

Position Description

Head of Media

Why work with us

Every child and young person deserves a great education.

We have a strategy that aims to unlock every child's potential now and into the future, one that in partnership with learners, students, parents and the wider South Australian community will build a world-leading public education system. One that is equitable and prioritises learning and wellbeing.

Together we will make our education system the best it can be.

When our children and young people thrive, so do our communities and our state.

Our values

We are part of the South Australian public sector and share the values of:

							
SERVICE	PROFESSIONALISM	TRUST	RESPECT	COLLABORATION & ENGAGEMENT	HONESTY & INTEGRITY	COURAGE & TENACITY	SUSTAINABILITY
We proudly service the community and the South Australian Government.	We strive for excellence.	We have the confidence in the ability of others.	We value every individual.	We create solutions together.	We act truthfully, consistently, and fairly.	We never give up.	We work to get the best results for current and future generations of South Australians.

About this role

The Head of Media leads the Department's media function and is responsible for protecting and enhancing the reputation of public education through strategic, proactive and coordinated media activity.

The role is responsible for leading a planned, integrated and high-performing function aligned to Government priorities and departmental objectives, working closely with the Minister's office.

This position leads a team responsible for proactive and reactive media activity, including media releases, statements, issues management, media monitoring and amplification of key messages across external channels.

The Head of Media provides strategic advice on complex and sensitive issues, assessing reputational risks and ensuring clear, consistent and aligned messaging to the Minister's office, Chief Executive, senior executives and stakeholders.

The position demands strategic thinking, ability to work under time pressures, and excellent interpersonal, negotiation and reprioritisation skills to develop trusting and credible relationships.

Working within a fast-paced and politically sensitive environment, the position needs to be adaptable and able to work across multiple projects, priorities and business areas efficiently, with a strong focus on continuous improvement, planning and strengthening systems and processes

Position title	Head of Media
Classification	SS2
Division	Strategy and Performance
Directorate	Communications
Location	31 Flinders Street, Adelaide
Reports to	Director Communications
Direct reports	ASO8 Media Manager ASO7 Senior Public Relations and Media Advisor ASO6 Senior Media Advisor ASO5 Media Advisor
Role description date	June 2026

What you will do (key outcomes)

1. Lead and develop the media team to deliver a high-performing program of proactive and strategic media communications, shifting effort from reactive management to planned activity that advances the department and Government's priorities and measurably strengthens its public reputation.
2. Provide expert and timely advice and content to the Minister's office, working closely with the Minister's media adviser to ensure alignment and consistency of messaging based on clear and effective strategy, exercising sound independent judgement on sensitive, complex or high-risk media matters to protect the reputation of the Minister and public education.
3. Provide expert advice to the Chief Executive, members of the Senior Executive Group and education leaders to be able to respond effectively to media requests and opportunities, and ensure leaders are kept informed in a timely and appropriate manner of media issues and activities including early identification of emerging issues and risks.
4. Lead the development and delivery of high-quality media content underpinned by local educational operational activity. Overseeing a forward-planned proactive pipeline, including story identification and alignment to Government priorities, while driving reactive content quality and ensuring the department's achievements in schools, preschools and services are compellingly communicated.
5. Establish and embed clear governance, workflows and approval processes to improve consistency, reduce risk and support efficient media operations.
6. Establish and maintain a structured issues management framework, including issues tracking, approved messaging and escalation pathways, ensuring timely escalation and consistent application of approved messaging, with clear accountability for issues resolution and post-incident review.
7. Drive integrated and coordinated communications function, including social media, to ensure coordinated planning, consistent messaging and alignment across channels.
8. Oversee a comprehensive media monitoring, analysis and reporting function that provides timely and actionable intelligence to senior leaders, identifies emerging risks and opportunities, and drives continuous improvement in the department's communications performance.
9. Lead a high-performing team of communications professionals, in partnership with the Director and Assistant Director, Communications, to advance the Department's objectives, promote the story of public education, and support schools and preschools to be responsive and valued within their communities.
10. Help to maintain a safe and healthy working environment by proactively reporting incidents, hazards and injuries.

The capabilities you will bring (key competencies)

- **Knowledge:** Comprehensive understanding the public education system, its stakeholder landscape, associated societal expectations as a means of setting an effective and iterative media strategy as well as successful responsive action to media activity.
- **Crisis Media Leadership:** Extensive experience managing high-level media and communications issues of a sensitive and/or critical nature, including demonstrated experience leading media response during crisis, incident or rapidly escalating situations which may outside established precedents and parameters.
- **Governance Knowledge:** Demonstrated ability to establish governance frameworks, improve systems and lead the shift from reactive to proactive communications. Sound knowledge of the South Australian government communications environment, including Ministerial protocols, caretaker conventions, media obligations under the Public Sector Act and the interface between departmental and political communications
- **Autonomy:** Demonstrated ability to independently exercise sound judgement and develop strategic, innovative solutions to complex, sensitive or high-profile media and communications challenges with significant reputational implications.
- **Stakeholder Management:** Demonstrated experience liaising and building effective relationships with senior executives, including providing expert advice and media responses for Ministerial office action. Excellent interpersonal skills that foster trust, cooperation and support among senior staff, with a strong capacity for negotiating and advising at Ministerial, executive and senior management levels, demonstrating confidentiality, diplomacy, tact and discretion.
- **Advanced Written Communication Skills:** Exceptional communications skills and extensive experience writing briefings, media releases, media statements and Chief Executive or senior executive communications.
- **Leadership:** Proven ability to lead a team - identify with required training and fostering a productive and positive culture where staff are encouraged to excel.
- **Work, Health and Safety:** Demonstrate knowledge and commitment to promoting and creating a safe and inclusive work environment, and the legislative requirements of Equal Opportunity and Work Health and Safety legislation.

Who you will work with (key relationships)	Qualifications
Direct working relationship: • Director, Communications • Assistant Director, Communications • Chief Executive • Minister's media adviser • Members of the Senior Executive Group • Education Directors • School principals and preschool directors • Subject matter experts in business units External working relationships: • Officers in other government agencies • Journalists	Essential: Relevant tertiary qualifications and/or relevant high-level experience in media, journalism or communications. Desirable: Nil

Corporate responsibilities	Special conditions
Keep accurate and complete records Act appropriately in line with the Public Sector Code of Ethics at all times Support diversity and promote an inclusive workplace for everyone Maintain a commitment to Work Health and Safety legislative requirements	You may need a current driver's license and be willing to drive You may be asked to work out of hours You may need to travel within or outside South Australia You need to achieve mutually agreed performance goals You must have a current Working with Children Check You must do Responding to Risks of Harm, Abuse and Neglect – Education and Care training. You must be an Australian resident or provide evidence you have a current work permit.

Assessed by: Hannah Matthews P&C Consultant		Approved by: Libby Rolfe Director, Communications	
Date: June 2026		Date: June 2026	