Role Description
Manager, External Communications

Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

Portfolio	Primary Industries and Regional Development
Department	Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
Division/Branch/Unit	Strategy Media and Ministerial Services/Communications
Classification/Grade/Band	Grade 11 / 12
ANZSCO Code	542323
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Date of Approval	June 2025
Agency Website	www.dpird.nsw.gov.au

Agency overview

The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) is the department dedicated to growing primary industries and supporting regional economic development to deliver long term benefits to the state. Our focus is to protect, support and develop our primary industries, mining sector, and regions.

DPIRD brings together Agriculture and Biosecurity; Fisheries and Forestry; Local Land Services; NSW Resources; Regional Development and Delivery; the Regional Growth NSW Development Corporation; NSW Public Works and Soil Conservation Service.

We have nearly 5,000 employees, with almost 80 per cent of us living and working in regional NSW.

The Strategy, Media and Ministerial Services Group (SMMS) oversights a cohesive approach to Departmental strategy and related reforms, manages critical corporate projects and provides strategic advice to the Secretary. The Group leads the provision of comprehensive advice and supports the Secretary and Departmental Leadership Team to enable effective strategic decision-making and execution of Departmental strategic plans and priorities.

Core functions comprise ministerial and parliamentary services; coordination of effective governance processes; media strategy and response; corporate, stakeholder and internal communications strategy and content; and leadership across priority corporate projects and change in initiatives

Primary purpose of the role

The Manager External Communications leads a team of subject matter specialists in delivery of communications advice, supports and services to the Department's Divisions and agencies. The role ensures that effective planning and prioritisation, resource allocation and technical capabilities are available to meet the needs of the Department to support branding, website content, social media strategy and assurance.

The Communications Unit operates on a highly collaborative basis, with the Manager External Communications leading relationships with a portfolio of Divisions and/or agencies within the Department and acting as the principal point of contact facilitating provision of the full range of Unit services. This requires close collaboration across the Communications Management team to ensure an effective response to client needs.

The Manager ensures the availability, prioritisation and currency of technical expertise, capability development and setting of performance expectations for team members.

Key accountabilities

- Manage a specialised external and corporate communications team to deliver advice, supports and services across DPIRD, delivering quality strategic external communications including development of communications strategies, copy writing, editing, speech writing, advertising, website content, and promotion of compliance with various communications policies and guidelines to support business outcomes aligned with Department and Government priorities and objectives.
- Develop and build a value-adding business partnership with a nominated portfolio of Clients across the Department, working closely with Executive Directors and Directors to establish the Communications Unit as a responsive and trusted provider of advice, a source of technical excellence and provider of value-adding solutions.
- Provide professional/technical leadership to team members, through prioritisation of workflows, setting quality and performance expectations and providing guidance and quality assurance.
- Maintain strong professional working relationships with client agencies, and with Media Units with a particular focus on assessing and understanding needs, identifying solutions, and evaluating satisfaction levels.
- Collaborate with Communications management peers to ensure that there is a planned response to needs across the Department, effective application and management of resources within the Branch, and optimum application of capabilities.
- Manage delivery of advice and services across DPIRD to achieve consistency and clarity in messaging, communication protocols, processes and methods.
- Encourage knowledge sharing and development of new ideas, initiatives, approaches or tools which provide opportunities for ongoing improvements in efficiency or effectiveness.
- Develop team members, identifying capability development needs, establishing proactive feedback processes, evaluating and manage team performance and effectiveness.

Key challenges

- Leading a cultural shift to a strong client-centered operating model while ensuring the efficient and effective use of resources, especially in a context of competing demands.
- Ensuring a highly collaborative leadership model which underpins the Unit’s reputation and client perceptions as a value-adding trusted advisor and provider of quality services.
- Managing a well-planned flexible resourcing model to ensure the availability of experienced technical resources and perceived seamlessness in response to client needs.

Key relationships

Internal

Who	Why
Director Communications	• Prioritisation of work program and plans • Set objectives, performance expectations, and provide work program progress reports • Inform of emerging and contentious issues or resourcing conflicts • Contribute to development and implementation of the Unit's business plan • Participate in business process improvement initiatives • Collaborate around formulation of appropriate communications strategies and channels • Provide specialised expertise. • Collectively, lead the development and ongoing application of a high quality, client-centred business partnering culture and response
Departmental Executives and Program/Project Managers	• Implement a proactive business partnership model, and lead visible collaboration with Divisional, Group and agency leaders and key executive and program leaders to define communications needs and prioritise delivery of high-quality advice and services. • Advise and collaborate on a communications response to emerging and or contentious issues and solutions
External Communications Team staff	• Inspire and motivate team, provide leadership and clear direction and build technical and management capability • Articulate strategies, and engage teams to understand common and shared organisational objectives, policies and procedures • Promote a culture of collaboration and knowledge sharing

External

Who	Why
Other government departments and agencies	• Develop effective networks across government to maintain currency, share knowledge and leverage best practice.
Third party consultants, vendors and contractors	• Ensure reliable access to contingent specialised capabilities to satisfy the needs of the department and its divisions and agencies.

Role dimensions

Decision making

- Works with limited supervision and guidance to achieve overall agreed work program commitments with a high level of autonomy to set direction, determines day to day work priorities for the team and make decisions
- Support the Director to deliver projects and tasks on time, within budget and to a high standard and is accountable for the content, accuracy, validity and integrity of advice provided and conflicts.
- Operates within legislative and regulatory provisions, public sector frameworks, DPIRD business plans, policies, delegations, budget and resource parameters

Reporting line

Director, Communications

Direct reports

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Budget/Expenditure

TBA

Capabilities for the role

The NSW public sector capability framework describes the capabilities (knowledge, skills and abilities) needed to perform a role. There are four main groups of capabilities: personal attributes, relationships, results and business enablers, with a fifth people management group of capabilities for roles with managerial responsibilities. These groups, combined with capabilities drawn from occupation-specific capability sets where relevant, work together to provide an understanding of the capabilities needed for the role.

The capabilities are separated into focus capabilities and complementary capabilities

Focus capabilities

Focus capabilities are the capabilities considered the most important for effective performance of the role. These capabilities will be assessed at recruitment.

The focus capabilities for this role are shown below with a brief explanation of what each capability covers and the indicators describing the types of behaviours expected at each level.

Focus capabilities

Capability group/sets	Capability name	Behavioural indicators	Level
	Act with Integrity Be ethical and professional, and uphold and promote the public sector values	• Represent the organisation in an honest, ethical and professional way and encourage others to do so • Act professionally and support a culture of integrity • Identify and explain ethical issues and set an example for others to follow • Ensure that others are aware of and understand the legislation and policy framework within which they operate • Act to prevent and report misconduct and illegal and inappropriate behaviour	Adept

	Work Collaboratively Collaborate with others and value their contribution	• Recognise outcomes achieved through effective collaboration between teams • Build cooperation and overcome barriers to information sharing, communication and collaboration across the organisation and across government • Facilitate opportunities to engage and collaborate with stakeholders to develop joint solutions • Network extensively across government and organisations to increase collaboration • Encourage others to use appropriate collaboration approaches and tools, including digital technologies	Advanced
	Communicate Effectively Communicate clearly, actively listen to others, and respond with understanding and respect	• Present with credibility, engage diverse audiences and test levels of understanding • Translate technical and complex information clearly and concisely for diverse audiences • Create opportunities for others to contribute to discussion and debate • Contribute to and promote information sharing across the organisation • Manage complex communications that involve understanding and responding to multiple and divergent viewpoints • Explore creative ways to engage diverse audiences and communicate information • Adjust style and approach to optimise outcomes • Write fluently and persuasively in plain English and in a range of styles and formats	Advanced
	Influence and Negotiate Gain consensus and commitment from others, and resolve issues and conflicts	• Influence others with a fair and considered approach and present persuasive counter-arguments • Work towards mutually beneficial 'win-win' outcomes • Show sensitivity and understanding in resolving acute and complex conflicts and differences • Identify key stakeholders and gain their support in advance • Establish a clear negotiation position based on research, a firm grasp of key issues, likely arguments, points of difference and areas for compromise • Anticipate and minimise conflict within the organisation and with external stakeholders	Advanced

	Plan and Prioritise Plan to achieve priority outcomes and respond flexibly to changing circumstances	• Understand the links between the business unit, organisation and the whole-of-government agenda • Ensure business plan goals are clear and appropriate and include contingency provisions • Monitor the progress of initiatives and make necessary adjustments • Anticipate and assess the impact of changes, including government policy and economic conditions, on business plans and initiatives and respond appropriately • Consider the implications of a wide range of complex issues and shift business priorities when necessary • Undertake planning to help the organisation transition through change initiatives, and evaluate progress and outcomes to inform future planning	Advanced
	Project Management Understand and apply effective planning, coordination and control methods	• Prepare and review project scope and business cases for projects with multiple interdependencies • Access key subject-matter experts' knowledge to inform project plans and directions • Design and implement effective stakeholder engagement and communications strategies for all project stages • Monitor project completion and implement effective and rigorous project evaluation methodologies to inform future planning • Develop effective strategies to remedy variances from project plans and minimise impact • Manage transitions between project stages and ensure that changes are consistent with organisational goals Participate in governance processes such as project steering group	Adept

	Manage and Develop People Engage and motivate staff, and develop capability and potential in others	• Refine roles and responsibilities over time to achieve better business outcomes • Recognise talent, develop team capability and undertake succession planning • Coach and mentor staff and encourage professional development and continuous learning • Prioritise addressing and resolving team and individual performance issues and ensure that this approach is cascaded throughout the organisation • Implement performance development frameworks to align workforce capability with the organisation's current and future priorities and objectives	Advanced

Complementary capabilities

Complementary capabilities are also identified from the Capability Framework and relevant occupation-specific capability sets. They are important to identifying performance required for the role and development opportunities. Note: capabilities listed as 'not essential' for this role are not relevant for recruitment purposes however may be relevant for future career development.

Capability group/sets	Capability name	Description	Level
	Manage Self	Show drive and motivation, an ability to self-reflect and a commitment to learning	Adept
	Display Resilience and courage	Be open and honest, prepared to express your views, and willing to accept and commit to change	Adept
	Value Diversity and Inclusion	Demonstrate inclusive behaviour and show respect for diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives	intermediate
	Commit to Customer Service	Provide customer-focused services in line with public sector and organisational objectives	Adept
	Plan and Prioritise	Plan to achieve priority outcomes and respond flexibly to changing circumstances	Adept
	Deliver Results	Achieve results through the efficient use of resources and a commitment to quality outcomes	Adept
	Think and solve Problems	Think, analyse and consider the broader context to develop practical solutions	Adept
	Demonstrate Accountability	Be proactive and responsible for own actions, and adhere to legislation, policy and guidelines	Adept
	Finance	Understand and apply financial processes to achieve value for money and minimise financial risk	Intermediate
	Procurement and Contract Management	Understand and apply procurement processes to ensure effective purchasing and contract performance	Adept

	Project Management	Understand and apply effective planning, coordination and control methods	Adept
	Inspire Direction and Purpose	Communicate goals, priorities and vision, and recognise achievements	Adept
	Optimise Business Outcomes	Manage people and resources effectively to achieve public value	Adept
	Manage Reform and change	Support, promote and champion change, and assist others to engage with change	Intermediate