

Job description

Title	Head of Strategic Māori and Iwi Partnerships
Number	
Group	Water Organisation
Division	Water Services
Reports to	Chief Executive
Direct reports	N/A
Date	12/06/2026

Job holder commitment

The job holder accepts as a fundamental requirement of their employment that they must demonstrate a personal commitment to:

- modelling organisational values at all times
- A safe and healthy work environment

At Water Services we uphold the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi by engaging in an effective and meaningful partnership with tangata whenua. We are committed to developing our knowledge and understanding of te reo Māori, tikanga Māori, Mātauranga Māori and our relationships with Te Mana o te Wai, and our relationships with iwi, hapū, mana whenua and Māori communities.

Job purpose

The purpose of this role is to lead, develop, and implement the Water Organisation's strategic framework for engaging with iwi, hapū, tangata whenua and the wider Māori community across the water services area.

The role provides strategic leadership and advice directly to the Chief Executive, Water Organisation and the Executive Leadership Team to ensure Māori perspectives, aspirations and partnership obligations are considered early and meaningfully in water services strategy, planning, investment, operations, infrastructure delivery and decision-making.

Key outcomes

<p>Lead the development and delivery of the Water Organisation's strategic framework for engagement with iwi, hapū, tangata whenua, and the wider Māori community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead, develop, implement and maintain the Water Organisation's strategic Māori and iwi partnership framework for water services. • Ensure significant Māori interests, opportunities and risks are clearly articulated and taken into account in the development of strategies, policies, plans and major decisions at all levels. • Provide strategic advice to the Chief Executive, Water Organisation, the Executive Leadership Team, governance forums and staff on iwi, hapū, tangata whenua and Māori partnership matters. • Support the organisation to give practical effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Te Mana o te Wai, tikanga Māori, mātauranga Māori and agreed relationship commitments in water services work programmes.
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<p>Provide guidance to the CEO and operate as a collaborative member of the Executive Leadership Team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as a connector for the CEO across ELT members to align Māori partnership objectives with organisational priorities. • Facilitate shared ownership of Māori outcomes across all portfolios. • Support ELT cohesion by balancing partnership commitments with operational realities, keeping the CEO and Water Organisational objectives as the priority. • Provide high quality strategic briefings to the CEO on emerging Māori partnership issues, risks and opportunities. • Prepare the CEO for engagement with iwi leaders and national Māori stakeholders • Anticipate sensitive issues and position the CEO to lead confidently and credibly.
<p>Iwi, hapū, tangata whenua, and the wider Māori community are meaningfully and proactively engaged in water services strategy, planning, and delivery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactively engage with iwi, hapū, tangata whenua and the wider Māori community to support the successful delivery of water services strategies, policies, plans, programmes and projects. • Develop and implement best practice tools, guidance, templates and appropriate methods for communicating, engaging and consulting with Māori partners. • Facilitate a long-term plan for partnership and joint commitment to outcomes for Māori to ensure systems, processes and decision making are designed for equitable outcomes. • Provide strategic advice to manage and coordinate Māori participation in water services decision-making processes through appropriate governance, advisory, project and engagement structures. • Support major drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, infrastructure, growth, resilience, catchment and environmental programmes to identify relevant Māori interests and partnership considerations early.
<p>Māori outcomes, statutory obligations, and partnership commitments are embedded, understood, and supported through organisational planning and performance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the organisation to understand and meet obligations arising from Te Tiriti, water services legislation, local government, resource management, Treaty settlement arrangements and formal relationship agreements. • Ensure Māori outcomes and partnership commitments are considered in water services planning, asset management, investment prioritisation, policy development, reporting and performance frameworks. • Support practical measures and reporting that demonstrate progress against agreed Māori outcomes, partner feedback and formal commitments. • Work with legal, governance, risk, planning and delivery teams to identify and escalate legal, reputational, cultural, political and delivery risks where obligations or partner expectations may not be fully understood or met.
<p>Enabled to engage with Māori partners confidently, consistently, and with strong cultural capability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the organisation’s internal cultural capability and competence to uphold its commitment to work in partnership with tangata whenua. • Coach leaders, technical specialists and project teams on early engagement, good faith relationships, tikanga-informed practice and culturally appropriate ways of working. • Promote consistent practice across the organisation so Māori partnership work is not dependent only on individual relationships or informal knowledge. • Coordinate internal activity where multiple teams are engaging with the same iwi, hapū, tangata whenua or Māori partners.

<p>Lead and develop the Strategic Māori and Iwi Partnerships function to deliver organisational objectives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide quality leadership, strategic advice and support to the Strategic Māori and Iwi Partnerships function. • Ensure the future needs of the function are anticipated and planned where possible. • Manage the financial budget for the function where applicable. • Drive continuous improvement and effectiveness within the function while actively seeking feedback on performance and impact. • Effectively lead the team in its support of the Chief Executive, Water Organisation, the Executive Leadership Team and delivery of agreed programmes and services.
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The job description is not an exhaustive list of requirements; the job holder will be required to perform tasks assigned to them that are not explicitly described in this document.

Person specifications

<p>Essential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A relevant tertiary qualification or significant relevant experience. • A minimum 10 years leadership experience within a complex organisation, with at least 5 years' experience in a similar role or at an advisory level, preferably within local government, utilities or a similar organisation. • Well developed networks and a strong and trusted standing, credibility and relationship base with iwi, hapū, tangata whenua and/or Māori communities relevant to the water services area. • Fluency in te reo Māori me ngā tikanga Māori, or demonstrated ability to operate confidently and appropriately in tikanga Māori settings. • Significant experience working with iwi, hapū, tangata whenua, Māori organisations or Māori communities in a strategic partnership, policy, planning, infrastructure, environmental or public sector context. • Strong understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and its practical application in water services, local government, infrastructure, resource management or public sector decision-making. • Strong understanding of Te Mana o te Wai, mātauranga Māori and the importance of cultural values in relation to wai, land, catchments and environmental outcomes. • Demonstrated ability to provide clear, balanced and practical strategic advice to chief executives, senior leaders, governance forums, elected members or boards. • Sound judgement, political nous, discretion and the ability to manage sensitive information, risk and competing expectations appropriately. • Strong written and verbal communication skills and the ability to influence across technical, operational, governance and community settings.
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