



Senior Media & External Communications Advisor

Position Description

Team:	Stakeholder Engagement & Communications	Location:	Auckland or Wellington
Reports to:	Manager Media & External Communications		
Role Type:	Permanent		

About Us

KiwiRail's Role in Aotearoa, New Zealand

KiwiRail, a proud State-Owned Enterprise, delivers sustainable and inclusive growth for our customers, communities, and people.

For more than 150 years, rail in New Zealand has connected communities, delivered freight and passengers around the country, and showcased our spectacular scenery to the world. Our purpose — Hononga Whaikaha, Oranga mo Aotearoa (Stronger Connections, Better New Zealand) — speaks to connection with our customers and the future needs of their businesses, connection with the communities we serve and operate in, and connection with each other. KiwiRail is carrying this legacy into the future, delivering connected rail and shipping transport services that create economic, social, and environmental value for New Zealand and New Zealanders.

Our Workplace

At KiwiRail, our values define the behaviour we expect from everyone. We have a team of over 4500 people, and every connection we make with each other, our union partners, our customers and all our stakeholders must be of the highest standard.



Safety, health, and wellbeing are our number one priority, ensuring our people return home safe and healthy every day.

About the Role

Purpose of the role

KiwiRail has a vision to become our customers first choice and is delivering on a significant five year plan to modernise and grow our business.

The Senior Media & External Communications Advisor is responsible for developing and implementing communications strategies and programmes to enhance and protect the corporate reputation of KiwiRail. The role delivers key communications functions and services, including media relations and digital communications, and assists with enterprise-wide coordination and collaboration to ensure external communications are accurate, aligned to the company's strategy and build a consistent impactful approach.

The Senior Media & External Advisor develops content and strategy using coordinated plans across stakeholders and channels to support an enterprise-wide approach. The role is proactive in establishing and maintaining relationships with key individuals and groups, both internal and external to the organisation, and demonstrates excellent interpersonal and communication skills.

As a safety leader, you will be expected to "walk the safety talk".

Key Accountabilities

Within the area of responsibility, this role is required to:

- Develop and implement proactive and reactive communications plans and programmes aligned to KiwiRail's strategy and key issues and risks enhance and protect KiwiRail's corporate reputation
- Ensure that KiwiRail's positioning externally is coherent and one narrative supporting strategic focuses and focus on building trust and corporate reputation.
- Ensure strong relationships and working with the brand, customer and marketing team on multi-stakeholder matters for consistency of content and positive impact for all stakeholders.
- Proactively identify and create proactive story and content opportunities that support this and lead communications planning.
- Develop and maintain clear, consistent key messages and ensure alignment across media, digital and stakeholder communications, using structured coordination and collaboration.
- Anticipate emerging issues and collaborate with relevant persons internally to be prepared and aligned.
- Develop content for channels such as social media and collaborate and clearly identify key channels and appropriate content adjustment while consistent to a core narrative.
- Proactively identify and manage communications risks and issues, and lead communications planning and response for high-profile, multi-stakeholder or sensitive situations.
- Implement structures and processes to ensure that relevant authorities and policies create clarity and efficient and effective working across KiwiRail.
- Recommend when interviews should or should not occur and provide media interview preparation for approved senior leaders as well as strategic advice on communications risks, positioning and timing of information release.
- Support the stakeholder and communications team and share responsibility for after-hours (evenings, nights and weekends) KiwiRail media phone and issues and crisis responses as part of a roster system with other team members.

Key challenges & opportunities

- Ensuring strategic alignment to one enterprise stakeholder and communications approach and proactively developing plans and delivery of positive story generation aligned to strategy while balancing high day to day demands.
- Ensuring strong coordination and clarity on communications and stakeholder sequencing in high-profile or crisis situations, ensuring timely and accurate information is provided.
- Balancing multiple priorities and deadlines across media, digital, and stakeholder engagement activities.
- Maintaining and enhancing KiwiRail's reputation in a dynamic and sometimes challenging public environment.

Key Relationships Here are the key relationships relevant to this role		Manage /Lead	Deliver to	Collaborate with	Advise or inform
Internal	GM Stakeholder Engagement and Communications		✓	✓	✓
	Manager Media & External Communications		✓	✓	✓
	Stakeholder and Communications Team		✓	✓	✓
	Executive Leadership Team & Senior Leadership Team		✓	✓	✓
	Approved Spokespersons under the Media Policy		✓	✓	✓
	Approved delegates for facts and information		✓	✓	✓
	Business Specialists (eg: Project Directors and key SMEs)			✓	✓
	Brand, Marketing & Customer Communications Team			✓	✓
External	Media / NZ public				✓
	Stakeholders as audiences including Shareholder, NZ Public, Communities, Customers, Industry and central and local agencies as relevant (for content and sequencing alignment)				✓
	Publishers			✓	

What you will do to contribute

Health Safety and Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the implementation of safety procedures and ensure team compliance • Analyse workplace risks and support the development of mitigation strategies • Promote a culture of safety and wellbeing within your team • Respond effectively to safety incidents and near-misses • Support team members' physical and mental health
Customer Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support KiwiRail to provide a positive customer experience • Support a customer-focused culture at KiwiRail • Know our services well and help others explain them to customers • Support others to solve complex customer issues • Work with colleagues to improve customer outcomes
High Performing Teams Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set clear performance standards aligned with KiwiRail's goal • Build a supportive and cooperative team environment • Provide timely and constructive feedback • Actively seek diverse perspectives in problem-solving • Identify opportunities for coaching and mentoring
Commercial Acumen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to the planning and monitoring of resource allocation to achieve team objectives • Consider financial implications when making recommendations • Work with suppliers to ensure quality outcomes • Recognise how financial decisions impact KiwiRail's overall position
Writing and message coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take an enterprise leadership role to content leveraging the creation of message houses and core narratives on key strategic messages that support the company's strategy and objectives. • Ensure effectiveness and efficiency for tailoring of content for media and a range of other communications and stakeholder channels so they occur authentically, consistently and in a timely sequenced manner.
Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactively provide advice to management on the communications implications of group policies, practices and actions. • Recommend actions to improve group communications • Contribute to the decision making of the ELT and through recommending appropriate communications initiatives and calling out key risks or opportunities.
Media Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare news releases and articles and arrange media briefings as appropriate. • Proactively identify positive opportunities to promote KiwiRail internally and externally • Develop and maintain relationships with key media staff and reporters.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully prepare staff for media interviews and briefings. • Ensure all media inquiries and responses are appropriately filed. • Be a key contact for media during working hours • Share with other team members on a rotation basis, responsibility for night-time and weekend monitoring of the after-hours media phone.
Issues & Crisis Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead coordinated communications and stakeholder plans and sequencing to support enterprise alignment and corporate reputation. • Manage the communications for issues and crisis situations according to recognised best practice to build trust among stakeholders. • Develop and manage communications plans in conjunction with relevant stakeholders.
Social media and online channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to managing KiwiRail's social media accounts, building engagement with audiences and enhancing KiwiRail's reputation • Support the content plan and provide regular content for KiwiRail's external channels including social media channels • Create and source content, aligned to key stories and overall strategy. • • Assist in the development and implementation of e-Communications tools and effectiveness for impact and reach.



Decision Making

Key decision-making requirements of the position include:

- **Shape communications approach and messaging:** Decide how to develop and implement communications strategies, including key messages, channels, and timing to enhance and protect KiwiRail's brand.
- **Manage media and digital activity:** Determine responses to media enquiries and social media engagement, including content, tone, and level of response, particularly in high-profile or sensitive situations.
- **Prioritise and coordinate delivery:** Balance competing communications activities across media, digital, and stakeholder engagement, deciding priorities and resource allocation to meet deadlines.
- **Assess and manage reputational risk:** Evaluate potential risks in communications and public interactions, determining when to escalate issues and how to mitigate reputational impact.

Human Resources Delegations	Nil
Direct reports	Nil
Finance Delegations	Nil
Budget (operating and capital)	Nil
Travel Delegations	Nil
Statutory powers	Nil

Physical demands and the nature of work

This role is administration-based and requires:

- prolonged sitting and high computer usage
- limited walking, standing, twisting, bending (at the waist), crouching (bend knee)
- carrying of laptop and paperwork when alternating between home and office
- limited lifting of up to 7 kg archive boxes

Your role may include other tasks suited to your level, as your manager directs. This job description shows your current duties. We'll review and update it with you if your responsibilities change.

About you

Knowledge and experience

- You have experience in communications, media management, and public relations.
- You have experience in the development of communications plans and strategies.
- You understand the significance of communicating to different audiences.
- You have experience operating in a public service environment.
- You can think beyond immediate issues to consider long-term and broader implications.
- You anticipate issues, opportunities, and changes relevant to communications and know how to respond appropriately.

Ways of working / Work-related qualities

- You demonstrate excellent interpersonal and written communication skills.
- You exercise good judgement and maintain a high standard of professionalism.
- You work collaboratively and contribute to a high-performing team.
- You are proactive, adaptable, and solution focused.

Other Requirements

- You comply with all KiwiRail health and safety requirements.

Qualifications

- You have secondary qualifications and a tertiary qualification in journalism, communications, or a related discipline, or equivalent industry experience.

**CREATING
STRONGER
CONNECTIONS**

The KiwiRail logo, featuring the word "KiwiRail" in a bold, sans-serif font, followed by a stylized graphic of a kiwi bird's tail feathers.