Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga
Ministry of Education

Ngā Kōrero e pā ana ki te Tūranga

Job Description

Senior Solicitor – Employment Law

Business Group	Te Pou Rangatōpū | Corporate
Location	Wellington
Salary band	A9

Mahi i roto i te Ratonga Tūmatanui | Working in the Public Service

Ka mahitahi mātou o te ratonga tūmatanui kia hei painga mō ngā tāngata o Aotearoa i āianei, ā, hei ngā rā ki tua hoki. He kawenga tino whaitake tā mātou hei tautoko i te Karauna i runga i āna hononga ki a ngāi Māori i raro i te Tiriti o Waitangi. Ka tautoko mātou i te kāwanatanga manapori. Ka whakakotahingia mātou e te wairua whakarato ki ō mātou hapori, ā, e arahina ana mātou e ngā mātāpono me ngā tikanga matua o te ratonga tūmatanui i roto i ā mātou mahi.

In the public service we work collectively to make a meaningful difference for New Zealanders now and in the future. We have an important role in supporting the Crown in its relationships with Māori under the Treaty of Waitangi. We support democratic government. We are unified by a spirit of service to our communities and guided by the core principles and values of the public service in our work.

Mō ētahi atu kōrero hei whakamārama i tēnei kaupapa, haere ki | You can find out more about what this means at Role and purpose - Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission.

To Mātou Aronga | What we do for Aotearoa New Zealand

At Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga | Ministry of Education, delivering our purpose makes a real difference to all ākonga of Aotearoa:

He mea tārai e mātou te mātauranga kia rangatira ai, kia mana taurite ai ōna huanga
We shape an education system that delivers excellent and equitable outcomes

We fulfil our purpose by:

- delivering services and support nationally, regionally and locally to and through the education sector and in some cases directly to ākonga and whānau
- shaping the policies, settings and performance of the education system so that it is well placed to deliver equitable outcomes for ākonga and their whānau, from early learning through tertiary.

Tēnei Tūranga | About the role

The Senior Solicitor contributes to the operations of the Employment Law team within the Legal and Privacy division. This specialist team is responsible for providing employment law and related advice and support across the Ministry, including supporting bargaining, employment dispute resolution and litigation.

Senior Solicitors are responsible for providing high quality, timely, accurate and practical legal advice in a complex and dynamic context and in a variety of forms, ranging from opinions to oral advice through to workshopping and training clients. They provide this support and advice to the Secretary for Education, Ministers, and the Ministry generally; to facilitate and contribute to the Ministry's goals and objectives.

The Senior Solicitor is a team member role supporting the Legal Manager – Employment Law and Chief Legal Advisor, to deliver quality legal services to the Ministry and contributes to coaching and mentoring less experienced team members and delivering training to Ministry clients to develop capability.

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Ngā Haepapa | Accountabilities

As the Senior Solicitor within Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga | the Ministry of Education, you will:

- Provide specialist expertise, skills and knowledge on legal interpretation and analysis within the Ministry's operating environment.
- Be responsible for the accurate identification and analysis of legal and other related issues and developing high quality legal advice on issues involving complexity, potential conflict, and risk.
- Lead increasingly complex and less well-defined legal assignments within the areas of expertise, skill or knowledge designated to the Senior Solicitor; including (as required) managing people and resources, and providing reports on milestones, work assignments, projects, and deliverables.
- Have deep legal knowledge and understanding in specialist area, including the ability to make strategic decisions where necessary.
- Identify trends in the relevant legal and policy environment and what this may mean for the direction of the legal advice and support to the Ministry.
- Identify and escalating risks and opportunities that may have a legal impact on the Ministry or sector, including taking a lead role in complex issues and making connections and suggestions for improvements in policies, guidelines, and legislation as appropriate.
- Challenge current thinking and support the development and delivery of a client-focused, engaged, and responsive team that understands and predicts presenting issues and identifies options and solutions that meet clients' needs.
- Effectively delegate work to others within the team and brief it externally, providing clear expectations.
- Work both independently and under supervision, and provide support, mentorship and coaching to other team members as required to ensure that quality legal services are provided to the Ministry.
- Actively encourage and promote a constructive team culture of inclusion, innovation, and support.
- Review legal advice and provide quality control as needed.
- Represent the Ministry when required, including at mediation, the Employment Relations Authority and Court, senior official and ministerial levels, Cabinet and Select Committees.
- Proactively build and maintain effective relationships and partnerships with internal and external stakeholders, including cross organisation and sector, senior managers, Crown Law, other external legal service providers.
- Demonstrate high trust relationships with clients and proactively recognises client needs and engages accordingly.
- Be actively involved and contributing to the Government Legal Network, including practice groups.
- Manage and influence colleagues and multiple relationships to take full advantage of different perspectives.
- Always look to improve service.

You will make decisions in accordance with the Ministry's policies and delegations' framework.

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Ngā Tohu Mātauranga Waiwai | Essential Qualifications

- Tertiary qualification in law (LLB or higher).
- Admitted Barrister and Solicitor of the High Court of New Zealand.
- Ability to hold a practicing certificate issued by the New Zealand Law Society.

Wheako | Experience

To be successful in this role you will have the following experience:

- Minimum 6+ years PQE or other relevant experience.
- Experience working in a legal role in Education and/or Public Sector agency is desirable.
- Experience working in a complex organisation.
- Experience in building relationships and partnerships to achieve shared outcomes.

Ngā Āheinga | Capabilities

To be successful in this role you will have the following capabilities and competencies:

- A confident practitioner with demonstrated high level general advocacy and presentation skills and excellent judgement on a wide range of legal issues within specialist subject area(s).
- A track record of bringing people together and leading, coaching, and mentoring others to achieve outcomes.
- A proven ability to use data and insights to identify trends, risks, and opportunities, to influence and guide organisational and system-level decision making.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, including proven ability to present complex legal issues clearly and concisely to a broad audience.
- Solid understanding of the New Zealand system of government, including the role of Ministers, Cabinet, Parliament and central agencies and the requirements relating to the conduct of Crown legal business.
- Solid understanding of the impact of the Treaty of Waitangi/te Tiriti o Waitangi and its principles on the Ministry's work is essential.
- Awareness of, and sensitivity to, the cultural values of different ethnic groups generally, including tangata whenua.
- A high level of integrity, self-motivation, flexibility, agility, and responsiveness.
- A high level of intellectual and analytical ability, with the ability to think strategically across a programme of work.
- A commitment to ongoing personal and professional development.
- Understands legal business and consistently operates strategically.
- Strong research, organisational, investigative, analytical, and problem-solving skills.
- Awareness of risk management and the ability to apply risk analysis to all aspects of legal work.
- Sound judgement and the self-confidence to take a stance.
- Ability to work collaboratively with others to achieve results.

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Tātai Pou | Our Cultural Competency

Tātai Pou is our Māori Cultural competency framework. It has been aligned and is complementary to the Māori Crown Relations Capability Framework (MCR). Tātai Pou is designed to support our people and organisation to give effect to the articles of te Tiriti o Waitangi in our work. The work-based capabilities have four focus areas and describe four levels of competency (high, consolidation, developing and essential) that enable us to deliver our partnership approach so that Māori enjoy and achieve educational success as Māori.

Pou Hono | Valuing Māori	Developing
Pou Mana | Knowledge of Māori content	Developing
Pou Kipa | Achieving equitable education outcomes for Māori	Developing
Pou Aroā | Critical consciousness of racial equity for Māori	Developing

Leadership Success Profile - Te Kawa Mataaho | Public Service Commission

Leadership matters. Strong leadership at every level in the Public Service will transform the experiences of New Zealanders. The Leadership Success Profile establishes “what good looks like” for leadership at all levels. Information about how the Leadership Success Profile applies to this role is available on the Ministry’s intranet.

Ngā Whakaaetanga | Approvals

Date Reviewed and Approved	November 2026
Approved By	HR Advisory team