

SENIOR LAWYER

POSITION APPLICATION KIT

MARCH 2021

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 (RLS). The Mental Health Law Centre now operates as a specialty centre of RLS.

RLS 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

We are looking for an enthusiastic advocate who is keen to join a great team. A willingness to learn and an ability to adapt to change in a fast paced environment is a must. You must love being in Court and advocating for your clients. You will have a desire to improve the lives of people who experience mental health issues.

This is a full time position whose role will be carry a caseload of criminal and civil matters and supervise younger lawyers. You will work in the team to mentor and train junior lawyers, supervise paralegals and volunteers, and to participate in the planning and manage the community legal education services and policy work of the centre.

MHLC represents clients who experience mental health issues and require legal assistance primarily in the following areas:

- Mental Health Tribunal hearings & matters under the *Mental Health Act 2014*;
- Criminal matters; &
- Guardianship & Administration matters in the SAT
- Restraining orders.

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

The position is to provide Maternity Leave Cover until 31 March 2022, however there may be longer term opportunities subject to funding.

Remuneration package includes salary package of \$90-\$110K dependent on experience. We also offer beneficial salary packaging.

MHLC works flexibly, with equipment provided for a home office and encouragement of flexible working practices.

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

Ability to purchase additional leave

Employee Assistance Scheme

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, attention Shayla Strapps, CEO. The closing date is 22 March 2021 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

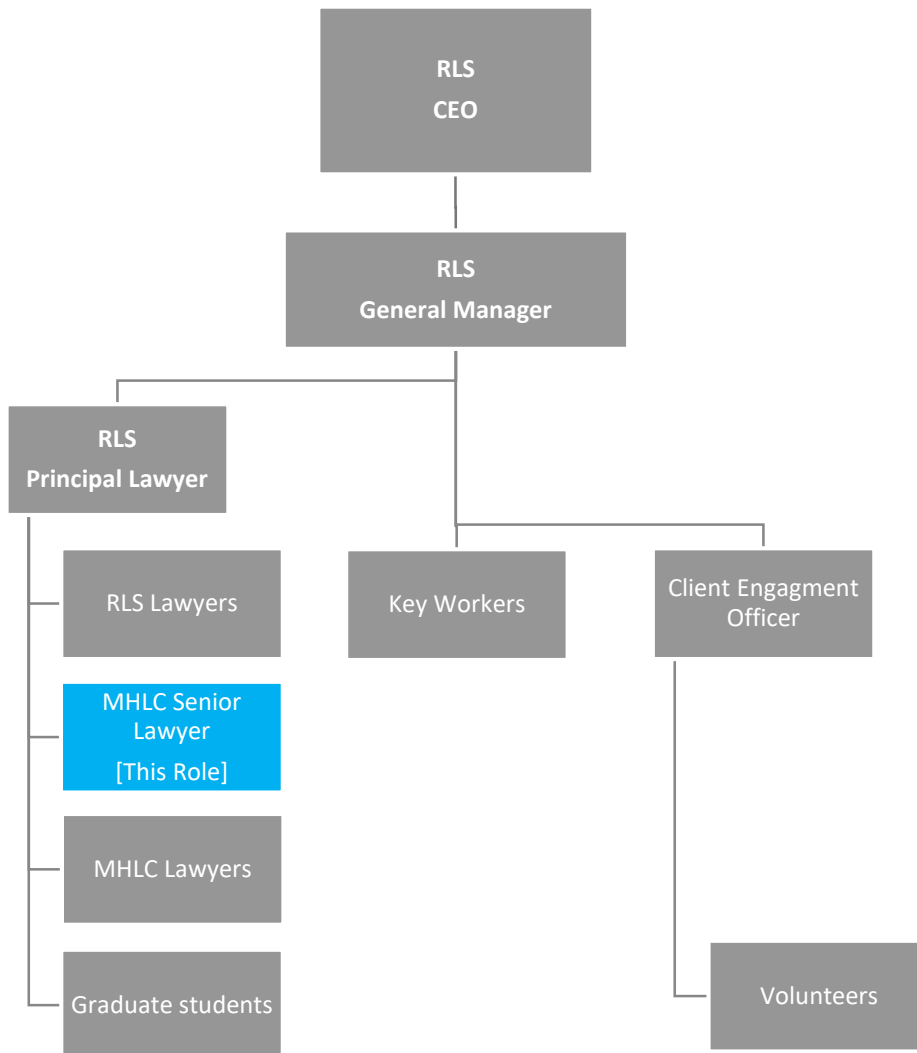
Your CV should set out:

- 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.

Position Description

Position Title	Senior Lawyer – Mental Health Law Centre
Code	SLAW
Division	Legal
Location	Subiaco
Classification Level	5 years P.A.E
Reporting To	Principal Lawyer – Ruah Legal Services
Supervision of	Restricted Practitioners and Paralegals

The Mental Health Law Centre (MHLC) is a speciality centre of Ruah Legal Services (RLS). Lawyers practicing within MHLC report to the RLS Principal Lawyer.



Key Duties and Responsibilities

<p>Mission and Values</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate ethical behaviour and decision making; • Relate to all staff, volunteers, clients and contractors with courtesy and respect; • Take responsibility for own actions/behaviours; • Maintain confidentiality of all information in accordance with the organisation's policies; and, • Operate within Ruah Legal Services' policies and procedures.
<p>Responsibilities regarding the legal practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist the Principal Lawyer with case allocation and managing the case workload of the legal staff to ensure appropriate skills match and that targets in any funding agreement are met if not exceeded; • Oversee, supervise and mentor the Restricted Practitioners and Junior Lawyers at Ruah Legal Services; • Provide legal advice and legal services for clients of the Mental Health Law Centre, including, but not limited to, matters under the <i>Mental Health Act 2014</i>; criminal matters; human rights matters; and matters relating to complaints and recourse for health services; • Appear and advocate for clients before the Mental Health Tribunal, the State Administrative Tribunal, the Magistrate's Court, District Court and similar jurisdictions such as the Mentally Impaired Accused Review Board; • Advise client via telephone, face-to-face or other means as appropriate on the above matters; • Keep up-to-date with legislative and other developments.
<p>Education and Training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervise and work closely with volunteer paralegals; • Prepare and deliver community education, training and resources to promote an increased understanding of the relevant laws within the community and in the legal profession; and, • Assist in identifying policy and law reform issues and conduct research and prepare papers/reports as appropriate and when requested.
<p>Leadership and Teamwork</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that Ruah Legal Services, its mission, programs and services are consistently presented in a strong, positive image to the community legal sector, the wider legal profession and the community at large; • Actively build rapport as well as constructive internal and external relationships; • Contribute to a supportive working environment; • Communicate with colleagues to maintain constructive working relationships; and, • Ensure the efficient operation of the legal practice in the context of the wider organisation.
<p>Quality and Risk Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comply with all Occupational Health and Safety requirements; • Complete conflict check training; • Be aware of Ruah Legal Services' need to comply with legal, regulatory and insurance requirements; including pursuant to the legislation in force in Western Australian governing legal practices and practitioners and in compliance with the NALCL's Risk Management Guide; and, • Identify risks of non-compliance and report these to the Principal Lawyer.
<p>Other duties</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As directed

Selection Criteria

Essential:

- Be admitted as a lawyer of the Supreme Court of Western Australia;
- Have recent and relevant criminal law experience;
- Demonstrated competence in advocacy before Tribunals and Courts;
- Exceptional time management skills and demonstrated ability to prioritise tasks;
- Excellent communication skills and ability to work co-operatively within a small team; and
- Willingness and ability to work within and contribute to the vision, mission, core values and the guiding principles of the organisation.

Desirable:

- Experience working in a community legal centre;
- Experience supervising legal staff; and
- Experience in the planning, execution and delivery of legal education to a diverse range of audiences.

Compliance document(s):

- Current driver's licence

Authorisation

This document is an accurate statement of the duties and responsibilities of this position.

Performance Competency Framework

Ruah Legal Services has a number of competencies that staff and volunteers are required to demonstrate in their practice. These competencies are:

- Team cohesiveness;
- Communication;
- Professionalism;
- Stress tolerance;
- Solution focus; &
- Attention to detail.

The tables below provide a broad description of each competency and examples of 10 or 11 behaviours for each of them.

Team Cohesiveness: Is open and trusting towards team members; displays commitment to the team and its collective outcomes; effectively manages team conflict; and holds self and others accountable to achieving team goals.

1. Aligns individual work with the objectives of the team and organisation
2. Takes personal responsibility to improve team's performance
3. Adheres to and supports group decisions
4. Values and promotes the collaborative contributions of others
5. Is confident voicing conflicting opinions and challenging team members
6. Shares knowledge, expertise and resources with other members
7. Recognises strengths and accomplishments in others
8. Provides constructive feedback to others to assist professional development
9. Is readily willing to admit mistakes and ask others for assistance when necessary
10. Willingly makes sacrifices for the good of the team
11. Engages effectively with others and develops ongoing relationships

Communication: Effectively communicates information in an appropriate way to the audience; practices active listening; shares relevant information in appropriate forums, and fosters an environment conducive to open communication.

1. Listens actively to gauge understanding of others' feelings, opinions and ideas
2. Asks open-ended questions that elicit in-depth responses
3. Fosters open and honest communication
4. Encourages and is receptive to contrary points of views
5. Refrains from immediate judgment and criticism of others' ideas
6. Articulates oral and written communication in a clear, accurate and professional manner
7. Matches communication approach to the audience
8. Seeks to understand others' feelings and perspectives
9. Willing to discuss difficult issues
10. Acknowledges others' feelings when facilitating discussions on sensitive matters
11. Uses persuasion to obtain support for ideas and group consensus

Professionalism: Behaves in a way that is consistent with competence in the relevant context, adheres to ethical standards in the interests of both the client and the organization, and supports professional development in self and others.

1. Seeks to serve the interests of clients, the organisation and the broader public
2. Represents the profession with honesty, integrity, and good character
3. Is competent in a specialised body of knowledge and skills
4. Practises in the context of their knowledge and skills
5. Seeks opportunities to develop professionally
6. Seeks to assist others in their professional development
7. Seeks feedback from staff and stakeholders to help performance
8. Maintains integrity and ethical standards
9. Acts professionally and diplomatically when dealing with clients
10. Shows discretion regarding confidential, private, or sensitive information
11. Encourages professionalism at all times, i.e., accurate, punctual and reliable.

Stress Tolerance: Maintains performance, judgment, and composure when under stress. Effectively adapts to competing demands, ambiguity, and hostility.

1. Remains calm and composed when under pressure
2. Capable of managing multiple tasks with competing demands
3. Pursues objectives with energy and persistence during periods of high stress
4. Takes ownership of emotions and prevents from interfering with situations
5. Seeks to balance work and personal life responsibilities
6. Is resilient to criticism/feedback and makes adjustments accordingly
7. Handles difficult situations with diplomacy and tact
8. Stays calm in the face of others' anger or lack of control
9. Maintains performance after disappointment or rejection
10. Is able to keep issues and situations in perspective
11. Able to shift priorities and multi-task on various projects

Solution Focused: Takes responsibility for solving problems. Uses initiative to identify causes and implement solutions in complex challenges.

1. Anticipates problems and proactively designs contingency plans
2. Takes responsibility for solving a problem
3. Sees problems as challenges that can be overcome
4. Seeks to understand reasons for obstacles and finds ways to overcome
5. Seeks information about actual needs, beyond those expressed initially
6. When faced with a problem, asks "How?" instead of "Why?"
7. Considers what *is* currently working, and seeks to accentuate it
8. Maintains a positive and hopeful attitude towards solving the problem
9. Willing to persevere until a problem is solved
10. Re-engineers or creates new processes and systems to get around obstacles
11. Uses initiative to effectively resolve difficult and complex problems that require new or innovative approaches

Attention to Detail: Sets high standards of performance for self and others; pays attention to quality and accuracy of work produced; and carefully monitors progress.

1. Produces high quality and accurate work
2. Establishes quality standards for the delivery of services and ensures they are met
3. Completes work in line with relevant policies, procedures, and standards
4. Makes adjustments to work to ensure client expectations are met and exceeded
5. Measures progress effectively against organisations targets and objectives
6. Develops systems to monitor the quality of work outputs and processes
7. Takes action to improve the efficiency of processes and quality of outputs
8. Leads/champions quality and process improvement efforts
9. Takes visible action to ensure the delivery of high quality services to all clients