



Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration

Tō'ou reo, kia 'akarongo' ia, ei puapinga nō'ou

Your Voice Should be Heard, Your Voice is Important

Health & Wellbeing Survey of the Public Sector

2022

The *Tō'ou reo, kia 'akarongo' ia, ei puapinga nō'ou, Your Voice Should be Heard, Your Voice is important* survey is the 2022 Cook Islands Public Sector's employee engagement survey focusing on the Health & Wellbeing of Public Sector employees and was launched on Tuesday 7th June. The survey was open to all employees from 28 Public Sector Agencies for two weeks, closing at 12am on Monday 20th June. The survey was conducted through Survey Monkey and was made available to all Public Sector employees through an email link.

It is envisioned that the individual Agency results and information provided from this survey can be used to drive policy change, make improvements to workplace culture and give Public Sector leaders a better understanding of the health & wellbeing of their employees. The survey results provide agencies with a snapshot of how employees see their workplaces, including views on: Employee engagement and job satisfaction, Public Sector ethics and culture, Communication, Inclusion, Workload and Motivation, Fairness and respect and Job demands, Resources and support.

This is a 'new look' survey and was redeveloped to be more user friendly, more focused, shorter and to encourage participation across the sector. Participation rates in previous years in the Employee Engagement Survey have been consistently low compared to the number of employees. After some research, and in consultation with a statistician it was determined that there were a number of changes that could be made to help increase participation numbers and provide the sector with a more concentrated set of data and reporting mechanism. The first change was eliminating a large number of questions required to be answered and focus on one area, and for this survey "Health & Wellbeing" was selected, unlike the previous survey that had a number of areas that it covered. This shortened the survey significantly and in turn the time it took to complete. Another change was to improve the level of confidentiality in the survey, so many of the 'identifier' questions were removed, leaving only the Agency an employee worked for, which improved the level of privacy and confidentiality significantly. Finally, another consideration was the reporting of the data collected. With the previous surveys, reports were downloaded straight from the survey platform website, Survey Monkey, and were very large and not very user friendly due to the amount of questions and the limited formatting options available. It was very time consuming to provide any kind of analytical report but with a more focused approach it allows for a report to be produced that is more succinct and should assist management to easily identify issues.

The lack of 'identifiers' means that demographic information is not able to be produced for this report. It is recognised that it is important for agencies to understand the demographics of their employees and this information will be available in the individual agency survey reports and under development is a sector wide demographic dashboard that will be launched on the OPSC website in August and updated at regular intervals.

A total of 412 employees participated in the survey. Of those who participated, 41 did not select which Agency they were employed with. The 412 respondents number does not include the 59 employees from the Pa Enea who participated in a shorter, mobile friendly version of the survey in an effort to make the survey more accessible. A separate report will be produced for the Pa Enea results. Work is underway at OPSC to develop a second survey which will seek feedback from employees on the management and leadership of the Public Sector. This is due to be launched in October 2022 and will contribute towards the Mid Year Review process for the 14 Government Ministry's. The response rates were too low overall to infer the result to the entire Public Sector population and is a snapshot of the opinions of the 412 that responded. In order to get a more accurate picture of the realities of working in the Public Sector and be able to track trends over time a higher participation rate is needed for future surveys.

In our endeavours to be more transparent for the purposes of improving performance, accountability and the service delivery to the public this report will be made available to all Public Sector employees .

About the Report

The *Tō'ou reo, kia 'akarongo' ia, ei puapinga nō'ou, Your Voice Should be Heard, Your Voice is important* survey has been designed to support Public Sector agencies to build positive workplace cultures with integrity and that reflect the Public Sector values of Honesty, Impartiality, Service, Transparency, Accountability, Respect, Effectiveness and Efficiency.

The survey results provide agencies with a snapshot of how employees see their workplaces, including views on:

- Employee engagement and job satisfaction
- Employee wellbeing
- Public Sector ethics and culture
- Communication
- Diversity and inclusion
- Workload and Motivation
- Fairness and respect

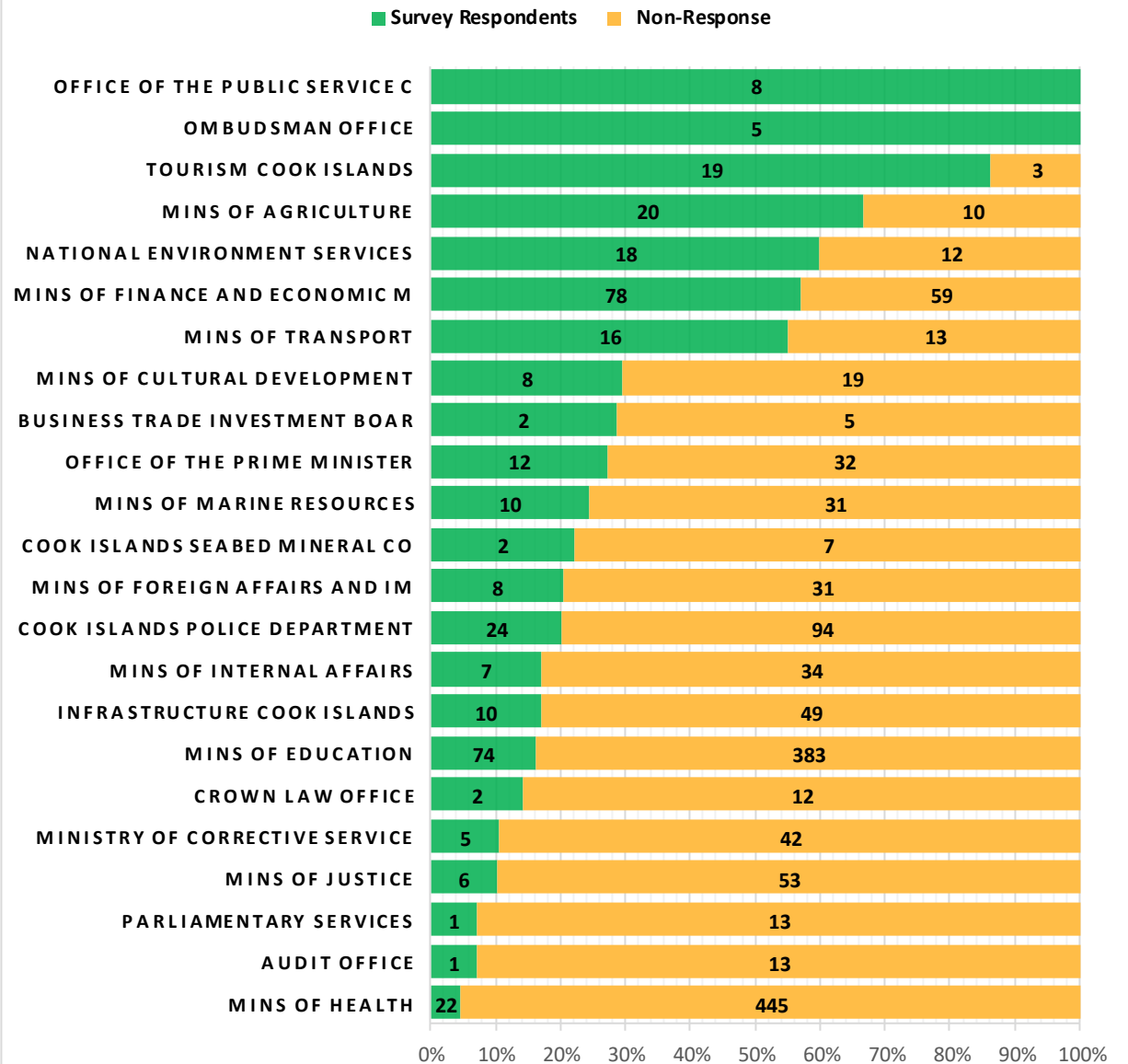
Agencies can use the results to determine how to improve the workplace for their employees.

Each report contains a summary of the data results and a summary of the participants comments. If the report contains no summary of comments it is because no comments were given.

This year you will also see:

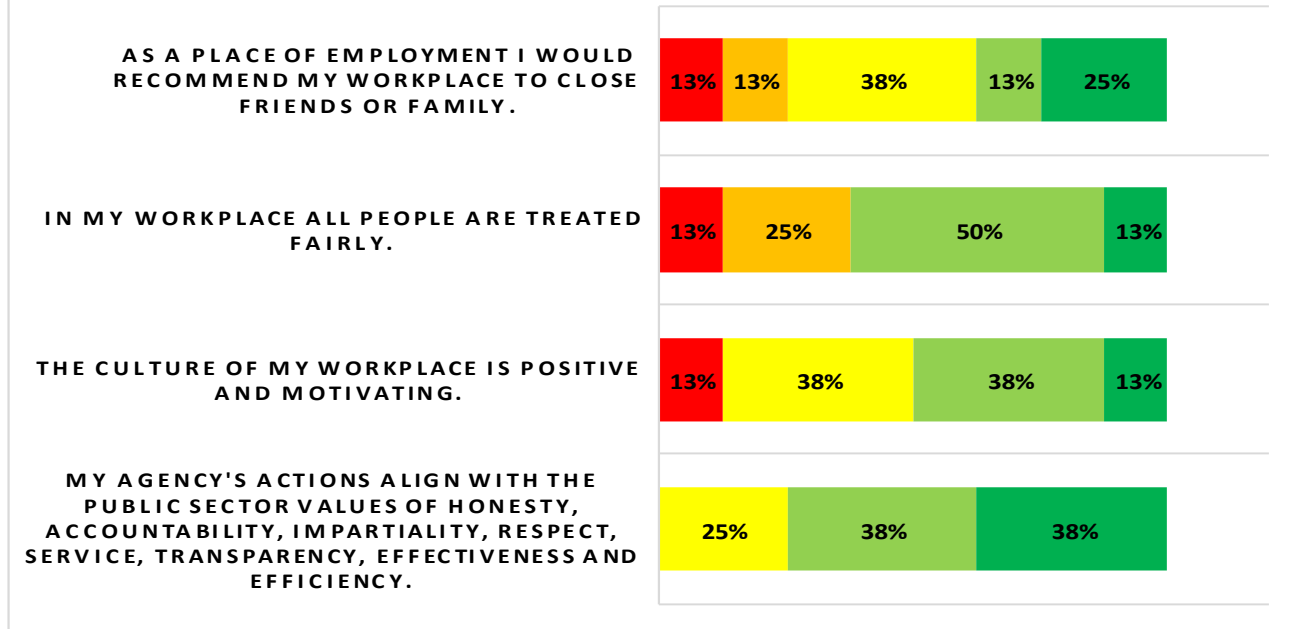
- Public release of the 'Survey Snapshot Report', which provides data results from all of the agency employees who participated.
- Demographic and survey information made available on the OPSC website, and
- A second employment engagement survey launched in October focusing on leadership and management.

PROPORTION OF AGENCY RESPONDENTS



ETHICS AND CULTURE

■ Never
 ■ Rarely
 ■ Occasionally
 ■ Frequently
 ■ Always



Summary of Results

A positive response in this section with two statements rating above 63% of respondents selecting Always and Frequently. However 64% did select Occasionally, Rarely or Never for the first statement and 51% for the third statement and it is these results that would be a concern to management.

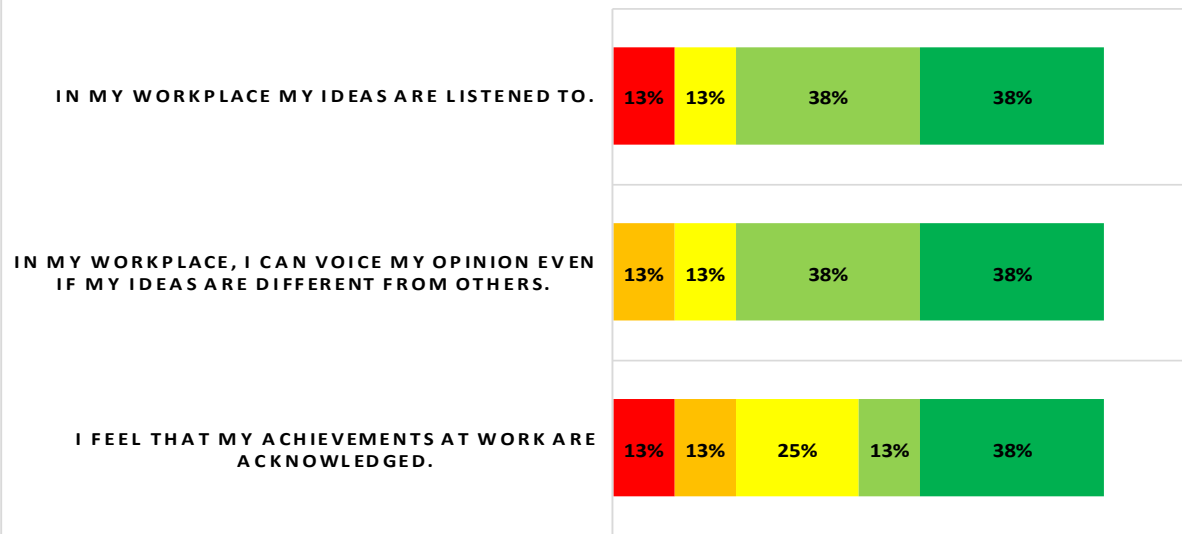
The first step to improving positivity in the workplace is to identify any glaring negatives such as employees feeling undervalued, unacknowledged, or a lack of connectivity and being part of a team. Using the results of this survey to help identify negatives and then developing and implementing strategies to reduce those negatives will help with staff motivation and engagement in their work.

Whether an employee will give recommendations to friends and family to apply for a role in an organisation is a good gauge of organisational, team, and work engagement levels. Management would be recommended to look at the other indicators from this survey for where improvements could be made to increase a more positive response for this statement. In addition if employees feel they are being treated fairly then they will be more engaged in their work and have a more positive outlook. Transparency and following clear procedures and guidelines is one of the key ways to combat unfairness in the workplace. Managers need to be mindful that every action they take is being scrutinized by their staff, so following correct procedure every single time is vital to ensure that employees are all being treated fairly and equally and that this is seen by employees.

Comments from respondents indicated a lack of transparency and some unfairness of how staff are treated within the Ministry, but felt impartiality and respect was evident.

COMMUNICATION

■ Never ■ Rarely ■ Occasionally ■ Frequently ■ Always



Summary of Results

Again, this section shows positive results, with high ratings of 76% of participants selecting Always or Frequently for the first two statements. It is the final statement in this section where respondents rated much lower with 26% selecting from one of the lower ratings, indicating that some employees do not feel acknowledged for their work.

Staff meetings are always a good forum for sharing ideas and an opportunity to acknowledge staff achievements , as well as one-to-one meetings with employees and their manager.

Feeling valued at work increases more than just an employee’s job satisfaction. The influence of recognition and appreciation has a profound impact on the entire organisation.

Appreciation in the workplace:

- Improves employee engagement. When leaders fail to recognize and appreciate their people, employees are 42% less likely to be engaged.
- Boosts productivity. There is an 18x increase in the probability of great work when employees are recognized at work.
- Strengthens company culture. Employee recognition has a tremendous impact on the six essential elements of a thriving organizational culture
- Helps to retain employees. Consistent appreciation and recognition can add 3.5 years to an employee’s tenure.
- Impacts bottom line results. Organisations that practice recognition effectively are 12x more likely to have strong business results like increases in shareholder return. (Reference www.octanner.com/insights/articles)

Commentary from respondents were mixed, for some - some days were motivating and positive and other days it was not.

Summary of Results

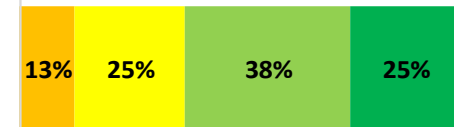
The workload and motivation results indicate that while 63% selected Always or Frequently about coming to work each day, much less felt that they were able to maintain a healthy work/life balance.

Respondents commented that lack of resources, particularly staffing has put pressure on existing staff, which in turn has impacted on being able to maintain a healthy work/life balance.

WORKLOAD AND MOTIVATION

■ Never ■ Rarely ■ Occasionally ■ Frequently ■ Always

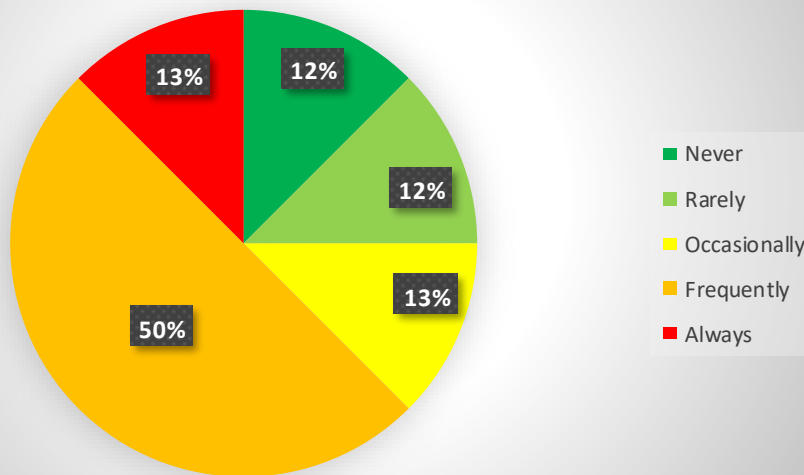
I LOOK FORWARD TO COMING INTO WORK EACH DAY.



I AM ABLE TO CARRY OUT MY ROLE WHILE MAINTAINING A HEALTHY WORK/LIFE BALANCE.



In the last 12 months, I have thought about leaving my workplace.

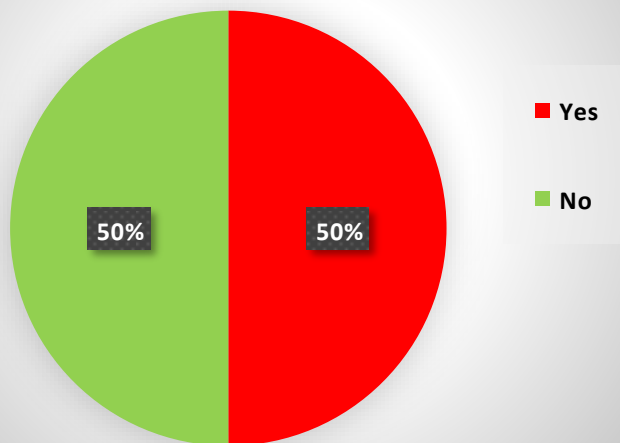


Summary of Comments

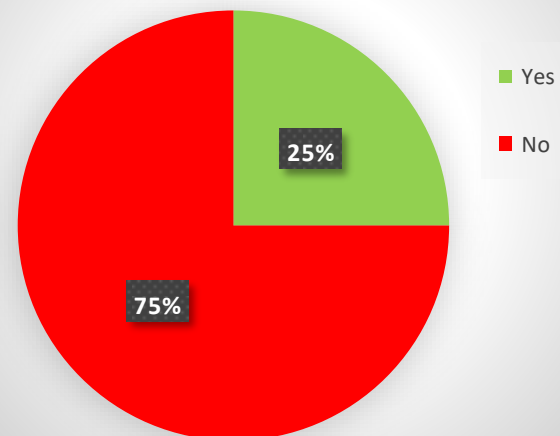
A significant amount of respondents, 63% selected Frequently and Always when asked if they have thought about leaving in the last 12 months.

Comments were repeated for this statement, as in other sections, with a lack of resources, lack of staff, a high workload and a lack of leadership support contributing factors in why employees have considered leaving.

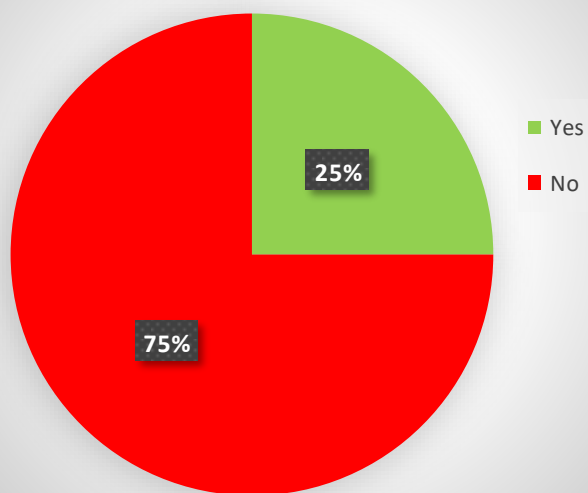
In the last 12 months have you experienced a dispute or conflict in your workplace?



Was your dispute or conflict resolved within one month?



Was the dispute or conflict resolved fairly?



Summary of Results

The most concerning indicator from these results is not that 50% of employees have experienced a conflict or dispute, it is the fact that 75% reported that the dispute was not resolved within a month or fairly.

Disputes and Conflicts in the work environment are difficult to eliminate completely but this result would indicate that management are lacking in the skills in conflict resolution. Management might benefit from some training. There is a list of free online training websites which have a wide selection of courses provided, including conflict resolution and management in the conclusion section of this report.

Conclusion

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration had 8 employees participate in the survey, which equates to 20.5% of employees. As a result, this report provides only a very small 'snapshot' of the Health & Wellbeing of its employees. For results that more accurately reflect the level of employees engagement management should be promoting the importance of engagement surveys with their staff and showing that they are interested in what employees have to say.

Non-participation in employee surveys is often an indicator of dissatisfied and disengaged employees who do not see any benefit from completing a survey.

The results highlighted in the report should be considered as 'points of action' and where management work together to identify how and what can be done to increase the number of employees participating and selecting Always or Frequently in the future.

Improving the wellbeing of employees leads to higher level of engagement and productivity, which again leads to better health, wellbeing and satisfaction with work.

Research suggests that employees who report high levels of wellbeing are more likely to:

- Be more creative
- Be more productive
- Provide better customer service
- Report more positive interactions with their managers
- Be more confident to speak up
- Be more satisfied with their job, career development and work-life balance
- Be more engaged.

Training Resources

Coursera is an online learning website that partners with more than 200 leading universities and companies to bring flexible, affordable, job-relevant online learning to individuals and organizations worldwide. They offer a range of learning opportunities—from hands-on projects and courses to job-ready certificates and degree programs. Coursera offers free online training courses as well as those with a fee. Coursera for Business provides courses for transformative skill development solutions for empowering teams with the high-impact skills that drive innovation, competitiveness, and growth. They also offer Coursera for Government which helps governments and organizations provide in-demand skills and learning paths to new jobs for the entire workforce, and implements national-scale learning programs. www.coursera.org

edX Open Courses offers online learning from world-class academic institutions and corporate partners, self-paced individual courses or multi-course programs to earn a certificate and typically take 2 to 6 weeks to complete. They are low cost, so organisations can affordably provision learning for teams or the entire organisation. www.edx.org/

Cook Islands Tertiary Training Institute offer two NZ Certificates in Business and Management. www.citti.edu.ck/courses/