



External Communications Manager

Communications and Marketing | Te Whakapāka me Te Whakatairaka

Our Purpose | Tā tātau whāika

We provide quality and dependable services, facilities, and infrastructure, so that Ōtepoti can be an inclusive, creative, and progressive city where all can thrive.

Why we are here | He aha i konei ai tātau?

The Dunedin City Council (DCC) looks after a vibrant region stretching from north of Waikouaiti to the Taieri River and inland to Hyde — covering 3,340 square kilometres of diverse communities and landscapes. We're here to make life better, offering everything from playgrounds, pools, and libraries to art, culture, and green spaces. Whether it's dog registration, collecting rubbish, designing better streets, or supporting local groups, we're working to help our city thrive.

Our Values | Ō tātau uara

As employees of the Dunedin City Council, we are committed to a public service ethic in all we do. Our core values are:

commitment – we love our city and look after it

wellbeing – we care for each other

accountability – we deliver with purpose and integrity

collaboration – we work together

Commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi | Te ū ki Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Long-term success and enduring partnership with Māori are important to the DCC. We are dedicated to working in partnership with mana whenua to provide opportunities for Māori to contribute to decision-making processes and to have an active role in our city's development.

Embedding te ao Māori (including te reo Māori and tikaka Māori) into the way we work at the DCC is a priority for all staff and is outlined in our Māori Strategic Framework – Te Taki Haruru. Te Taki Haruru envisions a reality where local government, mana whenua and the wider Māori community can work together with a shared intent to transform the state of wellbeing of whānau, anchored in connection between people, place, and the environment.

Your Purpose | Tō whāika

This position sits within the Communications and Marketing team. This role primarily manages the communications team and supports the Head of Communications and Engagement with development and implementation of the Council's communication and engagement functions, plans and preparation of strategies that will help the Council to engage with stakeholders and Dunedin residents.

Your Role | Tō tūraka

The Lead Communications Advisor has a range of objectives. This role leads and empowers a high-performing communications team that models DCC values, builds capability, and strengthens communications and engagement with staff, stakeholders, media, and the wider community. It contributes to strategic and operational planning to enhance communication excellence, promote the Council's reputation, and support meaningful connections—particularly through strengthened relationships with Hapori Māori. The position also ensures effective internal and external communications, proactive media management, and safe, supportive team environments aligned with the Council's goals and culture.

Our Vision:
One of the
world's great
small cities

Position details | Pitopito kōrero mō te tūraka

Reports to

Head of Communications and
Engagement

Portfolio

Community and Strategy

Salary grade

SP10 – Grade 19

Direct reports

Yes – 5

Budget

No

Spend authority

Refer to Delegations of
Authority

Warrant

No

Safety sensitive role

No

Child worker role

No

Date last reviewed

July 2026

Position Objectives | Kā whāika o te tūraka

- Lead and support your team to achieve goals, build capability, and work collaboratively. Model DCC values, encourage accountability, and foster a positive, inclusive, and high-performing team environment.
- To develop a team environment in which team members are empowered to perform to the best of their ability while committing to the goals and values of Dunedin City Council.
- To improve communications and engagement between the Dunedin City Council and residents and ratepayers via quality and situation specific communications.
- To contribute to the strategic and operational planning for ongoing development of excellence in communications services and broader engagement activities undertaken by the Dunedin City Council.
- To promote the Council as an organisation which is efficient and effective, progressive, innovative and responsive to the needs of the communities it services.
- To contribute to the operational planning for engagement with stakeholders.

Key Outcomes | Ka hua matua

- Relationships with Hapori Māori are strengthened through everyday use of te ao Māori values, contributing to better wellbeing and connections for all whānau in Ōtepoti Dunedin. Te Taki Haruru is applied, where necessary, to appropriately execute the role.
- Team members are properly trained to perform efficiently and effectively; they are provided a safe, supportive environment that encourages performance.
- Team members are supportive of the Council's strategic vision and values and support the culture of communications and engagement with the community.
- All practicable steps are taken to ensure personal safety and the safety of others, while at work, according to the departments and the Council's health and safety policies, procedures, and systems.
- The Council regularly has contact with the media.
- Communication and engagement is established and maintained with other key organisations and stakeholders.
- Oversee the coordination of media releases and statements for approval by the relevant Executive Managers and CEO.
- A close working relationship is developed with local media, media enquiries fielded and filtered, and media contact records kept.
- There is active liaison with appropriate staff to coordinate responses to media issues, and alert senior management to sensitive or controversial media issues relevant to the organisation.
- A communications strategy is prepared on an annual basis and the timetable for action set out in those plans complied with.
- Communication plans for specific projects or issues are prepared on an as required basis.
- Issues, when they emerge in the media, are identified and preparations made for management of these issues.
- Leads the coordination of communications as part of broader engagement plans.
- Communication and engagement services are accessible and meet the needs of Council.

		Share information	Advise/ Inform	Collaborate/ Partner	Reporting / Briefing	Influence	Support	Manage/ Lead
WITHIN DCC	Team	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Manager/ Team leader	✓	✓		✓		✓	
	DCC Leadership	✓	✓				✓	
	Council kaimahi	✓	✓				✓	
	The Mayor and Elected Representatives	✓	✓				✓	
EXTERNAL TO DCC	General Public	✓	✓				✓	
	Media	✓		✓		✓		

What you bring to the role | Ō pūkeka hā kai ki te 3

Professional or Practical Expertise

- Minimum 7 years experience working within communications, ideally with team leadership experience.
- A tertiary qualification in a communications/public relations related field at degree level.
- Journalism/editorial experience is highly desirable and the ability to reduce complex issues to a form which can be easily understood by the public is essential.
- A knowledge and understanding of the media and public relations industries and solid experience in dealing with the media.
- Political acumen and the ability to understand and analyse the activities of the Dunedin City Council and its relationships within the Dunedin Community.
- The ability to prepare strategies and plans which will guide the Council in dealing with the public and issues of public concern.
- Experience in working for a large, diverse organisation.

Making Decisions

- Ability to cope with pressure situations and to prioritise workload effectively.
- Ability to identify gaps, risks and potential in the communications and engagement area and formulate plans in response.
- Ability to research and analyse complex issues, including consolidating diverse or conflicting information sources to form sound recommendations.

People Management

- Works independently and in conjunction with manager to determine priorities and approaches within broad organizational frameworks.
- Excellent organisational, time management and interpersonal skills.
- The ability to generate enthusiasm within Council staff towards the public and the meeting of public needs.
- The ability to quickly establish credibility and rapport with people and to communicate effectively.

Working as a Team

- Proven ability to work as part of a leadership team in a collaborative style with shared responsibility.
- Personal skills to work with a wide range of individuals – internally and externally.

Working with Technology

- Experience with corporate computer systems, particularly in the area of Office Automation and the Microsoft Office range of products.
- Ability to demonstrate adaptability to new technologies, systems, and facilities.

Focus on Customers

- Familiarity with and respect for the values of mana whenua and te Ao Māori.
- Awareness of and respect for the values of those from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Able to engage positively with people from a wide range of backgrounds, ages, and cultures.
- Willingness to learn and develop these competencies.
- Provides superior customer service by actively listening and correctly interpreting messages and instructions.

Communicating Effectively

- Excellent communication skills (both written and verbal) and the ability to conduct oneself professionally at all times.
- Public presentation skills.
- Ability to use culturally appropriate communication styles as required.

Your Health, Safety and Wellbeing | Tō hauora, tō noho haumarū, tō oraka

The DCC is committed to our vision - 'staying healthy and safe kia hauora, kia haumarū' through creating a workplace culture that engages and supports health, safety and wellbeing (HSW), and the development of our people. Everyone at the DCC is responsible for HSW; this responsibility increases incrementally through the management structure. This is done by:

- Actively supporting and complying with the DCC's health and safety policies, procedures and safe work practices.
- Reporting all incidents, near misses, hazards and injuries and ensuring appropriate corrective actions have been taken.
- Engaging in and supporting health and safety activities, initiatives and feedback mechanisms.

Civil Defence | Ārai Mate Whawhati Tata

The DCC is a part of the Otago Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Group. This Group is responsible for preparing for, responding to, and supporting recovery from local emergencies. DCC employees may be required to assist with the Council's Civil Defence responsibilities.

