# Disability Support Services and Ministry of Social Development, Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora

# Director Design

## 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

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| --- | --- | --- |
| 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\***

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| --- | --- |
| 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

### Overview of position

### The Director Design provides strategic leadership, planning and delivery of the organisation’s design function, overseeing the design and delivery of service models, operational policy, change initiatives (such as implementing Taskforce recommendations) and key programmes. This role is responsible for embedding system design practices that enable the delivery of services and solutions that are effective, equitable and aligned with DSS’s strategic direction.

### The Director Design plays a pivotal role ensuring that design is a key driver for delivering a system of disability support services that are fair, consistent, transparent and sustainable.

### The Director Design is a key leader in the DSS Design, Delivery and Data team, and responsible for ensuring design-led thinking is not only a delivery function but a strategic enabler of change. They will contribute to a culture of innovation, collaboration and continuous improvement.

### Location

Various

### Reports to

General Manager Design, Delivery & Data

## Key responsibilities

* Lead and manage the design team, including oversight of the Design and Operational Policy associated programme and project teams, ensuring high performance and wellbeing.
* Provide strategic leadership and guidance across the work, including providing advice and support to the General manager and other leadership team members as required
* Oversee the design and implementation of new initiatives lifecycle, including prototyping, testing, and implementation, ensuring alignment with agile and iterative delivery approaches as appropriate.
* Establish and maintain design standards, frameworks, and tools that support consistency, accessibility, and quality across all design outputs.
* Build design capability across the organisation through mentoring, training, and the development of communities of practice.
* Ensure that operational policy supports the successful implementation of new initiatives and current delivery
* Collaborate with policy, data, delivery, and operational teams to ensure integrated, end-to-end service design.
* Manage constructive relationships with external stakeholders including other government agencies, NGO’s and contracted providers, key representatives from the disability sector and the disability community.
* Monitor and evaluate the impact of design interventions, using feedback and evidence to continuously improve.
* Ensure that design practices function to deliver a system that is consistent, fair, transparent and sustainable and that considers how users experience and navigate the system. Ensure design activities are aligned with ethical standards, and Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles.
* Provide coaching, mentoring, and professional development support to team members, fostering a high-performing and engaged team culture.
* Represent the design team in cross-functional working groups, governance forums, and external engagements as required.

**Embedding te ao Māori**

* Embedding and building on Te Ao Māori within their 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 manager accountabilities as outlined in the HSS Accountability Framework.
* Ensure health, safety, security and wellbeing policies and procedures are understood, followed and implemented by all employees.

## Emergency management and business continuity

* Take responsibility for emergency management and business continuity confirming management of the critical functions that satisfy legislative, regulatory and client obligations are in place during and after a disruptive event.
* Ensure that policies and procedures encompassing emergency management, business continuity and crisis management arrangements are understood, followed and implemented by employees.

## Know-how

* Relevant tertiary qualification and or equivalent experience
* Strong understanding of public sector service delivery,
* Demonstrated experience leading multidisciplinary teams and managing complex, high-impact design portfolios.
* Ability to translate complex policy and operational challenges into actionable design opportunities.
* Expert knowledge of service design, systems thinking, operational policy, design research, and user experience methodologies.
* Skilled in stakeholder engagement, facilitation, and navigating ambiguity and complexity.
* Understanding of accessibility standards, inclusive design principles, and digital service design.
* Understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and its application in design.
* Knowledge of behavioural insights and systems mapping is advantageous.
* Extensive experience in leading design projects from discovery through to delivery, including facilitation of co-design and participatory processes.
* Experience with agile and iterative delivery approaches, including sprint planning, prototyping, and user testing.
* Ability to manage competing priorities, coordinate multiple workstreams, and deliver results in a fast-paced environment.
* Extensive leadership and partnership building skills
* Experience in coaching and developing others, and in building team capability and cohesion.
* Organisational awareness coupled with political savvy to be able to influence at all levels across a large multi-disciplinary organisation.

## Attributes

* Leads with clarity and purpose, fostering a positive and inclusive team culture.
* Maintains a strong user-centered focus, ensuring design solutions reflect real-world needs.
* Communicates effectively and adapts messaging for different audiences.
* Strong ability to build trust through integrity, transparency, and consistent delivery.
* Adapts confidently to complexity and ambiguity, maintaining focus and flexibility in changing environments.
* Actively mentors and develops others, building design capability and maturity across the organisation.Champions equity and cultural responsiveness in design and leadership.
* Takes initiative and ownership, driving continuous improvement.
* Builds strong, collaborative relationships across disciplines and levels, fostering a culture of shared ownership.
* Demonstrates curiosity and a growth mindset, seeking opportunities to learn.
* Upholds Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles in all aspects of work.
* Depth of skill in planning, organising and time management, as well as being adaptable and flexible
* Role models integrity and accountability
* Environmental and organisational awareness coupled with political savvy
* Excellent relationship management capability.
* Able to support and articulate strategy and vision and lead a team with inspiration, clarity and consistency, and display sound judgement.
* Exercises sound judgement, good decision making, and political savy
* Highly effective communication skills
* Flexible, adaptable and pragmatic
* Strong client focus
* Welcomes and values diversity and contributes to an inclusive working environment where differences are acknowledged and respected

## Key relationships

### Internal

* DSS Leadership Team
* The wider Design, Delivery & Data team

### External

* Disability sector providers and representative groups
* Disability non-government organisations
* Other government agencies
* Disability Community

## Other

### Delegations

* Financial – Yes level 4
* Human Resources - Yes level 4

### Direct reports - Yes

### Security clearance - No

### Children’s worker - No

Limited adhoc travel may be required

**Position Description Updated:** June 2025