

Position description

Branch Manager Strategy and Innovation



Department	Strategy, Partnerships and Performance
Employment type	Permanent
Classification	Senior Management
Location	Warrnambool
Date approved	July 2026
Approving Officer	Executive Water & Sewerage Services

Position objectives

This role leads the Strategy and Innovation Branch, with responsibility for Wannon Water's strategy delivery, organisational performance, corporate planning and reporting, research, development, innovation and knowledge sharing portfolios.

The role is accountable to:

- Lead Wannon Water's approach to strategy development, delivery and monitoring to strengthen organisational outcomes, long-term sustainability and alignment between strategic priorities, corporate planning and branch planning.
- Develop and embed an organisation-wide performance measurement and reporting model that provides clear insight into delivery, outcomes, priorities, risks and trade-offs.
- Support the organisation to align effort and resources with strategic priorities by identifying opportunities to reduce, reshape or cease lower-value activities and optimise investment.
- Lead the coordination of Corporate Plan, Annual Report and related strategic reporting processes, ensuring governance, Board and Executive processes are informed by clear evidence and performance insights.
- Lead Wannon Water's approach to research, development, innovation and knowledge sharing to support experimentation, continuous improvement, organisational learning and delivery of strategic priorities.
- Support the development of future strategic initiatives, metrics and evidence required for price submissions, Board strategy activities, horizon planning and corporate planning processes.
- Lead and develop a multidisciplinary branch, ensuring clear priorities, effective governance, strong collaboration and continuous improvement within available resources.

The role provides leadership, direction and oversight of the functions for which it is responsible and applies a growth mindset focused on learning, evidence-based decision-making, continuous improvement, empowering teams and achievement.

The role works closely with the Board, Executive and Senior Management Team and maintains routine engagement across the organisation, with sector partners, regulators, government, research bodies and other external stakeholders.

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Key responsibilities and duties

Team Leadership

As the Branch Manager Strategy and Innovation within the Strategy, Partnerships and Performance Department, the primary responsibilities and accountabilities include:

Leadership

- Lead, motivate and develop Strategy and Innovation Branch employees to ensure achievement of corporate objectives, branch plans and agreed performance standards.
- Demonstrate professionalism and commitment to Wannon Water's values in a way that inspires and influences employees and stakeholders.
- Support the development of Wannon Water through effective change management practices, strategic alignment, integrated planning and continuous improvement.
- Support team members by optimising and recognising their contribution through a positive, challenging working environment that provides opportunities to acquire and use skills to increase organisational productivity and impact.

Teamwork

- Foster collaboration within the Strategy and Innovation Branch, the Strategy, Partnerships and Performance Department and the wider organisation.
- Act as a member of Wannon Water's Senior Management Team and contribute to the performance and effectiveness of this team.
- Partner with Branch Managers to assess the strategic contribution of their work, identify opportunities to reduce, redesign or cease lower-priority activities, and rebalance effort and resources towards the organisation's strategic priorities.

Strategy Development and Delivery

- Coordinate Board and Executive processes to develop, review and monitor Wannon Water's corporate strategy and strategic focus areas.
- Implement and continuously improve Wannon Water's model for strategy delivery to clarify priorities, ownership, delivery pathways and organisational impact.
- Facilitate alignment between corporate strategy, Corporate Plan, branch plans, Board activity, price submission priorities and organisational initiatives.
- Support horizon planning for medium and longer-term strategic priorities, including emerging initiatives for future corporate planning and price submission processes.
- Provide strategic advice to the Executive, Board and senior leaders on strategic priorities, delivery risks, dependencies and trade-offs.
- Lead the preparation, submission and monitoring of the annual Corporate Plan and support integration with annual reporting processes.

Performance Measurement and Reporting

- Develop, implement and continually improve an organisation-wide performance measurement framework that integrates strategic, corporate, customer, regulatory and branch-level indicators; and covers both the purpose and vision for Wannon Water.
- Coordinate organisational performance reporting to support Board, Executive and Senior Management Team decision-making.

- Strengthen the use of customer, operational, financial, engagement and external performance insights to support evidence-based decision-making.
- Develop and implement key performance measures and control systems compatible with Wannon Water's systems to enable progress reporting and exception reporting.
- Lead the preparation and submission of the Annual Report and support integration with corporate planning processes.

Research, Development, Innovation and Knowledge Sharing

- Lead Wannon Water's approach to research, development and innovation to support strategic priorities, organisational performance and business improvement.
- Coordinate research, development and innovation activity across the organisation to improve visibility, prioritisation, value and knowledge sharing.
- Develop frameworks and advice to clarify the value, appropriate investment and governance of research, development and innovation activities.
- Support experimentation, continuous improvement and organisational learning, including the scaling of successful innovation activities where appropriate.
- Represent Wannon Water in research, innovation, sector and university partnerships and forums as required.

Governance, Board and Strategic Reporting

- Support the Executive Strategy, Partnerships and Performance to facilitate an annual program of activities for relevant Board strategy and performance forums.
- Prepare and oversee reports, insights and recommendations for the Board, Executive, governance forums and external stakeholders as required.
- Coordinate the relationship between Corporate Plan, Annual Report and strategic performance reporting to improve consistency, traceability and governance value.
- Develop and maintain systems, processes and standards that support effective governance, quality, safety, records management and integrated management system requirements.

Financial and Special Duties

- Develop an annual budget for the administration of the Strategy and Innovation Branch.
- Deliver responsibilities in accordance with the nominated budget and contribute to the financial accountability and sustainability of Wannon Water.
- Monitor branch risks, opportunities, resource constraints, performance and continuous improvement priorities.
- Prepare regular and special reports as required and carry out other duties as directed from time to time.

Organisational relationships

Responsible to	Executive Strategy, Partnerships and Performance
Responsible for	Employees within the Strategy and Innovation Branch, including the Strategy Coordination Officer, Vision Impact Leads and Performance Coordinator.

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External liaison

Government departments and regulators, water corporations and sector associations, research organisations, universities and innovation partners, consultants, contractors and service providers, customers, community and other stakeholders as required

Accountability and extent of authority

- Freedom to act is governed by policies and delegations of the Board and by legislative, regulatory and organisational requirements.
- Maintain authority, as Branch Manager Strategy & Innovation, over all Strategy & Innovation Branch employees and delegate authority and responsibility to individual employees where appropriate to ensure the efficient and effective operation of the branch.
- This position will coordinate the strategy, performance, corporate planning, reporting, research, development and innovation functions consistent with Wannon Water's objectives and strategic directions under the general guidance of the Executive Strategy, Partnerships and Performance.
- This position will be expected to be highly self-sufficient.
- This position is responsible for ensuring that all Strategy & Innovation Branch employees work in a safe environment and use sound and safe work practices which maximise employee health, safety and wellbeing in accordance with occupational health and safety requirements.
- The effect of decisions and actions taken by this position may have a significant impact on Wannon Water's reputation, customers, community, Traditional Owners, partner organisations and stakeholder relationships.

Judgement and decision making

- This position is expected to develop policy, frameworks, systems and methods in consultation with the Executive Strategy, Partnerships and Performance within the areas of responsibility.
- This position requires the incumbent to use significant initiative to develop systems, schedules, approaches and methods to efficiently and effectively carry out the branch functions.
- This position will make all decisions necessary for the proper performance of the duties within the limits of budget constraints, policy, procedure and direction of Wannon Water, the Managing Director, Executive Strategy, Partnerships and Performance and the limitations of the law.
- This position will make recommendations to the Executive Strategy, Partnerships and Performance regarding policy, procedures and methods that would improve the efficiency, effectiveness and integration of branch functions.
- Generally, guidance may be sought from external experts in specialist areas, with general guidance available from the Executive Strategy, Partnerships and Performance.

Specialist skills and knowledge

The position requires strong leadership skills to lead and motivate staff, general management skills and sound knowledge of strategy, performance, corporate planning, reporting, research, development and innovation functions.

This position requires:

- A sound knowledge of the development, implementation and evaluation of corporate strategy, strategic planning and strategy delivery systems.
- Sound knowledge of organisational performance frameworks, performance measurement, reporting, evaluation and evidence-based decision-making.
- Sound knowledge of corporate planning, annual reporting, Board and Executive reporting and public sector governance requirements.
- A sound understanding of research, development, innovation, continuous improvement and knowledge sharing approaches.
- A systematic and creative approach to problem solving and alternative solutions.
- A sound understanding of the legislative, regulatory, political and social context relevant to Wannon Water and its strategic functions.
- Knowledge of administrative procedures, budgeting, procurement, contract management and financial procedures.
- Sound knowledge of the application of quality, safety, risk and integrated management systems in a corporate environment.

Management skills

This position requires:

- Self-motivation, management of time, setting priorities and organising own work and the work of branch employees.
- Effective competencies in performance management, development, coaching and training of staff.
- Ability to prepare strategic and operational plans for areas of responsibility, timetable tasks and meet objectives within agreed timeframes.
- Ability to lead, recognise and motivate staff in a performance culture.
- Ability to manage budgets, resources, procurement, reporting and branch performance measures.
- Ability to support effective change management practices and integrated management philosophies across the branch and wider organisation.

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Interpersonal skills

The Branch Manager Strategy & Innovation must have excellent leadership and communication skills.

This position requires:

- Very well developed ability to manage people, including gaining cooperation in change management and improvement activities.
- Ability to lead and motivate teams in a manner that encourages high levels of satisfaction, motivation, commitment and accountability.
- Written skills at a level suitable for direct presentation to the Executive and Board.
- Ability to negotiate, liaise and advocate issues with media, regulators, Traditional Owners, customers, community members, partner organisations and external stakeholders.
- Ability to build effective working relationships across Wannon Water and with counterparts in other organisations to resolve specialist matters and cross-organisational issues.
- High levels of integrity, judgement and interpersonal capability when dealing with sensitive, complex or high-profile matters.

Qualifications and experience

- A tertiary qualification in business, public policy, economics, governance, business analytics, evaluation, performance, innovation, management or a related discipline, or extensive experience in a similar role, is required.
- Postgraduate qualifications in a management or relevant specialist discipline will be well regarded.
- Appropriate experience in strategy, performance, corporate planning, reporting, research, development, innovation or related functions is required.
- Experience in a significant management role is a necessary prerequisite.
- Experience working with Boards, Executives, government, regulators, sector partners, research organisations or complex governance environments will be well regarded.

A current Australian driver licence is required.

Our values and Code of Conduct

All employees are required to act in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees and demonstrate the Victorian Public Sector values of responsiveness, integrity, impartiality, accountability, respect, leadership and human rights, together with Wannon Water's organisational values.



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Inclusion and diversity

We embrace all forms of diversity and promote family friendly working hours and leave arrangements to ensure our workforce reflects the community that we serve.

Policies and procedures

All employees are required to adhere to systems, policies and procedures in relation to our activities. Employees shall not use their position for personal gain or advantage, nor disclose any confidential information acquired through employment by the Corporation.

Occupational health and safety

We've developed OH&S policies and procedures designed to meet the requirements of the internationally recognised Australian Standard/New Zealand Standard 4801 (AS/NZS 45001). These standards ensure that all employees are provided with a safe and healthy working environment.

Equal employment opportunity

We follow the principles of equal employment opportunity and every employee is responsible for ensuring the workplace is free from discrimination.

Training and development

Well-planned training is crucial to our success. Managers and employees work collaboratively to identify training and development needs to equip our employees with the necessary knowledge and skills to perform their roles effectively. Each year, managers conduct performance reviews with employees to identify, plan, and initiate relevant training and development for the upcoming twelve months.

Signature

Employee Name

Employee Signature

Date