

POSITION DESCRIPTION



Program Director, Research and Policy



POSITION DETAILS

Position Title	Program Director, Research and Policy
Classification	Academic Level E
Position Number	7013268
School/Office	Whitlam Institute
Division	Faculty of Social Science, Arts, Business, Education and Law (SABEL)

POSITION PURPOSE

The Whitlam Institute holds a unique place in the national landscape as a Prime Ministerial institute with significant research and public policy, educational, cultural, historical and heritage responsibilities. The *Program Director, Research and Policy* position is critical to the next stage of the Whitlam Institute's development and will be strongly focused on enhancing its policy and research scope of work and impact.

This senior academic position reports to the Director of the Whitlam Institute to advance the Whitlam Institute's research portfolio. The *Program Director, Research and Policy* will work collaboratively with the Director to develop and strengthen cooperative regional, national, and international networks and to support the advancement of the Whitlam Institute's two research themes: *The Future of Australian Democracy* and *Australia in the World*. With a primary focus on developing and implementing research and public policy programming to support the contemporary relevance of the legacy of the Whitlam Government, the position will work to drive the evidence and advocacy agenda for the Whitlam Institute, including government relations. The position plays a key role in developing the Whitlam Institute's policy engagement in the broader regional, national and international debate. It ensures the Whitlam Institute's policy positions are based on combined experience and the best evidence available while producing high quality research, reports, and publications with a goal to influence policy and identify opportunities for broader engagement.

The *Program Director, Research and Policy* will lead the Whitlam Institute's strategic engagement to produce, lead and supervise high quality research publications, research symposia and presentations, and media engagements.

KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES

1. **Strategy**
 - Develop and implement research strategies that align with the Whitlam Institute's strategic objectives in collaboration with the Director of the Whitlam Institute.
 - Develop and maintain a vision for the research and policy portfolio and an evidence-based strategy that maintains its impact and relevance to the Whitlam Legacy.
 - Contribute to financial decisions related to the research and policy priorities, including securing grant funding and managing budgets.
2. **Governance, Reporting and Resourcing**
 - Exercise responsibility for the resource planning and management of the research program, including preparing and submitting reports for the Director and any research regulatory requirements as needed.
 - Ensure all research activities adhere to ethical guidelines and regulatory requirements.
 - Ensure that the Whitlam Institute research and policy programs and planning align with Whitlam Institute's Strategic Plan. As a Senior staff member of the University, contribute to the development of both the Whitlam Institute and the University.
3. **Staff Management and Leadership**
 - Supervise, manage, and allocate work to staff in direct reporting lines and work collaboratively with staff within the Whitlam Institute and within the University.
 - Lead, mentor, and support external researchers and research fellows, which can involve setting priorities, allocating resources, and making decisions about infrastructure and working arrangements.
 - Build and maintain relationships with external organisations, academic institutions, and professional bodies to foster collaborations and stay current with industry trends.
4. **Project Delivery**
 - Initiate and deliver collaborative research projects for the Whitlam Institute, working closely with relevant stakeholders.
 - Evaluate and report upon the impact of the individual projects and the Whitlam Institute's research and policy program, as aligned to the strategic priorities of the Whitlam Institute.
 - Manage the entire research lifecycle, from the initial proposal and design to execution and final reporting. This includes ensuring projects are completed on time and within budget.
 - Analyse and present research findings to senior management, stakeholders, and other relevant audiences.
5. **Quality and Compliance**
 - Ensure quality control and improvement of the overall research output of the Whitlam Institute.
 - In consultation with the Office of the DVC Indigenous Leadership, implement the Research component of the University's Indigenous Strategy within the Whitlam Institute.
6. **Undertake other duties, as directed**
 - Other duties relevant to the classification level.

QUALIFICATIONS, EXPERIENCE AND SKILLS

1. Doctoral qualification or equivalent accreditation and standing with a demonstrated track record of innovation and achievement in public policy research and analysis on issues impacting communities, with particular focus on civics education, citizenship and democracy.

2. Demonstrated research track record and experience in grant management, with a strong understanding of Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) framework and international research ranking systems.
3. Demonstrated high level leadership capabilities in managing people and fostering positive relationships, underpinned by a proven commitment to high ethical, personal, and professional standards.
4. Demonstrated experience in preparing, securing, and managing grant budgets, with a sound understanding of diverse funding sources and opportunities.
5. An ability to contribute to public debate and government policy in areas aligned with the Whitlam Legacy.
6. Demonstrated ability to initiate, develop and foster productive external relationships with potential partners, colleagues, industry and community stakeholders to deliver strategic projects.
7. Demonstrated high-level organisational and communication skills and an ability to work to set priorities, manage timelines, and deliver outcomes across strategic projects and initiatives.
8. It is a mandatory requirement for any incumbent of this position to have a current NSW Employee Working with Children Clearance in accordance with the NSW Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012.

KEY RELATIONSHIPS

- **This position reports to:** Director of the Whitlam Institute
- **This position supervises:** Research Assistant (0.2 FTE)
- **Key internal relationships:**
 - Team Members of the Whitlam Institute
 - Academic colleagues in discipline groups, Schools, and across the University
- **Key external relationships:**
 - Local Councils and community organisations, State and Federal Government and other related governmental organisations and departments
 - Non-Governmental organisations and research institutions, art and archival bodies, Prime Ministerial organisations
 - Partner institutions, Academic organisations, including domestic and international universities and research centres
 - Community Leaders, Public Policy Institutes, and other partners.

CHALLENGES

- Navigation of the competing institutional priorities between the Whitlam Institute, University, and the governing Board of Whitlam Institute - ensuring alignment of objectives while maintaining and promoting the Whitlam Institute's distinctive mission and public identity.
- Delivery within operational and financial parameters, recognizing shifting University priorities and the expectations of multiple internal and external stakeholders.

- Maintaining institutional integrity and non-partisan approaches to research and policy work in an environment where public discourse, exhibitions, and programs may intersect with politically sensitive issues - ensuring that the Whitlam Institute's work remains evidence-based, inclusive, and aligned with the strategic priorities of the Whitlam Institute and University's values of academic independence and neutrality.

UNIVERSITY EXPECTATIONS

The University expects that all employees are aware of, and comply with legislation and Western's policies and procedures relevant to the position, including but not limited to:

- Code of Conduct
- Work Health and Safety and Wellbeing Management System
- Enterprise Agreement or Award
- Anti-discrimination principles, Equal Employment Opportunity and staff and student equity.

Approved by: SHRP minor changes

Date: 13/11/2025