

Women's Legal Service NSW

Position Description

Law Reform and Advocacy Researcher

Grade Classification	Grade 5
Salary Range	\$ 100,182.32 to \$ 121,355.39 per annum (2025-2026) (indexation to be applied for 2026-2027)
Location	Role base: Lidcombe NSW. May require travel across Greater Sydney as well as to rural, regional and remote NSW.
Employment type	Full Time, Part Time.
	Permanent
Award	The Women's Legal Service NSW Enterprise Agreement, read in conjunction with the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services (SCHADS) Award.
Benefits	Salary packaging option available.
Approval Date	17 July 2026

PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THE ROLE

The Law Reform and Advocacy Researcher undertakes high-quality legal, policy and social research that informs Women's Legal Service NSW's (Women's Legal) law reform, systemic advocacy and strategic policy agenda. Working collaboratively across the organisation, the role provides research and analytical expertise to support the development of evidence-informed law reform positions, policy advice, submissions and advocacy initiatives that improve access to justice and advance gender equality for women.

KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES

- Conduct high-quality legal, policy and social research to identify emerging issues, analyse evidence and inform Women's Legal's law reform and advocacy priorities.
- Contribute to the development of evidence-informed law reform proposals, policy advice and submissions that support systemic change and improve access to justice for women.
- Monitor legislative, policy and social developments and provide timely analysis that informs Women's Legal's strategic advocacy and systemic reform priorities.
- Develop and maintain a robust evidence base by collecting, synthesising and managing legal, policy and practice information that strengthens organisational knowledge and decision-making.
- Build collaborative relationships with internal and external stakeholders to facilitate knowledge sharing and support evidence-informed law reform and advocacy.
- Manage assigned research activities to ensure deliverables are completed to agreed quality standards and within established timeframes.
- Communicate research findings through high-quality reports, briefing papers, presentations and other written materials that inform decision-making and influence policy and practice.
- Contribute positively to organisational capability by demonstrating professional practice, continuous learning and behaviours consistent with Women's Legal's values and strategic objectives.

POSITION DIMENSIONS

This position reports to Principal Solicitor.

Number of direct reports to this position None.

ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

Women's Legal Service NSW works to end gender-based violence and achieve gender equity. With decades of experience and a feminist understanding of how law, systems and power impact women's lives, we drive structural and systemic change through legal action, law and policy reform, advocacy, and education to improve women's safety and economic security.

Our legal practice spans three specialist programs: the Women's Rights Program, the First Nations Women's Legal Program, and the Working Women's Centre. Together, they provide free, trauma-informed, culturally safe, client-centred legal services, grounded in a gender justice framework.

Our organisation relies on strong administrative systems and coordinated operational support to achieve these outcomes.

The Law Reform and Advocacy Researcher contributes to Women's Legal's broader purpose by strengthening the evidence base that informs legal practice, strategic advocacy and organisational decision-making. The role works collaboratively across the organisation to identify emerging issues, analyse trends and provide research and analysis that supports law reform and advocacy initiatives.

KEY RELATIONSHIPS

Who	Why
Internal	
Law Reform and Advocacy Program Leads (Working Women's Centre and Women's Rights Program)	- Receive direction, guidance and professional support while contributing to the delivery of law reform and advocacy priorities. - Provide regular updates on research activities, progress and emerging issues.
Principal Solicitor	Provide research and evidence that supports legal practice, law reform and systemic advocacy.
Assistant Principal Solicitors	Work collaboratively to identify emerging legal issues and opportunities for law reform arising from legal practice.
Solicitors and Legal Practice Teams	Work collaboratively with practitioners across all legal programs to gather frontline insights and practice information that informs research, law reform and advocacy.
First Nations Women's Legal Program	Collaborate with the team and, where appropriate, engage with the First Nations Women's Consultative Network to ensure First Nations perspectives and practice insights inform culturally responsive research, law reform and systemic advocacy.
Practice Integration and Capability	Provide research, analysis and evidence to support organisational planning, evaluation and systemic advocacy initiatives.
Education and Training	Share research findings and collaborate as needed on the development of educational resources and community information.
Communications and Operations	Provide research, evidence and policy content to support publications, campaigns and external communications.
External	
Community Legal Centres and Peak Bodies	Work collaboratively to strengthen sector-wide advocacy and shared law reform initiatives.
Women's Organisations and Community Partners	Engage with organisations to understand emerging issues, gather evidence and support collaborative advocacy.
First Nations Organisations	Build respectful working relationships to support culturally informed research and advocacy.
Government Departments and Agencies	Develop constructive professional relationships that support consultation, research and information sharing.
Universities and Research Institutions	Collaborate on research activities, evidence development and knowledge exchange.

CORE POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES

This position description outlines the primary responsibilities; however, it is not intended to be an exhaustive list.

Accountability Areas	Responsibilities
Research and Analysis	• Undertake legal, policy and social research on issues affecting women experiencing disadvantage, discrimination and violence. • Analyse legislation, case law, government policy, research literature and emerging practice. • Identify trends, gaps and opportunities for systemic improvement. • Apply intersectional, trauma-informed and evidence-based approaches to research activities.
Law Reform and Policy	• Provide research and analysis that supports the development of organisational law reform priorities, policy positions and submissions. • Prepare submissions to government consultation processes, parliamentary inquiries and law reform bodies. • Draft discussion papers, briefing papers and policy documents. • Support the development of evidence-informed recommendations for law reform and policy activities.
Strategic Advocacy	• Provide research and analytical support for strategic advocacy initiatives. • Monitor legislative and policy developments relevant to Women's Legal's work. • Identify emerging legal and policy issues and provide research that supports organisational advocacy and systemic reform initiatives. • Provide research and evidence that supports public advocacy, campaigns and stakeholder engagement.
Evidence and Knowledge Management	• Collect, synthesise and maintain research, legal and policy information that supports organisational priorities. • Analyse frontline legal information and practice insights to identify emerging trends and support evidence-informed law reform and advocacy. • Maintain research resources and knowledge repositories. • Promote consistent use of evidence across law reform and advocacy activities.
Stakeholder Collaboration	• Build collaborative working relationships across legal practice areas to support research activities. • Consult with internal and external stakeholders to gather information and test proposals. • Work collaboratively with researchers, government agencies, community organisations and sector partners to support research and information sharing. • Contribute to collaborative research and cross-sector initiatives where appropriate.

Accountability Areas	Responsibilities
Research Project Coordination	• Coordinate assigned research projects from planning through to completion. • Monitor project milestones, timelines and deliverables. • Support project reporting and documentation. • Ensure research activities are delivered to agreed quality standards and timeframes.
Knowledge Translation	• Prepare reports, publications, briefing papers and presentations for a range of audiences. • Present research findings in clear, accessible and practical formats. • Contribute research and evidence to organisational publications, community legal education resources and knowledge-sharing activities. • Provide research findings, analysis and briefing material to support advice and organisational decision-making. • Maintain contemporary knowledge of legal, policy and social issues affecting women.
Organisational and personal values	• Represent the organisation in an honest, ethical and professional way and act with integrity and respect at all times and in all situations. • Work collaboratively, sharing knowledge with colleagues to deliver professional excellence. • Recognise and report misconduct and illegal and inappropriate behaviour. • Show commitment to achieving work goals and deliverables. • Adhere to the Australian Solicitors Conduct Rules and the Legal Profession Uniform law at all times. • Proactively identify and manage risks in line with the Community Legal Centres Australia Risk Management Guide to uphold the safety, integrity and quality of the Women's Legal Service NSW services.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Essential Criteria	1. Commitment to Social Justice and Gender Equity. Demonstrated understanding of, and commitment to, social justice issues for women, particularly First Nations women, and women experiencing deep and persistent disadvantage (social, economic and cultural) and lack of access to legal services. 2. Qualifications. A tertiary qualification in Law, Public Policy, Social Science, Criminology or another relevant discipline, together with demonstrated experience undertaking legal, policy or law reform research. 3. Law Reform, Policy and Systemic Advocacy. Demonstrated experience preparing law reform submissions, policy advice or other evidence-informed papers that influence policy, practice or systemic reform. 4. Research, Analysis and Evidence-Informed Practice. Demonstrated experience applying qualitative and/or quantitative research methodologies to collect, analyse and synthesise information that informs policy, practice or organisational decision-making. 5. Written Communication and Influence. Demonstrated experience preparing high-quality reports, submissions, briefing papers and other publications, with excellent written and verbal communication skills and the ability to synthesise complex legal and policy issues into clear, persuasive information for a range of audiences. 6. Legal Research and Analysis. Demonstrated ability to analyse complex legislation, policy and research and communicate findings to support evidence-informed decision-making. 7. Time Management and Organisational Skills. Highly developed organisational skills, with the ability to deliver quality outcomes and manage multiple research activities, competing priorities and deadlines while working both independently and collaboratively. 8. Relationships. Strong interpersonal, consultation and collaboration skills, with the ability to establish productive working relationships with a broad range of internal and external stakeholders. 9. Technical & Systems Proficiency. Demonstrated proficiency in Microsoft Office applications and the ability to use organisational information systems, databases and reporting tools to support research, analysis and evidence-based decision-making. 10. Legal Ethics and Risk Management. Demonstrated understanding of confidentiality, privacy and information management obligations.
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Additional criteria	11. Pre-Employment Screening. Satisfactory Police Check and Working with Children Check (as applicable). 12. Willingness to Travel. Ability to travel in line with work commitments. 13. Professional Development. Commitment to undergoing organisational relevant training and education in line with role responsibilities.
Desirable criteria	14. Sector Experience. Experience in the community legal, human rights or not-for-profit sector. 15. Values-Based Legal Practice. Understanding of feminist legal practice and systemic advocacy.

The Women's Legal Service NSW considers being a woman a genuine occupational qualification for this position under s. 31 of the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW).