

POSITION DESCRIPTION

ORGANISATION:

Natural Hazards Research Australia

POSITION:

Legal Counsel (Research)

LOCATION:

Brisbane, Melbourne or Sydney

REPORTS TO:

Research and Implementation Director

FTE:

Part time – 0.5

CONTEXT

Natural Hazards Research Australia (the Centre) focuses 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.

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

The Centre involves a large number of participants drawn from government, private and not-for-profit sectors across Australia. The Centre has a strong focus on delivery of useable outputs to enhance the safety, resilience and sustainability of communities.

The Centre has no formal head office and operates through Nodes located in Melbourne, Brisbane and Sydney, with a new Node under establishment in Perth. Staff in each Node have responsibility for working with end-users and researchers across Australia.

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

CENTRE VALUES

Respect – recognising and valuing the contributions of everyone through embracing diversity in gender, ethnicity and thought.

Focus – Ensuring that our activities are aligned with the Centre 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 cooperatively in a trusting environment.

Independence – To be open, transparent and independent.

PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

The Legal Counsel (Research) is pivotal in ensuring the smooth operation of the Centre’s research contracting through risk minimisation and maximising research investments. Responsibilities include overseeing research and business contracts to guarantee they adhere to legal, governance and compliance frameworks, drafting and negotiating contracts with various external stakeholders, and providing legal guidance on contract, commercial, intellectual property law matters. Additionally, the Legal Counsel (Research) will advise on procurement processes, ensure probity standards, share legal expertise with colleagues, keep relevant Centre policies up to date with current best practices and provide governance advice. This role is integral to the Centre's operational success and from time to time may be required to provide or coordinate other legal advice, as required.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Providing high-quality legal advice to ensure compliance with legal requirements, governance and compliance frameworks, minimise risk to the Centre and maximise the Centre’s research investments.
- Providing advice on contract, commercial, intellectual property law matters relating to research activities which may include advising on funding agreements; research and services contracts; consultancy agreements; collaboration agreements; confidentiality agreements; intellectual property assignment and licences; tender documentation and processes; and novation, accession and variation agreements.
- Negotiating all terms of research and business contracts and contract templates with external stakeholders including government, universities and businesses.
- Providing procurement and probity advice to assist Centre staff to act in a fair and ethical manner and to comply with the Centre’s policies.
- Sharing and transferring legal knowledge, expertise and skills to colleagues to contribute to the broader work of the Centre.
- Managing the provision of legal services outsourced to external legal providers to ensure value for money, quality and timeliness of work produced.
- Maintaining the Centre’s policy governance framework including ensuring that relevant Centre governance, risk, procurement, IP and compliance policies, procedures and registers are up to date.
- Providing advice on governance matters.
- Conducting work with integrity and responsibility.
- Maintaining current knowledge of developments in law.

OTHER DUTIES

- Other duties as reasonably requested by management.

KEY RELATIONSHIPS

Internal:

- CEO & Executive Leadership Team
- Research Services Team
- Node Research Managers
- Communications Team
- Executive Assistant to the CEO

External:

- Research providers and researchers
- End-users
- University research offices
- External legal firms
- Government agencies
- Businesses

SELECTION CRITERIA**Education:**

- Relevant completed tertiary qualifications in law.

Specific knowledge and experience required:

- Strong experience and comprehension in contracts, intellectual property and commercial law, and the conduct of negotiations, the drafting of documents and provision of advice in these and related areas.
- Exemplary communication and interpersonal skills, together with the ability to liaise effectively with a client centric, and confident style, and build and maintain strong and effective relationships with a diverse group of stakeholders.
- Critical thinker who displays accuracy and attention to detail.
- Ability to apply logic and reasoning, and risk management to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.
- Strong demonstrated business acumen, ability to work independently, efficiently manage competing priorities and meet deadlines.
- Collaborative team player, highly motivated and a positive can-do attitude.
- Strong integrity and experience in providing probity advice.

Desirable knowledge and/or experience required:

- At least five years' experience in a similar, or related role.
- Knowledge of the workings of government, industry, universities or research organisations.

Desirable behaviours:

- A self-starter able to work independently.
- Able to work as part of a distributed team.