

Senior Legal Counsel - Rugby

The Senior Legal Counsel – Rugby provides internal legal advice and related services to New Zealand Rugby (NZR) and assists the organisation to meet their commercial and operational objectives.

This role is a key legal point of contact for NZR’s Rugby Delivery team, and with NZR’s rugby stakeholders, including Provincial Unions and Super Rugby Clubs, who are at the heart of rugby in New Zealand, delivering community rugby, and high-performance outcomes throughout the country.

					
Location	Team	Leader	Employment Type	Direct Reports	Span of Control
Wellington or Auckland	Legal	Chief Legal Officer	Permanent / Full Time	Nil	Nil
Key Stakeholder Groups Internal: NZR Staff External: NZR legal advisors, Provincial Unions, NZMRB, Professional Rugby Players, Super Rugby Clubs					

What You Do

Corporate Legal Advice & Support

- Provide proactive and pragmatic legal support and advice to NZR and particularly its Rugby Delivery team, in relation to the delivery of rugby, and domestic competition. This includes:
 - Provincial Union funding, support and monitoring arrangements.
 - Compliance by the Provincial Unions and Super Rugby Clubs with the player contracting model required under applicable Collective Employment Agreements.
 - Development, implementation and review of Domestic Competitions Regulations and rules, including assisting with investigations and breach proceedings for any alleged breaches of Domestic Competitions Regulations.
 - Supporting the delivery of Community Rugby and TIB initiatives including legal support and contracting with third parties as required.
- Act as the Legal team’s primary point of contact for NZR’s rugby stakeholders, including Provincial Unions, and Super Rugby Clubs, providing timely and practical advice across a broad range of legal, regulatory, and operational matters, including:
 - Membership related advice and support, including constitutional matters and support for Annual General Meetings and other member governance processes.
 - Managing workloads and expectations across multiple stakeholders while ensuring appropriate prioritisation and escalation.
 - A functional knowledge of the general legal framework in relation to criminal, property, commercial, employment relations or compliance issues.
 - Drawing on expertise across the Legal team or external advisors as appropriate.

- Establish and maintain strong and effective working relationships with Provincial Unions, the NZMRB, Super Rugby Clubs, and other key rugby stakeholders, including visiting stakeholders around the country, when appropriate.
- Provide training, guidance and practical support to rugby stakeholders help them understand and meet their legal, regulatory and compliance obligations.

Work Planning & Prioritisation

- Lead, plan, and manage work across your portfolio, ensuring effective prioritisation, allocation, delegation, and escalation of tasks to deliver high-quality outcomes on time.
- Oversee engagement of external legal advisors within your area, including scoping instructions, monitoring quality, and managing costs in consultation with the Chief Legal Officer.
- Exercise sound commercial judgment in assessing and managing legal risk, escalating significant matters to the Chief Legal Officer as appropriate.
- Adapt to shifting organisational priorities and maintain delivery standards in a complex, fast-paced environment.
- Identify opportunities for improvement in how activity is delivered and supported by NZR and across the rugby system.

Stakeholder & Team Relationships

- Build and sustain effective working relationships with the Executive, leadership teams, and business stakeholders across NZR, acting as a trusted legal partner
- Create a positive and supportive environment so that those around you can do their best work.
- Share legal knowledge and insights with colleagues to build capability across the Legal team and across the organisation.
- Celebrate team successes and actively contribute to a connected and engaged team culture.
- Support the Chief Legal Officer and wider Legal team on matters beyond your immediate area as required.

Leading Self

- Model the highest standards of professional conduct, integrity, and ethical behaviour in all interactions.
- Demonstrate sound judgment and effective decision-making in complex and ambiguous situations, acting with confidence and accountability.
- Take responsibility for your own ongoing professional development, staying current with legal, regulatory, and industry developments relevant to your role.
- Seek and act on feedback to continuously improve your effectiveness as a leader, lawyer, and colleague.
- Maintain composure and resilience under pressure, demonstrating positive leadership in challenging circumstances.

Other

- Contribution to a culture of innovation, collaboration, accountability and excellence in legal and business outcomes.
- Assist the Chief Legal Officer and the wider Legal Team on other matters as required to support Legal team objectives and NZR's broader organisational needs.

What You Bring

Key experience and skills include:

- A tertiary degree in Law and completion of legal professional studies.
 - Stakeholder relationship management.
 - 7 or more years post-admission experience in Commercial Law with experience in regulatory or compliance or employment law an advantage.
 - Strong commercial acumen with the ability to balance legal risk with business objectives.
 - Ability to provide clear, practical and solution-focused legal advice in a dynamic environment.
 - High standards of professionalism, integrity and judgment.
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