



Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Australia

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership in Social and Emotional Wellbeing, Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

Director, Policy

Position Description

Position Title	Director, Policy
Employment Type	Full Time
Salary	\$149,077 - \$176,499
Team	Policy
Report To	Chief Executive Officer
Direct Reports	Government Relations Advisor Senior Policy Analyst Policy Development Lead Committees Coordinator
Location	Brisbane, Canberra or Melbourne

About Gayaa Dhuwi

Gayaa Dhuwi is the national peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social and emotional wellbeing, mental health, and suicide prevention. As a members based, community-controlled organisation, we are governed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experts and peak bodies.

Our vision is the highest attainable standard of social and emotional wellbeing, mental health, and suicide prevention outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Our role is to lead and advocate for systemic change that places the voices, strengths, and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples at the centre of national policies and reforms.

We work in a fast-paced national policy and reform environment where priorities can shift quickly in response to government processes, parliamentary inquiries, sector developments, member priorities, emerging evidence, and national reform opportunities. As a result, our team needs to be made up of individuals who can understand complex policy and service systems, work respectfully within an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership and organisations, and produce high-quality work across social and emotional wellbeing, mental health, and suicide prevention.

Gayaa Dhuwi's work is long-term with progress often requiring sustained advocacy, careful relationships, strong evidence and the ability to keep work moving over time. People who thrive at Gayaa Dhuwi are steady, thoughtful, organised, respectful, clear in their communication and able to maintain perspective while working on issues that matter deeply to our peoples and communities.



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The Role

The Director, Policy leads Gayaa Dhuwi's national policy work across Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social and emotional wellbeing, mental health and suicide prevention. The role is responsible for the quality, coherence and strategic impact of Gayaa Dhuwi's policy positions, publications, submissions, government engagement, and consultation processes.

This is a senior leadership role that requires a sophisticated understanding of the national policy architecture, including the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, Commonwealth and state health agreements, and the legislative and funding landscape. This is required to be able translate that understanding into clear, evidence-informed advice and policy setting advice that moves systems.

The Director, Policy leads a team of four and is a member of the executive leadership team alongside the Director, Reform and the General Manager. The role works in close and active partnership with the Director, Reform to ensure policy positions are grounded in implementation realities, and reform work is guided by Gayaa Dhuwi's policy analysis and advocacy.

This role will suit a senior leader who combines deep subject matter expertise with strong writing, clear strategic thinking, and a genuine commitment to developing the capability of the people they lead. They will understand that national policy influence requires sustained engagement, careful relationships and the patience to work at the pace of systems change.

Key Responsibilities

- Lead the Policy stream, setting clear priorities, maintaining focus on agreed outcomes, and ensuring the team delivers work to a high standard.
- Oversee the quality and coherence of Gayaa Dhuwi's policy positions across social and emotional wellbeing, mental health, suicide prevention and related reform areas.
- Identify emerging policy issues, risks and opportunities, and provide clear, timely advice to the CEO and executive leadership team.
- Represent Gayaa Dhuwi in policy forums, government meetings and sector engagements with professionalism and cultural authority.



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- Lead, supervise and develop the Policy stream team, providing clear expectations, regular guidance, constructive feedback and quality review of work.
- Actively build the policy capability of team members by identifying development needs, modelling high-quality practice, and supporting staff to grow into more complex and independent work over time.
- Manage performance constructively and in accordance with organisational processes, addressing issues early and with clarity.
- Lead the development of Gayaa Dhuwi's policy positions, publications, submissions and briefings, ensuring work is evidence-informed, well-argued and appropriate to the audience.
- Oversee policy environment scanning and ensure the organisation has timely situational awareness of relevant developments across Commonwealth and state/territory governments.
- Lead or support Gayaa Dhuwi's appearances before parliamentary committees and other formal government processes.
- Ensure policy work is informed by member priorities, councils and collaborative networks, lived experience, and relevant evidence.
- Lead Gayaa Dhuwi's government relations function, maintaining and developing relationships across Commonwealth and state/territory health, mental health and Indigenous affairs portfolios.
- Lead sector engagement activity, including coalition work, in line with organisational priorities.
- Provide strategic oversight of Gayaa Dhuwi's engagement with the Coalition of Peaks and related national mechanisms.
- Work with the executive leadership team to connect policy priorities with reform implementation, communications and organisational planning.
- Lead Gayaa Dhuwi's member consultation processes, including councils, collaborative networks and the Members Policy Subcommittee, ensuring member voices inform policy development.
- Oversee the planning and delivery of national roundtables and policy forums.
- Produce and review high-quality written materials, including policy papers, briefs, reports, meeting papers and correspondence.
- Undertake other duties as required.



Performance and Behaviour Expectations

- Maintains a clear, coherent and current set of organisational policy positions across all relevant areas, grounded in evidence and member priorities.
- Produces and oversees written work that is accurate, well argued, evidence-informed and appropriate to the audience.
- Identifies emerging policy risks and opportunities early and provides clear, practical advice to the CEO.
- Provides clear expectations, regular guidance, constructive feedback and quality review for Policy stream staff.
- Actively develops staff capability, identifies development needs, models high-quality policy practice, and supports staff to grow into more complex work over time.
- Addresses performance issues early, directly and constructively, in accordance with organisational processes.
- Maintains productive, professional relationships across relevant government portfolios and sector organisations.
- Represents Gayaa Dhuwi credibly and with authority in policy forums, government meetings and sector engagements.
- Ensures member consultation processes are well run, inclusive and genuinely inform policy development with embedded feedback loops to those engaged.
- Works constructively with the Director, Reform and General Manager as an executive leadership peer, with clear role boundaries and shared understanding of priorities.
- Connects policy work to reform implementation, communications and organisational planning in an integrated way.
- Handles sensitive matters with discretion, receives feedback constructively and contributes to a focused and respectful workplace.
- Works respectfully within an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation and ensures policy work reflects self-determination, community control and member priorities.

Qualifications, Knowledge and Experience

- Relevant tertiary qualifications or equivalent professional experience.
- Significant experience leading policy development and advice in a national peak body, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisation, or a health, mental health or suicide prevention setting.



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- Strong understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social and emotional wellbeing, mental health and suicide prevention, including the national policy, service system and reform context.
- Demonstrated knowledge of the national policy architecture including the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, Commonwealth health agreements, and related legislative and funding frameworks.
- Demonstrated ability to work respectfully and effectively within an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation, or with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, organisations and communities.
- Experience leading staff, building team capability, managing competing priorities and overseeing delivery across a complex policy work program.
- Exceptional written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to produce and review high-quality policy papers, submissions, briefs and government correspondence.
- Sound judgement, discretion, professionalism and attention to detail.

Selection Criteria

1. Demonstrated ability to work respectfully within an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership organisation, including understanding the importance of culture, self-determination, community control, member-informed priorities, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership.
2. Demonstrated understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social and emotional wellbeing, mental health and suicide prevention, including the policy, service system and reform context relevant to this work.
3. Demonstrated experience leading policy development and advice, including the ability to produce high-quality policy papers, submissions, briefings and publications that are evidence-informed and strategically positioned.
4. Demonstrated ability to build and maintain productive government and sector relationships, represent an organisation credibly in policy forums, and navigate complex stakeholder environments.
5. Demonstrated ability to lead staff, manage competing priorities, review work, maintain quality across a complex policy program, and communicate clearly through high-quality written and verbal advice.



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Benefits

- Competitive salary package including superannuation, four weeks of annual leave with annual leave loading, salary sacrificing options, and a mobile phone allowance.
- Flexible working arrangements working from home two days per week on a Monday and Friday, and in the office three days per week on a Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.
- Professional development support and mentoring from the executive leadership team.

Eligibility

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are encouraged to apply for this opportunity under section 51 of the Equal Opportunity Act 1984.
- Applicants must be an Australian citizen or have permanent residency status pending the granting of Australian citizenship. All successful applicants for the position will be asked to complete pre-engagement checks including national police check and a working with vulnerable people check.

Additional Notes

- Travel to other parts of Australia will be required from time to time.