

Galvin-Rowley
Executive



Commercial-In-Confidence

Candidate Information Pack

Western Port Biosphere Foundation

Chief Executive Officer

September 2026

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A UNESCO Biosphere Reserve

The Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve was designated under UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme in 2002. It is one of five biosphere reserves in Australia and forms part of a global network of learning places for sustainable development. The designation recognises the importance of finding practical ways for communities and nature to flourish together.

A significant regional landscape

The Reserve spans the cities of Casey and Frankston, the shires of Bass Coast, Cardinia and Mornington Peninsula, and French Island. It encompasses a diverse mix of coastal, marine, rural and urban environments. This breadth gives the Biosphere an important role in connecting environmental priorities across communities and municipal boundaries.

Rich natural values

The Biosphere is home to internationally significant Ramsar wetlands, saltmarsh, mudflats, mangroves and important temperate forests and grasslands, terrestrial and marine habitats. It supports migratory birds and an exceptional diversity of plant and other animal species. Protecting these natural systems is central to the long-term environmental health and resilience of the region.

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Connecting people and nature

The Western Port Biosphere Foundation works to strengthen the relationship between environmental health, community wellbeing and sustainable development. It connects people, organisations, knowledge and resources around a shared responsibility for the region's future. This reflects its purpose to inspire a positive future by connecting people and nature today.

Practical action and advocacy

The Foundation is an ACNC-registered charity with Deductible Gift Recipient status. Through science-based advocacy, community engagement and on-ground conservation, it works to create environmental, social and economic value across the region. Its activities span climate action, environmental preservation and restoration, and sustainable development.

Collaboration at the heart

The Foundation works with Traditional Owners, government, councils, research institutions, business, landholders and communities. Its role is increasingly focused on bringing these different perspectives together around challenges that no single organisation can address alone. Through collaboration, it seeks to strengthen biodiversity, climate resilience and sustainable development across the Western Port region.



Position	Chief Executive Officer
Organisation	Western Port Biosphere Foundation
Reports To	Board through the Chair
Location	Western Port region, Victoria
Staff	Six staff, supported by volunteers, advisers and delivery partners
Key stakeholders	Traditional Owners, government, local councils, DEECA, water corporations, research institutions, philanthropy, industry, landholders and community
Employment	Permanent, full-time

Executive Summary

The Western Port Biosphere Foundation is seeking an accomplished Chief Executive Officer to lead the organisation through its next phase of development and regional impact.

With an established reputation, trusted partnerships and a strong record of conservation and community outcomes, the Foundation is well positioned to strengthen its role as an influential regional leader. The next CEO will translate strategy into clear priorities, deepen stakeholder relationships, diversify funding and build the organisational capability required for sustainable impact.

Reporting to the Board through the Chair, the CEO will lead a small specialist team and serve as the Foundation's principal external representative. The role requires a strategic and hands-on leader who can build alignment across government, Traditional Owners, community, research, philanthropy and industry while maintaining a clear focus on delivery.

The Board welcomes leaders from environmental, government, natural resource management, philanthropy, community, research and other purpose-led sectors. Above all, the successful candidate will bring strong leadership, sound judgement, be a respected leader with proven experience in stakeholder engagement, funding acquisition, governance, and a strong commitment to the Western Port Biosphere's purpose.



This is more than an organisational leadership role. It is an opportunity to influence the future of an environmentally significant region and bring diverse stakeholders together around outcomes that no single organisation can achieve alone.

The CEO will build on an established platform of credibility, partnerships and practical conservation outcomes, while helping the Foundation evolve into a stronger regional leader. The UNESCO Biosphere designation provides a distinctive connection between local action and global thinking on sustainable development.

What makes the opportunity particularly compelling is its breadth. The CEO will combine environmental leadership with stakeholder influence, funding and investment, organisational development and Board partnership, while remaining close to a small team and the communities the Foundation serves.

For the right leader, it offers the opportunity to create enduring impact across the environment, community and region.

Strategic context

The Western Port Biosphere Foundation is evolving from a highly effective project-delivery organisation into a sustainable regional leadership organisation. Its role is increasingly to connect organisations and communities around outcomes that no single party can achieve independently, while retaining the agility and entrepreneurial spirit that have underpinned its success.

Strategic priorities to 2028

The Foundation's strategic priorities are to:

- Tackle climate change and biodiversity loss within the Biosphere Reserve
- Leverage the global significance of the Reserve and the UNESCO designation to inspire action
- Attract investment to support the long-term health of the Biosphere Reserve.

Three pillars of the Foundation's work

Climate action

Build resilience and mobilise practical regional responses to climate change.

Environment preservation and restoration

Protect and restore habitats, species and ecological connections.

Sustainable development

Demonstrate how communities, nature and economies can flourish together.

Guiding principles

The Foundation seeks to:

- Build awareness and reinforce its reputation as a credible authority
- Maintain a sustainable business model supported by strong governance
- Achieve better outcomes through partnerships with traditional owners, government, science and research institutions, business and community.

The leadership opportunity

Reporting to the Board through the Chair, the Chief Executive Officer will provide strategic leadership for the Foundation and act as its principal external representative.

The CEO will translate purpose and strategy into clear priorities, partnerships, investment and measurable outcomes. They will ensure the organisation is well governed, financially resilient and equipped with the capability and systems required to deliver its ambitions.

This is a role that combines strategic leadership with practical involvement. The CEO will be influential and collaborative, ambitious for regional impact and disciplined about organisational capacity and delivery.

Why the role matters now

The Foundation enters this next phase with strong foundations and a clear opportunity to increase its regional influence.

- Climate change and biodiversity loss require coordinated regional leadership and practical action.
- The Foundation has established credibility and relationships that enable it to convene diverse partners around shared outcomes.

- Long-term impact requires a broader and more sustainable funding base supported by compelling investment propositions.
- The organisation is ready to strengthen its systems, measurement and capability while preserving its agility.
- The UNESCO Biosphere designation provides a distinctive platform to connect local action with global knowledge and influence.

Reporting and leadership environment

The CEO reports to the Board through the Chair and leads a small team of six dedicated staff. The skills-based Board provides strategic insight and, by agreement, practical support to the organisation.

The CEO also works with volunteers, advisers, delivery partners and an extensive external stakeholder network. Success will depend on an open and constructive relationship between the CEO and Board, together with the ability to lead effectively through relationships and influence.

Key Accountabilities

1. Strategic leadership and impact

The CEO will:

- Translate the strategic plan into clear priorities, measures and a practical implementation roadmap
- Lead initiatives that deliver environmental, community and organisational outcomes
- Assess opportunities for strategic alignment, impact, feasibility and organisational capacity
- Balance ambition with sustainable delivery capability and disciplined execution.

2. Partnership, influence and regional leadership

The CEO will:

- Serve as the foundation's principal spokesperson and advocate
- Build trusted relationships across traditional owners, government, councils, deeca, water corporations, research, philanthropy, industry, landholders and community

- Create alignment where priorities differ and convene partners around shared outcomes
- Strengthen the foundation's credibility with decision-makers and influence regional priorities.

3. Sustainable funding and investment

The CEO will:

- Develop and execute a diversified funding and partnership strategy
- Cultivate government, philanthropic, corporate and community investment
- Create compelling propositions that communicate environmental, social and community value
- Grow unrestricted income, strengthen stewardship and build long-term financial resilience.

4. Organisational capability and culture

The CEO will:

- Lead, develop and retain a positive, engaged and high-performing team
- Establish clear priorities, accountabilities and effective ways of working

- Strengthen systems, operational maturity and safe work practices while preserving organisational agility
- Ensure resources and capability are aligned with the annual business plan and strategic ambition.

5. Governance and stewardship

The CEO will:

- Build an effective and transparent partnership with the chair and board
- Provide high-quality advice and accurate financial, risk and performance reporting
- Maintain strong governance, compliance, risk management, budgeting, audit and project oversight
- Protect and enhance the foundation's reputation, purpose, culture and long-term sustainability.

What success will look like

Within the first 12 months

Leadership and relationships

Trusted relationships are established with staff, the Board, councils, government, Traditional Owners, DEECA, water corporations, philanthropy and major partners.

Strategy and organisation

A clear Strategic Plan implementation roadmap is in place, supported by agreed priorities, measures and an effective reporting rhythm. Organisational capability opportunities have been identified and prioritised.

Funding and sustainability

Existing momentum has been maintained and a credible, diversified funding and partnership pipeline has been established.

Culture and capability

A collaborative and accountable culture is supported by stronger systems, clear responsibilities and effective ways of working.

Within two to three years

Success will be reflected in:

- Stronger governance, operational maturity, systems and organisational resilience
- A more diverse funding base, increased unrestricted income and reduced reliance on individual grants
- Recognition of the foundation as a trusted regional convenor, independent environmental leader and partner of choice
- Programs operating at greater scale with clear biodiversity, climate resilience and community outcomes
- A capable and engaged team operating with clear accountability and effective decision-making.

Leadership profile

The successful candidate will lead with purpose, build confidence and mobilise people across organisational boundaries. They will be comfortable operating in a complex public environment where progress depends on trust, evidence, diplomacy, persistence and sound judgement.

The Board is seeking strength across six core leadership capabilities.

Strategic leadership

Translates purpose and ambition into clear priorities and practical action. Brings strategic perspective while remaining sufficiently close to delivery to understand organisational capacity, opportunities and constraints.

Partnership and influence

Builds trust across organisations and communities and creates alignment where interests and priorities differ. Has the credibility and judgement to convene stakeholders around shared outcomes and influence without relying on formal authority.

Resource development

Builds confidence among funders and partners by communicating value, impact and opportunity clearly. Demonstrates the ability to secure investment and develop sustainable funding pathways across government, philanthropy, corporate and other sources.

Government and stakeholder leadership

Operates effectively across government, public, community, industry and institutional environments. Brings political astuteness, diplomacy and the ability to navigate complex stakeholder relationships constructively.

Organisational and people leadership

Builds capability, empowers others and creates a culture of trust, accountability and learning. Strengthens systems, ways of working and organisational maturity while preserving the entrepreneurial spirit and agility of a small organisation.

Adaptive leadership and stewardship

Leads confidently through uncertainty, policy change and emerging opportunities while maintaining disciplined execution. Protects the Foundation's reputation, governance, culture and sustainability and follows through on commitments.

Experience and credentials

The Board is open to accomplished leaders from environmental conservation and sustainability, government and the public sector, natural resource management, social enterprise, philanthropy, community development, research partnerships, place-based initiatives and adjacent purpose-led sectors.

Direct environmental sector experience will be valued, although the Board recognises that the capabilities required for the role may have been developed across a range of relevant settings.

Candidates will demonstrate

- Experience leading an organisation or significant portfolio, including strategy, business planning, budgets and reporting
- Success building partnerships and credibility with government, community and other complex stakeholders
- A track record of securing external investment, grants, donations, sponsorship or strategic funding partnerships
- Strong people leadership and an appreciation of the opportunities and constraints of a small organisation
- Sound governance, risk, financial and workplace health and safety judgement
- Excellent communication, advocacy, mediation, negotiation and problem-solving capability
- Political astuteness, resilience and personal credibility
- The judgement to make difficult decisions and the discipline to deliver results.

Qualifications and additional knowledge

Candidates will bring:

- Relevant tertiary qualifications, for example in administration, communications, environmental science, finance or a related discipline
- At least five years' management and/or leadership experience.

Knowledge of the UNESCO Biosphere Programme, ecologically sustainable development and/or government structures will be well regarded.

Personal alignment

Above all, the successful candidate will bring genuine belief in the Foundation's purpose and values, together with the ability to build meaningful connections with the communities and environment of the Western Port region.

They will understand the relationship between environmental health, community wellbeing and sustainable development, and recognise the importance of collaboration in creating enduring regional outcomes.

Values

Champion life

Celebrate people and nature thriving together, recognising that community wellbeing, culture, the economy and the health and diversity of nature are interconnected.

Empower people

Enable participation and give people the knowledge, confidence and tools to create change. Lasting progress comes from informed, inspired and connected communities.

Employment requirements

- Permanent, full-time appointment
- Valid, unrestricted Australian working rights
- Successful completion of a current National Criminal Records Check

Selection Process

Thank you for your interest in the Western Port Biosphere Foundation Chief Executive Officer selection process.

Galvin-Rowley Executive is thrilled to be leading the process of this appointment on behalf of Western Port Biosphere Foundation.

This briefing pack provides you with the information regarding the organisation, the role, the process time frames and requirements.

Application Process:

Once you have reviewed this material, and if you haven't already, please provide us with the following to formalise your application.

- A one to two-page cover letter stating your interest and motivation, and a summary that demonstrates your achievements and suitability as relevant to this appointment
- Your resume

Jen Galvin-Rowley

jen@galvinrowley.com.au | 0410 477 235

Key Dates

Late August

Position released to the market.
Initial discussions with applicants and targeted candidates.
Enquiries responded to and information packs distributed.

Mid September

Applications close.

Mid-Late September

Present long list of finalised candidates to Community Housing Limited.
Galvin-Rowley Executive to conduct interviews with long listed candidates.

Early October

Shortlist finalised and presented to Western Port Biosphere Foundation.

Mid October

Board Interviews.

Early November

Finalise interviews, references completed and preferred candidate appointed.

Galvin-Rowley Executive is a boutique executive search and advisory firm with more than 30 years' experience guiding organisations through their most critical leadership appointments. We specialise in C-suite, board, and senior leadership recruitment, delivering tailored, high-touch solutions that ensure every placement is strategically and culturally aligned.

As the exclusive Australian member of Agilium Worldwide, a global alliance of independent executive search firms, we combine deep local expertise with international reach. This gives our clients access to a diverse global talent pool while retaining the personal service and discretion of a boutique partner.

Our team is led by Founding Partner and Director Jennifer Galvin-Rowley and includes highly experienced executive search consultants, talent specialists, and research professionals. Together, we operate as an

extension of our clients' organisations, acting as brand ambassadors with the insight and care to represent each role and business with integrity.

What defines our approach is a commitment to understanding the essence of every organisation we partner with – its purpose, structure, culture, and aspirations. By investing in this depth of knowledge, we design bespoke strategies that attract exceptional leaders and deliver long-term impact.



Quality & Excellence

We deliver more than capable leaders – we secure executives who are strategically aligned, culturally attuned, and equipped to create lasting impact.



Flexibility

Every search is bespoke. Our tailored approach allows us to respond quickly to each client's needs while maintaining the rigour that ensures success.



Tenacity

We pursue every search with focus and creativity, drawing on deep networks, insight, and persistence to identify and appoint exceptional leaders.



Honesty & Respect

Trust underpins every engagement. We are transparent, respectful, and committed to building relationships that endure well beyond the placement.



At Galvin-Rowley Executive, we combine the insight of a local partner with the scale of a global network.

As a proud member of Agilium Worldwide LLC—a top-ranked international executive search group with over 55 offices across more than 30 countries—we offer our clients seamless access to leadership talent around the world.

This affiliation extends our reach while maintaining the personal, consultative service we are known for. Whether conducting a local search with international complexity or delivering a fully cross-border executive appointment, we bring the same level of precision, discretion, and cultural alignment to every engagement.

Our clients benefit from:

- Global market access without compromising the bespoke approach that defines our work1/3 on Presentation of acceptable shortlist
- Cross-border search capability for roles requiring global perspective or specialised expertise
- Consistent quality and discretion, no matter where leadership is needed

From Melbourne to Madrid, Singapore to San Francisco—wherever leadership is required, we deliver with confidence, care and clarity.

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Jennifer Galvin-Rowley

Director and Founder

Jennifer Galvin-Rowley is the Founding Partner and Director of Galvin-Rowley Executive. For more than 30 years, she has built the firm's reputation as one of Australia's most trusted boutique executive search partners.

Her track record spans complex search assignments across diverse industries, including retail and consumer goods, ports and infrastructure, banking and financial services, aviation, health, government, not-for-profit, agribusiness, and manufacturing.

Working closely with boards and CEOs, Jennifer is recognised for her ability to listen deeply and design search strategies that meet the unique requirements of each appointment – whether for a chief executive, senior leadership role, or high-performing management team. She has developed a rigorous search methodology delivered with professionalism, discretion, and warmth, ensuring every client is represented with integrity in the market.

A strong advocate for candidates, Jennifer is committed to ensuring every executive she engages with experiences respect, care, and confidentiality throughout the process. She is also a leading voice for greater diversity in leadership and continues to champion inclusive practices across every search.



“I have had the great fortune to partner with Galvin-Rowley Executive for over 15 years. Jen and the team are extremely professional and above all take the time to understand the role requirements to ensure the right candidate is matched. When labour markets are tight, and roles are in high demand Galvin-Rowley Executive always find the right candidate. I really appreciate how they keep me informed of their progress, challenge my thinking and create a collaborative environment. Finding the right candidate is never easy, Jen makes it easy!”

Georgina Poulos,
T2, Global Director People

“What a joy it is to engage with Galvin Rowley Executive. Grace, care and expertise are the adjectives that come to mind when I think about Jen and the way she manages her clients and candidates. Above all, I am impressed with Galvin Rowley's service ethic and ability to astutely find the right match for a win-win outcome. Jen is a delight to work with and is a wonderful representative of your corporate or personal brand. She is trustworthy, generous, unflappable, diligent and savvy and comes with my heartfelt recommendation.”

Jane Sydenham-Clarke,
Food Frontier, Chief Executive Officer

“I have utilised the executive search services of Jennifer Galvin-Rowley for many years. Throughout this time, I found Jennifer and her team members to be exemplary in their dedication and commitment to providing services that meet my needs and deliver positive outcomes. I believe the essence of Jennifer's success lies in her desire and her ability to comprehensively understand the needs of her clients and to ensure that all search activities are totally aligned to meeting those needs.”

The Hon Chris Pearce MP
Adjunct Professor JP, FAICD, FAMI, BBus, MBA, GCDiv, GradCertPosPsych



At Galvin-Rowley Executive, we see diversity, equity, and inclusion as essential to building strong and future-focused leadership teams. Diverse leaders bring fresh perspectives, foster innovation, and create meaningful change within organisations.

Supporting our clients in advancing their DEI strategies means looking beyond traditional career pathways. We consider candidates across sectors, focusing on transferable skills and core leadership competencies as well as proven experience.

As trusted advisors, we are committed to presenting balanced and inclusive candidate pools that reflect both talent and potential. We actively encourage our clients to demand diverse shortlists for every role, including in sectors or environments where resistance has historically been stronger. In doing so, we help remove unconscious bias and expand opportunities for exceptional leaders.

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Leadership That Transforms Organisations

At Galvin-Rowley Executive, we specialise in appointing leaders who drive innovation, shape culture, and deliver meaningful impact.

Whether it's a visionary CEO, a strategic executive, or a governance expert, we bring the insight, rigour, and care required to secure transformative leadership.

Jen Galvin-Rowley

Director & Lead Search Consultant

0410 477 235

jen@galvinrowley.com.au

www.galvinrowley.com.au

ABN 36 416 126 573