SUSTAIN the Australian food network

Australian Food Network & Communications Manager

(15-Month Parental Leave Cover)

POSITION DESCRIPTION

About Sustain

Sustain exists to champion the transition to healthy, equitable, resilient and sustainable food systems. We empower people, governments and organisations with the knowledge, tools and connections they need to become agents of food system transformation.

As a national food systems organisation, Sustain works across three strategic pillars:

- Capacity Building
- Network Facilitation
- Advocacy

Through these pillars, we support governments, communities and organisations to strengthen food systems knowledge, build cross-sector collaboration and drive systems-level change.

Sustain works as a connector, facilitator and enabler within the food systems sector. We focus on building capability, supporting collective action and translating food systems knowledge into practical action.

Role Summary

The Australian Food Network & Communications Manager leads Sustain's Network Facilitation portfolio and organisational communications strategy.

This role is responsible for growing and activating the Australian Food Network (AFN) as a national platform for connection, collaboration and collective action across the food systems sector. The role oversees membership growth, stakeholder engagement, digital communications and public-facing storytelling that advances Sustain's mission and strategic priorities. This role is also responsible for managing and implementing key projects in the Network Facilitation portfolio, with a strong focus on network building and facilitating workshops and webinars.

The role also manages Sustain's Communications & AFN Officer and supports the development of systems, processes and engagement strategies that enable sustainable growth of the AFN platform and Sustain's broader communications activities.

Working closely with the Executive Director and leadership team, this role combines strategic communications, community engagement, business development and movement-building. The position plays a key role in strengthening Sustain's visibility, sector leadership and national influence.

Key Responsibilities

1. Team Leadership

- Supervise and support the Communications & AFN Officer
- Develop team workplans, workflows and role clarity across communications and engagement activities
- Support staff professional development and conduct regular supervision and performance reviews
- Contribute to organisational planning, strategy implementation, reporting and operational decision-making as part of the Sustain leadership team
- Maintain systems and processes for communications planning, membership administration and event coordination
- Contribute to organisational monitoring, evaluation and reporting processes

2. Australian Food Network Growth and Facilitation

- Lead the strategic growth and activation of the Australian Food Network (AFN)
- Refine and implement membership growth, retention and engagement strategies which support business sustainability
- Convene and facilitate online events, webinars and member engagement activities
- Build strategic relationships with food systems organisations, councils, public health organisations, philanthropy and sector stakeholders
- Work closely with the Capacity Building and Advocacy portfolios to strengthen cross-sector engagement and collaboration
- Represent Sustain within relevant sector networks, partnerships and collaborative initiatives

3. Project Management

- Lead key projects in the Network Facilitation portfolio, including VicHealth's *Local Partnerships for Food First* and Tripple Foundation's *Communities in Power: Taking Back Our Food System*
- Project management, including developing workplans, budgeting, reporting, governance and communication with funders and stakeholders
- Delivery of project activities, including workshop design and facilitation, resource creation, network building and Community of Practice facilitation
- Attendance at project events as needed, in person and online

4. Strategic Communications

- Lead the refinement and implementation of Sustain's communications strategy
- Oversee organisational communications including newsletters, digital campaigns, social media, website content and public storytelling
- Ensure communications align with Sustain's strategic priorities, values and brand positioning
- Identify opportunities to amplify Sustain's work, partnerships, campaigns and sector leadership
- Support development of communications plans for advocacy campaigns, events and major organisational initiatives
- Build relationships with media, partners and collaborators to increase public visibility and impact
- Lead communications measurement, reporting and continuous improvement activities

Key Selection Criteria

Essential

- Experience leading stakeholder engagement, community development or network facilitation initiatives
- Demonstrated experience developing and implementing communications, engagement or membership strategies
- Demonstrated leadership and team management experience
- Strong background in managing projects, workflows and competing priorities in dynamic environments
- Experience designing and facilitating workshops and webinars
- Strong relationship-building and partnership development skills
- Experience managing digital communications including newsletters, social media, websites and online campaigns
- Strong written, verbal and visual communication skills with the ability to communicate complex ideas clearly
- Ability to work collaboratively across teams while managing projects independently
- Tertiary qualification in communications, marketing, public relations, community development, social sciences or related fields
- Strong commitment to social and ecological justice and interest in food systems transformation

Desirable

- Experience working in the not-for-profit, public health, sustainability or food systems sectors
- Experience developing Communities of Practice or membership-based engagement initiatives
- Familiarity with impact measurement and communications analytics
- Experience with website development or management
- Familiarity with food policy, systems change or advocacy campaigns
- Experience using Airtable or similar CRM/project management systems

Employment Conditions

Reporting and working relationships

This position reports directly to the Executive Director. The incumbent will develop strong, collaborative working relationships with other Sustain staff, consultants and clients.

Staff performance and development

Sustain staff may undertake allocated duties not specifically mentioned in their position description but within the capacity, qualifications and experience normally expected from persons occupying positions at a similar level. This provides opportunities for staff to develop new skills and expertise.

Performance targets and expectations will be negotiated at the beginning of the contract as well as when undertaking new project responsibilities. A 6-monthly review project and annual performance review will provide opportunities to monitor progress and discuss performance and development needs. Where budgets allow, staff will be supported to develop skills and knowledge relevant to the position through attendance at workshops/events and/or participation in training activities.

Contract: Part time 15-month contract (0.8 FTE). Salary packaging up to $15,900 pa for general living expenses.

Hours: To be negotiated and align with work patterns of key team members.

Hourly rate: $49/hour plus super

Places of work: 59A Roseberry Av, Preston (Primary) / From home. Must be available to attend in-person meetings and activities in and around Melbourne.