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Position Description

**Director – Research & Strategy**

**Organisation:** Australian Strategic Policy Institute

**Location:** Canberra

**Division:** Executive

**Reports to:** Executive Director

**Employment Basis:**

☒ Full-time

☒ Permanent

☐ Part-time

☐ Temporary

**Classification:** The successful candidate will be offered a remuneration package at a level aligned with their demonstrated skills and expertise.

**Last Updated:** June 2025

**The Role**

ASPI is searching for an exceptional and dynamic senior leader to fill a crucial position which exists at all major think tanks globally - Director of Research (sometimes called Director of Studies). A think tank's objective is to influence and impact domestic and international public policy making and this role is essential in overseeing ASPI's analytical output. Currently, functions including contestability, analytical production and design, strategic communications & media and events sit within the small but high-performing team which reports to this role.

This role, and the team more broadly, must drive new ideas and ways of doing things, embed quality control and contestability within all of ASPI's analytical output, help to encourage innovative tradecraft practices and ensure ASPI's output (from research to events to podcasts) is strategically communicated to target audiences.

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At ASPI, the Director of Research role also leads on 'Strategy' which means the role is also responsible for supporting the strategic vision of the Executive Director and shaping and supporting ASPI's key strategic initiatives. Such initiatives include the [Sydney Dialogue](#), [Raisina Down Under](#) and supporting the development and build of ASPI's globally influential data-driven projects, examples of which include the [Critical Technology Tracker](#), [Chinese Defence Universities Tracker](#) and [other sites](#). Like all senior roles at ASPI, the Director of Research and Strategy engages in fundraising and that includes working with other seniors to

drive change and innovation in business models, creating value out of ASPI's intellectual property and enhancing global partnerships.

The role provides a unique opportunity for a strategic and creative leader to help drive ASPI's strategic direction, support the continued development of ASPI's data-driven and policy relevant research, and help ASPI continue to build and leverage global networks across governments, industry and civil society.

This is an exceptional opportunity for a talented senior leader to contribute to the work of one of the Indo-Pacific's top policy think-tanks.

### **Duty Statement**

The Director will:

- Report to the Executive Director (ED) and support or lead on agreed high level ASPI Executive priorities as directed and within capacity. These could include supporting and strategising the development of a major initiative, project or conference; website and publication modernisation; strategic communications initiatives and generating new research ideas and revenue pathways for the institute.
- Focus on streamlining and strengthening the quality of ASPI research and analytical output. This will involve working collaboratively across the organisation, especially with Directors, research seniors and the publications manager to implement greater quality control of ASPI's research product. This will include, for example, examining ASPI's external research commissioning practices and updating and communicating ASPI's peer review processes and ensuring all research adheres to the institute's peer review process prior to publication.
- Lead on the drafting and delivery of ASPI's first gender and diversity strategy. This will involve working collaboratively with Directors, corporate and staff. It will build on previous work undertaken by corporate and will include inputs from staff (such as feedback already received through ongoing staff consultations and documents that have fed into the ASPI 2022 strategy process).

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- Lead, foster and support the establishment of large, global, strategic initiatives that are within ASPI's interests and mandate. Such strategic initiatives - like The Sydney Dialogue and the establishment of the Washington Office - boost ASPI's international reputation, provide the institute with new and unique platforms to influence global policymakers and tend to bring in new, large streams of funding for the organisation that support dedicated teams. This will involve working closely and collaboratively with Directors and senior staff to develop, build and deliver such proposals.
  - Continue working very closely with Director Cyber, technology & Security to support the delivery of high-quality research, staff management and fundraising.
  - Lead and coordinate - across ASPI - on topics or initiatives as directed by, and agreed with, the Executive Director. This could include, for example, coordinating ASPI's China output to encourage collaboration, apply a strategic and policy lens to that output and to avoid duplication across the organisation.
  - Support ASPI's Washington Office to build a pipeline of deliverable, relevant and influential research that fits within ASPI's research priorities and commitments made when establishing the office.
  - Support Director Defence Strategy and The Sydney Dialogue team as required.

### **Selection Criteria**

#### **Essential:**

- High level conceptual and strategic thinking ability, including the ability to think and act ahead of global policymaking and to help the institute capitalise on emerging opportunities (whether in relation to policy challenges or commercial opportunities to take just two examples).
- A passion for both strategy and detail, with proven written and verbal communication skills and the ability to convey complex topics, and related ideas, to non-specialist audiences in Australia and globally.
- Excellent analytical skills and some combination of possessing a strong understanding of data collection and analysis, policy-relevant research and/or OSINT tradecraft
- Experience working on some of the topics covered by ASPI
- Strong, agile, leadership skills including:
  - extensive experience in growing and managing diverse teams
  - the demonstrated ability to lead multiple teams focused on different institute priorities
  - the ability to provide these teams with clear, strategic direction resulting in high quality output

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- Strong relevant domestic and global networks across government, industry, and civil society, coupled with political astuteness and sensitivity / awareness to government processes (domestic and foreign).
  - The ability to contribute to raising funding from governments, industry and/or civil society sources (such as foundations) to support ASPI's ongoing work
  - An understanding and/or passion for better understanding how Artificial Intelligence is continuing to reshape OSINT tradecraft, data collection and analytical products more broadly
  - Sophisticated diplomatic skills that will enable dealings with senior representatives from domestic and international organisations.
  - High levels of integrity with a commitment to maintaining ASPI's independence.
  - Comfort working in a dynamic and fluid budgetary environment.

**Desired:**

- Prior and relevant think-tank, government or business experience in the defence, national security and/or foreign affairs space is highly desirable.
- Experience authoring reports on some of the topics covered by ASPI
- Demonstrated ability to generate new, forward leaning ideas and the skills to develop those ideas into funded, effective projects that influence policy outcomes.
- Strong OSINT and research skills
- Strategic communications experience

Remuneration will be competitive and commensurate with experience and relevant skillsets.

ASPI has headquarters in Canberra, Australia and an office in Washington DC, USA. This role is Canberra-based. ASPI welcomes applications from APS employees and is open to secondment arrangements in line with agency approvals.