

Position Description

Practical Legal Training Placement

Unpaid, volunteer position
Part time, minimum two days per week
Sydney based

1. The Justice and Equity Centre

The Justice and Equity Centre (formerly the Public Interest Advocacy Centre) is a leading social justice law and policy centre. We build a fairer, stronger society by helping to change laws, policies and practices that cause injustice and inequality.

Our work combines:

- legal advice and representation, specialising in test cases and strategic casework;
- research, analysis and policy development; and
- advocacy for systems change and public interest outcomes through media, communications, submissions and engagement with decision-makers.

We work across 5 focus areas: First Nations justice; reducing homelessness; disability rights; energy and water justice; and civil rights.

2. Our teams and projects

Successful applicants will work across our:

- Strategic Litigation team;
- Homeless Persons' Legal Service; and/or
- Towards Truth project.

Strategic Litigation is the JEC's largest team. It undertakes strategic legal casework, specialising in test cases, and brings legal expertise to systemic policy and law reform issues. The team both leads and contributes to priority projects that seek social justice and systems change. Our work is focused on advocating for people and communities who are marginalised and facing disadvantage.

HPLS is the JEC's largest project, providing free legal assistance for people experiencing homelessness at outreach clinics in Sydney. The project also provides a specialist criminal law service, which aims to divert clients with mental health conditions from the criminal justice system. Within HPLS, the Women's Service provides specialist, holistic support to women, including trans and gender diverse women, with a focus on reaching victim-survivors of family and domestic violence at risk of eviction, homelessness or criminalisation.

The Towards Truth team coordinates and carries out the research required for the Towards Truth project. Towards Truth is a collaboration between the JEC and the Indigenous Law Centre at UNSW that responds directly to the call of the Uluru Statement from the Heart for truth-telling. We are building a comprehensive database and website of the laws and policies that have impacted the lives of First Nations people since 1788. You can find out more about Towards Truth by visiting www.towardstruth.org.au.

Practical Legal Training Placements may be required to undertake work for and under the supervision of all lawyers engaged in the legal practice.

3. Position overview

Practical Legal Training Placements support the provision of a successful, innovative, and responsive legal practice by assisting our solicitors on casework and client intake and supporting associated policy advocacy that advances the JEC's strategic priorities.

This is an unpaid, volunteer position. The JEC will reimburse Practical Legal Training placement students for the reasonable cost of travel between home and the JEC for the period of their placement.

Placements will include two career mentoring sessions: one towards the beginning of the placement, to discuss career interests and aspirations, and set objectives for the Practical Legal Training Placement; and another towards the end, to reflect on the placement and discuss future career goals.

Placements require a commitment of at least two days per week for a minimum of 40 days, and are based at the JEC office at Level 5, 175 Liverpool St, Sydney. However, we are open to requests for flexible working arrangements.

4. Major accountabilities

- 4.1 Legal research, analysis and problem solving to support the work of the JEC with litigation, casework, policy submissions, research reports, media releases and other work undertaken by the JEC.
- 4.2 Research for large-scale policy projects, including Towards Truth.
- 4.3 Assist solicitors with preparing documentation for legal proceedings and other legal drafting, under supervision.
- 4.4 Interact with clients, with a particular focus on conducting intake of new telephone and online enquiries.
- 4.5 Deliver supervised legal information to clients.
- 4.6 Liaise with stakeholders, eg police, corrections and courts.
- 4.7 Input and maintain accurate client and case information on the JEC's electronic file management platform.
- 4.8 Work responsibly within the limits of the role.
- 4.9 Collaborate with the PLT Coordinator to manage workflow and priorities.
- 4.10 Assist with administrative tasks and reception cover as required.

4.11 Perform work in accordance with set guidelines and procedures.

5. Selection Criteria

Essential

- 5.1 Interest, knowledge or experience with human rights law or community legal centre work.
- 5.2 Ability to develop positive relationships with clients based on empathy, respect and fairness.
- 5.3 Demonstrated ability to work co-operatively with others and as part of a team.
- 5.4 Strong writing skills to support drafting of research reports and legal documents.
- 5.5 Strong legal research skills.
- 5.6 Responsiveness to feedback from clients, stakeholders and colleagues with a mindset to reflect on and improve professional and soft skills.
- 5.7 Sound time-management and organisational skills.

Desirable

- 5.8 Understanding of legislative and law reform processes.
- 5.9 Demonstrated understanding of the issues facing socially and economically disadvantaged people.

6. Applications

Your application should be no longer than five pages in total. An application should comprise:

- a cover letter addressing the selection criteria;
- a current CV; and
- a copy of your academic transcript.

Applications should be sent by email to placements@jec.org.au.

For further information about these opportunities please contact Kate Sinclair, Solicitor, via placements@jec.org.au.

Applications close 28 February 2025, and we anticipate placements will commence in March 2025.