



# POSITION DESCRIPTION



## Head of Communications & Engagement

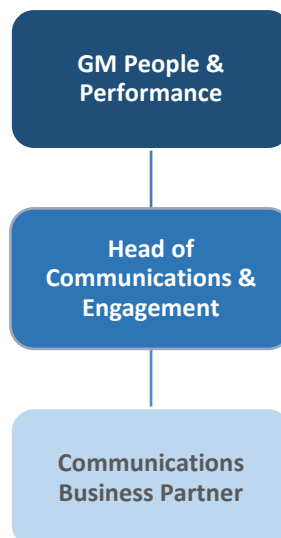
<b>Reports to:</b>	GM People & Performance		
<b>Group:</b>	People & Performance	<b>Financial Authority:</b>	As per DFA
<b>Direct / Indirect Reports:</b>	1	<b>Revision (m/y):</b>	6/2026

### Purpose

The purpose of this role is to lead WEL’s strategic communications and engagement capability, ensuring clear, consistent and credible communication with employees, customer groups, communities, media, regulators, industry partners and other key stakeholders. The role protects and strengthens WEL’s reputation as a trusted electricity distribution business by providing proactive communications leadership, effective issues and media management, strong internal communications, and trusted advice to the Chief Executive, Executive Leadership Team, Board and senior leaders.

It also leads communication and engagement strategies that support WEL’s business strategy, network priorities, safety culture, customer outcomes, community relationships, regulatory obligations and future energy ambitions.

### Reporting Structure





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### Key Accountabilities (Outcomes)

- Lead the development and oversee the delivery of WEL's strategic corporate communications and engagement approach, ensuring communications support WEL's business strategy and aspirations.
- Develop and promote WEL's brand in line with our statement of strategic intent "Leading Waikato's Energy Future", building the corporate profile as a future-facing energy business.
- Create and tell the WEL story with a focus on innovation, collaboration, community and the role we are playing to support the future energy landscape. Support the business to do this through opportunities such as campaigns, awards or speaking opportunities.
- Protect and strengthen WEL's reputation as a trusted electricity distribution business through proactive issues management, clear messaging, effective media management and high-quality stakeholder engagement.
- Identify, escalate and help mitigate reputational and communications risks, including customer, community, media, safety, outage, emergency, regulatory and commercially sensitive matters.
- Provide trusted, timely and practical communications advice and support to the Chief Executive, Executive Leadership Team, Board and senior leaders on business priorities, customer impacts, operational matters, regulatory issues, community matters and change initiatives.
- Work collaboratively with the areas of the business directly accountable for customer engagement to provide expert communications advice.
- Advise on and support the business to maintain or develop trusted relationships across WEL and with external stakeholders, including customer groups, community groups, local authorities, iwi, regulators and industry bodies.
- Build and maintain effective relationships with media, advertisers, publishers, agencies and other communications partners to support WEL's reputation, public profile and engagement objectives.
- Oversee delivery of the internal communications plan to ensure employees are well informed, engaged and supported through organisational priorities, operational change, safety initiatives, business transformation and sector change.
- Build, lead and develop a capable Communications function, providing clear direction, coaching, accountability and support for continuous improvement and service excellence.
- Monitor, evaluate and report on the effectiveness of communications, engagement, media, internal communications, public relations and channel activity, using insights to improve performance and support business outcomes.

### Leadership Expectations

This role has leadership responsibilities and is expected to create clarity, support capability growth and maintain a high-performing, safety-focused environment.

- Provides clear direction, operational oversight and consistent expectations for the team.
- Builds team capability through coaching, training coordination, knowledge sharing and support for ongoing development.



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- Leads effectively through operational pressure, change and ambiguity while maintaining a calm, safe and service-focused environment.
- Supports accountability, teamwork and continuous improvement across the team and wider group.

### Ways of Working (Enterprise Expectations)

These expectations apply to all roles and should be demonstrated through day-to-day behaviour, decision-making and interactions across the business and with external stakeholders.

- Acts consistently with WEL's values and contributes positively to organisational performance and development.
- Champions health, safety and wellbeing, and models safe behaviours in all aspects of the role.
- Maintains a strong customer and service focus, supporting reliable delivery and positive stakeholder outcomes.
- Builds effective relationships across the business, with contractors, utilities, authorities and other stakeholders to support coordinated operational delivery.

### Capabilities That Matter Most

The role requires a credible and strategic communications leader who can operate confidently in a safety-critical, customer-focused and publicly visible electricity distribution environment. Success depends on sound judgement, strong relationship management, clear communication, and the ability to protect WEL's reputation while supporting reliable network operations, customer confidence, organisational change and community trust.

- Strategic communications leadership, with the ability to shape clear narratives, frameworks and plans that support WEL's strategy, network priorities, customer outcomes and community reputation.
- Strong judgement in reputation, risk, issues and crisis management, including the ability to anticipate sensitivities and provide calm, practical advice in operational, safety, outage, media or stakeholder situations.
- Credible and influential executive-level advisory capability, with the confidence to support, challenge and align leaders around clear, consistent and defensible messaging.
- Highly developed relationship management and stakeholder engagement skills, including with governance, senior leaders, customers, communities, local authorities, iwi, regulators, industry bodies, media, service partners and suppliers.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to translate complex, technical, sensitive or ambiguous information into clear, accessible and audience-appropriate messages.
- Strong people leadership and function leadership capability, including coaching, setting direction, building capability and supporting a collaborative, safe and service-focused culture.
- Ability to work effectively through change, ambiguity, operational pressure and public scrutiny while maintaining professionalism, consistency, safety focus and trust.



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### Essential Qualifications & Experience

- Tertiary qualification in communications, public relations, journalism, marketing, business or another relevant field, or comparable experience in strategic communications.
- Significant experience in a senior communications, engagement, public affairs, media, corporate affairs or reputation management role.
- Experience developing and delivering communication strategies, engagement plans, internal communications, media responses and executive messaging that support business priorities and stakeholder confidence.
- Experience providing strategic communications advice and support to chief executives, executive leadership teams, Boards, governance groups or senior operational leaders.
- Experience in issues management, crisis communications and/or emergency communications.
- ideally involving operational, customer, community, safety or media-sensitive matters.
- Highly developed relationship management skills, including the ability to work effectively with senior leaders, employees, customers, communities, media, local authorities, iwi, regulators, contractors and partner organisations.
- Sound knowledge of best-practice communication processes and channels, including media, digital, social media, internal communications, stakeholder engagement and reputation management.
- Ability to think strategically, influence senior stakeholders, and deal effectively with complex, technical, sensitive or ambiguous issues.
- Established professional networks across communications, media, electricity, utilities, infrastructure, local government, community, regulatory or relevant industry partners.

### Desirable Qualifications & Experience

- Experience working in, or alongside, electricity distribution, utilities, infrastructure, energy, local government or another safety-critical public-facing service environment.
- Experience operating in a regulated, commercially sensitive or highly scrutinised environment.
- Experience supporting organisational change, business transformation, customer initiatives, community engagement, public perception management or high-profile stakeholder activity.
- Experience developing and implementing communication frameworks, internal communications plans, engagement strategies, media protocols or crisis communication plans.
- Experience with the Coordinated Incident Management System (CIMS) model.

### Role Evolution

This role may evolve as strategy, structure and priorities change.

# Our Purpose

Enabling our *communities to thrive*

# Our Vision

To create and support an *innovative and sustainable energy future*

# Best in Service

So we have the *trust of our community*



# Best in Safety

Every Day - *Home Safe*



# Our Values



**Agile**

We listen to ideas, we explore opportunities and we adapt to changing situations with an open mind. When change is needed we make sure we understand why and we make it work. We're flexible and we respond professionally to change.



**Build the business**

We make sure our day to day activity is sound while exploring ways to improve the way we work or things we do. We often ask "is there a better way to do this?" and we investigate options.



**Care for each other, the customer and our assets**

We work as a team across the business to do things the right way. We treat others with respect, listening to their needs so we can deliver a reliable and safe service to our communities.



**Do the right thing**

We make decisions with integrity and when we can, we help others make the right decision for their situation. We're open, honest and trustworthy. We speak up if we feel we should and we listen to others.



**Every Day - Home Safe**

We lead by example to keep ourselves, our workmates and our communities safe. We use the right equipment, we challenge unsafe acts and we say no if we think it's not safe.