

LES Position Description

AGENCY	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
POSITION NUMBER	10884
POSITION TITLE	Political Affairs and Research Officer
CLASSIFICATION	LE5
SECTION	Policy and Programs
REPORTS TO (TITLE)	Second Secretary (Political)

About The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Amend for each agency)

The role of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) is to advance the interests of Australia and Australians internationally. This involves strengthening Australia's security, enhancing Australia's prosperity, delivering an effective and high quality overseas aid program and helping Australian travellers and Australians overseas. The department provides foreign, trade and development policy advice to the Australian Government. DFAT also works with other Australian government agencies to drive coordination of Australia's pursuit of global, regional and bilateral interests.

The Australian High Commission represents Australia's interests in the Kingdom of Tonga. This involves delivering an effective and high-quality overseas aid program, economic, people-to-people and security partnerships, and helping Australian travellers and Australians overseas.

About the position

The Political Affairs and Research Officer is responsible for delivering political research and analysis under the direction of the Second Secretary (Political). The position helps build Australia's understanding of changes to Tonga's political landscape, including on topics such as the Australia's foreign policies and aid program, police and military cooperation, cyber affairs, parliamentary relations, and people-to-people links. It also provides up-to-date research and analysis of Tongan political affairs, translates Tongan-language material, monitors the media, and provides briefing for Australian staff on emerging political, economic and social trends. Additionally, the Political Affairs and Research Officer will be required to provide administrative support for events, visits, delegations, training programs and twinning programs with Australian institutions.

Depending on your position, you may be required to undergo additional security and background checks and undertake specific Child Protection e-learning.

Key responsibilities of the position include but are not limited to:

- Monitor, research and analyse political, economic, social, security and policy developments in Tonga, including Tongan-language material, and produce timely written reports, verbal briefings and recommendations that inform Australia's policy and engagement.
- Anticipate emerging issues, opportunities and risks; exercise sound judgement to interpret complex or incomplete information, identify implications for Australia's interests and propose appropriate courses of action.
- Initiate, strengthen and maintain productive networks across political offices, government, business, civil society and other key stakeholders; represent the High Commission at meetings and events, advocate Australia's interests as directed, and report accurately on outcomes and developments.

- Manage and analyse records of Tonga's ministerial engagement with international partners, including Australia, ensuring information is accurate, current and readily available to support planning and advice.
- Prepare and coordinate high-quality official correspondence and reporting, including Third Party Notes, cables, meeting records and messages to Canberra, in accordance with relevant policies, procedures and record-keeping requirements.
- Plan and deliver concurrent events and official visit programs, coordinating competing requests, stakeholder engagement, schedules, invitations, RSVPs, logistics, catering, entertainment, public events and media arrangements.
- Support the planning, delivery, monitoring and risk management of development programs, including Australian support for the Tonga Electoral Commission, and contribute to responses where issues or changing circumstances arise.
- Organise own workflow under limited direction, set priorities and meet deadlines in a fast-moving environment; contribute to team planning, improved work practices and, where required, task allocation, on-the-job guidance and capability development.

Required Qualifications/Experience/Knowledge/Skills

- Relevant tertiary qualifications and/or substantial experience in communications, political science, international relations, public policy or another related field.
- Demonstrated knowledge of Tonga's modern history, politics, economy, government and parliamentary systems, and social and cultural environment, together with an understanding of the policy and regulatory frameworks relevant to the role.
- Strong research, analytical and judgement skills, including the ability to monitor trends, assess complex or unfamiliar issues, identify risks and opportunities, draw sound conclusions and recommend practical courses of action.
- High-level written and spoken English communication skills, with demonstrated ability to prepare clear, concise and accurate reports, briefs, correspondence and meeting records for decision-makers.
- Strong Tongan-language skills, including the ability to interpret Tongan-language source material and produce accurate English-language translations.
- Demonstrated ability to build and maintain effective networks, provide advice, represent an organisation professionally and manage sensitive or contentious matters with tact, persuasion and cultural awareness.
- Strong organisational, project and time-management skills, including the ability to work under limited direction, organise own workflow, coordinate concurrent activities, manage competing priorities and deliver accurate work to deadlines.
- Demonstrated ability to work collaboratively in a small team, contribute to planning and continuous improvement, support colleagues and, where required, coordinate work or provide on-the-job guidance.
- Demonstrated flexibility, initiative and sound risk awareness, with the ability to adapt methods, learn new skills and respond constructively to changing or unpredictable circumstances.