

Position Description – (Practitioner, Child and Youth Witness Service)

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Position title:	Practitioner, Child and Youth Witness Service
Position number:	D00868
Group:	Community Safety, Victims and Racing
Business Unit/Branch:	Victims, Redress and System Reform
Classification:	VPS4
Employment status:	Fixed
Position reports to:	Team Manager, Child and Youth Witness Service
Work location:	277 William Street, Melbourne
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ROLE PURPOSE

The role of a Child and Youth Witness Practitioner

- Provide specialist end-to-end case management of child witnesses' contact with the criminal justice system.
- Provide information to child witnesses and their families about the criminal justice system.
- Work collaboratively with external agencies providing support to child witnesses and their families.

The Victims, Redress and System Reform (VRSR) branch is part of the Police, Racing, Victims and Coordination group in the Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS). The VRSR is responsible for coordinating a suite of services for victims of crime that provide information and support to help manage the effects of crime and guide victims through the criminal justice system across Victoria.

The Child and Youth Witness Service (CYWS) is a statewide specialist case management service for child witnesses (up to 18 years at the time charges were laid) and their families and/or carers. The model of care is child focused and incorporates principles of trauma informed care. The purpose of the CYWS is to increase participation by child witnesses in the criminal justice process and to reduce trauma associated with being involved with the criminal justice system, particularly being a child witness.



The CYWS is non-investigative and does not provide comment on the evidence of child witnesses or provide legal advice. The role of the CYWS is to:

- Provide specialist end-to-end case management of child witnesses' contact with the criminal justice system.
- Provide information to child witnesses and their families about the criminal justice system, how it works, their role as a witness and the roles and responsibilities of other people involved in the criminal justice system.
- Work collaboratively with external agencies providing support to child witnesses and their families, including: Intermediaries providing expert communication or developmental assessments; legal teams; police; and courts, to support child witnesses.

In Melbourne, child witnesses generally give evidence from the CYWS, a purpose-built facility that hosts the remote witness rooms for Melbourne courts and is child, youth and family friendly. In metropolitan and regional courts, the service is provided via outreach. Approximately 40 per cent of CYWS clients are located in regional locations. As such, regular regional travel across Victoria is required, often requiring overnight stays. There may be some occasions when working from home is required.

KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES

- Provide specialist case management to child witnesses and their families when children are witnesses in criminal matters. The service is provided for matters heard in the Magistrates, County and Supreme Courts and the criminal division of the Children's Court.
- Quickly build rapport with children and adolescents and their families/carers and have a good understanding of child development and the possible impacts on children of being subjected to (or witness to) violent crimes.
- Assess child witnesses' specific needs that may affect their participation in the criminal justice process and tailor court preparation to the child's individual needs accordingly, e.g., working with child witnesses to identify stress management techniques that will work for them. This may include working collaboratively with other professionals such as Intermediaries who conduct specialist assessments of children to assist children to give their best evidence in court.
- Undertake witness preparation, including familiarising child witnesses with the remote witness room, court processes and key roles within the court.
- Provide information to the legal team (Office of Public Prosecutions, Police Prosecutions) about the individual needs of child witnesses to assist in improving the way the criminal justice system accommodates the needs and concerns of child witnesses and their families/carers.
- Facilitate effective communication between child witnesses and the legal system, keeping child witnesses and their families/carers informed about key dates and progress with criminal proceedings.
- Convene legal conferences between child witnesses, their family/carers and the legal team to assist the legal team to understand the child's preferences and for the legal team to explain proceedings and options to the child and their family.
- Support child witnesses whilst giving evidence, provide support and debriefing throughout the process, including post court.

- Work collaboratively with external agencies that are identified by the child and/or their family as supporting the child and provide supported referral to other services as required.
- Participate as a team member of the CYWS and the VSSR more broadly.
- Contributing to the effective operation of the VSSR and wider victim support system by adhering to the organisational vision, policies, guidelines and procedures.
- Ensure the administrative, recordkeeping and reporting requirements are met in a timely and transparent manner.

KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

Technical Expertise

- Extensive experience in the provision of direct services to children who have experienced trauma.
- Demonstrated experience in working in community and/or court-based settings.
- Sound knowledge of child development and the impact of trauma and abuse on child development.

Personal Attributes

- **Resilience:** Gives frank and honest feedback/advice. Listens when ideas are challenged, seeks to understand the nature of criticism and respond constructively; displays confidence and conviction when communicating an opinion.
- **Flexibility and Adaptability:** Accept changed priorities without undue discomfort. Responds quickly to changes. Comfortable working in collaboration with teams outside of own organisation.
- **Working Collaboratively:** Build a supportive and cooperative team environment; engages other teams to share information in order to understand or respond to issues; support others in challenging situations.
- **Promote Inclusion:** Pays attention to words, expression and body language; recognises behaviours that promote a culture of inclusion. Hold self and team accountable towards being inclusive to individuals from diverse backgrounds. Takes corrective actions when behaviours displayed do not promote an inclusive workplace.

Meaningful Outcomes

- **Partnering and Co-creation:** Identifies and partners with users/stakeholders/experts to ensure active collaboration in the design process to understand user needs, obtain ideas, insights and input. Work with stakeholders/users to build prototypes and coordinate testing to validate the strategy, program or product. Ensures decisions are made within agreed timeframes.
- **Innovation and Continuous Improvement:** Seeks opportunities for continuous improvement and ways to innovate; offers suggestions and ideas, encourages others to do the same; leverage on existing continuous improvement systems and procedures to improve outcomes, quality and efficiency of work; creates space for learning and innovation by seeking for input and feedback from others.



Enabling Delivery

- **Critical Thinking and Problem Solving:** Resolves issues through deep understanding or interpretation of existing guidelines. Where guidelines are not available, analyses ideas available and takes action through self, or in consultation with others to resolve problems. If required, determine additional information needed to make informed decisions. Applies critical thinking and problem solving concepts in the right context.

Authentic Relationships

- **Interpersonal Skills:** Sees things from another's point of view and confirms understanding; understand motivations, needs and wants of stakeholders and their impact on service delivery; tailor communications according to audience and/or audience preference.
- **Managing Difficult Conversations:** Listens to and acknowledges that the concerns of others have been heard; clarifies problems; seeks options to resolve conflict.
- **Stakeholder Management:** Takes steps to add value for the client or stakeholder; links people with other areas as appropriate; monitors client and stakeholder satisfaction; constructively deals with stakeholder issues.

Qualifications

- Tertiary qualifications in a human service related profession such as Social Work, Psychology or Allied Health is essential and registration with the appropriate body is desirable.
- A current 'Working with Children Check' is required.
- A current driver's licence is required.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- The salary range for this position is set out in the Victorian Public Service Enterprise Agreement 2020. Please refer to the Department of Treasury and Finance website (dtf.vic.gov.au) for further information.
- Department policy stipulates that salary upon commencement is paid at the base of the salary range for the relevant grade. Any above base requests require sign off by an executive delegate and will be by exception only or where required to match the current salary of Victorian Public Service staff transferring at-level.
- If you have previously left the VPS on a departure/ separation package, employment restrictions may apply.
- You may be required to mobilise to other areas to support priority projects or programs.
- The department is committed to providing and maintaining a working environment which is safe and without risk to the health of its employees.



SAFETY COMMITMENT

- Staff safety commitment - Actively participate in health, safety, and wellbeing (HSW) programs and proactively report on all HSW incidents through the Justice Incident Management System (JIMS) to embed and support a strong safety-first culture that supports the HSW Strategy's vision of "a workforce that thinks safety and works safely".
- Manager safety commitment - Create and maintain a working environment, that takes a zero-tolerance approach to unsafe practices and behaviours, which supports the HSW Strategy's vision of "a workforce that thinks safety and works safely".
- Child safety commitment - The Department of Justice and Community Safety is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. We seek to prevent harm of any kind impacting children and young people and have zero tolerance for racism, child abuse and inequality. Children and young people's rights, relationships, identity, and culture must be recognised and respected, their voices heard, and their concerns acted upon. We aim to foster a culturally safe, child safe and child friendly environment for all children and young people we have contact with, deliver services to, or are impacted by our work.

PRE-EMPLOYMENT CHECKS

All appointments to the Department of Justice and Community Safety are subject to reference checks, pre-employment misconduct screening and criminal record checks. Some positions may also be subject to a Declaration of Private Interests (for executive and responsible officer roles), medical checks, and/or 'Working with Children Check.'

If the position is based in a prison, youth justice facility or community corrections location, or has offender management responsibilities, employment may be subject to a number of additional pre-employment security and safety checks, including, but not limited to:

- Pre-employment Security and Misconduct Checks (Declaration Form)
- National Police Record and Fingerprints Check and International Police Clearance (if applicable)
- VicRoads Information Check
- Drivers Licence Check(s) (if applicable).

A National Police Check and an Australian Entitlement to Work Check is a requirement for all DJCS positions, and these checks require identification documents of either a passport or birth certificate.

For Aboriginal Prioritised or Designated positions, a Certificate of Aboriginality (CoA) will be required prior to an offer of employment being made.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants are strongly encouraged to email:

aboriginal.workforce@justice.vic.gov.au for support and assistance if they have any concerns that they cannot meet the identification documents requirements.

VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS



Department of Justice and Community Safety employees are required to demonstrate commitment to:

The Victorian Public Sector Values: responsiveness, integrity, impartiality, accountability, respect, leadership and human rights.

The Environment: The department is committed to minimising its environmental impact and requires all staff to comply with its environmental policy.

Recordkeeping: The department is committed to good recordkeeping and requires all staff to routinely create and keep full and accurate records of their work-related activities, transactions and decisions, using authorised systems.

Diversity: The department values an inclusive workplace that embraces diversity and strongly encourages applications from Aboriginal people, people with disability, people from the LGBTIQ community, and people from culturally diverse backgrounds.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Please visit About the Department on the [Department of Justice and Community Safety website](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au) (<http://www.justice.vic.gov.au>) for information on:

- Organisational values and structure
- Our policies such as privacy and conflict of interest
- The Victorian Public Service (VPS) code of conduct
- Our commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children.