



Position Description – Deputy Director, ATN Universities

Position Details

Position Title: Deputy Director, ATN Universities

College/Portfolio: Policy Strategy & Impact **School/Group:** ATN Universities

Campus Location: The position will be based at the RMIT Melbourne City campus but will be required to travel to, and engage with, key Canberra stakeholders. The position may be required to work out of, and travel to, any of the ATN universities across Australia.

Classification: HEW 10C **Time Fraction:** 1.0 FTE

Employment Type: Fixed Term

Fixed Term Reason: Specific Tasks or Projects

Reporting Line: Executive Director, ATN Universities

No. of Direct reports: 2

RMIT University

RMIT is a global university of technology, design and enterprise, committed to creating transformative experiences for students and making a meaningful impact through research, innovation, and engagement. For more information on RMIT University follow the links below.

<https://www.rmit.edu.au/about>

<https://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/university/rmit-university/>

<https://www.rmit.edu.au/about/facts-figures>

Our campuses in Melbourne (City, Brunswick, Bundoora, and Point Cook) are complemented by international campuses in Vietnam and a centre in Barcelona, Spain. We proudly acknowledge the Woi Wurrung and Boon Wurrung peoples of the eastern Kulin Nation on whose unceded lands our campuses are located.

We are deeply committed to reconciliation and Indigenous self-determination, embedding these values throughout our policies, culture and structures.

<https://www.rmit.edu.au/about/our-locations-and-facilities>

Why Join RMIT?

Our people are at the heart of everything we do. At RMIT, we value innovation, collaboration and impact. Our values are the heart (durrung) of who we are and what we stand for at RMIT. They guide what we do, how we make decisions, and how we treat each other.



Inclusion Imagination Integrity Courage Passion Impact

Learn more about our values: <https://www.rmit.edu.au/about/our-strategy/values>

Organisational Accountabilities

RMIT is committed to the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all staff and students. As a staff member, you are expected to comply with all relevant legislation and RMIT policies, including those related to: Equal opportunity, Occupational health and safety, Privacy and trade practices & Child safety standards:

Appointees are responsible for completing all required training and ensuring that they and their team members remain up to date on relevant compliance obligations.

Staff are expected to understand and support RMIT's child safe practices as part of their professional responsibilities. More about our child safety commitment: <https://www.rmit.edu.au/about/our-locations-and-facilities/facilities/safety-security/child-safety>.

Leadership at RMIT

At RMIT, leadership is not defined by position or hierarchy—it is a shared responsibility demonstrated by all staff, regardless of role or title. Leadership is grounded in our six core values, which guide and shape how we work together, make decisions, and create impact.

Effective leadership means consistently integrating these values into everyday actions and interactions, whether influencing a project outcome, supporting a colleague, or leading a team. All staff are expected to embody the principles of the *Be-Know-Do* Leadership Model:

Be – We are open and authentic, inclusive and empowering. We are purpose driven role models and communicators.

Know – We are self-aware, and understand our stakeholders, our sector and priorities.

Do – We set clear direction and expectations, we develop ourselves and others and promote mutual accountability to deliver results.

At every level, leadership at RMIT is about influence, contribution, and mindset. It is reflected in how we empower others, foster collaboration, and drive positive change through capability-building and alignment to strategic goals.



Australian Technology Network of Universities

Australian Technology Network of Universities (ATN) is a national Australian higher education peak body, with a membership of six universities across Australia. ATN has a strong presence both nationally and internationally and in key metropolitan and regional media markets. Established in 1999, ATN undertakes policy, advocacy, public affairs and national media work to benefit the shared interest of our membership of world-class Australian universities, the higher education sector and society more broadly.

ATN member universities are Curtin University, Deakin University, RMIT University, The University of Newcastle, and University of Technology Sydney. Swinburne University of Technology joined as an observing member in 2026.

The ATN Secretariat serves its members through a wide range of activities, including policy analysis and development, while ensuring the voice of our membership is heard at all levels of government, as well as in and through media channels throughout Australia and internationally.

Regarded as Australia's most innovative and enterprising grouping, ATN prides itself on its shared mission to ensure Australia's higher education system remains open, fair and accessible, as well as meeting the needs of industry, particularly Australia's 2.3 million SMEs.

The ATN Secretariat is led by the Executive Director and its head office is based at RMIT's City Campus in Melbourne. RMIT University is the employing agent for ATN staff.

Learn more about the ATN at the following link: <https://atn.edu.au/>

Position Summary

The Deputy Director is a senior strategic and operational leadership role within the ATN Secretariat, responsible for the leadership and performance of the Policy and Program units, in alignment with the strategic priorities set by the Executive Director.

This is a fixed position that will provide whole-of-Secretariat oversight to support the development, implementation and evaluation of agreed strategic initiatives over the next two-years. The Deputy Director acts as the Executive Director's delegate and proxy during periods of absence, at pre-designated events, and as otherwise directed, representing ATN at senior external forums and engagements.

A core function of the role is leadership of ATN Universities' government relations strategy. The Deputy Director builds, sustains, and leverages trusted relationships with ministerial offices, central agencies, and senior government stakeholders. The role requires deep expertise in parliamentary, legislative, and machinery-of-government processes, combined with a high degree of political judgement and acuity. This includes the ability to interpret emerging policy signals, internal party dynamics, and decision-making pathways that influence government priorities and outcomes.

Operating with a high level of autonomy and strategic authority, the role focuses on relationship management, political intelligence, issues monitoring, and strategic engagement. Engagement is primarily at the Commonwealth level, with targeted State and Territory engagement on agreed priority issues. The Deputy Director provides timely, authoritative advice to the Executive Director and ATN member universities, supporting informed decision-making, coordinated advocacy, and proactive positioning.

The role leads the translation of ATN's policy positions into effective government engagement strategies, advocacy activity, and sector intelligence gathering. This includes shaping engagement plans, briefing materials, and strategic messaging to support ATN's influence and reputation. The Deputy Director works closely with ATN's media and communications functions to ensure government engagement is coherent, strategically framed, and reputationally robust.

In addition, the Deputy Director ensures ATN's programs are delivered effectively and to a high standard, with a focus on program quality, growth, and long-term sustainability in service of ATN member universities. The role contributes to continuous improvement across programs and operations, ensuring alignment with ATN's strategic objectives and stakeholder expectations.

Reporting Line

Reports to: Executive Director, Australian Technology Network of Universities (ATN)

Direct reports: 2

The Deputy Director will also manage consultants and external contractors as directed.

Key Accountabilities

1. Leadership and Operational Oversight

- Partner with, and support, the Executive Director in developing, tracking and successfully realising strategic objectives.
- Maintain oversight of the Secretariat's operations, including finance, resources and policy compliance, and reporting.
- Lead the Secretariat's Policy and Program teams with a focus on a people-centred, collaborative and high-performance culture.
- Act as the Executive Director's proxy during periods of absence, at pre-designated events or as directed.

2. Strategic Government Relations and Advocacy

- Lead the ATN's government relations and engagement strategy, consistent with organisational priorities set by the Executive Director.
- Build and maintain high-trust relationships with ministerial offices, advisors and senior departmental stakeholders to support ongoing intelligence gathering, early issue identification and informed advocacy.
- Act as the primary secretariat and senior point of contact for the ATN Government Relations Committee, including agenda setting, preparation of high-quality papers, facilitation of meetings, and follow-up of agreed actions.
- Provide strategic advice to the Executive Director on political context, stakeholder dynamics and engagement opportunities.
- Represent ATN in senior-level meetings, briefings and consultations with government and political stakeholders, at the direction of the Executive Director.
- Communicate with influence and credibility across complex and politically sensitive environments.

3. Policy Leadership and Translation

- Lead the ATN policy team to ensure government engagement activities are aligned with agreed ATN policy positions.
- Translate policy positions into tailored engagement approaches for ministers' offices and senior officials, without assuming policy ownership.
- Provide feedback and intelligence from government stakeholders to inform ATN policy development, translation and impact.

4. Program Leadership (Frontiers and Governance)

- Provide strategic leadership and oversight of ATN's programs portfolio, encompassing the Frontiers program and ATN's governance and committee framework, to ensure alignment with strategic priorities and member university needs.
- Ensure the design, delivery, and continuous improvement of high-quality, sustainable programs, integrating program activity with ATN's policy, government relations, and communications functions to support advocacy and sector positioning.
- Lead and develop the Programs Team, ensuring effective governance, risk management, and performance across programs, and fostering a high-performing, outcomes-driven culture.

5. Collaboration and Capability

- Operate as a senior specialist and trusted adviser to the Executive Director, exercising sound judgement and discretion.
- Collaborate closely with ATN media and communications to coordinate messaging, engagement timing and manage reputational considerations.
- Support, and partner with, the Executive Director in Secretariat-wide planning, prioritisation and continuous improvement through senior professional leadership.

6. Reputation, Risk and Issues Management

- Identify and manage emerging policy, political and reputational risks for ATN, escalating issues appropriately and advising on, and enacting, mitigation strategies.
- Exercise sound judgement in sensitive and confidential matters, including pre-decisional policy advice and stakeholder engagement.
- Lead coordinated responses to government inquiries, reviews and rapid-turnaround requests.

7. General

- Ensure compliance with RMIT and ATN policies and professional standards.
- Undertake other senior-level responsibilities consistent with the scope and intent of a HEW9 role.

Special requirements:

1. Willingness to work flexibly to meet deadlines, including occasional out-of-hours work if required.
2. Availability to travel interstate if necessary for stakeholder meetings or project delivery.

Key Selection Criteria

Essential

1. Extensive experience in executive leadership, with a proven senior-level track record in government relations, policy, communications, advocacy or a closely related field.
2. Demonstrated ability to operate strategically and autonomously, exercising sound judgement, and providing trusted advice to senior executives and governing bodies.
3. Deep understanding of Australian government processes, including parliamentary, budgetary, legislative and intergovernmental frameworks, and political dynamics.
4. Proven capability in building and sustaining high-trust relationships with ministers, parliamentarians, senior officials and sector leaders.
5. Highly developed judgement, political acumen and capacity to manage sensitive and complex issues.
6. Exceptional written and verbal communication skills, including the leadership and oversight of high-quality executive briefs and submissions.

Desirable

1. Experience working with or within peak bodies, universities, research organisations or membership-based organisations.
2. Demonstrated people leadership experience, including mentoring and capability development.

Qualifications

Relevant higher-degree qualification (e.g. political science, public policy, economics, communications, social sciences or related field), or an equivalent combination of education and relevant experience.

Working with Children Check

Appointment to this position is subject to holding a valid Victorian Working with Children Check and other checks as required by the specific role. Maintaining a valid Working With Children Check is a condition of employment at RMIT.