# Ministry of Social Development logo

# Senior Lawyer

# MSD Legal

## 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 purpose of this position is to provide legal expertise, skills, and knowledge in the delivery of Quality Legal Services (QLS) to the Ministry including:

• Providing legal advice, legislation and advocacy services on the range of operational, public law and corporate issues facing the Ministry.

• Helping the Ministry identify legal risk and put in place strategies to manage that risk and identifying legal issues of importance to the Ministry.

• Mentoring, coaching, supervising and developing other legal staff.

### Location

National Office / Regions as applicable

### Reports to

Team Manager MSD Legal

## Key responsibilities

### Quality Legal Services

• Provision of high quality legal services to Ministry staff (including DCE’s, GM’s as and when required) within allocated areas, pools or teams, including advice and advocacy for the Ministry supported by increasing cognisance of wider organisational implications of that advice

• Demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the Ministry, relevant law and legal issues facing the Ministry and deliver services and advice that anticipate client needs while assisting other legal staff to do likewise

• Demonstrate high level of professional expertise in across multiple broad areas of legal practice within MSD Legal’s scope

• Proactively provide support and assistance to Managers and Principal Lawyers in the management of legal issues, compliance and risk

• Pro-actively assess the need for training and education with clients/legal staff and develop/deliver tailored training where necessary and as requested

• Scan the operating environment and promote suggestions for the initiation or amendment of the Ministry’s policies and legislation

• Support the development and operation of quality assurance services that exist within the legal team

• Support the development of and operation of systems, processes and tools across MSD Legal to support QLS

• Support, mentor, coach and oversee the work of other lawyers ensuring that quality legal services are is provided to Ministry staff

• Be responsible and accountable for the conduct of proceedings in the District Court Social Security Appeal Authority or other Tribunal as required

• Represent the Ministry in any other legal proceedings as required

• Coordinate and liaise with Crown Lawyers, other practitioners, Courts and other agencies throughout the area or areas assigned

• As authorised by Managers, instruct the Crown or other solicitors to conduct legal business for the Ministry as required

• Proactively promote the services available from MSD Legal

• Maintain a high standard of personal integrity in all matters and ensure Ministry processes and protocols are followed.

### Strategic Legal Risk Management

• Identifying current & future risk, trends, issues in relevant work areas and escalating to Managers / Principal Lawyer

• Contribute to risk analysis on proposed changes to legislation, new legislation and operational developments and the Ministry’s response

• Assist Manager / Principal Lawyer as required.

### Relationship Management

• Develop a strong understanding of the client’s needs and issues

• Build strong and effective relationships with key stakeholders, including at a senior level

• Strengthen and maintain a client focused approach

• Interpret and translate legal advice for key stakeholders in business appropriate language that takes account of the client’s strategic and business interests

• Proactively build appropriate levels of understanding among key stakeholders of the operations, imperatives and constraints of the Ministry

• Build and maintain close cooperative relationships with key external providers of MSD Legal Services (both public and private sector).

### Team, Pool and Individual Performance

• Identify opportunities for improvement and lead / participate in projects that support continuous improvement to the delivery of legal services and / or the performance of MSD Legal / teams or pools

• Proactively provide leadership, mentoring and coaching within MSD Legal

• Contribute to team / pool communication activities

• Identify and act on personal learning and development opportunities

• Participate in peer review of own and others work.

### People Leadership

• Role model behaviours expected and help build a constructive and collaborative culture across MSD Legal

• At the direction of Managers / Principal Lawyer coach, mentor and support more junior staff

• Support Managers / Principal Lawyers by having an oversight of development plans for Graduate Lawyers, Lawyers, Legal Executives and Appeals Officers, creating learning opportunities for these staff when opportunities arise

• Identify and support personal and professional growth / stretch development opportunities for staff

• Supporting Managers / Principal Lawyers to ensure work is effectively supervised and reviewed, with clear accountability and performance expectations

• Support Managers / Principal Lawyers in talent management and succession planning

• Contribute and support the Legal Operations team on the development of MSD Legal’s strategies, systems and processes to improve staff capacity and capability

• Actively encourage others and seek out opportunities for process improvement

• Guide and support colleagues; motivating legal staff to achieve set objectives

• Contribute to practice development and innovative delivery approaches within teams / pools across MSD Legal.

### Workflow Management

• Assist Managers / Principal Lawyers with the work allocation process

• Take responsibility and the lead for delivery in certain areas of work.

## Embedding te ao Māori

* Embedding Te Ao Māori (te reo Māori, tikanga, kawa, Te Tiriti o Waitangi) into the way we do things at MSD.
* Building more experience, knowledge, skills and capabilities to confidently engage with whānau, hapū and iwi.

## 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

• Been admitted as a Barrister and Solicitor in New Zealand and have (or be eligible for) a practicing certificate with extensive post qualification experience

• Strong understanding of legal, policy and practice issues relevant to the Ministry’s business

• Extensive practical experience providing quality legal services to clients, pro-actively anticipating client needs within a complex political environment or in conducting cases autonomously and appearing before Courts and Tribunals

• Extensive expertise/skill in the practical application of relevant areas of law in which the Ministry operates

• Experience in the development of and adaptation of policy and practice issues to ensure continuous improvement is made

• Comprehensive knowledge of the justice systems, the parliamentary system and Public Service administration

• Good computing skills and typing ability and be competent working with MS Office and relevant Ministry IT programmes and applications.

## Attributes

* Enthusiastic, curious, keen and proactive
* Excellent relationship and engagement skills - able to establish, build and maintain effective and trusting relationships with colleagues and clients including at a senior level
* Exercises first class judgement – able to critically think, analyse and problem-solve, makes fact-based decisions, considers all relevant information including resources, constraints and environmental considerations
* Demonstrates highly effective oral and written communication skills – able to provide helpful / practical / actionable legal advice on complex issues, able to influence/convince/persuade others, able to identify and surface the real issues that need to be addressed
* Proven excellent organisational and time management skills
* Exudes credibility, integrity and professionalism – demonstrates these characteristics at all times
* Welcomes and values diversity, and contributes to an inclusive working environment where differences are acknowledged and respected.

## Key relationships

### Internal

* Chief Legal Advisor
* Team Manager, Principal Lawyers and Legal Operations team
* Other MSD Legal staff
* Ministry managers and staff

### External

* Relevant external agencies, in particular Crown Solicitors, Crown Law, Legal Practitioners, the Judiciary, Courts and the Law Society.

## Other

### Delegations

* Financial – No
* Human Resources – No

### Direct reports: No

### Security clearance: No

### Children’s worker: No

Limited adhoc travel may be required

**Position Description Updated:** October 2020