Strategic Partnerships Manager

Contract Type: Full time, permanent
Location: Auckland

About Te Ara Ahunga Ora Retirement Commission

Te Ara Ahunga Ora is the office of the Retirement Commissioner. Te Ara Ahunga Ora aims to help New Zealanders to retire with confidence. Retiring with confidence means New Zealanders feel secure that they'll have resources to live and the know-how to make ends meet.

We focus on three areas; Retirement Policies, Retirement Villages and Financial Capability. As part of our role we advise Government on the policies that will enhance retirement outcomes for New Zealanders. We also help support individuals to better prepare for retirement, and we contribute to better understanding of what retirement means in the 21st century. Times are changing.

TĀ MĀTOU PŪTAKE
OUR PURPOSE
Improving financial futures

TĀ MĀTOU WHAKAKITENGA
OUR VISION
A better retirement for all

TĀ MĀTOU KAUPAPA MĀTĀMUA
OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES
Provide ***trusted information***, ***informed advocacy,*** and ***effective collaboration*** on retirement income, retirement villages, and financial wellbeing.

OUR VALUES
Kia manawanui Let us be big hearted
E tipu, e rea We embrace the best of both worlds to flourish
Me hoe tahi We paddle as one
He taonga te pono We treasure truth

Position purpose

The Strategic Partnerships Manager leads Te Ara Ahunga Ora's approach to building and activating partnerships that increase the organisation's reach, influence and impact. The role thinks and acts strategically across the wider financial wellbeing and retirement ecosystem, developing the partnership strategy, operating model, tools and organisational capability required for deliberate, coordinated and high-value engagement with external stakeholders.

The role does not own every external relationship. It provides organisational and system leadership by influencing, enabling and coordinating others, ensuring priority partnerships are aligned to strategic outcomes and translate into tangible benefits for New Zealanders. Through partnerships, the role supports people to build financial capability and resilience, make informed financial

decisions and prepare effectively for retirement. As a people leader, the role sets clear expectations, supports high performance and develops the capability of the Partnership Specialist.

Key aspects of the role include

- Lead the development and implementation of an organisation-wide partnership strategy, identifying where collaboration can create the greatest long-term impact.
- Design the operating model, frameworks, playbooks and tools that support consistent partnership practice and continuous organisational improvement.
- Influence and coordinate relationship owners and contributors across organisational boundaries to deliver shared outcomes through priority partnerships.
- Build individual and collective partnership capability through clear expectations, training, coaching, feedback and practical support.
- Establish meaningful measures of partnership health, strategic contribution and impact, and use evidence to adapt priorities and improve performance.
- Work with Digital Platforms lead and Enterprise Technology Lead to ensure partnership tools are fit for purpose and enable timely measurement of the Partnership Strategy.
- Understand the Commissions market positioning and strategic growth opportunities to ensure improved audience reach.
- Ensure that all partnership activity is centralised, coordinated, aligned and visible across the organisation.
- At any given time, ensure partners our network consider the Commission as a trusted advisor and value our contribution to the wider ecosystem.
- Work with Strategic Communications Manager to build National Strategy for Financial Capability Implementation Plan.

Working relationships

Reports to:	Director, Policy, Partnerships and Impact
Member of:	Policy, Partnerships and Impact team
Direct reports:	Partnership Specialist
External relationships:	Government agencies; financial services sector; community and social sector organisations; employers and workplace networks; Māori and other community partners; education and capability providers.
Internal relationships:	Commissioner and Leadership Team; Policy team; Product Management, Design and Marketing; Strategic Communications team; Research and Impact Lead, Organisational Performance Lead; other relationship owners across the Commission.

Areas of accountability and what great looks like

Accountability	What you deliver	What great looks like
A deliberate partnership strategy	• Develop and maintain an organisation-wide partnership strategy aligned to Te Ara Ahunga Ora's strategic outcomes and longer-term direction.	• Priority partnerships are clearly linked to outcomes Te Ara Ahunga Ora cannot achieve alone.

Accountability	What you deliver	What great looks like
	• Think strategically across the financial wellbeing, resilience and retirement ecosystem, considering issues through multiple perspectives and identifying wider connections and implications. • Map the ecosystem influencing financial wellbeing, resilience and retirement readiness. • Identify and prioritise partnership opportunities, gaps and duplication. • Maintain a clear portfolio and transparent criteria for strategic investment. • Engage leaders, staff and relevant external stakeholders in shaping and implementing the partnership strategy.	• People understand which partnerships matter, why they matter and where effort should be focused. • Investment in partnerships is proactive, disciplined and informed by the wider ecosystem. • The role progresses organisational thinking by constructively challenging established approaches and bringing forward alternative perspectives. • The partnership strategy provides a clear and compelling direction that others understand and support. • Emerging system trends, risks and opportunities are anticipated and reflected in partnership priorities.
A clear partnership operating model	• Design practical partnership tiers, governance arrangements, decision rights and relationship ownership. • Clarify when Leadership Team involvement and cross-team coordination are required. • Develop and maintain a Partnership Engagement Playbook, templates and guidance for planning, governance, engagement, escalation and review. • Enable information about partnerships to be shared and commitments to be tracked. • Establish clear expectations for relationship owners and contributors, while enabling them to apply judgement within agreed parameters. • Review and improve partnership systems and practices using	• Relationship owners know their role, the support available and how decisions are made. • External partners experience one coordinated organisation rather than disconnected engagement. • Partnership practice is consistent while remaining proportionate to the relationship and intended outcome. • The operating model strengthens organisational performance by reducing duplication, improving coordination and supporting better decisions. • Relationship owners are empowered to act, with appropriate oversight of significant commitments, risks and emerging issues. • The organisation continues to learn and improve how it establishes and manages partnerships.

Accountability	What you deliver	What great looks like
	experience, evidence and feedback.	
Stronger partnership capability	• Develop a partnership capability framework and practical learning programme. • Deliver workshops, training and coaching for relationship owners. • Support teams and executives to prepare for significant partner engagements. • Facilitate shared learning and communities of practice. • Set clear expectations for the Partnership Specialist and provide regular coaching, feedback and development support. • Create opportunities for the Partnership Specialist and relationship owners to build capability through practical experience, reflection and shared learning. • Monitor individual and collective capability needs and address gaps proactively.	• Relationship owners build trust, understand partner motivations and create mutual value. • Staff have the confidence and tools to develop strategic collaborations. • Effective partnership management becomes an organisational capability rather than relying on individual style. • The Partnership Specialist is clear about expected outcomes, receives timely and constructive feedback, and is supported to perform and grow. • People are encouraged to test their thinking, solve problems and take increasing ownership of partnership work. • Capability development is inclusive, practical and targeted to organisational needs. • The role models the behaviours and standards expected of others.
Coordinated, high-value partnerships	• Maintain visibility of strategic relationships and coordinate activity across teams. • Support relationship owners with strategy, planning, facilitation and executive preparation. • Identify and develop new opportunities across high-leverage channels and key life moments. • Ensure partnership commitments are followed through. • Lead with purpose and develop clear, planned influencing approaches for priority partnerships. • Build trust by listening carefully, understanding partner	• Engagement with priority partners is deliberate, aligned and well prepared. • Duplication and inconsistent approaches are actively reduced. • Partnerships extend the reach, influence and impact of Te Ara Ahunga Ora for New Zealanders. • The role gains active support for shared initiatives through clear, credible and audience-specific communication. • Strong relationships across public, private, iwi/Māori, community and not-for-profit organisations are leveraged to deliver organisational and system outcomes.



Accountability	What you deliver	What great looks like
	motivations, reading stakeholder dynamics and communicating tactfully. • Bring internal and external stakeholders together around shared outcomes, including where interests, perspectives or operating environments differ. • Navigate the public sector and political context with sound judgement, ensuring partnership activity reflects relevant government priorities and sensitivities.	• Stakeholders experience the role as trustworthy, purposeful, open and focused on mutual value. • Difficult issues and competing expectations are addressed directly, tactfully and with integrity. • Partnership decisions maintain an organisation-wide and system perspective.
Evidence of partnership impact	• Develop measures and reporting for partnership health, activity, strategic contribution and impact. • Use evidence and partner feedback to improve the partnership portfolio and approach. • Focus reporting on what changed through working together, not simply meetings held or agreements signed. • Analyse information critically, test assumptions and seek diverse perspectives when assessing partnership value. • Maintain a clear view of short and longer-term priorities, directing time and effort towards the partnerships with the greatest potential contribution. • Act decisively when evidence indicates that partnership investment should continue, change, increase or stop.	• Leaders have a clear view of partnership health, value, risks and opportunities. • Decisions to continue, grow, change or stop investment are evidence-based. • Partnerships demonstrate tangible contribution to organisational and system outcomes. • Measures focus attention on ambitious outcomes and support timely, fit-for-purpose decisions. • The role remains open to challenge and adjusts its approach when evidence, feedback or context changes. • Difficult messages about partnership performance or value are communicated clearly and constructively. • The role maintains composure, perspective and delivery focus when progress is difficult or stakeholder expectations conflict.
One-organisation leadership	• Contribute actively to the Policy, Partnerships and Impact team and the wider organisational leadership cohort.	• Teams understand how their work contributes to shared partnership and organisational outcomes.

Accountability	What you deliver	What great looks like
	• Build strong relationships across Te Ara Ahunga Ora and create opportunities for cross-team collaboration. • Lead by example on encouraging an organisation-wide view of priorities, relationships and outcomes. • Share information early and ensure relevant expertise informs partnership decisions. • Provide constructive challenge and support collective decisions once made. • Model curiosity, integrity, resilience, self-awareness and adaptability in working with others.	• Decisions reflect organisational priorities rather than the interests of an individual function. • Colleagues experience the role as open, enabling and dependable. • Different perspectives are actively sought, listened to and integrated into decision-making. • The role invites feedback, reflects on its impact and adapts its approach to different people and situations. • Complex or sensitive issues are handled calmly, honestly and constructively.

Our values in action

Value Statement	Examples of the value in action
Kia manawanui *Let us be big hearted*	• Advocates for those in need • Champions change to drive equitable outcomes • Acts with aroha and puts others before themselves • Treats people as they would like to be treated – with respect and empathy • Acknowledges and celebrates the achievements of others • Creates a safe and welcoming space where everyone feels comfortable to contribute
Me hoe tahi *We paddle as one*	• Is inclusive and actively seeks input and feedback from their colleagues and other teams • Connects with and inspires people to build great relationships internally and externally • Considers perspectives other than their own • Respects the opinions of others even when they don't agree • Helps glue the organisation into one team
E tipu, e rea *We embrace the best of both worlds to flourish*	• Focusses on the opportunities a dual worldview presents, not the obstacles • Introduces new ways of doing and thinking that include viable mātauranga Māori based alternatives • Considers diverse cultural viewpoints in their work and workplace • Consistently looks outward, not just in • Actively increases their own knowledge and cultural capability • Prizes the innovation that emerges from respect for difference

He taonga te pono *We treasure truth*	• Prioritises the kaupapa, the higher purpose • Is transparent, truthful and honest • Takes ownership and responsibility • Does what's right, even when no one's watching • Follows through on commitments • Acts without ego • Takes a balanced, impartial approach

Essential skills and experience

- Significant experience developing and managing strategic partnerships in complex stakeholder environments.
- Degree in Business, Strategic Management, Strategic Communications, or relevant experience in leading business development, sales teams, sales strategy, customer strategy or B2B relationship management.
- Experience designing partnership or engagement strategies and translating strategy into practical operating models.
- Experience working across public, private and community sector contexts.
- Strong systems thinking, with the ability to identify where partnerships can create leverage and system-level impact.
- Demonstrated ability to influence and coordinate senior stakeholders without relying on formal authority.
- Strong facilitation, communication, coaching and organisational capability-building skills.
- Sound judgement and the ability to understand different partner motivations, interests and operating environments.
- Strong outcome orientation, with the ability to establish meaningful measures of partnership value and impact.
- Demonstrated ability to lead strategically, engage others in a clear direction and translate strategy into coordinated action.
- Experience setting clear expectations, providing constructive feedback and developing the capability of others.
- Strong political awareness and sound judgement within a public sector environment.
- Evidence of adapting leadership and influencing approaches across different people, organisations and contexts.

Position specific:

- Partnership architecture and portfolio design
- Strategic systems thinking and ecosystem mapping
- Relationship intelligence and stakeholder judgement
- Influence without authority
- Facilitation, learning design and capability building
- Measurement, evaluation and evidence-based improvement

Acknowledgement

This position description serves to illustrate the scope and responsibilities of the position and is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all tasks and duties. You will be required to perform other job-related tasks as requested and as necessitated by the development of this role and the organisation. This position description may also be modified and updated from time to time to reflect these changes.

I certify that I have read, understood and accept the duties, responsibilities and obligations of my position.

_____	_____
Employee	Date
_____	_____
Manager	Date