

POSITION DESCRIPTION

ORGANISATION:

Natural Hazards Research Australia

POSITION:

Research Services Project Officer

REPORTS TO:

Research Services Team Leader

CONTEXT

In July 2020, the Australian Government announced \$88.1 million in funding for critical research into natural hazards. Of the total funding, a grant of \$85 million over 10 years was made available to the Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC to establish Natural Hazards Research Australia (the Centre) as a new research centre focusing on outcomes that will:

- Protect human life and minimise harm and suffering – towards zero preventable deaths
- Contribute to well-prepared and resilient communities that are better informed of the risks associated with natural hazard exposure, are informed about strategies for mitigating the impacts from natural hazards and are able to make informed decisions if faced with a potential disaster.
- Translate research into action, maximising translation and implementation of research outcomes.

In delivering the strategy, the Centre will build Australian capability through:

- Strengthening relevant research capabilities
- Supporting the development of sustainable research and its translation capabilities within research provider and end-user organisations
- Strengthening and expanding the knowledge networks that were developed through the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) and the Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC (BNHCRC).

The Centre will focus on natural hazard resilience and disaster risk reduction to support the needs of a variety of critical stakeholders – including emergency service agencies and communities – in preparing for, responding to and recovering from disasters caused by natural hazards.

The Centre will involve a large number of partners drawn from government, private and not-for-profit sectors across Australia and New Zealand through contractual arrangements with their institutions. The Centre has strong pressures to deliver useable outputs, gain recognition and harness intellectual property to achieve the significant outputs expected from the Centre.

Utilisation (translation and implementation) of the knowledge and other outcomes from the Centre's activities is an important activity and involves close collaboration with our end users in the fire services, emergency services, land management organisations, government departments and businesses.

The first year of the operation of the new Natural Hazards Research Australia research centre will include wind-up activities for the current CRC and establishment activities for the new research centre.

CENTRE VALUES

Respect – To recognise and value the contributions of everyone through embracing diversity in gender, ethnicity and thought

Focus – Ensuring that our activities are aligned with the Centre’s vision and mission.

Integrity and Honesty – To be honest and act with integrity in all we do.

Research Excellence – Pursuing highest quality research methods and use.

Supportive Leadership – Allowing all involved in the Centre to achieve their potential.

Trust and Collaboration – Sharing and working co-operatively in a trusting environment.

Independence – To be open, transparent and independent.

THE RESEARCH SERVICES TEAM

The Research Services Team is responsible for providing efficient and effective project management support to the Centre’s Research and Implementation Team. To achieve this, the Research Services Team is responsible for managing:

- day-to-day project-level relationships with researchers, research providers and end users
- managing the contracting of all research for the Centre
- progress reporting for projects and requests for changes to approved project plans
- timely payment of invoices for projects
- advising the Director, Research & Implementation and Node Research Managers of delays, underperformance and any other issues that are, or are likely to, affect the progress of projects
- maintaining the Centre’s Intellectual Property Register
- coordinating the application and review process for applications for funding to the Centre’s research and grant funding programs, early career researcher and postgraduate student programs
- ensuring the accuracy of the Centre’s research data and providing data summaries to assist the Centre with its internal and external reporting obligations
- Working with the Centre’s Communications Team to support delivery and publication of research outputs

The team will work closely with the Director, Research & Implementation, Chief Scientist and Node Research Managers to ensure the Centre provides effective management of a large and diverse portfolio of research and research translation projects.

The team includes the Research Services Team Leader and two Project Officers.

PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

As a member of the Research Services Team at Natural Hazards Research Australia (the Centre), the role supports the efficient development, implementation, and management of research projects in the Centre. This includes supporting the research, translation and implementation elements for each project and playing a role in ensuring that outputs meet the needs of project end-users.

The Research Services Project Officer will also participate in other contract research management and utilisation projects, as a member of the Research Services Team.

The position will be based at one of the CRC’s nodes in Melbourne, Sydney or Brisbane.

Due to the potential for COVID-19 related restrictions restricting movement and working in offices, the Research Services Project Officer may be required to work from home and at their place of work, dependent on Government and Centre policy.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Research Project Management

The Research Services Project Officer is responsible for:

- contract management including the development of contracts and contract variations
- working closely with researchers in the monitoring and reporting of progress on projects
- providing project management oversight and tracking ongoing progress of projects
- maintaining communication with lead researchers and research teams on the progress of projects
- identifying and supporting the management of issues and risks that could affect the Centre's projects
- providing effective and efficient record-keeping
- coordinating and preparing documents and briefing information for Centre meetings and reporting, and
- supporting the monitoring and evaluation of the Centre's research projects and programs, including updating internal databases (Intellectual Property Register, Impact and Evaluation database) and public facing databases (Inquiries Database and Value Tool for Natural Hazards)

Stakeholder Engagement

Strong relationships with internal and external stakeholders are essential for the efficient administration of the Centre's research program. The Research Services Project Officer is responsible for:

- representing the Centre by attending meetings, forums etc. with stakeholders and other organisations as required,
- liaising with stakeholders to schedule meetings, and
- supporting the Centre's communications team to source and provide information that contributes to the development of a range of media and communications products to promote research projects.

Office Support and Administration

The Research Services Project Officer is responsible for providing administrative support and undertaking other tasks as required to support the effective operation of the Centre.

KEY RELATIONSHIPS

Internal:

Research Services Team Leader
Director, Research and Implementation
CEO
Chief Scientist
Director, Partnership Development
Node Research Managers
Communications Team
Executive Assistant to the CEO
Business Services Team

External:

Research Teams

Project End Users
University research offices
Scholarship and associate students
Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authority (AFAC) staff

SELECTION CRITERIA

Education:

- University degree, preferably in an area relevant to natural hazards and/or emergency management, or equivalent work experience.

Specific knowledge and experience required:

- Well-developed communication and interpersonal skills, together with the ability to liaise effectively with a mature, friendly and confident personal style, and build and maintain strong and effective relationships with a diverse group of stakeholders
- Strong skills in project management, including a demonstrated ability to plan and organise work efficiently and to operate effectively in an environment characterised by short and often conflicting time frames
- Sound writing skills and the ability to undertake projects independently, liaising with external stakeholders as necessary and meeting deadlines
- Sound conceptual and analytical skills, including the ability to identify issues, manage data and develop appropriate solutions
- Highly developed skills in MS Office and other related programs.

Desirable knowledge and experience:

- At least 2 years' experience in a similar, or related role
 - Knowledge of the workings of universities or research organisations
 - Knowledge of the workings of government departments and agencies
 - An understanding of intellectual property management and contract negotiation
 - Experience working in, or with, organisations involved in disaster and emergency management.
-