

Position description

Position title:	Policy Manager
Reports to:	Associate Director, Early Childhood
Employment type:	Maximum-term, Full-time, (12 month contract)
Location:	Australia (Sydney or Melbourne preferred)
No. of direct reports:	None
Date:	January 2026
Approved by:	Executive Director, Social Impact Initiatives

The operating environment

SVA overview

Social Ventures Australia (SVA) is a not-for-profit organisation that works with partners to alleviate disadvantage – towards an Australia where all people and communities thrive.

We influence systems to deliver better social outcomes for people by learning about what works in communities, helping organisations be more effective, sharing our perspectives and advocating for change.

SVA Values

As a purpose-driven organisation, our values guide who we are, how we work and the decisions we make.



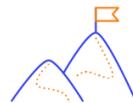
People at
the centre



Difference
gives
us strength



Open and
ready
to learn



Real change
takes time

Learn more about SVA's values [here](#).

Social Ventures Australia Limited

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First Nations Practice Principles

SVA is committed to providing a culturally safe workplace for all our First Nations employees, partners and clients. We commit that our work with First Nations peoples is aligned with our First Nations Practice Principles set out below.



Learn more about SVA's First Nations Practice Principles [here](#).

Team overview

SVA's Social Impact Initiatives division creates innovative solutions to challenging social problems. We find, test and scale new ways to drive real change so that everyone in Australia can live their best life.

Our approach includes:

- Testing and growing innovative solutions by building the evidence behind them and bringing the right partners together to drive them
- Unlocking new sources of capital and innovative financing to solve problems we all care about
- Creating change at scale by influencing funding and policy settings

The Young Children Thriving (YCT) team is one of SVA's Social Impact Initiatives. The YCT team seeks to transform Australia's early childhood development landscape for an Australia where all children, regardless of where they live or the challenges their family face, have the opportunities and supports they need to thrive. We work collaboratively with partners on ambitious high impact initiatives that redress systemic gaps.

Position purpose

The Policy Manager is responsible for leading research, policy development and advocacy to support our mission to disrupt and transform the early childhood development system to drive better outcomes for children and families in Australia.

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The position works closely with the Associate Director, Early Childhood, on our Nurture Together program that is focused on scaling Early Childhood Hubs (ECHs) and related integrated early years models, embedding them within our national early years systems to ensure children and families experiencing socio-economic disadvantage have access to the supports and services they need to thrive.

The two major research pieces in 2026 are focused on exploring optimal funding models and workforce strategies to progress this goal. The role will also work across the breadth of the YCT team as required, and with other teams within the Social Impact Initiatives program.

Position responsibilities

Specific responsibilities include:

Policy development

- Develop and implement policy and research strategies to support the Nurture Together program and YCT team's broader agenda to transform Australia's early childhood development landscape.
- Conduct research and policy analysis to support development of policy solutions to strengthen outcomes for young children experiencing disadvantage. This will focus on two major pieces of research in 2026, exploring:
 - optimal funding model options to embed ECHs and other integrated early years models within our early childhood education and care system, and
 - solutions to address workforce gaps in ECHs and other integrated early years models so they can deliver high-quality, culturally safe and integrated services at the necessary scale across Australia.
- Prepare high-quality written advice in the form of policy briefs, papers, presentations, proposals and other communications.
- Support for other emerging areas of YCT's work, for example food insecurity in early childhood.
- Monitor evolving social policy debates in the early childhood field, including to identify opportunities for SVA to participate in formal and informal policy processes.
- Support implementation of the YCT monitoring, evaluation and learning strategy.

Collaboration, stakeholder engagement and knowledge sharing

- Establish positive and productive working relationships with internal stakeholders, sector stakeholders, and project partners to support policy and advocacy objectives and strengthen collective impact.

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- Contribute knowledge in areas of expertise in SVA publications, thought leadership, and organisational learning and development. Participate in internal and external meetings and networks as required. Other responsibilities as may be required.

Person requirements

To effectively perform this position, the person will require the following:

Knowledge

- Deep understanding of Australia's social policy landscape and one or more key early childhood development domain areas (e.g. health, education, child protection).
- Demonstrated understanding of systemic workforce issues within social services sectors desirable, including knowledge of innovative policy, funding, and structural solutions to support workforce expansion, sustainability and effectiveness.
- Strong grasp of government policy reform processes, funding mechanisms, and levers employed by governments for systemic change.
- Understanding of the key issues impacting socio-economic disadvantage in Australia and key strategies or evidence base to address this at a system-wide level.
- Comprehensive working knowledge of Microsoft Office (i.e. Excel, Word, PowerPoint, Outlook).

Experience

- Significant experience in shaping and advancing policy positions, either within government or through advocacy organisations (including coalition building, advocacy campaigns, or communications for policy impact).
- Demonstrated ability to undertake research, including stakeholder consultation with diverse stakeholders (particularly in cross-cultural and disadvantaged communities), to support the development of policy or advocacy objectives.

Qualifications

- Degree qualifications in a relevant field, such as Public Policy, Law, Early Childhood, Communications or Social Sciences.

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Skills & Abilities

- Ability to analyse, understand and navigate complex policy issues relevant to the Early Childhood setting.
- Strong written and oral communication skills with demonstrated ability to present and convey information in a confident, clear and interesting way.
- Ability to build trusted relationships across a broad set of organisations and work collaboratively within and external to the organisation.
- Demonstrated ability to work effectively independently, to prioritise use of time and limited resources toward meeting ambitious, measurable goals.
- Excellent project management skills – ability to manage large, long-term, complex projects.
- Adaptive mindset, openness to innovation, and willingness to embrace new ideas and to be challenged.
- Ability to work in cross-cultural settings, and to situate the voice of people with lived experience in all program design thinking and decision making.