

The role

The Lawyer – Generalist and MHT Advocacy Program will provide legal assistance to clients in our Generalist and MHT Advocacy Programs, with a particular focus on mental health, infringements, NDIS, tenancy, guardianship and administration, child protection, intervention orders, freedom of information, Commonwealth benefits and family law, along with other areas relevant to disadvantaged communities, such as summary crime and civil law. The Lawyer will be required to attend at outreach court, tribunal, hospital and stakeholder venues to provide advice, consultations, case work and advocacy in various practice areas.

The Lawyer – Generalist and MHT Advocacy Program will also deliver education sessions, proactively network with key stakeholders, identify systemic issues and think strategically.

The incumbent will have the opportunity to provide their clients with a wraparound legal service, working collaboratively with community services and partners. This is an exciting opportunity for someone with exceptional organisational and communication skills, energy and vision. A core part of the Lawyer's 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 Coordinating Lawyer and Leadership Team.

Mental Health Legal Centre Overview

The Mental Health Legal Centre (MHLC) is an independent, not-for-profit, specialist legal centre in Victoria.

For over thirty-five years, MHLC has delivered accessible legal services to consumers of mental health services and to people who are incarcerated. We deliver community education and advocate for systematic change that enhances the rights of people experiencing mental health issues. Our multidisciplinary team (law, paralegal, and financial counselling) provide a range of innovative services in the community, in treatment facilities and in prisons. We recognise that health and legal issues do not occur in isolation, and 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.

Vision

Mental health: rights, choice, agency

Purpose

MHLC aims to increase access to social and legal justice for people experiencing mental health and legal issues. A key element of social justice is that everyone is entitled to equal access to opportunities for positive health and well-being. We work within a social model of mental health, recognising that positive mental health is influenced by social factors. We provide interdisciplinary supports include legal assistance, advocacy and financial counselling to address our clients' unmet legal and non-legal needs.

Principles that underpin our work

All of our services are designed to reduce the barriers to positive mental health



Mental Health Legal Centre

Lawyer – Generalist and MHT Advocacy Program

About the position

The MHLC currently operates four program streams:



The Lawyer is responsible for the work undertaken within our Generalist and MHT Advocacy Program.

About you

You are a lawyer with a passion for human rights and providing legal assistance to clients in disadvantaged communities. A range of applications will be considered including newly admitted lawyers and those with more experience.

You are able to:

- Deliver high quality, accurate legal advice and manage casework.
- Develop strong relationships with other supporting organisations/services.
- Communicate with clients and stakeholders from diverse backgrounds.

You will be joining an established and cohesive team that has a strong culture of collaboration and a framework of continuous improvement.

The Offer

- 1 FTE (76 hours per fortnight) ongoing position.
- SCHADS Level 5 Award salary subject to skills and experience.
- Salary packaging.

MHLC is an inclusive employer. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, members of the LGBTIQ+ and culturally diverse communities encouraged to apply.

Enquiries can be directed to Kate Windmill, Principal Lawyer via mhlc@mhlc.org.au or via 03 9629 4422.

To apply

Please address applications to Kate Windmill, Principal Lawyer, via email: mhlc@mhlc.org.au.

Applications must include:

- Curriculum Vitae (CV/Resume);
- A cover letter; and
- Your response to the key selection criteria (essential and desirable skills/experience).

Please note that applications that do not respond to the key selection criteria (essential and desirable) will not be considered for interview.

Applications close **Monday 22 August 2022 at midnight** with interviews to take place as applications are received.

Position Description – Lawyer – Generalist and MHT Advocacy Program

Key responsibilities

With supervision and support:

Legal Service Delivery

- Provide legal assistance to clients in our practice areas by way of:
 - Information, referral, advice, and casework.
 - Ongoing casework which may require conferences/mediation and appearances in courts, tribunals, &/or other advocacy forums.
 - Deliver place-based services at partner organisations as required.
- Deliver high standards of service to clients often with complex and disadvantaged needs.
- Prioritise strategic casework and services and link these to our law reform, policy, and community engagement work.
- Ensure quality and consistency of delivery of legal services in accordance with CLC policies.
- Participate in legal team meetings and debriefing sessions with colleagues.
- Ensure the complete and accurate collection of client data.
- Assist with other program areas within the CLC as required.

Stakeholder engagement, education and law reform

- Building and maintaining referral pathways and operational relationships with courts, tribunals and local service delivery partners to achieve better outcomes for clients.
- Participate in stakeholder and community meetings as required.
- Develop and deliver legal education to community members and service providers in accordance with a work plan.

Other roles and responsibilities

- Comply with policy and procedures and maintain currency through training that relate to legal and regulatory requirements and our ways of working.
- Seek out training opportunities to further enhance professional development in accordance with duties as required within this position after consultation with your manager.
- Participate in regular supervision and meet agreed performance indicators and work plan activities.
- Undertake any reasonable additional tasks as directed by management.
- MHLC is committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of its staff. MHLC and its staff must comply with a range of statutory requirements, including equal opportunity, occupational health and safety and privacy laws. MHLC is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people.

Ways of Working

- Support colleagues and the team environment, we value debriefing and accessing supports when needed.
- Contribute actively in meetings and staff days – we value your input and feedback helps us improve.
- Maintain organisational values and behaviours with energy, transparency and vision.
- Support the achievement of the MHLC Strategic Plan, through team planning and work plans.

Performance indicators

- Perform effectively the duties and responsibilities in your position description with commitment and diligence.
- Approach your work with adaptability and openness to feedback and learning, including seeking out relevant opportunities to support your professional development.
- Use your best endeavours to protect and promote MHLC's interests, reputation and strategic priorities.
- Contribute actively to meetings and team discussions - we value your expertise and input.
- Promote a positive culture and support your colleagues. Maintain organisational values and behaviours as outlined within the Code of Conduct, including cultural safety and awareness.

Mental Health Legal Centre

Lawyer – Generalist and MHT Advocacy Program

- Maintain all qualifications, licenses, skills, knowledge and competencies relevant to your employment with MHLC.

Key selection criteria

Essential (Skills, knowledge, experience)

1. Exceptional interpersonal skills including a demonstrated ability to engage with people who have complex vulnerabilities including trauma and a commitment to access to justice and equity principles.
2. Experience networking and building relationships with a broad range of stakeholders.
3. High level oral and written communications skills, including legal drafting.
4. Demonstrated capacity to work in a small team and support a cohesive team environment, as well as ability to work independently (with supervision).
5. Commitment to social justice and alignment with MHLC vision and principles.

Desirable (Skills, knowledge, experience, qualification and/or training)

1. Knowledge and experience in community legal sector, including legal education and development, policy, and law reform.
2. Practice or knowledge of key legal areas including mental health, infringements, NDIS, tenancy, guardianship and administration, child protection, intervention orders, freedom of information, Commonwealth benefits and family law.

Prerequisites

1. Eligible for a practising certificate. MHLC will pay for the cost of applying for or renewing a practicing certificate and the employee must continue to meet the requirements for holding a practicing certificate.
2. Based on current Victorian Government directions we are required to collect, record and hold vaccination information to ensure staff are fully vaccinated. This information will be treated as private and confidential.

Any changes to these prerequisites after employment commences must be communicated to the employer immediately by the employee.

Hours of work

This position is a two-year maximum-term position, to be worked 5 days a week (38 hours).

This role is subject to government and project funding.

Acknowledgement

I certify that I have read, understood and accept the duties, responsibilities and obligations of my position.

Signed by you: Date:

Name:

Signed by MHLC CEO: Date:

Name: