

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position details	
Position title	Senior Legal Counsel
Team	Legal – Legislation
Group	Legal, Monitoring and Compliance
Location	Wellington
Date	April 2025

Our purpose

We are a kaitiaki of electricity. Our purpose is to enhance New Zealanders' lives, prosperity, and environment through electricity.

How we work

The Electricity Authority Te Mana Hiko promotes competition in, reliable supply by, and the efficient operation of, the New Zealand electricity industry for the long-term benefit of consumers.

Our functions describe how we do this. We work to:

- **Promote market development:** To enable New Zealand's electricity markets to deliver better outcomes for consumers, we maintain a responsive regulatory environment that both reflects industry's current state and supports innovation and change. Key tools for market development include market facilitation measures and amending the Electricity Industry Participation Code.
- **Monitor, inform and educate:** Transparency and understanding are vital to the operation of the electricity markets. Our market monitoring, information and education work focuses on making data, information and tools available, increasing participation, and improving awareness of how electricity market's function.
- **Operate the electricity system and markets:** We are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the electricity system and markets. To achieve this, we contract out some services including the role of system operator, which provides the real-time coordination of sending generated electricity across the national grid to meet demand from consumers.
- **Enforce compliance:** We ensure the Electricity Industry Act, its regulations and the Electricity Industry Participation Code are followed by electricity industry participants. Our compliance function also helps improve the industry more generally, as lessons learned support our education of participants and help us to identify and resolve on-going or systemic issues.
- **Protect the interests of consumers:** We are responsible for protecting the interests of domestic and small business consumers in relation to the dealings of industry participants supplying their electricity.

More information can be found on our website www.ea.govt.nz.

Our values

The Electricity Authority has the following values:

Our people

We support the development of each other and work together to achieve our goals.

Boldness

We are decisive, forward thinking and not afraid to do the right thing.

Excellence

We are committed to producing the highest-quality work.

Openness

We are transparent in our work and listen to others.

Integrity

We are honest and trustworthy and treat everyone with fairness and respect.

Our group

The Legal Team sits within the Legal, Monitoring and Compliance Group and provides in-house legal services for the Authority. The Compliance Team is responsible for monitoring, investigating and enforcing compliance with the Code, the Electricity Industry Act and various regulations. The Monitoring team analyses market activity and provides insights and information across the Authority to inform key initiatives.

There are two legal teams – the Legislation Team is primarily responsible for providing legal advice on the development of market policy and secondary legislation. The Legal Compliance and Corporate Team advises on compliance with applicable legal and regulatory frameworks and manages compliance and litigation matters. It also provides advice on contractual and procurement matters. Lawyers within these teams work collaboratively and flexibly across teams as required, to enable the organisation to deliver its key initiatives and fulfil its strategic functions.

Purpose of this position

The purpose of this position is to be responsible for providing high quality legal advice in a timely manner to the Authority.

Working relationships

Reports to	Manager – Legislation
Direct reports	Nil
Internal relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• General Manager – Legal, Monitoring and Compliance• Electricity Authority Board Members• Electricity Authority staff
External relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• External legal advisors• Industry participants and stakeholders• Other government agencies

Key accountabilities and deliverables

The key accountabilities listed below are not intended to be a complete or limiting description of the role and certain duties may change from time to time.

Legal activities

- Interpretation and application of the law relating to the Authority's functions, in particular, the Electricity Industry Act 2010 (Act), Regulations made under the Act, the Electricity Industry Participation Code 2010 (Code), and applicable administrative law
- drafting, and assisting with, amendments to the Code
- reviewing Board papers, Committee papers, consultation papers and decision papers
- drafting and reviewing Authority policies and advising on compliance with legal obligations
- providing legal advice related to Ministerial support and other functions of the Authority
- assisting the Legal Compliance and Corporate Team with compliance and corporate activities as required, including drafting, reviewing and interpreting contracts, managing litigation and compliance processes, and assisting with governance matters and privacy officer duties
- improving existing processes and identifying opportunities to enhance the legal function
- providing legal education to the organisation.

Relationship and stakeholder management

- Leads with purpose, communicating clearly to persuade and inspire others.
- Connects with others by listening and reading people and situations to communicate tactfully.
- Strengthens business performance and leads innovatively to foster continuous improvement at the Authority.
- Participates as an active team member and contributes knowledge and expertise needed to achieve Authority outcomes.
- Develops effective working relationships with Authority staff in order to transfer knowledge and learning to the wider organisation.

Workflow management

- Actively and independently plan and manage own projects and workload, with guidance from Legal Manager as required
- Provide coaching and mentoring to the Legal Counsel positions, as required.

Experience and knowledge

To be successful in this role you will have:

- A tertiary qualification (LLB or equivalent) with 6+ years PQE
- Admitted as a barrister and solicitor in New Zealand
- An understanding of public sector legal issues and requirements
- Experience providing legal advice to public sector agencies (in house or private practice) or as an in-house lawyer in a commercial environment
- Sensitivity to unique issues of working within the public sector framework
- Excellent critical reasoning and analytical skills
- An ability to interpret, apply, and draft legislation.

Personal specifications

To be successful in this role you will have:

- Curiosity, flexibility and openness in integrating ideas, information and differing perspectives
- Excellent verbal and advocacy skills
- An ability to see the 'big picture' in terms of the Authority's statutory objective
- Well-developed relationship management skills
- An aptitude for quickly understanding technical information
- The ability to prioritise work and manage competing deadlines.