



POSITION DESCRIPTION

Principal Lawyer

Ballarat & Grampians Community Legal Service (BGCLS) is a not-for-profit organisation providing **free** legal advice, information and community legal education to people who live, work or study in the Central Highlands, Grampians and Wimmera regions of Victoria.

BGCLS assists not only with individual legal matters, but also more broadly in community development, community legal education, capacity building and law and policy reform projects based on the needs of our community.

We actively work in partnership wherever possible, with government, Victoria Legal Aid and other publicly funded legal assistance service providers, pro bono contributors, the private legal profession, community services agencies and other community partners to ensure the best outcomes for their clients and community.

Position Title:	Principal Lawyer
Accountable to:	CEO
Reports to:	CEO
Direct Reports:	Senior Lawyers
Location:	This position is located in Ballarat or Horsham
Travel:	This position requires regular travel in the region and to Melbourne
Award:	Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010 (SCHCADS) Community Services Worker.
Level:	7
Conditions:	All conditions are in accordance with the award and the current Community Legal Centres Multi Business Agreement.
Salary Packaging:	The benefits of tax-effective Salary Sacrifice arrangements are available to all staff subject to BGCLS's ongoing Fringe Benefits Tax exempt status.

POSITION SUMMARY

The Principal Lawyer is a member of the BGCLS Leadership Team and responsible for the management of the legal practice including leading and supporting members of the legal team, service delivery design that meets our funding obligations and operating within the guidelines of the CLC Risk Management Guide.

The Principal Lawyer is integral to the development and implementation of a service delivery model that aligns with the strategic direction of the organisation and maximises available resources for community benefit. With a client-centric mindset, the Principal Lawyer will ensure our legal services and referral processes are meeting community need and can be responsive to the unique elements of the many communities we serve in our region.

The Principal Lawyer will be passionate about community legal education and law reform, providing expertise and guidance through a social justice lens which is meaningful and relevant to the communities in our region.

The Principal Lawyer will value and seek to develop relationships and partnerships within the community legal centre sector, the legal sector and the social services sector to lead with an innovation and best practice framework.

DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership

- Work closely with the CEO to ensure a consistent and collaborative management approach is applied across the legal team
- Collaborate with the Leadership Team in the planning and development of the Service's programs, projects and partnerships
- Identify legal practice improvements
- Identify emerging law reform issues
- Identify learning and development opportunities for members of the legal team

Management

- Supervise, support and mentor Senior Lawyers in the management of their teams.
- Implement systems, processes and training to ensure legal services operate within internal guidelines, funding guidelines and in accordance with professional legal standards, uniform rules and regulations for Lawyers, government and professional indemnity insurance requirements as well as the mandatory Risk Management Standards for Community Legal Centres.
- Evaluate legal procedures and file management systems, implementing improvements as required.
- Monitor the required caseload of each lawyer set in accordance with funding targets.
- Conduct annual performance appraisals of the legal team with relevant manager.
- Review the quality of service delivery and outcomes using quantitative and qualitative measurement tools.

Legal Service Delivery

- Provide legal information, advice, representation and casework services to clients in accordance with BGCLS's Casework Guidelines and the National Legal Assistance Partnership 2020-25 (NLAP) if required.
- Refer clients to other relevant services and community resources, based on a sound knowledge of and relationships with other service providers and government departments
- Maintain an appropriate file management system including participating in case management meetings, up to date file notes and regular file reviews
- Ensure that all work is conducted within the requirements of the *Legal Profession Act 2004* and Rules, the BGCLS's Professional Indemnity Insurance and policies and procedures

Community Development

- Proactively promote and raise the profile of BGCLS by identifying opportunities, and building and maintaining positive relationships with key stakeholders including, but not limited to, Courts, legal firms, Victoria Legal Aid and social support agencies

- Assist with Community Legal Education activities in consultation with BGCLS's Community Development Officer
- Identify trends and issues arising from legal advice and casework practice
- Engage in relevant law reform activities such as submissions and campaigns
- Provide updates on legislation and sign off on legal content for presentations and publications
- Provide legal information to community sector professionals who seek assistance
- Support and provide appropriate supervision for student placements in accordance with agreements in place with tertiary institutions.

Service Development & Reporting

- Liaise with the Senior Lawyers and facilitate casework meetings as required
- Participate in organisational development activities and strategies

Monitoring & Evaluation

- Contribute to monitoring and evaluation as required

Professional Development

- Undertake appropriate professional development activities to maintain and enhance the knowledge and skills required to fulfil the responsibilities of the position and comply with CPD requirements

EXPECTATIONS OF ALL BGCLS EMPLOYEES

Health and Safety

- Create, maintain, and foster a safe workplace
- Identify, report & correct any unsafe acts, conditions, or behaviours according to BGCLS's Policies and Procedures and OH&S requirements

Risk Management

- Ensure compliance with all requirements of the Risk Management guide for Community Legal Services
- Ensure compliance with the [Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2014 \(Vic\)](#), [Legal Profession Uniform General Rules 2015](#) and other relevant legislation

EEO and legislative requirements

- Support equal opportunity
- Require all staff to be sensitive and inclusive of individual needs including but not limited to cultural, religious, and sexual orientation
- Encourages applicants from diverse backgrounds

Code of ethics and Conduct

- Actively support BGCLS vision, purpose, and values
- Ensure compliance with BGCLS Code of Ethics and Conduct
- Operate within BGCLS policies, procedures, funding guidelines, practice directions and legislative requirements
- Supports equal opportunity and requires all staff to be sensitive and inclusive of individual needs including but not limited to cultural, religious and sexual orientation
- BGCLS encourages applicants from diverse backgrounds
- Adhere to BGCLS Team Charter

KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

Essential

1. Holds or is eligible to hold a current Victorian Lawyers Principal Solicitor Practising Certificate and is admitted to practice in Victorian and Federal Jurisdiction.
2. Previous experience as a Principal Lawyer, preferably in the CLC sector.
3. Experience managing and supervising lawyers including training and supporting the professional development of lawyers.
4. Critical interpersonal communication skills, including communicating with clients with empathy.
5. Demonstrate high level written and verbal communication and leadership skills, including creativity in problem solving, conflict resolution and the ability to work well within a small team environment.
6. Extensive legal practice experience in a broad range of matters including but not limited to family law and family violence.
7. Extensive experience in representing clients in the Magistrates Court.
8. Demonstrated ability to lead law reform and legal advocacy projects in partnership with a range of agencies and organisations.
9. Demonstrated ability to meet legal needs of disadvantaged groups.
10. Sound organisational skills and ability to manage workload and competing demands, keep accurate files and records, meet deadlines and work effectively as part of a team.
11. Understanding and commitment to principles of social justice and to working effectively with vulnerable and disadvantaged people.

Desirable

1. Experience working in the community sector and a commitment to the philosophy and principles of Community Legal Centres.
2. Experience in undertaking systemic advocacy and assisting in the delivery of community legal education.
3. An understanding of the principles of trauma informed practice.