



General Manager

Position Description

About

Surfing for Farmers is a nationwide mental health and wellbeing initiative supporting New Zealand's rural communities. Founded on the principle of connection through shared experience, we use surfing as a vehicle to offer farmers a break from the pressures of farming, an opportunity to learn a new skill, and a chance to engage with others in a relaxed and supportive environment. Operating across multiple coastal regions each summer, Surfing for Farmers partners with industry organisations, sponsors, and local volunteers to foster stronger rural networks and improve mental wellbeing outcomes.

Role Overview

The General Manager is a key leadership role responsible for driving the strategy, relationships, and operational execution of Surfing for Farmers. This person will lead the delivery of the national programme, develop strong partnerships across the sector, and ensure financial sustainability through funding and sponsorship. This role requires someone who is as comfortable in the surf as they are in the boardroom – an authentic, community-driven leader with the capability to scale impact.

Scope

Reports to: Surfing for Farmers Charitable Trust Board

Location: Remote / Canterbury preferred

Key Relationships

- Board of Trustees
- Regional Coordinators and Volunteers
- Sponsors and Donors
- Government and Industry Partners
- Mental Health Service Providers
- Marketing and Media Partners



Key Activities and Outcomes

1. Programme Leadership

- Lead the nationwide delivery of Surfing for Farmers events.
- Support and guide regional coordinators and volunteers.
- Ensure consistency, quality, and safety across all locations.

2. Partnerships & Stakeholder Engagement

- Build and maintain strong relationships with sponsors, industry groups and funding partners.
- Represent Surfing for Farmers in public and media forums.
- Develop and deliver reporting and value for partners.

3. Funding & Financial Management

- Develop and execute annual funding and sponsorship strategies.
- Secure sustainable funding to support operations and growth.
- Manage budgets and oversee financial reporting.

4. Operational Excellence

- Ensure robust systems, communication channels, and processes to support national operations.
- Coordinate logistics and event planning across the organisation.
- Implement tools for volunteer management and regional support.

5. Strategic Development & Governance Support

- Work with the Board to evolve strategy, identify growth opportunities and manage risk.
- Provide regular updates and recommendations to the Board.
- Support future succession planning and leadership development.

Qualifications & Experience

- Proven experience in leadership roles within not-for-profit, rural, or agri-sector organisations.
- Demonstrated experience in fundraising, sponsorship, or partnership development.
- Understanding of New Zealand's rural sector and mental health challenges.
- Experience working with volunteers and community-led programmes.

Key Personal Characteristics & Values

- Empathetic and community minded.
- Authentic and approachable leadership style.
- Purpose-driven with strong personal alignment to mental health and wellbeing outcomes.
- A hands-on, 'can-do' attitude with strong follow-through.



Skills & Competencies

- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills.
- Strong strategic and financial acumen.
- Confident public speaker and media representative.
- Capable of managing complexity and leading through influence.
- Effective across both strategic and operational contexts.