

Job: Non-executive Director (voluntary)

Org: Sharks And Rays Australia Research Ltd

- Term: 3 yrs
- Hours: 8-16 hrs per month, flexible
- Reports to: the board

About Sharks And Rays Australia Research Ltd.

SARA-r was founded by SARA Pty Ltd in 2021, to expand our ongoing work with endangered sharks and rays, including sawfish, both in Queensland (field work, collaborations with Aboriginal Land and Sea Ranger groups, collaborations with local schools) and Australia wide (Citizen science project identifying sawfish distributions). As a not-for-profit research organisation, the governance of SARA-r is divided into the business side (board of directors) and the research side (research board). Our research board brings together 7 internationally renowned biologists, who represent essential expertise on the unique sharks and rays of Northern Australia.

Our core values and mission

At SARA-r we believe that long-term conservation goals can only be achieved if they are based on sound science, public outreach and an inclusive model of implementation, i.e. working with local stakeholders. SARA-r aims to not just produce science in the 'ivory tower' but to involve the general public in our sawfish and shark research expeditions. In many ways, it is ultimately up to them to look after the incredible species that share the natural world with us.

Our current work

At SARA-r, we like to think outside the box. Our current main study species, sawfish, are the most endangered of all sharks and rays globally, but they are much more than that. These large animals (up to 7m length) are culturally important to many Indigenous groups, and they were once amongst the most abundant large predators in tropical coastal, inshore and freshwater regions of our planet. Sitting somewhere between charismatic and dangerous megafauna, the work done by our principal scientist, collaborators, students, field assistants, interns, and volunteers, ensures that these animals don't just quietly go extinct, but will remain a vital part of Northern Australia's ecosystems.

Our creative, outcome-oriented, and dynamic work environment allows the creation and implementation of real-world conservation concepts, that unite people with a common idea and goal.

- SARA is currently the only Australian organisation that allows paying field assistants to participate in shark and ray research expeditions, and gain hands-on research experience. Field work is led by our scientists and conducted in close collaboration with Aboriginal Land and Sea Rangers, and sometimes with commercial fishers, thus uniting all of us during intensive tagging work-ups of large animals.
- Our citizen science project turns members of the general public into sawfish spotters, and spreads the word on sawfish and their biology by turning old trophy saws into messengers for conservation. Our sawfish display cases and boards can be seen at 60 locations across Queensland.

Organisational Context

At SARA-r we believe in a holistic conservation model, that works on various levels. Ecological research identifying the biological parameters of our study species is the foundation. In order to create effective, long-lasting change, it is imperative to work with governmental departments to create effective laws and legislation. In order to protect rare, endangered and wide-ranging animals,

it is also important to work with the people on the ground, the land managers, Aboriginal Land and Sea Rangers, Traditional Owners, commercial fishers and the general public.

SARA-r builds upon and is founded by SARA Pty Ltd, which in turn was incorporated by Dr Barbara Wueringer in 2015. The operational side of SARA-r has thus been operational for years. SARA is a well-established venture, that has been running research expeditions since September 2015, to river systems throughout Queensland's Gulf of Carpentaria and the Cape York Peninsula. Under the lead of Dr Wueringer, SARA is currently collaborating with four different Aboriginal Land and Sea Ranger groups from around the Gulf, with many more wanting to collaborate with us as we grow.

On our field expeditions, we conduct ecological surveys for the presence of sawfish and other sharks and rays, and visit a local school to discuss the role that these animals play in the northern river systems. Very often, our school visits are done collaboratively with the local Aboriginal Land and Sea rangers, thus creating a vision for kids in remote communities. Our outreach program allows citizen scientists to report sawfish sightings from around Australia, creating the largest database for sightings of these rays in Australia. In order to produce significant, high quality research, SARA collaborates with international experts for different research projects in North Queensland.

Board context

SARA-r is recruiting board members to grow our new entity to the next phase of organisational maturity. The board of directors will lead our strategic vision, consistent with our core values and aims. While the board of directors oversees and provides insight into the business direction of SARA-r, it also works closely with the Research Board and Principal Scientist.

The board is expected to operate in accordance with the constitution, and applicable legislation (including the Australian Not for Profits Commission Act, the Corporations Act and fundraising legislation).

Vacancies

As SARA is growing and restructuring to SARA-r, we are seeking a board of directors that will offer leadership and governance in their complementary fields of expertise. SARA-r is seeking to appoint up to four highly motivated Non-Executive Directors. We aim to establish a diverse board, comprising directors with a broad range of skills and life experience. All directors must have, or be already working towards gaining, an understanding of the governance principles of an Australian not for profit organisation (company limited by guarantee). Directors need to be team players who can also work independently. We are looking for enthusiastic individuals who are residing in Australia.

We are seeking expressions of interest from individuals with qualifications, skills and/or experience in any of the following areas:

Essential:

- Law (corporations, NFP sector, environmental, tax, contract)
- Governance (corporate, environmental)
- IT (Public relations / marketing / communication)
- Philanthropy / fundraising / campaigning
- Finance / accounting (audit, NFP sector, tax)
- Ability to actively participate in strategic decision making

Desirable:

- Ability to share and engage professional networks and relationships to the mission of SARA-r
- Experience in working with various levels of government

- A sound understanding of the principles of conservation biology, ecological management, endangered species management and a willingness to expand this knowledge in pursuit of SARA-r's mission.

Key selection criteria

SARA-r board members are expected to:

- Demonstrate a strong commitment to the mission and values of SARA-r
- Demonstrate experience in strategic planning that may come from business, management experience or not-for-profit organisations
- Lead a culture of collaboration, transparency and collegiality where board peers and organisational staff/volunteers feel engaged and respected
- Thrive in an outcome-oriented environment
- Provide evidence of knowledge of ACNC and ASIC governance principles and demonstrate a commitment to working according to these principles
- Demonstrate initiative and innovative thinking

Time, commitment, term and expenses

Board duties include: 3 board meetings per year (3hr each, strategic planning, operational planning, board evaluation), ability to oversee specific portfolios (treasurer, secretary, chair, plus essential items listed above). The time commitment will vary throughout term (i.e. inductions and meeting other directors at beginning) and year (i.e. interim meetings of committees as required). This is a volunteer position. All meetings can take place virtually.

Responsibilities of the SARA-r board of directors

- Please read together with key selection criteria
- Provide strategic planning and governance to the organisation
- Lead and review our strategic plan
- Adopt specific portfolios (treasurer, secretary, chair)
- Promote and maintain linkages with state and federal government, other not-for-profit organisations and businesses, and other key stakeholders.
- Oversee and guide fundraising activities, nurture relationships for purpose of fundraising
- Advise on and monitor legal requirements
- Identify when additional expertise is required
- Take guidance on research directions from research board
- Represent SARA-r

Benefits of joining SARA-r

- Opportunity to contribute your skills to a growing and inspiring organisation
- Working in an environment of integrity and commitment to a cause
- Become a change maker for some of the rarest and misunderstood animals in Australia and globally
- Create positive impact through conservation in some of the most remote, and poorest communities in Queensland.

To apply for this position, please email a cover letter outlining answers to the following questions, along with your CV, to Dr Barbara Wueringer (barbara@saw.fish) by November 15, 2021.

1. Why are you interested in joining the board of directors of SARA-r?
2. What skills, knowledge and experience would you bring to the board?
3. What do you hope to get from joining our board of directors?

If you have any questions please call Barbara on 0431 519 524.