

## POSITION DESCRIPTION: Social Worker

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| <b>Title:</b>          | Social Worker  |
| <b>Status:</b>         | 0.8 FTE, one year contract. All positions at SMLS are subject to the continuation of external program funding. |
| <b>Reports to:</b>     | Manager Community & Strategic Development  |
| <b>Classification:</b> | Social Community Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award  |
| <b>Salary:</b>         | SCHCADS Award rate (based on skills and experience) plus superannuation and generous salary packaging          |

### About SMLS

Established in 1973, Springvale Monash Legal Service (SMLS) is a community legal centre that provides free legal assistance to people in Southeast Melbourne. SMLS provides legal information, advice and case work including representation for people experiencing disadvantage on a range of legal matters, such as family law and family violence, employment law, debt and fines, civil litigation, wills, power of attorney, and tenancy.

SMLS aims to empower and support members of the community to understand and make use of the law and the legal system to protect their rights and to increase their awareness of their legal responsibilities. SMLS is a strong advocate of and committed to the use of integrated service models to address multifaceted challenges facing our community members.

SMLS is committed to advocacy and social change. SMLS is a leader in the provision of community and clinical legal education; advocacy through policy submissions and lobbying; outreach services; and targeted referral programs.

### Our Vision

A fair and inclusive community where people can access the resources, networks and support they need to resolve legal issues and overcome barriers to social, cultural and economic inclusion and participation

### Our Purpose

To help resolve people's legal and interconnected issues and ensure that laws and legal processes are fair.

### Our Values

Our core values are Respect, Community, Excellence and Courage.

#### Head Office

A: 5 Osborne Avenue, Springvale Vic 3171  
P: (03) 9545 7400  
PO Box 312, Springvale, VIC 3171  
W: [smls.com.au](http://smls.com.au)

#### Branch Office

A: Suite 1, Level 2, 64 Victor Crescent, Narre Warren Vic 3805  
P: (03) 9038 8002  
PO Box 2543, Fountain Gate VIC 3805  
ABN: 96 206 448 228 | Reg: A0013997D



## **Position context**

### **Integrated Services Program (ISP)**

The ISP aims to contribute to a resilient community by taking a holistic approach to meet the legal and social needs of vulnerable people from diverse backgrounds in south east Melbourne.

The ISP provides social support and financial counselling services to clients with complex needs through an integrated practice model of service in which Community Lawyers work together with Social Work and Financial Counselling to provide advocacy, support, legal advice and case work interventions as part of a team.

This program recognises the importance of well-coordinated services in order to deal with co-occurring legal problems. Legal problems are often clustered together, and disadvantaged people are especially vulnerable to a wide range of legal problems. ISP address the complicated, coexisting and interrelated legal and non- legal problems that cut across many aspects of people's well-being, including their family circumstances, finances, employment, health, housing and welfare.

Clients accessing the program receive the provision of legal assistance, financial counselling and social work support. The social work element provides referrals and case management to community members so that interventions, actions and supports have a medium term, sustainable outcome for the individual. People access the program via one of our many intake points, including our duty lawyer program at Dandenong Magistrates Court, outreaches at high schools and libraries, as well as community, maternal and health centres.

The Social Worker will work with the Integrated Programs Coordinator and the Financial Counsellor to provide case work, referrals and support to vulnerable and disadvantaged clients coming to SMLS for assistance.

### **Clinical Program**

A central element of the ISP is a dedicated clinical learning experience for students undertaking their placement at SMLS. The Social Worker is responsible for providing clinical supervision to these students, according to the Supervisor Standards as outlined in section 9.1 of the [AASW Supervision Standards 2014](#). The program is an onsite clinical experience where future social workers have a discrete and unique exposure to the justice system in a community legal context. The learning of students in this clinical context aims to break down barriers between professions, assisting students to have a cross-disciplinary understanding will shape them as effective practitioners, help their future clients and build stronger services.

### **Further Aims**

Further aims of the ISP are to move from a multidisciplinary model to a complex, co-case management model, drawing on the research, experience and expertise within SMLS and the community legal and support service sector more broadly. This will be alongside monitoring and evaluation to ensure best practice and a client centred approach.

### **Team Structure**

ISP Team sits within the Community Development Department comprising: The Manager of Strategic and Community Development, the Integrated Programs Coordinator, the Social Worker, and a Financial

Counsellor, provided through a partnership with Good Shepherd. The team liaises with other teams including our lawyers and our intake team.

All members of SMLS must adhere to relevant legal professional privilege requirements and related privacy and reporting policies. Regular supervision, support and guidance for the position is provided by the Manager of Strategic and Community Development.

## **Position responsibilities**

### **Direct Service Provision**

- Provision of high-quality social work support services including:
  - Advocacy
  - Assessment and referral
  - Case management to achieve best outcomes
- Providing interventions such as risk assessment, safety planning, case planning and short-term client coordination to SMLS clients as part of an integrated practice model
- Providing clients with information and advice in relation to a range of non-legal issues including: family violence planning, social security, housing and child care
- Advocating on behalf of clients for access to relevant services and making necessary referrals
- Outreach support at court and other locations
- Collaboration with lawyers and financial counsellors working with the client to achieve best outcomes for client
- Developing and strengthening external relationships and networks

### **Clinical Supervision**

- Provide clinical supervision to social work students undertaking their placement at SMLS
- Provide a minimum of 1.5 hours formal supervision for every 35 placement hours per student, with one-on-one supervision comprising a minimum of half of this time
- Provide reviews, reflection, critique and replenishment of emerging practitioners
- Enhance the professional skills and competence of social work practitioners and strengthen their capacity to achieve positive outcomes for clients while responding effectively to complex and changing practice environments;
- Meet the supervision requirements of students according to our contracts with universities

### **Integrated Practice**

- Work collaboratively with our Lawyers, Community Development staff, Integrated Services team to contribute to the further development of SMLS's integrated service delivery model
- Actively engaging in ISP processes to ensure integration across all areas of the program
- Participation in relevant Integrated Practice working groups where appropriate

### **Organisational Participation**

- Ensure an understanding of, and compliance with, all professional obligations relating to legal professional privilege and maintaining client confidentiality within a multidisciplinary team
- Contribute to SMLS policy and law reform where appropriate through the provision of case studies, data collection and other relevant contributions to research
- Participate in organisational strategic planning initiatives and projects
- Contribute to a healthy, productive organisational culture where work practices, decision making and behaviour reflect SMLS philosophy and values

- Develop and strengthen networks, engaging the support and involvement of a range of individuals and organisations
- Perform other duties as directed and necessary for the proper performance of the role

## **Key Selection Criteria**

### **Essential skills and experience**

- Tertiary qualification in Social Work, recognised by the AASW and eligible for membership with the AASW with at least two years post qualifying experience as a social worker
- Experience supervising social work students undertaking placements/field work or relevant experience
- Demonstrated skills and knowledge in the provision of social work services to people experiencing disadvantage including: assessment, counselling, crisis management, case management, advocacy, intervention and appropriate referral
- Experience working in community or health-based services such as; housing/homelessness, family violence, mental health, disability or drug and alcohol services, settlement services
- Demonstrated experience working with or within a multi-disciplinary environment, building collaborative relationships across professional boundaries
- Commitment to social justice and an understanding of feminist principles and values within a family violence context
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills
- Ability to work independently in a self-directed and self-motivated manner, while also actively contributing to a team based working environment

### **Desirable**

- Experience working with people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities
- Experience working in or demonstrated knowledge of the justice system and processes in a legal context
- Ability to identify systemic barriers, and work towards systemic change

## **Location and work outside office hours**

The position will be based at SMLS offices in Springvale and Narre Warren. Occasional work outside normal office hours may be required, such as to attend meetings and after-hours events.