



Environmental Defenders Office

Solicitor/Senior Solicitor – Nature – Freshwater Team – Position Description

EDO relies on our people to use their skills and experience to provide the best possible support to our clients and other staff. While this job description aims to outline the fundamental reason the role exists, the role may evolve as EDO evolves.

If you see a way to play to your strengths in a way that achieves EDO outcomes, please don't be limited to this list. We have important work to do and need everyone to be operating at their best.

Job Title: Solicitor/Senior Solicitor – Nature – Freshwater Team

Reporting to: Managing Lawyer, Nature

Special Requirements:

- This is an Identified Position – it is an occupational requirement that this position be filled by an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.
- Travel may be required at times to fulfill this role.

Purpose of the position

Environmental Defenders Office (EDO) is the largest environmental legal centre in the Australia-Pacific, dedicated to protecting our climate, communities and shared environment by providing access to justice, running ground-breaking litigation and leading law reform advocacy.

Since time immemorial, First Nations and Indigenous peoples have been taking care of their Countries in Australia and the Pasifik. These deep understandings, knowledges and experiences are critical to maintaining the health and vitality of Australia and the Pasifik's unique wildlife and ecosystems. EDO respects these great knowledges, and strongly believes that EDO cannot achieve a world where nature thrives without working alongside First Nations and Indigenous peoples.

The Nature Program is an integral part of EDO's national Systemic Change Team and includes two components – Freshwater and Biodiversity. The Nature Program works alongside First Nations communities, as well as non-Indigenous communities, who are doing all they can to protect water.

EDO has established an Indigenous-led First Nations Program to support First Nations peoples to protect their Country in Australia and the Torres Strait Islands, and centre understanding of – and respect for – First Nations perspectives in our work. This program has also built the infrastructure within EDO to sustain, whilst continuously improving, culturally safe work practices for all team members, but specifically First Nations team members.

EDO understands that First Nations solicitors can bring both their professional legal skills, as well as their lived experiences as First Nations peoples to their work, which can help EDO provide better grounded legal representation to First Nations clients.

Solicitors in EDO's national Nature legal practice use their legal skills to provide legal advice, representation and education to clients to achieve those of EDO's strategic outcomes that relate specifically to the protection of biodiversity and freshwater.

The advertised position relates specifically to the Freshwater component of the Nature Program. The position reports to the Managing Lawyer, Nature, and will also involve supervision by Special Counsel, Nature.

Members of our Freshwater program undertake work that concerns the regulation and protection of freshwater across Australia. Our team has a particular commitment to addressing inequities in relation to First Nations water justice.

Team members conduct litigation, prepare legal advice, work on policy and law reform projects and engage with the community including through legal education. Our team's work currently spans the Murray Darling Basin (with a particular focus on NSW), the Northern Territory and Western Australia. We also have an interest in and conduct work from time to time in other jurisdictions – subject to need and team capacity.

Key responsibilities & duties:

(Please note: responsibilities and level of autonomy for the successful candidate will depend on their level of legal experience):

- Environmental law and/or policy experience is highly desirable, as is experience or knowledge in relation to water regulation and management, and in relation to administrative and public law generally.
- As the Solicitor / Senior Solicitor will be expected to take on litigation files, some litigation experience is essential.
- To be eligible to work as a Senior Solicitor, you must have at least 5 years PAE (or equivalent alternative, but relevant, experience). Senior Solicitors will be expected to work closely with the Managing Lawyer and Special Counsel to develop and implement planning for the Freshwater program, with a higher level of autonomy and self-direction. This may include leading on media work, seminars, publications, as well as having carriage of litigation, law reform and advice work. They also have a mentoring and/or supervisory role with staff.
- Provide legal advice, representation and education to clients on public interest environmental law issues, in particular in relation to the sustainable, equitable regulation and management of Australia's scarce water resources.
- Where required, provide legal advice, representation and education to clients on public interest environmental law issues and disputes more broadly.
- Conduct litigation within Australia on behalf of clients in alignment with EDO's strategic priorities.
- Contribute to and prepare policy and law reform publications in alignment with EDO's strategic priorities.
- Undertake public education and outreach, including developing resources (e.g. fact sheets, blogs) and conducting workshops or seminars. This may require travel to remote locations.
- Deliver legal services in a culturally safe manner and work with clients from a wide

variety of backgrounds.

- Supervise the work of volunteers who undertake tasks such as legal research, document preparation, etc
- Where appropriate, mentor and provide guidance to more junior EDO staff members.
- Undertake other reasonable requests made by Special Counsel (Nature), the Managing Lawyer (Nature), or Director, Legal Strategy from time to time.

All staff have a responsibility to:

- Develop and maintain a good knowledge of EDO's role and policies.
- Comply with EDO's policies and procedures and all professional and legal obligations.
- Represent EDO in a positive and effective manner by actively demonstrating EDO Values.
- Attend, and contribute actively and constructively at staff meetings.
- Maintain appropriate records, assist with office administration, such as files, computer and precedent systems.
- Seek opportunities for personal and professional development, particularly related to the team and position's specific areas of responsibility.
- Respond to requests by clients and fellow staff in a knowledgeable, professional, constructive and respectful manner.
- Provide accurate and timely data and information for reporting, fundraising and communications purposes.
- Work with EDO's fundraising and communications team in relation to matters you are involved in.

Commitment to EDO's Values:

Commitment

- We are committed to; a united organisation, to each other, to collaboration, to justice, to our communities and to creating a world where nature thrives.
- We are committed to providing excellent legal services and resources, informed by the best available science, in order to empower clients and communities.
- We are committed to improving our planet and society.
- We care for EDO's clients and stakeholders.
- We are fearless in the face of adversity, and care for each other as we face this adversity.

Diversity

- We are respectful of and welcome diversity of staff, volunteers, offices, environmental regions, communities, stakeholders.
- We respect First Nations Peoples' knowledge and experience, and work with them to protect their country and culture.

- We acknowledge that the law has not always been just.
- We dedicate ourselves to understanding the diversity of our people and culture.
- We welcome and respect our own differences and learn from them, and collaborate to achieve our greatest potential.
- We are great lawyers and great people, with open hearts and open minds.
- We respect the different places our stakeholders come from and strive to help them, even if their worldviews don't align completely with ours.
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Integrity

- We work effectively, efficiently, strategically, professionally and ethically; “justice is in our nature”.
- We are truthful with ourselves and others.
- We are nonpartisan and inspire trust in our clients, stakeholders and government.
- We respect the world's resources and make maximum productive use of the resources entrusted to us.

Vision

- We lead change and environmental empowerment using innovation, creativity, and courage.
- We expand the boundaries with creativity and skill, pioneering new legal pathways to a healthier, safer world and inspiring others.
- We are inquisitive, curious and persistent: exploring new ideas and embracing change.
- We boldly challenge the status quo while providing solutions to our most pressing challenges.