



Villamanta Disability
Rights Legal Service Inc.

Senior Lawyer

POSITION DESCRIPTION

40 hours per week (includes paid lunch break)

CONTEXT

Villamanta Disability Rights Legal Service Inc. (Villamanta) is a state-wide community legal centre that works on disability related legal and justice issues. Villamanta's main purpose is to ensure that Victorian people who have a disability know about the law and their rights and can access legal advice and casework, as needed. Villamanta's focus is on the rights of people with an intellectual disability.

Villamanta is a free service that is funded by the Federal Government via the National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP), National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and the National Legal Assistance Program (NLAP).

Services offered by Villamanta include information, advice, referrals, advocacy (casework), community education and policy and law reform (systemic advocacy). Villamanta also delivers limited training and secondary consultation services to legal and advocacy organisations and stakeholders.

ABOUT THE ROLE

1. Casework

The Senior Lawyer is primarily responsible for undertaking legal work and providing direct supervision and support to a small team of junior lawyers and volunteers; while ensuring compliance with Villamanta's legal practice standards and Community Legal Centres Australia (CLCA) risk management framework, and all other applicable legal and regulatory standards.

Under direction of the Principal Lawyer (PL), duties include:

- a) undertaking legal action on behalf of clients. Legal action may include providing information, advice, referrals, advocacy (casework) and representation, community legal education and policy and law reform (systemic advocacy)
- b) ensuring all legal work follows current legislative requirements and legal practice standards
- c) supporting the development and continual review of legal intake, advice, and casework guidelines in line with Villamanta's strategic goals and funding requirements
- d) providing regular supervision and mentoring to legal staff including:
 - i) monitoring caseloads and capacity
 - ii) participating in continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities for legal and non-legal staff in collaboration with the legal services team and overseen by the PL.

- e) Providing high quality legal advice and casework to clients; including representation in Victorian and Federal tribunals and courts
- f) have ongoing carriage of files of a complex nature.

2. Law reform and systemic change work

- a) Contributing to submissions that clarify issues, propose alternatives, and seek to improve outcomes under our purpose and service priorities
- b) planning and at times delivering and overseeing the delivery of community education workshops and training to stakeholders.

3. Organisational responsibilities.

- a) in collaboration with the PL develop and lead change management processes that have a positive impact on staff, clients, and effective service delivery
- b) support the development and maintenance of templates, tools, and precedent systems, including legal precedents
- c) ensuring compliance with Villamanta's data entry requirements, file management and data systems
- d) taking part in Villamanta's casework team meetings
- e) provision of supervision to volunteers and students as needed
- f) undertaking Continuing Professional Development (CPD) per legal regulations
- g) always ensuring compliance with Villamanta's policies and procedures
- h) other projects, activities and duties that may be decided in
- i) collaboration with the Principal Lawyer and the Executive Officer.

4. Reporting

Provide regular reports to the Principal Lawyer who reports to the Executive Officer and the Committee of Management, as needed.

KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

1. Essential

- a) eligible to hold an unrestricted practising certificate from the Legal Practice Board (LSB)
- b) an understanding of the issues that affect people who have a disability
- c) demonstrated, mentoring and leadership experience; including ability to work collaboratively, and perform as an efficient and productive team member
- d) demonstrated ability to provide high quality legal advice, casework services and tribunal or court representation (without direct supervision)
- e) excellent verbal and written communication skills suitable for a range of audiences, including strategic and community stakeholders as well as stakeholder management and negotiation skills
- f) proven strong level of initiative and organisational abilities; including time management skills and the ability to prioritise while managing a diverse caseload
- g) demonstrated commitment to the protection and advancement of human rights

- h) advanced computer skills relevant to the operation of Microsoft programs, email and Villamanta's data systems.

2. Desirable

- a) knowledge of relevant disability legislation, government policies and current issues
- b) experience working with people who have a disability, in particular people who have an intellectual disability or cognitive impairment
- c) hold a current drivers' licence.

HOURS OF WORK

The ordinary hours of work are 9 am and 5 pm, Monday to Friday unless otherwise agreed.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Senior Lawyer is directly accountable to the Principal Lawyer, who is in turn responsible to the Executive Officer on a day-to-day basis.

Overall governance responsibility lies with the Committee of Management (COM).

SALARY & CONDITIONS

Conditions of Employment are regulated according to the Villamanta Disability Rights Legal Service Inc.'s Certified Agreement and the Victorian SCHADS Award (2010). Salary packaging is available.

Salary for this role is per the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award (SCHADS). Level 7.

The position is based in Geelong West. You may have to travel within rural Victoria and to Melbourne, and from time to time be needed to undertake work outside normal business hours, and sometimes involving overnight stays.

No overtime pay is available, but provision is made through time in lieu and provisions within the Villamanta Certified Agreement.

Villamanta is committed to ensuring a safe working environment without risk to the health of employees under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic). The successful candidate will need to supply reasonable proof that they have been vaccinated against COVID-19 or have reasonable evidence of an exemption.