

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER GRADES 1- 3 SENIOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER GRADES 1 AND 2

GROUP STANDARD

Definition

Public Affairs Officers are responsible for the initiation, development, production and implementation of public relations and public communications strategies. This includes the dissemination and/or marketing of information on government programs and policies by the creation and/or editing, using VDT equipment as appropriate, of written, spoken or electronically communicated material used in the media and for publication.

At Public Affairs Officer Grade 3 and above, it includes the direction and management of this work or specialisation, involving participation in public affairs tasks which are consonant with the contribution of other senior officers in the management of the agency.

Features

Dissemination and/or marketing of public information includes the following activities associated with promoting the corporate image of the agency

- Public Relations or Public Communications media liaison, information and education campaigns targeted towards specific audiences or for the population at large within Australia and/or abroad; it may include the assessment of audience responses to campaigns along with other market and opinion research.
- Publicity the promotion of government and agency programs, policy initiatives and other activities of public interest through the media, publications and static displays within Australia and/or abroad.
- Publication the creation, editing (including layout and design), production and distribution of editorial matter intended for public relations, public information and publicity purposes within Australia and/or abroad, e.g. media releases, brochures, forms, pamphlets, annual reports and booklets, audio visual material, television and radio material.

Liaison within Australia and/or abroad with representatives of the print and electronic media, members of the Government and their officials and the general public is found at all Levels to varying degrees.

Public Affairs Officers may supervise supporting Public Affairs Officer and non Public Affairs Officer staff.

Public Affairs Officers, as well as officers of other classification structures, may be involved in functions such as

- formulating advertising strategies;
- organising static displays and exhibitions;
- planning film/video/radio productions;
- drafting official reports, instruction manuals and similar documents.

Eligibility Requirements

1. Completion of a media cadetship leading to employment as a graded journalist, public relations or marketing officer, press photographer, film/video director or producer, or creative/graphic art designer; or
2. A degree or diploma or postgraduate diploma with a major in journalism, editing, communications, public relations, marketing, press photography, television/radio

production, film/video production, creative/graphic art design, of an Australian tertiary institution, or a comparable overseas qualification which, in the opinion of the Secretary, is appropriate to the duties of the office; or

3. Possession of recognised skills or relevant experience in the fields referred to in clauses 1 or 2 which, in the opinion of the Secretary, are appropriate to the duties of the office.

Terms used - Roles

Public affairs practitioner at Public Affairs Officer Grades 1 3 is an individual, team member or team leader. Public Affairs Officers Grades 1 and 2 apply public affairs judgement across a limited range of activities. Public Affairs Officers Grades 1 and 2 may undertake normal public affairs work under supervision and guidance. Public affairs supervision is required for Public Affairs Officers Grade 1 and may be required for Public Affairs Officers Grade 2. Public Affairs Officers Grade 3 carry out a broad range of activities or functions using relevant practices or procedures. In this role they can provide advice to others on aspects of public affairs and can be expected to contribute in an original and creative manner to the activities of the work area. This role may include the supervision of subordinate Public Affairs Officers and other staff.

Public Affairs Director at Public Affairs Officer Grade 3 and Senior Public Affairs Officer Grades 1 and 2. A person in this capacity is required to have wide or considerable or extensive knowledge of the principles, practices and procedures applicable to public affairs. The Director will be responsible for the achievement of particular objectives or completion of a project within an agency or its regional or overseas office. This responsibility includes accountability for material, human and financial resources allocated to that objective or project.

Public Affairs Specialist at Public Affairs Officer Grade 3 and Senior Public Affairs Officer Grades 1 and 2. A person in this capacity has substantial in depth and/or extensive public affairs knowledge. They would be engaged on:

- complex public affairs work;
- complex and novel public affairs work;
- or complex, novel and critical public affairs work

related to some or all of the agency's operations. An original and continuing contribution to the field of public affairs is an essential element of this role.

Other Terms used

Complex public affairs work means work which includes various tasks involving different approaches. Depending on the subject or issues involved in each assignment and the appropriate course of action that may have to be selected from various alternatives, the degree of complexity ranges from less complex to highly complex.

Corporate impact is a measure of the effect of public affairs decisions made or advice given on agency policies and operations and the achievement of program objectives. Corporate impact is direct in the case of decisions taken, e.g. in determining policy or committing resources, or indirect where advice or recommendations are involved. Particular advice or recommendations in relation to public relations /communications strategies may, for example, influence the work of a major function or area of an agency's operations or have an effect beyond that agency.

Critical public affairs work refers to a critical issue or critical decision requiring the exercise of sound public affairs judgement which affects the effectiveness, standing and credibility of the agency's operations.

General public affairs guidance refers to guidance given by a Public Affairs Officer Grade 3 or Senior Public Affairs Officer Grade 1 or 2 on a range of public affairs assignments. There is discretion in selecting the most appropriate method of completing these and conformity with directions is measured by satisfactory completion of allocated public affairs assignments.

General supervision refers to the supervision given by a Public Affairs Officer to non Public Affairs Officer staff. It consists of the allocation, direction, oversight and co ordination of the work of such staff. Public Affairs Officers may receive direction on non public affairs matters from non public affairs staff.

Marketing means devising and executing strategies to promote and explain government and/or agency policies and programs. It is not intended to be that function which is directly related to the sale of materials, products or services.

Normal public affairs work includes ongoing public affairs duties performed in accordance with conventional or established public affairs practices and procedures, but involving some degree of creativity even where straightforward tasks are involved.

Novel public affairs work encompasses work requiring a significant degree of creativity, originality and initiative.

Public affairs judgement involves the application of public affairs knowledge and experience in defining public affairs objectives, devising approaches to be taken, reviewing the work of others, interpreting results of public affairs campaigns and providing and assessing advice or recommendations.

Public affairs knowledge includes knowledge of principles and procedures applicable to public affairs matters. It is obtained in the course of acquiring entry requirements to the Public Affairs Officer structure and subsequently through experience as a Public Affairs Officer.

Public affairs management involves the application and development of public affairs plans and strategies, including related financial and human resource management plans and strategies, formulated or devised by those in the Public Affairs Officer structure. Public affairs supervision refers to supervision given to Public Affairs Officers which requires the exercise of public affairs judgement and consists of

- setting guidelines for the work of Public Affairs Officers;
- suggesting approaches for the conduct of public affairs work;
- solving problems raised by subordinate Public Affairs Officers;
- giving decisions on solutions proposed by subordinate Public Affairs Officers;
- reviewing and sometimes checking the work of other Public Affairs Officers.

Publication(s) are media releases, brochures, pamphlets, annual reports, booklets, press photographs and photographic collations, creative art and other printed material; and film, television, video and other audio visual products and presentations for public relations, public information, marketing or publicity purposes.

Routine (in the context of public affairs supervision) refers to supervision which is appropriate to a recently qualified or experienced public affairs practitioner. It should provide a reasonable degree of latitude to allow a person to exercise skills learned and experience acquired, but would involve provision of any necessary guidance on how to approach and/or undertake particular tasks which may be monitored while in progress as appropriate.

Guidelines

Managerial positions in Public Relations/Public Information Sections should be classified in the Public Affairs Officer structure when the following conditions apply:

1. the major part of the occupant's time is spent in the supervision of Public Affairs Officers and/or in making decisions or giving advice on the style and form of material used for public relations, public information, public education or publicity purposes; and
2. the position involves planning or implementing agency marketing or public affairs programs; and
3. Public Affairs Officer eligibility requirements as prescribed by the Public Service Commission under sub section 33A(l) of the Public Service Act 1922 are seen to apply.

Any persons from outside the Public Affairs Officer structure may be engaged in formulating and planning agency marketing or public affairs programs from time to time as their specialised knowledge/expertise is required, e.g. in formulating strategies for gaining support, understanding and acceptance of agency initiatives and achievements and in measuring public responses to such initiatives and achievements.

Officers other than Public Affairs Officers may prepare information and data from official records which may subsequently be used for public affairs purposes.

This information is correct as at August 2008 – details from the MEAA and www.workplace.gov.au.