

Director of Research and Analysis

A New Approach | Position description

Reports to: Chief Executive Officer

Employment: Part-time at 0.8FTE, ongoing subject to funding

Location: Canberra or open to other locations within Australia, with travel as required

Remuneration: \$139,500 pro rata + super

Closing date: 5pm, 1 November 2026

Commencement: To be agreed

The role

A New Approach (ANA) is seeking a Director of Research and Analysis to lead a research program that helps governments and partners make better decisions about arts, culture and creativity. The Director will identify questions of national consequence, commission and conduct research, test the strength of evidence, and turn findings into clear insights that support practical policy solutions and public discussion.

The role connects ANA's evidence base to its wider theory of change: evidence, policy solutions, national narrative, coalition and reform. Working closely with policy and engagement colleagues, the Director will ensure ANA's research is credible to specialists, useful to decision-makers and accessible to people beyond the sector. The Director is accountable for research quality; policy recommendations and advocacy are developed collaboratively with the relevant leads.

About ANA

A New Approach is Australia's national arts and culture think tank. ANA works to strengthen the place of arts, culture and creativity in Australia's economic and social future through independent research, practical ideas and constructive engagement. Its work is guided by its Board and made possible by Philanthropic Partners.

What the Director will deliver

- A focused, forward research program aligned with ANA's strategic priorities and to assist policy decision-makers to undertake reform including, but not limited to, participation, education, workforce, economic contribution and community outcomes.
- A small number of authoritative research and analysis outputs each year, answering clear questions, using transparent methods, articulating proportionate claims and practical implication.
- Accessible briefings, factsheets, data analysis and presentations that allow policymakers, partners and the public to understand and use the findings.

Key responsibilities

- Set the research strategy and annual work program, prioritising questions where independent evidence can materially improve policy choices.
- Design and oversee mixed-method research, including literature reviews, administrative and survey data analysis, economic analysis and qualitative work where appropriate.
- Specify research questions, methodologies and quality standards; document assumptions, limitations, uncertainty, data provenance and ethical considerations.
- Lead research projects from scoping and budgeting through commissioning, analysis, peer or expert review, publication and evaluation; manage external researchers and contracts.

- Translate findings into compelling, accurate reports and briefings, and work with policy colleagues to develop feasible options without overstating what the evidence shows.
- Build constructive relationships with universities, data custodians, governments, cultural organisations, industry and community partners, including First Nations researchers and organisations where relevant.
- Represent ANA in research discussions and public forums, respond to scrutiny, and safeguard ANA's independent and non-partisan standing.
- Lead and develop research staff and contributors, establish workable systems for data management and quality assurance, and contribute to a collaborative organisational culture.
- Track research reach, use and influence, and use feedback to improve future work.

The person we are seeking

The successful candidate combines strong analytical judgment with the ability to make complex evidence useful. They can distinguish a persuasive argument from a supported finding, lead a focused program in a small organisation, and build trust with people who bring different perspectives. Experience in arts and culture is valuable, alongside the ability to connect the field to broader economic and social priorities.

Selection criteria

Essential

- Substantial experience leading applied research and analysis in a think tank, university, government, consultancy or comparable setting.
- Demonstrated command of qualitative and quantitative methods, research design, critical appraisal and the responsible use of data; ability to oversee specialist methods beyond your own expertise.
- A record of producing rigorous publications and explaining findings, caveats and implications clearly to senior decision-makers and wider audiences.
- Experience shaping a research agenda, managing multiple projects and budgets, commissioning external work and delivering to deadlines.
- Strong relationship and people leadership skills, including collaborative work across research, policy, communications and external partners.
- Sound judgment about independence, ethics, conflicts of interest, privacy and the boundary between evidence and advocacy.

Desirable

- Knowledge of Australian arts, culture and creative industries and their policy settings.
- Experience with national or jurisdictional datasets, evaluation, economic analysis, or research on participation and distributional outcomes.
- Experience working with First Nations research partners and culturally appropriate research practices.

Working at ANA

ANA offers flexible ways of working and welcomes applicants from diverse backgrounds, including First Nations peoples, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, people with disability and people of all genders.