



Tūhono mai

Be a part of our team



Mō tēnei tūranga Position Description

Title: Principal Legal Counsel

Reports to: Associate General Counsel

Financial Delegations: Tier 5

Direct Reports: 0

Business Group: People and Assurance

Location/s: Auckland / Wellington / Christchurch

Budget:

Indirect Reports:

Mō mātou - Our Organisation

Building better, brighter homes, communities and lives

What is exciting about working for Kāinga Ora is getting the chance to use our skills and knowledge to create the homes and neighbourhoods that will make a real and positive impact on New Zealanders' lives and build a better future for Aotearoa New Zealand.

We are passionate about transforming New Zealand for the better. This includes being a trusted partner for Māori and iwi, protecting and enabling their rights, interests and aspirations under the guidance of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Our past has laid the groundwork and now as a team, we are focussed on creating a legacy for the good of future generations of New Zealanders.

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You can/will be part of a team that plays a vital role in where Aotearoa New Zealand is heading.

We provide tenancy services to over 187,000 public housing customers and we maintain and develop around 70,000 houses. We help many other New Zealanders into their own homes through our home ownership products and other services.

We are building many thousands of homes each year and transforming entire communities across the country. And we have an exciting plan for the future that will enable us to do more to help New Zealanders than ever before.

Ō Tātou Uara - Our Values

Our values were developed by us, for us. They unite us as an organisation and guide how we work every day. Our values are:

- Manaakitanga – People at the Heart
- Mahi Tahi – Better Together
- Whanake – Be Bold

Our People and Assurance Group

The People and Assurance Group focuses on ensuring that Kāinga Ora is a great place to work and ensuring our workforce and capabilities are aligned with the organisation's priorities. The People and Assurance group supports our decision making and regulatory compliance, leads our approaches to risk management, and leads our communications, engagement and marketing strategies.

Ngā mahi - What you'll do

The Principal Legal Counsel works closely with the Associate General Counsel to lead best practice and efficiency in legal support to the organisation as required, whether in an strategic, advisory, contracting or dispute resolution capacity. The Principal Legal Counsel works to minimise legal risk, identify opportunities and engage with the organisation on pragmatic solutions to assist the business deliver strategic goals. You will work closely with **Senior Legal Counsel**, **Legal Counsel** and the **Associate General Counsel** who leads the team.

Ngā haepapa - What you'll be responsible for

The role leads the provision of high quality, legal and strategic advice to achieve organisational outcomes. In supporting the organisation to achieve its strategic outcomes, the role will work closely with the General Counsel, Associate General Counsels across the Legal Team, wider legal team members and Legal Team business partners to deliver a single seamless legal service to Kainga Ora. The Principal Legal Counsel will be a technical expert in their field with capability to handle high risk, complex legal matters with minimal supervision, as well as providing mentoring and coaching to the Legal Counsel and Senior Legal Counsel.

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Expert Advice

- Provide specialist and expert solutions focussed legal advice to the General Counsel and internal stakeholders on all or any other areas of law as required.
- Lead the legal technical review and approval of relevant compliance policies, agreements, and other documents across Kāinga Ora.
- Responsible for identification of strategic and systematised solutions to legal problems so that solutions are implemented organisation-wide and benefits maximised.
- Accountable for delivering focussed instructions to external lawyers, consultants and other advisers operating under the instruction of the General Counsel and Associate General Counsel and monitoring outcomes.
- Identify strategic and systematised solutions to legal problems so that solutions are implemented organisation-wide and benefits maximised.
- Identify opportunities provided by new (or ongoing) case law, legislative change, policy improvements and systems change to deliver Kāinga Ora strategic objectives and makes recommendations on the same to the General Counsel.

Strategic Leadership

Although not a people leader with direct reports, the Principal Legal Counsel is a senior member of the Legal Team and provides leadership across the team.

- Operates as an effective member of the Legal Team, including working collaboratively with colleagues, the Associate General Counsels and the General Counsel to deliver a seamless experience for stakeholders and a single Legal Team approach.
- Actively contributes to the Legal Leadership Team where requested by the General Counsel.
- Actively contributes to the strategic direction and organisational priorities for the Kāinga Ora Legal Team and articulates and champions the strategy.
- Innovatively leads strategic and tactical legal initiatives where required by the General Counsel.
- Make recommendations to the General Counsel on legal aspects of legislation and policy changes affecting relevant Kāinga Ora objectives.
- Make recommendations to the General Counsel on opportunities for innovation and improvement that aligns with the strategic direction of Kāinga Ora.
- The Principal Legal Counsel will need to have significant influencing skills, able to articulate ideas and opportunities to a large audience across the organisation including with the Board and Executive Leadership Team.

Operational Legal Services

- Review and draft other documentation relevant to your area of practice.
- Use a risk based assessment to advise the General Counsel on how Legal services can be most efficiently and effectively delivered (using self-service or automated tools, and the appropriate response depending on the risk level).
- Supports project teams with any matters that may arise, including insurance, health and safety, warranties, contract terms, extensions of time, variations and novations.

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Advocacy and Stakeholder Relationships

- Works with the General Counsel and business partners to ensure stakeholders experience a seamless service provision.
- Establish strong working relationships with senior stakeholders and ensure the team understands the commercial and strategic context of the work being undertaken.
- Effectively manage external lawyers for the General Counsel in terms of quality, service, cost and timeframes.

Other Legal Work

- Undertake other legal work, unrelated to the portfolio, as may be instructed by the General Counsel from time to time.

Managing Risk and Reporting

- Report on areas of legal risk and opportunities.
- Proactively provide advice to the Associate General Counsel and General Counsel on risks and opportunities.
- Ensure the General Counsel is well informed on work through regular reporting.

Training

- Determine and consolidate training needs to lift staff capability as appropriate including by presenting to the Legal Team at internal training sessions.
- Deliver specialist training to client business groups on the organisation's legal obligations as and when required.
- Support Senior Legal Counsel and Legal Counsel with their training and development programmes (whether to uplift internal legal capability or with training for client business groups).

Ngā rōpū whaihua - Who you'll work with

Internal Relationships

- Business Partners
- Legal Team colleagues
- Legal Leadership
- Internal stakeholder relevant to area of work

External Relationships

- Councils and other local bodies
- External legal firms
- Inhouse legal teams (eg MHUD, MSD)

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Ngā pūmanawatanga ōu - What you'll need

To be successful in this role the **Principal Legal Counsel** will have:

- A Law Degree and current practising certificate (mandatory).
- 10 + years previous legal experience either in a law firm, and/or experience as an in-house counsel in a public sector organisation
- Knowledge across relevant areas of law would be an advantage
- The ability to demonstrate sound judgement even in ambiguous situations
- The ability to anticipate, identify, and resolve complex multi-disciplinary legal issues
- Strong intellect with well-developed analytical and problem-solving skills
- The ability to thrive within challenging environments, embracing change
- The ability to provide solutions-focused legal advice
- Very high standards of personal ethics and integrity
- The ability to share knowledge and work with a wide variety of stakeholders who may have differing drivers
- The ability to prioritise competing demands
- Flexibility and adaptability to respond to the changing needs of the organisation. You will need the ability to adapt and develop as the environment evolves
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office suite including Word, Excel, PowerPoint

Leadership Attributes:

Leadership is the mindset, skills and behaviours used to inspire and provide direction for people to achieve Kāinga Ora outcomes. Kāinga Ora attributes for this role are outlined below.

<p style="text-align: center;">Values relationships</p> <p>Builds and nurtures trusting relationships with direct reports, their teams and leader.</p> <p>Builds and nurtures relationships with colleagues, stakeholders, Iwi, partners, suppliers and our communities. Tailors how they communicate for their audience. Looks first to their own areas for improvement before turning to others.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">People focused</p> <p>Actively works to understand people to ensure the best work experience possible for them.</p> <p>Recognises everyone is different and is curious about what makes people tick.</p> <p>Is aware of their own paradigms and influences, and the impact this has on the behaviours and attitudes they bring to work and relationships.</p> <p>Comfortable being themselves and admitting to being less than perfect.</p> <p>Identifies personal development areas through reflection and feedback, and shares these with their team and leader.</p> <p>Puts their people’s needs ahead of their own.</p> <p>Understands the importance of language and carefully considers the words they use and their impact. Recognises that we are all human and are constantly iterating and innovating.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Develops people and the organisation</p> <p>Continuously seeks to understand their people in order to motivate and enable their development.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Delivery Focused</p> <p>Develops clear expectations of delivery objectives and expectations.</p>

<p>Provides tailored feedback, coaching and development that motivates at the right time.</p>	<p>Organised, consistent and disciplined approach to work.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Enable and empower</p> <p>Chooses to trust others first.</p> <p>Develops clear outcome frameworks that enable their teams to make decisions and develop new ways of working.</p> <p>Identifies assumptions and is comfortable with uncertainty. Is comfortable not having all the answers.</p> <p>Takes responsibility for their actions and the work programme of their wider teams.</p> <p>Recognises and emphasises their people’s input over their own.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Leads our Culture</p> <p>Frames challenges as development opportunities and encourages this in others.</p> <p>Fosters an environment where input and feedback are welcomed, well-intended and develop others.</p> <p>Gathers input with different experiences and viewpoints as part of decision making.</p> <p>Role models our values and highlights positive examples from within their wider teams.</p> <p>Leads with humility, emphasising the obligations and responsibilities that come with the role.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Ambitious and Innovative</p> <p>Transparent about ambition for the organisation. Actively embraces and is curious about doing things differently and encourages others to do so. Enables bottom-up change, embedding behaviours, practices and processes that create both permission and a sense of responsibility for their teams to embrace and drive change.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Embraces Diversity and Inclusion</p> <p>Holds themselves and their teams responsible to identify, address and minimise bias wherever they encounter it. Acknowledges and values different opinions and perspectives to get better outcomes. Supports the inclusion of different ideas, viewpoints and questions from their teams and others. Takes responsibility for developing their own and their teams' cultural capability</p>
<p>Applies Māori Leadership principles</p> <p>Applies principles of Rangitiratanga, Whakaiti, and Ako. Demonstrates active consideration of Te Ao Māori, Tikanga Māori, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and Māori values and perspectives when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading and developing their team; • Developing their strategies and work plans; • Influencing organisational culture and performance; • Supporting a culturally safe environment. <p>Engaging with Kāinga Ora employees, customers, communities, stakeholders and treaty partners' plan fits into the strategy, and how it connects to vision and values.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Leads Strategically</p> <p>Understand the outcomes we are seeking to achieve, our "why".</p> <p>Thoughtful, considered, consistent, long term and fact based when establishing direction and work plans. Develops a clear strategic framework for their wider teams to work within what aligns with Kāinga Ora's overall strategy. Focuses their teams on achieving those outcomes. Communicates how the strategy connects to the functions they perform. Aligns work plans across their wider teams with Kāinga Ora outcomes and purpose. Recruits based on immediate and future needs for their wider team and business unit.</p>