

Chief People and Transformation Officer

Reports to:	Chief Executive Officer	Position Status:	Permanent
Unit:	People and Transformation	Location:	To be agreed
Direct Reports:	[x]	Budget & Delegated Authority:	[x]
Band:	Executive	Date:	September 2025

OUR ORGANISATION

Earth Sciences NZ was established on 1 July 2025, through the merger of GNS and NIWA, with the upcoming acquisition of MetService further strengthening its capabilities. As part of the most significant reform to New Zealand's science and innovation system in over 30 years, Earth Sciences NZ is positioned as a leading-edge organisation that excels in earth, environmental and natural resources science.

With six core science missions – Geological Hazards, Weather and Climate Hazards, Energy, Land and Freshwater, Atmosphere and Climate, and Ocean – Earth Sciences NZ is set to become a globally recognised science leader. By integrating multidisciplinary expertise and advanced technologies, the organisation will tackle complex environmental challenges and unlock opportunities for sustainable growth and development.

Following the MetService acquisition, Earth Sciences NZ will comprise approximately 1,500 staff across 22 sites, managing \$400 million in assets and generating \$370 million in annual revenue. Serving both public and private sectors, Earth Sciences NZ plays a vital role in enhancing national resilience to natural hazards, supporting economic growth, and delivering innovative science for a sustainable future.

ROLE PURPOSE

The Chief People and Transformation Officer partners with the Board, CEO and Executive Leadership Team to shape and deliver Earth Sciences NZ's people strategy as well as driving organisational transformation. This role ensures the organisation attracts, develops, and supports a high-performing inclusive workforce that drives scientific impact and sustainable growth.

With a blend of strategic leadership and operational oversight, the role leads the realignment of the operating model, embeds a unified culture, and oversees a portfolio of strategic, digital, people, commercial and cultural initiatives. It builds the leadership and workforce capability essential for success in a complex, multi-site scientific organisation.

A catalyst for both change and continuity, the Chief People and Transformation Officer guides the organisation through a complex programme of change that spans integration of people, systems, science platforms, and infrastructure. The role aligns internal capabilities with government direction,

public-good science mandates, Te Tiriti obligations, and long-term sustainability goals, embedding wellbeing, equity, and enduring systems and behaviours across Earth Sciences NZ.

POSITION PRIORITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Executive Leadership Accountabilities

- Champion Earth Sciences NZ's purpose, values, and commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, modelling ethical leadership and integrity in all actions and decisions.
- Shape and deliver the organisation's strategic direction, fostering collaboration and alignment across all functions and offering innovative insights to inform and enhance the organisation's delivery of its core objectives.
- Ensure robust governance, risk management, and compliance with legal, regulatory, and public sector requirements.
- Promote health, safety, and wellbeing culture as a strategy priority, embedding it into systems, culture, and leadership practice.
- Apply a whole-of-science systems approach by actively collaborating across the broader science system, ensuring integration beyond an Earth Sciences NZ perspective.
- Engage effectively with the Board, government, iwi, sector partners, and stakeholders to advance Earth Sciences NZ's mission and reputation.
- Uphold collective accountability for organisational performance, financial sustainability, and continuous improvement, resource stewardship, and delivery of public-good science impact.

Integration and Transformation

- Lead the design and execution of Earth Sciences NZ's transformation strategy, including post-merger integration, operating model alignment, and cultural unification across GNS, NIWA, and MetService.
- Champion a people-first approach to change, fostering open, transparent communication that builds trust, strengthens cultural connection, and drives alignment and change readiness.
- Build and oversee a centralised integration function, ensuring initiatives are sequenced, prioritised, and coordinated to maximise impact and minimise disruption.
- Drive organisation-wide transformation programmes across cultural change, digital enablement, and organisational redesign, underpinned by robust change management frameworks.
- Identify and manage strategic, operational, and reputational risks related to the People and Transformation unit, ensure business continuity and stakeholder confidence.
- Promote a culture of innovation and continuous improvement, exploring emerging technologies and practices to future-proof the organisation.
- Ensure transformation efforts align with government direction, public-good science mandates, Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations, and long-term financial sustainability goals.

People Strategy & Organisational Development

- Shape and deliver a unified people strategy that supports organisational effectiveness, scientific excellence, and a high-performance, inclusive, values-driven culture.

- Lead workforce planning, organisational design, succession, leadership development, and strategic analytics to align people capability with long-term priorities.
- Champion employee engagement, wellbeing, and the overall employee experience, embedding health, safety, and wellbeing into systems, culture, and leadership practice.
- Provide expert advice and service to the Chief Executive Officer, Board of Directors, and Executive Leadership Team to ensure people and culture strategies are fully embedded in organisational planning and performance.
- Maintain a strategic lens on emerging workforce, societal, and sector trends shaping Earth Sciences NZ's national and global talent environment.

People Operations and Systems

- Oversee seamless, compliant HR operations and systems across the employee lifecycle, including HRIS, payroll, health & safety, learning and development and employment documentation. Ensure efficient processes, robust systems, and policy development aligned with public sector standards.
- Provide oversight of people-related metrics, reporting, and insights to inform decision-making.
- Act as the Privacy Officer for Earth Sciences New Zealand.

Remuneration, Performance and Rewards

- Lead a fair, future-focused reward strategy including job evaluation, pay equity, benefits, recognition, and incentive frameworks.
- Embed performance systems that promote accountability, development and impact.

Employment Relations & Talent Acquisition

- Lead the development of a constructive industrial relations environment by overseeing collective bargaining processes and implementing the consolidation of existing collective employment agreements.
- Manage employment related risks and ensure full compliance with employment legislation and public sector principles, while fostering constructive, trust-based relationships with unions and employee representatives.
- Attract and retain top talent through a compelling employer brand and an inclusive recruitment strategy. leading strategic sourcing, technology-enabled recruitment, onboarding experiences, and early-career development.

People Leadership, Direction and Development

- Inspire and grow high-performing teams by shaping a collaborative, inclusive culture grounded in the Earth Sciences NZ's purpose, values, and commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- Provide clear direction and alignment for the People and Transformation function, ensuring efforts are focussed on achieving organisational objectives.
- Identify and develop capabilities required to meet current and future business needs, promoting a culture of personal growth, succession planning and supporting capability building across the organisation.

Board and External Engagement

- Lead timely, confident engagement with the Board and People and Culture Committee on strategic people matters, including workforce capability, culture, wellbeing, and legal compliance.
- Support the CEO in building strong, trust-based relationships with Shareholding Ministers and officials, particularly MBIE, through transparent and strategic reporting on people and culture performance.
- Build influential relationships with unions, government, sector partners, and internal stakeholders to align people systems with Earth Sciences NZ's objectives.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW)

An executive leader at Earth Sciences New Zealand owns and champions a proactive HSW culture across the organisation. This includes:

- Own and champion a proactive HSW culture across the organisation, modelling visible safety leadership and embedding HSW into strategic decision-making, planning, and delivery.
- Take personal accountability for organisational critical risks, ensuring they are identified, understood, and actively managed. This includes regular review of risk controls, assurance activities, and escalation of emerging risks.
- Demonstrate legal and ethical responsibility for HSW, recognising that executive leaders may be held personally accountable for failures in managing known risks.
- Lead by example through safety conversations, site visits, and engagement with frontline teams, reinforcing a culture of openness, learning, and continuous improvement.
- Ensure consistency and integration of HSW practices across Earth Sciences NZ, supporting a unified approach to wellbeing and risk management.
- Support incident investigations and corrective actions, ensuring timely response, appropriate support for affected workers, and effective implementation of improvements.
- Report risks and issues transparently and promptly to the Chief Executive and Board to ensure that critical information is surfaced and acted upon at the highest levels of the organisation.

Leadership Expectations

An executive leader at Earth Sciences New Zealand empowers and enables their teams for success—equipping people to deliver on our goals and foster a strong, positive culture. This includes:

- **Strategic Leadership:** Articulates a bold and future-focused vision, aligning teams and stakeholders around shared strategic priorities. Demonstrates foresight and influence in shaping organisational direction and leading transformative change.
- **Systems Thinking:** Enhances organisational and system-wide performance through fostering collaboration, championing innovation, and leading meaningful stakeholder engagement.
- **Adaptive Leadership:** Demonstrates curiosity, courageous decision-making, and inclusive leadership while navigating complexity with integrity and foresight. Embraces ambiguity as an opportunity for innovation, modelling resilience and self-awareness in the face of uncertainty.

Leads organisational adaptability by championing continuous learning and responding decisively to emerging challenges and opportunities across the organisation and science system.

- **Capability Development:** Builds organisational capability by empowering leaders at all levels, investing in talent development, and embedding a high-performance culture that supports growth, accountability, and innovation.
- **Performance and Accountability:** Drives ambitious outcomes through strategic prioritisation, effective resource stewardship, and a commitment to empowering others. Holds self and others accountable for delivering outcomes that advance organisational goals and science impact.

Responsibilities of all Employees

- Comply with all Earth Sciences NZ policies, procedures and frameworks, and act in line with the organisational values.
- Contribute to our healthy and safe workplace by following Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) expectations outlined in and integrated into our operational practices and HSW Frameworks, including undertaking HSW training and participating in health monitoring programmes relevant to your work.
- Work effectively as a team member by fostering good relationships and supporting others by providing coverage of other functions as required and ensuring workloads are evenly spread.
- Have the flexibility to adapt and develop as the organisation and its environment evolves.

Key Working Relationships

Internal	External
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Leadership Team, Board of Directors, Managers and Leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment, other Public Research Organisations, iwi, Union representatives, specialist providers, employment lawyers, professional bodies

Person Specification

Qualifications and Experience

- Post-graduate qualification in human resources, organisational development, psychology, employment law, or a related discipline, or equivalent capability gained through a combination of education and executive-level experience.
- Professional certification in change, programme or transformation management is an advantage.
- 10+ years' experience in transformation, strategic human resource management, or enterprise-level leadership.

Skills, Knowledge and Attributes

- Proven success in leading large-scale change and workforce integration, including organisational mergers, restructures, and cultural transformation
- Experience within research, innovation, science, or public-sector entities preferred.
- Strategic leader with experience influencing boards, and key stakeholder groups.

- Skilled at translating vision into action, strategy into delivery.
- Deep expertise in people strategy, organisational development, and culture transformation in complex, multi-site environments.
- Experience leading equity, diversity, inclusion, and Te Tiriti o Waitangi commitments in organisational strategy and practice.
- Extensive experience in executive level people leadership, including responsibility for HR operations, employment relations, and leadership development.
- Skilled in stakeholder engagement and union negotiation, with a track record of building trust across diverse employee groups, government, and sector partners.
- Familiarity with public sector accountability and workforce governance requirements, including reporting to boards and Crown entities.