

First Nations Media Australia Senior Manager Succession Planning Policy



This Policy document is to be read in conjunction with the First Nations Media Australia Senior Manager Succession Planning Procedures.

1 PURPOSE

The First Nations Media Australia Senior Manager Succession Planning Policy is aimed at ensuring the security, stability, ongoing effectiveness and staff capacity of First Nations Media Australia in responding to the departure of IRCA senior managers in the case of:

- Defined departure; or
- Unforeseen departure.

The loss of a senior manager in a small, not-for-profit organisation such as First Nations Media Australia is a significant risk for the organisation and can create uncertainty and loss of momentum.

Where a senior manager chooses to leave the organisation (Defined Departure), significant corporate knowledge can be lost. Where a senior manager is suddenly unable to attend work for an extended period or permanently (Unforeseen Departure), the situation can create a crisis for the organisation.

The ability of First Nations Media Australia to respond effectively to the loss of a senior manager is influenced by the capacity of First Nations Media Australia staff to undertake their work skillfully and with minimal supervision, work collaboratively as a team, have strong working relationships with key stakeholders additional to those of senior managers and implement a coordinated communications strategy. In addition, cash reserves to support the additional costs of recruitment, handover, and any short-term placements will enable First Nations Media Australia to minimise the financial impacts of departure.

2 DEFINITIONS

Defined departure is an agreement reached between the senior manager and the General Manager, or the General Manager and the First Nations Media Australia Board of Directors, with the date of departure being of between 12 to 24 weeks¹ from the date of notice. Defined departures are permanent departures.

Unforeseen departure may occur for any number of reasons including illness or accident, family emergency, personal decision, employment termination or taking up another position. Unforeseen departure takes place with no, or limited notice of less than 12 weeks. Unforeseen departure may be permanent or for an extended period of time of 12 weeks or more.

Senior managers are the General Manager and the Assistant Manager. The General Manager may also identify other key First Nations Media Australia staff, in liaison with the Board of Directors, to whom this policy will apply.

¹ The length of this notice is guided by the challenges of recruiting for senior roles in not-for-profit small organisations. It is recognised that senior managers may give notice of two weeks or less.

3 Policy



3.1 Guiding principles

The departure of a senior manager needs to be managed in such a way as to:

- Ensure leadership continuity during the absence or departure and transition phase to new senior management;
- Ensure the stability of First Nations Media Australia during the absence or departure and transition phase to new senior management;
- Assure key stakeholders of the sustainability of First Nations Media Australia during the absence or transition phase;
- Enable corporate knowledge to be passed on as far as possible given the category of departure and the duration of the departure; and
- When appropriate to the duration of the departure, publicly acknowledge the contribution of the senior manager to First Nations Media Australia’s operations.

3.2 Policy Implementation Summary

General Manager departure				
Departure Category	Action(s)	Departure duration	Handover period	Supporting organisational resilience actions
Defined Departure	The General Manager and Board will implement formal recruitment action. If recruitment is unable to be achieved in the departure period, a short-term placement may be made in collaboration with the Board.	12-24 weeks (preferred but not compulsory)	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation and procedures in place • Effective communications • Skilled and professional staff • Strong team work • Selected staff with skills to undertake other workplace roles
Unforeseen Departure	Assistant Manager takes on General Manager role initially with approval of the Board, pending decision on continuation of Assistant Manager in role, or short-term placement, or General Manager in collaboration with Assistant Manager until departure.	0-12 weeks	May not be possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dispersed relationships with key stakeholders • Board knowledge of staff and roles • Higher duties allowances • Industry talent “pool” • Cash reserves to cover recruitment costs, handover costs, short term placement costs

Senior Manager departure				
Departure Category	Action(s)	Departure duration	Handover period	Supporting organisational resilience actions
Defined Departure	The General Manager and Board will implement formal recruitment action. If recruitment cannot be finalised by the date of departure of the senior manager, the General Manager makes a decision on short term arrangements including sharing or activities by other staff, external short-term contract.	12-24 weeks (preferred but not compulsory)	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation and procedures in place • Effective communications • Skilled and professional staff • Strong team work • Selected staff with skills to undertake other workplace roles • Dispersed relationships with key stakeholders
Unforeseen Departure	General Manager identifies key activities and operations and in collaboration with the Board; makes and decision on short term arrangements including sharing or activities by other staff, external short-term contract if recruitment cannot be finalised by the date of departure of the senior manager.	0-12 weeks	May not be possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board knowledge of staff and roles • Higher duties allowances • Industry talent “pool” • Cash reserves to cover recruitment costs, handover costs, short term placement costs

3.3 Defined departure

The General Manager and the First Nations Media Australia Board of Directors will work together on effecting a smooth transition in the case of the planned departure of the General Manager, in line with *First Nations Media Australia Senior Manager Succession Planning Procedures*.

As far as possible, the General Manager and the Board of Directors will plan for a 12 to 24 week departure period, including recruitment and handover, or where not possible, implement a short-term placement in line with Clause 2.1.2 of the *First Nations Media Australia Senior Manager Succession Planning Procedures* whilst recruitment processes are completed.



In the case of other First Nations Media Australia senior managers, the General Manager will implement an effective recruitment and induction process, in line with the *First Nations Media Australia Senior Manager Succession Planning Procedures*.

The General Manager may, where necessary and with the Board of Directors' approval, implement a short-term solution or placement whilst recruitment processes are completed in line with Clause 2.1.2 of the *First Nations Media Australia Senior Manager Succession Planning Procedures*.

3.4 Unforeseen Departure

3.4.1 General Manager

Where the General Manager is not able to be at the workplace, the Assistant Manager will:

- Assume the immediate responsibilities and delegations of the General Manager, as set out in the First Nations Media Australia Delegations Policy and the General Manager job description;
- Convene a Board Meeting urgently to authorise acting General Manager arrangements;
- Commence implementation of the procedures set out in Clause 3 of the *First Nations Media Australia Senior Manager Succession Planning Procedures*.

Where the General Manager works out her/his notice at First Nations Media Australia for a period of up to 12 weeks, and recruitment CANNOT be finalised within the 12 weeks:

- With the approval of the Board of Directors, the Assistant Manager and the General Manager will collaboratively share the General Manager roles for an agreed period, with clear areas of work responsibilities communicated to the IRCA staff and Board with a view to having the Assistant Manager undertake the full responsibilities of the General Manager in an acting capacity as soon as possible.
- The Assistant Manager and the General Manager in collaboration with the Board will decide on the timing for implementing *Clause 2.1.1 of the First Nations Media Australia Senior Manager Succession Planning Procedures*.

The Assistant Manager, and the General Manager if present in the workplace, will liaise with the Board in securing the additional human resources required for carrying out the essential activities and responsibilities of the Assistant Manager role or any other role that takes up some of the General Manager responsibilities.

3.4.2 Other senior managers

In the case of the unforeseen departure of a senior manager other than the General Manager, the General Manager will:

- Assess the activities and responsibilities of the position;
- Inform the Board of the arrangements that will be implemented in the carrying out of any essential activities and responsibilities of the position until a person is recruited for the position;

- Follow the *First Nations Media Australia Succession Planning Procedures* as relevant to senior managers.



3.5 Higher duties payments

First Nations Media Australia staff moved into higher level acting positions due to senior manager departure will be entitled to receive a fortnightly higher duties allowance proportional to the percentage of activities and responsibilities that they undertake of the higher level position.

3.6 Communications

There will be a coordinated communication procedure for managing Defined and Unforeseen Departure. Consistent with First Nations Media Australia's Communications Policy responsibilities for communications will be as follows:

- The General Manager will liaise with the Board of Directors on the communication to key stakeholders (including members, funding bodies, and government agencies) of a Defined Departure of the General Manager.
- The Board of Directors will work with the Assistant Manager in the communication to key stakeholders (including members, funding bodies, and government agencies) of an Unforeseen Departure of the General Manager.
- The General Manager will communicate with Board Directors, stakeholders, members and other bodies on a Planned or Unforeseen Departure of a senior manager as appropriate to the role of the senior manager.

3.7 Building capacity and operational resilience

First Nations Media Australia will build capacity and operational resilience in its staff to support First Nations Media Australia respond to Defined and Unforeseen Departure. Senior management will:

- **Professional development:** Conduct annual evaluations of staff to ensure they are performing in their positions and have the necessary skills needed for success for the purpose of ensuring their capacity to work with no or minimal supervision, and where appropriate to move into higher level positions.
- **Team work:** Develop First Nations Media Australia's key staff into a high-performing team that is able to work together, resolve challenges collaboratively, set agreed team goals, and communicate effectively for the purpose of reducing uncertainty in the departure period.
- **Diffuse key stakeholder working relationships:** Enable First Nations Media Australia's key staff, in addition to the General Manager, to build relationships with external stakeholders for the purpose of ensuring that critical external relationships are able to be maintained without disruption during and beyond the departure of a senior manager.
- **Board knowledge of IRCA staff:** Support the Board of Directors to gain understanding of the work and capacity of First Nations Media Australia's key staff so as to enable the Board to support Acting or new senior managers in undertaking their roles.



- **Cross-skill staff:** Where possible:
 - Cross-train current staff in appropriate key operations to minimise the disruption from the flow-on effect of defined or unforeseen departures, such as the flow-on effect of the Assistant Manager acting in the General Manager position.
 - Identify staff or Directors who can mentor or coach staff moving into acting or new positions as an outcome of defined or unforeseen departures.
- **Identify industry talent:** Create an industry “pool” of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons from within the broadcasting and media production industry who may be able to fill short-term placements and/or be interested in applying for employee positions, through the provision of internship, secondment and project specific short-term contract opportunities.

3.8 Ensuring financial resilience

- First Nations Media Australia will progressively build two sets of cash reserves from untied funding, and maintain separate bank accounts from First Nations Media Australia’s general trading account, for the purposes of:
 - Meeting recruitment costs and the costs of the handover period: at least 50% of the General Manager’s annual salary (including on-costs) to be maintained.
 - Providing a buffer should the departure period disrupt First Nations Media Australia’s capacity to seek and gain funding: an amount equivalent to 3 months of First Nations Media Australia’s annual operational budget in a separate bank account to be maintained.
- In the case of the departure of the General Manager, the Assistant Manager will be responsible for:
 - Immediately advising First Nations Media Australia’s accountants and auditor of the departure date of the General Manager, and
 - Effecting changes at the appropriate time to expenditure authorisations for First Nations Media Australia’s bank accounts and credit card following approval by the Board of Directors at a Board meeting.

Associated policies:

- Code of Conduct
- Communications Policy
- Delegations Policy
- Financial Management Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy and Processes
- Risk Management Policy
- Staff Leave Policy
- Workplace Grievance Policy



Version	Date adopted/revised	Endorsement/Description of change
1.		General Manager Daniel Featherstone
	16 August 2017	Endorsed by IRCA Board
	8 May 2019	Endorsed by First Nations Media Australia Board