



POSITION DESCRIPTION: Family Violence and Crime Lawyer/ Senior Family Violence and Crime Lawyer

Title:	Family Violence and Crime Lawyer/ Senior Family Violence and Crime Lawyer
Status:	Part-Time- 30.4 hours per week/ 12 month Fixed Term Contract
Reports to:	Principal Lawyer
Classification:	Social Community Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award
Salary:	SCHADS Award rate (based on skills and experience) plus superannuation and generous salary packaging

About SMLS

Established in 1973, South-East Monash Legal Service (SMLS) is a community legal centre that provides free legal assistance to people in Southeast Melbourne. SMLS provides legal information, advice and case work including representation for people experiencing disadvantage on a range of legal matters, such as family law and family violence, criminal law, employment law, debt and fines, civil litigation, wills, power of attorney, and tenancy.

SMLS aims to empower and support members of the community to understand and make use of the law and the legal system to protect their rights and to increase their awareness of their legal responsibilities. SMLS is a strong advocate of and committed to the use of integrated service models to address multifaceted challenges facing our community members.

SMLS is committed to advocacy and social change. SMLS is a leader in the provision of community and clinical legal education; advocacy through policy submissions and lobbying; outreach services; and targeted referral programs.

Our Vision

A fair and inclusive community where people can access the resources, networks and support they need to resolve legal issues and overcome barriers to social, cultural and economic inclusion and participation

Our Purpose

To help resolve people's legal and interconnected issues and ensure that laws and legal processes are fair.

Our Values

Our core values are Respect, Community, Excellence and Courage.

POSITION PURPOSE

The Family Violence and Crime Lawyer/ Senior Family Violence and Crime Lawyer supports vulnerable and disadvantaged community members by assisting them in a range of family violence and criminal law matters across our programs. This includes the intervention order duty lawyer service in the Specialist Family Violence Court at the Dandenong Magistrates' Court and the Criminal Law Advocacy Group criminal duty lawyer service at the Dandenong Magistrates' Court. These programs aim to assist victims of family violence and those accused of minor criminal and regulatory offences who would otherwise be unrepresented or unsupported through often complex and challenging court and judicial processes. The family violence and criminal law team are committed to integrated service delivery, access to justice and being part of the broader policy engagement of the organisation.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The role supports the SMLS' strategic objectives: practitioners of the future, empowered communities, integrated person-centred services.

The role should be able to demonstrate a working knowledge of these objectives and be able to implement them through their duties. For more information about our strategic objectives, read SMLS' Strategic Plan 2021-2025 [here](#).

POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES

Common responsibilities

Both the Lawyer and Senior Lawyer will:

- Deliver accessible legal services in family violence, intervention order, criminal and related matters, including client interviews, legal information and advice, referral, casework, negotiation, preparation of legal documents, court advocacy and duty-lawyer appearances.
- Maintain a caseload, client communication, file notes, legal documentation, court material, data and records to a high professional standard and in accordance with legal, ethical, privacy, insurance and organisational requirements.
- Identify and respond to client-safety, family-violence, child-safety, legal-practice, ethical, conflict, limitation, capacity and professional-indemnity risks, seeking supervision and escalating matters in accordance with policies, delegations and professional obligations.
- Work collaboratively with supervised student social workers, colleagues and external agencies to provide safe, coordinated and holistic responses to clients' legal and non-legal needs.
- Build and maintain productive relationships with Victoria Legal Aid, Dandenong Magistrates' Court, Victoria Police, specialist family violence services, criminal justice agencies, legal services and other community stakeholders.
- Contribute to student learning, community legal education, legal-information resources, stakeholder training, service partnerships, policy engagement, systemic advocacy, research, reporting and law-reform activity as relevant to the role.
- Participate in supervision, reflective practice, professional development, team meetings, organisational planning and continuous improvement.

Family Violence and Crime Lawyer

The Family Violence and Crime Lawyer provide independent day-to-day legal service delivery within established legal-practice procedures, delegated authority and professional-supervision arrangements.

The Lawyer will:

- Manage duty-lawyer, advice, casework and advocacy matters of routine to moderate complexity, applying established policies, precedents, risk controls, client-safety procedures and service-delivery protocols.
- Use sound professional judgment to identify and promptly seek advice or escalate complex, high-risk, urgent, novel, ethically difficult, strategically significant or otherwise unsuitable matters.
- Receive and engage actively in structured professional supervision, including case discussions, file review, court debriefing, reflective practice and targeted capability development.
- Support Monash law students during Professional Practice placement or leave coverage within established placement arrangements, delegated authority and their own competence.
- Contribute to allocated community legal education, stakeholder engagement, data collection, reporting, systemic advocacy, service-improvement and organisational activities.

Senior Family Violence and Crime Lawyer

The Senior Family Violence and Crime Lawyer operates with a higher level of professional autonomy within SMLS's legal-practice governance, delegation, supervision and risk-management framework.

The Senior Lawyer will:

- Independently manage complex, sensitive, high-risk, urgent, novel and strategically significant family violence, intervention order, criminal and related matters, applying advanced legal analysis and professional judgment to case strategy, advocacy, ethical obligations, client safety, legal-practice risk, referral and escalation.
- Provide delegated day-to-day mentoring, practice guidance and constructive feedback to lawyers, law students, volunteers and other relevant team members, while escalating matters and supervision issues appropriately.
- Contribute to legal-practice quality and risk management through activities such as file review, practice discussions, development or review of precedents and resources, identification of emerging risks, training and improvements to legal-practice systems.
- Lead or substantially contribute to defined court-service, partnership, community legal education, policy, systemic advocacy, law-reform, research, evaluation, reporting or program-development initiatives.
- Represent SMLS at relevant court-user groups, networks, stakeholder meetings, working groups and consultations where delegated, and assist the Principal Lawyer or supervising manager to identify service trends, resource pressures, practice risks and improvement opportunities.

Organisational Participation

- Participate in organisational strategic planning initiatives and projects.
- Contribute to a healthy, productive organisational culture where work practices, decision making, and behaviour reflect SMLS philosophy and values.
- Develop and strengthen networks, engaging the support and involvement of a range of individuals and organisations.
- Perform other duties as directed and necessary for the proper performance of the role.

Values and Behaviour

- Promote and role model appropriate behaviour to support SMLS culture, performance and profile.
- Actively support SMLS commitment to the principles of diversity, inclusion, social justice and Equal Employment Opportunity.
- Actively demonstrate organisational values.
- Demonstrate commitment to continuous personal development, with a strong willingness to develop new skills and knowledge.

Health, Safety & Wellbeing

- Act in a safe manner at all times, including complying with all safety instructions and training.
- Participate in, and contribute to, health and safety awareness and improvements.
- Report all incidents, injuries and potential hazards in a timely manner.
- Ensure that the work is carried out in ways which safeguard the health and safety of workers, or others in their charge, including contractors whom they engage.

POSITION REQUIREMENTS

Essential criteria: Family Violence and Crime Lawyer

- Eligibility to hold, or current holding of, an unrestricted Victorian practising certificate appropriate to the role, with between two and five years' post-admission experience or equivalent demonstrated relevant legal-practice experience.
- Demonstrated ability to provide legal information, advice, representation and casework services to clients, supported by strong legal research, analysis, drafting, problem-solving and client-communication skills.
- Demonstrated capacity to manage a legal caseload, maintain high-quality and timely file records, manage competing deadlines and use digital legal-practice, court and client-management systems competently.
- Court advocacy skills, or the demonstrated capacity to develop and safely undertake court advocacy with appropriate training, support and supervision.
- Highly developed interpersonal skills and the ability to communicate sensitively and build effective relationships with people experiencing trauma, family violence, distress, disadvantage or criminal legal issues and with internal and external stakeholders.

Additional criteria: Senior Family Violence and Crime Lawyer

- Substantial relevant post-admission experience—ordinarily five or more years, or equivalent demonstrated capability in family violence, intervention orders, criminal law, court advocacy or a closely related practice area.
- Demonstrated capacity to independently manage complex, high-risk, sensitive, urgent and strategically significant legal matters, including sound professional judgment regarding client safety, legal ethics, legal-practice risk, case strategy and escalation.
- Demonstrated experience mentoring, supervising, supporting or developing lawyers, law students, volunteers, paralegals or other practitioners.
- Demonstrated contribution to legal-practice quality, risk management, file review, precedents, practice procedures, training, quality assurance or service improvement.

Desirable criteria

- Experience providing legal services to people impacted by family violence
- Criminal law experience and court advocacy experience will be highly regarded
- Experience in a community legal centre, not-for-profit, public-interest, multidisciplinary or integrated-practice setting.
- Experience supporting or supervising clinical legal education students, and knowledge of south-east Melbourne service systems and referral pathways.

Personal Attributes

- The ability to work within tight deadlines, independently and with minimal supervision
- Flexible, adaptive and able to work effectively in a small team or independently
- Solutions and outcomes focused, with a steady line of sight to the impact of our actions for clients
- Openness to change, receptiveness to new ideas and exercise initiative
- Capacity to reflect on own work performance
- Demonstrated commitment to social justice and awareness of the legal needs of disadvantaged and marginalised people
- Commitment to SMLS values
- Committed to contributing to a positive work environment

Appointment and progression

- Appointment level and remuneration will be determined by demonstrated capability, relevant experience, ability to perform the relevant accountabilities, organisational requirements and the applicable industrial instrument.
- Appointment to Senior Lawyer level is not based on post-admission experience alone. It requires demonstrated capacity to independently manage complex and high-risk matters, exercise advanced professional judgment, contribute to legal-practice quality and risk management, and provide leadership through mentoring, delegated supervision, service development, stakeholder engagement and/or systemic advocacy.

Location and work outside office hours

The position will be based between the SMLS offices in Springvale and Narre Warren, with work also conducted at outreach and court locations. Occasional work outside normal office hours may be required, such as to attend meetings and after-hours events.

What SMLS offers

- 5 weeks annual leave pro rata
- Extra days off over Christmas and New Year
- Paid above award
- Cultural and ceremonial leave
- Additional Family Violence leave
- Gender affirmation leave
- Professional development
- A culture of mentorship and opportunities for career progression