

Position Description

Criminal Solicitor, Women's Homelessness

18-month fixed term contract

Full time

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. HPLS Women's Service

Part of the Homeless Persons' Legal Service (HPLS), the HPLS Women's Service provides women including trans and gender diverse women with specialist, holistic support - including both legal and non-legal assistance. It particularly seeks to reach victim-survivors of domestic and family violence who

1. are at risk of being evicted, homeless, and/or facing other barriers to accessing and maintaining safe and stable housing and/or
2. have been policed and/or charged with criminal offences.

The HPLS Women's Service is overseen and coordinated by a Senior Solicitor, and includes a caseworker, paralegal/client liaison officer, a civil lawyer and specially trained pro bono solicitors.

The service provides legal and social work assistance in-person and by phone across a broad range of legal issues including tenancy, fines, Centrelink issues, credit/debt, victims compensation and criminal legal matters. Through the service's casework we identify opportunities to advocate for systemic responses to issues of homelessness, domestic and family violence facing women.

3. Position overview

Reporting to the Senior Solicitor, HPLS Women's Service, the Criminal Solicitor will provide criminal legal help to women, particularly those who are victims survivors of domestic and family

violence or sexual assault. In addition, the Criminal Solicitor will advise clients on issues such as fines, victims compensation and other legal issues which have led to their criminalisation.

By incorporating a Criminal Solicitor position into the HPLS Women's Service, we aim to improve the individual outcomes and experiences of the criminal justice system for women charged with criminal offences. An important part of this position will be to investigate and implement best practice and critically reflect on the extent to which the service is meeting its objectives.

4. Major accountabilities

- 4.1 Advise women charged with criminal offences to ensure they are aware of their legal rights;
- 4.2 Represent clients in criminal proceedings, including bail applications, sentences, hearings and applications under sections 13 and 14 of the Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Act;
- 4.3 Advise and assist women charged with criminal offences on related civil legal issues;
- 4.4 Identify best practice and innovative legal strategies for achieving better outcomes for women and critically review the work of the service;
- 4.5 Contribute to the work of HPLS in responding to systemic issues for women experiencing homelessness;
- 4.6 Provide advice to HPLS legal clinic lawyers in criminal and civil matters to assist them to address their client's legal needs;
- 4.7 Contribute to submissions, reports, articles and media releases to communicate the JEC's policy positions to decision makers and the community;
- 4.8 Provide regular reports to management to ensure the Board and management have sufficient information to understand and properly assess the progress of the JEC's work;
- 4.9 Maintain files to a high standard of file management including grants of Legal Aid and participate in regular file reviews;
- 4.10 Support the successful implementation of the JEC's Reconciliation Action Plan;
- 4.11 Other duties as reasonably required.

5. Knowledge, skills and experience

Essential

- 5.1 Eligible for a practicing certificate in NSW and at least three years' post-admission experience in criminal law.
- 5.2 Awareness of legal issues and barriers facing women who are victims of domestic and family violence or sexual assault and/or who are experiencing homelessness.

- 5.3 Capacity to conduct outreach in the community, including in non-legal settings, to women, to provide accurate and appropriate legal assistance.
- 5.4 Sound interpersonal skills and experience developing relationships with clients and stakeholders.
- 5.5 Demonstrated ability to identify and seek support to manage risks, including work health and safety risks.
- 5.6 Capacity to identify best practice and innovative legal strategies for achieving better outcomes for women in the criminal justice system
- 5.7 High-level writing and analytical skills for the drafting of legal documents, correspondence, submissions and reports.
- 5.8 Demonstrated understanding of issues facing people experiencing homelessness

Desirable

- 5.9 Experience working with people experiencing homelessness.
- 5.10 Experience with civil law issues relevant to people experiencing homelessness.

6. Conditions

We are an equal opportunity employer and are committed to promoting a diverse and inclusive workforce.

Annual salary range: \$117,568 - \$130,228 (pro rata where applicable) plus leave loading and superannuation.

We are a Public Benevolent Institution and are currently able to offer salary packaging options subject to our Salary Sacrifice Policy. Staff who take full advantage of salary packaging options can significantly increase their take-home pay.

Our Enterprise Agreement provides benefits including additional paid leave between Christmas and New Year and paid cultural and ceremonial leave. See further: [Justice and Equity Centre Enterprise Agreement](#).

The position is offered as a full time, 18-month fixed term contract.

We are committed to flexible working arrangements and provides opportunities for professional development and mentoring. Our workplace culture is collaborative, dynamic and committed to cultural safety

7. Applications

Your application should be no longer than 6 pages in total. An application should comprise a cover letter, resume, and a statement outlining your suitability for the role with reference to the selection criteria (see 'Knowledge, skills and experience').

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

Inquiries about the position should be addressed to:

Rachael Barwick

Senior Solicitor, HPLS Women's Service

jobs@jec.org.au

If you would like to discuss the recruitment process and any reasonable adjustments you may require, please contact jobs@jec.org.au.