

Position Description

Civil Solicitor/Senior Civil Solicitor, Women's Homelessness

Ongoing position

Full time, 5 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. Homeless Persons' Legal Service

The Homeless Persons' Legal Service (HPLS) protects the rights of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, and helps people avoid or exit homelessness. We do this by providing free legal assistance, advice and representation to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and supporting advocates with lived experience to drive change and challenge systemic barriers that prevent people from having a safe, secure and healthy home.

HPLS focuses on building strong partnerships with services in the homelessness sector, fostering trust that encourages ongoing referrals to our service. HPLS conducts legal work internally and refers ongoing casework to pro bono volunteer lawyers from our partner firms, who work under the supervision of our in-house team.

The HPLS consumer advisory committee, StreetCare, empowers people with lived experience of homelessness to initiate, inform and influence positive change. The group also helps drive our policy priorities.

Informed by our casework and consumer feedback, HPLS addresses causes of homelessness through strategic engagement and policy advocacy with government and service providers.

3. HPLS Women's Service

Part of the Homeless Persons' Legal Service (HPLS), the HPLS Women's Service is a gendered service that provides specialist assistance to women, trans and gender diverse people who are at risk of being evicted, homeless, and/or facing other barriers to accessing and maintaining safe and stable housing.

We provide a wrap around service to clients, including advice and casework in the following areas of law:

- tenancy;
- victims compensation;
- fines;
- credit/debt;
- criminal defence advocacy; and
- Apprehended Violence Orders

The HPLS Women's Service is overseen and coordinated by a Managing Solicitor and includes a Criminal Solicitor, a Social Worker, a Community Caseworker, a Legal and Client Support Officer, secondees and specially trained pro bono solicitors.

Through its casework and engagement with the community, the Women's Service also identifies opportunities to advocate for systemic responses to homelessness and domestic and family violence affecting women.

4. Position overview

Reporting to the HPLS Women's Service Managing Solicitor, the Civil Solicitor plays a pivotal role in delivering specialised, integrated legal services for women experiencing or at risk of homelessness. In addition to their own casework, the Civil Solicitor will provide supervision, mentoring and support to junior lawyers and secondees.

The position also contributes to HPLS's advocacy and engagement initiatives, with particular focus on preventing or ending homelessness among women affected by domestic and family violence.

5. Major accountabilities

- 5.1 Undertake legal advice and casework in key areas of civil law that affect women who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness including housing and tenancy, fines, debts and victims support.
- 5.2 Identify best practice and innovative legal strategies for achieving better outcomes for women and critically review the work of the service.
- 5.3 Develop relationships and liaise with key partner organisations and other stakeholders relevant to the JEC's work.
- 5.4 Identify current and emerging issues relating to homelessness particularly as they relate to women experiencing homelessness and contribute to the development of strategic responses, including by assisting to draft submissions, reports and articles.
- 5.5 Attend meetings and conferences to promote awareness of the work of the Women's Service and related public policy positions.
- 5.6 Support and/or supervise junior solicitors, interns, and paralegal staff.
- 5.7 High-level writing and analytical skills to contribute to the drafting of legal documents, correspondence, submissions, articles, media releases and reports to communicate the JEC's policy positions to decision makers and the community.

- 5.8 Lead or contribute to the planning and management of projects to achieve outcomes consistent with the JEC's strategic priorities.
- 5.9 Provide regular reports to funders and to the JEC Board addressing outcomes and impact.
- 5.10 Support the successful implementation of the JEC's Reconciliation Action Plan.

6. Knowledge, skills and experience

Essential

- 6.1 Eligible for a practising certificate in NSW and at least five years' post-admission experience relevant to our practice areas.
- 6.2 Demonstrated experience working with women experiencing disadvantage and with complex needs.
- 6.3 Awareness of, and commitment to, trauma-informed service delivery and an understanding of issues facing women who are victim survivors of domestic and family violence or sexual assault and/or women experiencing homelessness.
- 6.4 Experience supervising members of a legal team and capacity to provide training and ongoing legal education.
- 6.5 A strong understanding of professional and ethical obligations and an ability to proactively manage risk, including work health and safety risks.
- 6.6 Capacity to identify and develop innovative legal strategies to further our impact on homelessness.
- 6.7 Strong writing skills in drafting legal documents, submissions, reports and other publications.
- 6.8 Sound interpersonal skills and experience developing formal and informal relationships and networks with clients and stakeholders.
- 6.9 Demonstrated commitment to social justice.

Desirable

- 6.10 Expertise in tenancy law, administrative law, criminal and/or consumer law.

7. Conditions

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

Annual salary range: \$121,683 to \$147,188 (pro rata where applicable) plus leave loading and superannuation. This is Level 6 and 7 on the JEC's salary scale.

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](#).

This position is offered as an ongoing full-time role. Part-time hours may be considered for suitable candidates.

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.

8. 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:

Tempe McMinn

Managing Solicitor, HPLS Women's Service

jobs@jec.org.au

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