

We are committed to the long-term goals of reducing gender, Māori, Pacific and ethnic pay gaps and growing the diversity of the workforce in the public service.

Kia Toipoto 2021 - 2024

Kia Toipoto is the Public Service’s action plan for closing gender pay gaps with its three-year goals being:

1. Making substantial progress towards closing gender, Māori, Pacific, and ethnic pay gaps.
2. Accelerating progress for wāhine Māori, Pacific women, and women from other ethnic communities.
3. Creating fairer workplaces for all, including disabled people and members of the rainbow community.

Kia Toipoto focus areas are:

1. Te Pono – Transparency
2. Ngā Hua Tōkeke mō te Utu – Equitable pay outcomes
3. Te whai kanohi i ngā taumata katoa – Leadership and representation
4. Te Whakawhanaketanga i te Aramahi - Effective career and leadership development
5. Te whakakore i te katoa o ngā momo whakatoihara, haukume anō hoki - Eliminating all forms of bias and discrimination
6. Te Taunoa o te Mahi Pīngore - Flexible-work-by-default

The NZSO acknowledges that the Public Service is recommending integrating Papa Pounamu Diversity & Inclusion and Kia Toipoto plans for ease of reporting, however; has elected to complete an inaugural Kia Toipoto plan for 2025 – 2027.

Our values

Our values support our work in closing pay gaps:

 **Fresh**
We play old music like it was written yesterday and inhabit new music in a way that is familiar.

 **Fearless**
We are not constrained by convention or location.

 **In Front**
We are world-class in everything we do.

 **He Herenga Whenua**
Inspired by, and connected to, the awe-inspiring country, we take excellence and turn it into a shared experience for all New Zealanders.

About us

Objectives of the Orchestra | Ngā Whāinga a te Tira Pūoro

As an Autonomous Crown Entity under the Crown Entities Act 2004, our principal objectives and functions are articulated in Sections 8 and 9 of the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra Act 2004 (“The Act”).

Our Principal Objectives

The Act sets out our principal objectives in section 8:

- To provide the public of New Zealand with live and recorded performances of symphonic music performed to an international standard.
- To provide an orchestra that:
 - is highly skilled and artistically imaginative.
 - has strong community support.
- To be a leading New Zealand performing arts organisation with a role in the development of a distinctively New Zealand cultural environment.
- To promote and encourage New Zealand musical composition and composers.
- To provide performance opportunities for New Zealand musicians, whether as members of the Orchestra or as soloists.

We recognise that our role is more than delivering the requirements of the Act, we must also seek opportunities to deliver on the spirit of the Act and continue engagement with and respond to New Zealand’s diverse communities through delivering valuable musical experiences onstage, in schools and within communities throughout the country.

We are a committed to being a high-performing leader in the culture and heritage sector. We aspire to represent the very best of the country’s performing arts as New Zealand’s national orchestra.

Our people

As at 31 March 2025 the NZSO had 119 permanent people. Our workforce profile tells us:

- Our people are 54% women.
- We have 44% women people leaders (Tier 2 and 3), and our people leaders are predominantly European.
- Our people are 71% European, 5% Māori, and 7% Asian.
- None of our people have identified as having a disability.

Our approach to developing our action plan

We invited people from across the NZSO to work with us to develop our Kia Toipoto action plan. Due to the differences in the occupational segments, small groups of Musicians and Management Team employees were both consulted with and helped to develop the plan. We will continue to consult with these groups throughout our journey.

We realise that we cannot achieve everything at once and that the constraints imposed by our funding model mean that it may take some time to close pay gaps. We will prioritise areas where we think we do need to do the most work. We will continue to build on our current practices and implement new practices as we travel.

Our leadership team are committed to reducing the pay gaps and delivering this plan. The NZSO Chief Executive is the sponsor of the plan and is responsible for its implementation.

Our operating context

We are committed to the long-term goals of reducing gender, Māori, Pacific and ethnic pay gaps and growing the diversity of the workforce in the public service.

The NZSO is unique in that our professional musicians occupy a specialised occupational segment. Musicians make up 71% of the NZSO. The characteristics of this segment are that they are required to audition for employment, with an extended probation period following employment. Candidates are initially sourced from New Zealand and Australia. If no suitable candidate is identified, the employment process will be widened to an international base. Increasing Māori and Pacific representation relies on a talent pipeline that is years in development with multiple institutions.

Permanent Musician turnover was 1.2% as of 31 March 2025 so opportunities to increase gender and diversity in this segment are low, which is further hindered by a full symphonic orchestra only consisting of 90 players and the financial constraints we are required to operate within. This is reflected in the tenure of Musicians with 50% having worked more than 20 years with the NZSO, and 72% more than 10 years.

Other characteristics of this occupational segment are:

- 50% are women.
- Of the people leaders in this segment, 25% are women (Tier 3).
- 87.5% of the people leaders identify as being European and 12.5% Asian.
- Our musicians are 69% European, Asian 6% and 4% identify as being Māori or MELAA (Middle Eastern, Latin American or African).
- Although 69% are European, there is a wide spread of nationalities due to the international recruitment process for this cohort.
- Being an orchestral Musician means there is very little opportunity for flexible work arrangements, not only because of the number of performers required for each concert but also because Musicians need to practice to maintain their proficiency.
- The gender pay gap favours men as they hold more senior roles in the orchestra than women. The ability to move into senior roles is proficiency based and does not demonstrate any gender bias.
- 95% of NZSO Musicians are covered by a Collective Employment Agreement.
- Increasing female representation in leadership and ethnic representation within this occupational segment relies on a pipeline that is years in development with multiple institutions.

The management team of the NZSO provide support services. While many of these team members have trained as musicians, the skills required for these roles are both readily transferable and more easily accessed in the general New Zealand recruitment market. This is reflected in turnover of 32% as at 31 March 2025.

As this team represents 29% of the NZSO workforce, small changes in this cohort can impact significantly on our human resources demographics, however it is within this group that we will be able to make progress on improving gender pay gaps and diversity and inclusion. Looking at our information we can see:

- 63% of the management team are women.
- 77% of the management team are European, 11% Māori, 6% Asian and 6% MELAA.
- 73% of the leadership roles are held by women (tier 1, 2 & 3)
- 73% of the entire leadership team identify as European, 18% Māori and 9% MELAA.
- The median hourly rate for women is 10% higher than men and the mean hourly rate is 15% higher than men. This reflects the higher number of women holding leadership roles and the greater numbers of women employed in management team roles.
- Jobs are sized or slotted to ensure parity between roles, however; we know that this needs review, and we need to settle on a remuneration policy line that reflects the markets that we recruit from. 86% of women are remunerated below 100% PIR and 92% of men are remunerated below 100% PIR.
- All flexible work requests are considered with the aim of balancing both the individual requestor’s and the NZSO’s needs.

Although this is our first Kia Toipoto plan, we have made progress towards ensuring our recruitment practices are free from bias through the introduction of a Policy on Recruitment and the review and refresh of our Audition Procedures. We know that there is more work to do. This year we will be focussing on:

- That our job sizing and remuneration policy supports our goal of improving ethnic and gender diversity in our workforce and leadership and is more representative of New Zealand society.
- Supporting people in lower pay bands with career development and ensuring that lower pay band roles are valued fairly.
- Assessing pay gaps for all working arrangements.

Kia Toipoto focus area	Our current state	What we will do in 2025/26	How we will measure success
Te Pono – Transparency - Agencies and entities publish annual action plans based on gender and ethnicity data and union/employee feedback. - Agencies and entities ensure easy access to HR and remuneration policies, including salary bands	- Due to the small size of the Management team charged with compliance, and the uniqueness of the organisation, it has taken some time to understand how to respond to Kia Toipoto in a meaningful way with our inaugural plan only now being developed. - HR policies are available through ArtsVision or on SharePoint. There is no remuneration policy and job sizes, remuneration bands and policy lines all need to be researched and approved before publishing.	- Publish our Kia Toipoto plan on ArtVision, SharePoint and our website. - Monitor progress against our plan. - Review job descriptions and size/slot all roles. - Develop a remuneration Policy that identifies the remuneration approach the NZSO will use.	- We develop action plans annually in consultation with our people and these are published by the due date. - We have achieved >70% of our annual Kia Toipoto plan. >50% of roles are sized, with any other roles being slotted against these. - The remuneration policy and line are approved by the Board and published on ArtsVision and SharePoint.
Ngā Hua Tōkeke mō te Utu – Equitable pay outcomes Agencies monitor starting salaries and salaries for the same or similar roles to ensure gender and ethnic pay gaps do not reopen.	- Musicians’ salaries are based on their position in the orchestra and contained in the CEA. - Pay ranges are set prior to recruitment commencing. Proposed remuneration offers are not compared against current roles in the same band or job size.	- Trial publishing relevant salary bands for all vacancies. - Offers are made following comparison with same sized roles within salary band to ensure equitable commencing salaries. - Remuneration will look at individual PIR, with a view to moving those below 80% PIR to above 85% PIR as funding is available. - Monitor all salaries for same or similar roles for pay gaps for all working arrangements (includes fixed term, part time and contract).	- The NZSO employer value proposition reinforces that we are a transparent and equitable employer. - Pay gaps are reduced at commencement of employment. >65% of Management team members are paid within 85 – 100% PIR. - We review roles and no justifiable gaps are identified.
Te whai kanohi i ngā taumata katoa – Leadership and representation By the end of 2022 agencies and entities have plans and targets to improve gender and ethnic representation in their workforce and leadership.	- We have good gender representation across our workforce. We know we need to increase our ethnic diversity, particularly in our leadership roles. As a small entity, numeric targets can be hard to achieve because changes of one or two people in each occupational segment will have a significant impact on our numbers. - Our recruitment policy was created in 2025 using guidance to be inclusive, equitable and bias free.	- Recognise that casual and contract musicians are potential future permanent employees. Monitor and report on ethnicity and gender for this cohort. - Report on the gender and ethnicity of all interviewed candidates for vacancies to assess whether the NZSO is attracting diverse candidates.	- Data is collected, analysed and reported. - Data reported and analysed. Recruitment campaigns altered as necessary to attract diverse candidates.
Te Whakawhanaketanga i te Aramahi – Effective career and leadership development By mid 2023 agencies and entities have career pathways and equitable progression opportunities that support women, Māori, Pacific and ethnic employees to achieve their career aspirations.	- As a small entity, we have limited opportunities for career progression, and we know that some people will need to leave the NZSO in order to progress their careers. Given the occupational segments, many of these will move to roles outside of the Public Service. We support all people in their career aspirations. - Players have a professional development system (PDS). While this requires review to ensure it is achieving the desired aims of both the musicians and the NZSO, it is currently functional. Management team members have annual performance partnership (PPF) discussions in which development needs are identified. Funding for both is limited and it is allocated based on the need of the individual and benefit to the NZSO.	- Performance management system is reviewed and refreshed. Annual meetings all completed and PDS applications for any NZSO Foundation funding are completed, ideally at the beginning of the calendar year (NZSOF’s financial year). - PPF is reviewed and refreshed. Meetings are held at a minimum annually for all management team members with recommended development needs going to People & Culture for action.	- Performance management framework is finalised and implemented. Meetings in line with the framework are held on time. The PDS funding system is well used, demonstrating benefit to individuals and the NZSO with annual reporting provided to the NZSOF at the end of each calendar year. - PPF conversations completed and documented annually by February. Development plans and budgets completed by April annually for implementation in new financial year.
Te whakakore i te katoa o ngā momo whakatoihara, haukume anō hoki – Eliminating all forms of bias and discrimination - Agencies and entities embed and monitor the impact of bias-free HR and remuneration policies and practices. - Agencies and entities ensure leaders and employees learn about and demonstrate cultural competence.	- We are continuing with our policy refresh programme and part of this entails ensuring that they are free from bias or discrimination. - In 2021 the NZSO engaged consultants to offer structural support to increase the level of cultural competency across the organisation and to uphold the NZSO’s Treaty Partnership responsibilities to Aotearoa. Some progress was made, however; ongoing development was paused due to fiscal constraints.	- Continue refreshing NZSO policies to ensure they are free from bias. - Introduce online anti-bias training for all employees involved in recruitment or development processes. - Re-establish the consultancy relationship (or an alternative) to reinvigorate and energise cultural competency for people leaders.	- Policy refresh completed with no bias identified. >50% of interview panellists have completed online training. - Establish Herenga Māori Committee and develop cultural competency programme for implementation in 2026 and beyond.
Te Taunoa o te Mahi Pingore – Flexible-work-by-default By the end of 2024 agencies and entities offer equitable access to flexible-by-default working and ensure it does not undermine career progression or pay.	- The performance, proficiency and travel requirements of the Musician occupational segment makes offering flexible work difficult, however; the practice and performance requirements do allow some work-life-balance. - Management team members are able to apply for flexible work arrangements. These are assessed on a case-by-case basis taking into account both the individual and organisation needs.	Monitor the effectiveness of our Flexible Working procedure.	Review and assess flexible-by-default working as required.