

Position Description

Position Title: Policy Officer / Senior Policy Officer (dependent on experience)
Position Status: Full Time (Contract) – 2year contract
Reports To: Deputy CEO
Location: 95 Drummond Street, Carlton, VIC. 3053

Summary

Penington Institute is an independent not-for-profit that connects lived experience and research to improve community safety in relation to drugs.

More than just an essential voice in the national conversation around drugs, we also educate the community, represent Victoria's Needle and Syringe Programs, train front-line workers, and influence real-world change.

The Policy Officer/Senior Policy Officer is responsible for conducting high-quality policy analysis, writing reports and briefing papers, drafting policy positions in line with the organisation's goals and conducting research to further support policy development.

This work will ensure the organisation provides effective and informed policy advice across a range of relevant drug-related issues to diverse stakeholders including the Commonwealth and state Governments, the health sector, and the community.

We are seeking someone who is capable of succeeding in a challenging environment, effectively responding to rapidly changing drug use trends and markets which historically move faster than research and policy responses.

The successful candidate will have strong writing, policy analysis and research skills. They will also be passionate about finding innovative ways for communities to be safe, healthy and empowered to manage drug use.

About Penington Institute

Penington Institute is an independent not-for-profit organisation. Our purpose is framed by our knowledge that we need to look at more effective, cost-efficient and compassionate ways to prevent and respond to problematic drug use in our community. Penington Institute advances health and community safety by connecting substance use research to practical action.

Our activities:

- **Enhance awareness** of the health, social and economic drivers of drug-related harm.
- **Promote rational, integrated approaches** to reduce the burden of death, disease and social problems related to problematic substance use.
- **Build and share knowledge to empower** individuals, families and the community to take charge of substance use issues.
- **Better equip front-line workers** to respond effectively to the needs of those with problematic drug use.

Penington Institute acknowledges the importance of individual responsibility in relation to substance use, as well as the role of government and community to address the risks that contribute to problematic use of licit and illicit drugs and alcohol.

Our approach

Penington Institute collaborates with many other sectors and organisations to identify and respond to specific substance use problems and their causes. With our outreach to the front-line we are well-placed to know and understand the realities of how drugs impact on communities. We add our front-line knowledge and experience to our analysis of the evidence to help support practical research and policy and the development of support services and public health campaigns. Our strong, diverse networks provide an excellent platform for building support for effective initiatives.

Our values

- **Productivity:** We support actions that deliver the best health, social and economic results.
- **Integrity:** Drug use is a complex issue. We advocate fair, evidence-based systems that improve the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities.
- **Compassion:** We do not condone drug use, but work to protect people from drug-related harm when at their most vulnerable. Feasible and accessible options are needed to help reduce the risks associated with the use of different types of drugs, including pharmaceuticals, alcohol and nicotine.
- **Persistence:** We believe that responding to drug use requires innovation and evaluation of a combination of approaches. There is no simple solution – but by persisting, we will create positive change.
- **Empowerment:** Tackling drug problems is a shared responsibility. We acknowledge individual responsibility tempered with government and community support in order to generate positive change.

Duties

The following duties represent main areas of work and responsibility; however, the position is a dynamic one that will require a variety of tasks to address emerging priorities.

Policy development and analysis:

- Take a proactive role in identifying policy issues relevant to drug use.
- Develop and contribute to policy papers that support Penington Institute's activities.
- Draft high-quality submissions to government.
- Be well-informed of all relevant policy issues.
- Keep abreast of intelligence from front-line workforces and various networks.
- Collect and analyse relevant data, identifying possible solutions and presenting recommendations to ensure Penington Institute makes well-informed, evidence-based decisions.
- Produce regular reports for the Executive and key strategic committees on Penington Institute matters.
- Apply extensive and in-depth knowledge to provide advice on a variety of governance and policy issues.
- Provide support to committees and ensure appropriate follow-up.
- Write content on policy issues for our publications.
- Support strategic communications activity by providing most relevant research and data, and writing content for our publications (media releases, websites, publications and campaign materials).
- Assist with media releases and briefings as required.

Grant submissions

- Assist in the development of grant submissions, especially by sourcing and analysing relevant policy, research and data.

Other projects

- Contribute to other projects as required.

Selection Criteria

Applicants should have:

- A relevant tertiary qualification or demonstrated equivalent competency;
- Experience in policy development;
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills and high-level consultation and negotiation skills.
- A background in criminal justice, health or a related field;
- Excellent planning and organisational skills and demonstrated ability to set priorities and meet deadlines;
- Excellent policy, research and report writing skills, conceptual skills and a high degree of analytical and problem-solving skills;
- Demonstrated ability to determine long term planning and key strategic directions and develop, implement and improve policies, processes and procedures; and
- Ability to work with a high degree of autonomy and initiative in a complex and confidential environment.

Desirable

- Experience in government and political processes.
- Experience working in the AOD sector.

Other Criteria

Teamwork

- Demonstrated ability to work collaboratively with colleagues as an active member of a team.
- Demonstrated high-level interpersonal, communication, liaison and organisational skills to be applied across a range of differing cultural environments and diverse communities and organisations.
- Able to participate and contribute to continuous improvement in a diverse and multidisciplinary team's functioning in a cooperative and collaborative manner.

Builds and Utilises Stakeholder Relationships

- Build networks within the wider community, sourcing and developing potential contacts relevant to the position and Penington Institute.
- Maintains strong, positive relationships both internally and externally
- Finds innovative solutions to resolve issues.
- Builds trust through consistent actions, values and communication.
- Keeps stakeholders up to date with issues and developments escalating stakeholder issues as appropriate.

Further Information

Please contact Dr Stephen McNally for further information on this position by calling +613 9650 0699 or emailing s.mcnally@penington.org.au.