

Role Description

Lead, Major Projects, First Nations



Role Description Fields	Details
Department/Agency	Australian Museum
Division/Branch/Unit	First Nations
Role number	51018256
Classification/Grade/Band	Clerk Grade 11/12
Senior executive work level standards	Not Applicable
OSCA Code	131931
PCAT Code	1449192
Date of Approval	04 August 2026
Agency Website	https://australian.museum

Agency overview

The Australian Museum acknowledges that we operate on the lands, waters and skies of many First Nations Peoples. As Australia's first museum, we share the responsibility of advocating for Country and honouring First Nations Peoples and knowledges.

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.

For more information, visit the website.

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.

Primary purpose of the role

The Lead, Major Projects, First Nations provides strategic project management for the Australian Museum's major First Nations initiatives, reporting to the Director, First Nations. The role applies evidence-based, entrepreneurial approaches to deliver strategic projects — including First Nations exhibitions and other initiatives — that benefit First Nations peoples and the AM, exercising independent judgement within delegations set by the Director, First Nations. Working closely with internal and external stakeholders — including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander exhibition contributors, community members, AM colleagues, and government and funding partners — the role develops First Nations-led projects with lasting social and cultural impact. This requires sophisticated cultural competency, extensive exhibitions, curation, and consultation experience, and the ability to represent the AM externally at a senior level.

The role upholds high museum standards and ICIP principles, carrying accountability for budget performance, procurement, and contract management within government guidelines, and reporting regularly to the Director, First



Nations on project status and risk. It requires collaborative leadership, high-level stakeholder management, and oversight of exhibition contributors and contractors (sometimes outside standard hours).

The role also provides leadership and development support to identified First Nations and Pasifika staff, fostering a culturally safe team environment.

Key accountabilities

- Manage and oversee major First Nations projects and programs, achieving milestones and allocating resources so projects are delivered to budget and agreed quality standards. Ensure work is undertaken through a culturally appropriate process, escalating matters of cultural, budgetary, or reputational significance to the Director, First Nations.
- Lead the operational and logistical aspects of First Nations-led curatorial and exhibitions projects, including procurement and contract management within government guidelines and delegations. Direct the performance of exhibition contributors and contractors, and oversee related administrative processes (contract servicing, purchase orders, invoicing), with significant variations to scope, cost, or schedule requiring Director approval (may require work outside standard hours).
- Build and maintain First Nations community stakeholder relationships, exercising independent judgement to balance community expectations, cultural protocols, and museum requirements. Direct working parties in line with community and museum expectations, facilitating engagement and delivery of outcomes.
- Liaise and negotiate with AM teams, Senior Managers, Directors, and external contributors to ensure all project components are coordinated and executed, including resource and risk management, keeping all parties informed of schedules and deliverables.
- Develop and recommend innovative project strategy and delivery approaches to reach new audiences and stakeholder groups, aligned with the AM's vision and First Nations community expectations, including ICIP principles and cultural protocols. Strategic direction of significance is endorsed by the Director, First Nations.
- Maintain project records, financial reporting, and compliance documentation in line with NSW Government policy and AM procedures, supporting governance and decision-making at Division level.
- Provide leadership, supervision, and development support to identified First Nations and Pasifika staff, fostering a culturally safe team environment, and undertake other duties as directed consistent with the role's skills and seniority

Key challenges

- Supporting First Nations Division colleagues and the AM in a fast paced and complex environment, and delivering First Nations-related major project activities and targets in line with agreed museum standards, schedule, budget, and the need to maintain accuracy and attention to detail.
- Ensuring ethical and culturally appropriate processes are followed, including maintaining cultural protocols and the AM's professional reputation. Ensure statutory and legislative requirements are adhered to and implement effective risk management procedures.
- This role may require the role-holder to carry out physical tasks within the parameters of the AM's Workplace Health & Safety (WH&S) requirements, which may include manual handling, repetitive bending, kneeling, twisting and/or squatting, and working at heights. Adhere to all obligations, responsibilities, and legislative requirements under current WH&S legislation and regulations, ensuring all areas under supervision are monitored for WH&S risks and hazards and are reviewed regularly, escalating issues promptly to the role-holder's manager.

Key relationships

Internal

Who	Why
Director, First Nations	• Receive direction, guidance, and advice; provide reports relating to First Nations initiatives, activities, and considerations at the AM, and engagements with First Nations communities; discuss and develop First Nations strategies and policies. Support the vision of the Director, First Nations. • Provide advice and escalate issues and provide regular updates on project delivery matters as required. • Ensure this role has oversight in ensuring all First Nations-related major projects at the AM are well integrated with broader Australian Museum programs, thoroughly planned and scheduled, and delivered to plan and budget.
Director, Museum Experience & Engagement	• Dotted line reporting relationship on exhibition projects ensuring First Nations exhibitions meet museum quality standards and operational requirements. • Collaboration and advice with MEE staff including Head, Exhibitions on exhibition delivery, project coordination, and alignment with broader MEE objectives. • Advocate for First Nations exhibitions and coordinate exhibition-related project requirements.
Executive Leadership Team	• Provide expert advice and reports on key issues relating to First Nations initiatives, activities, and considerations at the AM, and engagements with First Nations communities and associated matters. • Interface with Director, Museum Experience & Engagement (MEE), alongside the Head, Exhibitions, MEE, to advocate for First Nations exhibitions and First Nations retail activities. • Interface with Director, Corporate Services to advocate for First Nations projects. • Interface with Director, Strategy & Chief of Staff as part of First Nations and government relations regarding First Nations projects.
Head, Curatorial, First Nations; Strategic Lead, First Nations; Head of Exhibitions	• Provides guidance and support; discusses issues relating to First Nations curatorial and strategic objectives; mentors and supports specialist professional development as appropriate.
First Nations Division	• Participate in meetings, share information, and provide input on issues. • Respond to queries, identify needs, communicate services and redirect, escalate or resolve issues.

External

Who	Why
Community/stakeholders	• Respond to queries, identify needs, provide accurate information, communicate services, and redirect, escalate or resolve issues. • Lead complex negotiations, and attend community, donor, and partner meetings to support the Director, First Nations and the First Nations Division. • Provide assistance using knowledge of policies and procedures and cultural capability.
Government relations	• Provide information to be sent to relevant government departments. • Assist the Director, First Nations with relevant requests relating to First Nations initiatives, activities, and considerations at the AM, and maintain

Who	Why
	relationships. Attend government-related meetings to support the Director, First Nations and the First Nations Division. • Observe the lawful NSW Government directives and legislative requirements pertaining to First Nations cultural heritage requirements, preservation, and management.
Contractors, external service providers	• Negotiate contracts; oversee the provision of services, ensuring the delivery of projects on time and within budget.

Role dimensions

Decision making

This role has reasonable autonomy. The Lead, Major Projects, First Nations makes decisions under their direct control and refers to the Director, First Nations for decisions that require significant change to outcomes or timeframes or involve other Divisions. The role-holder undertakes decision making with the First Nations management team on matters related to First Nations objects, content, and community stakeholders. This role is accountable for the efficient and appropriate coordination/delegation regarding the delivery of project work assignments on time to achieve individual and team deadlines, and to expectations in terms of quality, deliverables and outcomes. The role-holder needs to prioritise their daily work schedule accordingly regarding internal requests, targets and directives, and seek clarification from the Director, First Nations and the Head, Curatorial, First Nations as respectively required.

Reporting line

Director, First Nations.

Direct reports

Project specific staff supervision and coordination, including of contractor and casual personnel on a projects-needs basis. Direct reports may be added.

Budget/Expenditure

Budgets and expenditure are coordinated by the Director, First Nations in accordance with approved Annual Budget and financial delegations and procedures subject to project type and sponsoring business unit.

Key knowledge and experience

- Deep understanding of First Nations self-determination, co-design, culturally grounded museum practices, cultural awareness, and terminology in order to perform in processes that are culturally aware and appropriate. Capacity to embed and apply ICIP into work practice.
- Demonstrated experience in managing First Nations-led projects and stakeholder engagement, with established track record.
- Over 5 years' experience working with First Nations (i.e. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Pasifika) communities on major cultural projects or programs, with suitable interpersonal skills to establish effective working relationships with stakeholders and manage expectations.
- High-level time management skills with the ability to prioritise multiple pieces of work according to importance, including a structured approach and attention to detail with exceptional written and verbal communication skills.
- Cultural humility, emotional intelligence, and the ability to operate across different worldviews.
- Demonstrated ability to coordinate information and report on project status, progress, and resource usage.
- A high level of organisational skills and an understanding of financial, technological, procurement, contract, and project management requirements.
- Holds a current full NSW Driver's Licence.

Essential requirements

- Relevant tertiary qualifications and/or equivalent professional experience in project management.

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	Display Resilience and Courage Be open and honest, prepared to express your views, and willing to accept and commit to change	• Be flexible, show initiative and respond quickly when situations change • Give frank and honest feedback and advice • Acknowledge when someone challenges your ideas, seek to understand why and respond appropriately • Raise and work through challenging issues and seek alternatives • Respond professionally when under pressure and in challenging situations	Adept
 Personal Attributes	Value Diversity and Inclusion Be inclusive and respect diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives	• Seek diverse perspectives and engage with people with lived experience when developing policies and programs • Build and monitor a workplace culture that enables diversity and has fair and inclusive practices • Implement systems and practices to ensure people can participate to their full ability • Create a positive and supportive team environment through diversity and inclusion practices where everyone belongs • Address non-inclusive behaviours, practices and attitudes within your organisation • Create a workplace culture that prioritises wellbeing and makes people feel safe and respected	Advanced

Capability group/sets	Capability name	Behavioural indicators	Level
 Relationships	Commit to Customer Service Provide customer-focused services in line with public sector and organisational objectives	- Take responsibility for delivering high-quality customer-focused services - Design processes and policies based on the customers' experience and engage people with lived experience to inform service improvements - Create opportunities to learn about and measure what is important to customers by engaging with a wide range of customer experience - Use customer data, feedback and insights to improve service delivery - Find opportunities to collaborate with internal and external stakeholders to improve outcomes for customers - Maintain relationships with key customers in your area of expertise - Connect and collaborate with relevant customers from the community	Adept
 Relationships	Work Collaboratively Collaborate with others and value their contribution	- Recognise when effective collaboration between teams leads to achieving outcomes - Communicate with others in your organisation and across government to improve information sharing and collaboration - Facilitate opportunities to collaborate with stakeholders to develop solutions together - Network widely across government and other organisations to increase opportunities to collaborate - Encourage others to use appropriate ways and tools to collaborate, including digital technology - Encourage diverse cultural perspectives in developing strong team relationships	Advanced
 Results	Deliver Results Achieve results by using resources efficiently and committing to quality outcomes	- Use your own and others' expertise to achieve outcomes, and take responsibility for delivering intended outcomes - Ensure staff understand expected goals and acknowledge staff success in achieving these - Identify the resources people need and ensure goals are achieved within budget and on time - Use business data to evaluate outcomes and inform continuous improvement - Identify priorities that need to change and ensure the way resources are allocated meets new business needs - Ensure you budget for and clearly state the financial impacts of new priorities	Adept

Capability group/sets	Capability name	Behavioural indicators	Level
 Business Enablers	Project Management Understand and use effective ways to plan, coordinate and control projects	• Prepare and review project scope and business cases for projects with multiple interdependencies • Use key subject matter experts' knowledge to inform project plans and directions • Design and implement effective stakeholder communication strategies for all project stages • Monitor project completion and implement effective and rigorous project evaluation methodologies to inform future planning • Develop strategies to correct projects if they vary from their plans • Manage transitions between project stages and ensure any changes to projects are consistent with organisational goals • Participate in governance processes, such as project steering groups	Advanced
 People Management	Manage and Develop People Engage with and motivate staff, and develop their capability and potential	• Define and clearly communicate roles, responsibilities and performance standards to achieve team outcomes • Adjust performance development processes to meet the diverse abilities and needs of individuals and teams • Develop work plans that consider capability, strengths and opportunities for development • Be aware of the effects of bias when managing team members • Seek feedback about your management capabilities and develop strategies to improve on them • Address and resolve team and individual performance issues, including unsatisfactory performance, promptly and effectively • Monitor and report on team performance in line with established performance development frameworks • Develop positive relationships to ensure cultural safety and trust between team members	Adept

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	Act with Integrity	Be ethical and professional, and uphold and promote the public sector values	Adept
 Personal Attributes	Manage Self	Be persistent, self-reflect and commit to learning	Adept
 Relationships	Communicate Effectively	Communicate clearly, pay attention to others and respond with understanding and respect	Adept
 Relationships	Influence and Negotiate	Gain consensus and commitment from others, and resolve issues and conflicts	Adept
 Results	Plan and Prioritise	Plan to achieve priority outcomes and respond flexibly to changing circumstances	Adept
 Results	Think and Solve Problems	Think, analyse and consider the broader context to develop practical solutions	Adept
 Results	Demonstrate Accountability	Be proactive and responsible for your actions, and follow legislation, policy and guidelines	Adept

Capability group/sets	Capability name	Description	Level
 Business Enablers	Finance	Understand and apply financial processes to achieve value for money and minimise financial risk	Intermediate
 Business Enablers	Technology	Understand and use available technology to maximise efficiencies and effectiveness	Intermediate
 Business Enablers	Procurement and Contract Management	Understand and use procurement processes to ensure effective purchasing and contract performance	Adept
 People Management	Inspire Direction and Purpose	Communicate goals, priorities and vision, and recognise achievements	Intermediate
 People Management	Optimise Business Outcomes	Manage people and resources effectively to achieve public value	Intermediate
 People Management	Manage Reform and Change	Support and champion change, and help others to engage with change	Foundational