WAITĪ WATERS

Position Description

Position details

Position title	Communications and Engagement Lead
Reports to	General Manager, Customer, People and Safety
Direct reports	1- 2
Location	Masterton head office
Delegations	TBC



About Waitī Waters

Waitī Waters is a water services council-controlled organisation established under the Local Government (Water Services) Act 2025. We are owned by South Wairarapa, Carterton, Masterton, and Tararua District Councils, in partnership with Rangitāne and Ngāti Kahungunu.

Our Board of Directors governs Waitī Waters and the Stakeholders' Forum of Council and iwi representatives provides oversight on behalf of our owners and partners.

From 1 July 2027, we'll deliver drinking water, wastewater and stormwater services to around 25,000 connections and 70,000 people. We'll manage close to $700 million in water assets, and plan to invest around $400 million over the next decade. Our service promise is simple: delivering safe and sustainable water services our communities can count on.

Our name comes from the Matariki star linked to freshwater, and the role it plays sustaining life and wellbeing.

About your group

Waitī Waters is made up of five groups:

- Service Delivery
- Infrastructure
- Finance and Commercial
- Customer, People and Safety
- Strategy, Regulatory and Governance.

Your role sits in the Customer, People and Safety group. This group ensures customers, communities and staff are at the centre of how Waitī Waters operates. The group leads customer services, communications and engagement, people and culture, and health and safety. Together, these teams help build trust and confidence in Waitī Waters, support a safe, healthy, capable and engaged workforce, and ensure services are delivered in a way that is responsive, sustainable and focussed on the needs of customers and communities.

About your team

The Communications and Engagement team helps communities understand, influence and have confidence in Waitī Waters and the services it provides. It provides strategic advice, and leads communication, engagement, consultation, infrastructure project communications, water restriction and saving campaigns and relationship-building activities across the organisation.

The team connects customers, communities, stakeholders and decision-makers, helping ensure people are informed about services, investment decisions, organisational priorities and performance. It supports trust and confidence through clear communication, meaningful engagement and accessible information.

The team works closely with all parts of Waitī Waters to ensure projects, service changes, incidents and organisational initiatives are communicated and that community and stakeholder perspectives are understood and considered.

About your role

The Communications and Engagement Lead is responsible for leading Waitī Waters' internal and external communications, engagement and consultation activities. The role helps communities, stakeholders and partners understand the organisation's services, priorities, performance and investment decisions and supports meaningful opportunities for participation and feedback.

The role leads the organisation's approach to communications, engagement, consultation, media and reputation management. It provides strategic advice to leaders across Waitī Waters and helps ensure communications and engagement activities support customer trust, stakeholder confidence and a strong regional identity.

What you'll do

Responsibility area	Key Deliverables
ROLE-SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES	
Communications strategy and delivery	• Communication strategies, plans and activities support organisational objectives and customer outcomes. • Communications are timely, accurate, consistent and accessible. • Organisational priorities, projects and service information are communicated effectively to relevant audiences. • All channels, including social media, newsletters, website and media, have strategies place that are maintained, reported on and agile as the situation requires.
Community engagement and consultation	• Community engagement and consultation activities are well planned and effectively delivered, appropriate to the audience, issue and level of significance. • Stakeholder and community input is gathered and considered in decision-making processes. • Public participation activities support trust, transparency and understanding.

Responsibility area	Key Deliverables
	• Public information and education campaigns, including water conservation, demand management and behaviour change, are planned and delivered.
Stakeholder relationships and engagement	• A stakeholder mapping framework and register of relationship owners are maintained and kept current. • Stakeholder engagement activities support constructive relationships with councils, communities, interest groups, sector organisations and other stakeholders. • • Stakeholder insights and feedback are effectively captured, communicated and used to inform organisational decisions. • Stakeholder relationships support trust, understanding and confidence in Waitī Waters.
Brand, reputation and channels	• The Waitī Waters brand is maintained and consistently represented across all communication channels. • Waitī Waters' brand and reputation are protected through proactive communications, media management and effective response to emerging issues. • Digital, print, media and stakeholder communication channels are effectively managed. • Reputation risks and communication issues are identified and addressed proactively. • Waitī Waters maintains a visible, accessible and trusted presence across the region. • Waitī Waters leaders are appropriately supported and trained to engage with media.
Organisational communications and support	• Internal communications support organisational alignment, change readiness and employee engagement. • Communications and engagement support is provided for projects, service changes, incidents and organisational initiatives. • Leaders receive practical communications and engagement advice to support internal change activities and external stakeholder engagement. • Communication risks and opportunities are identified and managed proactively.

Responsibility area	Key Deliverables
	• Communication and engagement activities support organisational priorities and customer outcomes.
COMMON RESPONSIBILITIES	
People leadership	• Clear performance expectations are set and regularly reviewed for all direct reports. • Staff are actively developed through coaching, feedback and development opportunities. • Poor performance is addressed promptly and fairly. • A positive, inclusive team culture, consistent with the Waitī Waters 'How We Work' principles is fostered and workloads are actively managed. • Own professional development is actively managed, including maintaining relevant technical and leadership capability. • Contribute to organisational priorities and as a visibly active member of the leadership cohort.
Health and safety	• Own safety and the safety of others is actively managed at all times. • Full compliance with Waitī Waters health, safety and wellbeing policies and safe systems of work. • Incidents, near misses, hazards and risks are reported promptly through the designated system. • Health and safety risks within the team are identified, assessed and managed. • Team members are supported to complete required H&S training, inductions and emergency drills.
Emergency management	• Emergency management training and exercises are completed as required. • Roster, on-call or call-out duties applicable to the role are undertaken. • Role-specific responsibilities under Waitī Waters' emergency response plans are understood and carried out when activated. • Team readiness for emergency response is maintained, including training, rostering and coverage planning.

Responsibility area	Key Deliverables
	• Team resources are coordinated during emergency activations.

Who you'll work with

Internal	External
General Manager, Customer, People and Safety	Customers and communities
Chief Executive and Executive Leadership Team	Councils and shareholder representatives
Communications and Engagement team members	Community groups and stakeholders
Other Customer, People and Safety leaders and teams	Iwi and hapū
All Waitī Waters groups	Media organisations
	Sector bodies and partner organisations
	Communications and engagement service providers
	Other water organisations

What you'll bring

Essential

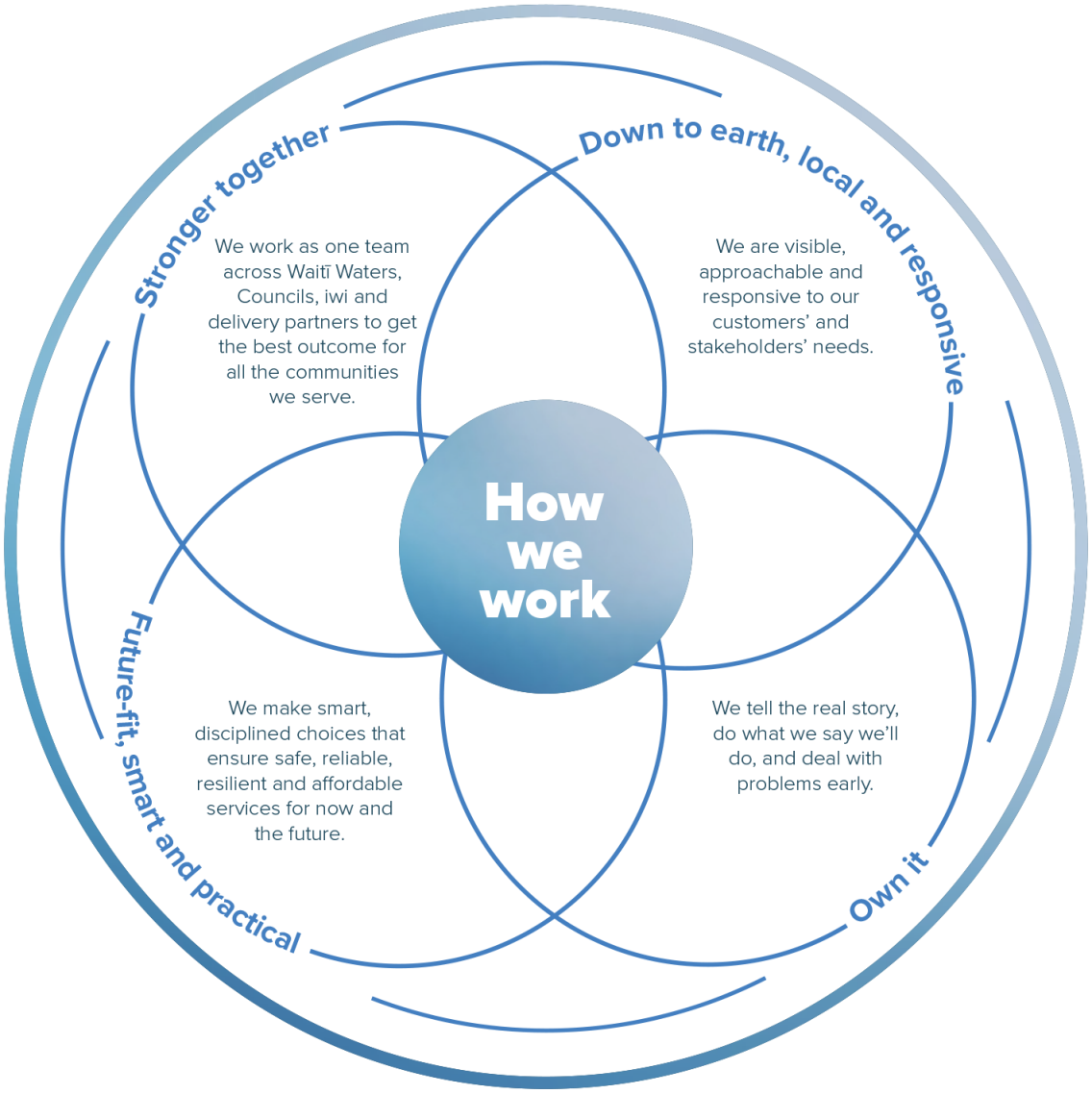
- Relevant tertiary qualification in communications, public relations, marketing, journalism, engagement, public policy or a related discipline.
- Significant experience in communications, engagement, stakeholder relations or public participation roles, particularly for operational organisations.
- Experience leading communications, engagement or stakeholder-focused teams.
- Experience developing and delivering communication and engagement strategies and plans.

- Experience managing stakeholder relationships, consultation processes and community engagement activities.
- Experience providing communications advice to senior leaders and decision-makers.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills, including media, digital and public-facing communications.
- Experience working in local government, infrastructure, utilities, the public sector or another customer-facing service environment.
- Strong relationship management and influencing skills.
- A commitment to working in partnership with iwi and hapū.

Desirable

- Experience supporting consultation on infrastructure projects, service changes or statutory processes.
- Experience in media management, issues management or reputation management.
- Experience establishing or supporting communications functions in new or changing organisations.
- Experience working in a water services environment.
- Understanding of customer experience, behavioural change or community education approaches.

How we work



Changing this position

Waitī Waters is a new organisation, and roles are expected to evolve as the organisation matures. Waitī Waters may, from time to time, make reasonable changes to this position description in consultation with the position holder.