

Position Description – Director of Legal Services

Level	Executive
Position Title	Director of Legal Services
Office Location	Bendigo or Shepparton, with regular travel between expected.
Employment Status	Permanent, full-time or part-time by negotiation (minimum 0.8 FTE)
Reports To	Chief Executive Officer
Direct Reports	Managing Lawyers (five)

Our organisation

Advocacy and Rights Centre Limited (trading as ARC Justice) is a public company limited by guarantee. We are an independent, not-for-profit human rights and social justice organisation which promotes equality before the law for people in rural and regional Victoria. Our vision is an inclusive community built on a foundation of human rights and equality before the law. We achieve this through living our values of excellence, together and impact.

Our programs deliver accessible legal services, tenancy advocacy and social support to those in our community in greatest need. We deliver community education and advocate for systemic change that enhances the rights of rural and regional Victorians. We recognise that housing and legal issues do not occur in isolation, and we work with partners to ensure a whole of person approach to our work.

With offices in Bendigo and Shepparton, our services cover 13 local government areas across central and northern Victoria.

Purpose

The Director of Legal Services provides strategic and operational leadership of ARC Justice's legal services, ensuring the organisation delivers high-quality, integrated services that improve outcomes for disadvantaged community members. An important component of the role will be to develop and empower ARC Justice people, strengthen legal practice and contribute to ARC Justice's strategy and external advocacy ambitions.

The Director of Legal Services will build and maintain a culture where legal expertise, collaboration and social justice work together to create lasting community impact. As a member of the Executive Team, the Director of Legal Services will contribute to organisation wide decision making, help shape and fulfil ARC Justice's strategic direction and will work alongside their Executive colleagues to achieve shared organisational objectives.

Key Outcomes

Success in this role will be demonstrated through tangible organisational outcomes in the following areas:

1. Legal practice and strategic alignment

- Legal practice staff fully understand and embrace ARC Justice's strategic direction. Staff understand the broader purpose of their work, confidently connect their individual role to organisational strategy, are empowered to contribute to community education and preventative initiatives, provide high-quality legal service delivery, partnership development and systemic law reform.

2. High performing, happy and healthy staff

- The Director of Legal Services has created a psychologically healthy, supportive and high-performing workplace where team members are empowered and equipped to manage the challenges associated with working with people experiencing disadvantage, minimising vicarious trauma.

3. Integrated and collaborative service delivery

- The Director of Legal Services has ensured that lawyers work collaboratively with social workers, financial counsellors and other professionals to deliver an integrated, client-centred service. Different professional disciplines are respected equally and operate as one cohesive team in pursuit of better community outcomes.

4. Executive leadership contribution

- The Director of Legal Services is an engaged and collaborative member of the Executive Team, contributing beyond legal practice to organisational decision making, strategic planning and innovation.

5. Sector leadership

- The Director of Legal Services has ensured that ARC Justice continues to strengthen its reputation as a leader within the community legal sector, contributing to policy development, advocacy and law reform while positioning ARC Justice as a trusted authority on regional socio-legal issues.

6. Stakeholder relationships

- The Director of Legal Services has maintained strong partnerships with government, community organisations, health services and other key stakeholders and partners that improve access to justice, strengthening service delivery and support organisational sustainability.

7. Financial, risk and compliance management

- The Director of Legal Services has responsibly managed financial resources, funding obligations, legal practice risks and regulatory requirements to ensure sustainable and compliant service delivery.

Key Accountabilities

Leadership and oversight

- Actively lead and contribute to the realisation of ARC Justice's Strategic Plan.
- Inform the development of, and regularly monitor and report on, the organisation's Business Plan activities and Community Legal Service Program plan.
- Lead, manage and support a diverse team of professionals to achieve service excellence through best practice, informed by evidence, and ensure the delivery of holistic outcomes for clients, amplifying the voices of clients and communities.
- Collaborate with Executive Team colleagues to support and enhance the capacity of managers to identify trends and emerging areas of need and translate this into program design and development, policy responses and/or systemic advocacy.
- As a member of the Executive Team, ensure all reporting, audits and acquittals to funding and oversight bodies are completed to a high standard, in a timely and planned way.

Legal practice management

- Through effective, collegial and supportive line management of the legal teams across Goulburn Valley and Loddon Campaspe, lead and oversee ARC Justice's legal practice, ensuring all clients have the same high-quality experience of the service regardless of where they access it.
- Undertake the role of Responsible Person as defined in the Community Legal Centres Australia Risk Management Guide, and ensure the legal service operates within ARC Justice's guidelines and in accordance with professional legal practice, including government and professional indemnity insurance requirements.
- Work collaboratively with the CEO and Executive Team to ensure financial, professional and administrative practices align with legal practice legislative responsibilities, ensuring compliance and mitigating risk.
- Facilitate teamwork and ensure conditions for individual and collective learning and professional development.

Stakeholder relationships

- Represent the organisation in key networks and at events and meetings, communicating complex legal and systemic issues clearly and persuasively with government, sector partners, communities and other stakeholders. Mentor and empower ARC team members to build and maintain effective networks, representing ARC Justice as appropriate.
- Actively foster effective relationships with external stakeholders to improve the functioning and quality of legal services, strengthen referral pathways, and undertake collaborative planning to achieve systemic change.
- Maintain awareness of new and emerging areas of service need, funding opportunities and partnerships, and collaborate with Executive Team colleagues to pursue these where agreed, in line with the Strategic Plan.

Collaborative team management

- Work collaboratively with Executive Team colleagues and direct reports to lead all ARC Justice people with a culture of excellence, collaboration and innovation, communicating clearly across the organisation to bring people along through change and connect strategy with day-to-day work.
- Implement best practice performance and development plans for all team members that recognise each person's aspirations and skills, build individual and team capability, ensure appropriate succession planning and position ARC Justice for success.
- Mentor staff to ensure a high-functioning and collaborative workplace that values excellence and critical thinking and ensures alignment with strategic outcomes and impact.

Law reform and advocacy

- Identify systemic legal and policy issues and initiate responses through the Executive Team for consideration of strategic advocacy and litigation.
- Contribute to, and lead as appropriate, strategic policy and law reform activities. Empower all ARC team members to participate when aligned with their knowledge and experience.
- Monitor casework and trends in designated practice areas to identify systemic issues and ensure appropriate responses.

Self-management

- Collaborate enthusiastically with Executive Team colleagues in a collegial and solution-focused manner to build the organisation's profile, maintain its reputation and position ARC Justice to achieve its purpose.
- Consistently role model our values of excellence, together and impact.
- Identify areas for self-development and reflect on your own leadership and impact with a commitment to excellence and continuous personal and professional development. Participate in regular meetings with the CEO and consistently meet or exceed agreed performance indicators and work plan activities.

Skills and Qualifications

Skills

- Exceptional people leadership, coaching and capability development skills.
- Strategic leadership and organisational development.
- Delegation skills – the capacity to empower your team.
- Strong stakeholder engagement and partnership development skills.
- The ability to contribute to advocacy and influence law reform.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills.
- Financial management skills, including the ability to be accountable for a budget.
- Accountability and performance management skills.

- Change management and organisational improvement skills.
- Strategic planning and execution.

Qualifications / requirements

- Relevant tertiary qualification/s in law.
- Principal Practising Certificate.
- Working with Children Check.
- National Police Check.

Knowledge and Experience

- A minimum 10 years' post admission experience in relevant areas of law such as family violence, family, tenancy and civil law.
- Senior people leadership experience, ideally at an Executive level.
- Sound understanding of governance, legal practice risk management and regulatory compliance.
- Strong understanding of finance, risk and compliance.
- Experience managing complex stakeholder relationships across government and community sectors.
- A good grasp of data, information management and cyber security awareness, including the use of Artificial Intelligence.
- Experience leading multidisciplinary professional teams highly beneficial.

Ways of working

- Demonstrates a genuine commitment to social justice and improving outcomes for disadvantaged communities and vulnerable individuals.
- A true people leader – leads with empathy, warmth and respect whilst maintaining accountability.
- Prioritises developing the capability of others.
- Visionary and future-focused – encourages innovation and new ways of improving organisation and community outcomes.
- Collaborative and inclusive, valuing diversity of thought, professional expertise and experience.
- Encourages curiosity, learning and continuous improvement.
- Curious, adaptable and receptive to different perspectives and new ways of doing things.
- Treats all people with dignity, fairness and respect.
- Acts with high levels of integrity and models ARC Justice's values at all times.