

WATERMARK SEARCH INTERNATIONAL CANDIDATE BRIEF

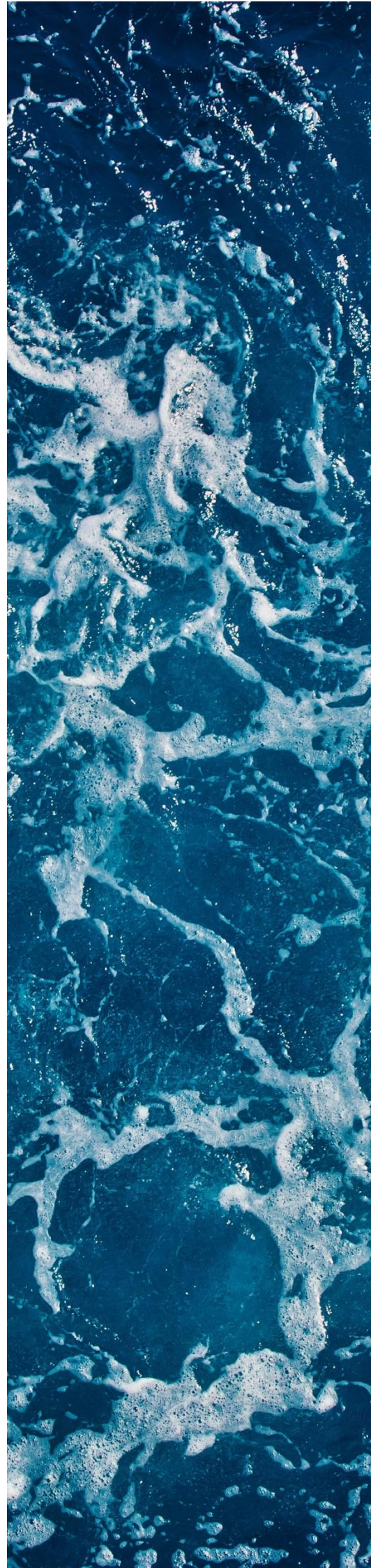
Head, Evidence and Impact

Sax Institute

December 2025



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About Sax Institute

The Sax Institute is a leading independent, not-for-profit organisation that improves health and wellbeing by driving the use of research in policies, programs and services. With a 20-year track record of innovation and impact, the Institute is internationally recognised for its expertise in knowledge mobilisation, evidence synthesis, and strategic evaluation.

Founded in 2002 and named after Dr Sidney Sax – a visionary in public health and health services reform – the Institute continues his legacy by embedding research into the heart of decision-making. Dr Sax's pioneering work in aged care, health data systems, and universal healthcare laid the foundation for the Institute's mission today.

The Sax Institute works at the interface of research and policy, partnering with governments, health organisations, and a national network of over 70-member research institutions. Its work spans a broad portfolio of programs and services, including:

- **The 45 and Up Study** – Australia's largest ongoing study of health and ageing, now entering its fourth wave of data collection, providing critical insights into chronic disease, aged care, and cognitive decline.
- **SURE (Secure Unified Research Environment)** – A trusted platform enabling secure access to sensitive health data for over 1,200 researchers and policy analysts.
- **Evidence Check** – Rapid, high-quality evidence reviews that inform policy in emerging areas such as gender dysphoria, aged care, and mental health.
- **Dynamic Simulation Modelling** – Innovative tools like hospital digital twins and causal loop diagrams that support strategic decision-making in complex health systems.
- **Aboriginal Health Division** – A newly established, First Nations-led division focused on community-driven research and culturally safe health programs, including breastfeeding initiatives and Indigenous-led program evaluations.
- **The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre** – A national leader in chronic disease prevention, fostering collaboration across government, academia, and public health organisations.
- **Evaluation and Impact Services** – Strategic evaluations for government and for-purpose organisations, including but not only, work on rural health models, youth justice, and women's economic safety.

The Sax Institute is guided by a refreshed governance structure and is the process of finalising a new strategy that positions it as the partner of choice for tackling complex health challenges. Under the leadership of CEO, Dr Martin McNamara, and a highly experienced executive team, the Institute is expanding its influence and capabilities across the health sector.

For more information, please refer to <https://www.saxinstitute.org.au/>

The latest Annual Report is available [here](#).

The Evaluation and Impact Services

Sax Institute's Evaluation and Impact Services team delivers high-quality, independent evaluations that help organisations understand the effectiveness, value and outcomes of their programs and policies. With deep expertise in health and social policy, the team works across government, non-profit and community sectors to provide actionable insights that drive improvement and innovation.

Key features of the service include:

Strategic Evaluation Design: The Institute partners closely with clients to co-design evaluations that are tailored to their goals, context and stakeholders. This includes mixed-methods approaches that combine quantitative data analysis with qualitative insights from interviews, focus groups and case studies.

Impact Measurement: The team supports organisations in developing frameworks and strategies to measure impact over time. This includes helping clients articulate outcomes, define indicators, and build internal capacity for ongoing evaluation.

Scalability Assessments: Sax Institute has led evaluations that assess the potential for scaling successful models, such as collaborative care approaches in rural NSW, providing critical insights for policy expansion.

For-Purpose Sector Engagement: In recent years, the Institute has expanded its work with community-based organisations tackling complex social challenges. Examples include:

- Evaluating the Money Clinics initiative by the Centre for Women's Economic Safety, which supports women experiencing financial abuse.
- Supporting Youth Off the Streets with evaluation of their Youth Justice program and development of an organisation-wide Impact Measurement Strategy.

Aboriginal-Led Evaluation: Through initiatives like the ILEAP project, the Institute is building local capabilities in Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services to evaluate culturally appropriate programs in areas such as youth suicide prevention and chronic disease management.

The team is known for its collaborative ethos, working alongside clients to ensure evaluations are not only rigorous but also meaningful and useful for decision making. The team brings a strong commitment to equity, innovation and real-world impact. Their work is helping shape more responsive, effective and inclusive health and social systems across Australia.

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position title	Head, Evidence and Impact Division
Date established	November 2025
Reports to	Chief Executive Officer
Direct reports	Deputy Directors
Employment status	Full-time

Background

The Sax Institute is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that improves health and wellbeing by driving better use of evidence in policies, programs and services.

The Institute has an international reputation as an Evidence Specialist, with nearly 20 years' experience in translating research findings into policy drawing on our own expertise as well as that of our more than 80 member organisations. We work with governments, health organisations, research organisations and a network of experts nationwide to analyse policy problems and find the best evidence-based solutions.

Program Area

The Evidence and Impact Division translates evidence into actionable insights for health policy, strategy, programs and services. The Division works with government agencies, health organisations and research institutions to address complex challenges through rigorous methodology, analytical excellence and strategic advice.

The Division has primary responsibility for the following Institute goals:

- Provide high-quality services in health policy, strategy and planning, digital health, program review and evaluation, and impact assessment
- Drive research that contributes to policy, program and service delivery decisions
- Build and maintain strategic partnerships with government, health sectors and research organisations
- Position the Sax Institute as a trusted advisor and partner of choice for complex policy and program challenges

Purpose of position

The Head, Evidence and Impact Division is a senior executive position reporting to the CEO and responsible for the strategic development and operational management of the Division. This position plays a pivotal role in expanding the Institute's impact through business development, strategic relationship management, and delivery of high-quality programs.

The position carries critical responsibility for:

- Delivering projects and services to the highest quality standards
- Driving business development and portfolio growth
- Ensuring client satisfaction and building long-term partnerships
- Positioning the Institute as a partner of choice for government and health sector decision-makers
- Achieving or surpassing budgetary targets
- Leading multidisciplinary project teams with excellence in methodology and analytical rigour
- Building organisational capability in project management and service delivery

- Identifying, regularly reviewing, and proactively managing division-level risks
- Cultivating a productive, engaged, and high-performing workforce

The Head, Evidence and Impact Division will be a highly credible leader with extensive experience, demonstrate excellent communication and relationship management skills, bring a strategic customer-centric mindset, have strong business development capabilities, and foster a culture of innovation, learning and continuous improvement.

Key accountabilities

Accountability	Key Performance Indicators
Executive leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to the development and strategy of the Institute • Develop and implement annual plans, budgets and performance measures • Together with the Executive team, drive and develop collaboration across the Institute
Lead the strategic development of Evidence and Impact Division and implement and monitor business plans and budgets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic plans and business plans are implemented for Evidence and Impact Division and progress against plans is monitored, evaluated and communicated to the Executive. • Plans are developed in collaboration with division staff and provide a clear direction and shared sense of purpose for all team members. • Activities are aligned with Institute goals and contribute to integrated business strategy and maximise positive impact on the health and wellbeing of Australians. • Division budgets are actively managed to ensure agreed expectations are met or exceeded. • On-time and on-budget delivery is achieved across all projects • Project outputs contribute to measurable outcomes for clients and demonstrate public value • Efficient use of resources is maintained while ensuring quality outcomes
Drive business development and expand the Division's portfolio.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic relationship management with key stakeholders across government, health sectors and research organisations expands the Institute's portfolio and impact. • New business opportunities are identified and pursued through proactive engagement with senior decision-makers. • A strong value proposition is articulated that is customer-centric and positions the Institute for growth. • Long-term partnerships are cultivated with senior decision-makers to position the Sax Institute as a partner of choice. • Professional networks are developed and nurtured for referrals and potential collaboration.

<p>Ensure effective financial management and resource allocation across the Division.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Division operates within approved budgets with regular monitoring and reporting of financial performance against targets • Resource allocation decisions demonstrate value for money and support strategic priorities • Financial trends are identified and analysed to inform business planning and forecasting •
<p>Provide executive leadership to multidisciplinary project teams.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellence in methodology, analytical rigour and client engagement is fostered across all projects. • Project teams are effectively led to deliver high-quality outcomes that meet or exceed client expectations. • Staff are supported in their professional development and career progression. •
<p>Build and maintain strategic partnerships and stakeholder relationships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular, open and transparent communications with key stakeholders including government agencies, health organisations, and research partners. • Strong relationships are built through honesty, reliability and professionalism. • Consensus and commitment are built around solutions through highly collaborative approaches. • The Institute is represented effectively at relevant forums and in strategic discussions with senior decision-makers.
<p>Foster a culture of innovation, learning and continuous improvement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Division operates with agility and responsiveness to a shifting landscape and evolving requirements. • A culture of innovation, learning and continuous improvement is embedded in Division operations. • Intellectual curiosity is encouraged with a focus on finding new perspectives and approaches to complex problems. •
<p>Foster whole-of-Institute collaboration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead engagement with other Institute divisions including Data and Research Services, the Prevention Centre, Aboriginal Health, and Communications to present a unified view to clients and stakeholders. • High quality, integrated Sax Institute proposals are developed for Evidence and Impact Division with input from all relevant divisions. • Business process improvements are shared across divisions for the benefit of colleagues. • Cross-divisional collaboration is driven as part of the Executive team.

Qualifications, Skills, Experience and Personal qualities - Selection Criteria

Essential

- Post graduate qualifications preferably in public health, health policy, health services research or related field
- Extensive experience of 10+ years specifically in health policy, strategy and planning, evidence mobilisation, modelling, program review and evaluation, and impact assessment
- Substantial leadership experience in staff management, administration, and process and systems development
- Experience and demonstrated competence in operational and budget management
- Demonstrated ability to drive business development and strategic relationship management with senior stakeholders across government and health sectors
- Proven track record of building and maintaining long-term partnerships with senior decision-makers
- Strategic mindset with ability to understand customer needs and offer strategies and solutions aligned with their goals
- Demonstrated ability to problem solve at a high level and develop, implement and evaluate innovative solutions to complex policy challenges
- Excellent interpersonal skills, verbal and written communication skills and proven ability to work effectively with a diverse range of people including academics, clinicians and senior government officials
- Highly effective communicator with ability to articulate strong value propositions in a customer-centric manner
- Experience in policy or program development, implementation and review at a senior level, either from within government or an organisation that works closely with government
- Demonstrated ability to lead multidisciplinary project teams with excellence in methodology and analytical rigour
- Proactive approach to developing and nurturing a strong network of professional contacts for referrals and collaboration

Desirable

- Publication in peer reviewed journals
- Experience in modelling, impact assessment and evaluation methodologies
- Knowledge of digital health and health technology assessment
- Understanding of health system design and reform
- Qualifications in project or program management
- Experience in strategy development or corporate planning
- Familiarity with advanced analytical approaches and research methodologies
- Experience working with Aboriginal health programs and organisations

Challenges

- Building and maintaining a strong pipeline of opportunities in a competitive marketplace
- Positioning the Division for growth while maintaining the Institute's reputation for independence and analytical excellence
- Remaining agile and responsive to a shifting policy landscape and evolving client requirements

- Balancing multiple complex consulting projects simultaneously while maintaining quality and meeting diverse client needs
- Navigating complex policy and program challenges to deliver pragmatic, evidence-based solutions that clients can implement
- Fostering whole-of-Institute collaboration to leverage all Institute capabilities in service delivery
- Managing client expectations while ensuring methodological rigour and analytical excellence

Key stakeholders and relationships

- Senior government officials in health departments and agencies at Commonwealth and State/Territory levels as clients and partners
- Health sector executives in public and private health organisations as clients and potential clients
- Research management staff in universities and research institutions as collaborators and potential clients
- Sax Institute Member organisations
- Sax Institute Data and Research Services, Communications, Corporate Services, Aboriginal Health teams
- CEO and the Sax Institute Executive and Board
- Professional networks in health policy, consulting and evaluation sectors

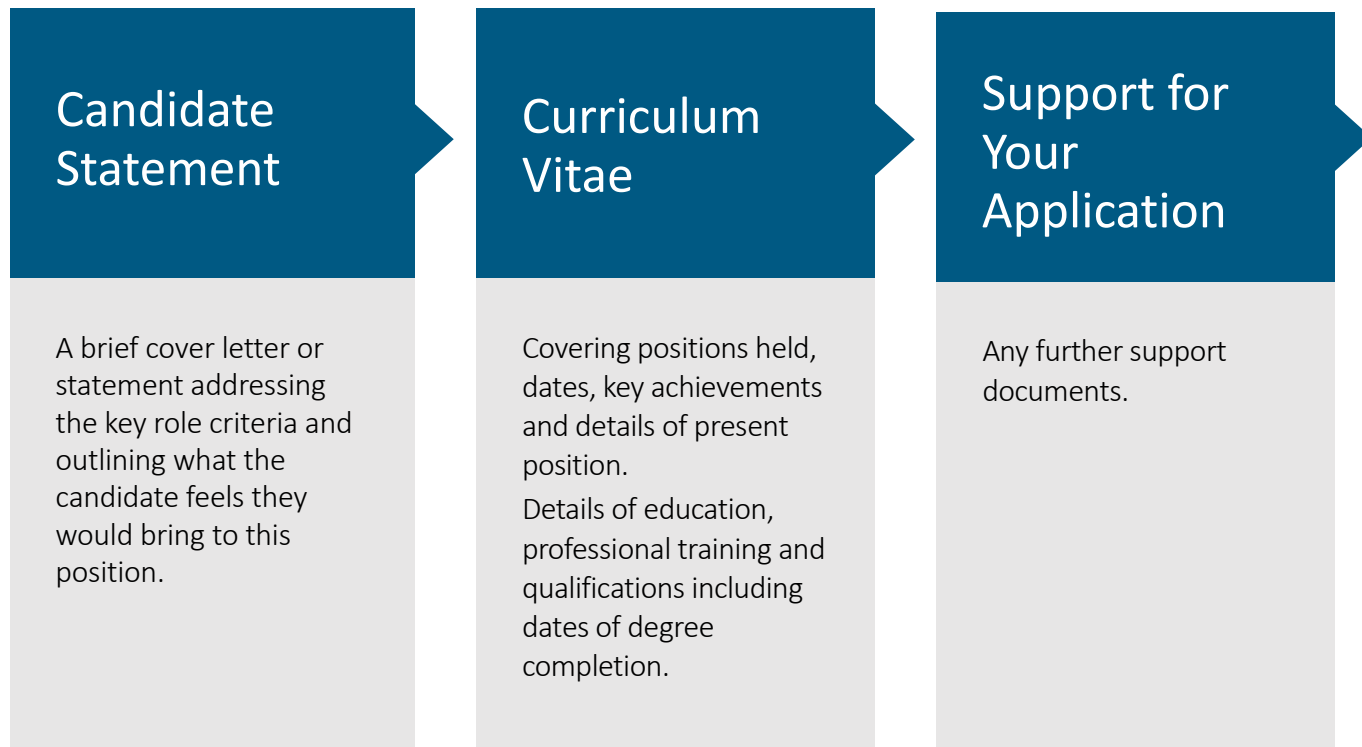
Key meetings/committees/working groups (that this role must be a part of)

- Sax Institute Executive Team
- Relevant government advisory committees and working groups
- Professional networks and forums relevant to health policy, strategy and evaluation
- Client governance and steering committees as appropriate for major consulting projects

How to Apply

An executive search is being undertaken by Watermark Search.

Applications for the position will need to include the following:



For a confidential discussion please call Bronwen Kerr, Jocelyn Hinder or Bronwen Kerr of Watermark Search International, who are leading the search on behalf of Sax Institute.

Daniel Nicholls

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02 9233 1200

Please send your application quoting **Ref No A006163** to Watermark Search International at search@watermarksearch.com.au. We will reply to the email address used for your application.

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