

Position Description

Legal and Client Support Officer, 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 Criminal Solicitor, a Social Worker, a Community Caseworker, 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, the Legal and Client Support Officer provides paralegal and administrative support for the solicitors working in the HPLS Women's Service as well as directly supporting clients to achieve better outcomes as part of our holistic service delivery approach. Direct client support includes conducting intake, providing information, and making facilitated referrals to other services.

5. Major accountabilities

- 5.1 Provide administrative and paralegal support across legal matters, including conducting conflict checks, opening and closing files, preparing and managing Legal Aid applications and correspondence, obtaining court and matter information, and maintaining accurate file notes and records.
- 5.2 Obtain, manage and organise evidence and supporting material, including police briefs, criminal records, medical and Justice Health records, transcripts, subpoenas and other relevant documents.
- 5.3 Prepare, issue and manage client authorities, consents, engagement documentation and correspondence.
- 5.4 Liaise and correspond with courts, tribunals, police, government agencies and other external organisations as required.
- 5.5 Provide trauma-informed, accessible and responsive intake services, including responding to enquiries by phone, email and in person, identifying legal and non-legal needs, undertaking risk assessments, providing information about the service and eligibility criteria, and making appropriate referrals.
- 5.6 Facilitate communication with clients, referrers, volunteers and other stakeholders, and liaise with housing providers, support services, caseworkers and other agencies on behalf of lawyers.

- 5.7 Provide administrative and operational support to in-house and pro bono lawyers, including following up enquiries, coordinating client communications, arranging interpreters, and providing guidance on policies, procedures and administrative processes.
- 5.8 Contribute to organisational initiatives, including supporting the implementation of the Justice and Equity Centre's Reconciliation Action Plan.

6. Knowledge, skills and experience

Essential

- 6.1 Experience working in a legal practice or relevant professional service environment.
- 6.2 Experience in the delivery of administrative support services including word processing and data entry skills.
- 6.3 Demonstrated ability to keep accurate records and maintain client confidentiality.
- 6.4 Excellent interpersonal communications skills, with the demonstrated ability to communicate effectively with staff, clients, external stakeholders and organisations.
- 6.5 Knowledge of issues facing women involved in the legal system, including First Nations women, women with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, women with disabilities and people from LGBTIQ+ communities.
- 6.6 Knowledge of, and commitment to implementing, principles of trauma-informed practice.
- 6.7 Demonstrated commitment to working in a collaborative and co-operative manner to achieve outcomes for clients, as well as the ability to work independently and take initiative as required.
- 6.8 Ability to respond to changing needs of electronic document management, including the ability to develop skills in the use of Actionstep and Sharepoint; and
- 6.9 Strong organisational and time management skills, the capacity to successfully manage competing priorities, maintain attention to detail and meet deadlines.

Desirable

- 6.10 Experience working with victim survivors of domestic and family violence or sexual assault and/or with homelessness and housing service consumers.
- 6.11 Tertiary qualifications in welfare, social sciences, law or related discipline.

7. Conditions

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

Annual salary range: \$94,304 to \$103,902 (pro rata where applicable) plus leave loading and superannuation. This is Level 4 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.