

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position:	Director of Legal Practice
Reports To:	CEO
Employment Type:	Full time, 38 hours per week
Position Hours:	Monday to Friday, 7.6 hours per day between the core hours
Location:	Broadmeadows office/ Hybrid
Classification:	Social Community Home Care and Disability Services Award (SCHCADS) Award Level 8
Employment Agreement:	Victorian Community Legal Centres Multi-Enterprise Agreement 2024 - 2027

About Northern Community Legal Centre

Northern Community Legal Centre (NCLC) is a dynamic not-for-profit, purpose-driven generalist community legal centre which operates in one of the fastest growing areas of Melbourne and has a significant catchment including the Merri-bek, Hume and Mitchell Shire Local Government Areas.

NCLC ensures services are accessible to all the community by providing legal advice, education and referrals. NCLC is committed to advancing access to justice for people experiencing serious disadvantage and has prioritised marginalized people who have the least resources and ability to access legal assistance including: newly arrived and refugees; survivors/victims of family violence, young people, people with mental health issues. We have a passionate, impact-driven legal and community development team who undertake a range of innovative projects and programs to identify and support those with the greatest legal needs, and contribute to systemic change, advocacy and community empowerment.

Our Mission:

NCLC provides legal services and community legal education to people facing systemic barriers to accessing such services in Melbourne's North West and Western growth areas, by enabling protection of rights and access to justice.

Our Vision:

The people of Melbourne's North-West and Northern growth areas have access to high-quality legal help advice and justice, and their rights are protected.

Our Values:

NCLC values an inclusive, flexible and supportive environment and are committed to providing a culture towards our clients, staff and stakeholders that reflects our values:



Respectful:

Acting with integrity, inclusiveness and accountability to each other, our clients and the community



Innovative:

Using creativity and flexibility to find the best possible solutions for our clients



Connecting:

Working with our community to achieve shared goals



Passionate:

Caring and supportive



Outstanding Service:

Delivering beyond expectations

POSITION OBJECTIVE

The Director of Legal Practice is the Principal Lawyer and is responsible for providing professional leadership, management and oversight across the Legal Services, and the legal practice. The Director of Legal Practice supports and contributes to the strategic advocacy, law reform and policy initiatives of NCLC.

The Director of Legal Practice is responsible for developing and managing a high-quality legal practice and providing support and supervision to a multi-disciplinary legal team, and legal volunteers, supported by a team of Senior Lawyers. The Director of Legal Practice oversees legal compliance, risk management and quality assurance, to ensure safe, ethical effective and client-centred legal services. This position also plays a key role in identifying systemic legal issues and contributing to the development of innovative responses.

ACCOUNTABILITY AUTHORITY AND DECISION MAKING

- The position is accountable to the Chief Executive Officer for the efficient and effective management of the Legal Services.
- The Director of Legal Practice has direct supervisory responsibility for Senior Lawyers and indirect supervisory responsibility for Lawyers who report to a Senior Lawyer.
- The position has authority and freedom to act within established operational and budgetary guidelines and the provisions of relevant Acts, regulations, codes, and policies.
- The Director of Legal Practice is responsible for keeping the Chief Executive Officer appropriately informed of significant legal service, operational, professional or risk matters.
- This position is a key member of the Senior Leadership Team, working collaboratively with Deputy CEO, Director of People and Culture and Operations Manager to support the strategic objective, and provide effective organisational leadership. The composition and structure of the management team may change from time to time in response to organisational needs, and the position is expected to work collaboratively with any roles that form part of the senior leadership team.

POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership and Strategic Contribution

1. Contribute to the leadership and strategic direction of the organisation in conjunction with CEO and Senior Leadership Team, ensuring services align with NCLC's mission, strategic goals and objectives.
2. Identify emerging issues, opportunities and priorities across the catchment, and provide strategic advice that supports NCLC's plans and objectives.
3. Identify and pursue strategic opportunities to strengthen legal service delivery, and contribute to legal research, law reform, advocacy and systemic change
4. Develop and manage high level stakeholder relationships with all sectors of the local community, the wider legal community, government authorities, and all other relevant external agencies.
5. Provide advice and recommendations to the CEO on the development and implementation of effective and quality legal and support services.

Legal Practice

1. Undertake the role of 'Responsible Person' as defined in the 'Risk Management and CLC Practice' guide published by the National Association of Community Legal Centre's and ensure that the legal service is compliant with the guide and operates within the Centre's guidelines and in accordance with professional legal obligations, and government and professional indemnity insurance requirements.
2. Lead and support effective supervision, mentoring, performance management and professional development of legal staff and volunteers, in conjunction with the Senior Lawyers, including recruitment, induction and training, ensuring that information, advice and casework services provided are appropriate, efficient and effective.
3. Foster a culture of continuous improvement, best practice, innovation and multidisciplinary collaboration, including regularly reviewing legal processes, procedures, file management, information systems and service delivery models.
4. Lead the development and implementation of service improvements, initiatives and projects, including effective and efficient client triage, clinics and outreach programs, to ensure resources are focused on clients experiencing the greatest disadvantage and vulnerability.
5. Provide some advice and casework to clients, when appropriate, including in relation to complex matters.
6. Encourage strong multi-disciplinary and cross-program collaboration internally and externally.

Community Development, Legal Education and Law Reform

7. Foster the integration of legal assistance with NCLC's community development, education, advocacy and systemic change work.
8. Contribute to community development, partnership, community legal education and law reform initiatives that advance NCLC's strategic objectives.
9. Strengthen relationships and networks with courts, legal practitioners, community organisations, volunteers and other relevant stakeholders to support effective service delivery.
10. Oversee the legal accuracy, accessibility and effectiveness of community legal education materials (in accordance with CLCA Risk Management Guide) and professional practice requirements.
11. Represent NCLC professionally at relevant sector, community, legal and stakeholder forums.

POSITION REQUIREMENTS

Mandatory Qualifications and Experience

- Eligible to hold a Principal Lawyer practising certificate in Victoria, with at least five years' post-admission legal practice experience and broad capability across areas relevant to community legal services.
- Demonstrated experience in legal practice leadership, including supervision and development of lawyers, legal practice management, quality assurance, risk management and continuous improvement.
- Demonstrated experience working with people experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage, with a strong understanding of community legal services, access to justice and client-centred practice.

Essential Knowledge & Skills

- Strong knowledge and understanding of professional legal obligations, ethical practice, legal practice risk management and quality assurance, with sound judgement in complex matters.
- Highly developed leadership and people management skills, including mentoring, supporting and developing Senior Lawyers and multidisciplinary staff.
- Strong strategic, innovative and service improvement capability, with the ability to lead change and respond to emerging issues and opportunities.
- Highly developed interpersonal, communication, stakeholder engagement skills with the ability to influence, prepare high-quality written reports and deliver professional presentations.
- Strong understanding of the legal assistance sector, access to justice and issues affecting people experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage, together with a commitment to NCLC's values, client-centred practice and social justice.

Desirable Knowledge and Skills

- Community language skills and/or experience working effectively with culturally and linguistically diverse communities, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- Experience working within the community, not-for-profit, social services or legal assistance sector.

Other Requirements

1. A current driver's licence and access to a vehicle for work-related travel. Where a private vehicle is used for work purposes, the vehicle must be appropriately registered and insured in accordance with legal requirements.
2. A current and valid Working with Children Check (Employee) is required for this role.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

- A supportive work environment, working alongside passionate and talented professionals, supported by an experienced leadership team.
- A deep commitment to your ongoing professional development, personal development, and health and wellbeing.
- A genuinely flexible working environment that supports individuals.
- 5 weeks annual leave
- Paid seasonal leave (three days between the Boxing Day and New Year's Day public holidays)
- Salary packaging (which can add up to \$15,900 in tax-free pay per year).