

# Director Public Affairs

## Classification: SSC

<b>POSITION NUMBER</b>	TBA
<b>POSITION REPORTS TO</b>	Chief Of Staff
<b>COLLEGE / PORTFOLIO / DEPARTMENT</b>	Office of the Vice Chancellor
<b>LOCATION/CAMPUS</b>	The position is located at the Footscray Park campus. The position and incumbent may be located to any other existing or future university work locations where it conducts its operations. There will likely be between campus travel associated with the role.

### OVERALL PURPOSE

The **Director, Public Affairs** provides leadership in media, public affairs, and corporate communications to advance the University’s reputation and strategic objectives. This role is critical in positioning the University as an influential voice in tertiary education, public policy, and industry through thought leadership and advocacy initiatives.

The Director leads the development and execution of high-impact communication strategies and campaigns that promote the University’s achievements, impact, and distinctive dual-sector status. Responsibilities include leading proactive media and social media approaches, reactive media and crisis communications, overseeing corporate publications, award submissions, social license messaging, and internal communications to ensure alignment with institutional goals and values.

Success in this role requires the ability to identify emerging issues, craft compelling narratives, and engage diverse stakeholders – including media, government, industry, and community – a to build trust and enhance the University’s profile. The Director serves as a trusted advisor to the Vice-Chancellor, Executive, and senior leaders, providing expert guidance on reputational issues, crisis management, and strategic communications.

Operating within a complex environment, the role demands exceptional leadership in managing significant resources, driving collaborative initiatives, and delivering public events and advocacy efforts that achieve sector-wide impact. As a senior leader, the Director contributes to enterprise-wide strategic planning and may lead major projects aligned with the University’s strategic priorities.

People and Culture use only

Date Updated		Date Classified	8/1/2026
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## ORGANISATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Victoria University's Strategic Plan 2022-2030, Start Well, finish brilliantly, commits the University to the bold ambition to be one of the leading impact-driven universities in the world by 2030.

VU is one of six Australian universities offering both TAFE and higher education, with campuses in Melbourne, Brisbane, and Sydney. VU is recognised for pioneering educational innovation, notably through the VU First Year College® and the VU Block Model®, which deliver exceptional student support and focused, learner-centred teaching. VU leads Victoria in student experience, teaching quality, peer engagement, and skills development (QILT 2023).

VU is renowned for its areas of research specialisation, strongly aligned to its TAFE and Higher Education offer, these include Sports and Exercise Science (ranked 7<sup>th</sup> in the world) as well as Policy Studies, Water; Green Research translation; Immunology and Early Childhood Education, to name a few.

VU has a strategic commitment to being a thriving place to study and work and to progressive inclusivity and diversity. We are one of Australia's most culturally and socially diverse universities, and our international students are highly valued contributors to the VU community.

### OUR VISION

To be one of the leading impact-driven universities in the world by 2030.

### PURPOSE

Victoria University emboldens its people to design their future and has a deep Commitment to Protecting Country.

### STRATEGIC DRIVERS

To achieve our vision, we have identified five Strategic Drivers, with a high-level objective, and the goals to get us to our 2030 target. Our vision is big and ambitious. It is also achievable.

1. Learner-centred for life
2. Partnering with Principle
3. Maximising Research with Impact
4. Protecting Country
5. A Thriving Place to Study and Work

#### **Commitment to Protecting Country:**

Victoria University honours its deep diversity as a foundation for collaboration and social progress. We will demonstrate sensitivity in respecting First Nation perspectives. We will ensure that we respect our Indigenous voices and commit to sustainable Protecting Country. We will take leadership responsibility, in all that we do, to improve the health and wellbeing of our local and global communities, and the planet that we share.

#### **Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion at VU:**

Victoria University believes that diversity of the workforce adds value to the University and creates a stronger, richer working environment for everyone. We are committed to making reasonable adjustments to ensure that our employees have positive, barrier-free work environments that accommodate their access needs. Employees who require adjustments are encouraged to discuss their needs with their line manager.

## **PORTFOLIO OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR**

The Vice-Chancellor's portfolio manages and coordinates all strategic and operational business arising on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor and is the key liaison between the Vice-Chancellor and key stakeholders. The functions within the portfolio play a critical role in strategic leadership and implementation oversight of our priorities as articulated in the university's strategic plan and ensures that the Vice-Chancellor and senior executive maximise their effectiveness in achieving these.

Key functions include Office of the Vice-Chancellor; Executive Services; Strategy and Planning; Strategic Communications; Governance and Secretariat; General Counsel and Legal Services; and Equality, Diversity and Belonging.

An organisational chart is attached.

## **MAJOR CHALLENGES / FREEDOM TO ACT**

This position reports to and receives broad direction from the Chief of Staff. It works closely with Office of the Vice-Chancellor, Strategy and Planning, Marketing, Government Relations, Advancement, Events and Major Partnerships, and operates within the University policies, procedures and guidelines.

The Director, Public Affairs provides management and leadership to a team of professional staff in a complex environment. The role is critical in providing leadership to optimise VU's reputation in the market and needs to be highly adept at being both proactive and reactive.

## **MAJOR DUTIES**

In performing the following duties, the incumbent is required to comply with quality assurance policies and procedures, and other relevant legislative requirements applicable to the University.

### **Media, Public Affairs, and Relations:**

- ◆ Lead the development and execution of media, social media and public affairs strategies that advance the University's brand, achievements, impact and strategic priorities.
- ◆ Build and maintain strong relationships with media outlets, journalists, and key external stakeholders, providing expert advice on reputational issues and crisis management.
- ◆ Drive thought leadership and advocacy initiatives that position the University as an influential voice in tertiary education, public policy, and industry.
- ◆ Monitor emerging issues, policy developments, and external trends, providing proactive advice and responsive communications strategies.
- ◆ Develop compelling narratives and messaging that highlight the University's distinctive dual-sector status and contributions to education, research, and workforce development.
- ◆ Build and maintain effective relationships with government, industry, community, and sector stakeholders to support the University's strategic goals.

### **Corporate Publications:**

- ◆ Oversee the creation and delivery of corporate publications that showcase and advocate the University's progress, impact, and strategic direction.
- ◆ Ensure publications and reports are accurate, compelling, and aligned with institutional goals.

### **Award Applications:**

- ◆ Lead the identification, preparation, and submission of award applications that highlight the

University's excellence in teaching, research, and community engagement.

### **Social License and Impact:**

- ◆ Develop and implement messaging strategies that reinforce the University's social license, public trust, and commitment to positive societal impact.

### **Internal Communications:**

- ◆ Plan and deliver internal communications to ensure staff are informed, engaged, and aligned with the University's strategy and values.
- ◆ Foster a collaborative and transparent communication culture across all levels of the institution as well as build capability and confidence in using communication channels.

### **Strategic Advice:**

- ◆ Provide high-level strategic communications advice to the Chief of Staff, Vice-Chancellor, executive and senior leadership on matters affecting the University's reputation and public positioning.
- ◆ Contribute to enterprise-wide strategic planning and lead major cross-institutional communications projects.
- ◆ Lead capability development and training in crisis communications, ensuring preparedness for emergencies or events that may impact the University's reputation.

### **Public Events & Executive Communications:**

- ◆ Oversee the planning and delivery of public events and executive communications that enhance the University's profile and engagement with key audiences.
- ◆ Lead advocacy campaigns and sector-facing initiatives that advance strategic priorities.

### **Performance Metrics:**

- ◆ Develop key performance indicators and reporting mechanisms to monitor and communicate the effectiveness of public affairs initiatives.

### **People and Resource Management**

- ◆ Lead and develop high performance teams, manage the public affairs and communications budget, allocate staff and resources across projects and parameters.

### **Occupational Health and Safety:**

- ◆ Identify, assess, prioritise and control risks to the health and safety of staff, students, visitors and contractors to the environment arising from the operation of the area under their responsibility, and ensure that a safe system of work is developed and followed through appropriate training, supervision and monitoring in line with the annual OH&S Plan.

## KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

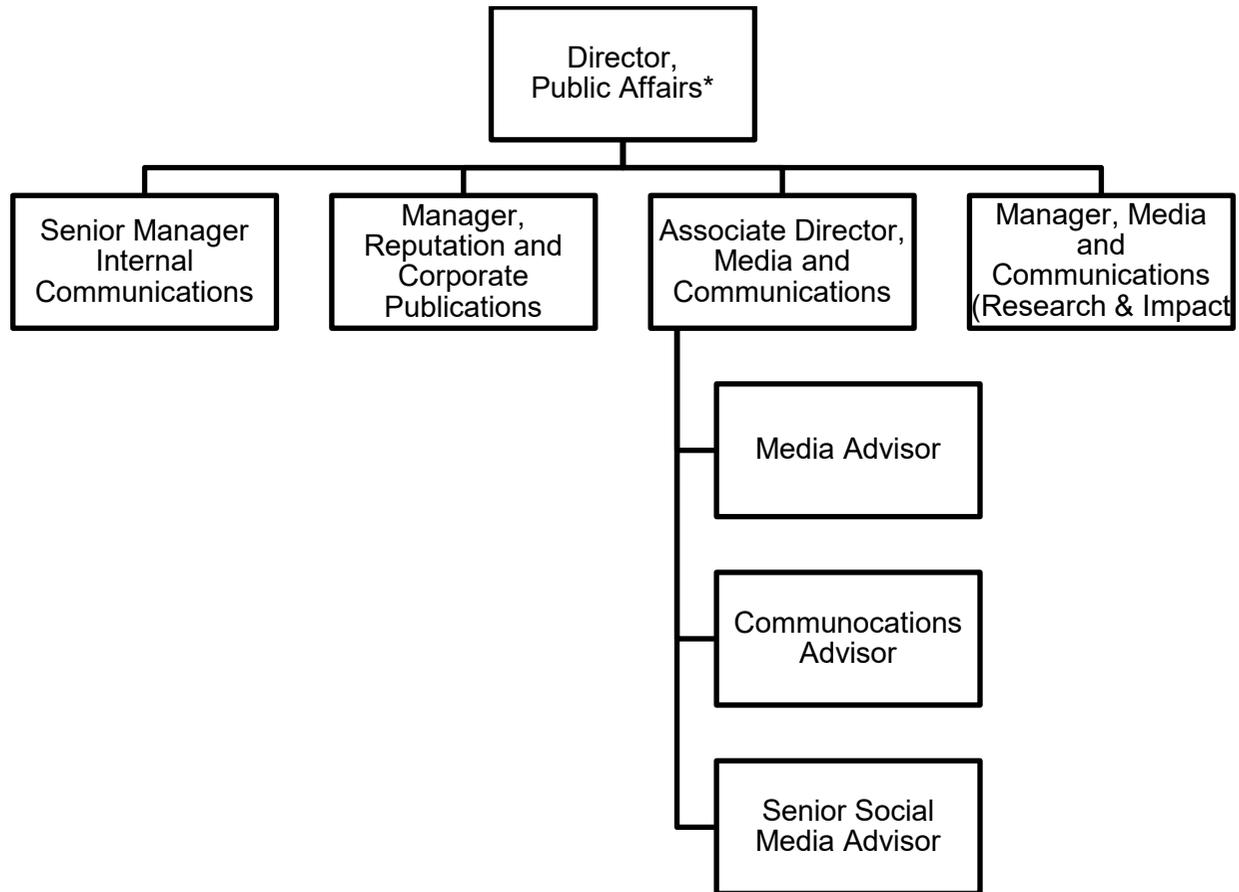
### Essential

1. Knowledge or training equivalent to: proven expertise in the management of significant human and material resources; in addition to postgraduate qualifications and/or extensive experience in strategic communications, media relations, public affairs, and corporate communications within a complex environment.
2. Demonstrated experience in developing and executing thought leadership and advocacy strategies that position the organisation as an influential voice in tertiary education, public policy, or industry.
3. Proven track record in identifying emerging issues, developing compelling narratives, and effectively engaging diverse stakeholders, including media, government, industry, and community, to advance an organisation's reputation, strategic objectives, and public trust.
4. Demonstrated experience in leading collaborative initiatives, public events, and policy advocacy campaigns that drive sector-wide impact, recognition and strategic outcomes
5. Proven experience in leading high-performing teams and managing significant human, financial and material resources.
6. Exceptional oral and written communication skills, with the ability to influence and build networks across diverse audiences.
7. Advanced skills in crisis management, negotiation, and stakeholder engagement including the ability to provide expert advice on reputational risks.
8. Experience in preparing award submissions and producing high quality corporate publications demonstrating measurable impact and alignment with organizational goals.
9. Proficiency in using data analytics and key performance indicators to monitor, evaluate and continuously improve communication strategies and initiatives.
10. Demonstrates strong leadership in the support and development of VU capabilities which include:
  - a) **Delivers Service Excellence** (Results driven, Accountability, Problem solving focus)
  - b) **Engage** (Customer service mind-set internally, externally and particularly for students)
  - c) **Collaborate and Partner** (Build successful relationships, communicate effectively, influence and negotiate)
  - d) **Innovate** (Entrepreneurship, Growth, Continuous Improvement, Digital Transformation)
  - e) **Lead** (Inspire direction, Lead change, Manage and develop people)
11. Sound knowledge and commitment knowledge of and commitment to OHS principles with a demonstrated ability to integrate and implement these at the strategic level.

### Desirable:

- ◆ Experience of the tertiary education sector.
- ◆ Being part of an extensive established network of journalists and media professionals.

# Organisational Chart



Note: \* position being recruited