

ROLE DESCRIPTION

Volunteer Solicitor

Allied Justice is a for-purpose organisation providing free legal assistance, integrated services and community legal education.

When people experience deep and persistent disadvantages, they often feel trapped in dysfunctional relationships, lost in complex inefficient legal systems, unnecessary processes, and often suffering in silence. We are at the front line of these issues.

We have invested significantly in the development of our new Strategy 2025-2027 to ensure our organisation is providing contemporary integrated services to respond the shared and unique needs of the people we support across 11 local government areas in Western Victoria.

Our commitment is to change life stories through better access to justice, and we achieve this by applying our values – respect, courage, empowerment & kindness – to the people of the communities we serve, our stakeholders and our colleagues.

By providing legal services, community legal education, law reform and integrated services through client centered, trauma informed and culturally safe practice, we will improve the safety and wellbeing of families and individuals.

Position Title: Volunteer Solicitor
Accountable to: Director of Legal
Reports to: Director of Legal
Direct Reports: None

Location: Ballarat or Horsham

Travel: This position may require regular travel in the Grampians region dependant on the specific volunteer activities undertaken

Salary: N/A

ROLE SUMMARY

The overall aim of the Allied Justice volunteer solicitor program is to increase our capacity to successfully respond to our core problems and deliver our strategic goals. The time and expertise that our volunteer solicitors contribute will increase our ability to provide needed legal assistance services across our region and increase our organisational knowledge.

Volunteer Solicitors will be responsible for providing legal assistance services within one or more of the following areas, by agreement between the organisation and the individual volunteer:

- Legal Services for Individuals
 - After-hours volunteer solicitor clinic
 - Duty lawyer services – Family Violence
 - Casework support (research, file preparation, secondary consultations)
 - Pro-bono representation
 - Emergency recovery responding
- Community Legal Education
 - Delivery of CLE
 - Development of CLE content
 - Development of legal information resources
- Law Reform & System Change
 - Research, submission support, test cases
 - Community advocacy
- Professional Development for BGCLS staff
 - Training development and/or delivery

The specific responsibilities of each volunteer solicitor will be dependent on organisational requirements and the capacity, knowledge and experience of the individual volunteer.

Allied Justice welcomes and actively seeks volunteers from varied backgrounds and experiences, recognising that an organisation that reflects the diversity in our community is better able to respond to and serve that community.

DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

General

- Be aware of and comply with the CLA Risk Management Guide and the centre's policies and procedures including the Legal Practice Quality Framework.
- Not refer clients to themselves or their firm.
- Refrain from offering further pro bono assistance outside of volunteer solicitor activities without consulting with the Director of Legal.
- Maintain up to date knowledge of relevant legislation, procedures and practices relevant to their responsibilities.

Volunteer Solicitor Legal Clinic

- Attend volunteer clinic shifts as rostered within the Ballarat or Horsham offices and/or any secondary location, and inform the Director of Legal ahead of time if unable to attend a shift.
- Provide confidential and free discreet assistance to individual client attending volunteer solicitor clinics via legal advice, information, referrals and/or assistance with legal tasks.
- Advise clients only within their areas of knowledge and/or expertise and endeavouring to convey legal advice and information to clients in a way that is 'user friendly' and clear.
- Check and complete adequate file notes outlining client instructions, advice given, referrals and legal information provided, all applicable limitation dates and further legal action to be taken (if any).
- Ensure compliance with the Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2014 (Vic), Legal Profession Uniform General Rules 2015 and other relevant legislation.

- Abide by the policies and practice advice of the centre in relation to the provision of advice and ongoing casework, and also as well as the NACLC Risk Management Guide.
- Refer clients to other relevant services and community resources, based on a sound knowledge of and relationships with other service providers and government departments.
- Disclose potential conflicts of interest when they occur and refrain from advising clients to whom potential conflicts apply.
- Ensure client confidentiality is maintained at the highest standard.

Community Legal Education Delivery

- Provide information and education to members of the community, community services, community groups, organisations and/or schools about the law and legal processes within the scope of approved content.
- Aim to inform and build community resilience by enhancing awareness and understanding about the law and how to identify, prevent and deal with problems and of the help available from legal and support services including Allied Justice.
- Deliver engaging and fit-for-purpose sessions via in-person or online presentations and workshops.

Community Legal Education Content & Resources Development

- Support the development or publication of resources as directed that provide accessible information for community members about the law and legal system, legal and support services and/or guidance for identifying, preventing or dealing with specific legal problems.
- Resources developed would need to be approved by the Director of Legal and would remain the intellectual property of Allied Justice.

Research Supporting Legal Advocacy & Reform Initiatives

- Support Allied Justice law and legal service reform activities focused upon resolving systemic issues affecting the ability of people facing economic, social and other disadvantage to access or receive justice which may include:
 - research, analysis and evaluation activities
 - developing papers about legal assistance services and systems
 - developing submissions to government, parliamentary body or other inquiry to provide factual information and/or advice.
 - strategic advocacy, such as law reform work.
- The volunteer solicitor would provide support to the legal team and initiative lead by way of undertaking direct or secondary research, drafting of documents and/or other tasks as required.

EXPECTATIONS OF ALL ALLIED JUSTICE EMPLOYEES & VOLUNTEERS

Health and Safety

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

Risk Management

- Ensure compliance with all requirements of the Risk Management Guide for Community Legal Centres Australia.
- Operate within Allied Justice policies, procedures, funding guidelines, practice directions and legislative requirements

EEO and legislative requirements

- Contribute to zero tolerance of sexual harassment, discrimination, racism, homophobia, and transphobia in the workplace.
- Sensitivity and inclusiveness towards the individual needs of all people including but not limited to disability, culture, race or religion, as well as parental and caring responsibilities.

Culture and Compliance

- Actively support Allied Justice's purpose, values and Strategy.
- Ensure compliance with Allied Justice Code of Conduct.
- Operate within Allied Justice policies, procedures, funding guidelines, practice directions and legislative requirements.

KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

1. Significant understanding of, and demonstrated commitment, energy and passion for the purpose, values and strategic direction of Allied Justice.
2. Commitment to understanding the legal and social issues that impact on access to justice
3. Demonstrated skills and knowledge of Family Law, Family Violence, and/or related civil matters such as tenancy and fines.
4. Demonstrated experience in undertaking legal services including information, advice, negotiation and advocacy on behalf of clients and representation of clients in courts and other legal settings
5. Excellent verbal and written communication skills.
6. Proficiency in client relations and interpersonal skills that demonstrate the ability to empower and support all community members with respect and kindness.
7. High level attention to detail.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Currently hold an unrestricted Practising Certificate within an Australian Jurisdiction and eligible to practice within Victoria.
- Cleared National Police Record Check (it is the responsibility of all staff to notify the organisation immediately if there are any changes to their criminal records status)
- Valid, volunteer Working with Children Check
- Physical ability to safely undertake all aspect of the position