Info Sheet – A Guide to Writing Position Descriptions

## Background

A Position Description is a written description of a job, and the types of duties performed and the conditions under which they are performed. They provide staff and management with a clear picture and set of expectations about the role and responsibilities for the position. It is the first stage of managing staff performances.

## Why do we need position descriptions?

Position descriptions tell both the manager and employee what need to be done, how to do it, how performances will be measured and what skills and behaviours are required for the role.

Position descriptions assist with:

• Recruitment and selection (for example, job advertisements)

• Job evaluations

• Objective setting

• Performance measurement

• Career/succession planning

## Position Description Format

Position descriptions should include the following components:

1. Position Title, Date, Division, Site, and State

2. Job Purpose

3. Key Accountabilities

4. Indicators of Effectiveness

5. Necessary Skills and Attributes

6. Key Relationships

A description of the key components above are detailed in the section following this page.

In its simplest form, the overall performance management process can be summarized as follows:

POSITION DESCRIPTION PERFORMANCE REVIEW PAY/REWARD

Performance standards Performance feedback Total Salary-

Objectives and priorities Training and Development Plan Package

## Job Purpose

The job purpose should be a short, accurate statement of why the job exists and should outline:

• The core reason for the position existing or key objective of the position

• Explains what results are to be achieved

• The job’s unique contribution to the business

## Key Accountabilities

Key Accountabilities support the purpose of the role. They describe the key areas of responsibility for which the job incumbent is to be held accountable.

Put another way, the key accountabilities are the main areas in which the job is to achieve its purpose.

Some examples:

• Financial Management

• Product Development

• People Management

• OH&S

## Indicators of Effectiveness

Aligned with each Key Accountability are Indicators of Effectiveness which should clearly detail how a key accountability is to be achieved and to what standard or level of effectiveness.

The key accountability is the heading, while the responsibilities required to meet this accountability are the indicators of effectiveness. Put simply, indicators of effectiveness detail what is to take place to meet the purpose and objectives of the role.

## Necessary Skills and Attributes

The skills and attributes needed to meet the requirements of the role are included in this section. Without these skills and attributes, the incumbent could not meet the indicators of effectiveness standards and therefore would be unable to meet the requirements of the job.

Skills and attributes also include qualifications, attitudes and behaviours required to meet the job purpose.

Some Examples:

## Necessary Skills and Attributes

**Essential**

• Tertiary Qualified

• 8-10 Years relevant experience

• Excellent Problem Solving/Analytical skills

• Proven Sales Track Record

• Leadership and management skills – gets results through others

• Ability to relate to people at all levels throughout the Company

• Honest, ethical with high performance standards

• Excellent verbal and written communication skills

• A “self-starter”

• Attention to Detail

**Desirable**

• Experience in similar role

• Experience working with similar customers

• Experience with using specialized equipment

• Solid understanding of financial statements such as balance sheets and profit and loss statements

## Key Relationships

Included in this section are the key relationships that are required both within and external to your company. Internally they include manager, direct reports, and other key staff within the business. External relationships can include suppliers, consultants, industry representatives, and unions.

The emphasis is on key, regular relationships where negotiation and influencing skills are frequently practiced. Ad-hoc, passing relationships are not to be included.