

Position Description

Position Title: Employment Relations Manager
Location: Tahua Hub, Auckland
Department: People & Capability, Tahua Shared Services

Date: August 2026
Reports to: Chief People & Capability Officer

Who we are:

Tahua Group Limited is a great Kiwi business, home to well-loved brands in retail and hospitality. Inspired by a common vision and a shared passion for hospitality/retail, we strive to serve our communities in a truly unique way based on our heritage in Aotearoa. Each of our business units operate independently as they face the market, but are supported by resources, skills and solutions available through the Tahua shared services community (e.g.: Information Services, Finance, Payroll, Strategy Development, Project Management, Property, and People and Capability). Each business celebrates its own unique culture, however we are all connected through the Tahua values of 'better', 'manaakitanga' and 'whanaungatanga'.

Why you'll love this role:

This newly created role strengthens Tahua's ability to resolve complex employment matters consistently, efficiently and fairly across the Group of multiple brands, with over 3,500 employees. As Employment Relations Manager, you'll provide deep expertise in New Zealand employment law and complex ER matters across the Group. You'll partner closely with the Senior P&C Managers, People Business Partners and Brand senior leaders to navigate sensitive people issues, manage organisational risk, and ensure our practices remain fair, compliant, and consistent with our values. You'll directly lead selected high-risk matters, and strengthen the ER capability of the P&C team and operational leaders so issues are addressed early and at the appropriate level.

Retail and hospitality environments move fast and employ large frontline workforces, with high labour turnover that is common in the industry. That means employment relations challenges are varied and often complex. The role is accountable for improving the quality, consistency and timeliness of employment relations practices while reducing unnecessary reliance on external legal advice and protecting the capacity of Business Partners to focus on proactive business partnering. This is not about reviewing the work of others; you'll be the trusted expert helping the business approach these situations with confidence, fairness, and sound judgement.

Senior People & Capability Managers and Business Partners remain accountable for their brand relationships and ordinary people partnering activity. The Employment Relations Manager provides specialist support and takes ownership where matters meet agreed complexity or risk thresholds. The role works through the partnering structure rather than operating as a separate channel to the business, except where independence, confidentiality or legal risk requires direct involvement.

If you enjoy solving complex people challenges and influencing leaders through thoughtful, practical advice, this is a highly impactful role.

What you'll deliver in this role:

Employment relations expertise

- Act as Tahua's internal expert on New Zealand employment law, providing advice and guidance on complex or high-risk people matters. Contribute to prioritisation and resourcing discussions where ER demands affect team capacity.
- Act as a trusted senior adviser to the Chief People & Capability Officer and Senior People & Capability Managers.

- Support P&C Managers, Business Partners and leaders in managing disciplinary processes, investigations, restructures, grievances, and resolving personal grievances. Provide senior escalation support to the People & Capability team on complex operational people matters.
- Ensure consistent, fair, and legally sound employment practices across the Group.

Case triage and ownership

- Alongside the Senior P&C Managers and CPO, establish and maintain clear criteria for triaging employment relations matters according to complexity, risk, organisational impact and precedent.
- Take end-to-end ownership of designated complex, high-risk or Group-significant matters as directed.
- Provide specialist advice and coaching on matters that remain owned by the relevant Business Partner or Senior People & Capability Manager. Provide practical, hands-on support to P&C colleagues managing other cases where required.
- Agree case ownership, decision rights and stakeholder responsibilities at the outset of each escalated matter.
- Ensure the relevant Business Partner remains connected to the operational leader, brand context and employee relationship unless a full transfer of ownership has been agreed.
- Avoid unnecessary duplication, review stages and hand-offs that delay resolution.
- Lead complex investigations where independence or specialist expertise is required.
- Prepare or oversee critical correspondence, evidence, risk assessments and resolution recommendations.
- Represent Tahua in mediation and support or manage ERA proceedings where required.
- Lead sensitive organisational change, medical incapacity, senior employee and precedent-setting matters when allocated.

Employment law, risk management and policy development

- Monitor changes in employment legislation, case law, and regulatory expectations.
- Translate legal developments into practical guidance, policies, and training for leaders and the P&C team.
- Help minimise organisational risk through proactive advice and sound process design.
- Lead the development and review of people policies, ensuring alignment with NZ legislation and Tahua values.
- Strengthen ER frameworks, investigation practices, and documentation standards, ensuring consistency of approach across the Group.

Union and collective employment support

- Partner with the Senior P&C Managers to develop and support a constructive industrial relations strategy that promotes direct employee engagement, respects employees' lawful rights to representation, and builds effective, good-faith relationships with unions and employee representatives.
- Support the organisation's approach to union engagement and collective bargaining where relevant.
- Assist with preparation for negotiations and provide advice on industrial relations strategy. Lead collective bargaining negotiations where appropriate.

Leader and HR capability building

- Develop the ER capability of CPO, Senior People & Capability Managers, Business Partners and operational leaders through coaching, case reviews, practical tools and formal learning.
- Build confidence within the team to manage routine and moderately complex ER matters without unnecessary escalation.
- Establish case clinics, retrospective reviews and structured learning from completed matters.
- Create clear development opportunities for employees who wish to deepen their ER and industrial relations expertise.
- Ensure specialist knowledge is documented and shared rather than concentrated within one role.

Insights and continuous improvement

- Work with Senior People & Capability Managers to identify recurring ER demands that are consuming Business Partner capacity and implement interventions that reduce avoidable casework, improve leader self-sufficiency and protect time for proactive partnering.
- Provide insights to the People & Capability leadership team to inform improvements in leadership capability, culture, and workplace practices.
- Identify systemic issues that can be addressed through policy, leader capability, workforce practices or organisational change. Recommend interventions that reduce repeat cases and avoidable escalation.

What you'll bring to the role:

- **Deep employment relations expertise:** A practicing employment lawyer or senior employment relations practitioner, you'll have extensive (8+ years) experience managing complex employment relations matters in New Zealand, ideally in high-volume operational environments. A current practising certificate is required as the role will provide privileged legal advice, manage litigation strategy and directly represent Tahua in complex legal proceedings.
- **Relevant operational experience:** Strong understanding of frontline operational environments and the commercial impact of employment decisions. Ability to provide workable, practical advice at pace, including matters where information is incomplete and operational consequences are significant.
- **Strong employment law knowledge:** Up-to-date knowledge of NZ employment legislation, case law, and dispute resolution processes. Experienced in mediation and ERA case management. Experience managing risk in environments with large frontline workforces is highly valued.
- **Sound judgement:** Able to balance legal risk, fairness, and commercial realities to provide pragmatic advice.
- **People-first and commercially sharp:** Balance empathy and pragmatism, making decisions that are human-centric and aligned to business outcomes.
- **Influence and credibility:** Confident working with senior leaders and guiding them through difficult people decisions.
- **Excellent investigation capability:** Experienced in conducting fair, thorough workplace investigations and guiding others through the process.
- **Calm under pressure:** Able to manage sensitive or complex situations with professionalism, discretion, and composure.
- **Clear and adaptive communicator:** Can tailor your message and tone to suit the audience, making complex people matters simple and accessible.
- **Values-led approach:** Committed to ensuring Tahua's employment practices reflect the values of better, manaakitanga and whanaungatanga.
- **Collaborative and tech-capable:** Naturally curious about AI and how emerging tech can improve the outcomes the P&C team deliver.