

## Position Description

**Position Title:** Senior Policy Officer  
**Position Status:** Full Time / Part Time (Contract) – 2 year contract  
**Reports To:** Manager, Research and Policy  
**Location:** 95 Drummond Street, Carlton, VIC 3053

*Are you highly skilled, committed to social justice and public health, and want to make a difference?  
We're looking for someone who is 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 that actively supports the adoption of approaches to drug use that promote safety and human dignity. 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 include:

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

Penington Institute collaborates with a broad range of 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.

## Position overview

The Senior Policy Officer works as part of a small and high-functioning team that reports to, and collaborates with, the Manager, Research and Policy on strategic policy, research and advocacy activities. The position is responsible for conducting high-quality policy analysis, writing reports and briefing papers and drafting policy positions in line with the organisation's goals to support policy development.

The work of this position ensures that the organisation provides effective and informed policy advice across a wide range of relevant drug-related issues to diverse stakeholders, including governments, the health sector and the community.

## Key responsibilities and 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.

1. Take a proactive role in identifying and staying informed about policy issues relevant to drug use.
2. Develop policy papers to support the organisation's activities.
3. Draft high-quality submissions to government.
4. Engage with key stakeholders to keep abreast of developments and intelligence from front-line workforces and various networks.
5. Produce regular reports for the Executive and key strategic committees on policy matters.
6. Apply an extensive and in-depth knowledge to provide advice on a variety of governance and policy issues.
7. Prepare grant submissions and other papers, especially by sourcing and analysing relevant policy, research and data to ensure that Penington Institute makes well-informed, evidence-based decisions.
8. Provide support to committees and ensure appropriate follow-up is achieved.
9. Write content on policy issues for our publications (media releases, websites, publications and campaign materials).
10. Assist with developing media briefings as required.
11. Contribute to other projects as required.

## Selection criteria

### Applicants should have:

1. A relevant tertiary qualification or demonstrated equivalent competency.
2. Experience in policy development.
3. Excellent policy analysis, research and report writing skills, conceptual skills and a high degree of analytical and problem-solving skills.
4. Excellent written and verbal communication skills and high-level consultation skills.
5. Excellent planning and organisational skills and demonstrated ability to set priorities and meet deadlines.
6. Demonstrated ability to determine long-term planning and key strategic directions and develop, implement and improve policies, processes and procedures.
7. Ability to work with a high degree of autonomy and initiative in a complex and confidential environment.
8. Experience in government and political processes is desirable.

## Other criteria

People with a multi-lingual or diverse background, or with personal experience of drug use issues, are encouraged to apply.

### Teamwork

1. Demonstrated ability to work collaboratively with colleagues as an active member of a team.
2. Demonstrated high level interpersonal, communication, liaison and organisational skills to be applied across a range of differing cultural environments and diverse communities and organisations.

3. 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**

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

#### **Eligibility criteria**

1. Holds Australian citizenship, permanent residency or proof of eligibility to work on an unrestricted basis in Australia.

#### **Other terms and conditions of employment**

1. Applicants will be asked to consent to a National Criminal Record Check; people with criminal records are not automatically excluded from applying.
2. Applicants must achieve satisfactory completion of a probationary period of 6 months.
3. Terms and conditions of employment will be negotiated according to relevant skills and prior experience.
4. This is a full-time or negotiated part-time position, with flexible working conditions and a positive work culture.
5. Salary starting at \$90,000, with access to generous public benevolent institution (PBI) salary sacrificing, plus 10% superannuation.

#### **Further Information**

Please contact Dr Karen Gelb for further information on this position by calling +613 9650 0699.