



NEW ZEALAND  
**CUSTOMS SERVICE**  
TE MANA ĀRAI O AOTEAROA

# Rautaki Mana Ārai Customs Strategy 2023-2028



»»» **Kia ora and welcome  
to Rautaki Mana Ārai -  
Customs Strategy**





# Rautaki Mana Ārai

## Customs Strategy

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**Christine Stevenson**  
Comptroller of Customs

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# Comptroller Foreword

## Kia ora koutou

**I am proud to introduce Rautaki Mana Ārai – Customs Strategy 2023 - 2028, which builds on the foundation of our existing strategy. It keeps the things you have told us are important – our purpose, vision and values, and introduces four strategic priority areas to better focus our thinking, our mahi, and our planning.**

These will enable us to continue to deliver on our core functions – the things we do every day to protect New Zealand’s border, facilitate the movement of people and goods across borders, and enable staff to see how their day-to-day activities play a part in delivering on our strategic intent.

The four strategic priority areas - People, Partnerships, Innovation, and Technology and Data - will be our focus for the next five years and help shape our organisation through to 2028.

These four areas will be supported by topic-specific strategies:

**People:** Customs has an adaptable, diverse workforce that can respond to a dynamic environment. We offer career paths that support growth and high performance. We promote and maintain a culture of wellbeing, and we keep our people safe.

**Partnerships:** We focus on partnerships that provide significant benefit to New Zealand and are mutually beneficial for us and our partners. We recognise and value the wider global benefit from those partnerships.

**Innovation:** We foster a culture of innovation, seeking new ideas and approaches to border and risk management from staff. We collaborate with stakeholders to stay connected to global innovations at the border.

**Technology and Data:** We refine and strengthen our data and information capability and our use of information. We use and adapt to technologies that benefit both users and customers.

These priorities will strengthen our core functions of Trade and Revenue, Protection, and Travel through effective border management and produce better outcomes for New Zealand. They will inform the way we prioritise work and make sure we invest in the right things at the right time.

I want to recognise the input we have had from across Customs in helping identify the things that are important to you and the areas we all need to focus on.

## E noho rā

**Christine Stevenson**  
Comptroller of Customs



# Who we are, What we do

Te Mana Ārai o Aotearoa - New Zealand Customs Service (Customs) safeguards New Zealand and advances our economic prosperity by delivering essential border services.

We **protect** New Zealand through risk prevention and mitigation, enforcement and assurance and checks on goods, people and craft crossing our border.

We **promote** New Zealand by supporting trade and travel, revenue collection, and through programmes and initiatives that support our country's economic prosperity.

We have chosen four strategic priority areas to focus on over the next five years. These are People, Partnerships, Innovation, and Technology and Data. They are aimed at strengthening our core functions of Trade and Revenue, Protection, and Travel, as well as producing better outcomes for New Zealand through effective border management.

Customs works closely with other New Zealand agencies to identify and target threats, deliver effective and efficient border processes, and facilitate trade and travel. We also work internationally with entities such as the World Customs Organization (WCO) and key trading partners, and act as a key revenue collection agent for the Crown. We support businesses and representative groups who play an important role at the border, including airports and seaports, regulatory agencies and commercial operators. We know it is important that New Zealanders understand our role and we work hard to maintain our trusted trader status and the economic benefits that come with it. We continue to adapt to our changing operating environment.

## Purpose, Vision and Values

Rautaki Mana Ārai – Customs Strategy 2023 - 2028 upholds our Purpose, Vision, and Values:

### Our Purpose

Ko te whakahaumarū me te whakatairanga i a Aotearoa ki ngā rohe:

We are here to protect and promote New Zealand across borders

### Our Vision

Te whakakore i tūraru rohe me ngā tūraru kohinga tāka:

We aspire to eliminate border and revenue risk

## Our Values

**Te Ara Tika**  
We do what's right

**Kaitiakitanga**  
We are guardians

**He Tāngata**  
We value people

**Pae Tawhiti**  
We look forward



# Te Pou Tokomanawa

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In a marae, Pou are the pillars supporting the structure of the building, and Te Pou Tokomanawa is the central pillar supporting the ridge pole, or backbone.

In the same way, Customs' Te Pou Tokomanawa strategy is our supporting document, central to our mahi. It guides our actions and our core values, and draws from ideals derived from the principles of te Tiriti. Those ideals - of manaakitanga (participation), kotahitanga (partnership) and kaitiakitanga (protection) - form Te Pou Tokomanawa, overarching what we do and how we do it.

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**As part of our fundamental work to protect New Zealand's border and our aspirations for stronger and enduring relationships with iwi, we aim to improve our Māori-Crown capability through:**

- > Building awareness and understanding of tikanga Māori and te Reo Māori capability amongst all Customs staff.
- > Supporting Māori staff within Customs to achieve their aspirations.
- > Strengthening our relationship with iwi/hapū in key marine and border areas.

# Rautaki Mana Ārai Customs Strategy

## Tō Mātou Aronga – Our Purpose

**Ko te whakahaumarū me te whakatairanga  
i a Aotearoa ki ngā rohe**

We are here to protect and promote  
New Zealand across borders

## Tō Mātou Kitenga – Our Vision

**Te whakakore tūraru rohe me ngā  
tūraru kohinga tāka**

We aspire to eliminate border  
and revenue risk



## TE POU TOKOMANAWA

Our Central Pou

### Ō Mātou Mātāpono – Our Principles

#### Kotahitanga

Partnership

#### Kaitiakitanga

Protection

#### Manaakitanga

Participation

### Whanonga pono – Our Values

#### Te Ara Tika

We do what's right

#### Kaitiakitanga

We are guardians

#### He Tāngata

We value people

#### Pae Tawhiti

We look forward

### Ō Mātou Wāhanga Rautaki Whakaarotau – Our Strategic Priority Areas



People



**Whakahaumarū**

Protection



Technology and Data

#### Ā Mātou Taumahi Mātāmua

Our Core  
Functions



**Hokohoko  
me te putea**  
Trade and Revenue



**Tāroi**  
Travel



Partnerships



Innovation

# Drivers of Change for Shaping our Future

We considered many drivers of change when developing the four strategic priority areas that will influence our direction for the future. These included being aware of impacts or pressures on our organisation from gradual trends and megatrends. In order to stay ahead of the game, we need the ability to respond effectively at the border with forward thinking, and sensible and appropriate actions.

## Gradual trends include:

- > Increasing travel and migration, both legal and illegal.
- > More diverse and complex international supply chains, driven by changing business models and increasing trade with emerging economies.
- > Expectations of more accessible and more timely public services with a greater sense of social responsibility, notably relating to transparency, openness, fairness and environmentally sustainable processes.
- > Expectations that we will be capable of managing emerging risks and dealing with new threats from the globalisation and complexity of crime.
- > Greater data richness and connectivity, enabling more effective risk targeting and efficient cross-border flows balanced by risks of breaches of privacy and security from greater use, collection and retention of data.

Megatrends are powerful, longer-term structural shifts that could change the global economy, business and society.

## Megatrends include:

- > Geopolitical changes and instability leading to ongoing supply chain disruptions – such as the conflict in Ukraine.
- > Demographic and societal changes with an ageing population (and more diversity across younger New Zealand demographics) and net positive immigration into New Zealand.
- > Advancements in technology, such as machine learning or application of artificial intelligence.
- > Climate change, rising sea levels, extreme weather events and instability caused by unforeseen events, such as the Covid-19 pandemic.





## Four New Strategic Priorities

The next section describes our four strategic priority areas through to 2028 – People, Partnerships, Innovation, and Technology and Data.

**Each area will have its own topic-specific strategy, with a senior leader as the sponsor:**



### People

Deputy Chief  
Executive  
People and  
Capability



### Partnerships

Deputy Chief  
Executive  
International and  
Governance



### Innovation

Deputy  
Comptroller  
Operations



### Technology and Data

Deputy Chief  
Executive  
Finance,  
Technology and  
Infrastructure



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**"Utilising our strategic and operational wellbeing and safety framework, we ensure we protect, build and promote current and future work design."**

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# People

**Ehara taki toa i te toa takitahi. Engari, he toa takitini**

My strength is not the strength of one, it is the strength of many

**Customs needs an adaptable and diverse workforce that can respond to dynamic and changing environments. We need good leaders, leading well.**

## **Our intended future state is:**

- > We have the skills and capabilities to help protect and promote New Zealand and our economy.
- > We have an adaptable, diverse and inclusive workforce that can respond to dynamic environments.
- > We have career paths that support growth, management and leadership.
- > We promote and develop a culture of wellbeing, health and safety.
- > We make sure all reasonable, practicable steps are taken to protect against harm.
- > We have great people and leaders who are values-led and high performing.
- > We are transparent, open and proactive in our communications with our people; working collaboratively with unions and representatives.
- > We pay our people fairly.

### *Why this strategic priority area?*

Customs' current and future capability needs are evolving to respond to new technologies, new threats of trans-national organised crime (TNOOC), a growing appreciation of the need for competency in te ao Māori, while maintaining excellence in our core functions.

The workforce and demographics of New Zealand are changing. The median working age is increasing, we are becoming more multicultural and the expectations of work, how and where we work are key considerations for our people.

This means, as well as developing new capabilities in core roles, we need to cultivate and retain strong specialised capability across the organisation. We need strong relationship management skills to support partnership goals and a culture of continued innovation. We need to have a critical understanding of te ao Māori and how being a Treaty partner informs how we conduct our mahi. We have workforce plans to enable these future capabilities that include capacity for development, acting and secondment opportunities.

Utilising our strategic and operational wellbeing and safety framework, we ensure we protect, build and promote current and future work design to enable effective, safe and healthy outcomes for all our people.

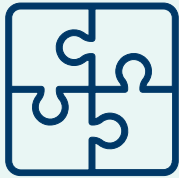
It is crucial our culture is welcoming, respectful and inclusive. Everyone feels supported and valued, encouraged to learn and grow. We have a strong sense of purpose in our mahi and take great pride in doing our best work and serving our communities well. This is reflected in the way we live our values every day and work in partnership to deliver on Customs' purpose.

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**"We focus on partnerships that provide significant value to New Zealand and on those that are mutually beneficial."**

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# Partnerships

**Kia kotahi te hoe e kore e totohu**

Paddle in unison together so the waka doesn't become heavy

**Customs will focus on our partnerships through to 2028 – the people, agencies, stakeholders and communities we work with and the way we work with them.**

## **Our intended future state for our domestic partnerships is:**

- > We maintain awareness of roles and capabilities with partners to achieve our respective outcomes.
- > We work with our colleagues to lead and shape relevant parts of New Zealand's response to the challenge of trans-national organised crime (TNOOC).
- > We promote collaboration at the border and efficient use of systems and assets, particularly within the Border Executive Board (BEB) agencies.

## **Our intended future state for international partnerships is:**

- > We focus on partnerships that provide significant value to New Zealand and on those that are mutually beneficial, recognising the wider global benefit from those partnerships.
- > We work with key partners to test out new approaches to border management.
- > We support work that expands trade and market access.
- > We focus on partnerships that are mutually beneficial and build better economic and social outcomes for New Zealanders.
- > We aim to develop a te ao Māori approach to partnerships, where the relationship is more important than the transaction.

### *Why this strategic priority area?*

Customs is a player in a wider border system, and we are more likely to achieve our goals through partnerships working for mutual benefit. Customs operates in a number of communities, including the public service, the aviation and maritime sectors, the international customs community, the South Pacific region and the global trading community. We seek to grow meaningful partnerships with iwi. We cannot achieve our goals in isolation.

Partnerships and relationships can be heavily impacted by global changes and it is vital that Customs remains alert to this, to better respond and prepare for the future.

Good partnering involves early liaison and co-design with our partners. We will continue to focus on the customer when designing and developing services.



**"Our innovation focus will allow Customs to adapt to the challenges of changing environments."**



# Innovation

## I orea te tuatara ka puta ki waho

A problem is solved by continuing to find solutions with creative thinking, adaptability and perseverance.

Customs will foster a culture of innovation, encouraging staff to generate new ideas and approaches to border and risk management and stay connected to global innovations at the border.

### Our intended future state is:

- > We create a shared understanding of innovation and encourage it.
- > We establish processes to turn innovations into successful scalable solutions.
- > We train our people in innovation thinking and skillsets.
- > We ensure a deep, evidence-based understanding of the problems we seek to solve.
- > We partner with a range of customers and stakeholders to encourage diversity of thought and experience.
- > We channel innovation from across the organisation towards clear strategic goals and objectives.
- > We equip our people with the tools to respond quickly and in agile ways.

### Why this strategic priority area?

Our innovation focus will allow Customs to adapt to the challenges of changing environments. Innovative thinking will be needed to respond to transnational organised crime, changes in trade and supply chains, new forms of goods compliance and responses to climate change. We want Customs to be seen as innovative and willing to implement changes to do things better.

We will use automation, data, technology and partnerships to explore new ways to deal with ongoing and changing risks offshore, actively respond when risks present at the border and create seamless experiences for trusted travellers and traders.

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**"Our Technology and Data priority area will focus on how we get the best value from our existing data, while at the same time making sure that data is protected."**

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# Technology and Data

**He aha te kai o te rangatira? He Kōrero, he kōrero, he kōrero**  
What is the food of the leader? It is knowledge; it is communication

**Technology, in terms of both hardware and software, and the best use of our data, will be a strategic priority for Customs through to 2028.**

## **Our intended future state is that we refine and strengthen our:**

- > Data and information capability.
- > Use of information and new technology to better serve New Zealanders.
- > Technological ability to address evolving crimes.
- > Use of technology to benefit both users and customers.

### *Why this strategic priority area?*

Traders' and travellers' expectations of how new technology can facilitate their trade and travel are evolving. Our people too bring their own expectations of information technology systems and what good information technology looks like to their roles, and Customs needs to be able to respond to these expectations.

We will continue to improve and evolve our digital services to make doing business easier. We will maximise what we can learn from the New Zealand Traveller Declaration programme and focus on improving systems for the maritime border. In the first few years of this Strategy a key focus will be implementing the Data for Mail programme, which will complement our current trade and targeting systems and improve our analytics capabilities.

We will manage cyber-risks and protect our systems and our vital and sensitive information. We will explore new technologies that are cost-effective and help us protect New Zealand's communities and economy. The pace of technological change is accelerating. We will manage our assets and plan for upgrades to keep pace with changing technologies and to manage the expectations of partners, travellers and business.

Good examples of Customs keeping abreast of technology are the Trade Single Window and New Zealand Traveller Declaration. These improve customer experience and reduce the need for recollecting information. We will continue to evolve these platforms and leverage those assets and the data they provide.

Part of the topic-specific strategy for our Technology and Data priority area will focus on how we get the best value from our existing data, while at the same time making sure that data is protected.



# Additional Important Areas

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Over the next five years, three immediate areas will also require focus:

## **Information management, information sharing and privacy**

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Customs collects and maintains a significant amount of information (including people's personal information). We will need to focus on maintaining high standards around data integrity and safety within both our current and new services.

## **Environment and climate change**

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'Green' Customs, the focus on sustainable ways of working, is developing momentum on the international stage, and we are making a positive contribution to the Government's carbon neutral programme. A key next step is developing our Green Customs policy to further develop approaches to reduce our carbon emissions and waste and contribute to environmental stewardship initiatives, as well as explore options to help traders and transport operators reduce their carbon footprints.

## **Response capability**

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Our ability to respond to a crisis is well developed, and we have processes for quickly responding to unforeseen events that impact the border. We will continue to test and refine our processes and build in lessons learned from reviews.

# Levers, Monitoring, Review

This Strategy is a living document. This means it is open to change. We will review our progress and make changes if necessary to keep Customs focused on the future state it seeks.

The levers we will use to help achieve the outcomes in each strategic priority area are:

## Customs system and border expertise

We maintain expert knowledge of our environment and approaches to border challenges and continue to use our experience and knowledge in the future.

## Policy expertise

We are well positioned to support government expectations. We provide excellent policy and legal advice for Ministers, strategic advice for senior decision-makers and support for our Operations groups.

## Regulatory stewardship and our authorising environment

The legislative instruments we are responsible for will be updated to make sure that the legal framework in which we operate enables, not inhibits, dealing with new challenges. At the same time, we are careful to balance the need to make sure our policies and practices clearly respect laws and enshrined rights, as well as social licence and the public, partner agency and government expectations.

## Capability, professionalism, commitment and integrity of Customs' people

The quality of our staff impacts our reputation and means we can deliver to a high standard.



## Data and intelligence

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Customs collects significant amounts of data, and skilled analysis of this data helps us facilitate trade and detect misconduct.

## International presence and influence

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We use relationships and navigate international organisations to support a rules-based order to secure the best outcomes for New Zealanders.

## Regulatory tools and levers

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We operate in a framework that empowers us to take action, from helping regulated parties comply with the law, to warnings and directions, to fines and licence suspensions and revocations through to recommending prosecution. This suite allows us to tailor our actions and make sure our responses are appropriate.

## Access to a network of public sector expertise

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Partnerships with key public sector colleagues with similar missions. Groups like the Border Executive Board (BEB) and World Customs Organization (WCO) are crucial partners for our mahi.

# Tracking our Progress

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As topic-specific strategies and action plans are developed for each of the strategic priority areas, clear outcomes and performance indicators will be developed and incorporated into our Performance Measurement Framework. This will enable us to show what we have achieved and establish clear connections between our day-to-day activities and the outcomes we are working towards.

As part of the approval processes, investment proposals and new work group activities will need to show how they align with one or more of the priority areas and key outcomes for the functional areas. This will mean our priorities and resources are targeted to where they will make the biggest difference.

High-level reporting on the establishment and implementation of the topic-specific strategies and action plans will be incorporated into our quarterly and annual reporting.





**Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa**  
New Zealand Government

## How to contact us

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