

## Position Description

### Policy & Government Relations Executive

**OUR  
VISION:  
EVERY  
YOUNG  
CHILD IS  
THRIVING  
AND  
LEARNING**

| Position Summary         |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Title                    | Policy & Government Relations Executive                     |
| Classification and Level | Level 5   |
| Section                  | Policy & Government Relations                               |
| Reporting to             | CEO   |
| Delegation/Supervision   | Can include managing project teams and external contractors |
| Compliance Requirements  | Working with Vulnerable People Registration                 |
| Date Approved            | September 2023  |

### About Early Childhood Australia

Early Childhood Australia (ECA) has been operating since 1938, we are a not-for-profit organisation with a national membership.

Our vision is ‘every young child thriving and learning’. To achieve this vision, we champion the rights of all children from birth to the age of eight to thrive, learn and play at home, in the community, within early learning settings and through the early years of school. Our work builds the capacity of our society, including families and early childhood professionals, so that every child—regardless of location, household income or individual needs—can be nurtured to achieve their unique potential.

ECA acknowledges the unique place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our society, the past and current injustices and realities for them across Australia, and the enduring strength of their cultures and identities. We commit to being at the forefront of achieving a reconciled nation that values, respects and celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing and being.

Everything we do is founded on our values:

**Equity:** We promote social empowerment and inclusiveness in how we work and what we do.

**Integrity:** Our work is based on evidence and expertise. It is always ethical and transparent.

**Leadership:** We are courageous in promoting the rights and interests of young children.

**Respect:** We value and esteem children, families, professionals and each other, always

**ECA’s Strategic Plan (2021-24)** outlines the future direction of the organisation and what we stand for. It contains five strategic priorities:

1. **Speak up for young children:** Be a courageous advocate that amplifies the voice of young children, their families and those who work with them.
2. **Collaborate for impact:** Work collaboratively with others to champion the importance of the early years and improve outcomes for all children, particularly those at risk of disadvantage.

3. **Champion 'beyond quality' in early education:** Strengthen the capacity of services to be ethical, inclusive and effective in amplifying the learning outcomes and wellbeing of all children.
4. **Lead and inspire professional learning:** Lead the provision of quality-assured resources and learning opportunities for early childhood professionals.
5. **Be sustainable and effective:** Increase our effectiveness through innovation and improvement that is socially, financially and environmentally responsible.

ECA is also strongly committed to reconciliation, our current **Reconciliation Action Plan** can be found on our website: [www.earlychildhood.org.au](http://www.earlychildhood.org.au).

## Position Purpose

The Policy and Government Relations Executive is a key position within the leadership team. It is responsible for overseeing ECA's work in the social and public policy arena. This includes engaging with State Committees and ECA members, drafting submissions to government and parliamentary processes, running advocacy campaigns and initiatives such as 'Early Learning Matters Week' as well as supporting our engagement with the Federal Parliament and relevant Ministerial offices.

To perform in this role you will need to have a thorough understanding of the policy and legislative frameworks relevant to the delivery of early childhood services across Australia as well as options for the future and contemporary directions in research and practice.

The Policy and Government Relations Executive will regularly review research and practice evidence to inform policy positions and advice developed by ECA. They will be responsible for developing submissions and advice to governments (including the Federal and State/Territory Governments) informed by ECA's values, the available evidence and consultation with ECA members and the early childhood sector more broadly. They will also manage research and development projects commissioned or undertaken by ECA, working with partners and funding bodies to ensure project objectives are achieved.

The position has a key role in ECA advocacy and is responsible for productive stakeholder management, in particular with parliamentary representatives and the media. The role will develop and implement ECA advocacy strategies for Federal Politicians and also at a State level (working with staff from ECA State and Territory Branches).

## Reporting Structures

This position reports to the Chief Executive Officer.

The Policy & Government Relations Executive may be responsible for managing the project staff or external contractors employed to secure or deliver funded projects either at the national level or through ECA State/Territory Committees. These are typically part-time or time-limited positions.

From time to time, this position will engage and work closely with external reference groups and specialists such as academic experts, researchers, administrations of government data, etc.

## **Key Responsibilities**

### **1. Policy Management**

- 1.1. Coordinate activities across ECA to develop a cohesive and consistent approach to policy, research and advocacy.
- 1.2. Monitor the public policy landscape including parliamentary and government consultation and inquiry processes.
- 1.3. Identify opportunities for ECA to contribute to policy debates and decision-making.
- 1.4. Monitor research and policy developments that can inform ECA's policy work.
- 1.5. Engage ECA members and stakeholders in consultation on policy issues.
- 1.6. Work with the CEO to develop policy positions and submissions to parliamentary and government processes on behalf of ECA and the early childhood sector.

### **2. Research Management**

- 2.1. Identify opportunities for ECA to commission, undertake and influence research into early childhood development, education and service delivery.
- 2.2. Maintain relationships with leading researchers and academics to inform our policy and project work.
- 2.3. Analyse and use research to inform ECA's policy positions and advice to government.
- 2.4. Prepare tenders, reports and proposals for research projects and projects involving sector consultation or sector development.

### **3. Project Management**

- 3.1. Undertake and manage all aspects of allocated projects, as per established work plans, project budget and funding contract.
- 3.2. Ensure work plans, project plans and reporting requirements are implemented and meet the needs of the organisation.
- 3.3. Establish and maintain operational functions for project delivery and progress reporting
- 3.4. Undertake sector consultation and research as required by the project plan.
- 3.5. Prepare interim and final project reports and communiques.
- 3.6. Develop and maintain contracts for any sub-contractors or suppliers involved in the project.

### **4. Advocacy**

- 4.1. Develop and implement non-partisan advocacy strategies for engaging Federal Politicians and representatives (Government and Opposition).
- 4.2. Organise and represent ECA at regular meetings to inform/engage Federal politicians and representatives under the direction of the ECA CEO. Follow up contact/correspondence.

- 4.3. Create and maintain a database of key Federal and State level politicians/govt. representatives with ECA priority listings/notes.
- 4.4. Develop individual State/Territory Government advocacy templates and work with ECA State/Territory Branch staff to implement. (State level MP advocacy could also help impact COAG and the Education Council and have national ramifications.)
- 4.5. Engage ECA Members in general advocacy through ECA projects and campaigns eg Everyone Benefits campaign and encourage early learning centres to invite local MPs into their services, write letters to their local MPS etc.
- 4.6. Investigate consulting with, and the participation of, children voices in ECA advocacy and statements.

## **5. Financial Management**

- 5.1. Develop, monitor and manage budgets for projects and advocacy activities (such as Early Learning Matters Week) within delegated authority.

## **6. Organisation and Business Development**

- 6.1. Implement the Policies and Procedures of ECA.
- 6.2. Actively engage with the content and strategic purposes of project/s and other work to meet organisational strategic goals.
- 6.3. Maintain relevant national/international contact database of key contacts in policy, research and advocacy.

## **7. Other duties as is required.**

## **Selection Criteria**

1. Tertiary qualification in social policy, law and/or project management
2. Minimum 5 years relevant experience in a policy or advocacy role and/or leadership role in the early childhood sector that has included policy/advocacy or research responsibilities.
3. Substantive experience in undertaking consultation and developing written submissions/reports.
4. Solid experience in the delivery of national projects funded by government – including work planning, liaison with funding bodies, delivery of project outputs.
5. Experience in an advocacy role, with strong diplomacy and negotiating skills.
6. Excellent written and oral communication skills.
7. Able to work well in a team.

## **Desirable**

1. Knowledge of early childhood education and care legislation and policy frameworks
2. Experience in conducting, analysing and utilising research
3. Excellent organisational skills, including demonstrated capacity to manage multiple projects
4. Possess sound Microsoft Office skills (including experience creating graphs and charts).

People with a disability, LGBTQI+ community members and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants are strongly encouraged to apply. ECA is strongly committed to Equal Employment Opportunities and workplace diversity.

## **General Conditions of Employment**

- The salary for this role is Level 5 of the ECA Enterprise Agreement. Salary packaging is available.
- The role is a full-time permanent position, 75 hours per fortnight.
- It is preferable for this role to be based at ECA's National Office in Canberra but ECA has office premises in most Capital Cities and/or some staff working remotely.
- A 6-month probationary period will apply. The position description and individual performance will be reviewed during and at the end of the probationary period then annually.