



Environmental Defenders Office

Special Counsel – Safe Climate - Position Description

EDO relies on our people to use their skills and experience to provide the best possible support to our clients and other staff. While this job description aims to outline the fundamental reason the role exists, the role may evolve as EDO evolves.

If you see a way to play to your strengths in a way that achieves EDO outcomes, please don't be limited to this list. We have important work to do and need everyone to be operating at their best.

Job title: Special Counsel

Reporting to: Managing Lawyer, Queensland

Purpose of the position

Environmental Defenders Office (EDO) is the largest environmental legal centre in the Australia-Pacific, dedicated to protecting our climate, communities and shared environment by providing access to justice, running ground-breaking litigation and leading law reform advocacy.

The Special Counsel will engage with legal issues surrounding climate change, biodiversity and environmental protection in Queensland. In this role you will think creatively about delivering systemic change for environmental protection, chiefly in relation to fossil fuel developments and climate change, but also regarding biodiversity issues such as deforestation.

Together with the Managing Lawyer, Special Counsel plays a leadership role and are expected to supervise, mentor, and support legal staff in delivering on advice, litigation and law reform work. Special Counsel will manage and maintain external relationships.

The role will primarily involve leading litigation and related advice with junior staff. It will also include non-litigious advice work and engaging in policy and law reform.

Key responsibilities & duties

The Special Counsel will be expected to work closely with the Managing Lawyer to develop and implement planning for a targeted work program, and work with a level of autonomy and self-direction.

Special Counsel will also be required to act as the solicitor on record for litigation work, authorise court documents and other work, supervise other lawyers, and represent the EDO in the media.

Key responsibilities

- Provide legal research, advice and representation on public interest environmental law issues and disputes primarily relating to fossil fuel exploitation, climate change, human rights, biodiversity and related duties of care. Conduct advice and litigation to achieve EDO's strategic outcomes.
- Comply with EDO's policies and procedures, and legal obligations.
- Deliver legal services and undertake duties in a culturally competent manner and work

with clients and staff from a wide variety of backgrounds.

- Deliver on and work to meet funding commitments.
- Supervise, mentor and support legal staff, including approving their work, and work collaboratively with other staff within EDO.
- Supervise the work of volunteers who undertake tasks such as legal research, document preparation, etc.

Duties

- Provide legal advice and representation to the public on a wide range of legal matters relevant to fossil fuel exploitation, biodiversity and environmental protection.
- Lead the preparation and conduct of litigation undertaken in Queensland.
- Collaborate and knowledge-share within broader EDO practice groups
- Comply with professional obligations.
- Participate in and support EDO fundraising.

General

All staff have a responsibility to:

- Develop and maintain a good knowledge of EDO's role and policies.
- Represent EDO in a positive and effective manner by actively demonstrating EDO Values.
- Attend and contribute actively and constructively at staff meetings.
- Maintain appropriate records, assist with office administration, such as files, computer and precedent systems.
- Seek opportunities for personal and professional development, particularly related to the team and position's specific areas of responsibility.
- Respond to requests by clients and fellow staff in a knowledgeable, professional, constructive and respectful manner.
- Provide accurate and timely data and information for reporting, fundraising and communications purposes.

Commitment to EDO's Values:

Commitment

- We are committed to; a united organisation, to each other, to collaboration, to justice, to our communities and to creating a world where nature thrives.
- We are committed to providing excellent legal services and resources, informed by the best available science, in order to empower clients and communities.
- We are committed to improving our planet and society.
- We care for EDO's clients and stakeholders.
- We are fearless in the face of adversity, and care for each other as we face this adversity.

Diversity

- We are respectful of and welcome diversity of staff, volunteers, offices, environmental regions, communities, stakeholders.
- We respect First Nations Peoples' knowledge and experience, and work with them to protect their country and culture.

- We acknowledge that the law has not always been just.
- We dedicate ourselves to understanding the diversity of our people and culture.
- We welcome and respect our own differences and learn from them, and collaborate to achieve our greatest potential.
- We are great lawyers and great people, with open hearts and open minds.
- We respect the different places our stakeholders come from and strive to help them, even if their worldviews don't align completely with ours.

Integrity

- We work effectively, efficiently, strategically, professionally and ethically; “justice is in our nature”.
- We are truthful with ourselves and others.
- We are nonpartisan and inspire trust in our clients, stakeholders and government.
- We respect the world's resources and make maximum productive use of the resources entrusted to us.

Vision

- We lead change and environmental empowerment using innovation, creativity, and courage.
- We expand the boundaries with creativity and skill, pioneering new legal pathways to a healthier, safer world and inspiring others.
- We are inquisitive, curious and persistent: exploring new ideas and embracing change.
- We boldly challenge the status quo while providing solutions to our most pressing challenges.