



MSF Australia – Executive Director
June 2025



Letter of Invitation

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I hope this message finds you well.

On behalf of the Board of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) Australia, I am writing to invite you to consider applying for the position of Executive Director of MSF Australia.

We are at a pivotal moment in our region and across the wider MSF movement. Over the past several years, MSF Australia has undergone an ambitious transformation—reshaping our systems, investing in people and technology.

As we look to the future, the challenges we face—rising humanitarian needs, shifting geopolitical landscapes, the growing impact of climate change on health and humanitarian crises, and the demand for principled, effective medical care—call for bold and visionary leadership. MSF globally is preparing to enter its next strategic period (2026–2031), and MSF Australia is primed to play a vital role in aligning local strategy with global priorities, while continuing to grow our financial contribution, advocacy impact, medical expertise, and provision of Internationally Mobile Staff within the broader international movement.

MSF Australia is well-respected within the movement, this has been in part because of the focus our Executive Director has in leading us to be engaged, informed and a significant contributor to our movement discussions and decisions.

Since taking on the role of Board President, I have witnessed first-hand the strength, commitment, and potential of MSF Australia and MSF New Zealand. It is a privilege to serve in this movement—one that challenges us, humbles us, and inspires us daily. If like me you enjoy a challenge, are committed to strategic and operational excellence, and can lead with empathy, humility, and a deep commitment to MSF's social mission then we would love to hear from you.

The Executive Director role offers a rare opportunity to help lead MSF through its next phase of growth and evolution, with purpose and integrity.

Kind regards,

Katrina Penney
Board President,
Médecins Sans Frontières Australia

About Médecins Sans Frontières

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) is an international, independent medical humanitarian organisation. MSF provides medical assistance to people affected by conflict, epidemics, disasters, or exclusion from healthcare.

MSF was founded in 1971, in the aftermath of the Biafran famine of the Nigerian Civil War, by a small group of French doctors and journalists who sought to expand accessibility to medical care across national boundaries and irrespective of race, religion, creed or political affiliation.

MSF teams are made up of tens of thousands of health professionals, logistic and administrative staff - most of them hired locally. MSF actions are guided by medical ethics and the principles of impartiality, independence and neutrality. Our teams conducted medical activities in over 70 countries in 2023.

MSF's revenue in 2023 exceeded 2 billion euros, of which 98 percent comes from individual private donors.

In 2023, MSF staff provided nearly 16.5 million outpatient consultations, and admitted nearly 1.4 million people to health facilities and hospitals.

The MSF Movement

The international MSF movement is composed of legally independent associations that are registered in the country where they operate.

They are the foundational structures of MSF. They are offices that enable, implement, support and govern the delivery of the social mission. They recruit staff, organise fundraising, and raise awareness on the humanitarian crises MSF teams are witnessing and are responding to.

The MSF associations work closely with six operational entities which directly organize and manage humanitarian action and are part of the association in the country in which they are based.

Several MSF sections have opened branch offices in different countries to extend their support work further. Additional "satellite offices" have been established to support field work, mainly in the areas of logistics, supply and epidemiology. A number of those satellite offices are also independent legal entities.

MSF Australia

The Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) Australia office was set up in 1994 and is an essential contributor to the global MSF movement, which comprises numerous sections, associations, and offices worldwide. MSF Australia plays a key role in delivering funding, technical expertise, skilled personnel, and advocacy in support of MSF's international field operations. MSF Australia has a workforce of about 165 domestic staff and volunteers, deploys over 50 International Mobile Staff (IMS) to global projects annually, and is supported by a committed Association of 350 members.





The Role

Role:	Executive Director
Reports to:	The President and Board of Directors, MSF Australia
Location:	Sydney, Australia - Preference will be given to candidates who have the legal right to work in Australia at the time of application
Salary:	Competitive - Fixed Term Contract (3 years, with possibility of one renewal)

Job Summary

The Executive Director is responsible for overseeing MSF Australia’s strategic and operational activities, ensuring effective and timely support for global MSF medical operations through funding, staffing, partnerships, and advocacy. This role champions the organisation’s core values, embedding them throughout all levels of the organisation.

Leading by example, the Executive Director fosters a culture of ethical decision-making, cultural sensitivity, inclusion, and accountability both within Australia and across the global MSF movement.

In line with MSF Australia’s Constitution, the Executive Director advances the organisation’s social mission and delivers on its long-term strategic goals. As MSF enters its new global strategic cycle (2026–2031), the Executive Director will implement MSF Australia’s strategic plan, aligning local efforts with international priorities.

The Executive Director ensures that MSF Australia remains strategically aligned with the wider movement while upholding MSF’s fundamental principles of independence, neutrality, and impartiality.

Job Dimensions

The Executive Director (ED) holds overall responsibility for the strategic and operational management of the Australian office, and oversight of the New Zealand Charitable Trust. The ED leads the MSF Australia Leadership Team, manages a large team of direct reports (Heads of Department) and provides oversight across all domestic staff, volunteers, and International Mobile Staff (IMS). The ED is also accountable for the organisational budget, emergency preparedness and response, risk management, and the external representation of MSF Australia and New Zealand.

In addition to overseeing domestic affairs, the ED represents MSF Australia in key partnerships with Operational Centre Paris (OCP), Operational Centre Geneva (OCG), and the APAC regional collaboration, which includes Australia, Hong Kong, Japan, and South Korea.

The Executive Director is deeply embedded in MSF's global governance architecture and represents Australia in several key MSF International leadership forums:

- Member of the International Executive Platform and Full Executive Committee (ExCom)
- Member of the OCP General Directors Group
- Member of the OCG General Directors Group
- Steering Committee Member for the Asia Pacific (APAC) partnership



Accountabilities

Executive Leadership and Organisational Management

- Provide overall strategic, operational, and cultural leadership for MSF Australia and MSF New Zealand, in line with MSF's core humanitarian principles and values.
- Develop and implement the organisational strategy in collaboration with the MSFA Board to achieve long-term goals and mission impact.
- Oversee the effective functioning of all departments, including Sydney Medical Unit, International and Domestic HR, Communications, Advocacy, Finance, and Fundraising.
- Ensure a high-performing, collaborative Leadership Team, fostering leadership development and succession planning to support organisational sustainability.
- Maintains regular communication with the President of the Board of Directors on all issues relating to the management of MSF Australia and New Zealand.

Risk, Safety and Governance

- Ensure the highest levels of health, safety, and duty of care for all MSF Australia staff, both domestically and internationally.
- Identify, assess, and manage all aspects of organisational risk, including financial, operational, reputational, and security risks.
- Lead or delegate crisis management in critical incidents, in line with MSF Australia's Critical Incident Guidelines.

Strategic Representation and Influence

- Represent MSF Australia in key forums, including: The MSF International Full ExCom (as a voting member), Operational Centre Paris (OCP) General Directors group, Operational Centre Geneva (OCG) partnership, and the Asia Pacific (APAC) Steering Committee with Hong Kong, Japan, and South Korea
- Ensure MSF Australia's active engagement and validation as a section within the international movement, including participation in key dossiers and initiatives (e.g., SPARC).

- Serve as the principal external spokesperson in Australia and New Zealand, representing MSF to media, donors, governments, academia, and partner organisations.

Operational Support and Partnerships

- Position MSF Australia as a trusted source of medical-humanitarian expertise and insight, leveraging its proximity to regional needs.
- Foster partnerships with Operational Centres (primarily OCP and OCG) to strengthen programmatic support and field operations.
- Advance regional cooperation across APAC, which includes Australia, Hong Kong, Japan, and South Korea.
- Support the hosting and strategic leadership of the Sydney Medical Unit (specialised in women's and paediatric health), ensuring its alignment with OCP MedOps.

Brand, Fundraising and Communication

- Maximise the impact and integrity of the MSF brand across Australia and New Zealand.
- Lead strategies to increase visibility and public trust, and strengthen MSF's fundraising and donor engagement.
- Cultivate high-level donor relationships and contribute to long-term sustainability.

Culture, Values and Organisational Development

- Embody and reinforce MSF Australia's organisational values.
- Promote a culture of feedback, learning, and continuous improvement across the organisation.
- Ensure team and individual performance are addressed constructively, with accountability and support for professional development.
- Celebrate success and foster morale through recognition of high performance and contributions.

- Model a positive, collaborative, and transparent working relationship with the Board of Directors, demonstrating mutual respect, and setting a standard for effective governance engagement across the organisation.

Challenge & Creativity /Decision-Making

The Executive Director role requires high-level judgement, innovation, and resilience in navigating complex challenges within both domestic and international contexts. Key areas of responsibility include:

- **Balancing Dual Accountability:** Effectively managing the organisation's domestic obligations while contributing to and influencing MSF's complex international governance structures.
- **Navigating Organisational Dynamics:** Advancing strategic priorities amidst internal political landscapes, requiring diplomatic leadership, tact, and strong negotiation skills.
- **Leading Diverse Teams:** Managing a high-performing, cross-functional leadership team with a commitment to equity, inclusion, and cultural competence.
- **Making Critical Decisions Under Pressure:** Exercising sound, time-sensitive judgement in highstakes or emergency situations, with clarity and confidence.
- **Driving Change with Integrity:** Leading transformative organisational initiatives while safeguarding MSF's core mission, values, and operational independence.

This role demands creativity, strategic foresight, and a principled leadership approach to inspire and maintain confidence both within MSF and across the broader humanitarian sector.



Key Performance Indicators

- Successful launch and implementation of the 2026-2031 Strategic Plan
- High-performing leadership team and workforce culture aligned with MSF values
- Growth in MSF Australia's contribution to field operations (staff, funds, visibility)
- Effective external engagement and stakeholder relations
- Compliance with governance and risk policies
- Strong representation and impact within MSF international structures

Candidate Profile

Essential Qualifications, Experience, and Competencies

- Tertiary qualification in international relations, humanitarian or development studies, political science, medicine, health sciences, business administration, or equivalent relevant experience.
- At least 10 years of senior leadership experience in the international humanitarian sector, including managing medium to large teams (40+ people).
- Proven track record in strategic organisational planning and execution, with strong analytical and problem-solving skills.
- Demonstrated ability to lead executive development and embed effective succession planning and performance management practices.
- In-depth knowledge of international affairs, humanitarian action, and political contexts, with the ability to represent MSF Australia across Australia, New Zealand, and within MSF's international governance structures.
- Strong communication skills, including experience in media relations, public speaking, and written advocacy.
- Experience in developing and overseeing fundraising and marketing strategies.
- Expertise in financial planning, budget control, risk management, and governance; a business background is an asset.
- Demonstrated leadership in fostering high-performing, diverse, and culturally sensitive teams, with a commitment to professional development and staff wellbeing.

- Ability to inspire and motivate teams, celebrate achievements, and build organisational morale.
- Fluent in written and spoken English.
- Willingness and capacity to undertake regular international travel (approximately 4–8 trips annually).

Core Competencies

- Demonstrated strategic thinking and the ability to articulate and drive a clear vision.
- Principled, values-driven leadership with high standards of integrity.
- Proven capacity to lead through complexity, ambiguity, and in diverse cultural contexts.
- Strong resilience, adaptability, and sound judgment under pressure.
- Exceptional communication and collaboration skills, with the ability to build alignment across teams and stakeholders.
- Committed to fostering a culture of development, accountability, and high performance.
- Leads by example, consistently embodying MSF Australia's core values.

Desirable Qualifications, Experience, and Competencies

- Knowledge and /or fluency in additional languages
- Previous experience within the MSF movement (either operations or headquarters)
- Master's degree, Postgraduate Diplomas or Specialist Medical Qualifications





How to Apply

All correspondence, at this stage, should be via Oxford HR. To apply for this post, click on the “Apply” button on the job advert page, complete our online application form, and submit your CV and cover letter as two different documents, which should be prepared before applying as they will be considered in the application process.

The cover letter should be no more than two pages long and explain why you are interested in this post and how your skills and experience make you a good fit.

The document should be saved in PDF in the following format: Your First Name-Your Last Name-Document Name-Date (mmyy)-Organisation e.g., Pat-Jones-CV-0625-MSFAU or Pat-Jones-CoverLetter-0625-MSFAU.

Timeline

Closing Date: 18 July 2025

First Stage Interviews: 28 July - 5 August 2025 (TBC)

**Panel Interviews and Assessments for Final Shortlisted Candidates:
August and September 2025**

Selection Process

All candidates will receive an update regarding their application after the closing date. We advise candidates to add the role email to their safe senders list and regularly check their spam folder.

Equality Statement

Equality and diversity are at the core of MSF’s values. Staff are expected to work collectively and individually to promote a constructive and sensitive approach to others from a variety of backgrounds, where the work of others is valued and respected.

Queries

If you have any queries on any aspect of the appointment process, need additional information, or would like to have an informal discussion, please email at jreinartz@oxfordhr.com in the first instance.

About Oxford HR

Oxford HR is a B Corp certified leadership consultancy. Having worked within a diverse range of institutions, from not-for-profits and charities to governments and corporate environments, we've seen the powerful impact that the perfect team can have.

Finding innovative leaders can be a challenge; and yet their transition into leadership is vital to an organisation's mission and success. We work across the globe to search for and support remarkable leaders and teams, improve their board effectiveness and support on a range of leadership functions.

Learn more at: oxfordhr.com





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