



Australian Government

**Australian Pesticides and
Veterinary Medicines Authority**



Assistant Director External Affairs
Position number: 01222
EL1

Candidate information package
September 2026



The position

Position title	Assistant Director External Affairs
Classification	Executive Level 1
Qualifications	Relevant tertiary qualifications and extensive experience in managing external communications in a public sector or regulatory environment.
Security clearance	Baseline
Citizenship requirements	Australian citizens only
Location	Armidale NSW or Canberra ACT
Job type	Ongoing; Full-time (Non-ongoing and Part-time options may be considered)
Salary	\$131,301 to \$149,140 (plus 15.4% superannuation), depending on qualifications and experience

Direct supervisor	Director Engagement and Communications
Program	The Office of the Executive General Counsel
Section	Communications

Position summary

The Office of the Executive General Counsel assists APVMA deliver its statutory functions and exercise its powers in regulating agricultural chemicals and veterinary medicines in Australia, by providing expert legal advice and support, leading governance functions (including as secretariat for the Board), delivering APVMA's compliance operations, facilitating and enabling legislative reform, strengthening operational capability, and enabling transparent engagement and communications. We work collaboratively to safeguard APVMA's accountability, performance and public trust.

The Communications team is responsible for promoting the APVMA through brand management, media, stakeholder engagement, publications and website publishing, to build and reinforce the APVMA's reputation as a global leader of agricultural and veterinary chemical regulation.

Reporting to the Director Engagement and Communications, the Assistant Director External Affairs will drive the agency's strategic external communications, stakeholder engagement and media management function to support the APVMA to work collaboratively in achieving its purpose. The focus of this role will be the strategic positioning of external communication, including proactive media, revitalising the voice of the agency and working closely with stakeholders.

The Assistant Director will respond to complex and sensitive media enquiries, handling multiple issues daily, as well as planning for future media interactions and stakeholder engagement on key decisions and agency priorities.

This position requires an understanding of or the capacity to rapidly acquire familiarity with the APVMA's operating environment, and the ability and passion to share the stories and science behind how we protect the health of people, animals and the environment, and support primary industries, biosecurity, and trade.

Core functions

Key responsibilities may include:

- Implement and maintain the APVMA Stakeholder Engagement Framework, including strategic engagement with regulated entities, industry, community groups and other stakeholders.
- Monitor stakeholder, media and community sentiment, manage expectations and proactively resolve issues.
- Provide media and stakeholder plans and advice to the Director Engagement and Communications, the Executive and senior science colleagues.
- Identify proactive media stories and research and provide support for all media interactions
- Establish strong and effective processes and planning mechanisms for all areas of responsibility, ensuring these are in line with APS best practice
- Leadership based on extensive experience in a public sector agency, including experience in agencies managing sensitive and contentious issues
- Actively engage with scientific subject matter experts across the agency to understand the pipeline of topics under review and devise innovative ways to highlight outcomes.
- Monitor and evaluate media to gauge success, identify opportunities for improvement and provide and contribute to strategic communication advice.

Selection criteria

To be a strong contender for the role, you will have:

Essential:

1. Relevant tertiary qualifications in communications, media or a closely related discipline.
2. Extensive experience managing media protocols and highly sensitive issues, preparing Ministerial briefings, and providing advice to senior public sector leaders.
3. Experience developing and implementing stakeholder engagement plans.
4. An understanding of, or the ability to rapidly acquire an understanding of, the agricultural and veterinary sectors and their regulation and maintain an in-depth knowledge of relevant stakeholders and their expectations.
5. Experience communicating complex scientific matters clearly and accurately.
6. Demonstrated ability to manage competing priorities, remain flexible and proactive in a fast-paced environment and deliver strategic outcomes under pressure.
7. Highly developed interpersonal, communication and networking skills, with the ability to build effective working relationships and contribute positively to a team environment.

Desirable:

- Experience in a regulatory environment.
- Familiarity with the agricultural, veterinary or related sectors.

Your application

In submitting your application, please ensure that you include an up-to-date resume and separate document addressing the selection criteria above. Your response to the selection criteria must not exceed 900 words.

Referee checks are used to confirm a candidate's suitability for a role. They also allow us to verify or gather additional insights about a candidate from their application, resume, interview and other capability-based assessments.

Please ensure you have nominated a current referee who has known you for a reasonable amount of time and has good knowledge of your performance in a relevant context (e.g. current work or education) to provide an objective assessment of your capabilities, knowledge and experience.

The information obtained from referees will be used to inform the final decision of a candidate's suitability for the role.

All applications are submitted online through the APVMA Careers website: apvma.gov.au/join-our-team.

If you have any questions, please contact our People and Culture team by email at hr@apvma.gov.au.

Our selection process

In accordance with the *Public Service Act 1999* we recruit our staff based on merit, which means that from a wide and diverse field of applicants we will select the best person for the position. To do this, we compare the skills, experience and abilities of each applicant. We use different tools and techniques to collect the evidence we need to make a merit-based decision.

The selection process will begin with an assessment of written applications to determine suitability against the role requirements. Based on this assessment, a shortlist of candidates will be formed. Shortlisting is anticipated to be finalised within **4 weeks** of the application closing date.

Shortlisted candidates may be required to undertake additional assessment activities, which could include interviews, work sample exercises, presentation, psychometric assessment and referee checks.

The APVMA reserves the right to vary the assessment approach as required during the recruitment process.

Writing tips

When writing your application (also referred to as your 'response to the selection criteria') you should demonstrate your experience through discussion of real-life examples. It is preferable for you to select an example/s that best allows you to present competencies against the requirements of the position.

For this you should consider using the STAR Method (Situation-Task-Action-Results):

Situation

- What was the situation? This is a brief outline of the situation faced and your role.

Task

- What were the main issues involved with the situation?
- What needed to be done?
- What task/s needed to be achieved and what was the desired outcome?
- What obstacles had to be overcome?

Action

- What were the steps you took to complete the task? This will include allocation of resources, people involved etc.

Results

- What was the outcome?

For additional information on preparing your application and addressing selection criteria please refer to [Cracking the Code](#) on the [Australian Public Service Commission](#) website.



About the APVMA

Our purpose

The APVMA regulates agricultural and veterinary chemicals to protect the health and safety of people, animals and the environment, and to support primary industries, biosecurity and international trade for all Australians.

Our vision

To be a global leader in agriculture and veterinary chemicals regulation for the benefit of Australia.

Our role

The APVMA is the national regulator of agricultural and veterinary (agvet) chemicals in Australia, in line with the responsibilities set out in the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Administration) Act 1992 and the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Code Act 1994. The regulatory framework for managing agvet chemicals in Australia is collectively referred to as the National Registration Scheme for Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (NRS). Under the NRS framework, it is responsible for the regulation and control of agvet chemicals up to and including the point of retail sale. The Authority also administers the import and export of chemicals and medicines.

The core regulatory functions of the APVMA are:

- assess new active constituents and products against the statutory criteria of safety, efficacy and trade
- ensure that the approved label accurately reflects how the product is identified, used, stored and disposed of, including first aid and safety information
- recall non-compliant products, ensuring the quality and safety of agvet chemicals in the marketplace and verify compliance with the relevant legislation
- ensure compliance on manufacturing, importing and exporting of agvet chemical products
- consider applications for permits to use an agvet chemical in a manner that is different to the directions for use specified on the registered product label. A permit may also authorise the use of an unregistered chemical under specific circumstances
- undertake chemical reviews (reconsiderations) of a registered active constituent or agvet product and its label. These reconsiderations assess the currently approved uses against contemporary science to ensure the statutory criteria can still be met.

Our values

The APVMA upholds the Australian Public Service (APS) Values as set out in the Public Service Act 1999 and these values are applied through the APVMA values and behaviours:

- Impartial – apolitical and provide advice that is frank, honest, timely, and based on the best available evidence
- Committed to service – professional, objective, innovative and efficient
- Accountable – open and accountable to our stakeholders across the Australian community
- Respectful – respect all people, including their rights and their heritage
- Ethical – demonstrate leadership, are trustworthy, and act with integrity
- Stewardship – build capability and institutional knowledge and support the public interest now and into the future, by understanding the long-term impacts of what we do.

About us

The APVMA provides regulatory services for the supply of safe and effective agricultural and veterinary (agvet) chemicals in Australia. Our decisions protect human and animal health, the environment, facilitate trade and contribute to Australia's agricultural productivity.

We regulate the manufacturing and supply of pesticides including, herbicides, biocides, insecticides, and seed treatments; animal antibiotics, hormonal treatments and some stock feeds and pet foods. We also regulate household products such as insect repellents, garden sprays and pool chemicals.

We demonstrate and celebrate our commitment to workplace diversity strategies to maximise the contribution and inclusion of our people. We welcome applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, mature age people, people with cultural and linguistic diversity, and people with disability.

The APVMA offers exciting opportunities for a challenging career where you can apply your scientific expertise for the benefit of all Australians. You will work as part of a broader team that delivers efficient regulatory services to support Australia's agvet chemical industry and Australian agriculture.

More information about [the roles and responsibilities of APVMA](#) is available on our website.

Benefits of working with the APVMA

Throughout your career with us we will offer you experience in:

- project management
- team work and leadership
- working with multidisciplinary science teams
- understanding of registration process and decision making in a regulatory context
- evaluation of the safety and efficacy of new pesticide or veterinary medicine products
- how product labels are used to manage risks to humans, animals, crops, the environment, and trade
- providing advice to the decision maker on registration of new products
- developing relationships with industry stakeholders.

We offer generous pay and conditions under the [APVMA Enterprise Agreement 2024-27](#).

In return we expect you to:

- comply with the requirements of the *Public Service Act 1999*, including the APS Values, Employment Principles and Code of Conduct
- comply with our policies and guidelines
- participate in our Performance Management process
- as a worker under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*, cooperate with any reasonable instruction, policy or procedures given to you by the APVMA which relates to health and safety in the workplace
- take reasonable care for your own health and safety while at work and ensure your acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons in your workplace.

