

**POSITION DESCRIPTION:  
LEGAL AND POLICY OFFICER**

## **PURPOSE OF THE POSITION**

The *Legal and Policy Officer* will be responsible for all legal and legal policy work undertaken by Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia. The role will involve diverse tasks including supporting client access to documentation, advocating for law reform through submission, and training organisation staff.

The role will support R&DVSA clients to access the legal system, by providing legal referral, managing requests for access to confidential client information, corresponding with external agencies including police, and preparing supporting documentation. The role will develop policy and advocate through submission to inquiries for law reform on a wide variety of issues related to sexual, family and domestic violence, across every Australian jurisdiction. Finally, the role will support Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia staff to understand legal processes and respond to any organisational legal needs.

The *Legal and Policy Officer* will **not** provide legal advice or legal representation.

## **POSITION RELATIONSHIPS**

Team: Legal Project

Position Reporting To: Executive Officer

Positions Reporting to this Position: None

## **ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT**

Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia is committed to upholding the rights of all women to live in a socially just and equitable society and the right of all people to live free of violence. The organisation provides services nationally in the area of sexual assault, domestic and family violence. The organisation works with all stakeholders in accordance with its vision, mission, principles and goals.

## **KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES AND WORK PERFORMED**

- Support clients to access the family law system, the criminal justice system, victims support and other legal processes, by providing legal information, but not advice, and referrals.
- Support clients involved in legal processes, by preparing supporting documentation based on client engagement with Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia services.
- Manage all requests for access to confidential client information received from clients, police, lawyers, victims support agencies, or other bodies.

- Support organisational staff to understand legal processes, by preparing resources and providing training.
- Maintain an awareness of current law reform issues across every Australian jurisdiction in relation to sexual, family and domestic violence.
- Develop policy and advocate for law reform on a wide variety of legal issues across every Australian jurisdiction in relation to sexual, family and domestic violence through engagement with Government inquiries and similar.
- Prepare written submissions and provide verbal evidence to Government and non-Government inquiries in relation to various policy and law reform issues.
- Assist Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia to achieve compliance with legal regulations, by reviewing organisational policy and practice.
- Assist Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia to obtain legal advice and/or legal representation where necessary.
- Attend and actively participate in supervision.
- Comply with the organisation's performance appraisal policy and procedure and participate in any ensuing professional development.
- Comply with information collection, quality improvement, risk management procedures, record keeping and administrative practices of the organisation.
- Ensure all documentation is concise, legible, secure and available to colleagues within the Organisation.
- Abide by workplace practices.
- Comply with the Confidentiality Policy and Copyright Agreement.
- Ensure work practices are ethical and comply with the Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia Code of Ethics and the code of the Australian Psychological Society, the Australian Association of Social Workers or the Counsellors and Psychotherapists Association.

## **MAJOR CHALLENGES OR CONSTRAINTS**

The *Legal and Policy Officer* will provide legal information but must not provide legal advice, including to clients, staff, stakeholders or the Board.

## **DECISION MAKING**

The *Legal and Policy Officer* will be responsible for managing and prioritising tasks on a day-to-day basis. The role will report to and receive direction from the Executive Officer. The role will consult with the Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia counselling team in relation to any clinical issues.

## **INTERACTION AND COMMUNICATION**

The role will involve telephone and online communication with clients. It will also involve interaction with police, lawyers, victims support agencies, and other relevant bodies.

The role will involve building relationships with community stakeholders and organisations in order to develop policy and advocate for law reform in formal government processes.

## **WORKPLACE ATTITUDE**

The *Legal and Policy Officer* will demonstrate the following positive workplace attitudes:

- A constructive and pro-active approach to work practices and tasks.
- Not participate in conversations which undermine the organisation or individuals within the organisation.
- Embrace of workplace diversity and difference.
- Willingness to learn.
- Commitment to upholding the rights of others.
- Recognition of shared responsibilities.
- Using reflective practices and taking personal responsibility for contributing to workplace problem-solving.
- Understand that each worker is a part of the whole and that all positions and roles contribute equal value to the organisation's overall aim of providing high quality service provision.
- Not engaging in social media in a way that may be detrimental to the organisation.
- Not using private communication medium e.g., a mobile phone to the detriment of the Organisation.

## **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED**

### **Essential**

- A Law degree (note: you need not be admitted or have a practicing certificate)
- Substantial knowledge and understanding of legal responses to sexual, domestic and family violence across the criminal justice system, the family law system, and victims support schemes
- Strong understanding of the causes and consequences of sexual, family and domestic violence from a feminist perspective
- Strong understanding of how sexual, domestic and family violence affect diverse communities, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, people with disability, culturally and linguistically diverse communities and LGBTIQ communities
- Dedication to the principles of feminist and client-centred practice
- An understanding of the impacts of trauma and how practice must be responsive to, and supportive of, someone experiencing trauma
- High level legal research and analysis skills
- High level written communication skills, including the ability to draft both legal documents and policy briefs
- Strong interpersonal skills, including the ability to convey complex legal concepts in plain English to clients and staff
- Proven ability to manage a workload independently and meet deadlines
- Initiative and accountability to ensure high quality results

### **Desirable**

- Knowledge of legal responses to sexual, family and domestic violence across various Australian jurisdictions

- Knowledge of sexual assault communications privilege across various Australian jurisdictions
- Experience working within the criminal justice system, the family law system and/or victims support schemes
- Experience working with women impacted by sexual, family and domestic violence
- Experience working with diverse communities, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, people with disability, culturally and linguistically diverse communities and LGBTIQ communities
- Experience working in the Women’s Health or NGO sector, including Community Legal Centres.

Sighted and agreed to by *Legal and Policy Officer*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Sign \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Current as at:</b>	January 2019
<b>Review due:</b>	January 2020
<b>Consultation by:</b>	Legal and Policy Officer, Executive Officer
<b>Approval by:</b>	Executive Officer