

Job Description

POSITION NAME	Principal Legal Officer
LOCATION	Level 1, 445 Hay Street East Perth
EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS	Employment is in accordance with the Social and Community Services (WA) Award, with above award remuneration and conditions as set by the Board of Management.
PAY	Annual salary range: \$88,113.44 to \$91,306.34 Hourly rate: \$45.0420 to \$46.6741 (payment pro rata to FTE) Attractive salary packaging available up to \$15,899.93 per annum
FTE	0.8 FTE (60 hours per fortnight)
CLASSIFICATION LEVEL	8
REPORTS TO	Senior Executive Officer
TENURE	Contract until 30 June 2020

ABOUT THE WOMEN'S LEGAL SERVICE:

The Women's Legal Service WA Inc. (WLSWA) is a not for profit community legal centre funded to provide free legal services for women in Western Australia. WLSWA assists vulnerable women who need help with family law, family and domestic violence issues, protection and care matters and criminal injuries compensation matters. WLSWA solicitors provide information, advice, referral, advocacy and limited Court representation within our casework areas.

WLSWA also promotes women's human rights and equality through law reform advocacy, community legal education and professional development training.

WLSWA is governed by a Board of Management comprising of 11 members elected at the Annual General Meeting. WLSWA receives core funding from the Commonwealth Government Community Legal Services Program (CLSP) administered through Legal Aid WA with some state and other funding for specific projects.

WLSWA works collaboratively with other service providers to deliver a holistic service to clients wherever possible. In particular, WLSWA undertakes outreach and other projects to specific women's target groups in partnership with other agencies. These include:

- the provision of legal services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands of the Gibson Desert in partnership with NPY Women's Council.
- Djinda Service, also known as the Perth Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention Legal Service, is run in partnership with Relationships Australia WA, with WLSWA hosting the legal component of the service. Djinda Service offers information, legal advice, support and casework to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women living in the Perth metropolitan area who are experiencing or have experienced family and domestic violence and/or sexual assault.
- Safe as Houses program, which is a partnership with Tenancy WA and Street Law WA that provides legal and other support for women who have been made homeless or face the threat of homelessness as a result of family and domestic violence.

POSITION OVERVIEW:

The Principal Legal Officer (PLO) is the most senior lawyer among a team of legal practitioners, administration staff and volunteers, and is the Responsible Person for WLSWA, ensuring that its legal practice complies with the required risk management and legal practice frameworks, and all statutory requirements.

The PLO will work closely with and strongly support the Senior Executive Officer (SEO) in promoting WLSWA as a respected leader in relation to women and the law in Western Australia.

The successful applicant will have considerable legal experience, as well as experience in compliance management and assistance in the development of law and policy that pertain to women's human rights.

The PLO will report to the SEO and will have responsibilities, subject to the SEO's oversight and direction, for:

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Responsibility for the Centre's legal practice.

The PLO will:

- 1.1. oversee and supervise the legal practice of WLSWA to ensure its efficient operation;
- 1.2. manage WLSWA's legal volunteer program and pro bono legal clinics;
- 1.3. undertake a caseload, particularly of more complex matters;

- 1.4. have oversight for WLSWA and volunteer legal practitioners and ensure sound substantive legal advice and representation is provided to WLSWA clients;
- 1.5. be responsible for legal systems management, such as conflict checks, intake, work flow management and legal libraries, including precedents etc.
- 1.6. convene and conduct regular meetings and casework overview meetings to monitor the capacity management and capability of WLSWA's legal practitioners;
- 1.7. coordinate supervision and professional development of legal practitioners, graduates and legal volunteers;
- 1.8. be ultimately responsible for the integrity and timeliness of data entry and data (CLASS) reporting;
- 1.9. in consultation with the SEO, manage the case/workload of the legal practitioners and client service officers to ensure targets in any funding agreement (including the CLSP plan) are met;
- 1.10. manage WLSWA's compliance with legal, regulatory and insurance requirements. Including cross-checks and auditing;
- 1.11. identify risks of non-compliance and in consultation with the SEO minimise those risks;
- 1.12. attend the WA Community Legal Centre Associations PII Committee Meetings; and
- 1.13. prepare PLO reports for and attend the 6 weekly Board meetings, with the PLO reports to address legal practice achievements in the period and contribution to strategic objectives.

2. Leadership and Teamwork

The PLO will work with the SEO to:

- 2.1. maintain a supportive working environment;
- 2.2. liaise effectively with colleagues to maintain constructive working relationships; and
- 2.3. ensure that WLSWA and its mission, programs, and services are consistently presented in a strong, positive image to the community legal sector, the wider legal profession and the community at large.

3. Law Reform and Advocacy

The PLO will:

- 3.1. keep up to date with legislative and other legal and service developments;
- 3.2. where resources permit, assist in the development of law reform advocacy (i.e. drafting law and policy reform submissions).

4. Relations with the community legal sector and the wider legal profession:

The PLO will:

- 4.1. participate in and assist in the development of programs within the community legal sector and the wider legal profession and liaise with other stakeholders to build relationships and improve services to WLSWA clients; and
- 4.2. contribute to and build WLSWA's relationship with the legal profession so as to collaboratively access *pro bono* services for the benefit of WLSWA's clients.

5. Projects

The PLO will work with the team to complete projects that:

- 5.1. improve the efficient operation of the legal practice, leverage technology and improve ways of working to better service clients. For example, by:
 - 5.1.1. implementing file management best practice in regards to document retention, document protocols, adoption of electronic record keeping, etc.; and
 - 5.1.2. introducing and maintaining technology improvements such as electronic libraries, precedent development and electronic document management.
- 5.2. educate women, the wider community and community sector about the most common legal issues affecting women and educate women about their legal rights such as by developing and presenting community legal education.

6. Other duties.

The PLO will perform other duties as required and directed by the SEO.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Essential

1. Degree in law, admission to practice in Western Australia, with 5+ years post admission experience.
2. Demonstrated experience in, or knowledge of the main casework areas of WLSWA, including family law (children, divorce and property), family and domestic violence, protection and care and criminal injuries compensation.
3. Demonstrated commitment to social justice and the pursuit of women's equality and advancement.
4. Demonstrated ability in supervision and management of legal staff, including volunteers.
5. Understanding of the economic and social issues affecting women, including gender inequality, family and domestic violence, homelessness and poverty.
6. Sound teamwork and interpersonal skills.
7. Demonstrated experience in, or knowledge of regulatory and insurance requirements, and monitoring compliance and evaluation in legal practice.
8. Outstanding written and oral communications skills, including demonstrated competence using Microsoft Word and Outlook.

Desirable

9. Experience in working with clients facing disadvantage.

10. Experience with or understanding of community service organisations (experience in a community legal centre will be highly valued, as will previous work in a small team environment).
11. Experience working with women from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds.
12. Experience in advocacy in policy and law development/reform.
13. Experience in developing relationships and networks, and an understanding of holistic service delivery.
14. Experience in development and delivery of community legal and staff education.
15. Flexibility to attend outreach locations.
16. Current and valid motor vehicle licence and experience in the use of a motor vehicle.

Personal Attributes

The right applicant for the position will be highly professional, combining legal experience with demonstrated empathy and understanding. They will value effective teamwork and have a supportive, positive approach to staff under their supervision. They will be able to work under pressure, multi task and be flexible in approaches.

Above all they will be passionate about advancing the interests of women, reducing gender inequality, and empowering women through the provision of excellent services to know and understand their legal rights.

People from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds are strongly encouraged to apply.