



Position Description

Principal Policy Officer

Reports to: Deputy Director Policy and Advocacy

Date: July 2026

Mental Health Australia Values

Mental Health Australia's values are: curiosity, courage and connection. These guide all our work.

Position Purpose

This position is responsible for developing compelling mental health policy advice and positions to improve mental health outcomes and experiences. Supporting the leadership of the Deputy Director Policy and Advocacy, this position leads engagement with Mental Health Australia members and stakeholders, develops practical policy solutions and advocates for reforms to drive better national mental health policies and systems.

As part of the Policy, Advocacy, Communications and Events Team, this position is accountable for a higher level of policy team management responsibilities and functions in the Deputy Director's absence, and may involve supervising and/or coordinating the work of other team members, depending on team structure and priorities at any given time.

Position Responsibilities

Policy

- Independently consult with Mental Health Australia members and other relevant stakeholders to develop policy advice
- Lead development of mental health policy positions, submissions and reports in priority work areas, including undertaking research and analysis
- Identify appropriate advocacy avenues for Mental Health Australia policy positions and support implementation of advocacy strategies
- Provide input and advice to senior Mental Health Australia staff and Board members on policy matters

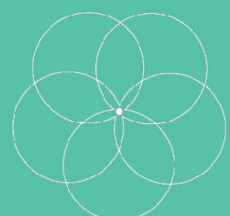
- Develop and maintain partnerships with key stakeholders involved in improving mental health in priority policy areas
- Advocate for and represent Mental Health Australia's policy positions in a range of forums including giving public presentations, participating in high-level meetings and providing input to national committees
- Identify and assess strategic risks and opportunities related to policy and advocacy priorities, and propose mitigation approaches within areas of responsibility
- Maintain a contemporary knowledge base of issues facing the mental health sector in Australia with particular reference to priority policy areas
- Develop and tailor communication products (e.g. written briefs, presentations, correspondence) to a variety of audiences, including people with lived experience of mental health challenges and their family, carers and kin, bureaucrats and politicians, Mental Health Australia Board and Executive
- Oversee the activities of other team members and Mental Health Australia staff in executing policy and project work plans as required

Projects and events

- Lead the planning of policy-related projects, developing relevant concept briefs and project design documents and developing recommendations through engagement and consultation with external stakeholders
- Implement and manage nominated projects and be accountable for the successful delivery of projects/subprojects within resourcing, timeline and budget parameters; including working with project advisory groups and managing other staff contributions as required
- Prepare briefing material, submissions, papers and reports related to project outputs
- Contribute to planning and delivery of policy related events, including member policy forums and online member policy consultations.

Corporate Requirements

- Participate as an effective team member within Mental Health Australia, including assisting other members of the team when required
- Demonstrate a strong commitment to a quality culture, implementing standards of excellence and a continuous improvement business focus
- Support and promote a strong health and safety culture by ensuring all work activities are performed in compliance with the organisation's Work Health and Safety Policy



- Reinforce and promote the principles of Equal Employment Opportunity and diversity in the workplace by ensuring that all employees and stakeholders are treated with dignity and respect
- Be conversant with policies and procedures relevant to this position and workplace
- Undertake other general duties commensurate with skills, knowledge and experience.

Skills, Knowledge and Experience

The candidate characteristics for this position include:

- Tertiary qualification in a relevant discipline, and/or equivalent related substantial experience in policy development
- Demonstrated skills in developing policy positions and advice including through undertaking stakeholder consultations, and balancing multiple perspectives to develop nuanced recommendations
- Demonstrated project management and organisational skills, including ability to manage competing priorities and coordinate contributions across multiple staff and/or stakeholders
- Strong interpersonal, facilitation and negotiating skills, including the ability to effectively consult and liaise with people of different backgrounds and perspectives in the community and sector
- Ability to apply well developed strategic, analytical and risk management skills when undertaking tasks, with strong initiative and sound judgement
- Demonstrated high level verbal, written and communication skills, including the ability to deliver presentations and information to groups
- Ability to represent or advocate on behalf of stakeholders or members
- Ability to work in a hybrid, small team environment
- Ability to demonstrate values consistent with Mental Health Australia

Desirable characteristics include:

- Experience working with mental health sector stakeholders
- Knowledge and understanding of policies and issues relevant to the mental health system and/or mental health reforms in Australia.

