

# Specialist Jurisdictions

Working in a specialist Jurisdiction has different requirements than working in the Local or District Courts. Although many of the activities may be the same the approach to dealing with clients can be very different in these specialist jurisdictions.

## Children's Court

The Children's Court is a specialist court to deal with criminal cases, applications for apprehended violence orders, applications for compulsory schooling orders and cases involving the care and protection of children.

When working in the Children's Court there is a need to be patient, compassionate, show empathy and be resilient. Staff need to have strong communication skills to liaise effectively with judiciary, advocates, children, police and parents / carers. In particular, staff should understand that Children's Court clients often have low levels of literacy and poor comprehension and oral skills.

Some of these specific work related requirements are;

- Working with young people;
- Working with clients unfamiliar with the Care and Protection jurisdiction and the processes associated with it;
- Exposure to distressing information, photographs and video (especially if in Court);
- Resilience in dealing with child related matters on a daily basis

## Coroners Court

The State Coroner ensures that all deaths, suspected deaths, fires and explosions are properly investigated, and Coroners make findings in regards to the cause and manner of death and the cause and origin of fires. At times, an inquest or inquiry is held to determine this. Coroners can also make recommendations to prevent future deaths.

The Coroners Court Lidcombe works on a team based approach, with registry staff attached to each Coroner. Each team is responsible for the management of their Coroner's workload and performs administrative tasks as directed by their Coroner or team leader.

When working in the Coroners court there is a need to have strong communication skills to liaise effectively with Coroners, advocates, police and grieving family of a deceased person. You also need to have a high level of resilience in dealing with grieving family members who can be angry, extremely upset, abusive and threatening.

The difference between clients of the Coroner's Court, as opposed to those in a Local Court, is that the clients usually only deal with the Coroner's Court once, so they are completely unaware of the process they are undertaking. They are going through this process against a backdrop of extreme grief and sadness, so staff must always remain conscious of this in their dealings with them.

## **Drug Court**

The Drug Court of NSW is a specialist court that takes referrals from the Local and District Courts of offenders who are dependent on drugs and who are considered to be eligible for a Drug Court program. The Drug Court of NSW attempts to address underlying drug dependency which has resulted in criminal offending.

The Drug Court Program is for a minimum period of 12 months, consequently you will be providing a service to the same clients over a significant period of time.

A large part of the Drug Court program involves supervised urinalysis of participants, undertaken by qualified health professionals.

The Drug Court Registry works very closely with the judiciary and an interagency multidisciplinary team of professionals from the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Legal Aid Commission, NSW Police, Justice Health and Department of Corrective Services.

Some of these specific work related requirements at the Drug Court include:

- a high level of interaction with drug dependent clients
- dealing with drug affected clients
- processing paperwork in relation to urinalysis
- maintaining professional boundaries with repeat clients
- strong communication skills to liaise with the interagency team
- maintaining work relations with the interagency team
- treating Drug Court clients with dignity and respect and communicating in a non-judgemental manner

The position holder will be required to be available for an overtime roster that includes public holidays and may from time to time be required to work at other Drug Court Registries.

## **Metropolitan Relief Pool**

The Assistant Client Services Officer (Relief Pool) works in the Local and District Courts throughout the metropolitan area.

This role provides a range of clerical and administrative services including, but not limited to, responding to client enquiries, providing assistance in the courtroom, data entry and records management.

Appointment to the relief pool is an ongoing role within Court Services; however, being part of the relief pool will require you to work at different locations within the region from time to time, as directed by your manager.