

Ngā Kōrero e pā ana ki te Tūranga

Job Description

Principal Solicitor (Legal Lead) – Charter Schools

Business Group	Te Pou Rangatōpū Corporate
Location	Wellington
Salary band	B4

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.

Tēnei Tūranga | About the role

The Principal Solicitor (Legal Lead) – Charter Schools will work collaboratively to ensure the Charter School Agency effectively implements and operates the charter school | kura hourua model. The Agency's core functions and responsibilities include:

- Being the secretariat for the Authorisation Board
- Contracting with school sponsors
- Monitoring and reporting on what has been achieved with contracts
- Providing advice to the Authorisation Board on implementation of interventions with schools
- Working with other agencies and statutory bodies (e.g. Ministry of Education, Education Review Office,

Ngā Kōrero e pā ana ki te Tūranga

Job Description

Public Service Commission, Teaching Council, Office of the Ombudsman)

- Advising Ministers.

The Principal Solicitor (Legal Lead) – Charter Schools will provide legal advice in a rapidly evolving context. The key priorities are to:

- Corporate governance, advice on Board papers, ensuring statutory compliance to enable the board to realise its objectives
- Trusted advisor to the chief executive, confidently providing strategic and operational legal advice across governance, risk and statutory compliance
- Provide expert advice covering government, commercial and public law
- Understand the operating context and support the Agency to implement and operate the statutory framework for charter schools as set out in the Education and Training Act 2020
- Be the key interface with the Ministry of Education's Legal Services team proactively engaging to identify issues, opportunities and points of collaboration and manage the provision of external legal advice (as required) to support the Agency's functions and goals.

The role provides high quality, timely, accurate legal advice in a variety of forms, ranging from opinions to oral advice through to workshopping and working with/instructing external advisors. They are a professional leadership role, drawing on their expertise to contribute to the management, strategic and business planning and risk for the Agency's leadership team.

Permanent role reporting to the Chief Legal Advisor at Ministry of Education, with the support of the Ministry's Legal Services team with a dotted line to the Chief Executive of the Charter School Agency as functional manager.

Ngā Haepapa | Accountabilities

As a Specialist within Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga | the Ministry of Education you will:

- Share specialist knowledge across the organisation and with stakeholders, working with others to inform operational level decision making.
- Contribute to an effective team with a positive approach to the work environment that encourages and supports high performance, collaboration and problem solving.
- Lead the resolution of issues, identifying risks and solutions to protect and enhance the integrity and reputation of the Ministry.
- Lead or contribute to the development and implementation of innovative and fit-for purpose solutions and frameworks for current and future challenges.
- Develop and use data and insights to make evidence-based decisions and recommendations on operational issues.
- Build capability in others through coaching, quality assurance, and proactively sharing knowledge and expertise.

As the Principal Solicitor (Legal Lead) – Charter Schools you will:

- Provide specialist expertise, skills and knowledge on legal and legislative issues within the Agency's operating environment. Engaging collaboratively with the Ministry of Education's Legal Services team and

Ngā Kōrero e pā ana ki te Tūranga

Job Description

drawing on external legal advisors where appropriate to support the Agencies functions.

- Act as the Agency's Privacy and Integrity Officer, providing advice to support compliance with privacy and integrity obligations.
- Be recognised as an expert in identifying and analysing legal and other related issues and developing specialist and strategic legal advice on significant issues involving high levels of intellectual complexity, potential conflict and risk, and propose practical and new solutions.
- Lead multiple complex (and often novel) legal assignments within the areas of expertise, skill or knowledge designated.
- Be recognised as a trusted source of advice within the team in the specialist area.
- Strategically manage and exercise analytical leadership by:
 - Advice to the Board directly or through the chief executive on their statutory obligations , supporting good governance and decision-making
 - Identifying emerging regulatory and policy trends in the operating environment and what this may mean for the direction of the legal advice and support to the Agency.
 - Identifying and escalating risks and opportunities that may have a significant legal impact on the Agency or sector, including taking a lead role in complex issues and making connections and suggestions for improvements in policies, guidelines, and legislation as appropriate.
 - Providing thought leadership on critical areas of legal advice including to less experienced colleagues, in a way that enables them to produce high quality and timely advice to the Agency.
- Challenging current thinking and supporting the development and delivery of a client-focused, engaged, and responsive legal service that understands and predicts presenting issues and identifies options and solutions that meet clients' needs.
- Build and sustain relationships with externals for the benefit of the Agency.
- Oversee the work of external and other lawyers as required, ensuring that quality legal services are provided to the Agency, in accordance with the Cabinet Rules for the conduct of Crown Legal business and Government rules of sourcing.
- Review critical and significant pieces of advice and provide quality control.
- Demonstrate high trust relationships with clients, anticipating their needs and engaging early to provide timely support
- Be actively involved and contributing to the Government Legal Network, including practice groups.
- Always look to improve service.

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

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.

Ngā Kōrero e pā ana ki te Tūranga

Job Description

Wheako | Experience

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

- 10 years PQE or other relevant experience
- Experience working in a legal role in education, Crown Entity. Working with a Board and/or public sector agency is desirable.
- Extensive experience in building relationships and partnerships to achieve shared outcomes.
- Recognised as an expert practitioner – both as a legal generalist and in specialist subject area(s), with advanced advocacy skills and exceptional judgement on complex matters.
- Demonstrated experience providing senior legal advice in complex public-sector or regulatory environments, including advising executives and Boards.

Ngā Āheinga | Capabilities

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

- A proven ability to use data and insights to identify trends, risks, and opportunities, to influence and guide organisational and system-level decision making.
- Exceptional interpersonal and communication skills, including proven ability to present complex legal issues clearly and concisely to a broad audience.
- Thorough 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 Agency's work is essential.
- Awareness of, and sensitivity to, the cultural values of different ethnic groups generally, including tangata whenua.
- An exceptional level of integrity, self-motivation, agility, and responsiveness.
- An exceptional 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.
- Thorough understanding of legal business and consistently operates strategically.
- Exceptional 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.

Ngā Kōrero e pā ana ki te Tūranga

Job Description

Key working relationships

Internal	Type of relationship
Chief Legal Advisor (Ministry of Education)	Reports to
Chief Executive (CSA) Legal Services team (Ministry of Education)	Dotted line reporting and peer relationships
Staff (CSA)	Technical expert, advice CSA representative when required

External	Type of relationship
Government Legal Network External legal networks Legal staff in other government agencies	Peers, community of practice
External providers (legal, actuarial, etc)	Commission, monitor and review work
Ministers Crown Law	Technical expert, advice, Ministry representative when required

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	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 Kōrero e pā ana ki te Tūranga

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Ngā Whakaaetanga | Approvals

Date Reviewed and Approved	April 2026
Approved By	HR Advisory Team