



Position Description

Position: **Community Lawyer** - Family Violence & Family Law [2 year duration]
Reporting to: Principal Solicitor
Location: Shop 111, Pacific Epping, Corner of Cooper and High Streets, Epping
Date: March 2024 - March 2026
Pay Scale: Level 5 SCHADS Award

Organisational Context

Whittlesea Community Connections (WCC) is a place based community agency that strives for the empowerment of individuals and groups within the local community who face disadvantage, isolation and obstacles to effective social and economic participation. The agency is committed to developing responsive approaches to meet the challenges posed by Whittlesea's changing and emerging communities. We have a clear role in advocating to both services and different levels of government through both direct service and policy input. Our services and programs are free, confidential and impartial. We have broad range of integrated services including legal, social work, community information, community transport, settlement support, volunteer resources, community engagement, and strong partnerships with mental health, housing and family violence specialists.

Whittlesea Community Connections core objectives are to:

- Identify and address information and service needs of residents in City of Whittlesea
- Advocate for and with the community for increased participation in decision making
- Support formal and informal volunteer roles in the Whittlesea community
- Collaborate with agencies and Government to develop and sustain services that serve local community needs
- Continue to develop and improve the quality, efficiency and accessibility of our services
- Identify opportunities for greater community involvement and leadership so that community residents can contribute to decisions that affect their lives.

Position Rationale

The prevalence of family violence in the City of Whittlesea is high particularly when compared to other municipalities in the North West Region. This role has been established to strengthen and expand our ability to meet the needs of clients experiencing family violence through the provision of legal advice, casework and advocacy in family law, family violence and migration law in the context of new funding for our thriving Health Justice Partnerships. This is a fixed two (2) year full-time role from commencement (part-time will also be considered).

The Community Lawyer will work in a dynamic intersectional environment within the Gender Equity & Family Violence Team and work closely with our Health Justice Partners to deliver advice, casework, advocacy and community legal education. This role is primarily based at our Epping office however, you may also be required to undertake outreach legal services at our Health Justice partner sites in the City of Whittlesea.

Accountability

The Community Lawyer reports to the Principal Solicitor and the Gender Equity & Family Violence Team Leader. Accountability will be through support & supervision sessions, provision of regular reports, and participation in performance reviews & appraisals. This role has a three month probationary period.

Like all WCC employees, the Community Lawyer is expected to participate in the life of the organisation, promote the objectives of WCC and adhere to articulated values, policies and procedures.

Overview of Duties

- As a member of the Gender Equity and Family Violence Team, provide legal information, advice, casework, advocacy and referral services for clients, presenting with family violence matters who identify as a victim/survivor and appear in court as necessary;
- Contribute to the provision of migration law advice and casework in the context of family violence;
- Develop, participate in or co-deliver community legal education programs related to family violence, family and migration law;
- Develop and co-create legal information resources;
- Work collaboratively with WCC and external partners to support the delivery of the Health Justice Partnership arrangement;
- Provide legal advice and secondary consultations to external partners in relation to the legal rights and responsibilities of their client(s);
- Provide practical assistance and support to volunteers and students, as required;
- Participate in relevant networks that advocate for improved systems and support;
- Assist with collection of data, analysis and preparation of reports and other service planning, needs analysis and accountability documentation as required;
- Ensure compliance with relevant professional and ethical standards relating to legal practice, including the Legal Profession Act 2004 and the National Risk Management Guide of the National Association of Community Legal Centres.

Key Selection Criteria - Essential

- Tertiary qualifications, qualifying law degree or equivalent and admitted to practice
- Experience in the provision of legal advice, advocacy, casework in the Family Violence sphere and/or court work, of 1-3 years
- Experience responding to people experiencing family violence in a specialist or non-specialist setting;
- Good working knowledge of the family law, family violence and migration systems in Victoria;
- Experience working in cross-cultural settings and with clients from diverse backgrounds;
- Demonstrated interpersonal skills, including effective communication, negotiation, verbal and written presentation skills;
- Ability to build and strengthen relationships with a diverse range of key partners, stakeholders, and specialist services to benefit clients and the organisation more broadly;
- Demonstrated commitment to social justice and an understanding of the legal and other issues that impact on people's access to justice.

Key Selection Criteria - Desirable

- Experience working as part of multi or inter-disciplinary teams or organisations;
- Proficiency in a community language

Salary and Conditions

- Conditions will be in accordance with the Social, Community, Home and Disability Services (SCHADS) Industry Award 2010, Level 5, pay point determined by experience;
- This position is offered as a full-time 5 day a week position (1.0FTE) with flexible working arrangements (part-time applications will be considered);
- This is a two (2) year fixed-term contract, from commencement;
- Generous salary sacrifice arrangements, if taken up by the employee, can significantly increase the net value of the remuneration received;
- The successful applicant will be required to enter into an employment contract and have a current National Police Check and Working with Children Check

To Apply

Please send a copy of your CV and a cover letter addressing the key selection criteria (max 3 pages) to Tanya Stelmach, Principal Solicitor at tstelmach@whittleseacc.org.au