

Position description

Position title: Head Chef

Position type: Full time (40hrs/week)

Supervisor: Café & Functions Manager

Location: Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne, 53 Waiapu Road, Karori, Wellington

Purpose of the role

Rātā Café is located within the Visitors Centre at Zealandia. Complete with a balcony and functions centre, the cafe overlooks our incredible valley and lower lake. Our ethos is working with what nature provides to make delicious food and drink that is not only sustainable but gives back to the earth.

The Head Chef will lead a hardworking kitchen team responsible for creating inspiring dishes for Rātā Café. The Head Chef will be responsible for operational management of the kitchen at Rātā Café including developing new food concepts for Rātā Café; developing the menu; implementing the food and hygiene standards agreed with the Cafe and Functions Manager; managing food and wages costs to the agreed budget; managing kitchen operations and weekly planning; and recruitment, performance development and training of all kitchen staff, assist in training Café and Functions supervisors on best practice hospitality service, assist with processes and procedures to ensure the Café and Functions team are efficient and effective, assist in training other Café and Functions staff in best practice hospitality service, counter food plating and presentation, counter food management, and together with the Café and Functions Manager ensure that Rātā café customers leave the premises feeling better than when they arrived.

Like all members of staff at Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne, the person in this role will be expected to actively uphold the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, maintain and promote exceptional health and safety, and support the maintenance of biosecurity in the sanctuary.

Organisation background

Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne is an organisation that cares for a 225-ha world class ecosanctuary in Wellington, New Zealand. We have a 500-year vision to restore a unique forested valley—Te Māra a Tāne. Zealandia's first generation of restoration effort has resulted in flourishing forests and the establishment of many native species, from hihi to tuatara. Looking forward, Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne's next generation is focused on '[Living with Nature—Tiaki Taiao, Tiaki Tangata](#)'. *"We connect people with our unique natural heritage and inspire actions that transform how people live with nature in our cities, towns and beyond."* This purpose is visible through our leading education, conservation, restoration, and engagement activities.

Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne is a not-for-profit organisation, and its conservation, restoration and outreach work is made possible by an award-winning sustainable business model. Funding currently

comes from visitors and tours, our café, memberships, grants, sponsorships, and donations. Every role in the organisation has some part to play in ensuring our 130,000+ visitors, 500+ volunteers and 15,000+ members are cared for and welcomed into the Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne community.

As an organisation we honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi and are on a journey towards learning how this plays out across our work as Tiriti partners. We accord value to te ao Māori (the Māori world), and support mana whenua to fulfil their role as kaitiaki. All staff are encouraged to build capacity and confidence across te ao Māori including te reo Māori me ōna tikanga, and Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

The Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne team

Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne is a medium-size organisation, with around 100 people employed in different contexts. We have around 500 volunteers who support all our work. We pride ourselves on exceptional teamwork which is required from all staff, volunteers, and members. The dynamic nature of Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne means it is an incredible place to extend and challenge yourself, have real on-ground outcomes for conservation and community engagement, and to be part of a successful team.

Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne is managed by the Karori Sanctuary Trust. To find out more please go to www.visitZealandia.com/

About this position description

As the work and priorities of Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne change over time, so will the requirements of each of its staff. As such, this document is not intended to represent the role that the occupant will perform in perpetuity. This position description is intended to provide an overall view of the role and responsibilities as at the date of approval. The specifics of the role will be reviewed on a regular basis, and adjustments may be made to key responsibilities and accountabilities.

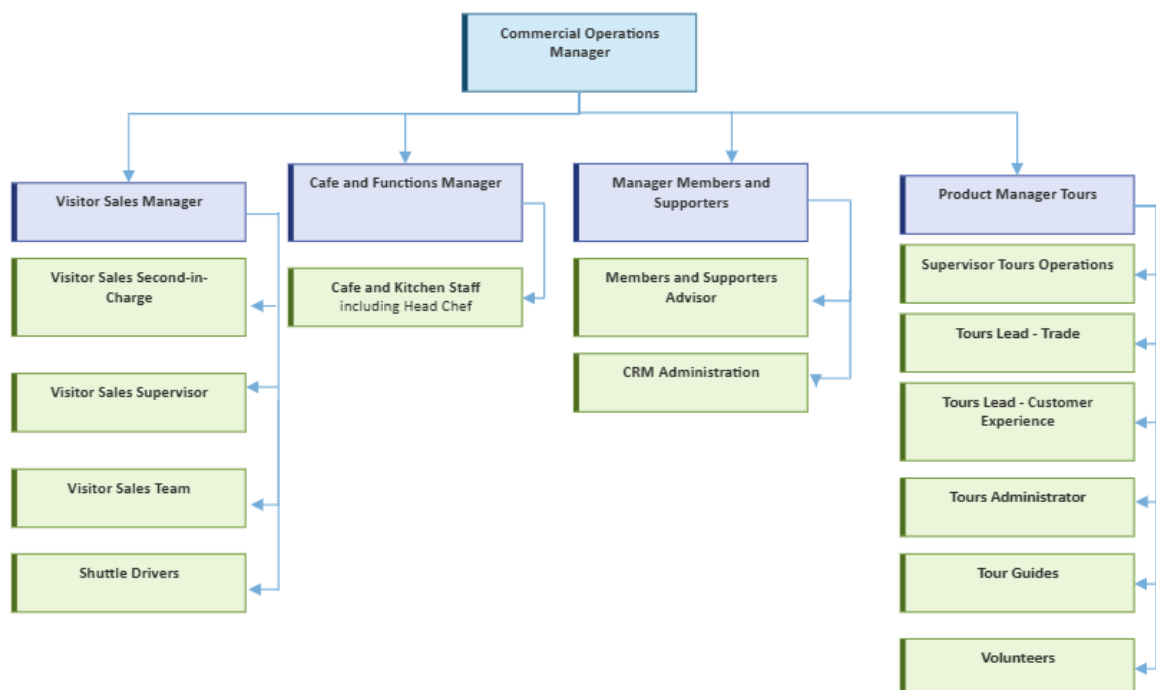
This position description details the minimum outcomes required for the position and employment. Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne is a seven day per week operation. After-hours and weekend work will be required from time to time. A non-smoking policy is effective on sanctuary land, with the exception of a designated smoking area.

The Café and Functions team

The Café and Functions team sits within the Zealandia Commercial Operations team. The Café and Functions team are responsible for contributing to the running of a profitable and vibrant café and functions business. Core responsibilities of the role include supervising the operations of the kitchen team, implementing and management of food and hygiene standards in the kitchen, managing all food related compliance activities, menu development, food preparation and presentation, managing food costs, and contributing to Rātā Café achieving revenue and profit outcomes, health and safety and Zealandia's sustainability objectives, assist in training Café and Functions supervisors on best practice hospitality service, assist with processes and procedures to ensure the FOH team are efficient and effective, assist in training other Café and Functions staff in best practice hospitality service, counter food plating and presentation, counter food management, and together with the

Café and Functions manager ensure that Rata café customers leave the premises feeling better than when they arrived.

The organisation chart below is indicative, and changeable as the role develops and staff training is achieved to run an effective kitchen and café at best practice staffing and service levels. The café operates 364 days a week, with only being closed on Christmas Day.



Key responsibilities

1. Developing new food concepts for Rātā Café and menu management

- Works with the Cafe and Functions Manager to propose menus and food products that enhance the brand of Zealandia and Rātā Café, increase profits and improves customer satisfaction.
- Leads the kitchen to create menu and food items in accordance with brand guidelines and standards as agreed with the Cafe and Functions Manager. Implements process to ensure that the kitchen can always deliver to those standards (e.g. menu, counter food, functions).
- Maximises the food margins in Rātā Café by ensuring that the costs to make all food products are known and kept up to date, keeping in mind the advantage of seasonal produce.
- Is abreast of seasonal food trends and uses these to create new food concepts for Rātā Café that meets the needs of visitors to Zealandia and regular café patrons.

2. Managing kitchen operations and weekly planning

- Manages the kitchen operations and develops kitchen plans to ensure that the kitchen continuously achieves standards set on food presentation and timeliness.
- Manages the Food Control Plan and other mandatory and voluntary compliance activities in the kitchen and ensures that the kitchen is 100% compliant
- Maintains the kitchen cleaning plan and ensures that the kitchen is cleaned in accordance with the plan. Ensures that the kitchen is spotless at the end of each shift.
- Ensures recycling bins and food waste bins are being used appropriately -in keeping with Rātā Café's sustainability approach.
- Manages food safety in the kitchen – ensures daily temperature checks are completed, and temperature checks of food items are completed as required.
- Ensures all food items are prepared according to agreed standards including testing for taste, assessing quality and final presentation.
- Manages stock to the agreed targets and undertakes monthly stock take for the café kitchen.
- Consistently identifies opportunities to minimise wastage to ensure that food cost objectives are achieved.
- Manages food ordering including switching ordering between suppliers to manage overall food costs. Puts processes in place to ensure supplier deliveries are checked and weighed as required.
- Assists in other Rātā Café operations when required e.g. training of kitchen and FOH staff, washing dishes, taking orders, delivering food, clearing, and cleaning tables, processing recycling, food waste bins, and other duties as required.
- Keep all storage areas (including bins behind cafe) clean and organised.

3. Leadership, Training, and staff management

- Manages kitchen staff recruitment and performance management.
- Ensures a high standard of personal and workplace hygiene for kitchen staff and FOH staff.
- Develops and implements training plans for kitchen staff, supervisors, and FOH staff. Ensures that all café staff have been trained to the relevant levels as specified in the Food Control Plan.
- Assist in ensuring all FOH staff are trained to best practice hospitality service.
- Assist with processes and procedures to ensure the FOH team are efficient and effective
- Manages kitchen staff leave requests and absences.
- Maintain and grow relationships with tangata whenua and mana whenua to reflect our responsibilities under Te Tiriti o Waitangi in our work.

4. Financial

- Manages food costs and wages costs to the agreed budget though ensuring all food items are fully costed.
- Works with the Café and Functions Manager to ensure that all food items are correctly priced to achieve targeted revenue to food cost ratios. Recommends price adjustments to respond to changes in food item costs or the daily menu.
- Communication with suppliers to ensure that we are always receiving the best price possible and minimising freight costs.

5. Mātauranga and te ao Māori

- Make an effort to learn appropriate pronunciation of te reo Māori and use it appropriately.
- Champion the appropriate and respectful use of te reo Māori, tikanga, and mātauranga Māori within the team.
- Engage in training opportunities that support upskilling as required, particularly in tikanga and te reo Māori.

6. Health and Safety

- All employees have a responsibility to work towards keeping a safe and healthy work environment by practising safe work methods, identifying workplace hazards, and using appropriate safety equipment.
- Adhere to Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne's code of conduct to support a healthy, safe, and enjoyable work environment.
- Ensure health and safety is addressed in day-to-day activities for all staff, volunteers and visitors working in the café and for functions.
- Ensure your workspace is a safe working environment through adherence to the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 and implementation of Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne's policy on safety.
- Promptly address any responsibilities assigned to your area by the Health and Safety Officer (these responsibilities are noted above in Section 4, if applicable).

7. Biosecurity

- We have a shared responsibility that the valley is maintained as an environment free of key animal and plant pests, allowing restoration progress to be made against the 500-year vision.
- All employees must take Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne's biosecurity seriously, so the risk of accidental introductions is minimised.
- Ensure all visitors and groups visiting with you adhere to biosecurity processes.

NOTE: the above responsibilities and expectations are provided as a guide only. The precise performance measures for this position will need further discussion between the jobholder and manager as part of the performance management process.

Key relationships

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| • Commercial Operations Manager | • All Zealandia Staff |
| • Cafe and Functions Manager | • All Suppliers and Caterers |
| • Café 2IC | • Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne Members and visitor |
| • Chief Executive | |

Person specification

Qualifications and Experience

- Completed NZQA food hygiene unit standards.
- NZQA qualifications in Cooking and/or Hospitality.
- Minimum of 2 years' experience in similar role
- Experience in training both kitchen and Café and Functions staff

Personal Attributes

- Excellent communication skills.
- Team player.

- Ability to train and engage with hospitality staff.
- Co-operative, assisting other team members as needed.
- Ability to follow and pass on instructions.
- Ability to manage staff and get the best out of them.
- Committed to team, establishment, and excellence in food service.
- Positive attitude.
- Ability to work competently under pressure.

Current: July 2026