

RESEARCHER SENIOR RESEARCHER PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER		 <p>NEW ZEALAND PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION Te Kōmihana Whai Hua o Aotearoa</p>
Reports to:	Director, Economics & Research	
Date:	May 2022	

Background

The New Zealand Productivity Commission Te Kōmihana Whai Hua o Aotearoa is an independent Crown entity that provides advice to government on improving productivity in a way that is directed to supporting the overall wellbeing of New Zealanders, having regard to a wide range of communities of interest and population groups. We conduct in-depth inquiries on a diverse range of topics selected by Government; carry out productivity-related research; and undertake a range of activities to promote better understanding of productivity issues.

The Commission’s work requires it to be an expert research, analytical, and advisory body – and to build the necessary capability for such a body. Of critical importance are the people that the Commission employs and further develops. Alongside our independence, the Commission is in a unique position to influence public policy debates. Our teams create practical and innovative solutions to complex and ambiguous problems – distilling issues and discussions into key insights and trade-offs.

The Commission has a Board, comprising a Chair plus up to 3 other Commissioners. They are responsible for leading inquiries, plus overall governance of the Commission including setting our strategy.

Researchers

The purpose of these roles – at all levels – is to assist the Commission to deliver its core functions of inquiries, research and promoting understanding of productivity by providing high quality research, analysis and advice and engaging and communicating effectively. The different levels of the role are based on the Commission’s judgement of skill and experience.

These roles require people with:

- Initiative and ambition to create practical and innovative solutions to complex and ambiguous problems;
- Effective and skilful communication skills, including experience turning high quality research and analysis into compelling advice;
- Analytical skills and ability, in public policy/economics/quantitative analysis or statistics/law/political science. The mix of desirable skills at any point in time will depend on the Commission’s circumstances and complementarities with other staff.

These roles will contribute to research or inquiries, working to the Director of Economics and Research or an Inquiry Director.

What you will do: Key role responsibilities

Overview

- Undertake robust analysis and research
- Develop sound advice
- Communicate and engage with a range of stakeholders to develop and test research, analysis and advice
- Operate effectively as part of a team
- Plan, organise and manage activities and outputs
- For *Principal Advisors*, support the Director and mentor and coach team members

Role responsibilities

Research

Key requirements

- Identify relevant research topics, working with inquiries and research teams
- Collate research, information and data from relevant sources
- Undertake research and analysis on agreed topics and integrate with results of research from other sources
- Identify key insights and trends and develop sound conclusions, linking back to information and data
- Report results and conclusions in a compelling manner

Key outcomes

- Insightful research, supported by evidence and sound reasoning
- Conclusions and information are seen as useful and well-presented
- Information and analysis are presented in innovative ways for ease of interpretation and impact

Analysis and advice

Key requirements

- Assess requirements to meet inquiry and research objectives
- Acquire information from relevant sources and identify key insights
- Apply frameworks to the synthesis and analysis of information and research
- Clearly identify problems that need to be assessed
- Identify effective and innovative solutions, based on analysis undertaken
- Assess options and develop practical advice, linking back to evidence
- Write and present clearly and lucidly

Key outcomes

- Robust, evidence-based analysis
- Analysis and advice are seen within the Commission as high-quality, practical and real-world

Communication and engagement

Key requirements

- Write and present in plain language
- Develop or contribute to the development of engagement plans to test analysis and advice with others
- Develop and contribute to the development of effective communications and engagement activities
- Participate in engagement activities, maintaining the impartiality and independence of the Commission

Key outcomes

- Engagement and communications are well planned, well delivered and timely
- Communications are recognised as being clear and skilful within the Commission
- Rapport is built with external people who view the Commission's work as robust and its engagement as effective

Effective team contribution

Key requirements

- Work collaboratively with colleagues and others inside and outside of the Commission
- Demonstrate personal leadership and responsibility
- Seek innovative solutions and continuous improvement
- Contribute ideas and advice freely and frankly
- Continuous communication of ideas, progress and results

Key outcomes

- Seen by others in the team as a valued and supportive team member, and someone good to work with
- Contribution to Commission's work and qualities as a team member are recognised and valued by others

Plan, organise and manage

Key requirements

- Apply project management principles and techniques, as appropriate to the activity being undertaken
- Ensure the scope of activities is properly defined, resource requirements are identified and mobilised, and work outputs are delivered within agreed timeframes
- Ensure others involved have the opportunity to provide effective input and contribution

Key outcomes

- Activities are well planned, adequately resourced, coordinated and delivered within agreed timelines
- Work and activities are seen by others as well-planned and managed

For Principal Advisors – support the Director and mentor and coach staff

Key requirements

- Lead by example in demonstrating personal leadership
- Establish clear and effective communication and rapport with team members
- Provide opportunities for professional and personal growth through setting stretching yet realistic objectives and planning relevant development activities
- Ensure that team members work is well planned, well directed and adequately resourced
- Encourage a two-way dialogue about progress and results

Key outcomes

- Team members are performing and developing
- Recognised by others as bringing out the best in people and the team

General

- Undertake any other tasks required to support the Commission's functions, objectives and plans, as and when assigned
- *For Senior and Principal Advisors* – Manage external providers (eg, consultants) relating to research and analysis

Capability: what you will bring to the role

All of these attributes, abilities and experiences will differ and graduate between the different levels of the Researcher role – as judged by the Commission.

Key attributes

- Service-focused with an ability to implement through influence
- A grounded, real-world, plain-language approach

- Ability to think strategically, but also implement in practice
- Innovative and able to generate new ideas
- Responsive and makes things happen with a can-do attitude
- Leads the Commission's values by example

Key abilities

- Qualitative and/or quantitative analytical skills
- Well-developed research ability
- Critical and lateral thinking skills
- Conceptual thinking and problem-solving skills
- Written and oral communication skills
- Numerate, able to identify and distil key information and trends
- Relationship management
- Interpersonal savvy
- Judgment about what is important and what issues to escalate

Experience

- Experienced in developing and providing analysis and advice in economics or other related disciplines
- Strong written and verbal skills with the ability to communicate complex issues and concepts with influence
- Extensive knowledge and experience of a range of research and/or evaluation approaches and methodologies
- *Principal Advisors* – Experience leading significant research projects and guiding and supporting team members

Education & qualifications

Essential

- Tertiary qualification in economics or a related discipline (or equivalent knowledge, skills and experience gained in the workforce) and a commitment to ongoing professional development

Desired

- A relevant research-based post-graduate qualification, preferably to Masters or Doctoral level (or equivalent knowledge, skills and experience gained in the workforce)

Progression

Progression through the levels of Researcher is possible at the Commission's discretion at any time, without the need for a vacancy or a recruitment process. A formal process for progression will be followed, most likely as part of the year-end performance assessment process, including an interview with other Directors. Providing for progression reflects the Commission's desire to develop and invest in its staff to enhance their careers and maximise contribution to the Commission.