



Role Description

Job Title: Senior Legal Advisor / Senior Counsel

Function: Legal

Reports To: Chief Advisor

Our Mission: To maintain or improve the quality of the New Zealand environment by providing robust independent advice that influences decisions.

Role Purpose:

The Commissioner's aim is to maintain or improve the quality of the New Zealand environment by providing robust independent advice that influences decisions. The acceptance and effectiveness of the Commissioner's advice depends to a large degree on the independence, integrity, and quality of the work undertaken by the team of advisers within his Office.

The purpose of the General-Counsel / Senior Legal Advisor is to assist the Commissioner achieve his aim by:

- Providing legal advice to the Commissioner and other Advisers on all legal and regulatory matters arising in PCE's work programme, in particular matters relating to environmental law;
- Commissioning expert legal advice as required to contribute to the Commissioner's investigations;
- Providing advice on the Commissioner's status and use of powers under the Environment Act 1986;
- Advising the Commissioner on all proposed amendments to legislation and consultations on potential law changes of relevance to the Commissioner's role;
- Providing advice on requests and complaints received by the Commissioner and his related statutory functions.

This role requires a person who has: significant experience providing general legal advice, including in the areas of resource management and environmental law; a detailed understanding of the legislative and policy-making process; an excellent understanding of how policy issues are communicated; and the ability to work effectively in a demanding, collaborative research environment.



Role responsibilities:

Legal Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide legal and strategic advice on the Commissioner's status and statutory powers under the Environment Act and support the Commissioner in the implementation of any such powers, if applicable.• Provide thorough, accurate and strategic legal advice on all legal issues arising within the Commissioner's work programme.• Provide input to any reports or correspondence on legal matters (including legal advice and/or preparing relevant sections).• Proactively identify and address potential legal issues or risks in a way that will assist the Commissioner in achieving his objectives.• Provide legal advice, drafting and guidance in submissions on legislation, rules, systems, processes and governance and how to make practical improvements.• Identify where the PCE may require specialist external advice and manage the instruction of appropriate external counsel.
Legislation and Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep abreast of any potential amendments or consultations on laws that impinge on the environment and support the Commissioner in preparing appropriate submissions.• Monitor the progress of environmental legislation through Parliament, and the scope of amendments being proposed by different Members of Parliament.• Advise and support delivery of advice to Parliament and assistance to select committees as required.• Cultivate and maintain strong relationships with legal draftspersons, the Law Society, the Resource Management Law Association and other relevant legal advisers.
Complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oversee the PCE's complaints process, including ensuring a robust complaints process, working with the Senior Management Team to triage and delegate work where applicable, and respond to complaints where appropriate.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide advice to the Commissioner and Chief Advisors on any exposure to risk arising from a complaint or a matter under investigation.
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Follow all codes of practice, procedures, and guidelines as required.• Operate in accordance with all health and safety practices.• Champion PCE's culture and values and inspire team members to deliver exceptional work.• Maintain extensive networks across the sectors involved in environmental issues• Perform other tasks and duties as required.

Key Attributes

- Grounded, real-world, plain-language approach to legal advice and ability to make sense of and communicate complex legal issues.
- Ability to develop and maintain strong relationships and networks.
- Responsive, making things happen with a can-do attitude.
- Curious with a willingness to learn, being open to new ideas.
- Resilient and comfortable with uncertainty.
- Takes responsibility for problems and acts to resolve them.
- Well-balanced judgement and decision-making.
- Ability to maintain a focus on outcome, to think strategically and purposefully, and to generate ideas and frame arguments.

Experience & Skills:

- Bachelor of Laws (or equivalent)
- Admission in New Zealand as a Barrister and Solicitor and holding a practising certificate
- Significant experience practising in the areas of resource management and environmental law, ideally at least 5+ years' experience
- Experience in the machinery of New Zealand's Parliament, government or public sector and knowledge of legislative and policy processes is desirable.
- Experience in engaging and managing stakeholders
- Excellent written and verbal communication and interpersonal skills.