



SOUTH-EAST MONASH LEGAL SERVICE INC.

ADVOCACY COMMUNITY EMPATHY

POSITION DESCRIPTION: Community Lawyer

Title:	Community Lawyer – focus family violence and sexual harassment
Status:	Full-time (4 days negotiable)
Reports to:	Manager of Civil and Climate Justice
Classification:	Social Community Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award
Salary:	SCHCADS Award rate (based on skills and experience) plus superannuation and generous salary packaging

About SMLS

Established in 1973, South-East Monash Legal Service (SMLS) is a community legal centre that provides free legal assistance to people in Southeast Melbourne. SMLS provides legal information, advice and case work including representation for people experiencing disadvantage on a range of legal matters, such as family law and family violence, employment law, debt and fines, civil litigation, wills, power of attorney, and tenancy.

SMLS aims to empower and support members of the community to understand and make use of the law and the legal system to protect their rights and to increase their awareness of their legal responsibilities. SMLS is a strong advocate of and committed to the use of integrated service models to address multifaceted challenges facing our community members.

SMLS is committed to advocacy and social change. SMLS is a leader in the provision of community and clinical legal education; advocacy through policy submissions and lobbying; outreach services; and targeted referral programs.

Our Vision

A fair and inclusive community where people can access the resources, networks and support they need to resolve legal issues and overcome barriers to social, cultural and economic inclusion and participation

Our Purpose

To help resolve people's legal and interconnected issues and ensure that laws and legal processes are fair.

Our Values

Our core values are Respect, Community, Excellence and Courage.

Position Purpose

The Community Lawyer will provide information, advice and legal assistance to clients in matters falling within SMLS' Advocacy Against Sexual Harassment ([AASH](#)) and Family Violence programs and strategic priorities of the Civil Law team. The Community Lawyer will negotiate with other parties and assist clients in mediation or conciliation; engage in appearance work; brief counsel where appropriate and assist senior lawyers in strategic litigation matters. The Community Lawyer will work collaboratively with social work students and financial counsellors in our integrated services program and contribute to SMLS' policy and advocacy work. This role includes outreach programs.

This is great opportunity for a junior lawyer to learn, develop and gain hands-on experience. SMLS is committed to building strong and transferable skills in new and emerging lawyers.

SMLS is a well-established and highly regarded service, and this role will suit someone who has a passion for social justice and a strong desire to work within the community legal sector.

Strategic Objectives

This role aligns with our Strategic Objectives:

- Empowered communities
- Practitioners of the future
- Fairer laws and better legal processes

Employees, students and volunteers at SMLS should be able to demonstrate a working knowledge of these objectives and be able to implement them through their duties. For more information about our strategic objectives, read SMLS' Strategic Plan 2021-2025 [here](#).

Position Responsibilities

Advocacy & Casework

- Provide legal information, advice, referrals and undertake case work and represent clients with civil law matters, predominantly in sexual harassment in the workplace matters
- Duty lawyering and early intervention in our family violence team
- Establish and maintain relationships with stakeholder services;
- Ensure that all casework files are maintained to the highest standards including appropriate levels of client contact, communication, professional documentation, record keeping;
- Exercise a high level of interpersonal skills in dealing with the public and other organisations;
- Maintain compliance with relevant professional and ethical standards including public indemnity insurance and legal practice.

Other

- Other duties as determined from time to time by the Manager of Climate and Civil Justice

Organisational Participation

- Participate in organisational strategic planning initiatives and projects
- Contribute to a healthy, productive organisational culture where work practices, decision making, and behaviour reflect SMLS philosophy and values
- Develop and strengthen networks, engaging the support and involvement of a range of individuals and organisations

Values and Behaviour

- Promote and role model appropriate behaviour to support SMLS culture, performance and profile
- Actively support SMLS commitment to the principles of diversity, inclusion, social justice and Equal Employment Opportunity.
- Actively demonstrate organisational values.
- Demonstrate commitment to continuous personal development, with a strong willingness to develop new skills and knowledge

Health, Safety & Wellbeing

- Act in a safe manner at all times, including complying with all safety instructions and training.
- Participate in, and contribute to, health and safety awareness and improvements.
- Report all incidents, injuries and potential hazards in a timely manner.
- Ensure that the work is carried out in ways which safeguard the health and safety of workers, or others in their charge, including contractors whom they engage.

Position Requirements

Essential Selection Criteria

- Eligible to hold a practising certificate in Victoria with at least 2 years of post-admission practice (no longer under supervision condition)
- Demonstrated casework experience in civil law practice areas, with employment law experience highly regarded
- Demonstrated commitment to social justice and, awareness of the legal needs of disadvantaged and marginalised people
- Excellent writing and oral communication skills, including the ability to work well within a team environment
- Ability to meet deadlines including internal record keeping and data collection tasks

Desirable

- Representation work including court, tribunals etc
- Demonstrated policy or law reform engagement work

Personal Attributes

- Motivated by collaboration and collective success.
- Flexible, adaptive and able to work effectively in a small team, and independently.
- Solutions and outcomes focused, with a steady line of sight to the impact of our actions for clients.
- Openness to change, receptiveness to new ideas and exercise initiative.
- Capacity to reflect on own work performance.
- Strong commitment to social justice, and values alignment with the SMLS values.
- Committed to contributing to a positive work environment.

Location and Work Outside Office Hours

The position will be based between the SMLS offices in Springvale and Narre Warren, with work also conducted at outreach and court locations. Occasional work outside normal office hours may be required, such as to attend meetings and after-hours events.

What SMLS offers

- 5 weeks' annual leave
- Extra days off over Christmas and New Years
- Paid above award
- Cultural and ceremonial leave
- Family violence leave
- Gender affirmation leave
- Professional development
- A culture of mentorship and opportunities for career progression