



public interest
ADVOCACY CENTRE

PIAC Volunteer Internship Position Description

The Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC) is a community legal centre that works for social justice by driving changes to laws, policies and practices that cause or entrench disadvantage.

PIAC removes barriers to justice and fairness experienced by people who are vulnerable or facing disadvantage through strategic litigation and policy advocacy. Our current priorities are:

- Fair use of police powers
- Reducing homelessness
- Equal access to services for people with disability
- Justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- Affordable energy and water
- Equal access to health care for asylum seekers
- Truth, justice and accountability for victims of conflict

Purpose

Volunteer interns may work across the Strategic Litigation team or the Truth and Accountability team.

In the Strategic Litigation team, interns will contribute to the provision of a successful, innovative, and responsive legal practice through assisting with PIAC's litigation and associated policy and law reform work.

In the Truth and Accountability team, interns may work across two projects. This can involve working as part of a team to assess information gaps in the Sri Lanka conflict mapping database, identify investigation leads and conduct independent open source research to collect and analyse documentation regarding alleged human rights and international humanitarian law violations. The other aspect involves undertaking discrete research tasks for the Towards Truth project, as well as working on subject areas to create overviews that tell the legislative and policy story of the issue under consideration.

These internships seek to provide opportunities for people who have completed or are close to completing their law degree to gain experience working in a community legal centre and/or on transitional justice projects.

Please note that this internship is **not** designed to satisfy the work experience rules for Practical Legal Training programs and will not count towards any work experience requirements for admission to legal practice, as there will not be sufficient contact with clients given the remote nature of the internship.

Relationships

The Strategic Litigation team includes two Principal Solicitors, Senior Solicitors, Solicitors, Legal Secretaries, secondee solicitors, volunteer interns and student placements.

The Principal Solicitors are responsible for the legal practice, including all decisions affecting the practice and supervision of all lawyers and legal staff.

A Solicitor is responsible for the day-to-day supervision of volunteer interns. However, interns may be required to undertake work for and under the supervision of all lawyers engaged in the legal practice.

The Truth and Accountability Team includes a Program Director, a Senior Legal Officer, Legal Officers, a Project Officer, a Technology Officer, secondee solicitors and volunteer interns. Interns may be required to undertake work for and under the supervision of several members of the team.

Decision making

In the Strategic Litigation team, the Principal Solicitors are ultimately responsible for the conduct of the legal practice. Issues relevant to the legal practice are discussed at legal practice meetings that all members of the legal practice attend.

In the Truth and Accountability team, the Program Director is ultimately responsible for work of the team.

Location

These are remote internships and volunteer interns will be required to work from home and to have the necessary equipment to do so including a computer and phone. The volunteer interns will be expected to participate in regular video-conferences with staff members using video conference applications such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams.

Minimum commitment

Interns are required to commit to working at least two days per week for a minimum of three months (not including a one week period of office closure at the end of December). This is an unpaid position to start in **November 2020**.

Major Accountabilities

For the Strategic Litigation team:

- assist with casework under the supervision of Solicitors, including drafting correspondence, preparing documentation, undertaking legal research; and
- conduct research to assist staff with casework and policy projects.

For the Truth and Accountability team:

- assist the team to assess information gaps in the Sri Lanka conflict mapping database, identify investigation leads and conduct independent opensource research; and/or
- undertake discrete research tasks for the Towards Truth project, as well as working on subject areas to create overviews that tell the legislative and policy story of the issue under consideration.

Selection Criteria

- Completion or close to completion of a law degree;
- Sound time-management and organisational skills;
- Legal research skills;
- Understanding of legislative and law reform processes;
- Writing skills to enable drafting of research reports and legal documents;
- Demonstrated understanding of the issues facing socially and economically disadvantaged people and of public interest concepts; and
- Demonstrated ability to work cooperatively as part of a team.

Applications

Your application should be no longer than 5 pages in total. An application should comprise:

- a cover letter addressing the selection criteria and your preference to complete your internship in the Strategic Litigation team or the Truth and Accountability team or both;
- a current CV; and
- a copy of your academic transcript.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants are strongly encouraged to apply.

Applications should be sent **by email to:** jobs@piac.asn.au

Closing Date: 5PM, 16 October 2020