

Westland District Council

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job title

Principal Communications Advisor

Purpose

The Principal Communications Advisor is responsible for developing and delivering effective internal and external communications that enhance the Council's reputation, engage the community, and ensure clear and transparent messaging. This role involves media management, content creation, stakeholder engagement, and digital communications.

Specific duties and responsibilities

Communications Strategy and Implementation

- Develop and implement communications strategy and plans that align to the District's communications strategy, ensuring Council communications consistently meet style, tone, and branding standards.

Media Relations and Public Relations

- Establish and maintain effective working relationships with local, regional and sector media by ensuring media enquiries are responded to in a timely and professional manner with accurate information provided.
- Prepare media releases as required, ensuring Council's reputation is enhanced through providing proactive and consistent communication;
- Research and write speech notes and/or editorial columns for the Chief Executive, Mayor, Group Managers, and/or elected members as required.
- Monitor media coverage and provide reports and insights to senior management.

Digital Communications and Content Creation

- Maintain accuracy and regularly update Council webpages and social media channels, ensuring plain English, positive language and the style guide is applied across all channels.
- Oversee social media channels, creating engaging and relevant content.
- Develop multimedia content, including videos, graphics, and infographics, to support communication efforts.
- Monitor digital engagement and analytics, reporting on effectiveness and recommending improvements.

Internal Communications

- Maintain and update internal communication resources
- Support internal communication initiatives to enhance staff engagement and information sharing.
- Develop internal newsletters, intranet updates, and staff communication materials.

Stakeholder Engagement and Community Relations

- Seek opportunities to raise engagement and awareness of Council services, ensuring Council is a trusted partner;
- Assist in planning and executing public consultations and community engagement initiatives.
- Work closely with key internal and external stakeholders to ensure clear and effective communication.
- Support crisis communication efforts as needed, ensuring accurate and timely information dissemination.

Event and Campaign Management

- Support managers in the development of communication plans for key activities and projects within required timeframes, budget, and ensuring general and project specific communication needs are understood and responded to appropriately.
- Contribute to the development of key messaging for Council initiatives, projects, and public engagement.
- Undertake and assist with any special communication-related projects.
- Assist in planning and executing communication campaigns for Council events, projects, and initiatives.
- Provide communication support for public meetings, hearings, and community events.

Compliance and Best Practices

- Ensure all communications comply with legal, ethical, and policy requirements.
- Stay updated on communication best practices, emerging trends, and technological advancements.

Key Relationships

Internal

- Senior Management Team
- Office of the CE
- Various Council departments
- Mayor and Councillors

External

- Media representatives
- Community stakeholders
- Local businesses and organisations
- Government agencies and industry bodies

Delegated Authority:

N/A

Staff management:

N/A

Reporting To

- Quality Assurance Manager

Health and Safety

- To adhere to all Council and safety plans, policies and procedures including using protective equipment supplied.
- To identify existing or potential hazardous conditions and recommend appropriate corrective actions.
- To report all accidents and near miss events.
- To be familiar with emergency procedures.
- To ensure safe working conditions, develop safe working practices and wear protective clothing and equipment where necessary.
- To implement the removal of hazards where practicable and provide training in this area.
- To investigate accidents and near miss events.
- To ensure staff are trained and kept up to date with any new work safe policy changes.
- To ensure visitors and contractors operate under the Council health and safety policy and procedures.

Civil Defence/Emergency Management

- To meet the Council's statutory responsibilities for civil defence and emergency management you will be expected to participate in any civil defence and emergency management training initiatives and undertake activities, as directed as part of Council's emergency response.

Skills, experience & education

Qualifications and Experience

- A tertiary qualification in Communications, Public Relations, Journalism, or a related field.

- Minimum of 3 years of experience in a communications, public relations, or media role.
- Experience in government, public sector, or local council communications is highly desirable.
- Proven ability to manage media relations and crisis communications.
- Strong writing, editing, and proofreading skills with attention to detail.
- Experience managing websites and social media platforms.

Knowledge and Skills

- Demonstrated excellent written and verbal communications skills.
- Organises information in a logical sequence using content appropriate for the purpose and audience, using feedback to ensure understanding.
- Ensures written communication contains the necessary information to achieve their purpose.
- Strong relationship management and stakeholder engagement skills.
- Ability to work under pressure and manage multiple priorities.
- High level of professionalism, discretion, and political awareness.
- Proficiency in digital tools, including content management systems, social media management, and design software (e.g., Canva, Adobe Suite).
- Strong analytical and problem-solving skills.

General duties

- Be punctual and work the hours and times specified.
- Prioritise workload to ensure work of the greatest importance to the business is undertaken with urgency and to a high standard.
- Support and help develop a positive workplace culture.
- Demonstrate excellent interpersonal communication skills.
- Responsibly manage all business resources within accountability levels.
- Undertake all duties and responsibilities outlined in this job description and all other duties as required by the business.
- Comply with all employment obligations.
- Promptly undertake to complete all reasonable and lawful instructions and directions given.
- Serve the business in good faith, promoting and protecting the business's best interests.
- During work time, and such other times as may be reasonably required, dedicate all effort to the execution and fulfillment of the duties, responsibilities, obligations, and instructions related to employment.
- Demonstrate through own actions a commitment to Health and Safety at work when undertaking work or observing others in the workplace.