38,150 page views

Performance Measure		Baseline	2024/25 Target	Actual 2024/25 result	Variance explanation (target vs actual 24/25 result)	2023/24 result
4.2	The Commission participates as an intervener in a minimum two legal cases per year	No baseline[154]	2 legal interventions undertaken	7 Achieved	The SPE was exceeded this year partly due to the number of appellate cases developing potentially important precedent in relation to the human rights framework. These are decisions in which the Commission may be conspicuous by its absence were it not to intervene, and where we wish to influence the development of the human rights legal framework.	5
4.3	Education, information and submissions promote reflect the Commission's primary functions to promote positive change for all human right including disability, race relations and employment rights	10	5 submissions	19 Achieved	We significantly exceeded the target of 5 submissions, This over-performance reflects high demand for timely human rights advice in response to a high volume of legislative and policy proposals. The result builds on strong performance in the previous year (15) and reflects increased external need to respond effectively.	15

[154] No baseline indicated due to nature of legal proceedings.

Outcome 2: Inclusive Tiriti and human rights-based communities

Intervention 5: Measure and report on perceptions of inclusivity and belonging

Performance Measure		Baseline	2024/25 Target	Actual 2024/25 result	Variance explanation (target vs actual 24/25 result)	2023/24 result
5.1	Baseline research of public understanding to assess and track how people in Aotearoa New Zealand view our constitutional arrangements	NM	Research findings are completed and published	Achieved	The findings provide a clear snapshot of how people in Aotearoa view human rights and Te Tiriti and the country's constitutional arrangements. This evidence will guide the Commission's monitoring, education, and advocacy work.	N/A

Outcome 3: Accountable duty-bearers

Intervention 6: Inquire into, report on and highlight duty-bearers' performance against commitments

6.1	Human rights and Te Tiriti obligations are monitored to promote compliance	4	4 monitoring initiatives	7 initiatives Achieved	Alongside the three ongoing monitoring mechanisms, more international monitoring procedures than anticipated were progressed by UN Treaty Bodies this reporting year, including for the Conventions against Torture, Racial Discrimination, Discrimination Against Women, and Civil and Political Rights.	6

Outcome 4: Effective Tiriti and human rights-based remedies

Intervention 7: Our human rights enquiries and dispute resolution provide an effective service

Performance Measure		Baseline	2024/25 Target	Actual 2024/25 result	Variance explanation (target vs actual 24/25 result)	2023/24 result
7.1	Level of satisfaction with the human rights enquiries and dispute resolution process	75%	75%	76% Achieved	-	78%
7.2	Responsive and timely resolution of enquiries and dispute resolutions as measured by the percentage of enquiries and dispute resolutions closed within one year	80%	80%	99% Achieved	The result of 99% significantly exceeded the target of 80% due to the implementation of a focused response reduction strategy over the final four months of the reporting period. This targeted approach effectively improved overall performance.	95%

Intervention 8: Provide legal representation under the Human Rights Act 1993

8.1	Percentage of applications decided within four months of receipt of the Privacy Act material from the Commission, where applicable	80%	80%	68% Not achieved	The 68% result fell short of the 80% target, primarily due to delays in the final quarter of the year. These delays were influenced by significant resource constraints and increased complexity of applications. Performance in earlier quarters was largely on track.	85%

Financial Statements

Statement of Comprehensive Revenue and Expense for the year ended 30 June 2025

	Notes	Actual 2025 $000	Budget 2025 $000	Actual 2024 $000
Revenue				
Revenue from the Crown		12,446	12,446	13,829
Interest received		399	248	130
Other revenue		135	200	90
Total revenue	**2**	**12,980**	**12,894**	**14,049**
Expenses				
Personnel costs	3	8,766	9,604	10,326
Other expenses	4	2,142	2,291	2,230
Programmes and projects	5	42	75	212
Travel costs		402	532	342
Depreciation and amortisation		550	469	679
Total expenses		**11,902**	**12,971**	**13,789**
Net surplus/deficit		**1,078**	**(77)**	**260**
Other comprehensive revenue and expense		-	-	-
Total comprehensive revenue and expense		1,078	(77)	260

The accompanying notes form part of the financial statements including Note 17 for major variances from budget.

Statement of Financial Position at 30 June 2025

	Notes	Actual 2025 $000	Budget 2025 $000	Actual 2024 $000
Equity				
Accumulated funds		4,910	3,791	3,832
Total equity		**4,910**	**3,791**	**3,832**
Current assets				
Cash and cash equivalents		4,214	3,164	3,076
Receivables	6	198	14,313	49
GST Refund		57	-	103
Prepayments		163	224	205
Total current assets		**4,632**	**17,701**	**3,433**
Current liabilities				
Payables	7	538	517	715
GST payable		-	1,789	-
Crown funding in advance		-	12,446	-
Employee entitlements	8	508	753	597
Provisions	9	-	-	12
Total current liabilities		**1,046**	**15,505**	**1,324**
Working capital		**3,586**	**2,196**	**2,109**
Non-current assets				
Property, plant, and equipment	10	1,332	1,546	1,716
Intangible assets	11	220	212	305
Total non-current assets		**1,552**	**1,758**	**2,021**
Non-current liabilities				
Payables	7	162	91	108
Employee entitlements	8	66	72	102
Provisions	9	-	-	88
Total non-current liabilities		**228**	**163**	**298**
Net assets		**4,910**	**3,791**	**3,832**

The accompanying notes form part of the financial statements including Note 17 for major variances from budget.

Statement of Changes in Equity for the year ended 30 June 2025

	Notes	Actual 2025 $000	Budget 2025 $000	Actual 2024 $000
Balance at 1 July		3,832	3,868	3,572
Total comprehensive revenue and expense		1,078	(77)	260
Balance at 30 June		**4,910**	**3,791**	**3,832**

The accompanying notes form part of the financial statements including Note 17 for major variances from budget.

Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended 30 June 2025

	Notes	Actual 2025 $000	Budget 2025 $000	Actual 2024 $000
Cash flows from operating activities				
Receipts from the Crown		12,446	12,446	13,829
Receipts from other sources		19	200	77
Interest received		399	248	130
Payments to commissioners and employees		(8,669)	(9,457)	(10,019)
Payments to suppliers		(3,006)	(3,107)	(3,064)
Goods and services tax (net)		46	82	(251)
Net cash flow from operating activities		**1,235**	**412**	**702**
Cash flows from investing activities				
Maturity of term deposits		13,600	-	-
Sales of property, plant, and equipment		-	-	-
Placement of term deposits		(13,600)	-	-
Purchases of property, plant, and equipment		(97)	(20)	(97)
Purchases of intangible assets		-	-	-
Net cash flow from investing activities		**(97)**	**(20)**	**(97)**
Net increase/(decrease) in cash		1,138	392	605
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		3,076	2,772	2,471
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		**4,214**	**3,164**	**3,076**

The accompanying notes form part of the financial statements including Note 17 for major variances from budget.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2025

1. Statement of accounting policies

Reporting entity

The Human Rights Commission is a Crown entity as defined by the Crown Entities Act 2004 and operates in New Zealand. The Commission's functions and responsibilities are set out in the Human Rights Act 1993 and Crimes of Torture Act 1989 and it has designated itself as a public benefit entity (PBE) for financial reporting purposes.

The financial statements of the Commission are for the year ended 30 June 2025 and were approved by the Board of the Commission on 29 October 2025.

Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis and the accounting policies have been applied consistently throughout the period.

Statement of compliance

The financial statements of the Commission have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Crown Entities Act 2004, which includes the requirement to comply with generally accepted accounting practice in New Zealand (NZ GAAP).

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Tier 2 PBE accounting standards as appropriate for public sector entities. The Commission is eligible to apply Tier 2 PBE accounting standards because it does not have public accountability, as defined in the PBE accounting standards, and its total expenses are less than $33 million.

These financial statements comply with PBE accounting standards.

Presentation currency and rounding

The financial statements are presented in New Zealand dollars and all values are rounded to the nearest thousand dollars ($000).

Summary of material accounting policies

Revenue

Revenue is measured at the fair value of consideration received or receivable. The specific accounting policies for significant revenue items are explained below:

Revenue from the Crown

The Commission is primarily funded by revenue received from the Crown through the Ministry of Justice for the provision of outputs. This funding is dedicated to the Commission meeting the objectives specified in the Human Rights Act 1993 and Crimes of Torture Act 1989 and the scope of the relevant appropriations of the funder. The Commission considers there are no conditions attached to the funding and it is recognised as non-exchange revenue at the point of entitlement. The fair value of revenue from the Crown has been determined to be equivalent to the amounts due in the funding arrangements.

Interest received

Interest revenue is recognised using the effective interest method.

Provision of services

Services provided to third parties on commercial terms, such as the provision of advice and educational workshops, are exchange transactions. Revenue from these services is recognised in proportion to the stage of completion at balance date.

Grants received

Grants are recognised as revenue when they become receivable unless there is an obligation in substance to return the funds if conditions of the grant are not met. If there is such an obligation, the grants are initially recorded as grants received in advance and recognised as revenue when conditions of the grant are satisfied.

Salaries and wages

Salaries and wages are recognised as an expense as employees provide services.

Project and programme costs

Costs, other than staff and general travel costs, that are directly attributable to a project or programme activity are reported in the statement of comprehensive revenue and expense as project and programme costs.

Leases

Operating leases

An operating lease is a lease that does not transfer substantially all the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of an asset to the lessee.

Lease payments under an operating lease are recognised as an expense on a straight-line basis over the lease term. Lease incentives received are recognised in the surplus or deficit in the statement of comprehensive revenue and expense as a reduction in rental expense over the lease term.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand and funds on deposit at banks maturing within three months, beyond that term deposits are separately reported. While cash and cash equivalents on 30 June 2025 are subject to the expected credit loss requirements of PBE IFRS 9, no loss allowance has been recognised because the estimated loss allowance for credit losses is trivial.

Receivables

Short-term receivables are recorded at the amount due, less an allowance for credit losses. The Commission applies the simplified expected credit loss model of recognising lifetime expected credit losses for receivables.

In measuring expected credit losses, short-term receivables have been assessed on a collective basis as they possess shared credit risk characteristics. They have been grouped based on the days past due.

Short-term receivables are written off when there is no reasonable expectation of recovery. Indicators that there is no reasonable expectation of recovery include the debtor being in liquidation.

Property, plant and equipment

Property, plant and equipment consists of equipment, furniture and fittings, and leasehold improvements. Property, plant and equipment and leasehold improvements are measured at cost less any accumulated depreciation and impairment losses.

Additions

The cost of an item of property, plant and equipment is recognised as an asset when it is probable that future economic benefits or service potential associated with the item will flow to the Commission and the cost of the item can be measured reliably.

Work in progress is measured at cost less impairment and is not depreciated.

In most instances, an item of property, plant and equipment is initially recognised at its cost. Where an asset is acquired through a non-exchange transaction, it is recognised at its fair value at the date of acquisition.

Disposals

Gains and losses on disposals are determined by comparing the proceeds with the carrying amount of the asset. Gains and losses on disposals are reported as a net amount in the surplus or deficit in the statement of comprehensive revenue and expense.

Subsequent costs

Costs incurred after initial acquisition are capitalised only when it is probable that future economic benefits or service potential associated with the item will flow to the Commission and the cost of the item can be measured reliably. The costs of day-to-day servicing of property, plant and equipment are recognised in the surplus or deficit in the statement of comprehensive revenue and expense as they are incurred.

Depreciation

Depreciation is provided on a straight-line basis on all property, plant and equipment at rates that will write off the cost of the assets to their estimated residual values over their useful lives. The useful lives and associated depreciation rates of major classes of property, plant and equipment have been estimated as follows:

Equipment	2–13 years	7.6–50%
Furniture and fittings	3–20 years	5.0–33%
Leasehold improvements	2–12 years	8.3–50%

Leasehold improvements are depreciated over the expected occupancy of the premises or the estimated useful life of the improvement, whichever is the shorter.

The residual value and useful life of an asset is reviewed, and adjusted if applicable, at each financial year-end.

Intangible assets

Software acquisition

Fees to access the supplier's application software in a SaaS arrangement:

Where the SaaS contract only gives the Commission a right to receive access to the supplier's application software, that access in the SaaS arrangement would usually not result in the recognition of an intangible asset due to lack of control over an identified asset. This is because the SaaS provider usually holds, manages, and updates the SaaS application software over the period of the arrangement. However, where the Commission receives rights beyond a right of access, this could indicate there is an intangible asset under PBE IPSAS 31 Intangible Assets or the arrangement contains a finance lease under PBE IPSAS 13 Leases. If the fees associated with the access to the software of a SaaS arrangement give rise to an intangible asset, then these are recorded against the intangible asset as part of its cost. If fees associated with the access to the software of a SaaS arrangement do not give rise to an intangible asset or finance lease, they are viewed as payments for services and are expensed as incurred (generally over the term of arrangement).

Configuration and customisation costs related to SaaS:

If the Commission controls the software in the SaaS arrangement and is recognising an intangible asset for the SaaS, then the configuration and customisation costs of that software are capitalised as an intangible asset. If the SaaS has been assessed as not an intangible asset of the Commission and the configuration and customisation to the SaaS provider's application software are performed by the Commission or its contractors, those costs are expensed as they are incurred. However, if the configuration and customisation work is performed by the SaaS provider, or their subcontractor, further analysis of the costs is required to determine if they should be expensed as the configuration and customisation services are incurred (usually upfront) and recognising a liability if the costs are paid over the term of the arrangement or spread over the term of the SaaS arrangement (recognising a prepayment if paid upfront).

For configuration and customisation related costs that are paid upfront (as opposed to payments throughout the service term), if the configuration and customisation services delivered to the Commission are distinct from the delivery of the SaaS access services, then they are expensed as incurred. Otherwise, if configuration and customisation services delivered are not distinct from the delivery of the SaaS access services, they are recognised as a prepayment and are expensed over the expected service term of the SaaS arrangement.

Amortisation

The carrying value of an intangible asset with a finite life is amortised on a straight-line basis over its useful life. Amortisation begins when the asset is available for use and ceases at the date the asset is derecognised. The amortisation charge for each financial year is recognised in the surplus or deficit in the statement of comprehensive revenue and expense.

The useful lives and associated amortisation rates of major classes of intangible assets have been estimated as follows:

Acquired software	2–3 years	20–33%
Developed software	2-5 years	20-50%

Impairment of property, plant and equipment and intangible assets

Cash-generating assets

The Commission does not hold any property, plant and equipment or intangible assets that are cash-generating. Assets are considered cash-generating where their primary objective is to generate a commercial return, otherwise they are considered non-cash generating.

Non-cash-generating assets

Property, plant and equipment, leasehold improvements and intangible assets that have a finite useful life are reviewed for impairment whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying amount may not be recoverable. An impairment loss is recognised for the amount by which the asset's carrying amount exceeds its recoverable service amount. The recoverable service amount is the higher of an asset's fair value less costs to sell and value in use.

Value in use is determined using an approach based on depreciated replacement cost or restoration cost. The most appropriate approach used to measure value in use depends on the nature of the impairment and availability of information.

If an asset's carrying amount exceeds its recoverable service amount, the asset is regarded as impaired and the carrying amount is written-down to the recoverable amount. The total impairment loss is recognised in the surplus or deficit in the statement of comprehensive revenue and expense. The reversal of an impairment loss is also recognised in the surplus or deficit in the statement of comprehensive revenue and expense.

Intangible assets that have an indefinite useful life are not subject to amortisation and are tested annually for impairment. An intangible asset that is not yet available for use at the balance date is tested for impairment annually.

Payables

Short-term payables are recorded at their face value. Leasehold incentives with an unexpired portion beyond 12 months are recorded at face value and classified as a non-current liability.

Employee entitlements

Short-term employee entitlements

Employee benefits that are due to be settled within 12 months after the end of the period in which the employee renders the related service are measured based on accrued entitlements at current rates of pay and are classified as current liabilities. These include salaries and wages accrued up to balance date and annual leave earned but not yet taken at balance date. A liability and an expense are recognised for bonuses where there is a contractual obligation or where there is a past practice that has created a constructive obligation, and a reliable estimate of the obligation can be made.

Permanent employees are entitled to actual and reasonable sick leave to recover from genuine illness, but entitlements do not accumulate and are recognised as an expense when the absence occurs.

Long-term employee entitlements

Employee benefits that are due to be settled beyond 12 months after the end of the period in which the employee renders the related service, such as long service leave and retirement leave, have been calculated on an actuarial basis and are classified as non-current liabilities. The calculations are based on:

1. likely future entitlements accruing to staff based on years of service, years to entitlement, the likelihood that staff will reach the point of entitlement, and contractual entitlements information and
2. the present value of the estimated future cash flows.

Superannuation schemes

Defined contribution schemes

Obligations for contributions to KiwiSaver are accounted for as defined contribution schemes and are recognised as an expense in the surplus or deficit in the statement of comprehensive revenue and expense as incurred.

Commitments

Expenses yet to be incurred on non-cancellable lease and capital contracts that have been entered into on or before balance date are disclosed as commitments to the extent that there are equally unperformed obligations.

Cancellable commitments that have penalty or exit costs explicit in the agreement on exercising that option to cancel are disclosed at the value of that penalty or exit cost.

Accumulated funds

Accumulated funds are the net surpluses and deficits that have accumulated over time and represent the Crown's investment in the Commission. Accumulated funds are measured as the difference between total assets and total liabilities.

Goods and services tax (GST)

All items in the financial statements are stated exclusive of GST, except for receivables and payables which are stated on a GST inclusive basis. Where GST is not recoverable as input tax it is recognised as part of the related asset or expense.

The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, Inland Revenue (IR) is presented in the statement of financial position.

The net GST paid to or received from the IR, including the GST relating to investing and financing activities, is classified as an operating cash flow in the statement of cash flows.

Commitments and contingencies are disclosed exclusive of GST.

Income tax

The Commission is a public authority and consequently is exempt from the payment of income tax. Accordingly, no provision has been made for income tax.

Budget figures

The budget figures are derived from the Statement of Performance Expectations approved by the Board at the beginning of the financial year. The budget figures have been prepared in accordance with New Zealand GAAP using accounting policies that are consistent with those adopted by the Board in preparing these financial statements.

Critical accounting estimates and assumptions

In preparing these financial statements, the Commission has made estimates and assumptions concerning the future. These estimates and assumptions may differ from the subsequent actual results. Estimates and assumptions are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

The estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing material adjustment to the carrying amount of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below:

Estimating useful lives and residual values of property, plant and equipment and intangible assets

At each balance date, the useful lives and residual values of property plant and equipment and intangible assets are reviewed. Assessing the appropriateness of useful life and residual value estimates of property, plant and equipment and intangible assets requires several factors to be considered such as the physical condition of the asset, expected period of use of the asset by the Commission, and expected disposal proceeds from the future sale of the asset. An incorrect estimate of the useful life or residual value will affect the depreciation or amortisation expense recognised in the surplus or deficit in the statement of comprehensive revenue and expense, and the carrying amount of the asset in the statement of financial position.

Notes 10 and 11 detail the carrying amounts of property, plant and equipment and intangible assets respectively.

Retirement and long service leave

Note 8 details the critical estimates and assumptions made in relation to retirement and long service leave liabilities.

Comparative information

When presentation or classification of items in the financial statements is amended or accounting policies are changed voluntarily, comparative figures are restated to ensure consistency with the current period unless it is impracticable to do so. There have been no restatements of comparative information in the financial statements.

2. Revenue

	2025 $000	2024 $000
Revenue from non-exchange transactions		
Revenue from the Crown	12,446	13,829
Other revenue	-	10
Total revenue from non-exchange transactions	12,446	13,839
Revenue from exchange transactions		
Interest received	399	130
Other revenue	135	80
Total revenue from exchange transactions	534	210
Total revenue	**12,980**	**14,049**

3. Personnel costs

	2025 $000	2024 $000
Salaries and wages	8,322	9,869
Employer contributions to defined contribution plans	233	276
Employee entitlements	(125)	(34)
Other[155]	336	215
Total personnel costs	**8,766**	**10,326**

[155] Relates to short-term contractors, recruitment and professional development.

Personnel costs include the Commissioners and Director of Human Rights Proceedings who are appointed by warrant of the Governor-General and are therefore not employees.

Employer contributions to defined contribution plans include contributions to KiwiSaver.

Employee entitlements of ($125,000) is mainly due to annual leave taken exceeding annual leave accrued during the financial year. There have also been reductions in the long service leave provision and retiring leave provision. Note 8 details employee entitlements owing at balance date.

Personnel costs were $1,560,000 less than last year due to redundancies made at the end of the 2023/24 financial year and three Commissioners not being replaced until November 2024.

Cessation payments of $26,438 were paid to one employee. This employee ceased to be employed within the financial year ending 30 June 2025. (2024: $458,179).

4. Other expenses

	2025 $000	2024 $000
Operating lease expense	822	865
Information and communications technology	595	733
Audit fees	75	75
Other operating costs	650	557
Total other expenses	**2,142**	**2,230**

Audit fees have been disclosed for the first time in compliance with accounting standard PBE IPSAS 1.

5. Programmes and Projects

Programmes and projects do not include any grants for the 2025 year. (2024: Nil).

6. Receivables

	2025 $000	2024 $000
Receivables under non-exchange transactions		
Other receivables	5	26
	5	26
Receivables under exchange transactions		
Debtors	193	23
	193	23
Total receivables	**198**	**49**

Receivables are deemed immaterial with any expected credit loss rates affecting the amounts disclosed not considered significant. The impact of macroeconomic factors on expected credit loss rates is not considered significant. The carrying value of receivables approximates their fair value.

All receivables have been assessed for impairment and there is no impairment.

7. Payables

	2025 $000	2024 $000
Current portion		
Payables under exchange transactions		
Creditors	313	394
Revenue received in advance	53	20
Make good lease payable	17	-
Lease incentive	17	17
Total current payables under exchange transactions	400	431
Payables under non-exchange transactions		
PAYE tax payable	138	284
Total current payables under non-exchange transactions	138	284
Total current portion	538	715
Non-current portion		

Payables under exchange transactions		
Make good lease payable	71	-
Lease incentive	91	108
Total non-current payables under exchange transactions	162	108
Total non-current portion	162	108
Total payables	**700**	**823**

PAYE tax payable is lower than the previous year due to the payout of redundancies in June 2024.

8. Employee entitlements

	2025 $000	2024 $000
Current portion		
Annual leave	444	547
Retirement and long service leave	64	50
Total current portion	508	597
Non-current portion		
Retirement and long service leave	66	102
Total non-current portion	66	102
Total employee entitlements	**574**	**699**

The annual leave liability has reduced due to lower staffing levels and encouraging staff to take their annual leave.

The liability for retirement and long-service leave entitlements is carried at the present value of estimated future cash flows, calculated based on several factors determined on an actuarial basis.

Two key assumptions used in calculating the retirement and long service leave liability include the discount rate and the salary inflation factor. Any changes in these assumptions will impact on the carrying amount of the liability. Expected future payments are discounted using forward discount rates derived from the yield curve of New Zealand government bonds. The salary inflation factor has been determined based on the long-term annual increase in salaries and wages expected by the New Zealand Treasury. A discount rate of 3.96 percent (2024: 5.30 percent) and an inflation factor of 2.01 percent (2024: 2.32 percent) were used.

Because the carrying amount of the retirement and long-service leave liability is small, the impact of either the discount rate or salary inflation factor differing by one percentage point from that used is negligible.

9. Provisions

	2025 $000	2024 $000
Current portion		
Lease Make Good	-	12
Total current portion	-	12
Non-current portion		
Lease Make Good	-	88
Total non-current portion	-	88
Total provisions	**-**	**100**

The Commission moved its Auckland operations to cheaper accommodation at the end of September 2024. The lessor is the same for both offices and make-good costs are required to be paid to the lessor totalling $100,000. The make good costs were covered by a provision created in the 2024 financial year. The provision was replaced by a payable in September 2024.

10. Property, plant, and equipment

Movements for each class of property, plant and equipment are as follows:

	Equipment $000	Furniture & Fittings $000	Leasehold Improvements $000	WIP $000	Total $000
Cost					
Balance at 1 July 2023	554	534	2,451	-	3,539
Additions	96	1	-	12	109
Disposals	(1)	-	-	-	(1)
Balance at 30 June 2024	**649**	**535**	**2,451**	**2**	**3,647**

	Equipment $000	Furniture & Fittings $000	Leasehold Improvements $000	WIP $000	Total $000
Balance at 1 July 2024	649	535	2,451	12	3,647
Additions	63	2	32	-	97
Capitalised	12	-	-	(12)	-
Disposals	(194)	(99)	(921)	-	(1,214)
Balance at 30 June 2025	**530**	**438**	**1,562**	**-**	**2,530**
Accumulated depreciation and impairment losses					
Balance at 1 July 2023	396	236	706	-	1,338
Depreciation expense	87	55	452	-	594
Eliminate on disposal	(1)	-	-	-	(1)
Balance at 30 June 2024	**482**	**291**	**1,158**	**-**	**1.931**
Balance at 1 July 2024	482	291	1,158	-	1,931
Depreciation expense	93	50	322	-	465
Eliminate on disposal	(193)	(84)	(921)	-	(1,198)
Balance at 30 June 2025	**382**	**257**	**559**	**-**	**1,198**
Carrying amounts					
At 1 July 2023	158	298	1,745	-	2,201
At 30 June and 1 July 2024	167	244	1,293	12	1,716
At 30 June 2025	**148**	**181**	**1,003**	**-**	**1,332**

There are no restrictions over the title of the Commission's property, plant and equipment, nor are any assets held under finance leases or pledged as security for liabilities (2024: nil).

11. Intangible assets

Movements for each class of intangible asset are as follows:

	Acquired Software $000	Trademarks $000	WIP $000	Total $000
Cost				
Balance at 1 July 2023	689	-	-	689
Additions	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-	-
Balance at 30 June 2024	**689**	**-**	**-**	**689**
Balance at 1 July 2024	689	-	-	689
Additions	-	-	-	-
Disposals	(1)	-	-	(1)
Balance at 30 June 2025	**688**	**-**	**-**	**688**
Accumulated amortisation and impairment losses				
Balance at 1 July 2023	299	-	-	299
Amortisation expense	85	-	-	85
Eliminate on disposal	-	-	-	-
Balance at 30 June 2024	**384**	**-**	**-**	**384**
Balance at 1 July 2024	384	-	-	384
Amortisation expense	85	-	-	85
Eliminate on disposal	(1)	-	-	(1)
Balance at 30 June 2025	**468**	**-**	**-**	**468**
Carrying amounts				
At 1 July 2023	390	-	-	390
At 30 June and 1 July 2024	305	-	-	305
At 30 June 2025	**220**	**-**	**-**	**220**

There are no restrictions over the title of the Commission's intangible assets, nor are any intangible assets pledged as security for liabilities (2024: nil).

12. Capital commitments and operating leases

Capital commitments

There are no capital commitments for the 2025/26 year. (2025: Nil).

Operating leases

The future aggregate minimum lease payments to be paid under non-cancellable operating leases are as follows:

	2025 $000	2024 $000
Not later than one year	694	708
Later than one year and not later than five years	2,593	1,398
Later than five years	856	778
Total non-cancellable operating leases	**4,143**	**2,884**

The increase in lease commitments from 2024 is due to an increase in rent for the Wellington office. From March 2025 the rent increased by $124,000 annually. This is a significant portion of the total non-cancellable operating lease expense relating to the lease of one floor of an office building in Wellington. The Wellington office lease is a ten-year lease which expires on 31 October 2031.

The lease for the Shortland St office in Auckland was terminated in September 2024 and a new lease signed for an office in High St commencing in October 2024. The lease for the new office will expire at the end of September 2030.

The remainder of the non-cancellable operating lease expense relates to the lease of a small portion of floor space in the Christchurch Integrated Government Accommodation campus. The lease expires in November 2027.

The Commission leases video conference facilities in the Auckland and Wellington offices. Both leases will expire in June 2026.

The Commission does not have the option to purchase the assets at the end of the lease terms and there are no restrictions placed on the Commission by any of the leasing arrangements.

13. Contingencies

Contingent liabilities

The Commission has no contingent liabilities. (2024: Nil).

Contingent assets

The Commission has no contingent assets (2024: nil).

14. Related party transactions and key management personnel

The Commission is a wholly owned entity of the Crown.

Related party disclosures have not been made for transactions with related parties that are within a normal supplier or client/recipient relationship on terms and conditions no more or less favourable than those it is reasonable to expect the Commission would have adopted in dealing with a party at arm's length in the same circumstances. Further, transactions with other government agencies (for example, government departments and Crown entities) are not disclosed as related party transactions when they are consistent with the normal operating arrangements between government agencies and undertaken on the normal terms and conditions for such transactions.

Key management personnel compensation

	2025 $000	2024 $000
Commissioners and Director of Human Rights Proceedings		
Total remuneration	1,199	1,132
Full-time equivalent members	3.6	3.5
Senior Management Team		
Total remuneration	1,774	2,255
Full-time equivalent members	8.3	8.9
Total key management personnel compensation	**2,973**	**3,387**
Total full-time equivalent personnel	**11.9**	**12.4**

Full-time equivalent values have been pro-rated for positions that were not part of the senior management team for the full year.

15. Events after balance date

There were no events after balance date that would have an impact on the Commission.

16. Financial instruments

Financial instrument categories

The carrying amounts of financial assets and financial liabilities in each of the financial instrument categories are as follows:

	2025 $000	2024 $000
Financial assets measured at amortised cost		
Cash and cash equivalents	4,214	3,076
Receivables	198	49
Total financial assets measured at amortised cost	**4,412**	**3,125**
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost		
Payables (excluding revenue in advance and taxes payable)	399	394
Total financial liabilities measured at amortised cost	**399**	**394**

17. Explanation of major variances from budget

Statement of comprehensive revenue and expense

Revenue

Revenue was more than budget due to interest received being higher than expected, due to interest received being higher than expected, because the Commission received all 2025 crown funding at the start of the year as opposed to quarterly as in previous years. This enabled more term deposits to be set up during the year.

Expenses

Personnel costs were less than budgeted due to vacant commissioner positions for several months and a reduction in the annual leave liability.

Travel costs were less than budgeted. This was due to not having a full complement of Commissioners for the financial year.

Other expenses were less than budget due to lower consultancy and ICT costs than expected.

Statement of financial position

Cash and cash equivalents are more than budget due to lower spend because of the vacant commissioner positions which impacted the completed work during the year.

Receivables, Crown funding in advance and GST payable are less than budget because the treatment of Revenue from the Crown for the 2026 year was different from budget.

Fixed assets are less than budget due to accelerated depreciation on the leasehold improvements in the Auckland office.

Employee entitlements are less than budget due to a reduction in the annual leave liability.

Payables are less than budget due to a timing difference at year end.

Statement of cash flows

Payments to personnel and suppliers are slightly less than budget due to vacant Commissioner positions, reduced travel and lower legal fees.

Deloitte.

Independent Auditor's Report

TO THE READERS OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION'S ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE INFORMATION FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

The Auditor-General is the auditor of the Human Rights Commission. The Auditor-General has appointed me, Bryce Henderson, using the staff and resources of Deloitte Limited, to carry out, on his behalf, the audit of:

- the annual financial statements that comprise the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2025, the statement of comprehensive revenue and expense, statement of changes in equity, and statement of cash flows for the year ended on that date and the notes to the financial statements that include accounting policies and other explanatory information on pages 97 to 119; and
- the performance information that consists of:
    - o the statement of performance for the year ended 30 June 2025 on pages 89 to 96; and
    - o the end-of-year performance information for appropriations for the year ended 30 June 2025 on page 92 to 96.

Opinion

In our opinion:

- The annual financial statements of the Human Rights Commission:
    - o fairly present, in all material respects:
        - its financial position as at 30 June 2025; and
        - its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended; and
    - o comply with generally accepted accounting practice in New Zealand in accordance with the Public Benefit Entity Standards Reduced Disclosure Regime; and
- The statement of performance fairly presents, in all material respects, the Human Rights Commission's performance for the year ended 30 June 2025. In particular, the statement of performance:
    - o provides an appropriate and meaningful basis to enable readers to assess the actual performance of the Human Rights Commission for each class of reportable outputs; determined in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice in New Zealand; and

- fairly presents, in all material respects, for each class of reportable outputs:
  - the actual performance of the Human Rights Commission;
  - the actual revenue earned; and
  - the output expenses incurred

  as compared with the forecast standards of performance, the expected revenues, and the proposed output expenses included in the Human Rights Commission's statement of performance expectations for the financial year; and
- complies with generally accepted accounting practice in New Zealand in accordance with the Public Benefit Entity Standards Reduced Disclosure Regime.

• The end-of-year performance information for appropriations:

- provides an appropriate and meaningful basis to enable readers to assess what has been achieved with the appropriation; determined in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice in New Zealand; and
- fairly presents, in all material respects:
  - what has been achieved with the appropriation; and
  - the actual expenses or capital expenditure incurred in relation to the appropriation as compared with the expenses or capital expenditure that were appropriated or forecast to be incurred; and
- complies with generally accepted accounting practice in New Zealand in accordance with the Public Benefit Entity Standards Reduced Disclosure Regime.

Our audit was completed on 29 October 2025. This is the date at which our opinion is expressed.

Basis for our opinion

We carried out our audit in accordance with the Auditor-General's Auditing Standards, which incorporate the Professional and Ethical Standards, the International Standards on Auditing (New Zealand), and New Zealand Auditing Standard 1 (Revised): *The Audit of Service Performance Information* issued by the New Zealand Auditing and Assurance Standards Board. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Responsibilities of the auditor section of our report.

We have fulfilled our responsibilities in accordance with the Auditor-General's Auditing Standards.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

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Responsibilities of the Board for the annual financial statements and the performance information

The Board is responsible on behalf of the Human Rights Commission for preparing:

- Annual financial statements that fairly present the Human Rights Commission's financial position, financial performance, and its cash flows, and that comply with generally accepted accounting practice in New Zealand.
- A statement of performance that:
    - o provides an appropriate and meaningful basis to enable readers to assess the actual performance of the Human Rights Commission for each class of reportable outputs; determined in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice in New Zealand;
    - o fairly presents, for each class of reportable outputs:
        - the actual performance of the Human Rights Commission;
        - the actual revenue earned; and
        - the output expenses incurred

      as compared with the forecast standards of performance, the expected revenues, and the proposed output expenses included in the Human Rights Commission's statement of performance expectations for the financial year; and
    - o complies with generally accepted accounting practice in New Zealand.
- End-of-year performance information for appropriations that:
    - o provides an appropriate and meaningful basis to enable readers to assess what has been achieved with the appropriation; determined in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice in New Zealand;
    - o fairly presents what has been achieved with the appropriation;
    - o fairly presents the actual expenses or capital expenditure incurred in relation to the appropriation as compared with the expenses or capital expenditure that were appropriated or forecast to be incurred; and
    - o complies with generally accepted accounting practice in New Zealand.

The Board is responsible for such internal control as they determine are necessary to enable them to prepare annual financial statements, and a statement of performance that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the annual financial statements, and a statement of performance, the Board is responsible on behalf of the Human Rights Commission for assessing the Human Rights Commission's ability to continue as a going concern.

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The Board's responsibilities arise from the Crown Entities Act 2004 and the Public Finance Act 1989.

Responsibilities of the auditor for the audit of the annual financial statements and the performance information

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the annual financial statements, the statement of performance, and the end-of-year performance information for appropriations, as a whole, are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion.

Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit carried out in accordance with the Auditor-General's Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements are differences or omissions of amounts or disclosures, and can arise from fraud or error. Misstatements are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the decisions of readers, taken on the basis of the annual financial statements, and the statement of performance, and the end-of-year performance information for appropriations.

For the budget information reported in the annual financial statements, and the statement of performance, and the end-of-year performance information for appropriations, our procedures were limited to checking that the information agreed to the Human Rights Commission's statement of performance expectations or to the Estimates of Appropriations for the Government of New Zealand for the Year Ending 30 June 2025.

We did not evaluate the security and controls over the electronic publication of the annual financial statements, and the statement of performance, and the end-of-year performance information for appropriations.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Auditor-General's Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. Also:

- We identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the annual financial statements, the statement of performance, and the end-of-year performance information for appropriations, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control

- We obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Human Rights Commission's internal control.
- We evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Board.
- We evaluate whether the statement of performance and the end-of-year performance information for appropriations:
    - provide an appropriate and meaningful basis to enable readers to assess the actual performance of the Human Rights Commission in relation to the actual performance of the Human Rights Commission (for the statement of performance) and what has been achieved with the appropriation by the Human Rights Commission (for the end-of-year performance information for appropriations). We make our evaluation by reference to generally accepted accounting practice in New Zealand; and
    - fairly present the actual performance of the Human Rights Commission and what has been achieved with the appropriation by the Human Rights Commission for the financial year.
- We conclude on the appropriateness of the use of the going concern basis of accounting by the Board.
- We evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the annual financial statements, the statement of performance, and the end-of-year performance information for appropriations, including the disclosures, and whether the annual financial statements, the statement of performance, and the end-of-year performance information for appropriations represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with the Human Rights Commission regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Our responsibilities arise from the Public Audit Act 2001.

Other information

The Board is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises all of the information included in the annual report, but does not include the annual financial statements, the statement of performance, and the end-of-year performance information for appropriations, and our auditor's report thereon.

Deloitte.

Our opinion on the annual financial statements, and the statement of performance, and the end-of- year performance information for appropriations, does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of audit opinion or assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the annual financial statements, and the statement of performance, and the end-of-year performance information for appropriations, our responsibility is to read the other information. In doing so, we consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the annual financial statements, and the statement of performance, and the end- of-year performance information for appropriations or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on our work, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Independence

We are independent of the Human Rights Commission in accordance with the independence requirements of the Auditor-General's Auditing Standards, which incorporate the independence requirements of Professional and Ethical Standard 1: International Code of Ethics for Assurance Practitioners *(including International Independence Standards)* (New Zealand) issued by the New Zealand Auditing and Assurance Standards Board.

Other than in our capacity as auditor, we have no relationship with, or interests in, the Human Rights Commission.



Bryce Henderson
Deloitte Limited
On behalf of the Auditor-General
Auckland, New Zealand

Te Kāhui Tika Tangata
Human Rights Commission

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