

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 Whakarae, Chief Executive



Renee was appointed as Te Tumu Whakarae, 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 development and implementation of organisational and capability strategies. These strategies ensure we have the right capabilities and practices in place to manage, plan and execute our work and projects. Lynda also leads the management of our corporate functions. Her goal is to ensure 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 previously worked for EQC (the Earthquake Commission), New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, Oranga Tamariki and various private businesses.

Lynda joined 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.

Aphra Green

Deputy Chief Executive, Policy, Data and Insights



Aphra leads the Policy, Data and Insights Group at the Social Wellbeing Agency.

The Group brings a collaborative, creative and multi-disciplinary approach to the analysis and use of data and evidence to advise the Government and the Social Wellbeing Board on what will materially improve the lives of New Zealanders.

Aphra is passionate about evidence-based decision-making, and brings a wealth of experience from the social and justice sectors, particularly from her former senior leadership roles in Oranga Tamariki and the Ministry of Justice. She has a Master of Laws and a Post-Graduate Certificate in Public Policy.