Australian Government | NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Chief People Officer and Branch Head, People and Communications

Job Reference	1088
Classification	Senior Executive Service Band 1
Division	Corporate Division
Branch	People and Communications
Location	Canberra, ACT; other National EPA office locations may be considered. Regular attendance in Canberra may be required.
Employment status	Ongoing
Hours	Full-time; Part-time
Office arrangement	We support a range of flexible work arrangements in accordance with our Enterprise Agreement.
Security clearance	Negative Vetting Level 1 (NV1)
Contact	**Executive Intelligence Group** has been engaged to support this recruitment process. For a confidential discussion please contact **Karina Duffey** at **Executive Intelligence Group** on 02 6232 2200.

Job overview

The National Environmental Protection Agency (National EPA) is seeking an outstanding senior executive to serve as its Chief People Officer and lead the People and Communications Branch.

As the agency's principal people adviser, the Chief People Officer provides strategic leadership of the agency's people, culture, communications and workforce functions. The role is responsible for driving workforce strategy, organisational design, capability development, employee relations, workplace health and safety, diversity and inclusion, recruitment, performance, and learning and development. The Chief People Officer supports the Chief Executive Officer, Executive Board and senior leaders to build a high-performing, engaged and future-focused workforce that enables the agency to deliver its regulatory objectives.

The Chief People Officer will lead the continued development of contemporary people, communications and engagement systems, policies, practices and capability appropriate to a newly established Commonwealth entity. The role is critical to shaping organisational culture, strengthening leadership capability, supporting change and workforce growth, delivering effective staff and stakeholder communications, and ensuring the agency meets its obligations as an employer under the Australian Public Service framework. The role currently oversees four sections: People and Capability; Enterprise Bargaining; Strategic Communications; and Stakeholder Engagement & Media.

Who we are

The National EPA is Australia's national environmental regulator. We deliver transparent, timely, and evidence-based environmental regulation.

The agency was established on 1 July 2026, bringing together regulatory functions of Australia's national environmental laws into one independent agency.

Our work:

- regulates development to protect matters of national environmental significance
- strengthens compliance with national environmental laws
- provides clear, predictable regulatory pathways that support environmentally responsible economic activity and good environmental outcomes.

The Corporate Division provides the foundational services, advice and assurance that enable the National EPA to operate effectively and achieve its objectives. Its responsibilities include finance, legal, people and culture, communications, governance, risk and compliance, procurement, property and business support.

Through strategic advice, operational support and effective corporate oversight, the division helps ensure that the agency is accountable, sustainable and equipped to meet the needs of its people, stakeholders and the Australian community.

The People and Communications Branch provides strategic advice, policy leadership and operational support across workforce, culture and communications functions to ensure the agency attracts, develops and retains a high-performing workforce, while fostering effective engagement with staff and stakeholders. The branch oversees workforce planning, recruitment, learning and development, employee relations, workplace health and safety, diversity and inclusion, performance management, organisational culture, internal communications, stakeholder engagement and corporate communications.

Through strong people practices and effective communication, the branch supports organisational capability, drives employee engagement, strengthens leadership, and ensures the agency is well positioned to deliver its priorities as a trusted and effective Commonwealth regulator. It also provides advice on workforce and communications strategies, supports organisational change initiatives, and promotes compliance with relevant legislative and Australian Public Service requirements.

For more information about us please visit our website: Homepage | National EPA

The job

As Chief People Officer, you will provide strategic leadership of the agency's people, communications, and workforce functions. You will lead the People and Communications Branch and work collaboratively across the agency to build organisational capability, strengthen employee engagement, support effective communications, and foster a high-performing and inclusive workplace.

Reporting to the Chief Operating Officer, you will be a trusted adviser to the Chief Executive Officer, Executive Board and senior leadership. You will provide clear, evidence-based advice on workforce strategy, leadership and capability development, employee relations, change management, communications and stakeholder engagement.

As a member of the agency's senior leadership cohort, you will contribute beyond your immediate professional responsibilities. You will help shape organisational strategy, lead enterprise reform, build organisational capability and foster a collaborative, inclusive and high-performing culture.

You will bring extensive professional expertise, sound executive judgement and the ability to operate effectively in a complex and evolving environment. You will lead the continued development of the agency's people, communications and engagement frameworks, systems and capability, while ensuring the delivery of contemporary and responsive services that support the agency's objectives.

One of the immediate challenges in this role will be balancing delivery across significant and concurrent priorities in three workstreams: establishment of the corporate division, embedding and maintaining effective business-as-usual operations, and implementation of environmental law reform initiatives.

You will demonstrate the highest standards of integrity, judgement and accountability when exercising relevant powers and delegations and supporting the effective management of the agency's workforce and communications functions. You will operate in accordance with the *Public Service Act 1999*, the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*, the *Fair Work Act 2009*, and other applicable legislative and policy requirements.

As an Officer under Section 27 of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*, you hold a personal, positive, and non-delegable duty to exercise due diligence. You will champion a culture of safety leadership and proactively integrate both physical and psychological safety frameworks into strategic and operational planning.

Key Responsibilities

As Chief People Officer and Branch Head, People and Communications, you will:

- Provide strategic leadership of the agency's people, communications and workforce functions, ensuring they support the achievement of organisational priorities and regulatory outcomes.
- Lead the development and implementation of workforce and capability strategies that attract, develop and retain a high-performing and diverse workforce.
- Provide authoritative advice to the Chief Executive Officer, Executive Board and senior leaders on workforce planning, employee relations, leadership, change management and communications.

- Oversee the delivery of contemporary people and communications services, including recruitment, learning and development, performance management, workplace health and safety, diversity and inclusion, internal communications and stakeholder engagement.
- Foster a positive, inclusive and high-performing workplace culture that supports employee wellbeing, engagement and productivity.
- Lead the agency's communications function to ensure staff, stakeholders and the community receive clear, timely and effective information about the agency's role, activities and priorities.
- Drive organisational change and capability-building initiatives to support the agency's growth, maturity and evolving operational needs.
- Build strong relationships across the agency and with external stakeholders to support collaboration, engagement and the achievement of strategic objectives.
- Ensure compliance with relevant legislative, policy and Australian Public Service requirements relating to employment, workplace relations, communications and governance.
- Contribute as a member of the senior leadership cohort to enterprise-wide decision-making, organisational strategy, governance, reform and continuous improvement initiatives.

What we are looking for

To be successful in this role, you will demonstrate:

- A strong record of shaping organisational strategy, translating priorities into workforce, culture and communications outcomes, and contributing effectively as a member of a senior leadership team.
- Extensive experience leading complex people and communications functions, including workforce planning, employee relations, capability development, workplace culture, change management and stakeholder engagement.
- The ability to analyse complex and sensitive issues, exercise sound judgement, manage competing priorities, and provide frank, practical and trusted advice to senior executives and other decision-makers.
- A demonstrated ability to lead organisational transformation, drive cultural change, modernise systems and processes, and build sustainable people and communications capability.
- A strong record of leading high-performing, inclusive and multidisciplinary teams, developing others and creating a culture of accountability, collaboration and continuous improvement.
- The ability to build productive relationships across organisational boundaries and influence effectively with employees, senior stakeholders, government agencies and external partners.
- A strong commitment to integrity, inclusion, accountability and public service, and the ability to model the APS Values and expected SES leadership behaviours.
- Highly developed communication and interpersonal skills, including the ability to communicate with influence, manage sensitive issues, tailor messages to diverse audiences and build confidence through clear and effective engagement.

- Experience developing and implementing workforce, people and communication strategies that support organisational objectives, strengthen employee engagement and enhance organisational performance.
- A demonstrated ability to foster positive workplace cultures that value diversity, wellbeing, inclusion, leadership and employee experience.

Qualifications and Experience

Highly desirable

- Tertiary qualifications in Human Resources, Communications, Business, Public Administration or a related discipline.
- Significant experience operating within the Australian Public Service or broader public sector environment, with a strong understanding of employment legislation, workforce management, governance and public sector policy frameworks.
- Experience developing and implementing strategic workforce, employee engagement, leadership development and communications initiatives that support organisational objectives and improve organisational performance.
- Demonstrated experience leading internal and external communications functions, including stakeholder engagement, strategic communications and reputation management.

In addition to demonstrating the capabilities expected at the SES Band 1 level and the behaviours set out in the Secretaries' Charter of Leadership Behaviours, the successful candidate will model the National EPA's leadership expectations.

Act with integrity

Model integrity, transparency and accountability in decision-making. Exercise sound judgement, provide frank and evidence-based advice, and promote the proper use of public resources.

Be part of the solution

Navigate complexity and ambiguity, identify practical solutions and take accountability for delivering outcomes. Anticipate emerging issues and mobilise people and resources to address them.

Collaborate, innovate

Build trusted relationships across organisational boundaries and create the conditions for collaboration, innovation and continuous improvement. Bring stakeholders with you through clear communication and purposeful engagement.

Develop self, develop others

Build organisational capability by developing people, encouraging diverse perspectives, providing constructive feedback and supporting workforce and succession planning. Demonstrate self-awareness and an ongoing commitment to learning.

Eligibility and other requirements

Citizenship - to be eligible for employment with the National EPA you must be an Australian citizen.

Security Clearance - this position requires a NV1 security clearance. Applicants must hold, or be eligible to obtain and maintain, an NV1 security clearance.

Pre-employment checks - the preferred candidate will be required to undergo pre-employment screening. This may include identity and citizenship verification, a Nationally Coordinated Criminal History Check, referee checks, employment history and qualification verification, and other suitability checks relevant to the role.

RecruitAbility

RecruitAbility applies to this vacancy. You will be invited to participate in further assessment activity for the vacancy if you choose to apply under the RecruitAbility scheme; declare you have a disability; and meet the minimum requirements for the job.

For more information see: www.apsc.gov.au/priorities/disability/recruitability.

Reasonable adjustments

Executive Intelligence Group is committed to all prospective applicants and can provide reasonable adjustments during the application and/or the interview process. If you require **Executive Intelligence Group** to provide reasonable adjustments, please contact our Project Managers: Catherine Jennings or Renee Brassington on 02 6232 2200 for a confidential discussion.

How to apply

The National EPA values the contribution of people with diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives. We encourage applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people with disability, culturally and linguistically diverse people and people with varied career pathways.

We are committed to providing an inclusive and accessible recruitment process. Reasonable adjustments are available at every stage of the process. You can request an adjustment through the online application form or by contacting the recruitment contact officer.

All applications must be submitted through the **Executive Intelligence Group** website, https://executiveintelligencegroup.com.au/. Detailed instructions on how to submit your application can be found at the end of this document.

Email will be the primary method used to contact you during the recruitment process. Please provide a current and accessible email address and regularly check your junk or spam folders. We recommend using a personal email address where possible.

Your application

Applicants are required to submit:

- a current résumé
- a statement of claims of no more than 700 words
- the contact details of two professional referees.

One referee should generally be your current or most recent supervisor. Referees may be contacted later in the assessment process, and where practicable the panel will discuss this with you beforehand.

Guidance on preparing an APS application is available through the Australian Public Service Commission's Cracking the Code resource.

Statement of claims

Submit a statement of claims of no more than 700 words explaining your interest in the role and demonstrating how your experience and leadership capabilities equip you to perform it.

Your statement should address the requirements under "What we are looking for" and include specific examples of your achievements, the context in which you operated and the outcomes you delivered.

You do not need to address each responsibility or leadership expectation separately. The panel will assess your application as a whole, together with your résumé and information gathered through other assessment activities.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) in recruitment

Use of AI in the recruitment process

The National EPA may use AI tools to support aspects of this process, such as administrative tasks or drafting recruitment materials, such as job descriptions or aspects of assessment activities (e.g. interview questions).

Any use of AI will be consistent with the National EPA's AI governance framework, monitored and subject to human oversight.

- All recruitment decisions relating to assessment outcomes, engagement and promotion are made by people, not AI systems.
- AI tools are assistive only and will not replace selection panel judgement or merit-based decision-making.
- Your personal information will be handled in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and relevant policies.
- AI tools used will meet government security and data protection requirements and will not use your information to train external models.

We are committed to ensuring recruitment processes remain fair, transparent, merit-based and free from bias, consistent with the APS Employment Principles.

Use of AI by candidates

We understand that artificial intelligence (AI) tools (like ChatGPT or similar tools) can help you prepare a job application. You can use AI tools unless we tell you not to at a specific stage.

However, it's important that your application reflects your own skills, experience and abilities.

What you can do

You can use AI to help you:

- draft or edit your resume or written responses
- prepare for interviews (for example, practice questions)

- improve clarity or structure in your application

What we expect from you

To make sure the process is fair and based on merit, we expect you to:

Be honest

- Only include information that is true and reflects your own experience and achievements
- Use your own knowledge when answering questions

Be yourself

- Show us your own ideas, skills and understanding of the role
- Be able to explain your application and answers in your own words

Be transparent

- Tell us if you have used AI, if asked
- Be ready to explain how you used it to support your application

Use AI responsibly

- Use AI as a support tool, not a substitute for your own work
- Check that any AI-generated content is accurate and relevant

When you should not use AI

You may be asked not to use AI in certain parts of the process (for example, during interviews or assessments). If this applies, we will let you know.

Why this matters

Recruitment decisions are based on merit. This means we assess your skills, experience and suitability for the role. If AI is used in a way that misrepresents your abilities or gives an unfair advantage, it may affect your application. For more information, see APSC guidance on AI in recruitment.

Assessment

The assessment process may include an executive interview, a presentation or work-based exercise, referee reports and other assessment activities relevant to the requirements of the role.

The panel may seek additional information to validate candidates' qualifications, employment history, demonstrated achievements and suitability for appointment.

If you require reasonable adjustments to participate in the assessment process, indicate this in your application or contact the recruitment contact officer. A member of the recruitment team will discuss suitable arrangements with you before the relevant assessment activity.

An order of merit may be established from this process and used to fill similar vacancies arising within 18 months of the advertisement date.

Closing date

Applications close at **11:30pm (AEDT) Sunday 29 November 2026.**

About Executive Intelligence Group

The National Environmental Protection Agency has engaged **Executive Intelligence Group**, to support this recruitment process.

Executive Intelligence Group is a Canberra based executive search and recruitment management firm. Specialising in finding, selecting, developing, coaching and mentoring senior executives across a range of different contexts and sectors.

We are held in high regard by senior decision makers and would be recognised as having exceptional coverage in terms of the number and nature of agencies for which we have completed assignments.

We have extensive experience in generalist, 'difficult to fill' and specialist executive roles, bulk rounds, statutory appointments and private sector positions and an outstanding reputation in dealing with Secretaries, senior executives CEOs and Boards.

If, after reading the selection documentation, you require further information please contact **Karina Duffey on (02) 6232 2200**, for a confidential discussion.

How to submit your application

Executive Intelligence Group accepts applications via our website, https://executiveintelligencegroup.com.au/.

When you apply, your details will be saved in your personal, confidential account. Should you apply for any future roles through us, you will not have to re-enter this information. If at any time your personal details change you can update this via your account. It is important to us that you find our website easy to use. If you have any feedback on how we can make the website more user friendly to assist you in completing an application or downloading candidate information, please let us know.

In addition to submitting your CV and a statement of claims (or 'pitch') you will be required to fill in some additional fields in our online application form. These include areas such as Key areas of expertise, Major Achievements, Staff Management and Budget Management.

At **Executive Intelligence Group,** we respect the confidentiality of the personal information you provide to us and understand that your privacy is critical.

To review our Privacy Policy please click here: https://executiveintelligencegroup.com.au/privacy-policy/.

Important things to note:

- When you apply, you will be asked to declare that all information provided in your application is complete at the time of application lodgement, accurate and not misleading, and that you have disclosed any matters relevant to your suitability, including any changes to your current role/employment arrangements, noting that integrity checks may be undertaken by the client and that a lack of transparency may result in your application being deemed unsuitable.
- When you apply for the first time, please create an account and make a note of your username and password.

- For subsequent applications, you will need to log in to your account and submit your application along with your CV and statement of claims/pitch. I.e. you will need to submit an application for **EVERY** vacancy you are interested in - submitting one application does **NOT** mean you will automatically be considered for other vacancies with **Executive Intelligence Group**.
- You will be required to include the details your statement of claims / pitch directly into the online application form. You do not need to upload your statement of claims / pitch as a separate document / file. Make sure you take account of the requirements of the position and the selection criteria (if required) against which you will be assessed.
- Please have your current CV ready to upload in a single document. In your CV, it is useful for you to provide a quick snapshot of the key responsibilities you have had in each role over the last 5 years.
- You will have an opportunity to review, edit and print your application before you submit. However, once your application is submitted you will not be able to make any changes.
- Once you have submitted your application, you will receive an automated email. In the event that you do not receive an automated email confirming your application has been submitted please ensure you contact us as there may be an issue with your application lodgement.
- If you do not hear from us about the progress of your application within 3 weeks from the close date, please contact us for an update.
- If at any time, you wish to withdraw from this process you will need to send an email to admin@execintell.com.au to let us know. You are unable to withdraw your application directly from the website.

We can be contacted on 02 6232 2200 or admin@execintell.com.au

Please note: our office hours are Monday – Friday between 9.00am and 5.00pm. If you have any queries on the advertised position/s or how to apply, please contact us during these times and before applications close.

How to apply online:

1. Go to the Executive Intelligence Group website and navigate to the Vacancies page (http://www.executiveintelligencegroup.com.au/vacancies/);
2. Find the vacancy you are interested in applying for and click ‘More Info’. This will enable you to download the candidate information pack. This will assist you on how approach your application;
3. When you are ready to apply, find the vacancy you are interested in applying for and click ‘Apply’;
4. Read the information about applying and press ‘Start’;
5. This is where you will create your account if you are applying for the first time. If you have used our system previously you can log in with your user name and password;
6. From here you will be guided through an online application form;
7. At the end of the form you will be prompted upload your CV. You **MUST** have your name referenced within the document/s you upload. Please note you should have this already saved in a single document it is preferable to keep the file name of the document short and without symbols for example: ***Surname First Name Ref No Job***. Where possible please upload your CV in PDF format, we are also able to accept documents in Word format.
8. If you wish to change any of the sections before you submit you can click on the ‘Summary’ table on the right-hand side which will take you to the specific page;
9. Submit your application; and
10. You will receive an automatic email with a copy of your application.