



**Te Tari Ture
o te Karauna**
Crown Law

Crown Law 2030

Legal excellence in the
service of government,
the public, and the rule
of law

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From the Solicitor-General

Crown Law occupies a distinctive place in New Zealand's constitutional arrangements. The Office enables the Attorney-General and Solicitor-General to discharge their Law Officer responsibilities (including overseeing public prosecutions), supports the elected Government to advance its programme lawfully and manage legal risk, represents the Crown in significant litigation, and contributes to the strength and stability of New Zealand's legal system.

The Public Service Commission's 2026 Performance Improvement Review recognises the quality of Crown Law's legal work, the depth of expertise across the Office and the commitment of our people. It also shows how we can make more of those strengths. We can direct more of our expertise and energy to the legal work that matters most, provide Ministers and agencies with consistently excellent legal services, lead across the government legal system more effectively and strategically, and equip our people with the professional support expected of a leading national legal practice.

These findings reinforce the priorities I set on taking office: peak performance for our public clients as the Government's law firm and legal department; excellence in our core legal functions of legal advice and litigation, including our independent Law Officer functions; and being a strong, respected national presence across the legal profession.

My goal is that by 2030 Crown Law is renowned for its quality and integrity, its authoritative and practical advice, its fair and formidable courtroom advocacy, and its prominent legal system leadership. It will be a talent magnet for lawyers and face outward to the government, the courts, and the wider legal profession.

In this way, Crown Law will no longer simply respond to legal issues as they arise. It will enable our democratically elected government to act confidently within the law, protecting long-term public legal interests and contributing to the strength of New Zealand's legal system.

This response sets our direction to 2030 and the actions we will take over the next 12 months. I will be accountable for its delivery.



Anna Adams KC
Solicitor-General

September 2026

Our direction to 2030

By 2030, Crown Law will be recognised as the government's trusted legal adviser, New Zealand's leading public law litigation practice and overseer of independent public prosecutions, and an enduring guardian of the rule of law. That standing will be earned through the quality of our legal advice, our litigation prowess, and the depth of our expertise as a national legal practice.

Crown Law's reputation will be for legal excellence, integrity and public spirit. In this way the Office will make its unique contribution to New Zealand's justice system, constitutional government and wider legal profession.

1. Excellence in legal practice – advice, litigation and advocacy

Crown Law's value to government, its effectiveness – and indeed its reason to exist – rests on the quality of its legal work. We must therefore deliver excellence in legal advice, litigation and advocacy for the government. And we must concentrate our effort where our authority, independence and specialist expertise add the greatest public value.

Our legal advice will clearly help Ministers and government agencies make sound, lawful decisions. Our advice will address the choices our public clients face, explain the legal and practical consequences, and distinguish between what the law requires and where lawful options remain. Our approach will be grounded in orthodox legal method, established principles, and analysis of the facts. It will be succinct and focussed on meeting our clients' needs – as any lawyer must. We will leave policy and political judgements to the elected government.

We will represent the government in court vigorously, fairly and strategically. Significant litigation will be approached with a clear view of the result sought, the wider government interest and the effect on precedent. We will maintain our lawyers' advocacy and courtroom skills to compete with our professional adversaries – the country's leading firms and barristers – on equal terms. Success in litigation matters – and so, alongside Crown litigation values, in litigation we will define government success and confidently aim for it.

We will explicitly prioritise the most important legal work facing government. Crown Law lawyers will be active litigators, advisers and strategists on issues that significantly shape the law and affect the operation of government. With our available pool of legal talent and time, we will focus on the work that we must do – the matters of national importance that require our expertise, experience and judgement.

Crown Law will continue to support the Solicitor-General in strong independent oversight of public prosecutions, and retain legal work of constitutional importance, major government or public risk and significant system impact. Work that can be undertaken effectively by departmental legal teams, Crown Solicitors or other providers should not displace those priorities nor dilute our efforts.

Crown Law's reputation will be the consequence of our professional commitment to excellence and integrity. Crown Law will face outward to the Government Legal and Crown Solicitor Networks, the courts, and the wider legal profession. We will contribute actively to legal thought, advocacy standards and professional development. Our senior lawyers will be visible in civil and criminal litigation, in the courts and across the profession. Crown Law will be sought out by lawyers to undertake some of the most consequential legal work in New Zealand and a hallmark of quality on a resume.

2. Serving government – the public – as our client

Crown Law's value to government lies in the authority of its legal judgement and the reach of its work across government decision-making. Our lawyers advise government on the practical application of the law, conduct litigation through the courts, work alongside agencies on complex issues and see first-hand the consequences of legal choices. By 2030, Ministers and government agencies will consistently engage Crown Law early on matters of significance, drawing on our expertise to shape viable courses of action, make high-quality decisions, and manage government-wide risks.

We will serve the public by treating government as a valued and multi-faceted legal client. While carefully preserving our independent Law Officer functions, we will take a deliberate approach to our major government relationships. Senior Crown Law leaders will personally manage solicitor-client service of Ministers, chief executives and chief legal advisers where the scale or significance of the work warrants it.

This will give Crown Law – and the government – visibility of emerging legal issues and the opportunity for legal strategy. It will allow risks to be addressed before positions and liability become fixed and support a coherent Crown approach across portfolios or agencies – for example, major issues of economic regulation, public safety and security, fundamental rights, and the role of the Treaty of Waitangi in planning and environmental decisions.

There will be greater professional legal structure in how Crown Law delivers services to its government clients. Ministers and agencies will know who holds senior responsibility, the legal strategy being pursued, the principal risks and costs, and the basis for decisions about legal work undertaken by Crown Law. Ministers and agencies will consistently be involved in key decisions where they bear responsibility for the outcome and cost.

These relationships must support, rather than blur, the responsibilities of the Attorney-General and Solicitor-General as the Law Officers. **Crown Law will continue to provide independent and authoritative advice, including robust challenge where it is required.** We will serve as lawyers with a full understanding of the government's objectives and the practical choices. Independence, sound judgement and engagement with government are the complementary parts of Crown Law's role as the government's principal legal office.

3. Strategic legal system leadership for government

Crown Law sees legal issues across government that no single department can see, and it is a deep well of legal system experience. Crown Law's perspective comes from conducting major civil litigation, advising on complex constitutional questions, overseeing public prosecutions and working alongside other government lawyers in the courts.

By 2030, we will use this position more deliberately in the public interest. Our role will be beyond observing developments in the law. We will contribute actively to the law's development and shape a coherent presentation of the government in the legal system.

We will maintain a current, strategic view of the Crown's most significant legal and constitutional risks, drawing on advice, litigation, prosecutions and the knowledge held by departmental chief legal advisers and Crown Solicitors. Engagement with the Attorney-General will not only report legal risks but strategically manage those that warrant the greatest attention and their implications for government. With respect to public prosecutions, the Solicitor-General supported by Crown Law will safeguard prosecutorial independence while supporting a well-functioning prosecution system as a critical government function.

Crown Law's lawyers will engage more closely with the Government Legal Network (around 1000 lawyers) **and the Crown Solicitor Network** (16 firms around the country) to identify emerging legal issues, draw lessons from litigations and strengthen the quality of government legal practice. Crown Law will functionally lead these networks, with that leadership evident in practical guidance, shared professional development, coordinated responses to major risks and clear positions on significant government legal questions.

Crown Law leaders will also be active contributors to the administration of civil and criminal justice and the legal profession. We will maintain constructive working relationships with the Ministry of Justice, the judiciary, the Bar, law firms and academic institutions. We will bring our expertise and practical experience to professional debate, and support legal system capability, particularly in areas of high public interest such as criminal prosecution and the day-to-day operations of civil justice that support the economy and civil society.

The proper functioning of the justice system is of profound importance to the rule of law, and so it is to Crown Law. **Crown Law's national presence will reflect this responsibility.** Wellington will remain central to our service to the government and the Law Officers. We will strengthen our capability in Auckland, reflecting the volume of court activity, the legal labour market and prosecution work in the upper North Island. The Crown Solicitor and Government Legal Networks will continue to provide national reach, local knowledge and frontline insight.

4. A modern, high-performing and national government legal practice

Consistently high performance in law depends on outstanding people plus well-run systems. **By 2030, Crown Law will combine the public service ethos and intellectual strength of the Office with the systems, professional disciplines and technology of a leading law firm.**

Crown Law will offer its lawyers a distinctive, modern professional experience. Few organisations offer the opportunity to work across constitutional and public law, Treaty issues, major civil litigation, criminal appeals, public prosecutions and issues at the centre of government.

Crown Law will significantly invest in its corporate support and its technology platform to match its peers and adversaries in the private sector. Our office and legal practice systems will be modern, digital and enable the professional performance that we promise. Our practice management and information systems will give us a reliable view of client instructions, demand, capacity, cost, progress and results and productivity. We will also use technology, (including artificial intelligence) to reduce low-value manual work and improve research and administration. As always, this will be subject to the accuracy, confidentiality, security and professional judgement required of the Government's principal legal office.

Crown Law will operate as a genuinely national practice, combining the strengths of our Wellington and Auckland offices with the reach, expertise and experience of the Government Legal and Crown Solicitor Networks. **We will be recognised as a place where outstanding lawyers and their supporting professional team members build careers,** deepen their expertise and contribute to some of New Zealand's most important and meaningful legal work.

Maintaining quality of legal experience will be central to our success. **Crown Law will invest in recruitment and development**, courtroom and informal advocacy, specialist legal and support expertise and opportunities for lawyers to build practical experience across different subjects. We want our people to be recognised not only for their legal knowledge, but for the judgement and self-confidence that comes from having worked directly on high-profile legal matters.

We will recruit talented people to our Wellington and Auckland offices from government, private law firms, the bar and New Zealanders returning from overseas. Crown Law will provide opportunities for lawyers to progress both within the organisation and the profession. Movement between Crown Law, government and the private sector should become valued steps in a career. Mobility of staff to and from the legal profession also brings diverse experience, discipline and legal creativity into government.

Our professional culture will support energetic legal debate, diversity of thought and respectful challenge. Performance expectations and progression will cover legal quality, advocacy, service, efficiency, leadership and contribution to the Crown legal system. Senior lawyers and managers will be expected to remain connected to practice, develop others and manage work and resources well.



Priorities for the next 12 months

Over the next year into 2027, we will strengthen Crown Law's core legal practice and operating model, consciously serve government as a legal client, provide strategic leadership across the government legal system, build a stronger national practice, and modernise the Office.

a. Strengthen Crown Law's core legal practice and operating model

In the next 12 months, our priorities will be to:

- **settle and publish a legal service strategy** defining the categories of work Crown Law will lead, the work departments should ordinarily retain, and the circumstances in which other providers should be used;
- **update Crown Law's operating model required to support the legal practice**, including defining senior leadership accountabilities for the Law Officer functions, government legal system engagement, Crown civil litigation, criminal appeals and public prosecutions, and the respective roles of counsel, legal support staff and technology;
- **introduce consistent systems for accepting, prioritising and allocating legal work** based on constitutional significance, government legal risk, complexity, precedent and system impact, counsel aptitude and experience;
- **establish systems for senior oversight and client engagement in significant litigation instructions** with recording of the intended result, legal strategy, Crown-wide implications, material risks, legal costs and accountabilities at the outset with regular review;
- **set expectations for senior legal leaders in the practice** including advisory and courtroom currency, leading matters of significance, staff professional development, government legal system engagement and relationships with the wider profession;
- **increase opportunities for junior Crown Law lawyers to gain direct legal experience**, including through appearances, secondments and structured development alongside experienced counsel; and
- **seek structured feedback from Ministers, chief executives and chief legal advisers** on the value, timeliness and practicality of Crown Law's work, and use that feedback in leadership and performance decisions

By the end of the year, Crown Law seniors should be leading the Office's most important legal work, significant advice and litigation should be delivered in a client-centric manner, and developing lawyers should have clearer opportunities to gain practical legal experience. Government clients, the courts and the profession should see strong, credible senior lawyers leading the legal business of the government, in an outward-facing manner.

b. Consciously serve government as a legal client

Within the next 12 months, our priorities will be to:

- **establish senior lawyer responsibility for Crown Law's major government client relationships** with regular engagement on upcoming priorities, significant legal risks and matters requiring early legal involvement, while respecting the independence of the Law Officer functions;
- **introduce a common professional discipline for significant client engagements** that covers the decision / litigation required, the legal issues, the Crown-wide interest, work to be undertaken, senior accountability, timing, cost and intended result or definition of success;
- **draw more deliberately on senior lawyers with current experience in courtrooms (civil litigation and prosecutions)**, so that Crown Law advice is more strategic and practical, anticipating likely consequences of different courses and implementation challenges;
- **agree arrangements with major department clients for the allocation of legal work**, clarifying what Crown Law should lead, what should remain with departmental legal teams and when other providers should be engaged - giving departments a meaningful role in decisions about legal services where the department is accountable for the outcome and cost; and
- **review major matters after completion in conjunction with the Crown client and Attorney-General**, applying lessons to future advice, litigation strategy, professional practice and overarching Crown legal risk.

By the end of the year, major government clients should be engaging Crown Law earlier on significant matters, receiving more strategic and practical advice and seeing clearer senior lawyer accountability. They should have confidence that Crown Law's advice reflects experience of how legal issues develop in practice, as well as a rigorous understanding of the law.



c. Provide strategic leadership across the government legal system

Within the next 12 months, our priorities will be to:

- **supplement the current approach to Crown legal risk reporting with a more direct and strategic assessment for the Attorney-General**, identifying the most significant legal and constitutional risks, connections across portfolios, likely consequences and options for management;
- **initiate horizon-scanning discussions with departmental chief legal advisers and Crown Solicitors**, focussed on detecting emerging risks, civil litigation and prosecution trends, and matters requiring a coordinated Crown response;
- **create a systematic lessons process for major advice, litigation, prosecution system trends and inquiries**, translating relevant findings into practical guidance, training, changes in practice or advice to government and the Law Officers;
- **agree a programme of shared priority legal work with the Government Legal Network and the Crown Solicitor Network**, addressing significant legal issues, lawyer capability and consistency of Crown practice;
- **establish a regular programme of professional engagement with the Ministry of Justice, the judiciary, Crown Solicitors, the Bar and the wider profession**, directed to legal developments, issues affecting the administration of criminal and civil justice, and legal professional standards; and
- **have actively practising lawyers lead our system work**, so that Crown Law's guidance and leadership remains informed by current courtroom and client experience.

By the end of the year, the Attorney-General should receive a sharper view of the government legal risks requiring attention and how they are being managed. Government lawyers and Crown Solicitors should see more regular engagement, sharing of knowledge and proactive Crown Law leadership on significant legal issues. The judiciary and wider legal profession should see a more prominent contribution from the Crown to the legal system and debate.

d. Build a stronger national practice

Within the next 12 months, our priorities will be to:

- **prominently operate as a national legal practice**, combining the strengths, expertise and talent bases of our Wellington and Auckland offices;
- **confirm the scale and professional leadership arrangements of our multi-disciplinary Auckland office**, reflecting the upper North Island's increasingly important role in the legal system in terms of court activity, legal labour market, civil litigation and prosecution work;
- **direct recruitment towards identified capability gaps and future legal needs**, rather than replacing roles automatically;
- **strengthen our specialist capability in areas of sustained legal demand** including public law litigation, criminal appeals, Treaty of Waitangi matters, natural resources, infrastructure, and climate litigation;
- **strengthen engagement and partnering with the country-wide Crown Solicitor Network**, including shared legal professional development, knowledge exchange and closer collaboration on system-wide issues affecting Crown prosecutions as part of the Solicitor-General's independent Law Officer function;
- **complete a national workforce and succession plan** covering critical expertise, key-person risks, emerging capability needs, leadership development and the transfer of institutional knowledge; and
- **create clearer pathways for lawyers and legal support professionals in Auckland and Wellington to gain experience across the Crown Law practice** including advocacy, advisory work, major litigation, client engagement and leadership of matters.

By the end of the year, Crown Law should have a clearer plan for building its national practice, stronger connections with the wider profession, a view of future workforce needs and a more substantial Auckland presence. Staff should see broader opportunities to progress their careers through active legal practice. Government clients and lawyers, Crown Solicitors and the profession should see a Crown Law that is stronger, more dynamic and engaged with the legal system on a national level.

e. Modernise the Office

Within the next 12 months, our priorities will be to:

- **complete our (underway) programme of critical technology foundation overhaul**, including hardware and software renewal, to achieve a stable platform for more advanced technology adoption;
- **complete the design and procurement decisions for the legal practice management system**, with clear executive accountability and reportable milestones;
- **standardise the core work processes the legal practice management system must support**, including instruction intake, matter opening, risk assessment, allocation, time and cost recording, document management, productivity measurement, billing and closure;
- **establish baseline enterprise management information** covering demand, capacity, matter age, timeliness, cost, financial recovery, use of external providers, workforce pressure and client experience;
- **clarify leadership and people-management expectations**, including responsibility for work allocation, coaching, feedback, performance, development and workload; and
- **set Crown Law's standards for the use of artificial intelligence** and continue controlled use where benefits, limitations and safeguards can be assessed.

By the end of the year, Crown Law should have better information for decisions about work, people and investment, clearer expectations of its leaders, an agreed route to a modern practice management system, and practical evidence of technology reducing avoidable effort without compromising legal judgement or opportunities to build professional experience.



Delivery and accountability

Crown Law's senior corporate and legal team will be collectively responsible for delivery under my leadership. Each action will have an accountable executive owner, a defined result and a clear sequence of actions. We will expressly acknowledge that it is not only lawyers but all staff who are part of our evolution to professional services excellence, including teams in corporate, people, technology, facilities and library. Progress will be reviewed each quarter so that constraints are addressed early and priorities can be adjusted as evidence develops.

We will develop a concise set of measures of our delivery. These will cover the quality and timeliness of legal services, significant litigation, government legal risk, client confidence, legal services demand and capacity, workforce capability and productivity, financial performance and technology delivery. We will also assess whether our people are gaining the experience required to maintain deep legal expertise, strong advocacy and effective succession in critical areas. These measures will support stronger management and public accountability without compromising legal privilege, confidentiality or the independent exercise of Law Officer functions.

Financial requirements will be assessed as individual actions are further developed, in a manner proportionate to their scope and scale. Material implications will be identified and addressed through the appropriate government planning, funding and approval processes.

Staff will be involved in designing the changes that affect their work. Ministers, departmental chief legal advisers, Crown Solicitors, the judiciary and the wider profession will be engaged where their perspective is needed. We will report on implementation through Crown Law's established accountability arrangements.

Our progress will be judged in the way all professionals are judged: on performance.

Clients – Ministers and government agencies – should receive vigorous and helpful legal support for significant decisions and litigations. The **Attorney-General** should have a clear view of Crown legal risk and a strategy to manage it. The **Law Officers** should continue to fulfil their functions with independence and integrity.

The **courts and profession** should see experienced Crown Law advocates and advisers leading matters of consequence with integrity and enjoying success. **Staff** should experience clear priorities, engaged leadership, modern legal support and meaningful opportunities to build their career through active practice. And the **wider government legal system** should benefit from the deep expertise and judgment that seasoned Crown Law leaders can offer.

In this way, Crown Law will be both a sustainable and enduring contributor to New Zealand's constitutional government, our public legal institutions and the rule of law.