

Who We Are - Ko wai mātou

The Privacy Commissioner is an independent Crown entity established under the Privacy Act 2020 as New Zealand's privacy regulator with an economy-wide focus.

Our purpose is to ensure privacy is a core focus for agencies in order to protect the privacy of individuals, enable agencies to achieve their own objectives, and safeguard a free and democratic society.

We advocate and advise on matters relating to privacy, examine new legislation and initiatives for impacts on privacy, undertake independent inquiries into privacy issues, investigate and conciliate complaints about alleged breaches of privacy, and have a compliance and enforcement function. The Commissioner also has due regard for the protection of important human rights and social interests that compete with privacy, and of international obligations accepted by New Zealand.

Our system outcomes

- Individuals are more confident that their privacy is protected.
- Agencies can better achieve their own objectives through respecting the privacy rights of New Zealanders.
- The right to privacy and the protection of personal information is valued in New Zealand.

Our values



Our objectives

- We work in partnership with Māori to take a te ao Māori perspective on privacy.
- We engage and empower people and communities who are more vulnerable to serious privacy harm.
- We set clear expectations to provide agencies with greater certainty about their responsibilities.
- We promptly use our full range of investigation and compliance powers to hold agencies accountable for serious privacy harm.

Position Title:	Investigator, Investigations and Dispute Resolution
Reports to:	Manager, Investigations and Dispute Resolution (MIDR)
Location:	Wellington
Date Issued/Reviewed:	May 2026

Role Purpose - Ko te aronga o te tūranga

The purpose of this position is to assist the Privacy Commissioner to achieve the objectives of the Commissioner's Office, with particular reference to Part 5 of the Privacy Act 2020, which deals with the investigation and resolution of complaints. The Investigator, Investigations and Dispute Resolution (Investigator) assess and investigates complaints from members of the public about their privacy rights and alleged breaches of those rights. The objective, wherever possible, is to assist and equip individuals, agencies and organisations to resolve privacy issues quickly and pragmatically.

The Investigator is part of a team of assistant investigators, investigators, senior and principal investigators based in the Commissioner's Auckland and Wellington offices, led by the Manager, Investigations and Dispute Resolution (MIDR), who in turn reports to the Deputy Privacy Commissioner (DPC).

The Investigator is required to respond to complaints in a manner that is well-informed and factually accurate, as well as independent and neutral. This requires a sound working knowledge of the Privacy Act 2020 and an awareness of other human rights legislation and related law. Sound judgement is required, as are excellent communications and relationship management skills to provide an approachable and professional service, and be able to deal effectively with abusive, threatening or distressed individuals. The high volume and wide-ranging nature of complaints also mean that the Investigator needs to strike an effective balance between quality and productivity.

Principal Accountabilities - Takohanga matua

Key Function	Accountabilities
Investigation of Complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To investigate alleged breaches of the Privacy Act 2020 and related Codes of practice. To undertake careful, well-judged and sensitive inquiries to clarify the issues and establish the relevant facts of any case. To effectively analyse and apply the law to the facts of individual complaints. To facilitate the settlement of complaints by the use of alternative dispute mechanisms where they would be more effective (e.g. by the use of early resolution techniques or conciliation) as approved by the MIDR. To draft and present objective, well-reasoned legal opinions To keep the MIDR well informed of the status of complaints.

Key Function	Accountabilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prepare reports and recommendations on complaints and investigations, as required.
Early and Fast Resolution of Complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To respond to complaints from members of the public about their privacy rights, in accordance with the processes and procedures of the Commissioner's Office and/or as directed by the MIDR. To apply a pragmatic and results-oriented approach to handling complaints that encourages, facilitates and equips complainants and agencies towards self-resolution, wherever practicable. To respond to complaints in a manner that is well-informed and factually accurate, independent and neutral. To provide a user friendly yet professional service that strikes an effective balance between the competing demands of quality and timeliness.
Triage of Complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To assess complaints from members of the public about alleged breaches of their privacy, in accordance with the complaints assessment framework. To evaluate whether the Privacy Commissioner should investigate or decline to investigate a complaint. To transfer or refer complaints to other regulatory or dispute resolution bodies where appropriate. To identify and undertake the early resolution of complaints, with an emphasis on the use of alternative dispute mechanisms, where early resolution is feasible. To undertake careful, well-judged and sensitive enquiries to clarify the issues and establish the relevant facts of any case as required. To effectively analyse and apply the law to the facts of individual complaints. To draft objective, well-reasoned opinions to support assessment and triaging decisions. To keep the MIDR well informed of the status of complaints. To ensure complaints are dealt with professionally, fairly and in a timely manner.
Supplementary tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To undertake or assist with specific research or policy advice work, as may be requested from time to time, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> advice about the privacy implications of draft or existing legislation, proposed or current government policy, non-government proposals, and business or other developments which might have an impact on the privacy of the individual; preparation of reports, papers or submissions to support policy positions taken by the Commissioner; research into, or the monitoring of, privacy and related developments in New Zealand and overseas. To help undertake investigations and inquiries initiated by the Privacy Commissioner into any matter, including any enactment or law, or any practice, or procedure, whether governmental or non-governmental, or any technical development, if it appears to

Key Function	Accountabilities
	<p>the Commissioner that the privacy of the individual is being, or may be, infringed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To assist the General Counsel (GC) with litigation in the Human Rights Review Tribunal (or courts), including preparation of documents and submissions, and appearing before the Human Rights Review Tribunal as led by the GC. • To undertake or assist with ad hoc or one-off special projects undertaken by the Commissioner, typically on a cross-functional basis, into any privacy related issue or to improve any aspect of the Commissioner's operations. • To undertake consultations with the Office of the Ombudsman as required.
Outreach and Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To deliver education seminars/workshops, as may be required from time to time. • To assist with the development of education and public information material such as case notes and guidance for the Commissioner's website.
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To undertake or assist with such other functions of the Commissioner as may be requested by the Deputy Commissioner or Privacy Commissioner from time to time. • To comply with any code of conduct, policy, practice or procedure as may be adopted by the Commissioner's Office. • To undertake the accountabilities of the position to the standards of quality and timeliness as prescribed by the MIDR, Deputy Commissioner, or Commissioner. • To alert the MIDR or Deputy Commissioner in a timely manner to any significant issue that might adversely impact the progress of any investigation or other work or may be of wider significance or concern to the Commissioner's Office. • To seek the prior approval of the MIDR or GC before applying any new interpretation of the law or departing from approved policy or practice. • To create and maintain accurate and up-to-date records of all investigations and other work. • To develop a thorough knowledge of the Privacy Act 2020 and other acts, regulations, codes, policies and procedures relevant to the functions and work of the Commissioner. • To manage relationships with complainants, respondents and their representatives, and other external stakeholders in a manner that reflects a responsive, timely and professional service by the Commissioner's Office. • To maintain productive working relationships with all the Commissioner's staff, including the senior leadership team, and to contribute as a team member to the wider objectives of the Commissioner's Office.

Key Function	Accountabilities
Health, Safety and Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comply with all reasonable instructions regarding wellbeing, health and safety policies and processes and the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015. • Take reasonable care to ensure that in the performance of their employment they do not undermine their own wellbeing, health and safety or that of any other person. • Work in a safe and responsible manner, ensuring incidents, accidents, hazards or near misses are promptly reported. • Promptly seek assistance without delay from your manager, HR or EAP if wellbeing at work is compromised to a level of personal concern.

Working Relationships

Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manager, Investigations and Dispute Resolution • Privacy Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner • IDR team • Other members of the Compliance, Capability and Resolution group • General Counsel, Legal, Communications, International & strategy, and Corporate Services teams
External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents and complainants across a wide range of both public and private sector agencies • Members of the public • Privacy Officers in other agencies and organisations

Delegations

Human Resources	Nil
Financial	Nil
Limits on Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No statement is to be issued to the news media or any information released to the general public without the prior approval of the Privacy Commissioner. • Any significant departure from approved or accepted work practice or procedure is first to be discussed and agreed with the General Manager, Deputy Privacy Commissioner, or Privacy Commissioner. • There is no authority to enter into any ongoing contract that may in any way be binding on the Privacy Commissioner, without the prior approval of the Commissioner or the General Manager. The booking of venues, travel or accommodation must be in accordance with the policies, practices and procedures of the Commissioner's Office.

Experience, Skills and Competencies - Wheako, Pūkenga me ngā Āheitanga

Qualifications and Experience

The Investigator will require a tertiary qualification in law or significant relevant experience in a legal or related role. This may include experience in a similar regulatory position or one involving the interpretation and application of legislation and legal principles. Experience in undertaking comprehensive research or investigative work, negotiation and problem-solving, mediating disputes, the use of alternative dispute mechanisms and/or in drafting complex legal opinions, would be an advantage.

The Investigator must be able to deliver a timely and high-quality service that is results-oriented, well-informed and factually accurate, user-friendly and professional. The position requires excellent communication skills, both oral and in writing, and the ability to relate effectively to a wide cross-section of the general public. The Investigator must be able to work independently and be self-managing yet be a strong team player. The position also requires the maturity, resilience, confidence and inter-personal skills to deal with sometimes abusive, threatening or distressed enquirers.

The position requires strong analytical skills and sound judgement. It carries its own caseload and other work programme and requires therefore the ability to manage competing priorities, and a results-oriented approach to work. The Investigator must be able to work independently and be largely self-managing, yet be a strong team player. The position demands a high degree of personal integrity and insight, and a commitment to upholding the principles of individual privacy. An inquiring mind is essential, as is an understanding of government and business systems and processes, and experience with, or a keen interest in, privacy law.

Key Competencies

NB: The competencies identified below are mapped against the five core values of the Commissioner's Office, expressed as follows:

- **Respect / Whakaaro nui** – for all the people we deal with, and for viewpoints that differ from our own
- **Integrity / Ngākau tapatahi** – we are honest, fair and transparent in our work
- **Independence / Motuhaketanga** – we operate impartially and without political or personal bias
- **Innovation / Auahatanga** – we value innovation, creativity and a culture of continuous improvement
- **Excellence/ Hiranga** – we strive for best professional practice and leadership in our field

Competency	OPC Values	Description of skilled behaviours
Alternative Dispute Resolution Skills	Respect Innovation Excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses appropriate dispute resolution mechanisms to help resolve conflict and settle disputes e.g. mediation, conciliation, negotiation and compulsory conferences; and • Helps facilitate settlement between opposing parties in a manner that is respectful of the rights of all parties.
Analytical Skills	Innovation Excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies intellectual rigour to researching and analysing complex issues systematically and comprehensively; and • Provides robust, well thought out conclusions supported by relevant data.
Professionalism	Respect Integrity Independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays highest standards of personal integrity, honesty and conduct; • Exercises discretion at all times, particularly in dealing with sensitive or confidential material; • Develops and maintains constructive working relationships with internal and external stakeholders; and • Uses language and has a demeanour and personal presentation that reflects a professional outlook.
Communication Skills	Respect Integrity Excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates clearly, concisely and in plain English, both orally and in writing, and is an active listener; • Delivers presentations effectively and can use a range of presentation methods and media; and • Negotiates effectively and can achieve co-operation and agreement where there are conflicting objectives.
Technology Skills	Innovation Excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competently uses equipment and software to produce own work, and is proficient with the Microsoft Office suite of applications and such other software or information technology tools as are required for the role; and • Adopts and adapts to new technologies readily.
Self-management	Innovation Excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works independently and is largely self-managing, yet is also a strong team player; • Self-motivated and self-driven, understands and accepts responsibility for own performance requirements; • Plans, organises and prioritises work effectively, is motivated to find solutions to problems, and is results-driven; • Maintains and enhances knowledge by actively keeping up-to-date with developments; • Participates actively in training and development opportunities; • Completes work in a timely manner and follows through with commitments; and • Sets and maintains high standards of performance.

Competency	OPC Values	Description of skilled behaviours
Teamwork	Respect Innovation Excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works as a team member and demonstrates collegiality through knowledge sharing and excellent work relationships; • Relates to a wide variety of people, both within the Office and externally, in a positive and helpful manner; and • Supports group decisions and puts group goals ahead of own goals.
Innovation and Adaptability	Innovation Excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays a positive attitude to change, adapts readily, and initiates changes as required; • Effectively manages competing priorities; • Generates ideas for improvement, takes advantage of opportunities and suggests innovations; and • As with all other staff, undertakes such other duties and responsibilities as the Commissioner may reasonably request from time to time.