

**Position Description**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Position: Generalist Solicitor** | **Location: Dubbo** |

**Award:** Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Award 2010 (SCHADS)

**Status:** Permanent Full Time 35 hours per week subject to ongoing funding.

**Work Hours:** 9am to 4.30pm (30 min lunch break)

**Salary:** As per SCHADS Award Grade 5 – 6 +5% commensurate with experience. Fringe benefits packaging available

**Conditions:** Probationary period six (6) months

**Responsible to:** Principal Solicitor, Executive Officer and Management Committee

|  |
| --- |
| **Overview** |

Western NSW Community Legal Centre (WNSWCLC) is a not-for-profit non-government organisation with a community led volunteer Management Committee (the Committee). It was established in 1996 after identifying a gap in access to legal services for female victims of crimes; in particular domestic and family violence. Over 20 years the centre has built up a legal delivery program that sees it helping disadvantaged people across a large region. It employs 13 staff who work in a collaborative and respectful team environment. It is based in Dubbo NSW but outreaches monthly to numerous communities including Nyngan, Bourke, Brewarrina, Cobar, Walgett, Lightning Ridge and Coonamble.

WNSWCLC also provides a specific domestic violence legal and casework service to female victims of family and domestic violence. This is known as the Domestic Violence Unit (the DVU). This service employs solicitors and caseworkers who provide legal and non-legal holistic help to its clients.

WNSWCLC promotes access to justice:

* For people within its region who are disadvantaged by their social, cultural and economic circumstances by providing free, accessible and high quality legal services.
* By conducting law reform and community legal education.

The Generalist Solicitor (the Solicitor) is accountable as follows:

* The Principal Solicitor;
* The Executive Officer; and finally
* The Management Committee.

The solicitor will be patient, understanding, non-judgemental and compassionate when helping clients.

|  |
| --- |
| **Role Summary** |

This position will involve legal and other work contributing to the day-to-day functioning of the Centre. It will include the provision of legal information, advice, representation and referrals. The role may also include designing and conducting community legal education programs aimed at informing and empowering people in rural and remote areas. The role will also include being actively involved in the area of law reform. There may also be scope to provide supervisory services to staff, as delegated by the Principal Solicitor.

This position will give assistance to clients across broad-ranging areas of law that are general in nature. The solicitor will work closely with other legal and non-legal staff of the Centre.

The solicitor is to approach their work and discussions with clients from a whole of person perspective. That is, they are to be sensitive to the client’s personal circumstances and vulnerability and will be mindful, respectful and acknowledging of the client’s situation. Clients are encouraged to have support people with them when attending the service and, where possible, re-traumatisation is to be avoided. Allowing clients to have a voice and be in control of the process and decision-making is critical.

Whilst identifying and focusing on legal issues is critical, it is to be done in the context of letting the client tell their story without fear of judgement. Where possible, clients are not to be rushed. The solicitor will always be mindful to ensure advice is communicated as simply and plainly as possible and will always keep their mind open to identifying non-legal issues for the client which could benefit from non-legal assistance, whether it be from within or outside of the Centre.

|  |
| --- |
| **Duties and Responsibilities** |

1. **Conduct advice, casework and representation**

The solicitor will provide legal assistance across a range of areas of law, and undertake a variety of work, such as:

* 1. family law, domestic violence/AVO, victims compensation, debt, social security, care and protection, anti-discrimination, employment law, neighbour disputes and the like
  2. Appear in court for matters where required and subject to Principal Solicitor approval
  3. Appear at mediation and dispute resolution conferences
  4. Identify legal issues and give high quality legal advice to clients
  5. Provide advice either face to face or over the phone
  6. Undertake ongoing casework for clients
  7. Undertake outreach trips, including overnight stays, to conduct client work
  8. Undertake prison outreach as required

1. **Participate in law reform activities**
   1. Identify systemic legal issues leading to injustice for disadvantaged people requiring law reform
   2. Undertake drafting law reform submissions to parliamentary enquiries, either on behalf of the centre or as part of a project with other services, including community legal centres.
2. **File management**
   1. Conduct regular file review of ongoing casework
   2. Attend regular casework meetings
   3. Comply with relevant casework and file management policies and procedures
3. **Community Legal Education**
   1. Participate in conducting community legal education to community groups
   2. Identify the need for community legal education in communities
   3. Prepare community legal education sessions on relevant areas of law for community groups
   4. Obtain feedback from community legal education sessions via feedback forms
   5. Undertake outreach trips, including overnight stays, to conduct community legal education
4. **Networking and training**
   1. Liaise with other community service based and government organisations to establish referral pathways for clients between services
   2. Establish relationships with other legal practitioners in the region, including Legal Aid and Aboriginal Legal Service
   3. Build relationships with other community legal centres and pro bono law firms, such as Ashurst and Gilbert + Tobin
   4. Attend the National Association for Community Legal Centre’s National Conference as required
   5. Attend CLCNSW Quarterly Meetings in Sydney as required
   6. Undertake continuing professional development to obtain 10 CPD points each year
5. **General**
   1. Commitment through action and behaviour to WNSWCLC values
   2. Comply with WNSWCLC policies and procedures
   3. Work cooperatively as part of a multi-disciplinary team
   4. Contribute as required to the development, implementation and updating of WNSWCLC policies and procedures
   5. Assist in the general administration of the centre (eg answer the phone, make client appointments etc)
   6. Undertake client work on behalf of other solicitors during periods of leave
   7. Travel independently or with other staff to rural and remote areas of Orana and North-Western NSW, including correctional centres, and Sydney, involving overnight stays
   8. Perform duties as delegated in writing by the Principal Solicitor from time to time, including as a Nominated or Responsible Person, if agreed to between the Principal Solicitor and staff member
   9. Undertake other duties as required from time to time

…………………………………….. ………………………………….

Employee Executive officer

Date ……………………………. Date……………………………….

|  |
| --- |
| **Selection Criteria** |

**Essential**

1. Demonstrated understanding of, and commitment to, social justice issues affecting people experiencing economic, social, cultural and geographic disadvantage and a lack of access to legal services
2. Eligible to hold a New South Wales practising certificate
3. Demonstrated ability to adopt a whole of person focus in the context of giving legal assistance
4. Ability to sensitively gain information from clients to identify legal issues and give high quality legal advice
5. Ability to analyse and relate client’s legal issues to the bigger law reform picture and to initiate responses
6. Demonstrated ability to work autonomously, as well as collaboratively, in a team environment and able to work with minimal supervision
7. High level oral and written communication skills including ability to work in an electronic environment
8. Ability and commitment to travel to remote and rural areas, and Sydney as required, including overnight stays
9. Hold a current NSW driver’s licence

**Desirable**

1. Post qualification experience of two years
2. Staff supervision experience

**This job description may be reviewed from time to time and/or in conjunction with your performance reviews.**