Principal Data Engineer (Generation)

Role Purpose

across New Zealand's largest renewable energy portfolio. This is a unique opportunity to be part of a new chapter in Meridian's Generation business — helping shape the future of data engineering from the ground up. As we modernize our data platforms and practices, you'll be at the forefront of designing and building the systems, standards, and tools that will power decision-making and innovation

Principal Data Engineer (Generation Business Unit) is a strategic leader within the Generation team, playing a pivotal role in shaping, executing, and advancing data and AI architecture and engineering across the business. This role leads collaboration with cross-functional teams to enable the creation and delivery of innovative, enterprise-scale data-driven products and experiences for both operational and business teams. You will drive the transformation of raw data into actionable, democratized data products that deliver significant business value and support the DigiGen vision of modernizing data engineering, enhancing data-driven decision-making, and optimizing outcomes through data at scale.

As a Principal, you will mentor and develop data practitioners across teams and practices, fostering a culture of innovation, strategic thinking, and continuous improvement. You will influence and set direction for architecture, governance, and team culture, leaving a lasting mark on the future of Generation and the broader enterprise.

Key Responsibilities

- Lead the design and implementation of modular, scalable data and AI architectures and data models for Generation, ensuring platforms serve all required data personas.
- Drive the development and management of robust ETL/ELT data pipelines, applying DataOps practices for automated quality, integrity, and observability.
- Ensure platform high availability, performance, privacy, security, and cost optimization, leveraging cloud-native technologies (e.g., Databricks, AWS, Azure, etc.).
- Champion the transition to modern, AI-supported data engineering approaches and best practices across the business unit.
- Influence and implement enterprise-wide data governance, principles, patterns, and standards, shaping the strategic direction for Generation and DigiGen.
- Provide technical leadership in CI/CD, Infrastructure as Code (e.g., Terraform), and advanced data engineering methodologies.
- Collaborate with cross-functional teams, enterprise ICT, and business stakeholders to deliver impactful, data-driven solutions aligned with strategic objectives.
- Mentor and develop data practitioners at all levels, fostering a culture of innovation, strategic thinking, and continuous improvement across teams and practices.

Capabilities

Domain expertise

- Deep expertise in designing, building, and optimizing scalable data and AI solutions for energy generation, leveraging modern cloud platforms.
- Advanced skills in developing and managing ETL/ELT pipelines, applying DataOps practices for automation, quality, and observability.
- Strong understanding of data modeling, architecture, and governance across the full data lifecycle, with the ability to set and influence standards and best practices at an enterprise level.
- Proven experience in implementing secure, high-performance, and reliable data platforms, supporting both operational and business needs.
- Ability to lead technical strategy and drive the adoption of modern engineering approaches, including CI/CD, Infrastructure as Code, and AI-supported solutions.

Individual Skills

- Exceptional communication and collaboration abilities.
- Strong planning and prioritisation skills.
- Strategic thinking, adaptability, and advanced problem-solving.
- Proven ability to lead and mentor others.
- Demonstrated leadership in technical decision-making.