



POSITION DESCRIPTION

Principal Lawyer

1. POSITION DETAILS

POSITION TITLE	Principal Lawyer
REPORTING TO	Director SSRV
DIRECT REPORTS TO THIS POSITION	Volunteer Lawyers, Law Students
HOURS PER WEEK	30.4 (0.8 FTE)
CLASSIFICATION	SCHCADS Industry Award (Community Development Worker, Level 7) Community Legal Centres Multi Business Agreement

2. CONTEXT

SSRV is an independent, state-wide community legal centre that specialises in social security and related law, policy and procedure. Our vision is for a fair and just society in which all people are able to receive a guaranteed adequate income in order to enjoy a decent standard of living. SSRV's contribution to this vision is the provision of legal services to vulnerable and disadvantaged Victorians, and those who support them, which assist them to secure and protect their right to equitable social security entitlements.

Our 2018-2021 strategic priorities include:

- We continue to strengthen our expertise in social security law, and we use our knowledge and our experience to provide high quality community legal services.
- We target our services at vulnerable and disadvantaged Victorians and to where they are most needed.
- We build the capacity and capability of other professionals, enabling them to better identify and assist people experiencing, or who may encounter, social security problems.
- We highlight and address injustice, enhance service outcomes and build knowledge by engaging and collaborating with others.
- Evidence informs our decisions, practice and advocacy.
- We are a high performing and sustainable organisation.

SSRV is governed by a skills-based Board elected from its membership. Our funding is sourced mainly from the Commonwealth and Victorian governments, and it is primarily administered by Victoria Legal.

3. ABOUT THE ROLE

The SSRV Principal Lawyer delivers front line, casework and legal representation services. As the most senior legal practitioner, it is expected that the Principal Lawyer will maintain a reasonable caseload, take on more complex legal matters and lead strategic casework and litigation. The Principal Lawyer supervises legal service delivery by other employee and volunteer lawyers and paralegal workers. The position contributes to SSRV's community legal education, community engagement and policy work.

The Principal Lawyer oversees SSRV's legal practice, ensuring that it complies with the required risk management and legal practice frameworks, and all statutory requirements. The role ensures that systems are in place for triage, intake and case management, that high quality legal services are delivered to clients and that related legal and other needs are identified and actioned. The Principal Lawyer contributes to accurate and consistent data collection and record keeping, monitoring and

evaluation activities, accountability and reporting requirements, and to reviewing service data to identify trends and recommend action.

The Principal Lawyer reports to and works in consultation with the Director. All aspects of SSRV's operations and service delivery are guided by the strategic plan and priorities which are determined by the SSRV Board and Director and relevant legal/regulatory requirements.

4. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Oversee legal service delivery and legal practice management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that SSRV complies with the applicable legal, ethical, insurance and risk management requirements related to the legal practice, including those imposed by the Legal Professional Uniform Law, SSRV's professional indemnity insurance (PII) and the NACLC/FCLC Professional Standards/Risk Management scheme. • Maintain up to date legal service guidelines and systems, policies and procedures, including those relating to triage, intake, eligibility, service provision, file management, record keeping and client/service data collection. • Supervise legal service delivery by paid and volunteer lawyers and paralegal staff and students - convene and conduct regular intake and casework review meetings, conduct regular file reviews and legal supervision of relevant staff and volunteers, co-operate with the Director in management of workloads and priorities. • Provide leadership in strengthening integrated casework systems with internal programs and external providers to provide holistic support for client legal and related needs. • Check and approve legal content of community legal education, law reform and media activities in line with Risk Management Guide requirements. • Contribute to annual appraisals and performance management of relevant staff and volunteers in co-operation with the Director. • Contribute to establishment and co-ordination of volunteer programs and pro bono relationships. • Co-ordinate access to continuing legal professional development/learning and legal practice knowledge and resources. • Contribute to development and implementation of legal service monitoring, evaluation and reporting activities. • Keep up to date with relevant legislative and other policy and service developments.
4.2 Deliver legal services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and maintain own professional knowledge and expertise in the areas of social security and administrative law, practice and policy. • Maintain a caseload including providing advice, secondary consultation, casework, advocacy and legal representation services. • Take primary responsibility for undertaking and supervising more complex matters and those which have strategic importance. • Ensure a high standard of legal and related assistance is provided to clients and that professional obligations and standards are consistently met. • Ensure that all internal administrative, data collection and reporting, monitoring and evaluation requirements associated with legal service delivery are consistently met.
4.3 Contribute to community legal education and law reform work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in preparation, delivery and evaluation of community legal education activities and resources. • Actively participate in SSRV's law reform and advocacy work, including through identification of trends and issues arising from SSRV's legal casework, proposing

responses, undertaking research, preparation of submissions, lobbying and media work to communicate SSRV's policy positions to decision makers and the community, and through the conduct of strategic casework and litigation.

4.4 Leadership and teamwork

Work co-operatively with the Director to:

- Ensure that SSRV, its purpose, strategic objectives, programs and services are consistently presented in a strong, positive image to partners and stakeholders.
- Maintain a supportive work culture and environment and constructive working relationships.
- Assist in identifying and building relationships with stakeholders to support the advancement SSRV's objectives and strengthen organisational capacity.
- Identify and pursue opportunities for continuous improvement, innovation and extension of services.

4.5 General duties

- Undertake own administrative work and contribute to general administrative and operational tasks.
- Proactively manage own workload.
- Participate in staff meetings and other relevant forums.
- Participate in regular supervision and performance reviews.
- Take reasonable care of own health and safety and that of others in the workplace.
- Participate in operational, service and work planning.
- Prepare reports and contribute to other accountability requirements as required.
- Contribute to monitoring and evaluation activities.
- Undertake other duties as directed.

5. KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

Qualifications and Experience:

- Qualified lawyer, eligible to practice in Victoria and for an unrestricted/principal lawyer legal practising certificate
- At least 3+ years post admission experience, including experience in providing representation in courts/tribunals.

Skills and Knowledge:

- Understanding of and/or capacity to develop expertise in relevant areas of law and practice, specifically social security and administrative law.
- Sound legal casework skills, including experience in court/tribunal representation and the ability to undertake high quality legal research, draft effective submissions, advices and legal correspondence.
- Demonstrated commitment to social justice.
- Experience in supervising legal and paralegal work performed by others.
- Demonstrated experience in working with clients from a diverse range of backgrounds.
- Demonstrated experience in meeting regulatory and risk management requirements.
- Excellent writing skills for the drafting of legal documents, submissions, reports and other documents.
- Strong organisational and time management skills, including the ability to manage competing demands, prioritise tasks and solve problems.

- Sound teamwork and interpersonal skills and experience in developing effective relationships with clients and other stakeholders.
- Competence in use of Microsoft Office programs and experience in using databases.

Desirable

- Understanding of and commitment to holistic/integrated service provision.
- Understanding of legal assistance sector.
- Experiencing in identifying and developing innovative legal strategies to address individual and broader public interest issues.
- Experience in design and delivery of community legal education programs and resources.
- Experience in law reform and media work.
- Experience working in a small team environment.
- Current driver’s licence.

6. TERMS & CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

The position is offered at 30.4 (0.8) hours per week and is ongoing subject to funding. There is the possibility of additional hours.

A six month probation period applies.

The position is paid under the Social Community Home Care and Disability Services Industry (SCHCADS) Award, and is classified as Community Development Worker Level 7.1-7.3 depending on experience. The wage is based on the award classification (range is currently \$89,809 - \$93,563 pro rata) and an above award component, plus leave loading and superannuation.

SSRV is a Public Benevolent Institution and is currently able to offer salary packaging subject to the Salary Sacrifice Policy.

SSRV offers above award additional leave on Easter Tuesday, the Tuesday before Melbourne Cup Day, non-public holiday week days between Christmas and New Year where these are usual working days.

The position is currently based in Fitzroy, travel to other locations will be required at times.

Position Description Review and Version Tracking			
Drafted/Reviewed	Date Approved	Approved by	Next Review Date
September 2019	September 2019	Director	30 June 2020