

WATERMARK SEARCH INTERNATIONAL CANDIDATE BRIEF

**Director General, Australian Centre for
Disease Control**

Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

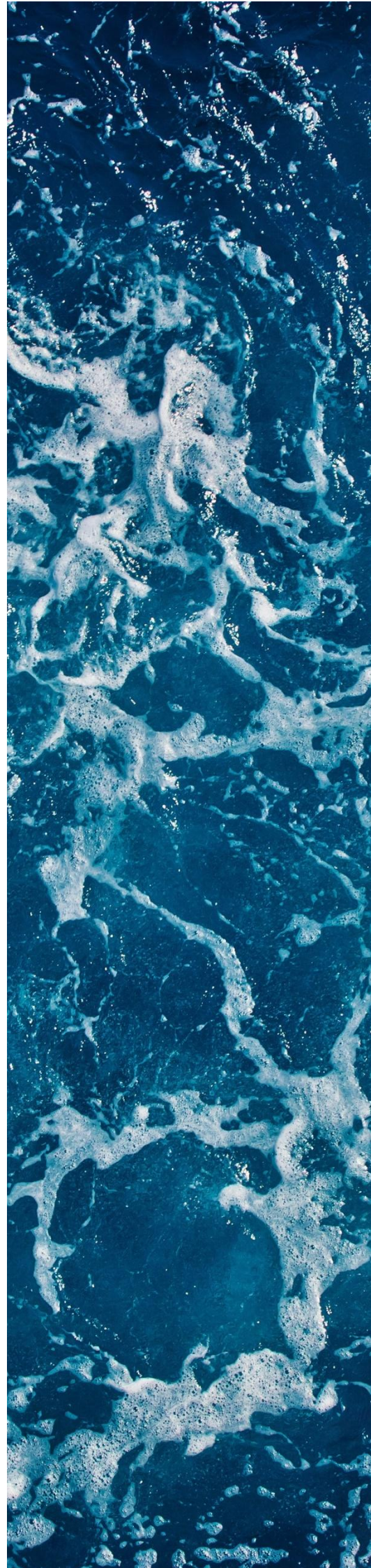
September 2025



Australian Government

Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

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Inaugural Director General

Australian Centre for Disease Control (CDC)

Safeguarding Australia from human diseases and
public health threats

Job Reference: 25-DEDIV-29825 / A006086

Field	Details
Job Reference Number	25-DEDIV-29825 / A006086
Job Title	Inaugural Director General
Group	Australian Centre for Disease Control
Employment Type	5 Year appointment
Total Remuneration	As determined by the Remuneration Tribunal
Base Location	Canberra, ACT
Security Clearance	Negative Vetting 2
Contact Officer	Watermark at search@watermarksearch.com.au

Our Mission is to provide trusted, independent, and expert advice on disease prevention and control in Australia.

The Australian Government is delivering on its commitment to establish an independent Australian Centre for Disease Control (Australian CDC).

The Australian CDC is expected to commence on 1 January 2026, pending the passage of legislation, as a non-corporate Commonwealth entity.

The creation of an independent Australian CDC will improve Australia's ability to prepare for, and respond to, public health challenges, including pandemics.

The Australian CDC will:

- Provide high quality, data driven, and evidence-based advice, informed by broad expertise, to safeguard Australia from diseases and public health threats;
- Promote and lead the coordination of national public health advice and activities that prepare for, and respond to, public health challenges;
- Build the need for public trust and community-based perspectives into public health decision making;
- Prepare for future public health risks, threats and emergencies.

The Australian CDC will be the Commonwealth agency responsible for public health protection, disease prevention, and management of infectious diseases across Australia.

The Australian CDC will be responsible for providing expert advice on public health matters affecting Australians. It will work with states and territories to develop real-time data capabilities, using the strongest evidence base to develop advice to ministers and agencies, and inform decision making.

As a leader in disease control, preparedness, response, and prevention, the Australian CDC will collaborate with relevant jurisdictional, national and international entities to strengthen Australia's public health infrastructure and insights.

In October 2024, the Australian Government announced an initial investment of \$251.7 million over four years (2024-25 to 2027-28) and \$73.3 million per annum from 2028 to implement the Australian CDC.

Functions currently undertaken in the interim Australian CDC will provide the foundations of the new statutory agency. These functions relate to communicable disease surveillance, analysis and public health advice; human biosecurity and health protection; environmental health; One Health; and health security.

Additional functions and funding for the Australian CDC will be considered and phased in over time. This will ensure a sustainable, credible public health agency is well established before any expansion to non-communicable diseases occurs.

Job Preview

The Australian Government has introduced legislation to Parliament to establish a statutory Australian Centre for Disease Control (CDC). In readiness for the commencement of the agency on 1 January 2026 the Government is seeking to appoint the CDC's **Inaugural Director General**.

The CDC will be a gamechanger, ensuring Australia is better prepared for the next pandemic and the many other health challenges we will face in the intervening years.

The CDC will provide a national lens on public health risks, bringing together evidence and expertise to complement and support state and territory responsibilities. Headquartered in Canberra, the agency will be Australia's chief source of independent, national expert public health advice, including on how best to respond to infectious disease outbreaks.

As a leader in disease control, preparedness, response, and prevention, the CDC will collaborate with relevant jurisdictional, national and international entities to strengthen Australia's public health infrastructure and insights. It will work with states and territories to develop real-time data capabilities, using the strongest evidence base to develop advice to ministers and agencies, and inform decision making.

The Opportunity

The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing is seeking applications from high calibre candidates to lead the CDC. You will be exceptionally well credentialed in driving improvements in public health, have a proven record in leading an organisation through transformational change and public communications.

The Director General will lead a team of approximately 250 staff initially and serve as a key national figure in public health crisis response and disease control. They will be the accountable authority under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* and the employing power under the *Public Service Act 1999*.

You will be a forward-thinking, innovative leader with a highly collaborative approach. You will inspire trust and confidence across a wide array of stakeholders, from government officials to the public, while maintaining a rigorous scientific foundation for advice and decisions.

You will be supported by an executive team and a chief medical advisor. An Advisory Council will be established to provide you with advice and assistance, with the possibility for expert technical advisory groups to be established as required.

You will work closely with the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing Chief Medical Officer. You will be an ex-officio member of the Australian Health Protection Committee to aid in effective collaboration and coordination between the Australian CDC and states and territories.

As the key advisor on matters related to public health threats, disease prevention and controls in Australia, you will be the public face of the CDC. You will be the CDC's key representative at public forums, parliamentary hearings, and international conferences. You will be a talented communicator, able to explain complex science-based information to diverse audiences, including the public through conventional and social media.

Maintaining relationships with public health research institutions and communicable and non-communicable disease professional groups, you will play a key role in ensuring the CDC is at the forefront of data analytics for disease surveillance and public health reporting. Strategic partnerships with relevant stakeholders who provide data and other inputs will be critical to enabling evidence-based decision making.

An attractive remuneration package will be offered to the successful candidate.

Required Capabilities

To be a strong contender, you will possess:

- a proven record of successfully leading complex public health organisations
- exceptional leadership skills with the ability to create a positive, trusted and inclusive workplace culture
- comprehensive knowledge of and experience in:
 - Australia's public health landscape, including the role of state, territory and federal health ministers, departments and other stakeholders
 - government health policy frameworks and public sector governance
- credibility as an expert in the field of public health with experience representing the organisation in many forums
- senior professional experience in population health, including contributions to public health policy, strategies programs and advice, with a track record of informing government decision-making at the highest levels
- demonstrated experience building and maintaining effective relationships with key stakeholders such as states and territories, medical professionals, international agencies, and the public
- exceptional communication skills, including the ability to:
 - demystify jargon to provide advice that is tailored and easily understood by the audience
 - provide a compelling and persuasive argument while gaining the trust of stakeholders
- sound knowledge of cutting-edge data science, disease modelling, and public health informatics

Qualifications

- an advanced degree in Public Health, Epidemiology or related field is mandatory

Recruitment Minimum Requirements

Minimum requirements for this role include:

- senior professional experience in population health, including contributions to public health policy, strategies programs and advice, with the ability to inform government decision-making at the highest levels
- exceptional leadership skills with the ability to create a positive, trusted and inclusive workplace culture in an evolving landscape

- credibility as an expert in the field of public health and epidemiology with experience representing the organisation in the media and public and international forums
- an advanced degree in Public Health, Epidemiology or related field is mandatory

RecruitAbility is a scheme which aims to attract and develop applicants with disability and also facilitate cultural changes in selection panels and agency recruitment. All vacancies for the Department of Health and Aged Care are advertised under the RecruitAbility Scheme.

Job applicants with a disability who:

- opt into the scheme
- declare they have disability, and
- meet the minimum requirements of a vacancy advertised under the scheme are advanced to a further stage in the selection process.

More information on RecruitAbility can be found here: [RecruitAbility scheme: A guide for applicants](#)

Eligibility

To be eligible for this position you should be an Australian Citizen at the closing date of applications, unless exceptional circumstances apply.

The successful candidate must be able to obtain and maintain a Negative Vetting Level 2 (Top Secret) security clearance, or hold a current security clearance of an appropriate level.

The successful candidate will be assessed through our pre-employment screening checks, such as an Australian Criminal History Check.

How to Apply

Your application will be assessed on your ability to demonstrate that you possess, or have the real potential to develop, the required skills, knowledge, experience, and qualifications to perform the role. These requirements are based on the information provided to you as part of the job advertisement.

You will also need to upload a current CV and list the details of at least two referees. We strongly encourage all applicants to discuss their application with their referees to ensure they can support your claims.

Applicants are required to provide a statement of claims framed around the key duties and key capabilities.

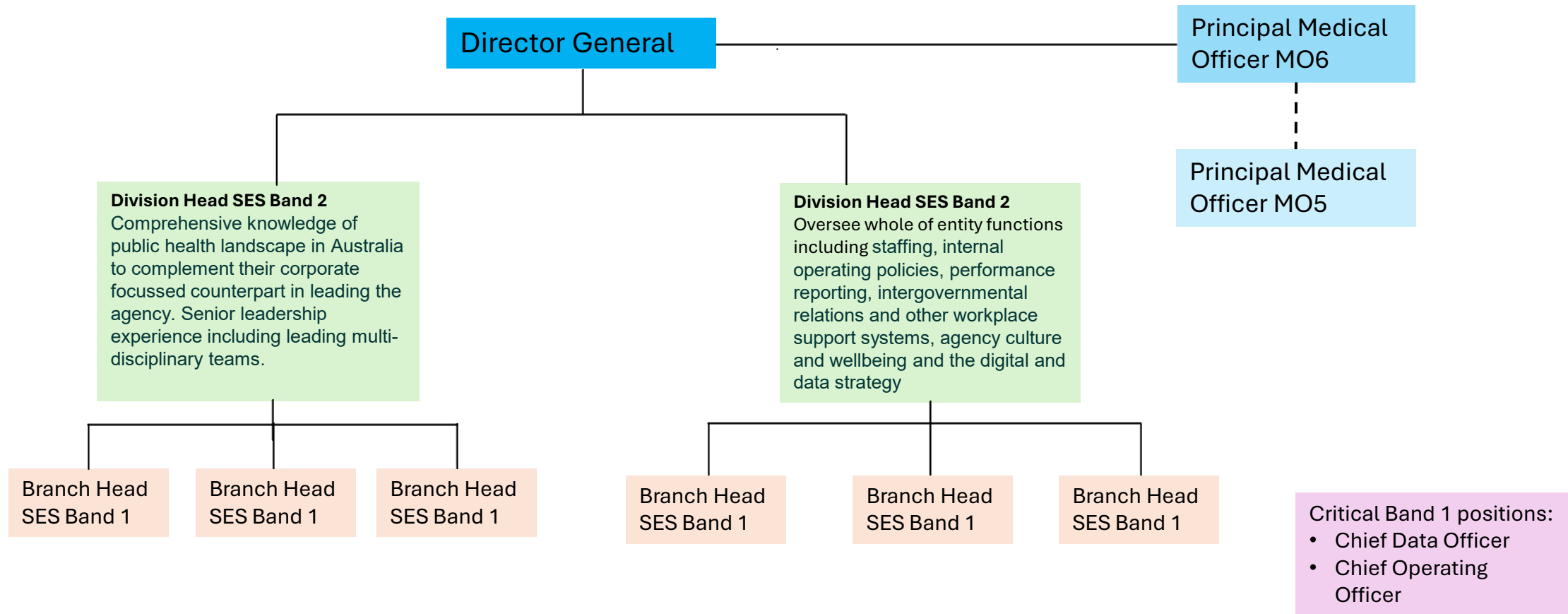
Your statement of claims should be no more than two pages in total with a font no smaller than size 10.

Applications that do not meet these requirements will not be considered.

Minister Butler's speech:

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Hansard/Hansard_Display?bid=chamber/hansardr/28849/&id=0024#:~:text=The%20bill%20establishes%20a%20director%2Dgeneral%20who%20will,requirements%2C%20scrutiny%20by%20parliamentary%20committees%20and%20budgetary

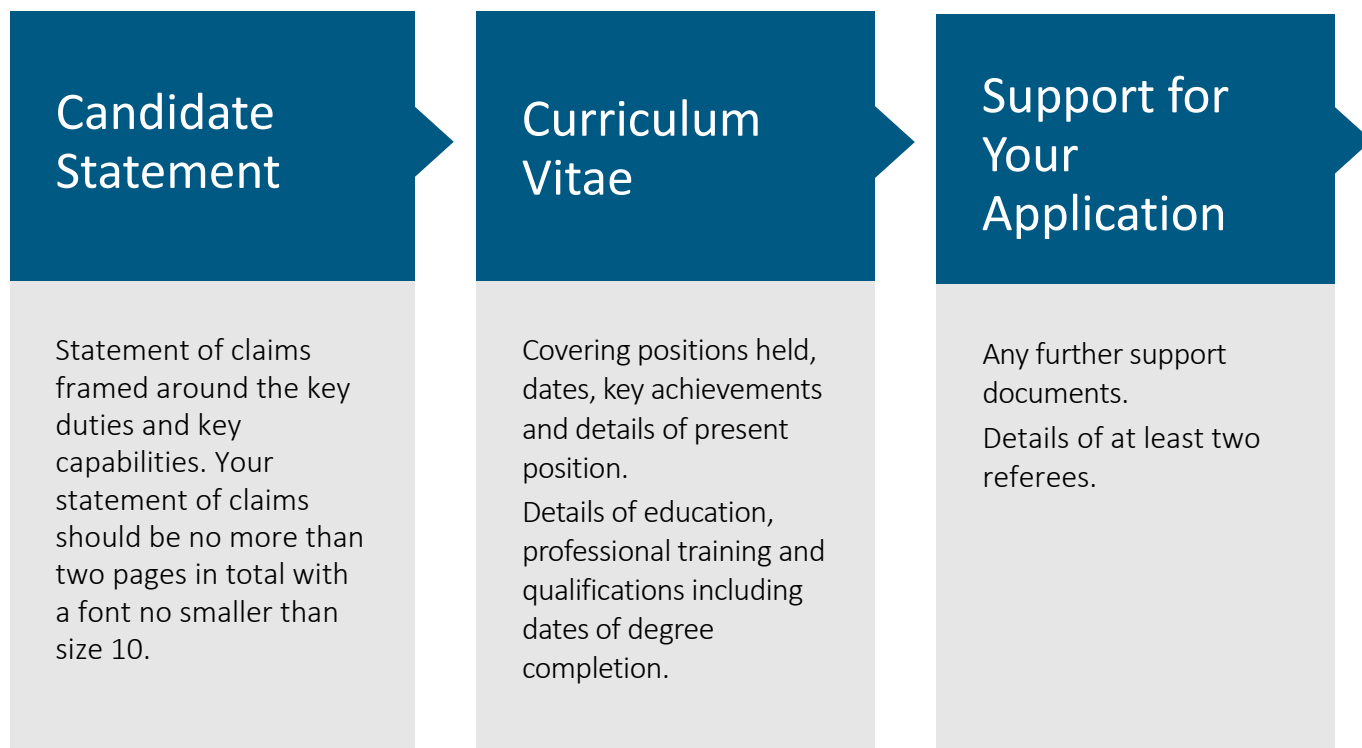
DRAFT – CDC skeleton organisation chart – SES positions



How to Apply

An executive search is being undertaken by Watermark alongside the public advertisement.

Applications for the position will need to include the following:



For a confidential discussion please call Alison Myatt of Watermark Search International, who are leading the search on behalf of The Department.

Daniel Nicholls

Partner, Executive Search
02 9233 1200

Claire Crawford

Partner, Executive Search
02 9233 1200

Alison Myatt

Head of Research
0412 630 817

Georgina Southwell

Project Administrator
02 9239 1223

Please send your application quoting **Ref No A006086** to Watermark Search International [via this form](#). We will reply to the email address used for your application.

Closing date: Monday 29 September 2025 at 11.59pm AEST

Candidate Care



At Watermark, we recognise we have a duty of care to both our clients and the candidates. As an ambassador for the Department, we recognise how important our role is in representing your brand, we take this responsibility seriously and treat successful and unsuccessful applicants with the same level of respect:

- All candidates filtered out before an initial interview are advised in writing.
- Candidates sourced by Watermark are called and given feedback on their performance throughout the selection process; this includes feedback about their experience, knowledge, capabilities and fit for the organisation as well as feedback about their interviewing and presentation techniques.
- Candidates who proceed to client interviews are debriefed and receive feedback either face-to-face or over the phone; this includes feedback as outlined above, plus specific feedback from any notes taken during the interview. We also provide feedback on areas for development such as interview skills, professional development and career guidance.

Candidate Charter



We respect our candidates as individuals and value them as an integral asset to our business. Our focus is on understanding their talents and aspirations and matching them to the right role and organisation. Whether we approach you about a specific role or you contact us to explore opportunities, we want you to experience our commitment to providing a seamlessly professional, constructive, integrity driven service where we care about our engagement with you.

[Association of Executive Search Consultants](#) (AESC) members and their people are guided by a Code of Professional Conduct and Professional Practice Standards.

The AESC Code of Professional Conduct is summarised through these critical values:

- **Ethics & Integrity**
 - We put integrity above all else
- **Excellence**
 - Excellence guides the work we do
- **Objectivity**
 - We exercise independent, objective judgement
- **Diversity & Inclusion**
 - We know the power of diverse talent and inclusive cultures
- **Confidentiality**
 - We safeguard any confidential information entrusted to us

To read the full AESC Code of Professional Conduct, please [click here](#).

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If ever you feel we have not lived up to this Code of Professional Conduct, please tell us. We want to know. Email our Managing Partner at David.Evans@watermarksearch.com.au

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