

Position Description: Senior Policy and Advocacy Advisor, Federal Portfolio

Position Title	Senior Policy and Advocacy Advisor, Victorian Portfolio
Position Status	Full-time or part-time (minimum 0.8 FTE) / ongoing
MEA Classification	Victorian Community Legal Centres Multi-Enterprise Agreement 2024-2027 Social and Community Services Employee, Level 6
Position Reports to	Director Policy, Advocacy and Communications
Position Supervises	May supervise interns, secondees, or short-term project staff as required
Date Reviewed	August 2026

About Women's Legal Service Victoria

Women's Legal Service Victoria (Women's Legal) is a specialist, trauma-informed, state-wide for-purpose organisation that has been providing free specialist legal services to women since 1982. We work with, and for, women and non-binary people to address legal issues arising from family violence and relationship breakdown.

Women's Legal's vision is that women and non-binary people live free from violence and discrimination in a gender-equitable society. Our unique contribution to this vision – as lawyers, social workers, financial counsellors, advocates and educators – is to work alongside women and non-binary people experiencing disadvantage to promote their rights to live free from violence and make informed choices about their relationships.

Women's Legal specialises in family and sexual violence, family law, migration, child protection, criminal law and victims of crime assistance – recognising the intersection between the jurisdictions. We focus on women's safety, recovery from violence and economic security. We do this by:

- Providing legal advice and representation to women and non-binary people with a wraparound model of service delivery where they are supported by social workers and financial counsellors, depending on their needs.
- Advocating for law and policy that respects and promotes the rights of women and non-binary people.
- Building the capacity of other professionals and communities to identify and respond appropriately to legal need.

About the Policy, Advocacy and Communications Directorate

The Policy, Advocacy and Communications (PAC) Directorate leads Women's Legal's law reform, policy and advocacy work to improve laws, systems and responses affecting women and non-binary people.

PAC's work is grounded in casework evidence, client experience, research and stakeholder engagement. This evidence base informs the identification of reform priorities, but our work is not linear – it requires ongoing judgement about where to focus effort for greatest impact in a constrained and dynamic policy environment.

The Directorate works across legal policy development, campaign advocacy, political engagement and communications. This includes shaping reform proposals, advising on advocacy strategy, building relationships with decision-makers, and contributing to coordinated campaigns that influence public debate and government action.

PAC collaborates closely across Women's Legal and with external partners to align advocacy with organisational priorities and maximise impact. This includes structured approaches to campaign planning, policy development and coordination.

Intersectional Feminist Framework

The work we do is informed by the principles in our Intersectional Feminist Framework, which shapes how we prioritise issues, centre lived experience, and approach questions of power, equity and system change.

Ongoing learning and humility: We commit to continually learning and evolving our understanding of how intersecting discriminations impact our clients, our people, communities and the legal system.

Transforming and disrupting systems: We're not just about playing the game; we're about changing the game.

Complexity and marginalisation: We target our assistance to those with complex needs at the intersections of inequality and discrimination.

Trauma-informed: We believe that people are the experts of their own lives and are best placed to make decisions for themselves and their families.

Whole person dignity and respect: We support the whole person through the development of systems change and law reform advocacy, as well as the delivery of multidisciplinary training and integrated services.

Power and accountability: We acknowledge differences in power and work collaboratively to share power with our colleagues, clients, and stakeholders where appropriate. We reflect on our position of power and hold ourselves to account.

Position overview

The Senior Policy and Advocacy Advisor – Federal Portfolio is responsible for developing and delivering high-quality policy, law reform and advocacy within Women's Legal's strategic priorities and agreed campaign strategies. The role has primary responsibility for policy and law reform in the Federal

jurisdiction and contributes to cross-jurisdictional and Victorian advocacy priorities where relevant and required. This includes but is not limited to laws, policies and practices relating to family law, migration, economic safety, sexual violence, and anti-discrimination.

The role monitors and analyses legal, policy and political developments, undertakes legal and policy research, builds and applies an evidence base from casework, client experience, stakeholder consultation and external research, and translates this into clear, timely and persuasive briefs, submissions, reports, policy papers and advocacy materials.

Working with a high level of autonomy and in consultation with the Director, Policy, Advocacy and Communications, the role provides concise advice and recommendations to support organisational decision-making, identifies emerging risks and opportunities, and translates agreed organisational objectives into advocacy strategies and implementation plans.

The role represents Women's Legal in consultations, working groups, advisory forums and stakeholder meetings, and works collaboratively across the organisation and with external partners in Victoria and nationally to progress evidence-based law reform and systems change.

Key responsibilities

1. Strategic advocacy and law reform

- Develop and deliver policy, law reform and advocacy campaign plans and initiatives aligned with Women's Legal's strategic priorities.
- Analyse complex legal, policy and systemic issues affecting women and non-binary people, particularly victim-survivors of family and sexual violence, and develop evidence-based reform proposals, policy positions and advocacy materials.
- Monitor and interpret legislative, policy, parliamentary, sector and media developments relevant to Women's Legal's strategic priorities, identifying risks, opportunities and implications for advocacy.
- Develop and implement advocacy strategies and campaign plans for allocated Victorian priorities, including identifying points of leverage, decision-makers, stakeholder dynamics, risks, opportunities and tactics to influence reform.
- Support engagement with government, parliamentarians, departments, regulators, sector partners and other decision-makers to advance Women's Legal's policy and advocacy objectives.
- Build and maintain effective stakeholder relationships and coalitions that support Women's Legal's advocacy objectives.
- Manage allocated policy and advocacy priorities independently, including planning work, coordinating inputs, meeting deadlines, documenting decisions and escalating risks or support needs.

2. Research, evidence and policy development

- Build and maintain effective relationships with colleagues across Women's Legal and Women's Legal Services Australia (WLSA) to identify casework trends, test reform proposals and ensure advocacy is grounded in frontline evidence.

- Use qualitative and quantitative evidence, including casework and practice insights, client experience and stakeholder consultation, to develop robust policy and law reform recommendations.
- Undertake legal and policy research, including analysis of legislation, case law, policy frameworks, government reports, sector evidence and external research.
- Provide timely advice, analysis and recommendations to support organisational decision-making.
- Contribute to monitoring, evaluation and organisational learning to strengthen policy, advocacy and law reform outcomes.

3. Communications and influence

- Work with communications colleagues to translate complex legal and policy issues into accessible public messaging, media materials, digital content and stakeholder communications.
- Provide strategic input into advocacy messaging and public communications to ensure materials are accurate, persuasive, values-aligned and consistent with organisational strategy.
- Identify opportunities to strengthen the public impact and visibility of Women's Legal's policy and advocacy work.

Cross-organisational engagement

- Contribute effectively to organisational strategic planning and projects to advance Women's Legal's strategic goals, purpose and vision.
- Contribute to the implementation of Women's Legal's Reconciliation Action Plan and Intersectional Feminist Framework.
- Contribute to a healthy, respectful, accountable and productive workplace culture where work practices, communication, decision-making and behaviour reflect Women's Legal values and Intersectional Feminist Framework.
- Perform other duties as reasonably directed and necessary for the proper performance of the role.

Key selection criteria

- **Strategic policy and advocacy development**
Demonstrated experience developing and delivering policy, law reform and advocacy initiatives, including setting strategic approaches, managing competing priorities and driving projects that influence decision-makers, strengthen stakeholder engagement or contribute to reform outcomes.
- **Analysis, communication and evidence-based advice**
Demonstrated ability to analyse complex legal, policy and systemic issues, synthesise evidence from diverse sources, and develop clear, practical and persuasive advice, recommendations and written materials tailored to a range of audiences.
- **Stakeholder engagement and influence**

Demonstrated ability to build and maintain effective relationships with government, sector partners, community organisations and stakeholders and internal colleagues, and to influence outcomes through collaboration, negotiation and strategic engagement.

- **Political judgement and strategic decision-making**

Demonstrated understanding of government, parliamentary and law reform processes, and the ability to exercise sound judgement, manage competing priorities and respond effectively in complex, politically sensitive and rapidly changing environments.

- **Intersectional feminist and trauma-informed practice**

Demonstrated ability to apply, or strong capacity to develop and apply, anti-oppressive, intersectional feminist, trauma-informed and culturally responsive approaches to policy, advocacy and law reform.

Qualifications and experience

Required

- A tertiary qualification in law, public policy, social policy, social science or another relevant discipline, or equivalent demonstrated experience.
- At least five years' experience in policy, law reform, advocacy or related roles in the legal assistance, family violence, sexual violence, social justice, community or public policy sectors.

Desirable

- Experience in one or more of Women's Legal's practice areas, including family violence, family law, migration law, child protection, sexual violence, victims of crime, crime or economic safety.
- Experience using client, lived experience or service data to inform policy, advocacy or law reform.
- Experience in advocacy campaigns, government relations, coalition advocacy or public affairs.
- Established networks across the legal assistance, family violence, sexual violence, community, government or policy sectors.

Our culture

We are intentional about building a culture that enables people to do demanding, high-impact work well.

Our work is grounded in an intersectional feminist framework. This shapes how we prioritise issues, whose expertise we centre, and how we approach power, equity and system change. We expect staff to apply this lens in their work, not just understand it conceptually.

We prioritise psychological safety, accountability and respect so staff can contribute openly, challenge ideas, and make decisions that improve outcomes for victim-survivors. Collaboration here means rigorous thinking as well as support.

We value diversity of experience and perspective and focus on how that translates into equitable practice. This includes recognising the different roles our staff hold in their families and communities and designing flexible ways of working that support sustainability in the role.

Our organisational values guide how we work with each other and with stakeholders, particularly in how we navigate complexity, disagreement and responsibility. Senior staff are expected to model these behaviours and contribute to strengthening our culture, not just operate within it.

This is an environment for people who want to think critically, work collectively, and contribute to meaningful system change.

Values and behaviours

Everyone who works at Women's Legal plays an important role in upholding our Code of Conduct and living our values. Together, we are:

Inclusive: We actively listen and ensure that marginalised voices are centred in every forum we create.

- We ask about accessibility needs and adjust where possible.
- We centre people's input into things that affect them.
- We ask what voices are being heard, who holds power and create spaces to amplify marginalised voices.

Purposeful: Our work leads us to achieve our strategy. We invest in learning and continuous improvement to achieve our impact.

- We are clear about the "why" and prioritise actions that help us achieve our strategy.
- We are clear in our roles and responsibilities and take accountability for meeting these requirements.
- We use data, lived experience; and professional judgement to make decisions that maximise impact.

Courageous: We take the challenging path to learn, grow and achieve our strategy.

- We have challenging conversations to understand, find common ground, and promote change including with people in positions of power.
- We are brave and challenge ourselves, even when it feels uncomfortable.
- We are committed to learning from our wobbles and using them as opportunities for growth.

Collaborative: We value and actively foster involvement of a diversity of views, experiences and expertise to work together to achieve better outcomes.

- We use open communication, clear processes and dedicated time to build collaborative and trusting working relationships.
- We consider the power, roles, styles and needs of those involved in collaboration.
- We are generous in sharing successes and learnings, acknowledging everyone's efforts and contributions.

Authentic: We are honest and accountable. We seek to learn from our successes and failures

- We are honest about our capacity, skills and knowledge and are open to receiving feedback.
- We do what we say we will do and take accountability for our actions and we ask for help when we need it.

Workplace health and safety obligations

All staff have a responsibility to always display and promote safe actions in the workplace including:

- Participating in the development of a safe and healthy workplace.
- Complying with instructions given for their own safety and health and that of others, in adhering to safe work procedures.
- Cooperating with management in its fulfilment of its legislative obligations. Taking reasonable care to ensure their own safety and health and that of others, and to abide by their duty of care provided for in the legislation.
- To report any injury, hazard or illness immediately, where practical to their supervisor.
- Not place others at risk by any act or omission.
- Not wilfully or recklessly interfere with safety equipment.

National Criminal History Check

All successful candidates will be required to produce a national criminal history check prior to the commencement of their employment.

Disclosure of a criminal record does not necessarily preclude appointment by Women's Legal, but if needed, we invite applicants to address this issue early in the application phase. Should a criminal record disclosure be advised by a candidate, Women's Legal will endeavour to provide clarity over whether the conviction would preclude a candidate from being able to carry out the position duties.

Please note, all staff employed by Women's Legal Service Victoria are required to comply with Section 121 of the Legal Profession Uniform Law.

Equal Opportunity Employer

We recognise our work benefits greatly from the unique knowledge, skills, and expertise of individuals with diverse experiences, including women and non-binary people who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, with disability, with lived experience of family and sexual violence, and from migrant, refugee, culturally and racially marginalised backgrounds.

If this is you, we strongly encourage you to apply.