

# Role Description

## Head of Life and Geosciences



Role Description Fields	Details
Department/Agency	Australian Museum
Division/Branch/Unit	Australian Museum Research Institute/Head of Life & Geosciences
Role number	50050937
Classification/Grade/Band	Clerk Grade 11/12
Senior executive work level standards	Not Applicable
OSCA Code	132411
PCAT Code	2331192
Date of Approval	29 May 2026
Agency Website	<a href="https://australian.museum">https://australian.museum</a>

### Agency overview

Australian Museum (AM) is located on the homelands of the Gadigal people. The AM acknowledges and pays respect to the Gadigal people as the custodians of the land, sky and waterways, paying respect to Elders past and present. The Australian Museum (AM) operating within the NSW Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport cluster, is the first museum in Australia and was founded in 1827. The AM provides access, engagement and scientific research to increase our understanding of natural history and culture, particularly of the Australasian region. The AM holds more than 22 million objects of biological, geological and cultural collections and develops programs, exhibitions and school and community education initiatives onsite, online and offsite.

The AM mission is: To ignite wonder, inspire debate and drive change.

The AM vision is: To be a leading voice for the richness of life, the Earth and culture in Australia and the Pacific. We commit to transform the conversation around climate change, the environment and wildlife conservation; be a strong advocate for First Nations' culture; and continue to develop world-leading science, collections, exhibitions and education programs.

The AM supports a diverse workforce and promotes applications from all ages and genders, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, culturally and linguistically diverse groups, the LGBTQIA+ community, veterans, refugees and people with disabilities.

For more information, visit the website.

- Australian Museum Research Institute
- Australian Museum Science Research Strategy

### Primary purpose of the role

The position is responsible for leading and managing the Branch that represents, cares for and develops the Museum's life science and geoscience collections; manages staff undertaking research on those collections; and is also responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of the Museum's Science Strategy. Reporting to the Director, AMRI, the Head of Life and Geosciences is a senior leader of the AMRI team and also works closely with the Chief Scientist and other AMRI Branch Managers.

## Key accountabilities

- Provide leadership within AMRI and in the Life and Geosciences Branch, through commitment to the Museum's vision and goals, translation of the Museum's agenda into operational plans, and ensuring that behaviour aligns with the Australian Museum's Code of Conduct, policies and procedures.
- Actively contribute to a variety of key functions across the museum, including WHS, Asset Management, Governance and Audit, to facilitate the achievement of Museum wide goals.
- Implement plans and strategies that influence internal staff, external stakeholders and organisations, and effectively communicate objectives to staff and stakeholders.
- Demonstrate an excellent knowledge of standards, legislation, policies and procedures relevant to the role, using judgement and complex analysis of organisational issues to identify and reach solutions.
- Communicate work requirements, delegate responsibility, and seek ideas and feedback from staff to encourage a team-based environment, and monitor and direct multiple teams performing different functions. Direct others in their scientific research and provide authoritative advice.
- Communicate with other teams and areas of the Museum to coordinate activities and programs and to ensure accuracy, relevance and appropriateness of information the Museum provides to the public.
- Deliver influential presentations, facilitate audience dialogue, synthesise views and promote further discussion in the field of natural sciences and as relevant to the Museum's Corporate Strategic Plan and Science Strategy.
- Prepare and manage the annual operating budget and monitor expenditure and cash flow for the Branch. Identify grant and other external funding opportunities relevant to the work of the Branch.

## Key challenges

- Manage a substantial work program including management of research and collection staff across various work units and sites as well as coordinating and participation in facilities improvement and expansion, exhibitions, and public program development and delivery.
- Explore opportunities for additional funding through grants, commercial activities and partnerships to deliver services and expand capacity. Motivate, encourage and facilitate development programs for staff to build their capacity in key areas
- Ensure appropriate allocation of available Museum resources to activities, consistent with overall corporate strategic priorities and government policy and support the work of the Director, AMRI.

## Key relationships

### Internal

Who	Why
Director, AMRI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The position reports to this person</li><li>• The position will also work closely with Chief Scientist and key support staff to the Chief Scientist &amp; Director, AMRI including the Business and Grants Manager, AMRI Divisional Coordinator, and AMRI External Partnerships Coordinator</li></ul>
Scientific Services and Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Working closely and collaboratively in areas of synergy and overlap within AMRI, including Digital Collections &amp; Citizen Science, the Collection Enhancement Project, Collections Care &amp; Conservation, the Australian Centre for Wildlife Genomics, Lizard Island Research Station, and the AM expeditions program.</li></ul>
Other Australian Museum Divisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Facilitate close and productive relationships with Corporate Services, Museum Experience &amp; Engagement, First Nations, and Marketing Communications &amp; Partnerships staff and those of other areas of the Museum.</li></ul>

Who	Why
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate close and productive relationships, ensuring any relevant internal reporting is timely and accurate. Provide expert assistance in developing public engagement activities.</li> </ul>
Executive Leadership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinate meetings, share information and prepare responses and reports.</li> </ul>

## External

Who	Why
Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist the Director, AMRI &amp; Chief Scientist in drafting briefing notes in relevant matters.</li> </ul>
Natural History Museums and other similar collecting institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote cooperation, develop opportunities and identify best museum practices.</li> <li>Represent the AM on external committees such as the Council of Heads of Australian Faunal Collections.</li> </ul>
Australian Universities and Universities overseas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and facilitate opportunities, partnerships and collaborations in areas relevant to the work of the Division.</li> </ul>

## Role dimensions

### Decision making

This role has autonomy and makes decisions that are under their direct control. It refers to the Executive decisions that require significant change to program outcomes or timeframes or are likely to escalate. This role is fully accountable for the delivery of work assignments on time and to expectations in terms of quality, deliverables and outcomes. This role submits reports, business cases and other forms of written advice with minimal input from the Director.

As a member of the Division's senior management team, the position holder will contribute to strategic planning, budget preparation, resource allocation, project management, policy development, program evaluation and reporting for the Division as a whole.

The position holder has a high level of autonomy and is responsible for managing the operations of the Branch including high-level administrative functions, budget oversight, and developing strategies for a range of self-generated and external income streams.

### Reporting line

The position reports to the Director, AMRI.

### Direct reports

6 x Group Managers (Entomology & Arachnology, Geosciences & Archaeology, Ichthyology, Malacology, Marine Invertebrates, Terrestrial Vertebrates)  
 Collection Storage and Logistics Manager  
 Other temporary and/or casual positions from time to time

### Budget/Expenditure

Budgets and expenditure are in accordance with approved Annual Budget and financial delegations and procedures subject to project type and sponsoring business unit.

Cost center – Y

HR Delegation – Y

Finance Delegation – Y, Budget Responsibility: ca \$5 million; Staff: ca 50

## Key knowledge and experience

- Demonstrated experience in staff, project and budget management within a scientific or collections-based environment
- Familiarity with working in and managing scientific natural history collections
- Experience identifying and securing grant and external funding opportunities
- Ability to represent an institution effectively on external committees and in sector-wide forums
- Strong written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to present authoritatively to specialist and public audiences

## Essential requirements

- Tertiary qualifications in a relevant field at PhD or Masters level, or demonstrated equivalent professional experience

## Capabilities for the role



The [NSW public sector capability framework](#) describes the capabilities (knowledge, skills and abilities) needed to perform a role. There are four main groups of capabilities: personal attributes, relationships, results and business enablers, with a fifth people management group of capabilities for roles with managerial responsibilities. These groups, combined with capabilities drawn from occupation-specific capability sets where relevant, work together to provide an understanding of the capabilities needed for the role.




The capabilities are separated into **focus capabilities** and **complementary capabilities**.




## Focus capabilities

*Focus capabilities* are the capabilities considered the most important for effective performance of the role. These capabilities will be assessed at recruitment.

The focus capabilities for this role are shown below with a brief explanation of what each capability covers and the indicators describing the types of behaviours expected at each level.

Capability group/sets	Capability name	Behavioural indicators	Level
 Personal Attributes	<b>Display Resilience and Courage</b> Be open and honest, prepared to express your views, and willing to accept and commit to change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be flexible, show initiative and respond quickly when situations change</li><li>• Give frank and honest feedback and advice</li><li>• Acknowledge when someone challenges your ideas, seek to understand why and respond appropriately</li><li>• Raise and work through challenging issues and seek alternatives</li><li>• Respond professionally when under pressure and in challenging situations</li></ul>	Adept
 Personal Attributes	<b>Act with Integrity</b> Be ethical and professional, and uphold and promote the public sector values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Represent your organisation in an honest, ethical and professional way and encourage others to do so</li><li>• Act professionally and support a culture of integrity</li><li>• Identify and explain ethical issues and set an example for others to follow</li></ul>	Adept

Capability group/sets	Capability name	Behavioural indicators	Level
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote a workplace culture that values high ethical standards and behaviour</li> <li>Act to prevent and report misconduct and inappropriate behaviour</li> <li>Put strategies in place to manage and monitor conflicts of interest</li> <li>Ensure that others are aware of and understand the legislation and policy framework within which they operate'</li> </ul>	
 <b>Relationships</b>	<b>Commit to Customer Service</b> Provide customer-focused services in line with public sector and organisational objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on providing a positive customer experience</li> <li>Support a customer-focused culture in your organisation</li> <li>Demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the available services and share relevant information with customers</li> <li>Identify and respond quickly to customer needs</li> <li>Consider different customer needs and experiences when developing solutions to meet needs</li> <li>Resolve complex customer issues</li> <li>Cooperate across work areas to improve outcomes for customers</li> </ul>	Intermediate
 <b>Relationships</b>	<b>Influence and Negotiate</b> Gain consensus and commitment from others, and resolve issues and conflicts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Influence others with a fair and thoughtful approach and present persuasive counter arguments</li> <li>Work towards mutually beneficial, win-win outcomes</li> <li>Show sensitivity and understanding when resolving serious and complex conflicts and differences</li> <li>Identify key stakeholders and gain their support in advance</li> <li>Negotiate from a clear position, based on research, a firm grasp of key issues, likely arguments, points of difference and areas for compromise</li> <li>Anticipate and minimise conflict within your organisation and with external stakeholders</li> <li>Use evidence, including data insights, to create persuasive stories</li> </ul>	Advanced
 <b>Results</b>	<b>Deliver Results</b> Achieve results by using resources efficiently and committing to quality outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek and apply the expertise of key individuals to achieve business outcomes</li> <li>Lead a culture of achievement and acknowledge others' input</li> <li>Determine how outcomes will be measured and guide others on evaluation methods</li> <li>Investigate and create opportunities to enhance the achievement of business objectives</li> </ul>	Advanced





Capability group/sets	Capability name	Behavioural indicators	Level
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure others understand the need for on-time and on-budget results and how success is defined</li> <li>• Control business unit output to ensure government outcomes are achieved within budget and on time</li> <li>• Progress organisational priorities and ensure resources are acquired and used effectively</li> </ul>	
 <p>Results</p>	<p><b>Demonstrate Accountability</b></p> <p>Be proactive and responsible for your actions, and follow legislation, policy and guidelines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess work outcomes, and identify and share what you learnt to inform future actions</li> <li>• Ensure your own and others' actions focus on achieving organisational goals</li> <li>• Exercise delegations responsibly</li> <li>• Understand and apply high standards of financial probity with public money and other resources</li> <li>• Identify and implement safe work practices, taking a systematic risk management approach to ensure your own and others' health and safety</li> <li>• Conduct and report on quality control audits</li> <li>• Identify and mitigate risks to achieving goals</li> <li>• Consider data security, ethics and privacy in decision making</li> </ul>	Adept
 <p>Business Enablers</p>	<p><b>Project Management</b></p> <p>Understand and use effective ways to plan, coordinate and control projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand all components of the project management process, including the need for change management to achieve business benefits</li> <li>• Prepare clear project proposals and accurate estimates of required costs and resources</li> <li>• Establish performance outcomes and measures for key project goals, and define monitoring, reporting and communication requirements</li> <li>• Identify and evaluate risks associated with the project and develop mitigation strategies</li> <li>• Identify and consult with stakeholders, including people with lived experience to inform the project strategy</li> <li>• Communicate the project's objectives and its expected benefits</li> <li>• Monitor the completion of project milestones against goals and take steps to address any problems</li> <li>• Evaluate progress and identify improvements to inform future projects</li> </ul>	Adept
 <p>People Management</p>	<p><b>Manage and Develop People</b></p> <p>Engage with and motivate staff, and develop their capability and potential</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refine roles and responsibilities over time to achieve better business outcomes</li> <li>• Recognise talent, develop team capability and succession plan</li> <li>• Coach and mentor staff and encourage professional development and continuous learning</li> </ul>	Advanced

Capability group/sets	Capability name	Behavioural indicators	Level
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritise dealing with team and individual performance issues and ensure your organisation uses a consistent approach</li> <li>• Implement performance development frameworks to align workforce capability with your organisation's current and future priorities and objectives</li> <li>• Develop systems to promote cultural capability as a means of ensuring the cultural safety of all colleagues</li> </ul>	


## Complementary capabilities

*Complementary capabilities* are also identified from the Capability Framework and relevant occupation-specific capability sets. They are important to identify performance required for the role and development opportunities.

Note: capabilities listed as 'not essential' for this role are not relevant for recruitment purposes, however, may be relevant for future career development.

Capability group/sets	Capability name	Description	Level
 Personal Attributes	<b>Manage Self</b>	Be persistent, self-reflect and commit to learning	Adept
 Personal Attributes	<b>Value Diversity and Inclusion</b>	Be inclusive and respect diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives	Intermediate
 Relationships	<b>Communicate Effectively</b>	Communicate clearly, pay attention to others and respond with understanding and respect	Adept
 Relationships	<b>Work Collaboratively</b>	Collaborate with others and value their contribution	Advanced

Capability group/sets	Capability name	Description	Level
 <b>Results</b>	<b>Plan and Prioritise</b>	Plan to achieve priority outcomes and respond flexibly to changing circumstances	Advanced
 <b>Results</b>	<b>Think and Solve Problems</b>	Think, analyse and consider the broader context to develop practical solutions	Adept
 <b>Business Enablers</b>	<b>Finance</b>	Understand and apply financial processes to achieve value for money and minimise financial risk	Intermediate
 <b>Business Enablers</b>	<b>Technology</b>	Understand and use available technology to maximise efficiencies and effectiveness	Adept
 <b>Business Enablers</b>	<b>Procurement and Contract Management</b>	Understand and use procurement processes to ensure effective purchasing and contract performance	Intermediate
 <b>People Management</b>	<b>Inspire Direction and Purpose</b>	Communicate goals, priorities and vision, and recognise achievements	Adept
 <b>People Management</b>	<b>Optimise Business Outcomes</b>	Manage people and resources effectively to achieve public value	Adept

Capability group/sets	Capability name	Description	Level
 <p data-bbox="129 387 272 443">People Management</p>	<b>Manage Reform and Change</b>	Support and champion change, and help others to engage with change	Intermediate