



Director – First Nations Program - 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: Director – First Nations Program

Reporting to: Chief Executive Officer

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.

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.

EDO has established an Indigenous-led First Nations Program to support First Nations communities 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.

The Director of the First Nations Program is a member of the Executive Team and is therefore collectively responsible for achievement of the KPIs of the 2025-2030 Strategic Plan.

An objective of our Strategic Plan is that:

First Nations and Indigenous communities are supported in defining, preserving and protecting their cultural heritage as they deem fit.

Underpinning this goal are four strategic objectives:

- First Nations and Indigenous Communities have access to legal advice, education and representation to fight for the protection of their cultural heritage, and to hold those who damage, destroy or desecrate cultural heritage accountable.
- First Nations and Indigenous Communities have access to legal support to access and look



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after Country and cultural heritage as the community deems appropriate.

- Advocate for cultural heritage reform across Australia and the Pasifik which improves rights of First Nations and Indigenous communities to defend cultural heritage and challenges western notions of cultural heritage and upholds UNDRIP, and especially FPIC.
- The public across the region understands the importance of contemporary cultural heritage protection as a crucial component for protecting Country.

Pre-eminently among the Executive Team, the Director of the First Nations Program is responsible for the achievement of the above objective of the Strategic Plan, as it relates to First Nations communities in Australia and the Torres Strait Islands, and specifically will oversee strategic First Nations projects, programs and engagement.

Key responsibilities

Key responsibilities of the Director will be:

- To spend time understanding the EDO, its historical work with First Nations and our pre-existing relationships with First Nations Communities.
- To work with the CEO, Board and other stakeholders to keep enhancing the ambitious strategic vision for the EDO's First Nations Program.
- To ensure adequate funding for the Program is secured:
 - -Research and source funding opportunities for the First Nations Program.
 - Write and contribute to funding proposals for the First Nations program.
 - Write and contribute to updates and reports for the First nations Program
- To continue the important task of networking and coalition building amongst key First Nations stakeholders, to provide the foundation for the Program's success.
- To oversee ongoing work in implementing Best Practice Protocols and Processes in Cultural Heritage protection work for First Nations clients.
- To provide cultural advice or insight, where appropriate, on matters involving First Nations communities, peoples or issues that affect First Nations communities.
- To provide advice on EDO communications that involve First Nations communities, peoples or issues that affect First Nations communities.
- To build and sustain respectful two-way partnerships with Aboriginal organisations.
- To supervise a small team of legal and non-legal staff in the First Nations Program.
- To convene and work with the First Nations Strategic Advisory Committee (FNSAC) to obtain strategic advice on issues of significance as they relate to First Nations communities.



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Likely ongoing responsibilities & duties

General operational governance

- Working with the Executive Team to ensure the overall effective operations of the EDO.
- Collectively responsible with the Executive for the delivery of the EDO's strategic plan.
- Working with the Executive on matters of general operational effectively, performance management and planning, reporting to the Board and observing various compliance requirements that apply to the EDO.
- Oversight and management of the budget for the First Nations Program.

Strategic direction

- The coordination, development, and direction of the EDO's projects, programs, cases and engagement as they relate to First Nations communities.
- The development and approval of policies and procedures relevant to EDO's work with First Nations communities.
- Assisting the organisation to grapple with the complexity of legal pluralism, of decolonial thinking, and of the provision of legal services, and the development of partnerships with First Nations communities and organisations in circumstances where views about development are contentious.
- Oversight of the work across EDO offices within Australia as they relate to the interest of First Nations communities.

Leadership and staff management

- Ultimately accountable for the performance of the First Nations Program.
- With the CEO, leads recruitment of Leadership Roles within the First Nations Program.
- Mentoring and guiding staff within the First Nations Program.

Legal work – Litigation, Law Reform and Education

- Working closely with the Director of Legal Practice/Principal Lawyer, in respect of cultural heritage matters the EDO may take on.
- Working closely with the Director of Legal Practice/Principal Lawyer in respect of work for First Nations communities.
- To facilitate the incorporation of First Nations perspectives into EDO policy work.

External relations

- Building and maintaining strong relationships with First Nations organisations, as well as other external stakeholders.
- Represent EDO in the media as required and in agreement with the Chief Executive Officer and Director, Fundraising, Marketing & Communications. Assisting in organisational fundraising and communication efforts.



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Professional competencies and behaviours

- **Strong leadership qualities with the ability to inspire and develop high-performing teams.**
Motivation: Regularly recognises and rewards team achievements, fostering a culture of appreciation and motivation.
Empowerment: Effectively delegates tasks, empowering team members to take ownership and responsibility for their work. Encourages team members to take initiative and lead projects or segments of work as appropriate.
- **Excellent organisational, communication and interpersonal skills.**
Clarity and precision: Communicates complex legal and strategic information clearly and concisely, ensuring all stakeholders understand the key messages.
Active listening: Practices active listening to understand the perspectives and needs of team members and stakeholders.
Self-awareness: Regularly seeks feedback on their own performance from across the organisation and demonstrates awareness of personal limitations and knowledge gaps. Actively seeks to improve and is open to learning from others, regardless of their role or level within EDO.
- **Proficient in or willing to develop skills in managing budgets and resourcing.**
Financial acumen: Demonstrates or willing to learn budgeting principles and financial management.
Cost control: Demonstrates or willing to learn how to effectively manage workloads/costs within a budget.
- **High level of integrity and professional ethics.**
Ethical decision making: Makes decisions that align with the organisation's values and ethical standards, even when facing pressure or adversity.
Transparency: Maintains transparency, fostering trust and credibility.
Accountability: Takes responsibility for actions and encourages the same level of accountability from members of their team.
- **Ability to drive innovation and adapt to changing legal environments.**
Curiosity and open-mindedness: Stays informed about emerging trends and developments in their field of expertise.
Flexibility: Able to adapt quickly to changes in the environment and is comfortable with ambiguity.
- **Inclusivity and ability to work closely with a diverse range of internal and external stakeholders.**
Inclusive: Committed to fostering an inclusive and diverse workplace, through active promotion of equity, thorough understanding of diversity and leadership of initiatives that ensure all employees feel valued and respected.
Ensuring varied perspectives: Involves team members in decision-making, ensuring diverse perspectives are considered.
Open and honest: facilitates open and honest discussions among team members.
Cultural competence: Shows respect for, and understanding for, diverse cultures, backgrounds and viewpoints.



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General

All staff have a responsibility to:

- Comply with EDO policies and practices including WHS.
- Develop and maintain a good knowledge of EDO's role and policies.
- Represent EDO in a positive and effective manner by actively demonstrating EDO Values.
- Attend and contribute actively and constructively at staff and other key meetings.
- Actively engage with and contribute to EDO's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).
- 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 the 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 communication purposes.

Commitment to EDO's Values:

EDO is in the process of developing a framework which incorporates all of the values and behaviours we expect to see at EDO, to provide the foundations for the culture we want to have. Once finalised, the EDO will be guided by that document – known as 'the EDO way'.

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 on their behalf 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, 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.

Integrity

- We work effectively, efficiently, strategically, professionally and ethically; "justice is in our nature".



Environmental Defenders Office

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- 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.