

DIRECTOR, ECONOMICS & RESEARCH		 <p>NEW ZEALAND PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION Te Kōmihana Whai Hua o Aotearoa</p>
Reports to:	Commission Chair	
Date:	October 2020	

Role

Director roles are the key management positions within the Commission, either leading the Commission's inquiries (Inquiry Directors) or supporting inquiries and undertaking wider productivity research work (Director, Economics & Research). The roles report to the Chair for substantive work programme matters and have a high degree of interaction with Commissioners in progressing the Commission's inquiries and research. Directors will also work with the General Manager to carry out other management functions in areas such as human resources, budgeting, planning, and financial management.

The roles are senior organisational leadership positions, focussed on getting the best out of people and generating the best value from the Commission's activity more generally. Each role requires wide capability, including:

- superior analytical skills with a background in economics;
- extensive experience in providing leadership to the development of analysis and a research agenda;
- superior ability to create practical and innovative solutions to complex and ambiguous problems, including skill in distilling issues and discussions into key insights, key points and trade-offs;
- excellent communication skills, with the ability to collaborate and engage skilfully internally and externally and turn complex analysis into a compelling, accessible story; and
- superior interpersonal, people management and leadership skills to successfully lead and manage the Commission's core deliverables, as well as display collective leadership for the Commission more generally as part of the Commission's leadership team.

Overview of role responsibilities

- Plan and manage the progress and outcomes of the Commission's research work programme
- Provide intellectual leadership to the development of robust analysis and insightful research
- Ensure effective engagement, consultation and communication with internal and external stakeholders
- Provide leadership to team, develop staff and manage performance
- Knowledge and ability to make use of a cross-disciplinary approach when appropriate

Background

As set out in our Act, “[t]he principal purpose of the Commission is to provide advice to the Government on improving productivity in a way that is directed to supporting the overall well-being of New Zealanders, having regard to a wide range of communities of interest and population groups in New Zealand society.” The Commission meets its purpose primarily by undertaking inquiries on matters referred to it by the Government, and also undertakes its own research agenda to promote understanding of productivity matters.

The Commission’s work requires it to be an expert investigative, analytical, research and advisory body – and to build the necessary capability for such a body. Of critical importance are the people that the Commission employs and further develops. Day-to-day management of the Commission is carried out by the General Manager. The Commission has a Board, comprising a Chair plus up to 3 other Commissioners, who are responsible for leading inquiries, plus overall governance of the Commission including setting strategy.

Role responsibilities – key requirements

Plan and manage research

- Conduct economic analysis within the Stats NZ datalab environment
- Work with internal and external stakeholders to develop a research agenda
- Manage research activities and balance between the team’s independent research plan and input towards the Commission’s inquiries
- Monitor and review work progress to ensure it is appropriately prioritised, coordinated and disseminated

Intellectual leadership

- Ensure the scope and conduct of analysis and research meets objectives
- Provide leadership to the generation of compelling insights and research at the international frontier
- Facilitate the sharing and open debate of analysis and research, internally and externally
- Ensure work is rigorous, of high quality and evidence-based
- Ensure reports are provided with sufficient technical detail, as well as presented in a range of formats for a wider audience (e.g. plain English succinct summaries for a policy audience)

Engagement, communication and consultation

- Build strong working relationships with the Commissioners
- Build and sustain effective relationships with other roles internally and networks with external parties
- Contribute to the leadership of engagement and consultation activities
- Ensure the impartiality and independence of the Commission is maintained

People leadership

- Develop and mentor team members
- Ensure that team members’ work is well planned, well directed and appropriately prioritised
- Effectively manage performance including any under-performance issues
- Encouraging open and frequent two-way dialogue about performance

General

- Undertake any other tasks reasonably required to support the Commission's work
- Represent the Commission, as required

Role dimensions

- Up to 5 direct reports, plus contractors and consultants
- Expenditure authority up to \$50,000 for expenses directly related to team work and activity

Capability

All of the attributes, abilities and experiences below – at an advanced or superior level – are preferred for an ideal candidate

Key attributes

- Advanced understanding of economics and analysis and research techniques
- Service focused with an ability to implement through leadership and influence
- Thinks strategically while also implementing practically
- Innovative and generates new ideas
- Responsive and makes things happen with a can-do attitude
- A grounded, real-world, plain-English approach
- Continually seeks to build others' understanding of their work
- Leads organisation values by example

Key abilities

- Advanced conceptual, critical, and lateral thinking
- Quality decision making and problem solving
- Excellent written and oral communication and presentation, including use of innovative approaches
- Superior relationship management and influencing
- Effective people development and team building
- High interpersonal savvy
- Organisational and strategic agility

Education & qualifications

- At a minimum, a post-graduate degree/qualification in economics

Experience

- Analysis of complex public policy issues
- Leading the development of a research plan and strategy
- Production of high quality reports and project management
- Persistence in challenging existing frameworks and viewpoints

- Discerning judgement in situations of ambiguity
- Skilful communication and relationship building around complex issues, including being comfortable and effective in media and public engagement – both written (blogs, op-eds, etc) and spoken – radio, TV & public speaking
- Management level (or potential to at that level) with a track record of successful strategic leadership
- Working closely with a Board or similar body
- Leading and building of high performing teams
- A working knowledge of the government sector