Senior Policy Advisor
Position Description
August 2014

Background

The National Rural Health Alliance is Australia’s peak non-government organisation for rural and remote health. Its Vision is good health and wellbeing in rural and remote Australia.

The Alliance takes a broad view of health and a long-term view of the development of rural and remote Australia. It supports initiatives that help the diverse communities of rural and remote Australia to be sustainable, healthy and health-promoting places in which to live and work.

The Alliance comprises 37 Member Bodies, each of which is a national organisation with an interest in rural and remote health. Member Bodies include consumer groups, health professional organisations, service providers and representation from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector. Each of the Member Bodies nominates a representative to the Council, which guides the development of the Alliance’s views on health policy and advocacy directions. The ten members of the governing Board are elected from the Council.

The Alliance has a secretariat in Canberra, with an Executive Director who is responsible for upholding the Vision of the Alliance and managing the work of its staff.

The core support the Alliance receives for its work from the Australian Government is testimony of the open and productive partnership between the two that is helping to keep the focus on the need for equity for rural people.

The Alliance manages the biennial National Rural Health Conference and the Australian Journal of Rural Health, and produces position papers, submissions, media releases and publishes a magazine (Partyline) and electronic newsletters. It is also the national management agency for the Australian Government of the Rural Australia Medical Undergraduate Scholarship (RAMUS) Scheme and Stream 2 of the Rural Health Continuing Education program (RHCE2).

Further information about the National Rural Health Alliance and its work is at www.ruralhealth.org.au
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Location: The position will be located at the Head Office of the Alliance, 10 Campion St Deakin ACT 2600.

Hours of Work: The position will be full-time, or close to, subject to negotiation & agreement with successful candidate.

Reports to: Executive Director

Direct reports: Other staff will be mentored and supported as appropriate by the Senior Policy Advisor.

Key relationships
- Other policy team members
- Executive Director, Governance and Liaison Officer, Office Manager, Graphic Designer, Conference Manager and other staff
- External consultants, individuals and agencies relevant to the Alliance’s policy work
- National Rural Health Alliance Council and Board
- Member Bodies, Friends of the Alliance, other rural and remote networks

Purpose of the position
The Senior Policy Advisor works with the Executive Director and fellow policy team members to:
- progress the development of policy for the Alliance;
- identify and implement strategies for communicating and progressing agreed policy positions; and
- analyse and provide advice on governments’ and other stakeholders’ health and health-related policies, decisions and proposals.

The Senior Policy Advisor's work will enhance the reputation of the Alliance and contribute to improving the health and wellbeing of people in rural and remote Australia through the preparation and communication of agreed policy positions.

The Senior Policy Advisor contributes to a workplace culture that is consistent with the culture of the Alliance and that emphasises its vision, objects, guiding principles and values.

In carrying out his/her duties, the Senior Policy Advisor follows the agreed procedures of the Alliance as set out in its governance manuals and other relevant documentation.

Duty statement
The Senior Policy Advisor will:
- Research and draft formal written positions, policy briefs and recommendations on key policy issues identified by the Alliance.
- Co-ordinate, guide & contribute to the processes by which such materials are revised, finalised, published and promoted.
• Liaise and consult with relevant colleagues and stakeholders in the conduct of policy work.
• Analyse relevant legislative and regulatory matters and keep up-to-date with government policy discussions in related areas.
• Assess the economic, environmental and social implications of existing and mooted policies relating to rural and remote health and wellbeing.
• Attend relevant conferences and meetings and present papers on behalf of the Alliance as delegated by the Executive Director.
• As appropriate, provide support to the Executive Director and others on matters relating to planning; budgets; securing funding opportunities; financial, management and project reporting; operational systems and processes; and other administrative duties relating to the Alliance’s policy and advocacy.

Deliverables

Timely, well-informed advice on current and emerging policy discussions.

Timely, high quality written policy documents and recommendations.

Effective consultation and communication with other Alliance staff, Council and Board members, consultants and relevant external stakeholders including individuals and agencies.

Effective representation of the Alliance and its interests.

Effective administrative processes relating to the Alliance’s policy and advocacy work.

Selection Criteria

• Demonstrated health policy experience including relevant tertiary qualifications and experience in health-related policy and research.
• Demonstrated experience in stakeholder engagement and relationship management including the ability to plan, identify and liaise with relevant internal and external stakeholders to inform policy development.
• Excellent interpersonal and communication skills and the ability to work across a broad range of groups, including members, rural networks and stakeholders in government and non-government agencies.
• Well-developed analytical skills including the ability to assess and critically evaluate the validity of information and research and prepare policy briefs and background analyses based on consultations, published data and research.
• Excellent writing skills and demonstrated ability to write reports, project proposals, submissions, newsletters, meeting papers/minutes.
• Ability to initiate and manage projects, develop implementation strategies, meet deadlines and manage competing priorities within a small team environment.
• Interest in and understanding of issues that relate to the health and wellbeing of people who live in rural and remote Australia.

Desirable

• Knowledge of political and legislative processes.
• Knowledge of and networks in the health and/or community sectors.