

Position Description

Criminal Solicitor, Women's Homelessness Prevention Service

18-month fixed term contract
Full time, five days per week
Sydney Based

1. The Public Interest Advocacy Centre

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.

Women's Homelessness Prevention Service

The Women's Homelessness Prevention Service (WHPS) is a new service, as part of PIAC's Homeless Persons' Legal Service (HPLS). WHPS provides women including trans and gender diverse women with specialist, holistic support - including both legal and non-legal assistance. It particularly seeks to reach victim-survivors of domestic and family violence who

1. are at risk of being evicted, homeless, and/or facing other barriers to accessing and maintaining safe and stable housing and/or
2. have been policed and/or charged with criminal offences.

WHPS is overseen and coordinated by a Senior Civil Solicitor, and also includes a Criminal Solicitor, a Social Worker, a Paralegal and specially trained pro bono solicitors. It is guided by an advisory group of women from diverse backgrounds with lived experience of homelessness and domestic and family violence.

The service provides legal and social work assistance in-person and by phone across a broad range of legal issues including tenancy, fines, Centrelink issues, credit/debt, Victims Support and criminal legal matters. Through the service's casework and input from our advisory group, we also identify opportunities to advocate for systemic responses to issues of homelessness, domestic and family violence facing women.

2. Position overview

Reporting to the Managing Solicitor, HPLS, the Criminal Solicitor will provide criminal legal help to women, particularly those who are victims survivors of domestic and family violence or sexual assault. The criminal legal service is a pilot that aims to:

1. improve the individual outcomes and experiences of the criminal legal system for women charged with criminal offences; and
2. increase the understanding within the criminal justice sector of how domestic and family violence victimisation might be relevant to client's criminal legal matters to encourage a more trauma-informed criminal legal system.

An important part of this pilot will be to investigate and implement best practice and critically reflect on the extent to which the service is meeting its objectives.

3. Major accountabilities

1. Advise women charged with criminal offences to ensure they are aware of their legal rights and position;
2. Represent clients in criminal proceedings, including bail applications, pleas of guilty, hearings and applications under Sections 32 and 33 of the Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Act;
3. Identify best practice and innovative legal strategies for achieving better outcomes for women and critically review the work of the service;
4. Contribute to the work of HPLS in responding to systemic issues for women experiencing homelessness.
5. Provide advice to HPLS legal clinic lawyers in criminal matters to assist them to address their client's legal needs;
6. Contribute to submissions, reports, articles and media releases to communicate PIAC's policy positions to decision makers and the community;
7. Provide regular reports to management to ensure the Board and management have sufficient information to understand and properly assess the progress of the PIAC's work.
8. Maintain files to a high standard of file management including grants of Legal Aid and participate in regular file reviews.
9. Support the successful implementation of PIAC's Reconciliation Action Plan.
10. Other duties as reasonably required.

4. Knowledge, skills and experience

Essential

1. Eligible for a practicing certificate in NSW and at least three years' post-admission experience in criminal law.
2. Capacity to conduct outreach in the community, including in non-legal settings, to women, provide accurate and appropriate legal assistance to manage relationships with clients.
3. Excellent interpersonal skills, including the capacity to assist clients from diverse backgrounds.
4. Awareness of legal issues and barriers facing women who are victims of domestic and family violence or sexual assault and/or who are experiencing homelessness.
5. Demonstrated ability to identify and seek support to manage risks, including work health and safety risks.
6. Capacity to identify best practice and innovative legal strategies for achieving better outcomes for women before the criminal legal system
7. High-level writing and analytical skills for the drafting of legal documents, correspondence, submissions and reports.

8. Demonstrated understanding of issues facing people experiencing homelessness.

Desirable

9. Experience working with people who have experienced homelessness.

5. Conditions

Annual salary range: \$98,087-\$102,445 (pro rata for hours worked) commensurate with experience, plus leave loading and superannuation. This is Level 6 on PIAC's salary scale. PIAC is a Public Benevolent Institution and is currently able to offer salary packaging subject to PIAC's Salary Sacrifice Policy.

This position is a full-time position, for a fixed period of 18 months, with flexible working arrangements available. Part-time work will be considered for the right candidate.

PIAC requires all employees to have up to date COVID-19 vaccination.

6. 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@piac.asn.au

Inquiries about the position should be addressed to:

Kira Levin

Managing Solicitor

jobs@piac.asn.au