

Position Description

Criminal Solicitor/Senior Criminal 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 Civil 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 Managing Solicitor, HPLS Women's Service, the Criminal Solicitor will provide criminal law advice and representation to women, particularly those who are victims survivors of domestic and family violence or sexual assault including in defended hearings and defended Apprehended Violence Orders. In addition, the Criminal Solicitor will advise and refer 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.

5. Major accountabilities

- 5.1 Advise and appear on behalf of clients in the Local Court and the District court in relation to criminal matters, including bail applications, sentences, hearings and applications under sections 13 and 14 of the Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Act.
- 5.2 Advise and appear on behalf of HPLS Women's Service in relation to Apprehended Domestic Violence orders.
- 5.3 Work collaboratively within a holistic, therapeutic setting with professionals across different disciplines both internally and externally.
- 5.4 Contribute to the work of HPLS in responding to systemic issues for women experiencing homelessness.
- 5.5 Develop relationships and liaise with key partner organisations and other stakeholders relevant to the Women's Criminal Law practice.

- 5.6 Contribute to submissions, reports, articles and media releases to communicate the JEC's policy positions to decision makers and the community.
- 5.7 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.
- 5.8 Maintain files to a high standard of file management including grants of Legal Aid and participate in regular file reviews.
- 5.9 Support the successful implementation of the JEC's Reconciliation Action Plan.

6. Knowledge, skills and experience

Essential

- 6.1 Hold or eligible for a practicing certificate in NSW.
- 6.2 At least five years' post admission experience.
- 6.3 Awareness of legal issues and barriers facing women who are victim survivors of domestic and family violence or sexual assault and/or who are experiencing homelessness.
- 6.4 Capacity to conduct outreach to women in the community, including in non-legal settings, to provide accurate and appropriate legal assistance.
- 6.5 Sound interpersonal skills and experience developing relationships with clients and stakeholders.
- 6.6 Demonstrated ability to identify and seek support to manage risks, including work health and safety risks.
- 6.7 Capacity to identify best practice and innovative legal strategies for achieving better outcomes for women in the criminal justice system
- 6.8 High-level writing and analytical skills for the drafting of legal documents, correspondence, submissions and reports.
- 6.9 Demonstrated understanding of issues facing people experiencing homelessness.

Desirable

- 6.10 Experience working with people experiencing homelessness.
- 6.11 Experience with civil law issues relevant to people experiencing homelessness.

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.

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.