Outdoor Access Commission
Herenga ā Nuku Aotearoa

Position Description

Position: Communications Manager

Location: Wellington

Reporting to: Chief Executive

Date: 6 November 2026

Duration: Full-time, Permanent

Background

The Outdoor Access Commission, Herenga ā Nuku Aotearoa, is the Crown agent responsible for providing leadership on outdoor access issues. Our role is to advise on and advocate for free, certain, enduring, and practical access to the outdoors.

The commission has a team of 12 full-time staff and 11 part-time regional field advisors nationwide.

Position summary

The communications manager leads the day-to-day delivery of the commission's communications and puts its communications strategy into action. The role coordinates the communications team's workload, supports agreed priorities, and mentors team members.

At the chief executive's request, the communications manager provides communications advice for management team discussions and Board papers and may attend Board meetings as required.

The role leads routine communications work and makes day-to-day decisions within agreed priorities and delegations. The chief executive and management team retain responsibility for strategic decisions and responses to significant, sensitive or high-risk issues.

Key relationships

Within the organisation

- Chief executive
- Communications team
- Relevant management team members
- Staff and regional field advisors

Outside the organisation

- Commission stakeholders
- News media
- Print and digital marketing partners

Key result areas

Communications delivery and advice

- Help implement the commission's communications strategy under the direction of the management team, maintaining consistency in messaging and branding.
- Provide day-to-day advice to staff on communications with the public, media, and other key audiences, escalating complex or sensitive matters to the management team.
- Monitor the political, media, and social media environment relevant to the commission's work. Identify potential communications impacts and promptly alert the chief executive and management team to significant or emerging issues.
- Support the management team in responding to communication needs arising from unexpected events and opportunities.

Team leadership

- Provide day-to-day leadership and coordination for the communications team, allocating tasks and supporting the team's work priorities.
- Mentor and support the development of team members.

Communications

- Help manage the communications budget and keep accurate records, within delegations agreed with the chief executive.
- Oversee the commission's web strategy and maintain content on the website.
- Track and report on the level and effectiveness of engagement with communications.
- Develop regular, relevant content that tells commission stories and informs stakeholders.
- Act as a day-to-day media contact for routine enquiries and prepare media releases, referring significant or sensitive enquiries to the management team.
- Draft speeches, presentations and briefing material for the chief executive, Board members and staff, as directed.
- Bring any media issues to the immediate attention of the chief executive.
- Maintain the commission's image library.
- Develop and maintain promotional and collateral materials.
- Proofread and edit external communications material before publication, including checking that they meet Plain Language requirements.
- Oversee the development of corporate accountability documents such as the annual report, the Statement of Performance Expectations and the Statement of Intent.

Engagement

- Support the engagement advisor to set and achieve their work priorities.
- Identify opportunities to advance the commission's goals and recommend potential partners to the management team.
- Build and maintain relationships with key stakeholders.

General

- Carry out reasonable duties that support the work of the commission, as required.
- Know and comply with health and safety policies and procedures.
- Implement and adhere to all other commission policies and legal obligations.

Dimensions of the position

Staff

- Day-to-day coordination responsibility for up to two staff. Formal people-management responsibilities, including performance and employment decisions, will remain with the relevant manager unless delegated.

Financial delegation

- Minor purchasing within communications budget lines, as agreed with the chief executive.

Person specification

- Several years' experience in communications, ideally including some public sector or Crown agency exposure.
- Strong written communication skills, including experience writing for different audiences. Strong editing and proofreading skills.
- Some experience coordinating or leading the work of others, with good interpersonal skills and a collaborative approach to problem-solving.
- A developing understanding of the principles of mauri.
- Demonstrated ability to provide sound communications advice to senior leaders and to manage emerging, sensitive or high-risk communications issues.
- A general understanding of how government operates, and familiarity with public policy processes in New Zealand.
- Ability to build effective networks and maintain relationships.
- Experience with digital communication tools, social media platforms, and web analytics.
- Sound judgement when handling confidential or sensitive information, and an understanding of the communications implications of public-sector transparency, privacy and information-management obligations.

Preferred

- Experience working with journalists and using print, digital and broadcast media to communicate public-interest issues.
- Experience developing corporate documents such as annual reports and statements of intent.
- Experience producing accessible digital content and applying relevant web accessibility standards.
- Knowledge of and an interest in the outdoor recreation sector.
- Design and layout skills.
- Photography and/or video editing experience.

Competencies

Communication

Communicates clearly in writing, in conversation and in presentations. Listens carefully, checks understanding and adapts the message and channel to the audience and situation.

- Listens and checks for understanding.
- Understands and meets the needs of the audience.
- Information delivery is well organised and presented.
- Is effective in various formal presentation settings: one-on-one, small and large groups, with peers, managers, inside and outside the organisation.
- Communicates confidently and can manage group process during a presentation.

Team collaboration

Works across the organisation as part of one team. Builds constructive relationships with colleagues and managers, shares knowledge and expertise, and helps others achieve shared goals. Behaves in a manner consistent with the responsibilities of a senior team member.

- Actively engages with others to achieve shared goals.
- Works collaboratively to accomplish shared goals.
- Attends to team disciplines such as being prepared for meetings, arriving on time, and respecting others' time.

Integrity

Acts in a manner that conveys the principles essential to the commission, including professionalism, mana, service, impartiality, fairness, sound business ethics and respect for others.

- Demonstrates high standards of ethical behaviour.
- Maintains organisational standards.
- Is seen as direct and truthful.
- Maintains confidences.
- Is seen as credible and professional in all dealings and advice provided.

Business awareness

Keeps up to date with communication industry trends and relevant commercial context. Identifies and acts upon, or assists with, opportunities.

- Undertakes regular environmental scanning.
- Regularly looks at possible future scenarios.
- Is politically astute.
- Considers and engages with tangata whenua to maintain currency and awareness of issues and how these relate to achieving the commission's goals.
- Considers and engages with other cultures to maintain currency and awareness of relevant issues.
- Demonstrates an awareness and understanding of Te Ao Māori and its impact on the commission's work.

Innovation and fostering creativity

Looks for opportunities to improve personal and team performance, rethinking how to approach work. Develops creative and practical ideas and encourages others to do the same.

- Proactively seeks improvement through innovation and fostering creativity.
- Contributes to an environment where creativity and innovation can flourish.
- Can project how potential ideas may play out.
- Helps develop realistic and practical plans.

Work standards

Sets high standards for their own work and supports others to do the same. Takes responsibility for completing projects and tasks, pays close attention to detail and checks work for accuracy.

- Balances quality, cost, timeliness and agreed expectations.
- Achieves high-quality results.
- Consistently displays a commitment to quality and service.