Australian Centre for Disease Control

Job application kit

Senior Public Affairs 2

Director, Communications & Public Affairs

Reference: 26CDC-SEB-10181

Job reference number:	**26CDC-SEB-10181**
Classification level:	Senior Public Affairs 2
Job title:	Director, Communications & Public Affairs
Division/Branch/Section:	Strategy and Operations Division, Strategy and Engagement Branch, Communication and Public Information Section
Employment type:	Ongoing
Salary:	$176,426 - $ 183,562 per annum
Base location:	Canberra, ACT, Sydney, NSW, Melbourne, VIC, Adelaide, SA, Hobart, TAS, Brisbane, QLD, Perth, WA, Darwin, NT
Security clearance requirements:	Negative Vetting 2
Contact officer:	Masha

About the Australian Centre for Disease Control (Australian CDC)

The Australian Centre for Disease Control (CDC) is at the frontline of improving Australia's ability to prepare for and respond to public health challenges, including pandemics. The Australian CDC is an independent technical advisory agency on public health matters and a leader in disease control, preparedness, response and prevention.

We bring together experts, data and evidence to provide independent public health advice to government. Our advice informs government decisions about preventing and controlling diseases and preparing Australia for future health threats. The CDC collaborates with national and international health bodies to strengthen Australia's public health infrastructure.

For more information on what we do, visit our website:
Australian Centre for Disease Control.

Working with us

The Australian CDC is a dynamic place to work, offering professional growth and flexible and competitive employment conditions. Our workspaces and our culture reflect a modern, flexible and safe work environment, empowering our people to deliver their best work. We value diversity and embrace inclusion.

A job with the CDC offers:

- exciting and fulfilling work, collaborating with experts to innovate and contribute to safeguarding Australia from human diseases and public health threats
- networking opportunities with experienced leaders who support you to achieve your career ambitions
- a respectful, inclusive and safe workplace where you are supported to perform at your best
- an attractive remuneration package including generous employer superannuation contributions and allowances
- support for mutually beneficial flexible work arrangements, such as part-time work, or working from home or remotely, where operational requirements allow
- modern, activity-based offices and a digitally enabled work environment to enhance communication, collaboration and innovation.

The opportunity

The Director, Communications & Public Affairs is accountable for leading the CDC's communication function and strengthening public understanding of, and trust and confidence in, its role in protecting the health of Australians. The position will lead a proactive, strategic and outward-facing approach to communications, building the profile of the CDC and its leaders and positioning the organisation as a trusted, authoritative and accessible voice on public health.

The Director will lead the implementation and evaluation of the CDC Communication Strategy, translating organisational and government priorities into coordinated delivery plans, compelling public narratives and measurable outcomes. The remit encompasses strategic communication, media and public information, digital and social channels, brand and storytelling, stakeholder and community engagement, and emergency and surge communications.

The role will advise the Director-General and executive leadership on complex and sensitive matters, strengthen their external profile and visibility, anticipate emerging issues and opportunities, manage communication and reputational risks, and ensure public advice is timely, accurate, accessible and evidence-informed.

The role will build influential relationships across governments, health services, research institutions, professional bodies, community organisations and trusted voice and spokesperson networks. It will also build and shape the communications function and capability the CDC needs as it matures, leading a multidisciplinary team, establishing clear governance and workflows, and maintaining the capability to mobilise rapidly during public health incidents and national emergencies.

Key responsibilities

Strategic communications leadership

- set strategic direction for the CDC's communication function and translate organisational priorities into clear operational plans and outcomes
- develop and implement the CDC Communication Strategy, governance arrangements and associated delivery plans
- provide authoritative, evidence-based advice to the Director-General, executive leadership and senior internal and external stakeholders on complex and sensitive communication matters
- anticipate emerging issues, assess strategic implications and manage communication risks within the CDC's risk appetite
- balance the strategic with the urgent to ensure appropriately responsive CDC communications activity and media engagement is grounded in a strategic communications approach
- establish a clear organisational narrative and evaluate communication performance against measurable outcomes.

Media and public information

- lead media engagement and public information activities on behalf of the CDC, including on complex, sensitive and high-profile matters
- establish and oversee a proactive media program and national spokesperson model
- direct media preparedness, issues management and reputation risk activities, providing clear escalation and decision-making arrangements
- exercise leadership and sound judgement during outbreaks, public health incidents and emergency responses
- ensure public advice is timely, accurate, evidence-based, accessible and consistent with agreed policy and operational settings.

Content, digital and channel management

- set priorities and oversee delivery across the CDC's digital channels and public-facing content

- lead the development of integrated campaigns, publications, toolkits, fact sheets, videos and digital content
- establish quality, accessibility and assurance standards so content is audience-focused and reflects public health communication best practice
- ensure the CDC website remains an authoritative, trusted and contemporary source of public health information.

Audience insight and evaluation

- establish audience insight, social listening and communication measurement capability to inform strategic decisions
- commission and lead research and evaluation to assess effectiveness, reach and impact
- synthesise evidence, behavioural insights and community feedback to identify risks, opportunities and appropriate communication responses
- use performance information to drive continuous improvement, organisational learning and responsible resource allocation.

Stakeholder and trusted voice networks

- build and sustain influential relationships across governments, health services, community organisations, research institutions and professional bodies
- negotiate shared priorities and deliver mutually beneficial outcomes across diverse and sometimes competing stakeholder interests
- establish trusted voice and spokesperson networks that extend the reach and credibility of CDC communication
- champion community-centred approaches, including meaningful engagement with priority populations and stakeholder groups
- represent the CDC with credibility and communicate persuasively in senior, public and cross-jurisdictional forums.

Organisational capability and workforce leadership

- lead, coach and develop a high-performing, inclusive and multidisciplinary communication and public information team
- set clear roles, accountabilities, performance expectations and workflows across the communication function
- plan and manage financial, workforce and specialist resources to deliver priorities and maintain surge capability
- build organisational capability in strategic communication, media engagement, crisis communication, audience insight and public health communication
- work nimbly across diverse technically expert functions and teams, engaging effectively with staff at all levels, and with stakeholders, both to respond to

emerging issues and to ensure communications activity is grounded in a strategic approach
- lead change, encourage innovation and foster a culture of integrity, collaboration, learning and continuous improvement.

Emergency and surge communications

- maintain organisational readiness for public health emergencies through tested communication plans, governance and assurance arrangements
- lead surge communication capability and emergency operating arrangements, including the rapid mobilisation of people and resources
- make timely, evidence-informed decisions in uncertain and high-pressure environments, identifying and escalating significant risks
- ensure communication systems, processes and resources can scale during major incidents and national emergencies
- participate in CDC emergency response governance and contribute influential advice to whole-of-government and cross-jurisdictional decision-making.

Key capabilities

To succeed in this role the Director will demonstrate:

- proven experience leading strategic communication, media or public affairs functions in complex, high-profile environments
- demonstrated ability to translate organisational priorities into integrated communication strategies, delivery plans and measurable outcomes
- proven experience providing authoritative advice to executives on sensitive communication matters, emerging issues and reputational risks
- proven experience leading media engagement, issues management and crisis or emergency communication, balancing urgent demands with strategic priorities
- demonstrated ability to oversee campaigns, digital channels and public-facing content that translate complex evidence into clear, accurate and accessible information
- proven experience building influential relationships across government, health, media and community networks, including trusted voices and spokespeople
- proven experience leading multidisciplinary teams, managing budgets and specialist resources, and strengthening governance, capability and emergency readiness
- demonstrated ability to use audience research, behavioural insights, social listening and evaluation to improve communication effectiveness.

Qualifications and experience

The successful candidate will bring substantial senior-level experience leading strategic communication and public information functions in a complex, high-profile and rapidly changing environment. They will demonstrate the strategic expertise, judgement and accountability expected at the Executive Level 2 classification.

Relevant tertiary qualifications in Communications, Journalism, Public Relations, Marketing, Public Health or a related discipline are highly desirable. Equivalent senior professional experience will also be considered.

Relevant experience will include:

- ability to combine strategic perspective with a practical, hands-on approach to delivery
- ability to exercise sound judgement, balance competing priorities and maintain composure in uncertain or high-pressure environments
- ability to communicate clearly and persuasively, translate technical information and build credibility with diverse audiences
- ability to work collaboratively across organisational boundaries, value specialist expertise and negotiate shared outcomes
- commitment to accessible, inclusive and community-centred communication that respects diverse perspectives and needs
- ability to adapt to changing circumstances, navigate ambiguity and identify constructive, workable solutions
- demonstrated integrity, accountability and commitment to the APS Values, Employment Principles and Code of Conduct
- ability to develop others, set clear expectations and foster an inclusive culture of collaboration, learning and continuous improvement.

Security clearance

The successful candidate must be able to obtain and maintain a Negative Vetting 2 security clearance.

RecruitAbility minimum requirements

Minimum requirements for this role are:

- demonstrated experience leading a substantial communication, media or public information function in a complex, high-profile environment

- ability to set strategic direction, translate organisational priorities into practical plans and deliver measurable communication outcomes
- ability to provide authoritative advice and exercise sound judgement on complex, sensitive or time-critical communication issues
- ability to lead multidisciplinary teams and manage people, financial, project and specialist resources to achieve results
- ability to build influential stakeholder relationships, negotiate outcomes and communicate effectively with senior leaders and diverse audiences
- demonstrated experience managing strategic, reputational and operational risks, including communication during crises, emergencies or matters of significant public interest
- ability to meet the role's eligibility and security requirements, including obtaining and maintaining a Negative Vetting 2 security clearance.

RecruitAbility is a scheme which aims to attract applicants with disability and create an equitable, level playing field. All vacancies for the Australian CDC are advertised under the RecruitAbility Scheme.

Applicants with a disability are advanced to a further stage in the selection process if they:

- opt into the scheme
- declare they have disability
- meet the minimum requirements of a vacancy advertised under the scheme.

Candidates who opt into RecruitAbility are not required to provide specific details of their disability to the panel. More information on RecruitAbility can be found here: RecruitAbility scheme: A guide for applicants.

Eligibility

It is a requirement for anyone who is employed by the CDC to be an Australian citizen.

The successful candidate will be assessed through our pre-employment screening checks, such as an Australian Criminal History Check.

How to apply

Apply by 11:30 pm AEDT on 2 December 2026.
To be considered for this role, applicants must submit a completed Australian CDC Application Form, and provide **a tailored CV of no more than 4 pages**, including the contact details of at least 2 nominated referees to jobs@cdc.gov.au.

Note: Incomplete applications may not proceed to shortlisting.

Who to contact

If you experience any difficulties accessing or submitting your application, please contact our Recruitment team via **Masha via** jobs@cdc.gov.au.

Work environment description

Responsibilities – As detailed in Section 28 of the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 while at work, a worker must:

- take reasonable care for his or her own health and safety
- take reasonable care that his or her acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons
- comply, so far as the worker is reasonably able, with any reasonable instruction that is given by the person conducting the business or undertaking to allow the person to comply with this Act
- cooperate with any reasonable policy or procedure of the person conducting the business or undertaking relating to health or safety at the workplace that has been notified to workers
- complete all WHS related induction and training
- report all work-related incidents or illnesses to the WHS Section.

Description	Requirement	Additional information
Administrative		
1. Computer use	Yes	
2. Generic screen based	Yes	
3. Sitting at desk	Yes	
4. Standing for long periods	No	
Manual handling		
5. Lifting 0–15kg	Yes	
6. Lifting 15 kg +	No	
7. Climbing	No	
8. Bending	No	

9. Squatting	No	
10. Reaching	No	
11. Push/pull	No	
12. Sequential repetitive movements in short period of time	No	
13. Manual dexterity/manipulation	No	
Work environment		
14. Work with others towards shared goals in a team environment	Yes	
15. Works in isolation from other staff	No	
16. Distance walking (that is, large building or inter-building transit)	No	
17. Works outdoors	No	
18.Works in a call centre environment	No	
19. Works in a customer service environment	No	
Tasks involving		
20. Exposure to chemicals	No	
21. Exposure to biological hazards	No	
22. Working at heights	No	
23. Requirement to wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	No	
24. Requirement for full-colour vision	No	
25. Work with energetics and explosives	No	
26. Exposure to petrol, oil, lubricant products that may cause dermatological conditions	No	
27. Exposure to extreme temperatures	No	
28. Confined spaces	No	
29. Exposure to non-ionising radiation	No	

30. Excessive noise	No	
31. Low lighting	No	
32. Dangerous goods/equipment	No	
33. Exposure to airborne odours	No	
34. Frequent travel – vehicle	No	
36. Frequent travel – seaborne	No	
Cyclic workload		
37. Peaks and troughs	Yes	
38. Frequent overtime	No	Unless there is an active public health emergency
39. Rostered shift work	Yes	