

DIRECTOR PROFILE

WESSA Non-Executive Board Director - Environmental Law

PURPOSE OF THE ROLE

WESSA is a century-old, membership-based environmental NGO working nationally through education, advocacy and action for environmental and social justice. We lead citizen action in climate action, biodiversity and habitat protection, and promoting a culture on tolerance of pollution.

As WESSA enters its second century, the Board seeks an experienced leader who can strengthen its strategic governance of the legal standing of WESSA's work and of the environmental law on which its advocacy and action depend.

KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

The ideal candidate will understand South African environmental law: the constitutional environmental right, the National Environmental Management Act and the specific laws under it, authorisation and assessment processes, and the legal regimes for water, biodiversity, waste, air quality energy and/or the marine and coast environment. Experience of environmental law practice, public interest litigation, regulatory or compliance work, policy advocacy or environmental law scholarship will be particularly valuable. The candidate would have experience in navigating through the tensions at the intersections of environmental and social justice issues.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BOARD

The successful nominee will serve as a full Non-Executive Director, contributing independent judgement across the Board's wider governance responsibilities as well as informed insight on the legal basis of WESSA's positions and advocacy, the risks of engaging in regulatory processes, and the evolving enforcement environment. This is a governance and advisory role: the Director will help the Board ask the right questions, strengthen strategic oversight and support the Executive team without taking on operational programme responsibilities. The Director does not act as WESSA's legal counsel.

ATTRIBUTES

Beyond subject knowledge, the Director must bring sound governance judgement, integrity, accountability, discretion and the ability to challenge constructively and be heard. Previous board or senior leadership experience is strongly preferred, as is an understanding of fiduciary duties and of how a non-profit company/NGO board differs from an executive team. A genuine commitment to WESSA's Mission, and the standing to represent the organisation and its members credibly in legal, regulatory and civil society settings.

In support of greater diversity and representation on the WESSA Board, nominations of suitably qualified black women (African, Coloured and Indian, as defined in South African employment equity legislation) are particularly encouraged. Persons in the employ of the state or who are an advisor or consultant contracted with a coastal municipality are ineligible for this role.

DIRECTOR PROFILE



INDEPENDENCE AND BOUNDARIES OF THE ROLE

This is a governance role. It is separate from any technical, advisory or contractual engagement with WESSA's programmes and from the role of a WESSA Patron or donor. The Director is not appointed to represent an employer, sector body, funder or advocacy position. As with every WESSA director, the appointee will act in the best interests of the organisation as a whole, observe fiduciary duties, maintain appropriate independence, declare actual or potential conflicts of interest, and recuse themselves where required.

The position is voluntary and carries no remuneration.

Applications/nominations to be sent to this email address: applications@wessa.co.za

The deadline for applications/nominations: 15h00 SAST, 30 November 2026

ENDS