

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Principal Lawyer

POSITION DETAILS

Position title	Principal Lawyer
Hours	38 hours (1.0 FTE) per week
Term of employment	Ongoing subject to funding
Industrial instrument	Community Legal Centres Multi Business Agreement 2006-2009
Pay level	Social Community Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010 pay tables (Community Development Worker Level 7) plus over-award payment. Salary range \$104,000 - \$108,000 approx, pro rata, depending on experience. Plus leave loading, portable long service leave and superannuation guarantee contributions. Salary packing available.
Reports to	Director, Social Security Rights Victoria
Direct reports	Volunteer lawyers/law students
Location	The position is currently based at Social Security Rights Victoria's office in Fitzroy, Melbourne. Travel to and work from other locations may be required.

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.

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 and co-operation 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.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Oversee legal service delivery and legal practice management

- 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 CLCA/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 - conduct regular intake and casework review processes, 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 legal 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.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep up to date with relevant legislative and other policy and service developments.
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.
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. • Contribute to SSRV's law reform and advocacy work, including as agreed 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.
Leadership and teamwork
<p>Work co-operatively with the Director to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
General duties
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
- Positively undertake accreditation, continuous improvement and monitoring and evaluation tasks as relevant to the role.
- Undertake other duties as directed.

KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

Qualifications and Experience:

- Qualified lawyer, eligible to practice in Victoria and holder of/or eligible to obtain a Principal legal practising certificate.
- At least 5+ years post admission experience, preferably with experience as a Principal Lawyer or Senior Lawyer.
- Experience in providing representation in courts/tribunals.
- Experience in legal practice management and in meeting regulatory and risk management requirements.
- Experience in executive/senior management role/s.
- Experience in supervising legal and paralegal work performed by others.

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, advocacy and representation skills, including the ability to undertake high quality legal research, draft effective submissions, advices and legal correspondence, and identify and conduct complex/strategic casework.
- Demonstrated experience in working with clients and stakeholders from a diverse range of backgrounds.
- Understanding of and commitment to holistic/integrated service provision.
- Experience in law reform and media work.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills, including experience in developing and delivering presentations and legal information resources.
- Strong organisational and time management skills, including the ability to manage competing demands, prioritise tasks and solve problems.
- Sound teamwork and interpersonal skills.
- Competence in use of Microsoft Office programs and experience in using databases.

Desirable

- Understanding of legal assistance sector.
- Demonstrated commitment to social justice.
- Experiencing in identifying and developing innovative legal strategies to address individual and broader public interest issues.
- Experience working in a small team environment.
- Current driver's licence.

TERMS & CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

- The position is offered at 38 hours per week (1.0 FTE) and is ongoing subject to funding.
- A six-month probation period applies.
- Salary as per Social Community Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010 pay tables (SACS Employee Level 7) plus over-award payment. Salary range \$104,000 - \$108,000 approx, depending on experience, plus leave loading.
- SSRV is a Public Benevolent Institution and is currently able to offer salary packaging subject to the Salary Sacrifice Policy.
- Four weeks annual leave. SSRV also offers additional leave on Easter Tuesday, the Monday before Melbourne Cup Day, non-public holiday week days between Christmas and New Year where these are usual working days.
- Legislated superannuation and portable long service leave contributions.
- The position is based in Fitzroy, some travel to and work from other locations may be required. Reimbursement is provided for the use of personal vehicle for work purposes.
- The employer will cover reasonable costs associated with professional registration, memberships and continuing professional development.
- The successful applicant may be required to provide a satisfactory police check prior to final confirmation of employment.

Position Description Review and Version Tracking			
Drafted/Reviewed	Date Approved	Approved by	Next Review Date
December 2021	December 2021	Director	December 2022