

Position Description – (Applied)

Version 19, Updated 15 December 2025

Position title:	Solicitor
Position number:	DJ4707
Group:	Justice System Coordination and Reform
Business Unit/Branch:	Office of the Public Advocate
Classification:	VPS 4
Employment status:	12 months, fixed-term - Full-time
Position reports to:	Principal Solicitor
Work location:	L11, 222 Exhibition St, Melbourne Vic 3000
Position contact:	Name: Omar Shahin, Acting Principal Solicitor Phone: 9055 6311 Email: omar.shahin@justice.vic.gov.au

ROLE PURPOSE

The role of a Solicitor

- Provide specialist legal services to the Public Advocate and his delegates including complex legal advice, casework, representation, practice resources, and education

The Office of the Public Advocate (**OPA**) is a standalone office that supports the Public Advocate to perform their statutory powers, duties and functions conferred under Victorian legislation, including the *Guardianship and Administration Act 2019 (Vic)*.

OPA works to safeguard the rights and interests of Victorians with disability, to strengthen their position in society, and to protect them from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. OPA's vision is of a just and inclusive society that values and respects people from all walks of life and ages.

OPA supports the Public Advocate through the delivery of a range of services and functions, including:

- Guardianship services.
- Advocacy and safeguarding interventions.
- Investigations into allegations of abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- Advice and information on guardianship, administration and substitute decision-making.
- Community Visitor Program activities.
- Community education and engagement.
- Policy development, systemic advocacy and law reform initiatives.



The **Solicitor** is a member of the Legal team which is made up of the Principal Solicitor, three Senior Solicitors and a Legal Support Officer. The team provides specialist legal services to the Public Advocate and his delegates, including through:

- Providing high-quality legal advice and guidance on guardianship, medical treatment decision-making, restrictive practices, human rights and related matters.
- Appearing on behalf of the Public Advocate and their delegates in proceedings before the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (**VCAT**) and other courts.
- In collaboration with other OPA programs, developing resources that are legally correct and practically useful to various program areas.
- Providing education and training in legal matters, as part of OPA's quality assurance program.
- Assisting OPA's volunteer programs comply with their legal and ethical requirements.

OPA staff are Victorian Public Service employees employed within the Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS). Working at OPA offers the opportunity to contribute to meaningful and impactful work that advances human rights, promotes supported decision-making and helps safeguard Victorians in vulnerable circumstances.

OPA promotes a workplace culture where disability, and diversity of gender identities, sexualities, faiths, ethnicities and abilities, are respected. OPA values a range of experience in its employees, including professional, volunteer and lived experience.

We strongly encourage applications from people with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, LGBTIQ+ communities and people of all ages.

This is an exciting opportunity to progress your legal career and contribute to safeguarding the rights, dignity and autonomy of Victorians with disability

OPA supports flexible and hybrid working arrangements.

KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES

Legal Advice and Representation

- With limited direction, provide high-quality legal advice and support to the Public Advocate and OPA staff in matters arising under the *Guardianship and Administration Act 2019 (Vic)*, *Medical Treatment Planning and Decisions Act 2016 (Vic)* and other relevant legislation.
- Prepare legal advice, submissions, witness statements, correspondence, briefs, reports and other legal documentation.
- Appear on behalf of the Public Advocate and OPA in routine matters before VCAT and other relevant courts and tribunals.
- Manage a caseload of legal matters, including file management, negotiations, dispute resolution and litigation support.

Research, Analysis and Problem Solving

- Identify emerging legal and operational issues and contribute to the development of practical and legally sound solutions.

- Undertake legal research and analysis to support decision-making, policy development and service delivery.
- Monitor legislative, policy and case law developments relevant to OPA's statutory functions.

Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration

- Develop and maintain productive working relationships with internal and external stakeholders, including court and tribunal staff, other government agencies, disability service providers, and community organisations.
- Work collaboratively with guardians, investigators and other OPA staff to achieve positive outcomes for clients and stakeholders.
- Contribute to a culture of professionalism, inclusion, integrity and continuous improvement.

Professional Leadership and Capability Development

- Contribute to legal education, knowledge sharing and capability-building activities across OPA.
- Contributing to the development of legal resources, practice guidance and organisational capability.
- Support organisational projects, policy initiatives and continuous improvement activities as required.
- Perform other tasks as requested by the Senior Leadership Team

KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

Technical Expertise

- Technical legal skills with the ability to analyse complex operational, policy and legal issues, interpret legislation and develop accurate legal solutions, proactively seeking supervision where required.
- General knowledge of laws relating to one or more of the following, plus a demonstrated ability to acquire knowledge of other laws relating to:
 - substituted and supported decision-making (guardianship and administration, powers of attorney, medical decision-making, compulsory treatment);
 - the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the NDIS Rules, policies and processes;
 - privacy and confidentiality;
 - rights of people with disabilities generally and specifically under the *Disability Act 2006* and Part 12A of the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997*;
 - administrative law.
- Strong legal research skills and proven ability to conduct research into complex legal and policy issues, including a demonstrated aptitude in administrative law.
- Experience developing and providing legal advice on policies and practice resources that have a legal component to assist non-legally educated staff to understand and comply with their obligations, and providing legal education and training to staff.

Personal Attributes

- **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

- **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.
- **Systems Thinking:** Assesses situations and identifies the best systems tools for analysing, understanding the system and addressing problems; can apply system archetypes to identify common dynamics that appear in different situations; identifies and understands the impact of particular courses of action on other parts of the organisation or more broadly.

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.
- **Political and Organisational Context:** Understands issues and pressures to which the organisation has to respond; Understands the reasons behind the organisational climate and culture.

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.
- **Communicate with Impact:** Prepares and delivers logical sequential and succinct presentations; uses clear and concise language; uses media appropriate to the audience and presents information to develop the understanding of the topic.
- **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.

People Leadership

- **Knowledge Management and Business Continuity:** Implements and support others to apply knowledge management and business continuity practices in day to day work.

Qualifications

- Currently qualifies as an Australian Legal Practitioner (as defined in Schedule 1 of the *Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2014*)

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- The salary range for this position is set out in the Victorian Public Service Enterprise Agreement 2024. 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 Nationally Coordinated Criminal History 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, or access to sensitive information, 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)
- Nationally Coordinated Criminal History Check (NCCHC) and International Police Clearance (if applicable)
- VicRoads Information Check
- Drivers Licence Check(s) (if applicable).

A Nationally Coordinated Criminal History 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 welcome to utilise support from the Aboriginal Recruitment Team throughout the recruitment process. Aboriginal candidates are encouraged to contact Aboriginalrecruitment@justice.vic.gov.au if they would like cultural support and guidance through the application process.

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:

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- 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.