

# Role Description

## Head of Strategic Communications & Engagement



| Role Description Fields               | Details                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Department/Agency                     | Museums of History NSW                                                      |
| Division/Branch/Unit                  | Strategy & Engagement Division / Strategic Communications & Engagement Team |
| Role number                           | TBC                                                                         |
| Classification/Grade/Band             | 11/12                                                                       |
| Senior executive work level standards | Not Applicable                                                              |
| OSCA Code                             | TBC                                                                         |
| PCAT Code                             | TBC                                                                         |
| Date of Approval                      | 15 June 2026                                                                |
| Agency Website                        | <a href="http://www.mhnsw.au">www.mhnsw.au</a>                              |

### Agency overview

Museums of History NSW brings together a portfolio of iconic museums, rich collections and heritage sites, the nation's oldest archive collection, vital recordkeeping services and expert staff.

We bring history to life by sharing the stories of our places and collections. Through the State Archives Collection, we manage NSW's official documentary heritage, supporting government transparency and the public's right to access information.

These two roles do not just sit side by side – they inform and enrich each other. By preserving and making accessible our places, collections and archives, we create opportunities for people to explore the past and better understand their own place in the world. By supporting lifelong learning and inviting people to come together, we promote civic literacy, empathy, wellbeing and belonging.

We believe that history belongs to everyone. This is the promise and the purpose of MHNSW.

Museums of History NSW is a state cultural institution, established under the Museums of History NSW Act 2022. It is an agency of the NSW Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport (DCITHS).

### Primary purpose of the role

The Head of Strategic Communications & Engagement leads the strategic direction and delivery of communications, media relations, stakeholder engagement and government relations across MHNSW, shaping how the organisation communicates with staff, government, media, partners, stakeholders and the community.

Through integrated communications, media and engagement strategies, the role strengthens MHNSW's reputation, influence and organisational alignment, ensuring its priorities, programs and public position are clearly understood and effectively supported by key stakeholders.

Operating within a complex and high-profile state cultural institution, the role provides strategic advice to the CEO, Executive and senior leaders; leads proactive and reactive media, corporate messaging, issues and reputation management; oversees stakeholder management, Board-facing communications and strategic stakeholder events; and ensures communications activity is coordinated, timely and aligned to organisational and government priorities.

## Key accountabilities

- Lead the development and delivery of integrated strategic communications, media relations, community engagement, government relations and strategic events activity that advances MHNSW's priorities, strengthens reputation and supports organisational impact.
- Provide high-level strategic communications advice to the CEO, Executive and senior leaders to support informed decision-making, effective public positioning and clear communication on complex, sensitive and high-profile matters.
- Lead proactive and reactive media relations to promote MHNSW's work, programs, collections and priorities, generate positive media coverage and public awareness, and manage issues, reputational risks and media enquiries through timely, accurate and strategically aligned responses.
- Shape and maintain MHNSW's corporate messaging, executive communications and public positioning to ensure the organisation communicates with clarity, consistency and authority across internal and external audiences.
- Lead strategic stakeholder management and engagement with government, the MHNSW Board and Board Committees, sector, media, community and partner organisations to strengthen relationships, build influence and support effective collaboration, information flow and high-quality Board and executive materials.
- Oversee internal communications that connect staff to MHNSW's strategic direction, priorities, achievements and change agenda, supporting organisational alignment and a shared understanding of key issues.
- Lead the planning and delivery of strategic events, briefings, announcements and engagement opportunities that support stakeholder relationships, public visibility and organisational objectives.
- Lead and develop a high-performing communications and engagement function, ensuring effective planning, systems, standards, budgets, reporting and continuous improvement across the team.

## Key challenges

- Balancing proactive promotion of MHNSW's work, programs and collections with the need to manage sensitive, complex or high-profile issues in a timely and strategically aligned way.
- Building clear, consistent and coordinated communications across a complex cultural institution with multiple sites, functions, audiences and stakeholders.
- Strengthening MHNSW's reputation, influence and stakeholder relationships while responding to changing government priorities, media interest, public expectations and organisational needs.

## Key relationships

### Internal

| Who                             | Why                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Director, Strategy & Engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Align communications, media, stakeholder engagement, government relations and strategic events activity with divisional and organisational priorities, and escalate significant issues, risks and opportunities as required.</li></ul> |
| CEO and Executive               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide strategic communications advice and support clear, consistent messaging on organisational priorities, sensitive issues and high-profile matters.</li></ul>                                                                     |
| Direct reports                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide leadership, direction and performance management, and support a collaborative, capable and high-performing team.</li></ul>                                                                                                     |
| Functional heads                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Coordinate communications and engagement activity across MHNSW, and identify opportunities to promote programs, places, collections, exhibitions and events.</li></ul>                                                                 |

| Who                              | Why                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| MHNSW Board and Board Committees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support clear, accurate and timely information, briefings and communications that enable effective information flow and informed decision-making.</li> </ul> |

## External

| Who                                                                   | Why                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Minister's Office, government agencies and public sector stakeholders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support effective communication, information sharing and engagement with government and public sector stakeholders on priorities, announcements and sensitive matters.</li> </ul> |
| Media, journalists and broadcasters                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build productive media relationships, generate positive coverage and respond to media enquiries and issues in a timely and accurate way.</li> </ul>                               |
| Cultural sector, industry, community and partner organisations        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen relationships that support collaboration, advocacy, influence and shared outcomes for MHNSW.</li> </ul>                                                                |

## Role dimensions

### Decision making

This role:

- Is accountable for the planning and delivery of the strategic communications, media relations, stakeholder engagement, government relations, Board support, internal communications and strategic events work program, ensuring alignment with organisational priorities and public sector obligations.
- Exercises a high level of autonomy within delegated authority, providing strategic advice, leading communications activity, managing issues and reputational risks, and overseeing associated budgets and resources.
- Applies sound judgement in navigating media interest, government approval processes, Board and governance expectations, stakeholder sensitivities and complex or high-profile issues, escalating significant reputational, political, governance or strategic risks as required.
- Makes decisions are made NSW Government legislation, policy frameworks and governance requirements.

### Reporting line

Director, Strategy & Engagement

### Direct reports

The following roles report to the Head of Strategic Communications & Engagement:

- Senior Manager, Community Engagement
- Media Manager
- Internal Communications & Engagement Officer
- Manager, Government Relations & Engagement
- Project Manager, Written Content

### Budget/Expenditure

The position is accountable for the Strategic Communications and Engagement budget and must operate within the position's financial delegation and in accordance with MHNSW and NSW government finance policies and procedures.

## Key knowledge and experience

- Extensive experience leading strategic communications, media relations, issues management and reputation management in a complex, high-profile or public-facing organisation.
- Demonstrated experience providing high-level communications advice to senior executives on sensitive, complex or high-profile matters.
- Strong knowledge of contemporary media practice, public affairs, stakeholder engagement and strategic communications planning.
- Demonstrated experience developing clear, accurate and compelling corporate messaging, executive communications and public positioning for diverse audiences.
- Experience building and managing effective relationships with government, media, sector, community and partner stakeholders.
- Knowledge of public sector protocols, Ministerial processes, Board and executive reporting requirements, and public accountability obligations, or the ability to quickly apply this knowledge in a NSW Government context.
- Experience leading teams, managing work programs and improving communications systems, standards and ways of working.

## Essential requirements

- Relevant tertiary qualifications in communications, media, public relations, journalism, public affairs, government relations or a related discipline, and/or equivalent professional experience.
- Demonstrated experience in a senior communications, media, public affairs or stakeholder engagement role in a complex, public-facing organisation.
- Ability to participate in occasional out-of-hours work, including media matters, issues management, stakeholder events or public programs, as required.

## 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**.

| Capability group/sets                                                                                             | Capability name                                                                                           | Behavioural indicators                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Level    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| <br><b>Personal Attributes</b> | <b>Act with Integrity</b><br>Be ethical and professional, and uphold and promote the public sector values | Model the highest standards of ethical and professional behaviour and encourage others to do the same<br>Set an example for others to follow by representing your organisation in an honest, ethical and professional way<br>Promote a culture of integrity and professionalism within your organisation and when dealing with external organisations<br>Reinforce and monitor the use of ethical practices, standards and systems<br>Promote practices and systems that create a workplace culture that values high ethical standards and behaviour | Advanced |

| Capability group/sets                                                                                     | Capability name                                                                                                           | Behavioural indicators                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Level           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <br><b>Relationships</b> | <b>Communicate Effectively</b><br>Communicate clearly, pay attention to others and respond with understanding and respect | Articulate complex concepts and put forward compelling arguments and rationales to all levels and types of audiences<br>Communicate in a highly articulate and influential way<br>Communicate the facts and explain their implications for your organisation and key stakeholders<br>Promote your organisation's position with credibility across government, other jurisdictions and external organisations<br>Anticipate and address key areas of interest for your audience and adapt under pressure                                                                                                                                     | Highly Advanced |
| <br><b>Relationships</b> | <b>Influence and Negotiate</b><br>Gain consensus and commitment from others, and resolve issues and conflicts             | Influence others with a fair and thoughtful approach and present persuasive counter arguments<br>Work towards mutually beneficial, win-win outcomes<br>Show sensitivity and understanding when resolving serious and complex conflicts and differences<br>Identify key stakeholders and gain their support in advance<br>Negotiate from a clear position, based on research, a firm grasp of key issues, likely arguments, points of difference and areas for compromise<br>Anticipate and minimise conflict within your organisation and with external stakeholders<br>Use evidence, including data insights, to create persuasive stories | Advanced        |
| <br><b>Results</b>     | <b>Deliver Results</b><br>Achieve results by using resources efficiently and committing to quality outcomes               | Seek and apply the expertise of key individuals to achieve business outcomes<br>Lead a culture of achievement and acknowledge others' input<br>Determine how outcomes will be measured and guide others on evaluation methods<br>Investigate and create opportunities to enhance the achievement of business objectives<br>Make sure others understand the need for on-time and on-budget results and how success is defined<br>Control business unit output to ensure government outcomes are achieved within budget and on time<br>Progress organisational priorities and ensure resources are acquired and used effectively              | Advanced        |
| <br><b>Results</b>     | <b>Think and Solve Problems</b><br>Think, analyse and consider the broader context to develop practical solutions         | Undertake objective, critical analysis to reach accurate conclusions that recognise and manage contextual issues<br>Work through issues, weigh up alternatives and identify the most effective solutions in collaboration with others<br>Consider the wider business context when thinking about options to resolve issues                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Advanced        |

| Capability group/sets                                                                                             | Capability name                                                                                                           | Behavioural indicators                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Level |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
|                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                           | <p>Explore a range of possibilities and creative alternatives to improve systems, processes and business practices</p> <p>Put systems and processes in place that are supported by high-quality research and analysis</p> <p>Look for opportunities to design innovative solutions to meet customers' needs and service demands</p> <p>Evaluate the performance and effectiveness of services, policies and programs against clear criteria</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |       |
|  <p><b>People Management</b></p> | <p><b>Manage and Develop People</b></p> <p>Engage with and motivate staff, and develop their capability and potential</p> | <p>Define and clearly communicate roles, responsibilities and performance standards to achieve team outcomes</p> <p>Adjust performance development processes to meet the diverse abilities and needs of individuals and teams</p> <p>Develop work plans that consider capability, strengths and opportunities for development</p> <p>Be aware of the effects of bias when managing team members</p> <p>Seek feedback about your management capabilities and develop strategies to improve on them</p> <p>Address and resolve team and individual performance issues, including unsatisfactory performance, promptly and effectively</p> <p>Monitor and report on team performance in line with established performance development frameworks</p> <p>Develop positive relationships to ensure cultural safety and trust between team members</p> | Adept |

### Complementary capabilities

*Complementary capabilities* are also identified from the Capability Framework and relevant occupation-specific capability sets. They are important to identify 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 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
|  <p><b>Personal Attributes</b></p> | <b>Display Resilience and Courage</b> | Be open and honest, prepared to express your views, and willing to accept and commit to change | Adept |
|  <p><b>Personal Attributes</b></p> | <b>Manage Self</b>                    | Be persistent, self-reflect and commit to learning                                             | Adept |

| Capability group/sets                                                                                           | Capability name                            | Description                                                                                      | Level        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| <br><b>Personal Attributes</b> | <b>Value Diversity and Inclusion</b>       | Be inclusive and respect diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives                       | Adept        |
| <br><b>Relationships</b>       | <b>Commit to Customer Service</b>          | Provide customer-focused services in line with public sector and organisational objectives       | Adept        |
| <br><b>Relationships</b>       | <b>Work Collaboratively</b>                | Collaborate with others and value their contribution                                             | Advanced     |
| <br><b>Results</b>             | <b>Plan and Prioritise</b>                 | Plan to achieve priority outcomes and respond flexibly to changing circumstances                 | Advanced     |
| <br><b>Results</b>           | <b>Demonstrate Accountability</b>          | Be proactive and responsible for your actions, and follow legislation, policy and guidelines     | Adept        |
| <br><b>Business Enablers</b> | <b>Finance</b>                             | Understand and apply financial processes to achieve value for money and minimise financial risk  | Intermediate |
| <br><b>Business Enablers</b> | <b>Technology</b>                          | Understand and use available technology to maximise efficiencies and effectiveness               | Adept        |
| <br><b>Business Enablers</b> | <b>Procurement and Contract Management</b> | Understand and use procurement processes to ensure effective purchasing and contract performance | Intermediate |

| Capability group/sets                                                                                          | Capability name                      | Description                                                                | Level |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| <br><b>Business Enablers</b>  | <b>Project Management</b>            | Understand and use effective ways to plan, coordinate and control projects | Adept |
| <br><b>People Management</b>  | <b>Inspire Direction and Purpose</b> | Communicate goals, priorities and vision, and recognise achievements       | Adept |
| <br><b>People Management</b>  | <b>Optimise Business Outcomes</b>    | Manage people and resources effectively to achieve public value            | Adept |
| <br><b>People Management</b> | <b>Manage Reform and Change</b>      | Support and champion change, and help others to engage with change         | Adept |