



# Head of Product Development & Business Improvement

## Position Description

Team:	Passenger	Location:	TBC
Reports to:	Executive GM Passenger		
Role Type:	Permanent		

### About Us

#### KiwiRail’s Role in Aotearoa, New Zealand

KiwiRail, a proud State-Owned Enterprise, delivers sustainable and inclusive growth for our customers, communities, and people.

For more than 150 years, rail in New Zealand has connected communities, delivered freight and passengers around the country, and showcased our spectacular scenery to the world. Our purpose—Hononga Whaikaha, Oranga mo Aotearoa (Stronger Connections, Better New Zealand)—speaks to connection with our customers and the future needs of their businesses, connection with the communities we serve and operate in, and connection with each other. KiwiRail is carrying this legacy into the future, delivering connected rail and shipping transport services that create economic, social, and environmental value for New Zealand and New Zealanders.

#### Our Workplace

At KiwiRail, our values define the behaviour we expect from everyone. We have a team of over 4500 people, and every connection we make with each other, our union partners, our customers and all our stakeholders must be of the highest standard.

Safety, health, and well-being are our number one priority, ensuring our people return home safe and healthy every day.



Key Relationships		Manage /Lead	Deliver to	Collaborate with	Advise or inform
Executive GM Passenger			✓	✓	✓

	Product Development and Business Improvement Team	✓		✓	
	Marketing Passenger Team			✓	✓
	Sales Passenger Team			✓	✓
	Crew & Onboard Experience GJNZ & Commuter			✓	✓
	IIL Crew			✓	✓
	IIL Fleet Operations			✓	✓
	F&B operations team GJNZ		✓	✓	✓
	F&B operations team IIL		✓	✓	✓
External	Catering suppliers			✓	✓
	Beverage suppliers			✓	✓

## What you will do to contribute

### Health Safety and Wellbeing

- Implement safety procedures and ensure team compliance
- Embed a safety-first approach in all product development and tour operations activities
- Promote a culture of safety and wellbeing within your team
- Respond effectively to safety incidents and near-misses
- Support team members' physical and mental health

### Customer Focus

- Provide a positive customer experience
- Support a customer-focused culture at KiwiRail
- Use customer research and feedback to shape new and enhanced product offerings.
- Align improvements with passenger needs and expectations, creating seamless, memorable experiences.
- Champion customer insights in product and process design.

### High Performing Teams Skills

- Set clear performance standards aligned with KiwiRail's goal
- Build a supportive and cooperative team environment
- Provide timely and constructive feedback
- Actively seek diverse perspectives in problem-solving
- Identify opportunities for coaching and mentoring

### Commercial Acumen

- Develop sustainable product offerings that are commercially viable.
- Monitor and manage budgets and cost structures to ensure financial targets are met.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build robust business cases to support investment in new experiences and efficiencies.</li> </ul>
<b>Other Role-Relevant Competences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drive cross-business collaboration to maximise innovation and efficiency.</li> <li>• Oversee the development of tourism products that reflect Aotearoa's identity.</li> <li>• Engage with internal and external partners to align on improvement opportunities and future initiatives.</li> <li>• Provide clear, data-informed reporting on improvement and product development performance.</li> </ul>

## Decision Making

The Head of Product Development & Business Improvement makes decisions within their delegated authority relating to product development, operational improvements, budget spend, and resource allocation. This role contributes to strategic direction-setting and investment prioritisation for new customer experiences and business enhancements.

- Product strategy & Innovation: demonstrate ability to define, lead and implement a compelling product vision aligned with business goals.
- Commercial acumen & budget ownership: manages large budgets effectively, allocating spend across channels for maximum ROI. Aligns efforts with targets, revenue goals and business priorities. Able to track and communicate product ROI to senior stakeholders.
- Stakeholder management and cross department collaboration: works closely with marketing, sales, revenue and operations to align efforts. Skilled at managing and negotiating with internal & external stakeholders. Able to present effectively to Leadership or C-suite, translating product development impacts into business value.
- Team leadership & development: skilled at mentoring and motivating sales teams. Able to manage performance, coach for improvement & foster collaborative sales culture. Leads with empathy, accountability and results orientation.
- Track record of launching successful new products, services or enhancements through collaboration, coordination and implementation management.
- Analytical & data-driven decision making: uses metrics, KPIs & performance data to inform product & improvement priorities. Data is key to decision making.
- Change management skills: can lead change linked to product launches. Communicates vision, builds buy-in and supports teams through transitions. Demonstrates empathy, patience & strategic timing in leading change.
- Customer Centre thinking: uses insights, feedback and behaviour to inform product design & business improvements. Understands target audience and advocates for best UX.
- Business process improvement: experience identifying, analysing & improving inefficient/ outdated business processes through collaboration. Demonstrates ability to balance process efficiency with service quality.
- Project Management execution: strong execution skills delivering complex initiatives.
- Technology & systems awareness: across digital tools, platforms & tech trends relevant to delivery. Able to lead digital transformation initiatives.

<b>Human Resources Delegations</b>	Senior Leader
<b>Direct reports</b>	6 direct, 8 team members
<b>Finance Delegations</b>	\$100,000
<b>Budget (operating and capital)</b>	\$TBC including CAPEX
<b>Travel Delegations</b>	Yes approves national travel
<b>Statutory powers</b>	Nil

### Physical demands and the nature of work

This role is administration-based and requires:

- prolonged sitting and high computer usage
- limited walking, standing, twisting, bending (at the waist), crouching (bend knee)
- carrying of laptop and paperwork when alternating between home and office
- limited lifting of up to 7 kg archive boxes

*Your role may include other tasks suited to your level, as your manager directs. This job description shows your current duties. We'll review and update it with you if your responsibilities change*

## About you

### Knowledge and experience

- You have experience in product development, business improvement, or tourism strategy.
- You've led cross-functional teams, ideally in a customer-centric, service-oriented environment.
- You understand the tourism, transport, or experience-based industry sectors.
- You have strong skills in building business cases, cost management, and project prioritisation.
- You've led successful change or continuous improvement projects.

### Ways of working / Work-related qualities

- You are a collaborative and strategic thinker.
- You lead with a customer-first mindset, aligning product design with experience goals.
- You are an effective communicator, able to influence across multiple teams.
- You thrive in dynamic environments, balancing creativity with structure.
- You value diversity, innovation, and sustainability in the workplace.

### Other Requirements

- You can pass regular drug and alcohol screenings
- You have a current and valid NZ Driver's Licence

### Qualifications

- A degree in business, tourism, design thinking, or operations,
- Equivalent experience in relevant industries or roles.

**CREATING  
STRONGER  
CONNECTIONS**

The KiwiRail logo, featuring the word "KiwiRail" in a bold, sans-serif font, followed by a stylized graphic of a kiwi bird's tail feathers.