



Square Kilometre Array (SKA) Strategy & Partnerships Program Director

Information for applicants

Acknowledgement of Country

In the spirit of reconciliation, CSIRO acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples today. [View our vision towards reconciliation.](#)

About CSIRO

CSIRO is Australia's national science agency, delivering solutions for a productive, sustainable and secure future.

CSIRO. Improving the life of every Australian.

CSIRO is one of the world's largest multidisciplinary mission-driven research organisations, creating a better future for Australia. Many of our iconic innovations were once considered impossible until someone, just like you, joined us and took on the challenge.

We focus on the issues that matter most: for our quality of life, for the economy and for our environment. We believe diverse teams are more effective and deliver more innovative outcomes. When we work in partnership with our communities and Indigenous Australia, Australian science and technology can solve seemingly impossible problems and create new value for all Australians.

- We are a statutory corporation within the Australian Government's Industry, Science and Resources portfolio and a corporate Commonwealth entity.
- We work with universities, governments, Australian businesses of all sizes, major industries and communities around the country to deliver value to Australia.

In 2022, we were named the most trusted government service in Roy Morgan's Trusted Brand Awards. With more than 5,500 staff, we contribute to Australia's national prosperity as well as creating environmental and social benefit.

To find out more about our purpose, vision, values and the challenges we are solving, visit www.csiro.au.



About CSIRO Space & Astronomy research unit

Our expertise is in understanding the Universe, including observing Earth from space. Through our Space and Astronomy research unit we operate national facilities for radio astronomy, spacecraft communications and tracking, and collecting satellite-derived data about Earth, for customers from across Australia and the world.

We have been at the forefront of radio astronomy for more than 75 years, managing observatories, developing new technologies and revealing the structure of the Universe, all areas of expertise that are feeding into SKA science and development. We were instrumental in Australia's bid to host the SKA-Low telescope and have been contributing to the SKA project since its conception.

We operate two facilities that are part of global networks providing continuous, two-way contact with spacecraft exploring our Solar System and beyond: NASA's Canberra Deep Space Communication Complex and the European Space Agency's New Norcia tracking station.

Our team of highly specialised engineers work across our radio astronomy and space programs. They develop new instruments for our own instruments, and those around the world, to enhance our understanding of the Universe and realise benefits for us here on Earth.

About Square Kilometre Array Observatory (SKAO)

The SKA Observatory (SKAO) is a global, next-generation radio astronomy facility that will revolutionise our understanding of the Universe.

The SKAO's two telescopes – SKA-Low in Western Australia and SKA-Mid in South Africa, will deliver more than half a century of transformational science for the international community. The SKA telescopes promise to have a major impact on society, in science and beyond, including developing new technologies that will deliver significant benefits to our everyday lives. By constructing and operating these advanced telescopes, the SKA Observatory will become the world leader in radio astronomy, providing unparalleled research capabilities for decades.

The SKAO is an intergovernmental organisation of 16 member and participating countries, with global headquarters in the UK.

In Australia, the SKAO is partnering with CSIRO, Australia's national science agency, to construct and operate the SKA-Low telescope.

SKA-Low teams work across three sites:

- Inyarrimanha Ilgari Bundara, the CSIRO Murchison Radio-astronomy Observatory on Wajarri Yamaji Country.
- Our Engineering Operations Centre on Nhanhangardi, Naaguja, Wilyny and Amangu Country in Geraldton.
- Our Science Operations Centre on Whadjuk Noongar Country in Perth.

Further Reading: [Explore CSIRO and the SKA-Low Telescope project](#)



Image credit: SKAO

Role summary

Tenure	Specified term of 5 years. Options for part-time, job-share and flexible work arrangements can be discussed based on needs of role and individual circumstances.
Salary range	Attractive salary package negotiable for the right candidate, plus 15.4% superannuation
Location	Kensington, Perth, Western Australia, (Whadjuk Noongar Country)
Travel	A willingness and ability to travel interstate and internationally
Relocation assistance	Will be provided to the successful candidate if required
Applications are open to	Applications are open to Australian and New Zealand Citizens, Australian Permanent Residents and international candidates who are able to obtain an Australian Government Baseline security clearance. Visa sponsorship may be provided if required.
Position reports to the	Space and Astronomy Director
Direct reports	3
Enquire about this job	Contact the SKA-Low Program Director, George Simpson, via email at George.Simpson@csiro.au or phone +61 416 025 717
Reference Number	103922

Background information

The SKA project is an international effort to build and operate the world's largest and most capable radio astronomy observatory. Through two telescopes located in Australia and South Africa, the project will enable transformational science, drive technological innovation, and deliver long-term economic and societal benefits.

Australia is a member of the international organisation established to build and operate the observatory, the SKA Observatory (SKAO), and hosts the SKA-Low telescope on Wajarri Yamaji Country in Western Australia. As Australia's national science agency, CSIRO plays a central role in supporting our nation's contribution to the SKA project and ensuring Australia realises the full benefit of its investment.

CSIRO is responsible for stewarding Inyarrimanha Ilgari Bundara, the CSIRO Murchison Radio-astronomy Observatory, where the SKA-Low telescope is being constructed. This includes management of the observatory site, protection of the radio quiet environment, delivery of site services, administration of land and access arrangements, and fulfilment of obligations under agreements with the Wajarri Yamaji People.

In addition to its Host Country responsibilities, CSIRO contributes scientific, technical and operational expertise to support the successful delivery and long-term operation of the SKA project. This includes leadership in scientific collaboration, specialised technologies, research infrastructure, stakeholder engagement and international partnerships.

To fulfil these responsibilities, CSIRO delivers its SKA project activities through two complementary programs:

1. The SKA Strategy & Partnerships Program, led by the SKA Strategy & Partnerships Program Director, which provides leadership of CSIRO's participation in the SKA project through mission assurance, Host Country stewardship, government engagement, partnerships and national coordination.
2. The SKA-Low Program, led by the SKA-Low Program Director, which delivers CSIRO's contribution to the construction, operation and long-term sustainment of the SKA-Low telescope in collaboration with the SKAO.

Together, these programs combine scientific leadership, stakeholder engagement, governance and operational delivery to ensure CSIRO fulfils its commitments to government, partners and stakeholders while maximising the value of Australia's investment in this globally significant research infrastructure.

Further Reading: [Explore CSIRO and the SKA project](#)

Role overview

The SKA Strategy & Partnerships Program Director provides leadership for CSIRO's participation in the SKA project and Australia's participation in one of the world's largest international scientific research infrastructures. The role leads activities that maximise the scientific, economic and societal value of Australia's investment in the SKA project through effective partnerships, governance, stakeholder engagement and national coordination.

The SKA Strategy & Partnerships Program Director provides mission assurance and executive oversight of CSIRO's commitments to the SKA project, including Host Country responsibilities delegated by the Australian Government, key agreements, stakeholder relationships and coordination across CSIRO, government and international partners. The role represents CSIRO in national and international forums and works closely with government, the astronomy community and research partners to support Australia's scientific interests and long-term contribution to the SKA project.

Working in partnership with the SKA-Low Program Director, the SKA Strategy & Partnerships Program Director helps ensure a coordinated approach to Australia's participation in the SKA project. The SKA Strategy & Partnerships Program Director leads mission assurance, Host Country stewardship, partnerships, governance and national coordination, while the SKA-Low Program Director leads CSIRO's contribution to telescope delivery, operations and construction support.

Working in partnership with the leaders of the Australia Telescope National Facility and CSIRO's Astronomy and Space Science Research Program, the SKA Strategy & Partnerships Program Director helps to ensure that CSIRO's research and development activities support the scientific success of the SKA Project.

As a member of the Space & Astronomy leadership team, the SKA Strategy & Partnerships Program Director contributes to research unit strategy, capability development and organisational priorities, while providing expert advice on matters of national and international significance relating to astronomy, major research infrastructure and scientific collaboration.

This role requires regular domestic and less frequent international travel, expected to comprise no more than 20% of working time across the year. We recognise that travel commitments affect everyone differently and, wherever possible, CSIRO works with employees to accommodate personal circumstances and support a sustainable work-life balance.

Duties and key result areas

- Provide leadership and mission assurance for CSIRO's participation in the SKA project, ensuring organisational commitments, scientific objectives, priorities and risks are effectively managed and communicated to senior leadership.
- Foster trusted relationships across the Australian Government, SKAO governance bodies, member nations and other key national and international stakeholders, advancing Australia's scientific interests and supporting the long-term success of the SKA project.
- Oversee governance, agreements and coordination arrangements that enable CSIRO's participation in the SKA project, ensuring effective decision-making, accountability and alignment with national scientific priorities.
- Provide oversight of CSIRO's Host Country responsibilities, ensuring effective stewardship of obligations, partnerships, infrastructure and long-term operational requirements associated with the SKA project in Australia.
- Champion Australia's scientific interests and maximise the scientific, economic and societal value of the nation's investment in the SKA project through CSIRO's engagement with the astronomy community, government, research partners and international forums.
- Contribute as a senior member of the Space & Astronomy leadership team, strengthening research capability, organisational performance, enterprise priorities and major cross-cutting initiatives across CSIRO.
- Other reasonable duties as directed.

Selection criteria

We recognise that candidates bring different experiences and career pathways. If you feel your experience does not align with every aspect of the selection criteria, but your background aligns strongly with the role, we encourage you to apply or reach out to us to discuss the role further.

Pre-requisite

Currently hold, or be able to obtain, Australian Government baseline security clearance.

Essential

1. Partnerships and External Engagement

Proven ability to establish, lead and sustain influential partnerships and collaborative initiatives across government, industry, research organisations and international stakeholders, including the negotiation of significant agreements and long-term relationships.

2. Leadership and Governance

Demonstrated experience providing leadership across complex scientific programs, research infrastructure or multi-organisational initiatives, including responsibility for governance, risk, stakeholder engagement and the delivery of organisational and research outcomes through collaboration, influence and effective leadership.

3. Executive influence and Advice

Demonstrated ability to influence decision-making and provide trusted advice to senior executives, boards, ministers or equivalent governance bodies on complex organisational, scientific or public policy matters.

4. Government and Public Policy Engagement

Demonstrated experience engaging with government agencies and navigating complex policy, governance or regulatory environments, preferably in relation to large-scale research infrastructure, science, technology or innovation programs.

5. Qualifications and Experience

A Ph.D. (or equivalent experience) in a relevant scientific, technical or policy-related discipline, together with a demonstrated record of leadership in scientific programs, major research infrastructure, government or international partnership environments.

Desirable

1. Astronomy Knowledge and Expertise

Knowledge of astronomy, radio astronomy or large-scale scientific research infrastructure, gained through qualifications, research experience or professional practice.

2. International Research Infrastructure Experience

Experience working within international scientific collaborations, intergovernmental organisations or major research infrastructure programs.

Required competencies

- Teamwork and collaboration: Creates and fosters an environment in which there is a high level of cooperation within and between teams. Facilitates positive team relationships to build interactions across Research Units and the organisation.
- Influence and communication: Uses complex influencing strategies, for example, assembling strategic coalitions, building behind the scenes support and the tactical use of information to gain support.
- Resource management/leadership: Contributes to or defines Research Unit / organisational policy directions, strategic planning and operationalises the vision for staff and gains commitment to the direction chosen. Plans, seeks, allocates resources and monitors to achieve outcomes. Adopts a mentor role.
- Judgement and problem solving: Resolves major conceptual scientific, technical, commercial or management problems, which have a significant impact upon the field of research, professional function, the Research Unit or the Organisation. Situations faced have little or no precedent and require original concepts and approaches.
- Independence: Commits significant resources in the face of uncertainty and takes calculated risks to improve performance and achieve challenging goals. Uses personal energy to drive change strategies. Formulates and implements contingency plans to minimise the impact of potential risks. Accepts personal responsibility for the outcomes of decisions/risks taken.
- Adaptability: Is flexible in response to external change or when faced with external constraints. Identifies and promotes the opportunities arising as a result of change.

Additional requirements

The successful candidate must have the ability to obtain and maintain a security clearance at Baseline level and will be required to undertake a National Police Clearance or equivalent. (There may also be other security/medical/character clearance requirements.)

Please note that individuals with criminal records are not automatically deemed ineligible. Each application will be considered on its merits.

Flexible working arrangements

We work flexibly at CSIRO, offering a range of options for how, when and where you work. Talk to us about how this role could be flexible for you. Find out more about our approach to work-life balance.

Diversity and inclusion

At CSIRO, diversity, equity, and inclusion are at the core of who we are. They are fundamental to our mission and to our impact. We understand that diverse perspectives drive innovation and helps us to better understand the complex challenges we seek to solve at CSIRO.

Inclusion underpins how we treat our team at CSIRO. Therefore, we're continuing to build a safe and welcoming culture where people can bring their whole selves to work and ensure that everyone at CSIRO feels supported to do their best work and feel empowered to let their ideas flourish. Our success rests on our ability to acknowledge and understand intersectionality, recognising the diverse experiences, identities, relationships and social factors that shape each individual. By fostering a thriving culture that embraces differences, we believe in, and respect, the power of diverse perspectives and learn from the uniqueness of our people.

We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. View our [Child Safe Policy](#)

Eligibility

Applications for this position are open to Australian and international candidates who meet the requirements of the role and who are able to comply with the special and essential requirements listed above.

How to apply

As part of the application process, we ask that candidates provide the following:

- Curriculum vitae outlining relevant aligning career experience and key achievements.
- Cover letter of no more than two pages outlining your motivation for applying and the relevant skills, experience and attributes you would bring to the role.

CSIRO is a values-based organisation, and all CSIRO staff are expected to demonstrate behaviours aligned to our values: People First, Trusted, Further Together and Making it Real.

Please note that Applications close 11:59pm Australian Eastern Daylight Time, Monday 5th October 2026.



Image credit: CSIRO/Alex Cherney

Questions

For any questions about the role, please feel free to contact:

George Simpson, SKA-Low Program Director
george.simpson@csiro.au or +61 416 025 717

Nicole Poole, Talent Acquisition Team Leader
nicole.poole@csiro.au or +61 410 131 650

CSIRO is Australia's national science agency, delivering solutions for a productive, sustainable and secure future.

CSIRO. Improving the life of every Australian.

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