



# Job description

## Haere mai

This job description is your go-to place for all the ins and outs of this role at Internal Affairs

## Principal Advisor

The Inquiries Directorate is responsible for establishing and supporting statutory inquiries on behalf of the government, and providing ongoing advice throughout their life-cycle (establishment, set up, initial operation, ongoing liaison and reporting, closedown, and management of legacy records).

The Directorate also provides leadership and supports connections across government to strengthen the government's inquiries system. The key tasks of the Directorate are to:

- provide policy and operational advice to support the establishment of new inquiries;
- co-ordinate and facilitate the operational interface between inquiries and DIA during each inquiry's lifecycle (from pre-establishment through to post-closure); and
- refine DIA's support model and ensure that the all-of-government inquiries system is understood, efficient and effective

The role of the Principal Adviser Inquiries is to provide thought and intellectual leadership, analysis and advice to the Director Inquiries, Inquiry Secretariats and the wider Department. The Principal Advisor has a critical role in the Inquiries Directorate leading high-quality advice to Ministers and Senior Officials in relation to statutory inquiries and managing risks and issues. This includes leading the delivery of specific pieces of work and contributing to policy and legislative reviews of the relevant legislation.

- **Reporting to:** Director, Inquiries
- **Location:** Wellington
- **Salary range:** Policy Band J

---

## What we do matters – our purpose

Our purpose is to serve and connect people, communities and government to build a safe, prosperous and respected nation.

In other words, it's all about helping to make New Zealand better for New Zealanders.

---

## How we do things around here – our principles

### We make it easy, we make it work

- Customer centred



**Te Tari Taiwhenua**  
**Internal Affairs**



- Make things even better

#### **We're stronger together**

- Work as a team
- Value each other

#### **We take pride in what we do**

- Make a positive difference
- Strive for excellence

---

## **Working effectively with Māori**

Te Aka Taiwhenua – our Māori Strategic Framework – enables us to work effectively with Māori. Te Aka Taiwhenua is underpinned by our mātāpono – Kotahitanga, Manaakitanga, Whānaungatanga, He Tāngata.

As DIA is an agent of the Crown, Te Tiriti o Waitangi/The Treaty of Waitangi is important to everything we say or do. We recognise it as an enduring document central to New Zealand's past, present and future. Building and maintaining meaningful relationships is important to work effectively with Māori, stakeholders and other agencies. We accept our privileged role and responsibility of holding and protecting the Treaty of Waitangi / Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

What you will do to contribute	As a result we will see
<p><b>Strategic leadership and advice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Test and challenge thinking, and provide expert advice on areas of deep technical/policy knowledge and expertise</li> <li>• Provide strategic and intellectual leadership and sound, high quality, impartial advice and insights</li> <li>• Makes sound judgment on controversial or critical issues using the best available data and information</li> <li>• Stay aware of relevant issues, risks and developments which may impact the Directorate; alerting and advising the Director on responses and what and when to escalate issues</li> <li>• Maintain a strategic overview of issues that may impact on the Directorate and its work in order to predict potentially controversial or politically sensitive issues that may arise</li> <li>• Provide strategic and intellectual leadership on branch performance and governance</li> <li>• Support the Director to develop branch level strategic and business plans, ensure alignment with Department wide strategy and planning, and support the PRC leadership team in implementing strategy.</li> <li>• Mentor and coach other staff, as agreed with the Director, in the application of high level analytical and strategic thinking skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deep understanding of the inquiry system across the Directorate and amongst key players</li> <li>• High quality, influential advice is provided to Director and Ministers.</li> <li>• Intellectual leadership and high level strategic thinking</li> <li>• Issues are successfully managed and there is excellent communication both internally and externally with relevant parties</li> <li>• An emphasis on continuous improvement and innovation across the Inquiry system</li> <li>• The Department is recognised as an effective leader and operator within the Inquiries system</li> <li>• Less experienced members of the Directorate are provided with direction and support where required</li> <li>• Sharing of information, experience, knowledge and ideas is encouraged</li> </ul>
<p><b>Monitoring and advice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide strategic and tactical advice, and thought leadership to the Director regarding issues related to the performance and monitoring of Inquiries</li> <li>• Develop deep understanding of machinery of government in relation to monitoring the performance of Inquiries</li> <li>• Support the Director in managing relationships with Inquiries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DIA's role as monitor of Inquiries reflects best practice</li> <li>• DIA influences the performance of Inquiries</li> </ul>

What you will do to contribute	As a result we will see
<p><b>Inquiries System</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a deep and broad understanding of the Inquiry system, and the key players within it</li> <li>• Support the Director to achieve the ‘up and out’ system function</li> <li>• Actively contribute to, and support, Inquiries system initiatives to address challenges, opportunities, identifying areas for improvement</li> <li>• Share knowledge and insights of the Inquiry system and performance to help grow a strong system understanding across the Directorate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deep understanding of the Inquiries system across the Directorate and amongst key players</li> <li>• An emphasis on continuous improvement and innovation across the Inquiry system</li> <li>• Policy and legislative reforms reflect the Inquiry system perspective</li> <li>• Strong Inquiry system performance</li> </ul>
<p><b>Relationship management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build networks and work collaboratively with key internal and external stakeholders, acting as a representative of the Directorate and Department where appropriate</li> <li>• Build and utilise networks from which to engage effectively with a range of external stakeholders to ensure policy advice is well informed, and to influence others and help shape policy debates</li> <li>• Ensure that all advice developed has had appropriate input from other Groups within the Branch and other areas of the Department</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective relationships are developed and maintained across PRC, the Department and with other stakeholder groups that contribute to the effectiveness of the Directorate and the Department.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Business Improvement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the overall strategic and operational performance of the branch by undertaking specific projects as required by the Director</li> <li>• Provide thought leadership on activity to improve culture and engagement</li> <li>• Lead by example and best practice in modelling effective business processes</li> <li>• Challenging the status quo and exploring ideas and opportunities that may lead to new and more innovative, creative and effective solutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Directorate is focused on continuous improvement</li> <li>• Well planned and managed projects that support the strategic and operational development of the branch</li> <li>• Projects and initiatives that are aligned with Departmental initiatives and anticipate future needs</li> <li>• High level of contribution to Branch and Departmental initiatives demonstrating original thinking</li> </ul>

What you will do to contribute	As a result we will see
<b>Health and safety (for self)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work safely and take responsibility for keeping self and colleagues free from harm</li> <li>Report all incidents and hazards promptly</li> <li>Know what to do in the event of an emergency</li> <li>Cooperate in implementing return to work plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A safe and healthy workplace for all people using our sites as a place of work.</li> <li>Health and safety guidelines are followed</li> </ul>

Who you will work with to get the job done		Advise	Collaborate with	Influence	Inform	Manage/lead	Deliver to
Internal	Chief Executive	✓			✓		
	DCEs/ELT	✓			✓		
	GMs and other managers (including Senior Leadership Cohort)	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Other PRC and wider DIA staff	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Departmental Parliamentary staff	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
External	Ministers and their staff	✓		✓	✓		✓
	Other Government Departments and Agencies	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	External Stakeholders and suppliers	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	NGOs and Sector Partners including Local Government Agencies	✓	✓	✓	✓		

Your delegations	
Human Resources and financial delegations	Nil
Direct reports	Nil

Your success profile for this role	What you will bring specifically
<p>At DIA, we have a Capability Framework to help guide our people towards the behaviours and skills needed to be successful. The core success profile for this role is <a href="#">Specialist</a>.</p> <p><b>Keys to Success:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Problem solving</li> <li>Critical thinking</li> <li>Interpersonal savvy</li> <li>Navigating complexity</li> <li>Communicating with influence</li> </ul>	<p><b>Experience &amp; knowledge:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An excellent understanding of Government and experience in working with Senior Leaders, Central agencies, Crown entities and Ministers/ Ministerial Offices</li> <li>A track record of delivering outstanding advice and working well with people at all levels</li> <li>Demonstrated success in building, maintaining and using networked relationships to deliver results</li> </ul>

Your success profile for this role	What you will bring specifically
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Technical and specialist learning</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Experience in Crown/Māori relations and engaging with Māori</li></ul> <p><b>Skills:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Politically astute and objective approach</li><li>• Able to deal with ambiguity</li><li>• Able to exercise excellent judgement - can quickly get to the nub of an issue</li><li>• Able to build the respect and trust of their colleagues</li><li>• Highly developed relationship management and communication skills</li><li>• Trustworthy and operates with absolute integrity in line with Public service standards</li></ul> <p><b>Other requirements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Able to obtain and maintain a Secret security clearance</li><li>• Hold a university degree</li></ul>