

Position Description

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Details

Award Classification: Children’s Services Award Level 8

Employment: Full time (flexible arrangements negotiable)

Location: Head Office in Kensington and secondary office in Fitzroy

Organisational overview

The Venny Inc operates free communal backyards and safe spaces (also known as adventure or junkyard playgrounds) for children experiencing disadvantage and the broader community in Kensington and Fitzroy. The Venny also runs pop-up play sessions at the Flemington public housing estate. The Venny provides a space and community where children and young people can engage in risk-taking, unstructured and creative play and connect with others.

The Venny is a trusted organisation with an excellent reputation for delivering child-centred, culturally safe and sensitive play experiences for children and young people aged 5 – 16. The Venny uses community development, trauma informed and play based practices to:

- reduce inter-generational disadvantage and welfare dependence early in the cycle;
- encourage and support children to develop life skills and resilience; and
- build a functioning, vibrant, diverse and connected community, bridging socio-economic and cultural divides.

Our Model

Our **Hands, Heart, Home** model guides our work



Hands of support

We support children and families. We help fill gaps in systems when they appear. We connect with community, schools, support agencies, families to provide a wrap-around support network. This can include practical assistance such as food, education supplies, uniforms, clothes and support to access cultural experiences like music, dance and sport.



Heart of play work

Play work is at the heart of what we do. We have been providing risk-taking play opportunities to children and young people for over 40 years. Our practice is based on Playwork principles and has been developed over the past 40 years. Our staff are play workers and we use play as our daily practice.



Home for children

We are the backyard of public housing. We provide the rhythms and rituals of a home. We are a place to gather and witness each other’s lives. We are a green space with animals and provide children with the opportunity to play, connect and learn. Our playground has been built with and by the community. Play sessions are free and all are welcome.

Position Overview

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) provides visionary leadership, strategic direction and robust oversight of The Venny. The CEO is responsible for implementing the organisation's mission, managing daily operations, leading staff and volunteers, while ensuring the organisation maintains financial sustainability, compliance with child safety and regulatory standards, cultivates strong relationships with stakeholders, funders, and is deeply connected to the community.

Working closely with the Board of Directors, the CEO ensures that all programs, operations, and initiatives align with the organisation's strategic goals and values. A key aspect of the role is to support and champion The Venny's core values and play-based model.

Shared Responsibilities

All staff at The Venny share responsibility for maintaining a child safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment. This includes:

- General housekeeping (e.g. cleaning, washing, animal care, greeting visitors).
- Contributing to the rhythms and rituals that reflect The Venny's home-like environment.
- Upholding a culture of mutual care, respect, and responsibility.

Key Responsibilities

Leadership & Strategy

- Develop and implement the organisation's strategic plan and annual business plans in collaboration with the Board.
- Provide strong leadership that aligns with the organisation's mission and values.
- Responsible for managing local government contracts (preparing tenders, negotiation and compliance with funding agreements and leases).
- Monitor social and economic trends affecting the organisation's work and adapt strategies accordingly.
- Lead and manage a team of staff and volunteers. This includes recruitment, supervision and performance management.
- Promote equity, diversity and inclusion across all aspects of the organisation.
- Foster a child safe organisation, ensuring compliance with child safe standards and embeds a culture of child safety across all programs.

Governance & Board Relations

- Serve as the primary liaison between the Board and staff.
- Support effective governance by ensuring timely communication, accurate reporting, and compliance with legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
- Report regularly to the Board on progress, challenges, and opportunities.
- Work in partnership with the Board to develop policies and ensure accountability.

Operations & Financial Management

- Oversee the day-to-day operations of the organisation.
- Responsible for all financial aspects of the organisation. This includes; developing and monitoring of budgets, daily bookkeeping tasks, end of month reconciliation and posting of journals, processing fortnightly payroll and superannuation.
- Secure and manage funding sources, including grants and donations.
- Responsible for reviewing and implementing the organisation's Risk Management Register.
- Ensure compliance with all legal, regulatory, and ethical requirements.

Fundraising and Marketing

- Develop fundraising strategy and initiatives to diversify and expand revenue streams.
- Build and maintain strong relationships with philanthropists, community organisations, government agencies and corporate partners.
- Develop and deliver Social Media plan.
- Represent the organisation as the public face and spokesperson.

Partnerships

- Actively consult, liaise and build strong networks with other community organisations to share knowledge and resources and form partnerships where appropriate.

Interpersonal Skills

- Well-developed interpersonal skills and the ability to form positive working relationships with colleagues, government (all levels) and partner organisations, including those from diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds.
- Approachable and friendly with excellent verbal and written communication skills.
- Strong organisation and time-management skills including ability to meet deadlines in a busy and dynamic environment.
- Collaborative in approach and able to work and lead effectively in a team setting.
- Strong problem-solving skills with the ability to be agile and respond to changing circumstances.

Key Selection Criteria**Essential**

- Extensive experience in managing a not-for-profit organisation.
- Strong leadership skills and proven ability to effectively manage staff and volunteers.
- Strong strategic planning and financial management skills.
- Demonstrated success in fundraising and stakeholder engagement.
- Excellent communication, negotiation, and public-speaking skills.
- Experience working with or reporting to a Board of Directors.
- Commitment to social impact, community engagement, and ethical leadership.
- Comprehensive knowledge of Child Safe Standards and demonstrated commitment to child safety and child-centered practice.

Desirable

- Understanding and knowledge of play work, child development, trauma-informed practices, cultural competency and issues faced by socially disadvantaged young people.
- Experience with grant writing, marketing, or advocacy.
- Relevant qualifications in management, social impact, or a related field.

Conditions of Employment

- A current Working with Children Check and Police Check (or willingness to obtain).
- First Aid certification (or willingness to obtain).
- Driver's licence.

Organisational Relationships

Reports to	Board
Supervises	Director of Play & Programs, Business Development Manager and Maintenance Worker
Internal Relationships	All staff and volunteers
External Relationships	Children and young people, parents, community members, community partner organisations (including schools), local and state government and stakeholders

Our Commitment to Child Safety

The Venny provides services for children under the age of 18, and therefore recognises its responsibility and commitment to child safety. Our organisation is committed to protecting children from harm and providing a safe space for children.

The Venny is committed to:

- Promoting and protecting the best interests of children.
- Safeguarding children who are participating in The Venny programs including on and off site activities.
- The safety, participation and empowerment of all children.
- Preventing child abuse and identifying risk early to remove and reduce these risks.
- Regularly training and educating staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.
- The cultural safety of Aboriginal children, and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and the provision of a safe environment for children with a disability.

The Venny supports and respects all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, family or social background have equal rights to protection from abuse, harm or mistreatment.

The Venny has:

- Zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our policies and procedures.
- Legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we have reasonable concern about a child's safety or reasonable belief that a child has been abused or harmed, which we follow rigorously.
- Robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.
- Policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

Every person working at, volunteering or participating in The Venny's programs is responsible for the care and protection of the children under our care. This includes reporting information about suspected child abuse or harm of children and young people. The Venny is aware of the Victorian Government's mandatory reporting obligations and associated legislation. A child's safety is a shared responsibility between The Venny, its staff, volunteers, contractors, patrons and members of The Venny's community.

If you believe a child or young person is at immediate risk of abuse or harm, please contact Emergency Services on 000.