Senior Environmental Planner



Role description

Job title	Senior Environmental Planner
Directorate	Integrated Catchment Management
Reports to	*Team Leader - Environmental Compliance and Planning*
Responsible for [# of staff]	Nil
Job purpose	To provide environmental policy and strategic planning support services across the Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) Directorate and champion ICM interests with other Directorates and key stakeholders / partners.
Direct reports	Nil
Date	July 2026

Organisation Context

Directorate

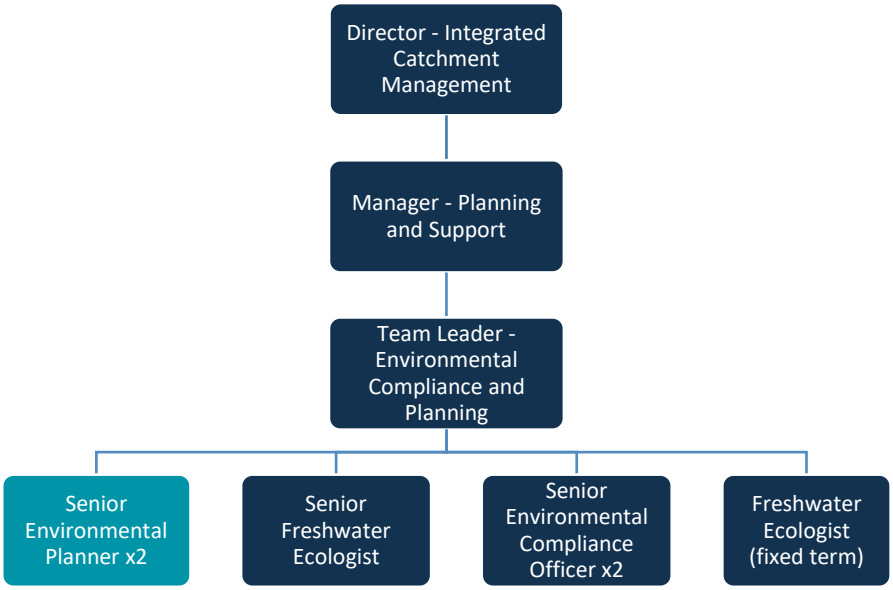
Integrated Catchment Management

We support Waikato Regional Council's mission by implementing policies and plans to achieve integrated catchment management, by statutory and non-statutory methods. The policies and plans can include biosecurity and natural heritage management, fostering sustainable use of land and catchments, and managing infrastructure assets of $586 million (comprising flood protection, river management, drainage, and catchment systems).

Te Tiriti

Our purpose is *Working together for a Waikato region that has a healthy environment, strong economy and vibrant communities.* We do this in partnership with tangata whenua in our region, and all roles at Waikato Regional Council have a contribution to make to how we uphold our Te Tiriti o Waitangi responsibilities.

Org Chart



Key Result Areas

Job holder is responsible for	Job holder is successful when
Own area of work	

• Providing advice and information to the ICM Directorate on strategic and operational matters related to legislation, including Resource Management Act, Local Government Act, and Soil Conservation and River Control Act.
• Undertaking strategic and operational policy analysis, provide policy advice, and manage policy process for the Directorate.
• Leading the development of strategic environmental plans and support the development of other strategic plans.
• Providing senior level advice, support and leadership to the Directorate in the following key planning and policy development areas:
  ○ Regional Plan and Coastal Plan.
  ○ Designations and other statutory land management instruments.
  ○ District level reviews and submissions e.g. District Plans, bylaws, Growth Strategies.
  ○ Zone plans.
  ○ Catchment plans.
	• ICM's strategic, operational and business needs are represented in regional and district plans, strategies and other statutory documents.
	• Management plans e.g. zone plans, catchment plans and harbour and catchment management plans, and supporting work programmes are implemented in a manner that achieves the goal of integrated outcomes.
	• ICM policy and planning is an example of best practice.
	• Collaborative relationships are in place with key stakeholders, particularly the SAS Directorate, zone managers, catchment management staff and council committee members.
	• Statutory planning requirements (including submissions) and timeframes are met.
	• The Senior Planner role is understood and is fully utilised.

○ Other planning instruments relevant to Directorate work programmes. • Leading or supporting strategic special projects as required. • Supporting ICM interests in the development of primary direction setting documents with key internal and external partners. • Assist the Science and Strategy Directorate with developing policies and plans, with a focus on ensuring Directorate interests are understood and considered. • Leading and project managing the provision of resource consent applications on behalf of ICM. • Manage the development of plans or processes as required for resource consent compliance. • Providing mentoring and support to Directorate staff in relation to planning/policy processes. • Establish/maintain effective working relationships with other sections and teams. • Support Directorate Managers and Team Leaders as required. • Providing quality advice to WRC customers and clients. • Attending and participate in team meetings. • Showing initiative, positively influencing others, achieving high visibility/recognition and building effective networks/relationships.	• Projects led by the Senior Environmental Planner are delivered in accordance with the approved project management plans and the project governance group(s) are informed of project risks, issues and progress in a timely manner. • ICM has defined processes and resource material available to achieve a high level of compliance across our resource consents.
Corporate citizenship	
• Ensure compliance with all legal and statutory requirements and WRC policies. • Actively demonstrating excellent customer service in support of Council's customer engagement strategy and customer promise. • Undertake civil defence training and assist the CDEM department fulfil their objectives. • Ensure appropriate risk management.	• No significant noncompliance events; audits indicate a high level of knowledge of Council policies. • Council's customer centric organisational culture is understood and supported. • Customer service (internal / external) is respectful, professional, helpful, accessible, transparent and consistent. • Timely and accurate communication is provided to all customers. • Civil defence training is completed and assistance provided as necessary. • Risks are identified and mitigation plans are in place.
Health and safety	
• Actively contribute to a safe and healthy workplace by providing examples that demonstrate procedures are followed, required safety measures are used, training is completed, and hazards or incidents are reported promptly.	

Te Tiriti o Waitangi and partnerships with tangata whenua	
• Contribute to the council's Te Tiriti o Waitangi legislative responsibilities, including upholding Treaty settlements in the Waikato region. • Appropriate to the role, identify opportunities for partnership with tangata whenua, and act to enable this partnership. • Understand and apply te ao Māori values and concepts, and tangata whenua priorities and aspirations to work. • Undertake regular learning and development for the role set out in the cultural competency framework.	• Work has a targeted consideration of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and settlement commitments in the Waikato as part of planning and delivery. • Tangata whenua aspirations and priorities are applied to work. • Advice and operational delivery is informed by te ao Māori and includes a clear focus on Māori outcomes. • Role specific relevant cultural competencies are identified and learning development opportunities are proactively sort to attain these.
• The job holder may also be required to perform any other reasonable tasks as required to support the team and achieve organisational goals.	

Accountabilities and Delegations

Financial and statutory delegations will be exercised appropriately and within the defined parameters in the **Delegations Manual.**

Operational delegation	*$5,000*
Capital delegation:	Nil
Statutory delegations:	Nil
Management delegations:	Nil

Work Complexity

Most challenging duties typically undertaken or most complex problems solved:

- Supporting the Directorate to maintain strategic oversight and influence of environmental planning and other legislative related to work programmes.
- Team Leader has adequate information to answer questions from stakeholders on progress with ICM's plan development and implementation.
- Projects are completed to a high standard and within statutory timeframes.
- Best practice knowledge and expertise maintained.
- Professional customer service is delivered both internally and externally.

Person Specification

Qualifications (or equivalent level of learning)

Essential	Desirable
• Tertiary qualification in planning, science, resource management and planning experience. • Full NZ Drivers Licence and the ability to drive a manual	• NZPI member (or eligible)

Knowledge / Experience

Essential	Desirable
• 5+ year's relevant planning experience. • Highly developed interpersonal skills with a demonstrated ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of audiences using a variety of media. • Minimum 5 years' experience in planning. • Previous experience in or working with local government. • A significant working knowledge of the full range of legislation relevant to Integrated Catchment Management e.g. Soil Conservation Rivers Control Act, Local Government Act, Resource Management Act and Land Drainage Act and or freshwater management. • Strategic and tactical thinking skills. • Political awareness and skill in dealing with sensitive and confidential issues (including bi-cultural sensitivity), and ability to deliver in a sometimes-high pressure, rapidly changing political environment. • Proven success at building relationships and resolving issues with internal and external stakeholders. • Highly effective organisational skills including time management, prioritising and forward planning skills, as well as the ability to multi-task. • Highly motivated with ability to work autonomously as well as part of a team. • High degree of computer/ software literacy	• Knowledge and understanding of local authority business and processes. • Success at a senior role in a multidisciplinary organisation with demonstrable achievements. • Ability to handle difficult clients and build strong client relationships. • Demonstratable project management experience. • Knowledge of Te Ao Maori. • Well-developed participation and partnership skills

Work Function/Activity

Work Function
Mainly Sedentary Frequent sitting at desk or in meetings.
Repetitive Use Ongoing or frequent episodes of repetitive tasks, such as hand and finger movements when typing, using a computer mouse, or writing.
Driving Occasional need to drive a vehicle for work purposes.
Outdoor work (occasional/light) Occasionally works outdoors; mainly involves walking across rough terrain. Light physical exertion.
Mental activities Include a high level of cognitive functioning with communication, interpersonal, administration, interviewing, assessment, information gathering, evaluation, negotiation, planning, report writing, organisational problem solving and decision-making capabilities.

Competencies

Core Competencies
Collaborates - Te mahi tahi Building partnerships and working collaboratively with others to meet shared objectives. Te mahi tahi kia tutuki ai ngā whāinga
Customer focus - Te tirohanga kiritaki Building strong customer relationships and delivering customer-centric solutions. Te whakakaha i ngā hononga ki ngā kiritaki me te whakaea i ngā hiahia kiritaki.
Drives Results - Te ū tonu kia eke rā anō Consistently achieving results, even under tough circumstances. *Te ū tonu, ahakoa te taumahatanga o ngā mahi.*

Communicates effectively Developing and delivering multi-mode communications that convey a clear understanding of the unique needs of different audiences.
Decision quality Making good and timely decisions that keep the organisation moving forward.
Plans and aligns Planning and prioritising work to meet commitments aligned with organisational goals.

Key Relationships

External

- Iwi
- Central Government agencies
- Local Government agencies (within and out of the region)
- External consultants/ contractors
- Peers in other local authorities and organisations
- Sector/ industry groups

Internal

- Chief Executive
- Executive Leadership Team
- Councillors
- Managers and staff – across ICM, Science and Strategy, and Resource Use

Change to role description

From time to time it may be necessary to consider changes in the role description in response to the changing nature of our work environment– including technological requirements or statutory changes. This role description may be reviewed as part of the preparation for performance planning for the annual performance cycle or as required. No significant changes to this role description will be made without consultation.