

Local Democracy Reporter (LDR) **Position Description**

Job title: Local Democracy Reporter

Reports to: Local editor, news director or senior editorial executive within the relevant host newsroom

Role: Ensure readers, viewers, listeners are kept informed and engaged with local democratic issues

Objectives:

- Ensure matters, decisions and issues relating to publicly appointed or elected officials or bodies are covered in a timely, accurate and impartial fashion
- Generate engaging stories that meet required standards of quality, consistency and accuracy
- Be a public ambassador for the project and become a trusted source of news and information about the public authorities covered

Key responsibilities:

- Deliver strong multimedia news and/or feature content on a regular basis
- Meet agreed targets for stories, photos, video and/or audio over a nominated period. These will be set depending on the successful candidate and the host newsroom's preferences. For example, some newsrooms may focus on text and photos only, and others on video stories.
- Follow the standard editorial policies and processes that will be provided to you
- Ensure all content is politically neutral and provides a fair reflection of views
- Ensure agendas and order papers for councils and other public bodies are scrutinised, identifying issues and stories that need to be brought to the public's attention
- Work with the LDR Editor appointed by RNZ and the senior editorial staff in your newsroom to identify which meetings and topics are to be covered and reported and provide daily and weekly planning notes to this effect
- Work collaboratively with the LDR Editor and other LDR staff on national story projects
- Build strong contacts for story-gathering within local communities
- Break news and regularly contribute ideas for original, investigative and enterprise stories
- Write clear and sharply-angled news copy and more detailed background, analysis and feature material as necessary
- Develop and maintain strong relationships with other staff linked to the service
- Ensure all content has appropriate metadata including photo credits and captions

Ideal skills and experience:

- Excellent writing skills
- This is ideally an intermediate or senior role and you will ideally have had broad experience in a range of newsroom positions over a number of years
- Up-to-date media law knowledge
- Able to work under pressure, be organised and able to identify priorities – a self-starter able to work with minimum supervision
- Excellent communicator on social media and familiar with digital tools and techniques
- Some knowledge of te ao Māori and/or te reo Māori will be an advantage
- Strong understanding of local government work and processes
- Demonstrable experience delivering great ideas for content
- Proficiency taking photos and/or shooting video
- Driver's licence

This job description summarises the main aspects of the job but does not cover all of the duties that the job holder may be required to perform. Therefore, the job description is a minimum standard. It is not a statement of all that the job does or may entail. It is not intended to restrict the scope of the job but clearly define its starting point. It may be that, where appropriate, the project will consider a job-sharing approach in some regions.

Editorial Brief for Local Democracy Reporting

The core purpose of Local Democracy Reporting is to provide impartial coverage of the regular business and workings of local authorities in New Zealand. Coverage will extend to other relevant democratic institutions. The service is designed to provide timely coverage of the affairs of publicly-appointed and/or publicly funded local institutions and organisations, including but not exclusive to: local councils (including district and regional councils), local trusts, council committees, community boards, council-owned or partially owned commercial enterprises, district health boards (and their replacements), port and airport authorities, and Māori incorporations and trusts.

- The brief is to report on the decision-making process: what decisions are made in the public's name and how are they arrived at, what evidence is presented to the councils, etc.
- The LDRs may provide other stories which are focused on local democracy and which are in the public interest – so long as that does not detract from the core purpose of the service.
- All work must be available to all qualifying media partners, simultaneously and in a timely manner.
- National politics generally is out of scope but there will be occasions in which national politicians and their work/decisions/pronouncements have direct impact/interest at a regional level. This would, as a matter of course, attract the attention of LDR staff.