

SPRINGVALE MONASH LEGAL SERVICE (SMLS)

LEGAL PRACTICE MANAGER

POSITION DESCRIPTION

1. BACKGROUND

Springvale Monash Legal Service (SMLS) is an independent community legal service which provides a range of community legal services.

SMLS operates from a community centre at 5 Osborne Avenue, Springvale. SMLS, in partnership with the Monash University Law Faculty, operates the Clinical Legal Education program whereby law students taking the subject Professional Practice 'PP', provide legal advice and assistance to clients under the supervision of qualified community legal practitioners and undertake Community Development and Law Reform work in the community.

The Legal Service receives ongoing funding and other support from:

- State and Federal governments through Victoria Legal Aid (VLA)
- Monash University Law Faculty
- City of Greater Dandenong

Project funding is also sought from various philanthropic trusts as the need arises.

SMLS is an independent body incorporated pursuant to the *Associations Incorporations Act 1981* as an incorporated association. Although we receive our funding through government sources, we are not connected in any way to the Public Service and are independently controlled by a Board of Directors.

2. SERVICE PROVISION

SMLS is open from Monday to Friday 9.00 am to 5.00 pm. Client session times are:

Appointment only session:

Friday 1:30pm - 3:30pm

Drop-in sessions:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday: 9:30am - 12:30pm

Monday: 6.00 pm – 7.30 pm

Tuesday to Thursday: 7:00pm - 8:30pm

All sessions are staffed by law students who provide advice and conduct on-going file work under the supervision of community legal practitioners.

SMLS also provides specialist legal services through our Child Support Lawyers, Litigation Advocate and Family Violence lawyer. In addition, we operate a sexual assault clinic which is staffed by 'Advanced PP' students and volunteers under supervision of a community legal practitioner.

3. POSITION REPORTING STRUCTURE

The position is ultimately responsible to the Board but reports to the Director.

4. KEY DUTIES AND AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

4.1 Management Team Membership

The Management Team comprises the Legal Practice Manager, the Director and the Administration Manager which meets regularly to oversee the day to day operations of the legal service.

- Develop and assess operational policies and procedures.
- Involvement in staff recruitment and performance management
- Develop strategies to deal with staffing issues that arise such as appointment of new staff or workplace conflict.
- Develop and assess program/outreach/partnership/funding opportunities.
- Develop policy proposals for Board consideration.
- Develop and review the Strategic Plan and set Annual Activity Targets for SMLS.
- Promote sound governance processes within the organisation.

4.2 Legal Service Delivery Management

The functions and responsibilities of Principal Solicitor and the oversight of all legal services provided are shared with the Director.

Responsibilities include:

- Monitor and evaluate allocated legal services in order to ensure quality and consistency of delivery in accordance with casework policies. This involves continuous liaison and regular meetings with SMLS paid solicitors (and unpaid solicitors through the Volunteer Coordinator) regarding the standard of casework undertaken and appropriate client contact/communication;
- Review and, where possible, improve effective case management systems, practices and work procedures amongst staff, students and volunteers;
- Be responsible for SMLS compliance with relevant professional and ethical standards relating to legal practice including professional indemnity insurance (PII), practise certificate requirements and participation in the Federation of Community Legal Centres (FCLC) PII monitoring program.
- Oversee the SMLS trust account,
- Oversee the orientation, training and ongoing management of allocated practitioners, students and volunteers.
- Report activities to the Board of Directors through the regular Progress Report.

4.3 Clinical Legal Education Program

The Clinical Legal Education program comprises Law Students from Monash University Law Faculty undertaking Professional Practice and Advanced Professional Practice Units based at the legal service.

Responsibilities include:

- Ensuring that the Clinical Program operates effectively.
- Direct responsibility for supervision and management of one client intake session per week, staffed by 4 or 5 Professional Practice students:
 - Supervision of all legal advice and file work undertaken;
 - Review and assessment of each student.

- Development and presentation of seminars in the clinical program.
- Involvement in planning and assessment meetings with all clinical staff of the Monash University Law Faculty.

4.4 Community Development and Law Reform

Springvale Monash Legal Service aims to address injustices in the community in collaboration with community groups. Priorities for this work are set at annual planning meetings.

Responsibilities include:

- Monitor casework to identify systemic issues and feed this information into the service's community development action plan.
- Raise the SMLS public profile and promote awareness of legal rights and responsibilities, through participation in public forums, the media (eg press releases, radio interviews) and community presentations.
- Authorise SMLS legal publications, legal submissions and other written material.
- Network with organisations including the Federation of Community Legal Centres, Victoria Legal Aid, other community legal centres, Courts, the Department of Justice, the Law Institute and relevant community agencies.
- Engage in appropriate Law Reform or Community Development activities as required by the legal service.

4.5 General Responsibilities

- Attend internal staff and planning meetings
- Involvement in relevant community network, including the Federation of Community Legal Centre members meetings and working groups.
- Involvement in fundraising and other events as required.
- Attend international, national and local conferences as required.
- Participate in professional development through appropriate training.
- Share general office duties as required.

5. QUALIFICATIONS

Mandatory

- Admitted to practice (or eligible for admission) as a Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Victoria and to hold (or be eligible to hold) an unrestricted current practising certificate under the *Legal Profession Act 2004*.

6. KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

Essential

- Commitment to social justice and to meeting the legal needs of disadvantaged groups.
- Experience in a broad range of legal areas.
- Commitment to providing clients with a high quality service in a professional and ethical manner.
- Demonstrated management skills to effectively direct, supervise and mentor staff, volunteers and students;
- Ability to develop, evaluate and improve operational efficiency and plan for organizational development.
- Knowledge of and commitment to the delivery of excellent clinical legal education.

- Excellent written and oral communication skills required to conduct research and prepare submissions/reports.
- Ability to fully utilize our computer resources, eg word processing, file management, internet and the SMLS client database.

Desirable

- Sound understanding of the principles and practice of community legal services and experience working within the community sector.
- Teaching experience, especially law students and volunteers.
- Project management experience and the ability to recognise the relationship between casework, community development and community legal education.
- Experience in community legal education and law reform activities.
- Experience in working with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Personal Attributes

- Excellent interpersonal/communication/leadership skills
- Committed team player
- Ability to work under pressure
- Energy and enthusiasm

7. HOURS

- Full time (38 hours per week)

8. CONDITIONS

- This position is covered by the Community Legal Centres (CLC) Multi Business Agreement (MBA).
- Above award salary ranging from \$66,000 to \$78,000 depending on experience.
- Salary packaging is available.

9. APPLICATIONS

Applications close at 5:00 pm on Monday 6 February 2012.

Application addressing the selection criteria and a current resume including the names of two employment referees should be addressed to:

The Director
Springvale Monash Legal Service Inc.
PO Box 312
SPRINGVALE VIC 3171

or electronically to:

joan.thong@monash.edu

Enquires can be made to Helen Yandell, SMLS Director, on (03) 9545 7400.