

Our people

A diverse group of passionate individuals have teamed up to form the Social Wellbeing Agency's Executive Leadership Team

Renee Graham

Te Tumu Whakahaere, Chief Executive



Renee was appointed as Te Tumu Whakahaere, Chief Executive in June 2021.

Renee has a track record of delivering strategic policy agendas and has a strong social policy background and experience across a range of domains, including education and employment. Prior to this role, she was the Secretary for Women and Chief Executive of the Ministry for Women, a position she held since June 2017. She has previously held senior policy roles at the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Social Development.

As Secretary for Women, Renee's achievements included the development and introduction of an online tool Bringing Gender In – to help policymakers explore and understand the gender impacts of their policies, the development and implementation of an action plan to eliminate the Gender Pay Gap in the public sector, and work to increase the representation of women senior leadership and governance roles across the public and private sectors.

As well as her policy expertise, Renee also has experience in operational roles in Work and Income, before moving into project and management positions after starting her career as a frontline case manager. Renee is a skilled public service senior leader with a track record of successfully leading the development of solutions to complex policy issues.

Renee holds Master of Public Policy (with merit) and Bachelor of Commerce and Administration degrees from Te Herenga Waka, Victoria University of Wellington.

Renee is of Ngāti Toa and Ngāti Raukawa descent.

Lynda Jelbert

Director Organisational Performance



Lynda leads the Agency's development and implementation of organisational and capability strategies. These strategies ensure we have the right capabilities and practices in place so that our work and projects are well managed, planned and executed. Lynda also leads the management of our corporate functions. Her goal is to ensure that the Social Wellbeing Agency is a great place to work, with a fantastic culture and capable people.

Lynda has a strong background in Human Resources, Leadership, Organisational Development, Change Management, and Health and Safety — spanning both public and private sectors. She has five years at EQC (the Earthquake Commission) and eight years at New Zealand Trade and Enterprise under her belt. She's also worked with Oranga Tamariki and various private businesses.

Lynda joined the us in October 2018. She holds an ANZSOG Executive Master's in Public Administration through Victoria University of Wellington.

Alistair Mason

Director Office of the Chief Executive



Alistair has worked with the Social Wellbeing Agency, formerly the Social Investment Agency, since its establishment as the Social Investment Unit in 2015. He moved into the role of Director Office of the Chief Executive in February 2020.

The Office of the Chief Executive oversees Ministerial engagement, communications, and provides advice and support to the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Board and Social Wellbeing Committee.

Alistair has spent close to ten years working as Ministerial Advisor for a variety of Ministers, primarily covering social portfolios. This experience has supported Alistair's passion for improved social sector decision making and practice.

Alistair has an extensive background in public relations, having worked for some of the world's leading public relations firms in London, Hong Kong, the UAE, and Wellington.