

**Care and Protection Lawyer**

**Position Application Kit**

**October 2020**

## **ABOUT RUAH LEGAL SERVICES**

### **Our vision**

To be an expert and valued legal service for people with mental health issues in our community.

To achieve this, Ruah Legal Services (RLS) provides clients with free, accessible and high-quality legal advice, advocacy and representation. We also work holistically with the broader community by providing education to address injustice and inequity.

### **About MHLC**

In 2019, the Mental Health Law Centre became part of Ruah Community Services, an organization that provides a range of services addressing mental health and wellness, FDV and homelessness. This merger has allowed MHLC to look at new opportunities and projects. The result is Ruah Legal Services.

The Centre provides free legal advice and representation in a variety of areas of law that impact on people with mental health issues. It is a member of the network of community legal centres located throughout Western Australia and Australia.

### **This role**

Ruah Legal Services will offer a part time family and domestic violence solicitor to assist clients with FDV matters, including family law and restraining orders. This position will work closely with the newly created Care and Protection project, a multidisciplinary care and protection legal service. That service is staffed by two full time care and protection lawyers who will work alongside a team of support workers to help parents navigate their way through child protection legal proceedings to achieve the best possible outcomes for their children. We are looking for a dedicated legal advocate who is keen to join a great team, and who are excited about contributing to the development and evolution of a new legal service in care and protection.

You must love being in court and advocating for your clients. You must understand and be committed to principles of holistic, trauma-informed and culturally-safe legal practice. This role will require emotional resilience and excellent interpersonal skills. You will have the ability to communicate sensitively and effectively with clients who are traumatized and who have complex personal circumstances, including mental illness. You will also be responsible for building collaborative, constructive relationships with key sector peers, stakeholders and service providers.

This role will be focused on providing legal advice, advocacy and representation (including at trial) to parents. You may also be required to assist clients with legal problems across a range of other areas of law, including care and protection, tenancy and criminal law. In addition to your client and advocacy work, you will work as part of the Ruah Legal Services team to mentor and train junior lawyers, supervise paralegals and volunteers, and participate in the community legal education services and policy work of the Centre.

The role will involve regular outreach work, including meeting with clients at refuges and a variety of community and health settings. At Ruah Legal Services we work flexibly at many places which might include the office, home, or while out and about.

The position is 3 days per week which can be worked flexibly and with hours and times as agreed.

We strongly encourage applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for all positions.

The application pack is attached.

### **Our Commitment to Diversity**

We are all better off, as a community, as a society, if we are all connected. At Ruah we believe true connection comes from a place free from judgement and discrimination, where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People are welcomed and treated with respect and their culture is celebrated.

Where everyone regardless of ability, age, culture, gender, race, sexual identity or intersex status are free to be themselves. Free to celebrate our differences.

We are building a workplace where difference is embraced and encouraged – and to do this, we need people on our team who are representative of the clients we work with, who are passionate about change and courageous enough to stand up for what is right.

**Everyone is welcome. Everyone belongs.**

### **Remuneration and benefits**

This role is a part time position (22.8 hours per week) for a fixed term of one year. Extensions are possible and dependent on funding. MHLC also works flexibly, with equipment provided for a home office and encouragement of flexible working practices.

Remuneration package includes salary package of \$78,000-\$95,000 plus superannuation dependent on experience. We also offer beneficial salary packaging.

5 weeks paid leave including paid leave during Christmas period shutdown.

Paid maternity leave

Ability to purchase additional leave

Employee Assistance Scheme

The position is funded for 12 months with the possibility of extension.

## **LOGGING YOUR APPLICATION**

We hope the information in the Position Application Kit will give you a better understanding of our recruitment and selection procedures and help you in preparing and submitting your application.

Applicants are asked to complete the following in order to apply for this role:

- Covering letter addressing mandatory selection criteria in no more than 3 A4 pages
- Copy of your CV

Applications that do not adhere to the above requirements will not be considered.

Please send all applications to [legalservices@ruah.org.au](mailto:legalservices@ruah.org.au) attention Shayla Strapps, CEO. The closing date is 16 October 2020 however applications will be considered as soon as they are received.

### **Addressing selection criteria**

You must clearly detail how you meet each selection criteria by addressing them separately. If you do not address the selection criteria, it is unlikely you will be considered for the position.

For each of the selection criteria, make a separate heading and then detail your knowledge, skills, abilities and experience and ensure you emphasise your major achievements by giving examples. Also include any non-working or volunteer activities, such as involvement in a community organisation.

It is your responsibility to convince the selection committee you are the best candidate for the position. You should ensure the information you provide is adequate for the selection committee to assess the strength of your application.

### **Resume/CV**

Your CV should set out:

- Your personal details
- Education and training
- Employment history – name of organisation, period of employment, job title, major duties and responsibilities, main achievements
- Skills/experience gained – inside and outside of work
- Name, address and contact telephone numbers of at least two referees who can provide the selection committee with information on your knowledge, skills, ability and experience in relation to the requirements of the advertised position. Advise your referees that you are applying for the position.

## JOB DESCRIPTION

### Family and Domestic Violence Lawyer

Position: Family and Domestic Violence Lawyer

Reports To: CEO, through the Principal Lawyer

Status: Part Time – 22.5hrs

Location: Subiaco, but with extensive outreach work

Salary: \$75,000 - \$95,000 (pro rata) commensurate with experience

Travel: Hold a current driver's licence in order to provide outreach services

Performance requirements	
Function area	Key tasks and responsibilities
<b>Legal Services</b>	<p>Having regard to the vision, mission and values of the Centre, the Lawyer will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide legal advice, legal services and representation for clients in relevant legal matters, including but not limited to restraining order, family law, care and protection, criminal, migration, and tenancy matters</li> <li>• Work closely with social workers, support workers and other services to provide holistic and wrap-round services for clients</li> <li>• Visit refuges and FDV service centres to provide outreach services to clients</li> <li>• Deliver legal services in an accessible, culturally-safe and trauma-informed way to all clients</li> <li>• Supervise, train and work closely with volunteer paralegals or other volunteers</li> <li>• Ensure the Centre, its mission, programmes and services are consistently presented in a strong, positive image to the community legal sector, the wider legal profession and the community at large</li> <li>• Contribute to a supportive working environment and maintain constructive working relationships by communicating effectively and respectfully with colleagues</li> <li>• Undertake file and matter management in accordance with service delivery goals, timelines and quality standards</li> <li>• Actively seek feedback from clients, sector peers and stakeholders, and identify and act on concerns and opportunities for service improvement</li> <li>• Ensure the efficient operation of the legal practice in the context of the wider organisation</li> <li>• Ensure the standards of service delivery as outlined in the Risk Management &amp; CLC Practice Guidelines are adhered to at all times</li> </ul>
<b>Community Legal Education (CLE)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare and deliver community education, training and resources to promote increased understanding of relevant law and access to justice within the community</li> </ul>
<b>Policy/Law Reform</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist in identifying policy and law reform issues and conduct research and prepare papers/reports as appropriate and when requested</li> </ul>
<b>Administration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain client files according to required procedure and undertake own work processing</li> <li>• Prepare reports as requested/required</li> <li>• Participate in staff meetings and other meetings as required</li> </ul>
<b>General</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perform such other duties as may be requested, required or directed.</li> </ul>

## Skills, Knowledge and Qualification Requirements

<b>Mandatory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• At least 3 years post admission experience in VRO and family law, and knowledge of and willingness to practice in care and protection, criminal, migration and tenancy law</li><li>• An understanding of the dynamics of family and domestic violence and its impact upon women and children</li><li>• An understanding of particular issues facing Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse communities and clients, especially in relation to dynamics of family and domestic violence</li><li>• Excellent interpersonal skills, including demonstrated ability to engage respectfully and effectively with clients experiencing complex trauma and other circumstances of vulnerability</li><li>• Understanding of, and commitment to providing, culturally safe services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds</li><li>• High level written and oral communication and presentation skills</li><li>• Excellent organisational, time management and file management skills</li><li>• Demonstrated capacity to work flexibly and efficiently, including independently and collaboratively as part of a team</li><li>• Excellent technology skills</li></ul>
<b>Desired</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Experience working in the not-for-profit legal sector</li><li>• A high level of knowledge of services (both legal and non-legal) available to support women who are experiencing family and domestic violence</li></ul>
<b>Driver's licence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Required</li></ul>