

Position Description

Position title:	Senior Lawyer, Migration Justice
Reports to:	Legal Director, Migration Justice
Direct reports:	N/A
Classification level:	SCHADS award level 6
Location:	Melbourne
Last updated:	September 2026

About the Human Rights Law Centre

The Human Rights Law Centre (the Centre) exists to take fearless human rights action for a fairer future for all. We use strategic legal action, policy solutions and advocacy in partnerships to support people and communities to eliminate inequality and injustice and build a fairer, more compassionate Australia.

Our vision is an Australia where people and communities live with dignity and have the power to challenge injustice, and human rights at the core of institutions and laws.

We exist to transform laws and policies to protect human rights. We exist to work with communities to stand up for human rights. We exist to ensure that governments and parliaments promote human rights. We exist to ensure accountability and redress when people's rights are violated.

Our strategy is to work in partnership with people and communities, challenge Australian laws and policies which stand in the way of justice and equity for all.

Our current strategic priorities aim to progress the following goals:

1. Australian laws and policies advance racial and socio-economic equality
2. A healthy workplace and sustainable organisation
3. A trusted partner, deeply connected to people and communities

We maximise our impact by working closely with key partners, including community organisations, pro bono law firms and barristers, academics and experts, and international and domestic human rights organisations. We are independent of government and business, with most of our funding coming from donations and philanthropic grants.

The Centre is a registered charity with offices in Naarm/Melbourne and Gadigal/Sydney. We are a diverse team with a strong, shared commitment to creating a better, fairer Australia.

The Human Rights Law Centre is an equal opportunity organisation and is committed to promoting a diverse and inclusive Board and workforce.

About the team

The Centre's legal, policy and advocacy work is organised into a number of impact areas. Currently these are Corporate Accountability, Climate Justice, Migration Justice, First Nations Justice, Democratic Freedoms and Human Rights Foundations.

This role is located within the Centre's Migration Justice team but may also be required to work across other impact areas as determined by the Centre.

Our Migration Justice work aims to help create an Australia where all people who cross national borders have a right to dignity, safety and a pathway to making Australia a permanent home. Our team works in close collaboration with the communities we represent and with other organisations in the migration and refugee rights and services sector. We aim to build relationships of trust and accountability with the communities, partners and clients we work with.

Our current areas of focus include:

- ending the offshore detention regime and ensuring permanent safety for people subjected to it;
- bringing families back together and changing the laws and policies that are keeping people separated from their loved ones for years on end;
- advocating for pathways to permanency for migrants and combatting the exploitation of migrant workers; and
- ending mandatory and indefinite immigration detention in Australia.

About this role

The Senior Lawyer will work with senior staff and the Legal Director, Migration Justice, to provide legal and policy support for the Migration Justice team. It is anticipated that this opportunity will support the team's work to undertake litigation, provide migration advice, undertake public and political advocacy, draft policy submissions, participate in and build coalitions, and engage in partnership with the communities we work with.

Organizational relationships and extent of authority

Reporting to the Legal Director, Migration Justice, the Senior Lawyer will work within the Human Rights Law Centre's current strategy and internal policies to ensure that we advance racial and socio-economic equality in Australian laws and policies, and that we work closely in partnership with people and communities.

Key responsibilities

1. Legal Strategy & Litigation
 - Contribute to developing and implementing innovative legal and advocacy strategies in partnership with affected communities to address the Centre's impact areas.

- Provide high-quality legal advice and representation to clients, including in courts, tribunals and other legal forums, ensuring compliance with legal professional responsibilities and international human rights standards.
2. **Advisory & Advocacy**
 - Analyse policy and develop robust policy positions and recommendations in support of our advocacy objectives and consistent with international human rights law.
 - Support advocacy campaigns by drafting legal opinions and policy submissions.
 - Engage with relevant decision-makers and stakeholders in relation to the legal and/or policy reforms we are seeking.
 3. **Leadership & Mentorship**
 - Assist with supervising secondees and with recruitment as required.
 - Contribute to development and implementation of relevant organisational plans & policies.
 - Foster a collaborative and inclusive team environment.
 - Participate in organisational strategic planning, impact measurement and other relevant internal forums.
 4. **Research & Policy Development**
 - Research and write reports, legal & policy submissions, briefing papers, speeches, letters and other publications that effectively communicate and promote our advocacy objectives.
 5. **Stakeholder Engagement**
 - Work with partners and allies to strengthen Australia's legal and policy framework for preventing and responding to human rights abuses.
 - Represent the organisation in senior-level meetings, at public events and in the media in relation to our work, in accordance with the Centre's policies.
 - Build and maintain collaborative and respectful relationships with community organisations, legal networks, and donors.
 6. **Fundraising and donor engagement**
 - Working with the Legal Director and fundraising team, help to identify and secure financial resources to support the team's work and assist with fundraising events, applications, reporting and acquittal.
 7. **Other duties**
 - Occasional interstate or international travel may be required in this role and some work outside standard business hours to accommodate work across time zones, as required.
 - Any other related duties assigned from time to time.

Health, safety and environmental responsibilities of staff

All staff are required to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of other personnel who may be affected by their conduct. OHS responsibilities applicable to positions are established in Centre policy.

Flexibility to work remotely must be negotiated with a line manager, who will consider any legislative requirements, safety, the organisation's objectives, ways of working, impacts on other staff and partners, and the inherent requirements of the role, in line with the Human Rights Law Centre's Policy.

All staff are required to understand and comply with the organisation's policies and procedures.

Selection Criteria

Essential

- A law degree and admitted or eligible to practice in an Australian jurisdiction, with at least three years post-qualification legal experience, or a combination of skills and experience working in human rights
- Understanding of the Human Rights Law
- A demonstrated understanding of and commitment to promoting the rights of people who are migrants or refugees;
- Ability to develop and maintain strong and constructive relationships with refugee and migrant communities, individuals and organisations;
- Demonstrated experience working in a legal setting on human rights issues, including casework or litigation experience.
- Outstanding written and verbal communication skills and proven ability to produce high quality external communications targeted at a variety of audiences.
- Excellent organisational and project management skills, including managing large projects involving external partner organisations.
- Demonstrated ability to work autonomously and to set priorities, plan and organise workflow to meet tight deadlines.
- Demonstrated experience in researching and writing policy submissions or reports for advocacy purposes.
- Sound knowledge of legislative processes and politics and a demonstrated capacity for innovative strategic and analytical thinking.
- Able to communicate easily with people from diverse backgrounds and quickly build relationships of trust and confidence.
- Willingness to work collaboratively, including in helping to build and nurture effective and diverse alliances to promote human rights or law reform.

Desirable

- Experience in public speaking, media advocacy and/or campaigning
- Experience working closely with a diverse range of key stakeholders including government, organisations and communities
- Lived experience of migration, displacement or seeking asylum
- Fundraising experience

This position description outlines the proposed duties and responsibilities of the position. These will be reviewed on a regular basis with the position holder and are subject to change according to the needs and priorities of the Human Rights Law Centre.

Employee Acknowledgement

Please sign and date to acknowledge you have read and understood this position description.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____