

Head of Product & Innovation

Position Description

Reports to:	Chief Technology Officer		
Direct Reports:	See Org Chart (attached)	Location:	Wellington/Auckland/Christchurch
Financial Delegations:	As per delegation's policy	Non-Financial Delegations:	As per delegation's policy
Salary Range	\$153,000 to \$200,000 per annum (pro rata) Appointment will be at a level which reflects skills, knowledge and experience		

About REANNZ

REANNZ is a Crown-owned membership organisation dedicated to empowering Aotearoa's research and education sector. Our diverse membership includes New Zealand's Public Research Organisations (PROs), universities, museums, libraries and government organisations.

Since 2007, REANNZ has been operating and supporting a specialist high-performance digital network tailored to meet the unique demands of Aotearoa's research and education sector. From July 2025, with the integration of the New Zealand e-Science Infrastructure (NeSI) people and technologies, REANNZ will offer a comprehensive hub for eResearch in Aotearoa, combining the unique capabilities of both organisations to deliver network products and services, high-performance computing (HPC, AI/ML, data-analytics) infrastructure and researcher-focused support.

We aim to foster a stronger economy and a more prosperous society by empowering a vibrant, active and collaborative eResearch sector.

As a small but effective team – our highly skilled and passionate people are motivated to identify and implement creative yet pragmatic solutions for our members, partners, researchers and the wider research and education sector.

Our Values

At REANNZ, our values guide our decisions, behaviours, and interactions every day. They are integral to how we deliver on our purpose and support Aotearoa's research and education sector. Our values are:

- **Collaboration** – Together everyone achieves more
- **Innovation** – Redefining the possible
- **Trust** – Earning trust, enabling discovery
- **Excellence** – Delivering our best, every time

This is underpinned by **Integrity** – The foundation of all that we do | Uncompromising | Constant

Position Purpose

As part of the Technical Group, the Head of Product & Innovation role leads the Product & Innovation team within the wider Technology function.

Working alongside people and technical leader peers to ensure REANNZ has the skills, capability and specialist knowledge to deliver on our 5 year strategy the Head of Product and Innovation supports this success by ensuring consistent focus on the identification, development and implementation of cutting-edge products and innovation opportunities.

The Head of Product & Innovation leads product direction, innovation, maturity and value realisation across REANNZ, but is not responsible for day-to-day delivery or individual product ownership.

The role sets the strategic direction for product and innovation across REANNZ, aligning user needs, technology, capability and organisational strategy. Working closely with Service Delivery, Advanced Computing, Research Support, Networks and Partnerships & Engagement, this role ensures product thinking is embedded end-to-end, new and existing services are intentionally designed, and innovation is prioritised where it delivers the greatest value and impact.

The Head of Product & Innovation works across all areas of the business to ensure operational implementation of new products and innovation opportunities are delivered in a timely, cost effective and most efficient manner for the benefit of our customers, the wider sector and for growth.

Key Accountabilities		
Result Area	Actions	Deliverables
Strategy, Delivery & Expert Advice	- Ensure a coherent portfolio of products and services with defined value propositions are available to support all innovation and product development opportunities and strategic objectives - Deliver intentional, prioritised innovation aligned to strategic objectives and sector needs - Provide specialist advice on opportunities and options to enable the CTO, SLT and Directors to make the best informed decisions on product and innovation	Visibility of product and services opportunities is provided by the P&I team to all parts of the organisation Innovation and product opportunities are identified, scoped and commissioned clearly and outputs and outcomes are clearly understood and agreed before work begins Strategic and operational advice is provided at the beginning of opportunity discussions
People Leadership, Coaching and Mentoring	- Develop a high-performing product and innovation team with clear roles and responsibilities, ways of working and an organisation wide collaborative approach - Coach and mentor team members and the wider business to lift product capability beyond the immediate team - Ensure the right skills, capability and experience is in place within the team delivering consistent performance to achieve agreed outputs and change	Team members deliver consistently across all areas of P&I and work collaboratively across all areas of the organisation to maintain momentum All REANNZ staff know what P&I is, how it works and the part it can play in successful delivery of our strategic objectives The team is fully resourced with a strong culture in place and a focus on collaborative work to deliver REANNZ's strategic ambitions

Customer and Growth	• Develop an informed view of user needs and experiences to inform strategic planning and target activity in priority areas and share this insight across all areas of the organisation, and where appropriate, the wider sector • Align customer needs, product design, innovation and service delivery outcomes to ensure REANNZ maintains and grows existing relationships and opportunities while identifying and growing the new/ different	Customers have numerous pathways to share opportunities for product and innovation ideas, investigation and development Customer needs, market gaps and opportunities are well known internally, and operational processes are in place to assess and agree how we respond
Product & Innovation Frameworks and Principles	• Develop and implement clear and integrated product and innovation frameworks aligned with REANNZ's mission and organisational priorities • Ensure consistent product management and service design practices are adopted and in use across REANNZ (and the wider sector where appropriate) • Develop and implement frameworks for disciplined experimentation and learning to support future service evolution while meeting our obligations to the Crown and members for prudent spending	Clear documentation is in place explaining how P&I work is identified, scoped, agreed and delivered Best practice tools, systems and processes are in use to ensure clarity for P&I team members and the wider organisation Expenditure is managed carefully with full transparency and tight governance in place for all work The value proposition is clear from the outset of all P&I opportunity discussions
Collaboration and Stakeholder Relationships	• Effectively collaborate with Advanced Computing, Research Support and Networks teams to deliver a cohesive end to end product and innovation experience	Silos are non-existent and the P&I team work seamlessly across all areas of REANNZ to deliver cohesive, scalable new products and improvements on existing

	Identify and manage stakeholder and collaboration relationships at a senior level ensuring REANNZ's reputation and trust in our services grows over time	Stakeholders are well informed, genuine partnerships are in place and discussions on new opportunities are always welcomed
Operational Excellence	- Deliver a smooth transition of products and innovations into operational delivery - Ensure use of customer, researcher and sector data and insights to inform product and innovation decisions - Build and evidence growing organisational maturity in product, service design and innovation practices across all areas of the product & innovation lifecycle	Products and innovation opportunities are always developed alongside practical requirements/ costs/ changes A wide view of the opportunity or problem being solved to ensure the right people are involved to deliver maximum benefit Measurement of success is agreed and in place as part of the delivery and implementation of all new/ changes
Health and Safety	- Lead and champion healthy and safe working behaviour for all REANNZ staff, with a particular focus on the Product & Innovation team by ensuring H&S is a priority - Proactively participate in regular assessment of REANNZ Health and Safety capability to ensure it is fit for purpose within the accountabilities of the Head of Product & Innovation role and wider organisation - Report all hazards or unsafe situations - Report all accidents/incidents including near misses - Work safely and use all protective clothing and equipment as required	CE/ H&S Committee/ wider SLT are aware of all risks and hazards to ensure proactive management of potential exposure Hazards reported same day Accident/Incident and near misses reported same day No injury caused to self or others

Project Governance and Delivery	• Provide leadership across REANNZ in the planning and implementation of projects by ensuring a product & innovation lens is provided • Ensure REANNZ benefits from product & innovation excellence and insights throughout project planning and delivery • Lead the delivery and implementation of product & innovation changes and improvements • Provide expert product & innovation advice required to ensure project and governance excellence	Leadership is provided for all strategic and operational projects as required, with proactive involvement in all scoping and planning processes Projects are managed using best practice approaches and within agreed REANNZ frameworks Projects are completed on time within budget

Skills and Knowledge

Essential:

- Proven experience leading a successful technical product and innovation team within a diverse tech- based business
- Excellent relationship management and collaboration skills with the ability to translate concept to delivery at pace and within fast moving environments
- A savvy operator able to meet expectations from the CTO and wider SLT members while building enduring relationships and trust
- An advocate for product and innovation practices and approaches across all areas of the business lifecycle

Preferred:

- Experience managing a multidisciplinary team of subject matter experts to deliver at pace
- Comfort working in a small but mighty team who influence well beyond their official remit
- A desire to partner with the sector and more widely to build and grow REANNZ's customer base and opportunities

Qualifications and Expertise

Essential:

- An experienced product and innovation practitioner who has made the leap from doing the mahi to leading a team of experts but is still able to roll their sleeves up as needed
- Product and Innovation development, delivery and experience in a similar sized technology business
- Proven experience building and growing a highly effective team

Preferred:

- Knowledge of similar operating environments or sectors and the likely challenges
- Someone willing to take calculated risks to deliver the best possible outcome

Key Relationships

Internal:

- CTO
- SLT and CEO
- All areas and teams across REANNZ

External:

- Vendors
- Member organisations
- Wider sector – existing partners or green-fields opportunities to develop and grow existing relationships
- New commercial opportunities

Health and Safety

Senior Leaders set the tone for Health and Safety in the workplace. To lead and deliver a culture where everyone goes home safe at the end of the day, you will:

- Lead and champion maintaining a safe and healthy workplace to prevent harm to self and to others by ensuring Health and Safety is a priority
- Take a leadership role in the ongoing improvement, refining and delivery of health and safety processes, practices, policies and guidelines
- Ensure that all personal actions and those across your group comply with and are conducted in accordance with health and safety processes, practices, policies and guidelines. This includes the correct use of PPE as required

- Immediately report all hazards, accidents, near misses and incidents to the appropriate level for the situation – incident register, H&S committee or office representative, manager, SLT member or Chief Executive to ensure all incidents are managed in accordance with legal and office holder obligations
- Ensure you are aware of all emergency procedures to a level where you can provide leadership, advice and appropriate assistance to others

Leadership Role Competencies	
Practise	Behaviours that demonstrate
Business Acumen	• Has a sound knowledge of general business principles • Is aware of both the formal and informal relationship structures of an organisation and will work within the parameters
Decision Quality	• Consistently makes sound decisions, seeking support or advice as needed
Innovation Management	• Encourages and generates creative and practical solutions to problems with a tight delivery, service or growth focus • Can think outside the square to develop new or leading-edge services/products and work collaboratively with other areas of the business to operationalise
Strategic Agility	• Is able to identify patterns and connections between situations that are not obviously related and develop practical ways to make relationships or problem-solving work • Is aware of broader strategic and conceptual issues when planning and decision making
Timely Decision Making	• Manages risks by making decisions on time
Priority Setting	• Focuses effort on the most important tasks and communicates these with teams
Managing Vision and Purpose	• Practically translates vision and purpose to have meaning for team members and supports them with realising these in their everyday working lives
Dealing with Ambiguity	• Is comfortable working with 'grey' or uncertainty • Will not let ambiguity prevent decision making and seeks advice and support when uncertain about wider impact or next steps

Product & Innovation team Organisation Chart

Product & Innovation Team

