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Transparency International New Zealand  
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## **No Complacency for Corruption on Anniversary of 100 Years of Public Service Act**

The New Zealand public sector has long enjoyed a reputation as one of the least corrupt in the world. On the day of its 100th Anniversary, Transparency International (New Zealand) warns that there is no room for complacency in the quest towards higher standards of governance. Later this year, Transparency International NZ (TINZ) will publish its Integrity Plus National Integrity System report, which looks at twelve key institutional pillars covering Parliament, political parties, the executive, the judiciary, the public sector including local government, key watch-dog institutions, the media, law enforcement agencies, community and voluntary organisations and business.

*“The fact that many government agencies are contributing funding to support the study indicates that the public sector also recognizes the importance of maintaining a high integrity society, and is not complacent about the risks to integrity in today’s more globalised world”,* says Transparency International New Zealand’s Executive Chair, Suzanne Snively.

*“National Integrity System studies have been carried out for the last 10 years or so, in countries all around the world”* says Suzanne Snively, who is the Co-director of the NIS research project for TINZ. *“We conducted a study in New Zealand back in 2003. As with that study, we will again be going beyond a narrow focus on corruption to assess New Zealand against best practice standards of transparency and accountability, taking account of our unique constitutional and cultural features. Emergent findings are beginning to be identified. For example, the Office of the Controller and Auditor General and the Ombudsman are particularly strong in terms of transparency and accountability. TINZ welcomes the just announced increased level of resourcing of the Office of the Ombudsman”.*

There have been significant developments in other areas of public life since the 2003 report as well, such as the creation of the Independent Police Conduct Authority in 2007, as well as in a number of areas where the 2003 Report recommended changes. These include the introduction of the State

Services Commission survey of public servants, the strengthening of the governance framework of Crown Entities, the establishment of the Judicial Conduct Commission, the introduction of reporting of tax expenditures, and, updated codes of conduct for Ministers and Crown Entities in 2008. But the picture is not all positive with a number of concerns raised in the 2003 report remaining unaddressed, while new areas of risk to integrity have emerged.

*“In this time of budgetary restraint” argues Suzanne “as the public sector faces reductions in funding, transparent processes and public engagement are more important than ever. This helps ensure that the best choices are made about effective ways to economise and innovate so that changes impact in a way that improves service delivery”.*

To test integrity systems, the NIS assessment includes some in-depth research into private sector organisations to assess the strength of their business ethics and processes. To compare them with the public sector, this means drilling down into specific areas such as exporting processes and financial transactions.

TINZ will be holding a number of events this year to engage with New Zealanders throughout the country to discuss its findings about public, private and community sector integrity systems. *“All members of the public are welcome to go onto our website now and comment,” says Suzanne. “New Zealand’s reputation for integrity and anti-corruption remains high in the international arena, but that does not mean that it is perfect and it does not mean that it can’t be improved. Integrity in public life increases trust, which is essential to maintaining a healthy and participatory democratic country”.*

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**Notes to editors:**

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2. Transparency International is the global civil society coalition leading the fight against corruption - <http://www.transparency.org/>.
3. Transparency International New Zealand, Inc is the local chapter of the global organisation - <http://www.transparency.org.nz/>.