

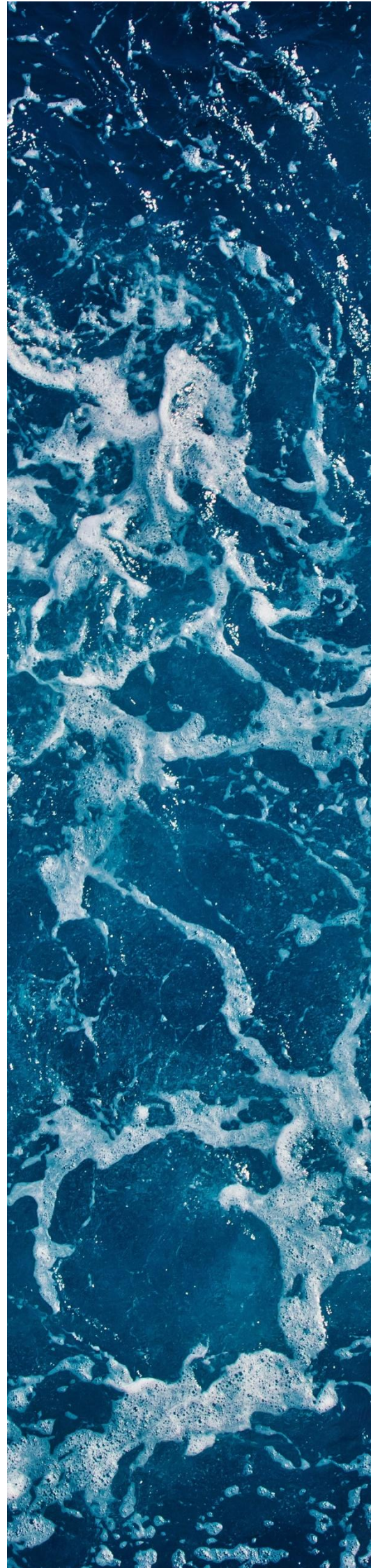
# **WATERMARK SEARCH INTERNATIONAL CANDIDATE BRIEF**

**General Manager Operations  
YHA Australia**

April 2025



Presented by Watermark Search International.  
Trusted for over 40 years, focused on the future.



# About YHA Australia

YHA Australia is a for-purpose, membership-based organisation, providing curious travellers with low cost, quality short-stay accommodation for over 80 years.

## Our properties

We own, operate and partner with a diverse range of properties across Australia offering private and co-living accommodation with facilities like on-site pools, kitchens and open-air rooftops. We create unique, sustainable spaces with just the right amount of modern comfort in safe, welcoming environments- giving people the freedom to explore.

We don't believe in 'one size fits all', and from thriving city destinations to off-the-beaten-path locations, there is something for everyone. Our property staff are hosts, guides, and most importantly, local mates, helping to connect guests to the destinations, cultures and experiences, ensuring they feel part of the local community and make the most of their trip.

Currently, we have a network of 19 properties across the country and are part of the global organisation Hostelling International (HI)- a network of over 2,500+ unique places to stay in more than 57 destinations.

## Our origins

Over a hundred years ago, the origins of the global youth hostel movement were founded in rural Germany, when schoolteacher Richard Schirrmann took some students on an excursion to the countryside. The first permanent hostel (which is still operating today, at Altena Castle) was established soon after, in 1912.

In 1932, the global network of not-for-profit youth hostel associations, Hostelling International (HI), was formed. Momentum grew, and the first YHA hostel in Australia opened in 1939 in Warrandyte, Victoria. It wasn't long before budget accommodation was being provided across the country to bring young people together in the great outdoors. Over the decades hostels began springing up in the city as well as the bush transforming humble beginnings into Australia's largest, most loved accommodation network for independent travellers.

Today, YHA Australia provides a variety of accommodation options to students, digital nomads, work and holiday makers, families and the young at heart- anyone with a spirit of adventure- to keep exploring and sharing the joy of travel with a like-minded community.

## Our governance

YHA Ltd, trading as YHA Australia, is not-for-profit that has a Board of Directors and holds an Annual General Meeting. The Board is the governing body of the organisation and is made up of ordinary members usually serving for three-year terms.

The primary focus of the Board is the long-term sustainability of YHA, including setting strategic direction, overseeing development of the network, ensuring that appropriate risk management and people management systems are in place, and enshrining YHA's mission and core values in all aspects of the organisation's activities.

## Our Purpose

To create an open and accommodating world where life flourishes.

## Our Mission

Our mission is to create a community in diverse spaces, by connecting the curious, inspiring personal growth and creating genuine local experiences, in a sustainable way.

## Our Impact

Our mindset of always exploring extends to our organisation and how we continue to find ways to better our environmental, social and cultural impact across Australia.

## Environmental sustainability

YHA was founded on a desire to support the exploration of our planet with minimal ecological impact. Not only have we led the way for over a decade in embracing sustainable travel through our sustainability program and a multitude of environment positive practices within our properties; we also aim to be leaders in regenerative travel for the future. We want our guests to have the opportunity not just to enjoy where they stay, but to leave it better than the way they found it.

## Diversity, acceptance and equality

Our properties are great spaces in even greater places; and through our model of co-living and keeping costs as low as possible, we have made, and continue to keep, travel available to all. YHA properties are more than just a place to go – they are also a place to connect. Our spaces and the experiences that we offer are designed to encourage learning, sharing and connecting.

## HI-Quality & Sustainability Commitment

As a proud member of Hostelling International, we pledge to uphold the highest standards of quality and sustainability. Our HI-Q&S system ensures responsible environmental, social, and economic practices, ethical operations, and continuous improvement. From supporting local communities to protecting cultural heritage and the environment, we are dedicated to creating exceptional, responsible travel experiences. [Read our full commitment here.](#)

## Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)

We are committed to working towards reconciliation in Australia. In October 2024 we launched our [Innovative Reconciliation Action Plan](#). We seek to build relationships between our business, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and all Australians, while also increasing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. We aim to deeply embed cultural learning throughout the YHA network and share it with our community of travellers.

YHA Australia is committed to reconciliation with Australia's First Peoples and respects their right to self-determination and be consulted with respect to laws and decisions impacting them. We proudly support the Uluru Statement from the Heart. Now, more than ever, we have to work together to build a better future for all Australians.

For more information, please visit <https://www.yha.com.au/>

Annual Reports and Integrated Reports can be found here <https://www.yha.com.au/about/yha-organisation/annual-reports/>



**JOB TITLE:** General Manager Operations

**DATE REVISED:** March 2025

**DEPARTMENT:** Operations Function

**REPORTS TO:** CEO

**EMPLOYEES:** **Direct Reports (6)**  
Operations Manager, Regional Operations Manager, Quality Manager, Safety & Compliance Manager, Food and Beverage Manager, General Manager Hobart Town Hotel

**POSITION OBJECTIVE:** Accountability for providing quality and affordable accommodation and in-property services to YHA members and guests. This ensures that the properties and their facilities operate efficiently, profitably, and in line with the philosophy and policies of YHA Ltd.

## KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

### Property Management

- The role involves managing YHA-owned properties and overseeing teams and assets to ensure profitable operations. Key responsibilities include:
- Implementing business plans and developing strategies to meet goals.
- Collaborating with team members to enhance occupancy, yield, cost control, and customer experience.
- Promoting a customer-centric culture aligned with YHA's philosophy.
- Ensuring effective property operations within the approved business plan and budget.
- Build capability and deliver quality food & beverage across property outlets.
- Partnering with leadership to direct the strategic property portfolio.
- Prioritising guest and team safety with crisis management, emergency procedures, and training for team members.
- Traveling regularly for inspections and communication with properties.

### Team Leadership

- Assume overall responsibility for the employment activities of property team members and their representation of YHA in the workplace.
- Establish the standards for recruitment and training processes for property employees in collaboration with the People & Culture team, a
- Manage the remuneration structures for the Operations and Property Managers across all property teams, ensuring alignment with the organisation's strategic objectives.
- Ensure that all operational team members receive an annual performance appraisal conducted by their immediate supervisors.
- Guarantee that employee salary levels remain within the established annual budget while maintaining workforce flexibility, strategically hiring short-term and casual staff to accommodate the seasonal demands of the property.



## Financial Management

- Monitor monthly financial statements for each property and analyze budget variances, collaborating with the Operations Team and Property Managers for optimal performance.
- Coordinate expenses according to the Management Authorisation Chart and effective cost control principles.
- Collaborate with the Revenue & Distribution Manager to develop pricing strategies and provide the CEO with an annual property rate review.
- Identify additional income streams to meet profit objectives.
- Implement and maintain a procurement system to maximize economies of scale and update equipment inventories in all properties.

## Sales and Marketing

- Collaborate with the Customer team for timely and effective marketing campaigns, enhancing visibility through social media.
- Build and maintain strong relationships with the local community, industry bodies, and key decision-makers.
- Ensure the property offers hospitality to visiting journalists, travel writers, and industry personnel to maximize promotional benefits.
- Oversee added value services for guests to enhance their experience, encourage longer stays, and create additional income streams.

## Maintenance and Development

- In conjunction with the Head of Development, plan, implement, and supervise a scheduled building and facilities maintenance and development program to ensure that the condition of property buildings and facilities meets agreed-upon standards for quality and safety and that such standards are reviewed from time to time to continue meeting guests' requirements and maintaining property standards.
- Work with the CEO and CFO to advise the Board on new development projects and implement its decisions.

## Workplace Health & Safety

- Actively participate in the WHS Consultative Group and execute agreed improvements. Together with the Head of People & Culture and Workplace Health & Safety Policy in the property network, ensuring that:
- The overall risk management approach involves implementing, maintaining, and reviewing WHS standards and practices in the designated area. This responsibility includes providing a safe and healthy work environment for team members and visitors, including contractors, and ensuring that standards and practices adopted by all conform to the statutory requirements and the provisions of YHA's WHS policies and procedures.

## Administrative Duties

- Authorise supplier payments for properties and development projects; monitor costs with the Head of Sustainability and CFO.
- Provide statistical information to management, the Board, and Accounts Departments.
- Facilitate Operations Team meetings for streamlined communication.
- Submit monthly Management Report information to the Head of Sustainability and



Operations Department for the Board.

- Ensure tenancy lease terms are upheld, rents are paid timely, and communication with tenants is maintained as needed.

## Management Contract Properties

- To be responsible for the management of Management Contract properties by:
  - Appoint contractors to properties YHA has selected management contracts and is responsible for negotiations with the CEO. Ensure all contracts are properly administered.
  - Liaise directly with the contracted managers and visit facilities regularly.
  - Advising and carrying out the organisation's policy decisions on contracted properties.

## HEALTH & SAFETY

While at work, you will take all practicable steps to:

- Ensure your own safety and the safety of others;
- Ensure your actions or inactions do not cause harm to any other person;
- Ensure that you are familiar with and comply with all health and safety policies and procedures;
- Report to management as soon as practicable any accidents, incidents or hazards arising during the course of your employment;
- Report to management as soon as possible any concerns you may have relating to health and safety and
- Comply with the relevant work health and safety legislation.

## SOCIAL IMPACT

We are committed to the regenerative travel strategy, focusing on giving back more than we take and seeking to build meaningful connections in the places that we visit. We will educate our guests (and our team) about the concept and develop activities that will allow our travellers to get involved through experiences.

We are committed to working towards reconciliation in Australia through our Reconciliation Action Plan. We will use this reconciliation journey to encourage the prosperity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to support their communities' ongoing sustainment. We will promote the joy of discovery through travel through our commitment to helping their companies and educating our guests and team about our country's unique Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

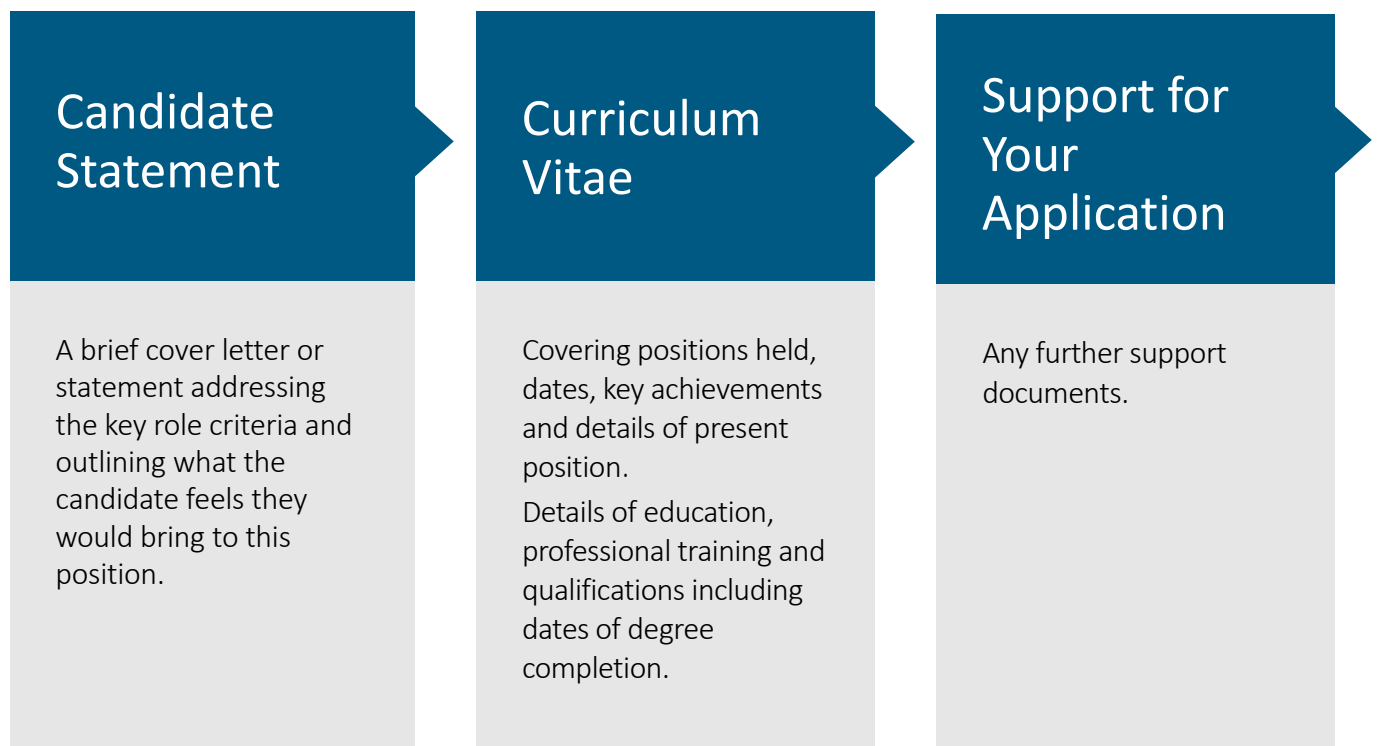
## Role Dimensions

- 19 Properties | 4,500 beds
- 980,000 guests pa
- 295 team members
- Income \$60m
  - Food & Beverage 11% of turnover
- Operating expenditure of \$23m
- Sydney-based with interstate travel required

## How to Apply

An executive search is being undertaken by Watermark alongside the public advertisement.

Applications for the position will need to include the following:



For a confidential discussion please call Alison Myatt of Watermark Search International who are leading the search on behalf of YHA Australia.

**Daniel Nicholls**  
Partner, Executive Search  
02 9233 1200

**Claire Crawford**  
Partner, Executive Search  
02 9233 1200

**Alison Myatt**  
Head of Research  
0412 630 817

**Georgina Southwell**  
Project Administrator  
02 9239 1223

To apply, please send an application quoting Ref No A005888 to Watermark Search International via the link below.

[Application Form – GM Operations, YHA Australia](#)

**Closing date: 11:59pm AEST on Monday 28 April 2025**



## Contact Us

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[watermarksearch.com.au](http://watermarksearch.com.au)



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