# CALL FOR PAPERS
## Addressing Capability Challenges in Public Management

### Special issue of *Policy Quarterly* (May 2025)

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## Introduction

*Policy Quarterly* is pleased to announce a call for papers for a special issue entitled 'Addressing Capability Challenges in Public Management'. The New Zealand public sector faces challenges that are common internationally: rising demand, limited resources, and growing complexity in a more volatile, challenging and uncertain world, as well as polarisation in broader society. It also has some unique characteristics, including the contested role of the Treaty of Waitangi, a reset after a post-Covid 19-induced spending boom and a recent change in government.

This issue will focus on management in important areas within New Zealand's public sector. We invite submissions that analyse contemporary challenges and innovative solutions, aiming to foster a deeper understanding and inform effective practices. We hope for intellectual diversity: a wide range of viewpoints, epistemologies and methods are welcome. We hope for constructive debate and dialogue to arise from the special issue. Submissions from non-New Zealand jurisdictions are welcome if there is strong relevance to New Zealand's context. Studies centred on the interests of agencies, employees, citizens, non-government organisations and taxpayers are welcome.

## Scope of submissions

We seek comprehensive articles that address the following themes:

- *Trust and legitimacy*. Concerns have been expressed in New Zealand about the loss of free and frank advice, and poor compliance with the Official Information Act (Kibblewhite and Boshier, 2018). There are also broader ethical issues, including how whistleblowers are treated, bullying, and even corruption (Macaulay, 2023). Papers that explore whether public agencies and officials are rightfully trusted, and what could be done within agencies to ensure trust and legitimacy are welcome (Taylor, 2018). Papers that address broader issues of ethical mis/conduct are also welcome.

- *Change management and managing through volatile budget cycles*. Expenditure grew enormously in the first year of Covid-19 and there are now attempts to scale it back. We are interested in studies that cover, for instance, rapid establishment, scaling and

expansion of programmes; and also retrenchment, including job cuts, restructuring and downsizing (Kiefer et al., 2015). Papers, for instance, could explore management and HR practices that address the implications of downsizing while maintaining recruitment, retention and workforce development (Kim, Cho and Wang, 2024).

- *Public sector leadership and development*. To effectively face rising challenges, a broader skill set than those within easy reach will be needed. Restructuring is an over-used lever, and command and control, pleasing the minister at all costs, or micro-managing staff are insufficient to meet rising challenges (Hamblin and Plimmer, 2023). Instead, resilient staff, capable of growing and developing skills, will be needed. Critiques of current approaches and examination of alternative options are welcome. Papers could examine how leadership styles and growth-oriented approaches enhance employee resilience, influence governance, and support policy implementation in changing political and social environments. Papers that look at capability from an employee, HR or employee relations perspective are welcome (Kim, Cho and Wang, 2024). Studies in leadership, organisational climate, voice and dialogue and debate within organisations are welcome.
- *Delivery methods*. Public sectors are increasingly expected to co-design, co-deliver and co-produce with outside organisations and individuals, rather than simply be service providers that meet customer expectations. But how this shift is managed remains under-explored. While desirable, problems with 'co' concepts remain (Dudau et al., 2023). Accountability is hard to specify and remains a challenge in novel delivery methods. The role of contractors and consultants has been criticised locally and internationally (Seabrooke and Sending, 2022). They present unique challenges of incentives, integration and management that remain understudied. The relationship between policymaking processes and human resource strategies, highlighting either successful alignments or potential conflicts, is also challenging (Hill and Plimmer, 2024). Papers that address these issues, as management challenges, are welcome.

- *Technological integration*, *artificial intelligence and social media*. A new wave of technological advance is upon us. We welcome papers on the implications of and responses to technology (Allen et al., 2020; Gaozhao, Wright and Gainey, 2024). IT project management is also important. Papers that investigate how emerging technologies and social media are transforming management practices in the public sector are welcome. Papers that address the following are also welcome: those that explore the adoption of employee social media policies and practices in public sector organisations; those that focus on ethical considerations and governance challenges associated with the implementation of artificial intelligence (AI); and those that focus on the application of talent analytics and workplace data machine learning.

## Deadline for submissions

Submissions of expressions of interest must be received by **9 December 2024** and full papers by **10 February 2025**. Early submissions are encouraged to facilitate a smoother review process. Reviews will be double-blind unless otherwise agreed.

## Submission guidelines

Contributors should prepare manuscripts of approximately 4,000 words (excluding tables, figures and references), aligning with the themes specified above. Please include a short abstract (no more than 100 words) and 5–6 key words. Consult recent online issues of *Policy Quarterly* for guidance on referencing and endnotes (see https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/igps/publications/policy-quarterly). Submissions must be original and not previously published. Each submission will undergo a peer review process to ensure the relevance and quality of the publication.

## Why submit to this special issue?

- **Reach**: Benefit from the extensive readership of *Policy Quarterly*, which includes a diverse range of public sector professionals, policymakers and academics.
- **Influence**: Contribute to critical conversations that could shape public management practices.
- **Engagement**: Connect with other experts and explore opportunities for future collaboration.

## How to submit

Articles should be submitted to the special issue editors,
Associate Professor **Geoff Plimmer**,

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Senior Lecturer **Wonhyuk Cho**,

via wonhyuk.cho@vuw.ac.nz or

PhD candidate **Annika Naschitzki**

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Please include your manuscript and a brief biographical note detailing your expertise in public management and HR.

For further information or queries regarding the call for papers or submission process, please reach out to the editorial team.

### References

Allen, B., L.E. Tamindael, S.H. Bickerton and W. Cho (2020) 'Does citizen coproduction lead to better urban services in smart cities projects? An empirical study on e-participation in a mobile big data platform', *Government Information Quarterly*, 37 (1), 101412

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Kim, P., W. Cho and I. Yang (2024) 'Workplace disruption in the public sector and HRM practices to enhance employee resilience', *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, 44 (1), pp.86–115

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Seabrooke, L. and O.J. Sending (2022) 'Consultancies in public administration', *Public Administration*, 100 (3), pp.457–71

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