



Principal Solicitor – Charter Schools

Business Group	Charter School Agency (CSA) – Business Strategy and Services
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

Charter schools | kura hourua offer more choice and flexibility in what is taught and how it is taught, as long as children are safe, attending school and achieving. The Charter School Agency is a departmental agency established on 1 July 2024 to implement and operate the new charter school model, including negotiating and managing contracts and delivering funding. The Charter School Agency supports the Authorisation Board to approve charter schools, monitor their performance and hold them to account.

Tēnei Tūranga | About the role

The Principal Solicitor – 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 interventions with schools
- working with other statutory bodies
- advising Ministers.

The role operates in a dynamic environment. The Principal Solicitor – Charter Schools will need to be flexible to navigate and respond to this context. The key priorities are to:

- Provide expert advice covering government, commercial and public law to the Agency's leadership team
- 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 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.



The role is anticipated to be a secondment or fixed-term role for 12-15 months (until June 2026) and will report to the Head of Business Strategy and Services, with a dotted line to the Chief Legal Adviser at Ministry of Education, with the support of the Ministry's Legal Services team.

Ngā Haepapa | Accountabilities

As the Principal Solicitor – Charter Schools, you will:

- Provide specialist expertise, skills and knowledge on legal interpretation and analysis within the Agency's operating environment, seeking direction and/or support from the Ministry of Education's Legal Services team and external advisors when required.
- 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 and not-well defined complex legal assignments within the areas of expertise, skill or knowledge designated.
- Be seen as a go to person within the team for technical advice in specialist area.
- Strategically manage and exercise analytical leadership by:
 - Identifying 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.
- Foster systems for enhanced communication and co-ordination across the Agency and with relevant areas within the Ministry.
- 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.
- Enhance others professional development through the provision of leadership and guidance, including the transfer of knowledge within the Ministry's Legal Services team.
- Actively encourage and promote a constructive team culture of inclusion, innovation, and support.
- Review critical and significant pieces of legal advice and provide quality control.
- Contribute to risk reporting, accountability reporting, the annual report, strategic and business planning for the Agency.
- Manage relationships and develop close links with business group stakeholders to identify their legal advice needs and get involved in issues at an early stage.
- Provide assistance to aid the Chief Executive, Executive Leadership Team, Ministers and the CSA generally, and represent the CSA as required.
- Proactively build and maintain effective relationships and partnerships with internal and external stakeholders, including cross organisation and sector, senior leaders, Crown Law, other external legal service providers, to identify and share best practice information.
- 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 Agency'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.

Wheako | Experience

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

- Minimum 10+ years PQE or other relevant experience.
- Experience working in a legal role in education and/or public sector agency is desirable.
- Extensive experience working in a complex organisation.
- Extensive 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:

- Recognised as an expert practitioner – both as a legal generalist and in specialist subject area(s) including government, commercial and public law, with advanced advocacy skills and exceptional judgement on complex matters.
- 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.
- 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, flexibility, 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.



Key working relationships

Internal	Type of relationship
Head of Business Strategy and Services (CSA)	Reports to
Chief Legal Advisor (Ministry of Education) Legal Services team (Ministry of Education)	Dotted line reporting and peer relationships
Chief Executive (CSA) Executive Leadership Team (CSA) 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

Date Reviewed and Approved	April 2025
Approved By	HR Advisory Team