



Position Description for Senior Lawyer

About MHLC

Established in 1989, the Mental Health Legal Centre (MHLC) is recognized for its unique place as a specialist legal Centre in Victoria. MHLC dedicated team has worked on behalf of consumers of mental health services since inception and that focus remains.

MHLC is a strong voice in the community legal sector, advocating for a better mental health system. MHLC works on behalf of individual clients, challenging laws which act to discriminate and disadvantage clients, both as individuals and as a broader consumer group. MHLC offers a range of opportunities that seek to inform and educate the community about the law and the issues impacting on people who have or are experiencing mental health issues.

Our multidisciplinary team (law, social work and financial counselling) provide a range of innovative services in the community, in treatment facilities and in prisons. We work in partnership with other agencies to provide integrated services that address the needs of some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

About the position

The Senior Lawyer in the generalist service will work with all MHLC staff, with particular attention to the generalist clinic and the Mental Health Tribunal (MHT) advocacy service. The role forms part of the leadership team at MHLC. This will include providing timely telephone advice, representation at MHT hearings, casework in accordance with the advice and casework guidelines, community and professional legal education and input into relevant legislative reform and campaigns. This role requires excellent organisational and communication skills. It will also require an understanding of the framework within which all the projects are being measured and reported, and a commitment to transparency and accountability. This is an exciting opportunity for someone with exceptional organisational skills, leadership skills, energy and vision. The position is funded by the Attorney General and subject to project funding.

A core part of the Senior Lawyers role will be to ensure that the project targets as listed and identified in the project agreements are delivered within project plans and reported to the Principal Lawyer.

Hours of work

This position is a full time position to be worked 5 days a week (38 hours).

Qualification and Education requirements for the position

- Lawyer with a minimum 5 years' post-admission experience;
- Experience and understanding of the complex and diverse client base of a specialist legal centre;

- High level interpersonal and leadership skills.

Line Manager

The Lawyer in this position will report directly to Principal Lawyer of the MHLC as required

Expectations

It is expected that the Senior Lawyer will:

- Contribute to the operational objectives of the MHLC to seek to ensure its sustainability.
- Identify outcomes for projects based on an appraisal process of the requirements for each project to contribute to the objectives of MHLC.
- Work effectively both independently and in a team to contribute to the achievement of program and organizational objectives.
- Undertake court and tribunal based work, together with advice and casework;
- Coordinate the generalist legal service in partnership with the Principal Lawyer; and
- Contribute to service planning, operational development and staff development projects.

Duties and Responsibilities

The general responsibilities and duties of the Senior Lawyer are set out below and are subject to change based on business requirements from time to time.

Main Duties

The Lawyer in this position will:

- maintain the project plan and deliver the educational needs of the project, which includes overseeing file management for all clients seen through the projects and represented by MHLC;
- maintain the CLASS database;
- ensure administrative requirements are noted to the Administrative support team;
- establish and maintain relationships with students;
- ensure that all casework files are maintained to the highest standards in respect of client contact information, communication and updates to clients, professional documentation and record keeping;
- make referrals to other services where appropriate;
- exercise a high level of interpersonal skills in dealing with the public and other organisations.

Financial Responsibilities

- Review any court fees required.

General Administrative Duties

The Lawyer in this position will:

- attend at or monitor regular staff meetings, legal practice meetings and leadership meetings
- participate in annual planning and strategic development;
- manage administrative duties as required related to the position, e.g. client database, client correspondence, telephone, etc;
- ensure compliance with policies and procedures; and
- undertake other general duties as required including providing cover for other roles during busy periods.