# Ministry of Social Development logo

# Principal Advisor

# Office of the Deputy Chief Executive

## Our purpose

**Manaaki tangata, Manaaki whānau**

We help New Zealanders to be safe, strong and independent

## Our commitment to Māori

As a **Te Tiriti o Waitangi** partner we are committed to supporting and enabling Māori, whānau, hapū, Iwi and communities to realise their own potential and aspirations.

## Our strategic direction



## Our Values



## Working in the Public Service

Ka mahitahi mātou o te ratonga tūmatanui kia hei painga mō ngā tāngata o Aotearoa i āianei, 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.

## The outcomes we want to achieve

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| New Zealanders get the support they require | New Zealanders are resilient and live in inclusive and supportive communities | New Zealanders participate positively in society and reach their potential |

## We carry out a broad range of responsibilities and functions including

* Employment, income support and superannuation
* Community partnerships, programmes and campaigns
* Advocacy for seniors, disabled people and youth
* Public Housing assistance and emergency housing
* Resolving claims of abuse and neglect in state care
* Student allowances and loans

## **He whakataukī\***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Unuhia te rito o te harakekeKei hea te kōmako e kō?Whakatairangitia, rere ki uta, rere ki tai;Ui mai ki ahau,He aha te mea nui o te ao?Māku e kī atu,He tangata, he tangata, he tangata\* | If you remove the central shoot of the flaxbushWhere will the bellbird find rest?Will it fly inland, fly out to sea, or fly aimlessly;If you were to ask me,What is the most important thing in the world?I will tell you,It is people, it is people, it is people |

\* We would like to acknowledge Te Rūnanga Nui o Te Aupōuri Trust for their permission to use this whakataukī

## Position detail

### Strategy and Insights

The Strategy and Insights group leads the development and implementation of the Ministry’s strategy by creating insights for effective decision making, focusing resources on the right investments, understanding and evaluating performance and supporting the alignment of the organisation to achieve its purpose.

### Overview of position

The Principal Advisor has two primary functions:

* Supports the Director to drive high performance, ensure quality work, and develop a great culture across the group.
* Provides advice and support to the DCE on a range of issues.

### Key elements of this role include:

* Providing strategic support and thought leadership, to the DCE and Director and the group leadership team
* Developing, maintaining and implementing frameworks that uplift group performance and culture
* Leading or overseeing significant projects for the group
* Providing advice and expertise to support good decision-making
* Resolving issues, and managing and mitigating risks
* Providing surge-capacity across the group and ensuring that priority work is delivered.

### Location

National Office, Wellington

### Reports to

Director, Office of the DCE

## Key responsibilities

### Strategic Perspective

* Make a significant contribution to the strategic direction of Strategy & Insights, based on a well-developed understanding of the public sector environment.
* Provide high-quality, expert advice to the Director and DCE on a wide variety of issues covering the range of strategy, management, and delivery.
* Provide thought leadership across Strategy & Insights, helping ensure that our work is aligned with MSD’s priorities and meets stakeholder needs.
* Lead, monitor and evaluate the development and progress of group-wide initiatives and strategies, and report on these regularly.
* When requested represent the Director or DCE at internal and external forums by gathering insights and/or presenting Strategy & Insights’ perspectives and priorities on relevant issues

### Issues and Risk Management

* Provide risk and issues management assistance including identifying, managing, monitoring and mitigating risk and issues.
* Leverage on lessons learned and collective experiences to adopt a focus on continuous improvement.

### Leadership

* Keep fully up to date, with a strategic focus, on relevant issues and developments across MSD and help ensure work across the group is responsive to this.
* Lead or contribute to significant projects or initiatives including stakeholder and project advisory groups, especially those that are cross unit and group boundaries.
* Motivate and manage others to achieve group objectives.
* Promote and support the core messages of the DCE and Director regarding priorities, vision and ensure an all of government perspective is taken.
* Develop and maintain a high standard of personal integrity in all matters and contribute to the maintenance of high standards within the group.

### Business Strategy and work programme

* Design, develop and test interventions to support group performance, such as frameworks, processes and policies.
* Lead or contribute to other areas of the work programme as agreed with the Director in accordance with the needs of MSD, professional areas of interest, and/or personal development plan.
* Facilitate, co-ordinate and produce group strategic and business planning documents.
* Participate in or lead significant projects or initiatives
* Participate in or lead groups including senior officials groups, stakeholders and project advisory groups, especially those that are cross unit and group boundaries.
* Manage special projects commissioned by the Director.

### Stakeholder engagement / Relationship Management

* Build, maintain and manage effective relationships with internal and external stakeholders.
* Identify common areas of interest emerging across stakeholders and proactively develop opportunities for collaboration.

## Embedding te ao Māori

* Embed and build on Te Ao Māori within leadership role.
* Create the conditions for Te Ao Māori and Te Tiriti o Waitangi in all decisions to ensure Te Pae Tata is delivered and embedded in your business group.

## Health, safety and security

* Understand and implement your Health, Safety and Security (HSS) accountabilities as outlined in the HSS Accountability Framework.
* Ensure you understand, follow and implement all Health, Safety and Security and wellbeing policies and procedures.

## Emergency management and business continuity

* Remain familiar with the relevant provisions of the Emergency Management and Business Continuity Plans that impact your business group/team.
* Participate in periodic training, reviews and tests of the established Business Continuity Plans and operating procedures.

## Know-how

* Tertiary qualification in a relevant discipline or equivalent operational experience.
* A deep understanding and interest in emerging trends and the strategic issues facing MSD, and Government.
* Proven ability to exercise sound judgement to identify, mitigate and escalate risk.
* Ability to provide high quality, balanced analysis and advice on a range of specialist issues and/or on issues of the highest complexity within specified timeframes without significant assistance.
* Proven ability to exercise sound judgement to identify, mitigate and escalate risk.
* Ability to provide constructive feedback to ensure products created by the group meet stakeholder needs.
* Can drive and role model the desired behaviours/behavioural shifts of the group.
* Understanding of change management processes.
* Demonstrated ability to establish credibility at a high level in a complex environment, and manage key internal and external relationships.
* Extensive experience in providing strategic advice in a fast-paced and complex environment, with multiple stakeholders and priorities.
* Extensive knowledge and experience of the machinery of Government or in a Central Government environment and how they operate.
* A good understanding of the policy development process, and of parliamentary processes and the workings of legislation.

## Attributes

* Exercises sound judgement and political sensitivity.
* Well-developed critical thinking skills, with the ability to write well and provide robust advice and recommendations to senior leaders.
* Excellent verbal and writing skills with the ability to provide concise, well-constructed written reporting.
* Adapts to the needs of the audience, able to influence others to accept ideas.
* Strong problem solving and decision-making skills.
* Ability to perform under pressure.
* High integrity and accountability.
* Excellent interpersonal skills, able to establish, build and maintain effective and appropriate relationships at all levels of an organisation.
* Welcomes and values diversity and contributes to an inclusive working environment. where differences are acknowledged and respected.

## Key relationships

Internal

* Deputy Chief Executive, Strategy and Insights
* Director, Office of the DCE, Strategy and Insights
* Office of Deputy Chief Executive Strategy and Insights
* Senior leaders and staff across MSD
* Other DCE Offices and staff across MSD

External

* Central Agencies
* Ministers’ Offices
* Social sector agencies
* MSD key stakeholders
* Māori, iwi, hapū and Māori organisations
* Key community stakeholders, peak bodies and sector leaders, third party vendors and external consultants/contractors
* Other Government agencies and departments, as appropriate.

## Other

### Delegations

* Financial – No
* Human Resources – No

### Direct reports – No

### Security clearance – No

### Children’s worker – No

Limited ad hoc travel may be required

**Position Description Updated:** September 2025