

Position Description - Solicitor

About us:

The Law and Advocacy Centre for Women (LACW) is a not-for-profit, Community Legal Centre for women in Victoria. We assist women, trans and gender-diverse people who are in or at risk of entering the criminal justice system, providing legal advice and representation in the following areas of law:

- Criminal defence advocacy;
- Infringements;
- Victims of Crime Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS) applications; and
- Family Violence Intervention orders.

LACW provides a wrap-around service to clients, addressing the underlying issues that have brought them into contact with the justice system, as well as providing legal advice and representation.

LACW is located at 106-108 Victoria Street, Carlton, Victoria, and co-located with Youth Law as part of a multi-disciplinary partnership with RMIT University.

Terms and Conditions:

1. This is a full-time role (5 days per week, 7.6 hours per day) for a term of 12 months. Part-time hours may be considered.
2. Salary and conditions are in accordance with the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010, the National Employment Standards and LACW's policies and procedures.
3. Salary range is between \$97,000-\$104,000 per annum plus superannuation depending on relevant skills and experience. Generous tax-free salary packaging is available.
4. The position reports to the Principal Legal Officer (PLO).
5. Employment is subject to the completion of a three-month probationary period, which may be extended to six months.
6. The employee will be subject to an annual performance review linked to objectives set out for the position.

Position Overview

The Solicitor is required to provide legal advice and representation to women in relation to LACW's four practice areas – criminal defence, infringements, FAS, and family violence intervention orders. The primary focus of the role will be in criminal defence advocacy. The Solicitor will be required to work on a range of matters, including in an early-intervention capacity to assist clients who, due to their lack of prior offending or the nature of their legal matter, are ineligible for legal aid. The Solicitor will also be required to work with clients with complex needs, including those with past or current experience of family violence.

The Solicitor will be part of a holistic practice that supports clients in relation to their legal and non-legal needs, which may include housing, health (including alcohol and drug use and mental health), overcoming family violence trauma, family reunification, and financial issues. To this end, the Solicitor is expected to work as part of a team which includes professionals from other disciplines, to provide a wrap-around service to clients.

As LACW is operating a State-wide service, travel will be required for this role, including to regional Victoria.

Key Responsibilities

1. Advise and appear on behalf of LACW's clients in the Magistrate's Court and County Court in relation to criminal matters. Specifically, provide representation for clients in relation to bail applications, plea hearings, contest mentions, adjournments and diversion hearings in mainstream and specialist lists including the Assessment and Referral Court and Koori Courts.
2. Advise and appear on behalf of LACW's clients in family violence, FAS and infringements matters.
3. Work collaboratively within a holistic, therapeutic setting with professionals across different disciplines both internally and externally.
4. Provide supervision to volunteers and students working within LACW.
5. Maintain, collect and record client information and data in accordance with LACW's policies and practices.
6. Attend meetings relevant to LACW's operations from time to time as requested.

Key Selection Criteria

1. Demonstrated experience in providing criminal defence advocacy for vulnerable clients.
2. A commitment to the principles of social justice.
3. Excellent oral and written communication skills, with a high degree of professionalism and a reputation for integrity, discipline and attention to detail.
4. A demonstrated understanding of the legal and non-legal issues that relate to women from diverse backgrounds with multiple and complex needs.
5. Excellent time management skills, including the ability to work effectively under pressure and comply with tight timeframes.
6. Strong administrative skills. Experience in using Victoria Legal Aid's ATLAS system will be considered favourably.

Qualifications

1. A degree in law and admission to practice in Victoria, with at least one year post-qualification experience.
2. Previous experience working for a community legal centre or legal aid commission is desirable.
3. Membership or eligibility for membership to the Victoria Legal Aid Panels relevant to LACW's practice is also desirable.
4. All offers of employment are subject to a satisfactory Criminal History Check and the successful applicant must provide a current Working with Children Check prior to commencement.

Applications for this role

Expressions of interest, queries and applications should be emailed to the Chief Executive Officer, via info@lacw.org.au using the subject: Solicitor role.

All applications must include a cover letter addressing the key selection criteria.

As our service provides for the special needs of women, LACW relies on an exception under the *Equal Opportunity Act* to employ only women in this role.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants are strongly encouraged to apply for this position.