Position Description

Position Title
Principal Adviser Employment Relations

Group
People and Operations Group

Location
Wellington

Reports to
Divisional Manager Organisational Capabilities

Last Review Date
December 2019

About the Ministry

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (the Ministry) acts in the world to make New Zealanders safer and more prosperous. We do this by building connections with and influencing other countries to advance New Zealand’s interests and project New Zealand values. We provide advice to the Government on the implications for New Zealand of what is happening in the world.

Our work contributes to the wellbeing of New Zealanders’ in the following ways:

- **Kaitiakitanga**: Generations of New Zealanders benefit from sustainable solutions to global and regional challenges;
- **Prosperity**: New Zealanders have better job opportunities and incomes from trade, investment and other international connections;
- **Security**: New Zealanders are able to live, do business, travel and communicate more safely at home and offshore;
- **Influence**: New Zealanders have confidence their country can influence others on issues that matter for them now and in the future.

Our values are:

**Impact**
- We achieve for New Zealand, every day, everywhere

**Kotahitanga**
- We draw strength from our diversity

**Courage**
- We do the right thing

**Manaakitanga**
- We honour and respect others

**Diversity and Inclusion**
We aspire to be a workplace that values and utilises diverse and inclusive thinking, people and behaviours. This means that our staff reflect the diversity of New Zealand
and the countries we work in, and that the contributions of staff with diverse backgrounds, experiences, skills and perspectives are valued and respected.

The Ministry supports a range of flexible work options as the default setting for all positions.

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**About the People and Operations Group**

The People and Operations Group is responsible for leading the delivery of the Ministry’s enabling functions, providing integrated strategies across the whole of the Ministry for organisational policy and practice, with a strong focus on providing smart solutions and enabling the Ministry to succeed.


The Group has responsibility for an overall annual operating budget of approximately $60 million including staff costs. The Group stewards the Ministry’s asset portfolio of $548 million and its annual operating budget of $493 million.

The role of Human Resources (HR) function is to ensure that the Ministry has the people and culture to deliver on the Government’s priorities. HR provides high-level strategic and operational advice and support to the Chief Executive Officer, the Senior Leadership Team, and Level 3 and 4 managers to ensure that effective HR strategies are developed and integrated into all organisation strategies and plans. This will help to build a high performing Ministry.

The HR function is also responsible for the design and delivery of a range of Ministry-wide HR policies, operational HR processes, and systems aimed at ensuring that managers have access to the best possible advice, support, and systems to motivate, develop and manage their people.

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**About the Position**

The Principal Adviser Employment Relations (Principal Adviser) is responsible for providing expert advice and guidance to the Ministry senior management and within Human Resources to support the management of employment relations (ER) issues.

The Principal Adviser’s role is to operate at a strategic level and to assist in operationalising the strategy into guidance for managers. The Principal Adviser will work with the Ministry’s leadership team to develop ER strategy, the bargaining strategy and approaches to ER matters.

The Principal Adviser is also responsible for managing the Ministry’s approach to contract management, ensuring that our Collective Employment Agreement (CEA) and Individual Employment Agreement (IEA) renewal process is managed effectively.

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**Key Accountabilities**

The following key accountabilities of this role assist in delivering the Ministry’s purpose. Lead strategy development for employee relations

- Develop the Ministry’s ER strategy to align with the strategic direction of the Ministry, our people strategy, our culture and values, and the Ministry’s employee value proposition.
• Advise senior leadership on the ER strategy and how to operationalise this.
• Give effect to the strategy through our engagement with unions and staff.
• Work with and provide support to the Organisational Capabilities Division in the development of our overarching strategies and ensure they in turn are reflected in our ER and bargaining strategies.

Act as the subject matter expert for employee relations advice and guidance
• Provide technical advice, support and coaching to Business Partners on managing ER matters, especially those that are more complex.
• Provide a quality assurance role to Business Partners in respect of investigations, disciplinary processes, restructuring proposals etc.
• Provide comment/advise on parameters for all settlement proposals.
• Maintain up to date knowledge of employment legislation and case law, providing regular briefings to HR on changes that may impact the Ministry.

Manage relationships with Unions
• Facilitate regular engagement with unions to respond to their concerns, share information of interest, and connect them with wider HR on matters of relevance.
• Guide consultation with unions, particularly on major initiatives
• Maintain information on union entitlements – e.g. education leave.

Develop bargaining strategy and facilitate the process
• Develop the Ministry’s bargaining strategy leading into each bargaining round and align with our organisational strategy and goals.
• Manage the process of obtaining SLT and SSC approval on the bargaining strategy and any modification required to these during bargaining.
• Represent the Ministry on its bargaining team and provide advice, support and direction to the bargaining team while operating within the parameters set by the Ministry’s bargaining goals.
• Coordinate all the research, information and modelling needs of the Ministry’s bargaining team. Develop innovative approaches to achieve the right outcomes through the bargaining process.

Manage core employment contracts for staff employed by the Ministry
• For staff employed in New Zealand, manage the Ministry’s approach to IEAs ensuring that there is a suitable contractual framework and that these are regularly reviewed and aligned, where appropriate, to the CEA outcomes.
• Maintain all templates that form part of the Ministry’s contractual arrangements with employees and variations from the collective are captured.
• Assess and recommend improvements to the Code of Conduct or other related policies as identified through changes to employment law or our engagement with employees on related matters.
• For staff employed at post, maintain an overview of contract templates. Assist the audit process by reviewing these to ensure Ministry minimum requirements are covered and they do not contain unenforceable references to NZ law or provisions we would be of concern. Review local legal advice sourced by Posts to ensure template contracts are appropriate and compliant with local law as required. Support the Business to work with Posts on the standard of our contractual arrangements.

Continuous improvement
• Assess opportunities to introduce greater simplification into our policies and procedures and to eliminate unnecessary complexity.
All other duties as requested by the employer.

**Organisational Responsibilities**

- Understand the Ministry’s strategic priorities and high-level outcomes framework and how this role contributes to the framework.
- Contribute to the Division’s delivery of its planned and agreed activity stream to realise its strategic priorities and high level outcomes.
- Understand and apply the strategic context in which the Ministry operates, including priorities and perspectives of the Ministers, partner agencies, and external stakeholders.
- Understand Tikanga and Treaty of Waitangi principles and have sufficient appreciation of Te Reo Māori to be able to apply the Ministry Māori dimension, underpinned by Ministry values, in a way that is relevant to the context of our business.
- Be aware of and adhere to the Ministry’s Health and Safety policies and procedures.
- Contribute to the continuous development of the Ministry’s knowledge base by using the Ministry’s internal systems, sharing information and data with relevant internal stakeholders, including contributing to/presenting at internal learning and development opportunities.
- Demonstrate the organisation’s values, goals, policies and procedures in all aspects of work.
- Buddy new members of the team supporting a culture of learning and sharing of experiences.

The Ministry supports a range of flexible work options as the default setting for all positions.

**Qualifications, Skills, knowledge & experience**

The following are required:

**Qualifications**

- Post-graduate degree in Human Resources, employment law, international relations, political science or an equivalent qualification from a related field; or equivalent level of experience working in a ER/HR role.

**Experience**

- Extensive and relevant experience dealing with complex ER issues.
- Ability to operate strategically and develop trust and credibility with the SLT.
- A proven track record in conflict resolution and the ability to negotiate complex issues.
- Extensive knowledge of employment agreement procedures and legislation.
- Good knowledge of remuneration management practices and performance appraisal systems.

**Skills**

- Strong oral and written communication skills with the ability to convey complex information logically and concisely.
- Ability to research and analyse issues and develop appropriate recommendations.
- Good policy formulation skills and sound judgement.
- Strong interpersonal skills and the ability to work as part of a team.
- Ability to work under pressure.
- Ability to work with staff from all levels of the organisation.
- Sensitive to and appreciative of EEO issues.
- Ability to work with people from other cultures.
- The ability to facilitate complex tasks in a multi-disciplinary environment.

**Relationships**

The position is required to build and maintain the following relationships:

**Internal (within MFAT)**
- DCE, People and Operations
- CEO, Senior Leadership Team, and Managers
- Organisational Capabilities Division, Human Resources and wider P&O Group.

**External (outside MFAT)**
- State Services Commission
- Other government departments and agencies
- Unions (FSA and PSA)
- ER practitioners in both the Public and the Private Sector
- Consulting companies as appropriate (including employment advice)

**Delegations**

As set out in the Ministry’s Instrument of Delegation

**Mandatory Role Requirements**

- You must be able to obtain and maintain an appropriate New Zealand Government Security clearance.
- You must hold New Zealand citizenship or be a permanent resident.