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May 2025

Candidate briefing

**BIRTH FOR HUMANKIND**

Chief Executive Office

# Role

<b>Title</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>Reports to</b>	Board of Birth for Humankind, via the Chair
<b>Direct reports</b>	Program Supervisors (x2); Operations and Programs Officer; Grants and Engagement Manager; Digital Communications Lead
<b>Based at</b>	Hybrid – CBD office and remote
<b>Term</b>	12 months
<b>Hours</b>	0.6 - 0.8FTE
<b>Salary</b>	SCHADS level 8.1 (\$124,840.04 pro rata)

## The organisation

Established in 2014, Birth for Humankind is a Melbourne-based not-for-profit organisation. They exist to achieve equitable maternal health and wellbeing for all, by providing and advocating for respectful pregnancy, birth, early parenting and abortion support for women experiencing social and financial disadvantage.

The programs and services include:

- **Doula support** – Their team of highly-skilled birth and postnatal support professionals (volunteer doulas) provide free and continuous personal, physical and emotional support
- **Doula training** – Through their doula training program, they are building a culturally diverse, lived experience workforce who are skilled in providing trauma-informed perinatal support. In doing so they are contributing to improving equity in pregnancy choices and care
- **Education** – They provide multi-language, accessible childbirth education resources to help people prepare for pregnancy, birth and early parenting
- **Research and advocacy** – They use and share programmatic evidence and contribute to partnerships, research and advocacy, to promote systemic change and improved maternal health equity.

For more information please see:

- [www.birthingforhumankind.org](http://www.birthingforhumankind.org)
- <https://birthingforhumankind.org/about-us/our-team/>
- <https://birthingforhumankind.org/about-us/our-work/>

# Background

Birth for Humankind was founded in response to the lived experience of Carly, a young woman who faced pregnancy at 19, shortly after the loss of her mother and a recent move to Melbourne. With limited support, she was referred to a volunteer doula, Mei Lai Swan, through the Royal Women's Hospital. This experience highlighted the profound impact of compassionate support during pregnancy and early parenting.

Recognising the broader need, Mei Lai, alongside doula Kirstan Flannery, began developing a volunteer doula program. With Carly's support as a founding board member and co-facilitator of the first childbirth education program for young mothers, Birth for Humankind was launched from a Melbourne living room. Today, the organisation has evolved into a registered charity, with a dedicated team, over 35 volunteer doulas, an active Board of Directors and has provided over 900 services to clients across Melbourne and Geelong.

After seven transformative years, Red Dearnley is stepping down as Chief Executive Officer. The Board now seeks a dynamic new CEO to lead Birth for Humankind into its next phase, continuing its commitment to providing equitable pregnancy support for those who need it most.

## Role overview

The Chief Executive Officer leads Birth for Humankind (BFH) to achieve the organisation's vision. The incumbent will be accountable to the Board of Directors (via the Chair), with a combined focus on effective and efficient program delivery and organisational sustainability the role, as per the strategic plan.

The role suits an experienced people, program and organisational leader, with hands-on experience delivering complex social support programs, ideally in the maternity/maternal health sector or aligned sectors. You will also be a confident strategic communicator, who has the capacity to represent BFH publicly.

The role will suit an all-rounder, who is can skilfully move from practical, service-delivery work to big-picture strategic thinking. You will be as comfortable handling conversations with clients in crisis, as representing the organisation at meetings with MPs and donors. You will be confident working simultaneously to financial/income generation targets and client-experience targets.

# Position elements

## Key Tasks and Responsibilities

### *Strategic Oversight*

- Be accountable for achieving the organisation's priority goals, and contribute to the development of these plans through innovation and identified service improvements
- Provide management oversight and strategic leadership of the operations and activities of BFH
- Regularly monitor and evaluate the performance against strategy and refine approaches, as required
- Prepare board papers and regular reports to the board, to support effective governance and organisational oversight
- Provide leadership, direction and advice in the development of program, operational and financial plans, including review and evaluation for ongoing success, and effective management of change and growth.

### *Program Management*

- Oversee and ensure the effective development and implementation of BFH's doula support program, to achieve optimum impacts and outcomes for clients, as per BFH program operations procedure
- Oversee and ensure the effective implementation of appropriate monitoring, evaluation and continual learning systems, and quality program improvement
- Oversee and ensure appropriate case supervision for all doula-client relationships
- Oversee and implement appropriate volunteer management and engagement programs
- Oversee and ensure appropriate, high-quality training, professional development, quality management and organisational compliance requirements for all doulas
- Oversee and ensure the implementation of high-quality, effective fee-for-service training to engage new supporters and volunteers
- Ensure robust critical incident policies and practices are implemented, and act as the organisations Child Safety Officer.

### *Stakeholder Engagement and Income Generation*

- Oversee effective implementation of income generation and diversification strategies
- Oversee the effective implementation of marketing and sales strategies for fee-for service training products, volunteer recruitment and other events, as applicable
- Ensure the oversight and implementation of appropriate stakeholder engagement and communication strategies, to ensure the organisation's brand and reputation aligns with our mission and values
- Develop and maintain relationships with key stakeholders, including but not limited to prospective and active philanthropic donors, government and sector partners
- Represent BFH in public forums, from media to sector events to coalition and working group participation
- Pursue and build collaborative partnerships with relevant healthcare providers, community organisations, government departments and other stakeholders.

### *Operational Management*

- Oversee all financial management, with the support of an external bookkeeper, including the annual audit process, budget setting and monitoring
- Be responsible for the development of Birth for Humankind's financial resources and fundraising targets, to ensure long-term sustainability and growth

- Maintain the organisation's corporate and regulatory compliance environment, including regularly reviewing and updating all policies and procedures.

#### *Personnel and Culture*

- Lead the BFH team of staff and volunteers, ensuring performance to targets, and the provision of development opportunities, and appropriate induction and training programs
- Develop, model and maintain a collaborative organisational culture that aligns with the mission and values of BFH, to attract, reward and retain skilled team members and volunteers, and that puts people at the heart of what we do
- Ensure the oversight and implementation of appropriate volunteer recruitment, communications, retention and growth strategies
- Manage multiple external contractor relationships, including bookkeepers and IT providers, to ensure compliance and a robust operating system
- Effectively manage and support the performance of direct reports, and growth of the team and organisation as a whole.

*\*Please note the position description is in development as the role continues to evolve*

## Key Selection Criteria

You're a CEO, general manager or senior executive with a history of effective leadership, from within a community services or health organisation, preferably with established experience within the Australian maternity or birth work sector

You're entrepreneurial, enjoy a challenge, and have a track record of delivering outcomes, including strong, target oriented, collaborative teams, and a network of engaged stakeholders.

#### **Skills and experience**

- A proven track record in leading and developing an NFP organisation, including change management and building positive work cultures
- Proven experience in people management and supervision (experience working with a volunteer base, highly desirable)
- Prior experience in, or excellent knowledge and understanding of the role of, the birth work or maternal health system within Australia
- Extensive prior experience working in a hands-on social support program delivery and/or management role
- A proven track record leading fundraising and business development for an organisation, including driving: grants, partnerships including government, and diversification of funding streams
- Strong stakeholder engagement and communications skills, with proven record of building and maintaining relationships (an existing strong network in maternity or philanthropy sectors, highly desirable)
- Proven track record in growing services, teams and a diverse funding base
- Qualifications in a relevant higher degree, or equivalent experience

### **Qualities and attributes**

- A strong alignment with BFH's values and pro-choice, intersectional feminist stance – and a commitment to trauma-informed, culturally safe, person-centred approach
- A strong desire to advocate for better health outcomes for women and gender diverse birthing people experiencing disadvantage at both an individual and population-based level
- Strong sense of accountability and responsibility for achieving role's KPIs and BFH's strategic and operational plans
- Ability to manage competing demands and identify priorities with limited timeframes and resources
- Collaborative, inclusive and supportive leadership and management style
- Commitment to transparent, open, authentic communication
- Comfortable working in an informal, flexible and inclusive workplace
- Experience reporting to, and working with, a governance Board.

### **Additional requirements**

- Police Check
- Working with Children Check
- You will be required to provide your own laptop and mobile phone. An IT allowance is provided. (Advance on an allowance to purchase a laptop can be made available if this would otherwise prohibit you from applying. Please still apply, this will not be taken into consideration during the application process).

# The advertisement

## CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, BIRTH FOR HUMANKIND

- Deliver high quality services with purpose
- Improve maternal health outcomes
- Lead a dynamic and passionate team

### About the organisation

Birth for Humankind is a Melbourne-based not-for-profit organisation that exists to achieve equitable maternal health and wellbeing for all. The organisation provides person-centred, trauma-informed and culturally sensitive care, advocating for respectful pregnancy, birth, early parenting and abortion support. They aim to improve maternity experiences and outcomes through one-to-one community-based doula support for women and gender diverse birthing parents who are experiencing social and financial disadvantage. Their services include doula support and training, education, research and advocacy.

### About the role

The Chief Executive Officer provides general management, strategic and compassionate leadership, working closely with the Board to guide the organisation's long-term success. This diverse role oversees the delivery of high-quality doula support services, driving innovation across all areas of work. The CEO ensures strong governance and financial sustainability while maintaining a collaborative, values-driven culture in the face of change. As the leader of a small and dynamic team, the CEO directly supports and contributes to daily operations and program delivery. By fostering strong relationships with government, funders, and sector partners, the CEO champions the organisations mission, safeguards continued impact, and ensures inclusivity, integrity and care are embedded across all programs.

### About you

You are a values-driven and resilient leader with deep experience in managing people, programs and organisations, ideally within health or community services. With a firm grasp on both frontline delivery and strategic oversight, you bring the clarity and adaptability needed to lead through change. Whether engaging with government, funders or communities, you build trust and foster meaningful partnerships. Skilled in governance, reporting and evidence-based decision making, you support the Board and stakeholders with the insights they need. A confident communicator, verbally and in writing, and an effective advocate, you balance financial sustainability with a deep commitment to equity in maternal health – always focused on making a genuine difference.

To express interest, click '[Apply for this job](#)'. Birth for Humankind welcomes and encourages applications from people who face systemic barriers in accessing the workforce. For more information, please see the **Candidate Brief** or email [Lilli Vagnarelli, Associate Partner at lilli.vagnarelli@shk.com.au](mailto:lilli.vagnarelli@shk.com.au). Please submit your CV (resume) and a **concise cover note in Microsoft Word format**. Direct and third-party applications will be forwarded to SHK. **The indicative close date is 1 June.**



**SHK.COM.AU**

# How to apply

Birth for Humankind are partnering with SHK Asia Pacific for the search and selection of their new CEO. Applications are to be submitted online by visiting [www.shk.com.au/jobs](http://www.shk.com.au/jobs) (preferred).

Please submit your **CV (in Microsoft Word format, no more than five pages)** and a **concise cover letter (no more than one page)**, broadly addressing your proposition for the role. All documents are to be attached in Microsoft Word format

For more information after reviewing this Position Description, and ideally after submitting your CV, please contact Lilli Vagnarelli, Associate Partner, via email at [lilli.vagnarelli@shk.com.au](mailto:lilli.vagnarelli@shk.com.au) (quote the role in the subject line), or text or call 0417 947 028, noting that call backs may be out-of-hours in the evening and may take several days (due to being in session during business hours).

Please note, there is a concurrent search. Selection processes may take some time and may include multiple review stages, panel interviews and meetings. These may be conducted over the next months. Candidates may be contacted by email or phone, including voicemail message, please check your junk mail/filter folder for correspondence.

Referees will only be requested and contacted at the time they are required, after initial stages of this process are completed. There may be additional assessments or evaluations required as part of the process. Probity checks must be completed in full before you can be considered for appointment. There are specific probity requirements for this role, and you may be asked for particular information outside standard details, if this is relevant.

Being considered for appointment must remain confidential throughout the process, prior to formal endorsement.

**The indicative closing date is midnight 1 June 2025.** We encourage candidates to apply early, noting conversations with well-matched candidates may commence well in advance of this date.

## Equal Opportunity

Birth for Humankind welcomes and encourages applications from people who face systemic barriers in accessing the workforce, including but not limited to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, people with a disability and/or neurodivergence, and people who identify as LGBTIQ+.

The organisation actively seeks to remove barriers that prevent people from applying for roles. This includes but is not limited to providing flexibility in the application process and communicating interview questions/discussion points in advance. If there are any adjustments we can make to assist you in applying, please contact [lilli.vagnarelli@shk.com.au](mailto:lilli.vagnarelli@shk.com.au). We will do our best to accommodate all reasonable modifications.