

Role Description

Title	Chief Science Advisor
Reports to	Chief Executive
Team	Science
Location	Christchurch/Travel to Scott Base may be required
Date	October 2026
Direct Reports	8 Direct (Shared management accountability with ASP)

[Antarctica New Zealand](#) is the crown entity responsible for developing, managing and executing New Zealand government activities in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean. We also manage Scott Base, New Zealand's Antarctic research station which supports science in the Ross Sea region.

Vision

Antarctica and the Southern Ocean: Valued, Protected, Understood.

Values

People are the key to Antarctica New Zealand's success. This includes permanent staff, fixed term and contract staff, seconded staff from the New Zealand Defence Force and our many strategic partners in Government, the science community and other National Antarctic Programmes. We seek to create a high-performance organisation underpinned by a culture of shared beliefs:

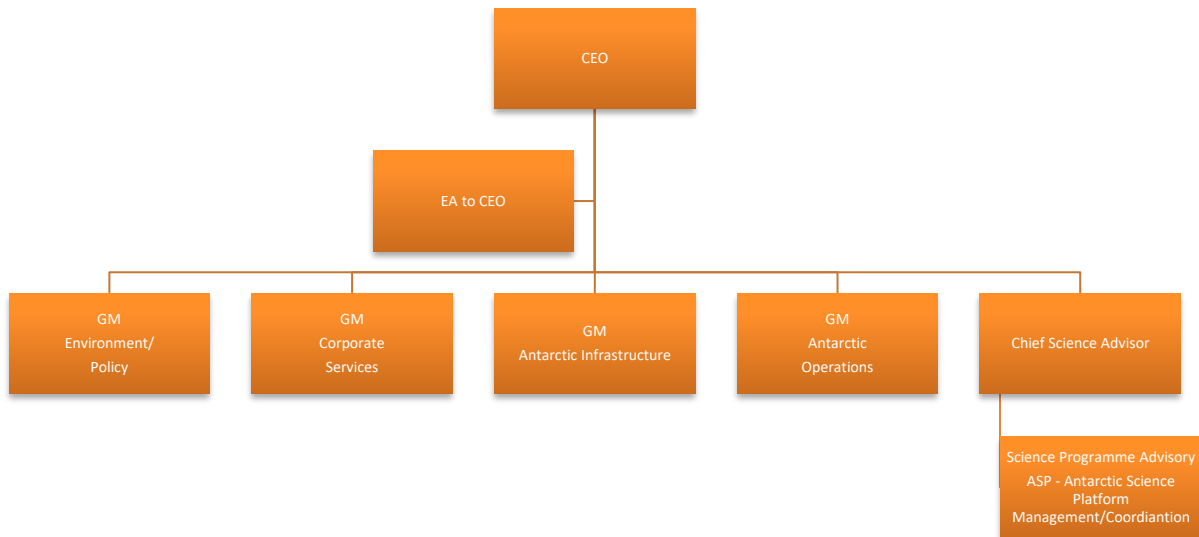
<i>We are passionate about what we do</i>	<i>Ka ngākau whiwhita tātou ki ā tātou mahi katoa</i>
<i>We care for each other and the environment</i>	<i>Ka tiaki tātou i a tātou anō, ka tiaki hoki i te taiao</i>
<i>We work together</i>	<i>Ka mahi tahi tātou</i>
<i>We act with integrity</i>	<i>He ngākau pono ō tātou</i>
<i>We aspire to the highest standards</i>	<i>Ka whai tātou i ngā taumata tiketike</i>

Business Unit and Role

The Science Team plays a key role in enabling Antarctica New Zealand to meet its legislative mandate under the New Zealand Antarctic Institute Act 1996, particularly to maintain and enhance the quality of New Zealand Antarctic scientific research.

The Science Team do this by supporting our partner organisations and learning institutions in the delivery of high-impact, internationally recognised research that advances understanding of Antarctica and the Southern Ocean. The team provides leadership and expertise, supports Antarctic science project planning and execution, strengthens connections between science, policy and decision-making, and works with researchers, funders, government agencies and partners to maximise the value and impact of New Zealand's Antarctic science investment.

The Chief Science Advisor provides organisational and sector leadership for Antarctica New Zealand's science portfolio. The role leads the science function, provides strategic scientific advice, builds influential relationships across the science system, and ensures Antarctica New Zealand delivers and supports world-class Antarctic science that advances knowledge, informs decision-making and contributes to New Zealand's Antarctic objectives.



Key Accountabilities

Strategic Scientific Leadership

- Provide expert scientific advice to the Chief Executive, Board and Senior Leadership Team.
- Lead strategic thinking regarding New Zealand's Antarctic science priorities.
- Identify emerging scientific opportunities, risks and trends to maintain and enhance science in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean.
- Champion scientific excellence, innovation and impact.

Science Function Leadership

- Lead and develop and manage the team of diverse science programme advisors, coordinators and specialists that make up Antarctica New Zealand's science function.
- Ensure delivery of organisational science objectives and outcomes.
- Foster a high-performing, collaborative and future-focused team.
- Oversee science planning, prioritisation and resource allocation.
- Lead the host of, and ensure the successful delivery of, the Antarctic Science Platform.

Antarctic Science Strategy

- Lead and support the implementation of New Zealand's Antarctic Science Strategy.
- Promote multidisciplinary research approaches.
- Ensure science activities contribute to government priorities and policy outcomes.
- Support effective science investment and prioritisation.

Science Policy and Impact

- Strengthen the interface between science, policy and operational decision-making.
- Promote the use of science evidence in decision-making.
- Support translation of research outcomes for end-users and policy-makers.
- Advocate for the societal, environmental and strategic value of Antarctic science.

Science Stakeholder Leadership

- Lead relationships with the New Zealand science community.
- Engage with universities, research institutes, science funders and Māori partners.
- Influence and align stakeholders around shared Antarctic science outcomes.
- Champion Antarctica New Zealand's science contribution.

International Representation and Science Diplomacy

- Represent Antarctica New Zealand in national and international scientific forums.
- Support MFAT and government agencies in Antarctic science diplomacy.
- Implement strategic relationships with international Antarctic programmes and organisations.
- Promote New Zealand's scientific reputation and influence.

Mātauranga Māori

- Work with the ASP platform to champion the integration of mātauranga Māori into Antarctic science.
- Support organisational commitments to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- Lead implementation of Vision Mātauranga outcomes within the science portfolio.

Organisational Leadership

- Contribute as a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Support organisational strategy and performance.
- Lead health, safety and environmental stewardship within the science function.
- Model organisational values and culture.

Key Challenges and Opportunities

- Influencing a diverse and independent science community without direct authority.
- Balancing scientific excellence with government, policy and operational capacity and priorities.
- Maintaining New Zealand's influence within the international Antarctic science system.
- Balancing New Zealand science demand with international scientific collaboration opportunities.
- Translating complex science into practical policy and organisational outcomes.
- Aligning science community ambitions with available resources and logistics capability.
- Integrating mātauranga Māori and western science in meaningful ways.
- Measuring and demonstrating science impact and value.

Key functional relationships

Internal	• Board • Chief Executive • Senior Leadership Team • Science Team • Scott Base Leadership Team • Operations and Programmes teams
External	• Antarctic Science Platform (ASP) • MBIE • MFAT • Universities • Public Research Organisations • Iwi and Māori partners • Science funders • International Antarctic Programmes

	• SCAR • COMNAP • CCAMLR • Antarctic Treaty stakeholders
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Experience and Capability

Qualifications	• PhD in a relevant scientific discipline.
Experience	• Significant scientific leadership experience. • Strong understanding of Antarctic science and research systems. • Experience influencing science strategy, funding or policy. • Demonstrated leadership in complex stakeholder environments. • Experience working nationally and internationally across scientific networks. • Track record of successful relationship management and collaboration.
Knowledge and Skills	• Knowledge of New Zealand's science and innovation system. • Understanding of Antarctic governance and policy settings. • Strategic thinking and systems leadership. • Outstanding communication and influencing skills. • Ability to translate complex science into practical insights. • Understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Vision Mātauranga. • Knowledge of National Antarctic Programmes, international operational partnerships, and shared logistics models is highly desirable.
Leadership Attributes	• Trusted advisor. • Strategic and future focused. • Collaborative and inclusive. • Courageous and influential. • Credible scientific leader. • Strong judgement and decision-making capability.