

Ngā Kōrero e pā ana ki te Tūranga

Job Description

Chief Legal Advisor

Business Group	Te Pou Rangatōpū
Location	Wellington
Salary band	GM22

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 āiane, 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.

Te Pou Rangatōpū | Corporate

The Te Pou Rangatōpū | Corporate group is responsible for delivering essential corporate support and functions that enable Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga | The Ministry of Education to operate effectively and help fulfil its statutory and reporting obligations. It includes pivotal people, financial and other corporate functions that are integral to the Ministry, which enable the delivery of excellent and equitable outcomes for users of the education system. The functions within the group are focused on providing responsive services and solutions that enhance staff to maintain and grow public trust and confidence in the Ministry's delivery.

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Tēnei Tūranga | About the role

The Chief Legal Advisor is the Ministry of Education's senior legal authority, responsible for providing leadership and high-quality advice that protects the Ministry's legal, regulatory, and reputational interests and supports effective decision-making.

Reporting directly into Hautū (Deputy Secretary) within the Corporate Group, the role leads the Ministry's legal and privacy functions and is a trusted advisor to the Secretary for Education and senior leaders. The Chief Legal Advisor is accountable for setting the direction, priorities, and delivery of the legal and the privacy work programmes, ensuring alignment with the Ministry's purpose, strategic direction, and public sector obligations.

The role has overall responsibility for the quality, consistency, and assurance of legal advice across employment relations, commercial and policy matters, regulatory issues, and general legal matters. The role has the same responsibility for the provision of privacy advice, and the Privacy Officer reports to the role. Working in partnership with other corporate functions, the Chief Legal Advisor strengthens governance, risk management, and compliance frameworks, helping to ensure the Ministry operates within a robust legal and regulatory environment and maintains public trust and confidence. The specific responsibilities of this role may change in line with the Ministry's wider requirements in the future.

The Chief Legal Advisor is part of the Te Pou Rangatōpū leadership team and works with the group to ensure that key priorities are identified and resourced so that Te Pou Rangatōpū works as a unified strategic group.

Ngā Haepapa | Accountabilities

As the Chief Legal Advisor you will:

- Provide strategic direction and leadership on legal and privacy issues and risks, ensuring the Te Tumu Whakarae mō te Mātauranga (Secretary for Education) has confidence that risks are proactively identified, managed, and mitigated to a high standard.
- Provide direct advice and support to Te Tumu Whakarae mō te Mātauranga (the Secretary for Education) and act as a trusted advisor on significant legal, privacy, legislative, regulatory, and risk matters.
- Hold and exercise the Ministry's Chief Legal Advisor delegations, ensuring statutory, regulatory, and governance responsibilities are met.
- Lead and develop the Legal and Privacy functions, ensuring the teams have the technical expertise, capability and capacity to deliver high quality services.
- Collaborate with Crown Law and other departmental legal teams to ensure alignment on legal matters and participate in the Government Legal Network.
- Represent the Minister or Ministry in engagements with external stakeholders on legal, and regulatory issues.
- Ensure the Ministry operates within legal and regulatory requirements, providing authoritative advice on legal and privacy compliance.
- Identify emerging legal, privacy, strategic, and operational risks and opportunities, and develop or implement appropriate response strategies.
- Act as a trusted legal advisor to the Senior Leadership Team and Ministry staff on high impact legal and risk issues affecting the Ministry.

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- Strategically manage all litigation involving the Ministry, maintaining oversight of matters conducted internally and by external legal providers.
- Support the Ministry's legislative programme, including monitoring legislation that may have an actual or potential impact on the Ministry.
- Oversee legal practice standards and quality assurance, ensuring consistency, excellence, and alignment with best practice.
- Develop and implement a Legal Services Strategy, and a Privacy Strategy aligned with the Ministry's Statement of Intent and broader strategic priorities.
- Act as a strategic partner across the Ministry, providing trusted legal and regulatory advice that supports effective operations, policy development, sector collective bargaining and delivery of outcomes.
- Collaborate with cross-functional teams to drive the Ministry's strategic goals and ensure alignment across privacy and legal operations and supporting information management across the Ministry
- Oversee the provision of privacy advice, including privacy incident responses, privacy impact assessments, privacy reporting, and responses to Privacy Commissioner complaints through the Privacy Officer.
- Build and maintain strong, collaborative relationships with key stakeholders, peers, sector partners, and other government agencies.
- Plan and manage operational budgets to support strong financial management and deliver maximum value from resources and investments.
- Support the development and maintenance of the right frameworks, capabilities and systems to achieve strategic outcomes, manage people and risk, and safeguard the Ministry's integrity and reputation.
- Build workforce capability and diversity by supporting others to grow, embrace change and seek out diverse perspectives.
- Create and maintain a safe, positive and inclusive workplace where people are inspired to collaborate and perform at their best.

Ngā Tohu Mātauranga Waiwai | Essential Qualifications

- A relevant tertiary qualification in Law
- Admission as a Barrister and Solicitor of the High Court of New Zealand
- Current Legal Practising Certificate from the New Zealand Law Society
- Extensive experience in a legal role in the public (preferred) or private sector including sound knowledge of the public sector environment, legislative and policy processes, privacy and official information as well as other areas of law relevant to the Ministry's business.

Wheako | Experience

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

- Senior leadership experience operating within large, complex, and politically sensitive environments, providing authoritative legal and strategic advice at executive level.
- Proven experience in developing, leading, and delivering integrated strategic and operational plans and budgets, ensuring alignment with organisational priorities and statutory obligations.

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- Extensive experience leading the design, implementation, monitoring, and continuous improvement of organisational systems, frameworks, and processes to strengthen governance, risk management, and legal assurance.
- Strong track record in driving and embedding organisational change aligned with strategic priorities, achieving measurable and intended outcomes in dynamic and evolving environments.
- Experience building and leading inclusive, diverse, and high-performing teams, and fostering a safe, open, and responsive culture that supports professional excellence and wellbeing.
- Proven ability to build strategic relationships and collaborate effectively across complex organisations and with external stakeholders to achieve shared objectives and system-wide outcomes.
- Demonstrated high levels of integrity.
- Understanding of co-governance relationships and partnerships with Māori.

Ngā Āheinga | Capabilities

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

- Demonstrated ability to coach, mentor, and constructively challenge legal and non-legal stakeholders to shift mindsets, strengthen legal understanding, and enable collaborative, outcome-focused decision-making.
- Proven ability to use data, case trends, and system insights to identify emerging risks, opportunities, and compliance issues, and to inform high-quality, system-level legal, privacy and strategic decisions.
- A strong track record of building and sustaining trusted professional relationships with internal colleagues, senior leaders, Ministers' offices, Crown entities, and external legal and regulatory stakeholders.
- Well-developed political acumen and sound understanding of government and public-sector decision-making processes, with the ability to navigate legal complexity, ambiguity, and competing priorities.
- Highly developed interpersonal and communication skills, with the ability to translate complex legal concepts into clear, practical advice for diverse audiences.
- Demonstrated commitment to ongoing professional and leadership development, including openness to innovation, modern legal practice, and continuous improvement.

Tātai Pou | Our Cultural Competency

Tātai Pou is the Ministry's Māori Crown Relations capability framework. 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, confident, 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	Confident
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Pou Mana Knowledge of Māori content	Confident
Pou Kipa Achieving equitable education outcomes for Māori	Confident
Pou Aroā Critical consciousness of racial equity for Māori	Confident

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	23/02/26
Approved By	HR Advisory Team