

Senior Strategic Advisor to the Chair

Horopaki | Context

Kaunihera Taiao ki Waitaha (Environment Canterbury) is the Regional Council for the largest region in Aotearoa/New Zealand, covering an area of 44,500 square kilometres, with a population of approximately 700,000.

As a regional council, we are responsible for managing natural resources including air, soil, water and land. We work in partnership with mana whenua Ngāi Tahu to protect the health of our environment to ensure a sustainable and prosperous future for our region.

The region's evolving environmental and political context means we will continue to be agile and adaptive, as we respond to regulatory and environmental changes.

Our mahi (work) is organised around the delivery of our three core services:

- Environmental Regulation and Protection
- Community Preparedness and Response to Hazards
- Public Transport

We are guided by our strategic drivers (pou):

- Putting the community and our customers at the heart of everything we do
- Growing our relationship with mana whenua into a true partnership
- Maturing our governance model and understanding of our political environment
- Removing pain for our people (and customers) by improving our systems and processes.

Our mahi is also underpinned by our values:

- Kaitiakitanga (stewardship)
- Pononga (integrity)
- Manaakitanga (people first)
- Whanaungatanga (collaboration)
- Māiatanga (can do).

Aronga | Purpose

The purpose of this role is to support the Canterbury Regional Council Chair's work towards Council strategic goals by providing strategic, robust and timely advice and information.

Ngā Haepapa | Accountabilities

Strategic Support

- Lead the development of high quality written and verbal advice to support the Chair to execute Council strategy, deliver organisational priorities, and respond to urgent or emerging issues.
- Prepares and provides high quality, trusted advice and information to the organisation on issues of strategic relevance and interest to the Chair.
- Prepares and provides advice and coordination support to parts of the organisation wishing to advise or contact the Chair.
- Collaborate with the Principal Strategic Advisor to the CE with developing and delivering apolitical, but politically astute, advocacy and engagement strategies for the Chair around issues such as legislative reform. This can include political engagement with Ministers, MPs, Rūnanga Chairs and others.
- With the Principal Strategic Advisor to the Chief Executive and Communications and Engagement staff, contribute to fit-for-purpose communications material for the Chair such as speech notes and emails.
- Undertake research and horizon scanning activities, including proactively identifying key future issues affecting and influencing the Council.
- Support the Chair in maintaining awareness of stakeholder and organisational priorities and relationships.
- Display political nous and escalate issues to the Principal Strategic Advisor to the Chief Executive as and when required.

Chair's Office Support

- With the Senior Executive Assistant to the Chair, proactively ensure the Chair can use their time effectively and efficiently (e.g. preparing them for meetings and engagements).
- With the Senior Executive Assistant to the Chair and other staff, manage the Chair's correspondence, draft letters, emails and other correspondence, ensuring all documentation and communication is professional, appropriate to the Chair's style, produced to high standards and delivered to recipients in a timely manner with appropriate approvals.
- Maintain awareness of high priority issues for the Chair, their duties and commitments.
- Proactively identify opportunities for, and actively contribute to, process and system improvements.

Governance support

- Maintain an overview of priority Council and Committee papers and draft Council material on the Chair's behalf (e.g. Chair's Reports).
- Develop and maintain effective internal and external networks and information flows to ensure the Chair is fully apprised of relevant issues, and staff are aware of the Chair's positions on them.

- Support the Governance team in their relationship with the Chair.

Toitū Te Tiriti | Treaty Partner Excellence

Personally, and support the Chair to:

- Deliver outcomes that underpin and give effect to achieving Ngāi Tahu cultural and environmental aspirations, including but not limited to, mahinga kai and revitalisation programmes.
- Connect with our Ngāi Tahu partner to ensure understanding of Ngāi Tahu aspirations and priorities so that there is genuine input and contribution, which can be considered in mahi programme development and prioritisation.
- Demonstrate openness and courageousness in approaching issues and in co-design of processes and systems, supporting thought leadership that can give effect to the progression of the partnership.
- Contribute toward our effective, strong and valued relationship with all Papatipu Rūnanga within Waitaha/Canterbury and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, to demonstrate our commitment to recognise and provide for the kaitiaki/responsibility Ngāi Tahu has for the natural environment. This will include sharing of knowledge and information, creating opportunities for increased participation in decision-making processes, effective engagement and development of existing working relationships.
- Support the organisation's cultural capability journey, leading by example and identifying clear priorities, expectations, and development opportunities for individual capability; planning and aligning work to support organisational cultural capability across all aspects of delivery.

Hauora me te Marutau | Health and Safety

The health, safety and wellbeing of our kaimahi and community is a priority for the Council, and we proactively implement robust health and safety practices. To meet our legal obligations, you must:

- Understand the health and safety and risk obligations that rest with this position, and care for your own health, safety and wellbeing and that of others you may interact with.
- Ensure awareness of, and compliance with, legislative and operational standards, policies and guidelines, including the Council's code of conduct.
- Maintain an enquiring mind, undertake your own due diligence, and apply your knowledge of best practice to ensure a detailed understanding of any risks associated with this position.
- Ensure that relevant certifications are maintained, if applicable.

Hononga ā-Mahi | Working Relationships

Kai rō Kaunihera | Within the organisation

- Accountable to the Principal Strategic Advisor to the Chief Executive and must establish a close working relationship with the Senior Executive Assistant to the Chair and GM Governance to provide comprehensive support to the Chair.
- Collaborate across the business to resolve issues, ensure alignment of priorities, work programmes, policies, consistency of approach and continuous improvement of processes and system support for these to deliver the best results. Internal relationships will include, but not be limited to, the Principal Strategic Advisor and Senior Executive Assistant to the Chief Executive, Senior Executive Assistant to the Chair, the Chief Executive, Communications advisors, senior leaders, Governance staff, Executive Assistants and Personal Assistants.
- Support the relationship between the Chief Executive and Chair through building a relationship of trust with the Chair, providing timely and accurate information, and displaying astute political acumen.

Kai waho i te Kaunihera | Outside the organisation

- Contribute toward our effective, strong and valued relationship with all Papatipu Rūnanga within the Waitaha Canterbury rohe and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu. To demonstrate our council's commitment to recognise and provide for the kaitiaki responsibility Ngāi Tahu has for the natural environment. This will include sharing of knowledge and information, creating opportunities for increased participation in decision making processes, effective engagement and development of existing working relationships.
- Cultivate and maintain trusted relationships with external organisations and individuals including key stakeholders, Ngāi Tahu representatives, Government Ministers and staff, dignitaries, Mayors, Chairs, Councillors, Chief Executives and staff at other Councils and organisations to support the Chair and act as an effective link between the Chair and these organisations.
- Where appropriate identify and grow new strategic external partnerships and relationships to support the Chair.

Ngā Herenga Motuhake | Special Conditions

Will be required to work or be available outside of the normal working hours.

Overnight stays may be occasionally required while providing support across the region.

As a regional council, we have a specific requirement to provide a civil defence function for Waitaha. Kaimahi are required to be available to assist, support or be associated, as reasonably required, with any Civil Defence emergency or any exercise organised in relation to this function.

Additionally, all kaimahi are expected to assist, support and respond, as reasonably required, to any event where the Business Continuity Plan is activated.

Māngai Whakahaere | Delegations and Authorities

Where specified, this role has delegated authority to make decisions in accordance with Council-approved delegations, and authority for decision making in accordance with policies and guidelines for financial, people management and media-related activities.

Ngā Āheitanga | Capabilities

Tohu Mātauranga | Qualifications

- Tertiary qualification in political science, public policy or environmental management, or other qualification with equivalent level of experience.

Mātau ā-wheako | Experience

- At least 5 years' experience in roles providing advice to senior decision-makers in a political environment and providing researched, nuanced and strategic advice to a Council, Executive and/or Board, and ability to engage effectively with different groups.
- Demonstrated integrity, maturity and wisdom to enable an effective working style within a political organisation. This can include being flexible to meet the different needs and working style of each Council Chair as and when they change.
- Exceptional verbal and written communication skills, and ability to adapt communication styles.
- Ability to prioritise and calmly manage multiple urgent and sensitive tasks, and to be flexible and adaptive within an environment that may be, at times, fast-paced, demanding, and/or ambiguous.
- Ability to prioritise, monitor and balance conflicting priorities and activities from across the organisation and react to changing circumstances.
- Political nous, with a clear understanding of Local and Central Government legislation, policy and practice and judgement of when to escalate matters.
- Strong interpersonal skills and the ability to quickly build trusted working relationships with the Chair, Councillors, senior management, officers, and external stakeholders.
- Ability to effectively plan and work autonomously and as a member of a multidisciplinary team.
- Ability to identify and undertake opportunities for process improvement and innovation.
- Advanced knowledge of, and demonstrated competence in, Microsoft Office programmes and demonstrated ability to learn new digital programmes and systems.
- Understanding of te ao Māori is advantageous, as the Chair's relationship with Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, Papatipu Rūnanga and iwi leaders across Aotearoa is significant.

Ngā Pūkenga Matatau | Core Competencies

Specific behaviours at the Technical Leader level sit beneath each of the following organisational competencies. To identify the competency expectations at this level view the competency framework in the P&C Kete.

Customer Focus	Ensuring that the customer perspective is a driving force behind decisions and activities. Initiating and maintaining relationships inside and outside the organisation.
Business Acumen	Using an understanding of the organisation's position to contribute to effective strategies and tactics by using economic, financial and industry information. Thinking from the ratepayers' perspective.
Achieving Outcomes	Translating strategic priorities into operational reality; aligning communication, accountabilities, resources, internal processes and ongoing measurement systems to ensure that strategic priorities yield measurable and sustainable results.
Leading Change	Identifying and driving organisational and cultural changes needed to adapt strategically to changing demands, technology, and internal initiatives; using new approaches to improve results by transforming organisational culture, systems, or services.
Common Purpose	Working towards a compelling view of the future by engaging with the organisation's vision; understanding and aligning to the common purpose.
Building Capability	Attracting, developing, engaging, and retaining talented individuals allowing the organisation to meet current and future organisational challenges. Sharing authority, responsibilities and decision making to enable individuals to stretch their capabilities and accomplish strategic priorities.

The above statements are intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed; they are not an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties and skills required of the position and incumbent. From time to time the Senior Executive Assistant to the Chair will be required to accept and carry out other duties.

Band / Grade
6 / 17

Position Code
TBC

Last Updated
October 2025

I agree to undertake the responsibilities detailed in this job description:

Ingoa | Name:

Waitohu | Signature:

Rā | Date Signed
