

Role Description

Senior Solicitor



Cluster	Justice
Agency	Legal Aid NSW
Division/Branch/Unit	Legal Services
Classification/Grade/Band	Legal Officer Grade IV
ANZSCO Code	271311
PCAT Code	1118192
Date of Approval	17 July 2014
Agency Website	www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au

Agency overview

Legal Aid NSW is the largest legal aid agency in Australia, comprising a Central Sydney office and 26 regional offices in metropolitan and regional centres across NSW and a number of specialist services and advice clinics. It was established under the Legal Aid Commission Act 1979 as an independent authority to assist economically and socially disadvantaged people to understand and protect their rights in the legal system. People with disabilities, from people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, women and children, Indigenous people and people with mental illness are some of the groups who may experience difficulties when enforcing and defending their rights.

Working in partnership with private lawyers, Legal Aid NSW provides legal advice, information and minor assistance and legal representation to eligible people in many areas of law. Legal Aid NSW also provides alternative dispute resolution services, community legal education programs, and publications on legal issues.

Primary purpose of the role

Provide senior management and leadership in the provision of family law services to socially and economically disadvantaged people in accordance with the Legal Aid NSW Plan and the Family Law Division Business Plan. This includes directly providing legal services to clients of Legal Aid NSW, including in more complex matters.

Key accountabilities

- Providing an efficient and effective legal service to clients in accordance with legislation and directions, policy, guidelines and practice standards, including:
 - providing legal advice, minor assistance and duty lawyer services to members of the public;
 - representing clients in dispute resolution processes;
 - representing clients in litigation
 - providing community legal education;
 - providing appropriate referrals to other agencies/services as required; and
 - developing and maintaining stakeholder relationships.
- Supervise, lead and manage solicitors by
 - providing advice and guidance on the management of a legal practice, the conduct of litigation and the exercise of discretions;
 - Induction and training of new staff

- Performance planning and reviewing
- Conducting regular file reviews and ensuring compliance with Commission policies and guidelines, delegations and relevant practice standards
- Utilizing the Legal Aid NSW electronic case management/tracking system and database including entering data in accordance with the standards and requirements of the systems, preparing required documentation and maintaining appropriate records in both soft and hard copy forms.
- Keeping up-to-date on legal developments and procedures.
- Identifying training and professional development needs of staff.
- Determining applications for legal aid under delegated authority and consistent with the Legal Aid Commission Act, policy and guidelines and/or submitting applications for Legal Aid to the Grants Division; including:
 - making recommendations about merit and exercising discretion as required;
 - preparing reports for the Legal Aid Review Committee as required;
 - undertaking active case management and complying with practice standards for case management including performing case related accounting duties
- Identifying systemic issues affecting vulnerable or disadvantaged clients and contributing to legal, policy and creative and tailored service delivery strategies to address those issues.

Key challenges

- Being able to communicate with and take instructions from a wide range of people including those from ATSI communities, people in crisis, people with a physical or intellectual disability or mental illness, people from non-English speaking backgrounds, or who have problem behaviours such as drug or alcohol addictions, in situations where the legal concepts involved are complex and difficult for the client to understand.
- Maintaining and enhancing professional competence, keeping abreast of legal developments, changes in Legal Aid policies, systems, guidelines, and practices and community needs.
- Adapting to new systems and technology which have a significant impact on the legal practice.
- Adapting to changes to the operating environment including changes to funding and other socio-economic factors
- Balance caseload commitments with supervisory responsibilities, law reform, policy and project work, building and managing partnerships and stakeholder relationships, developing service delivery strategies and the participation in or co-ordination of any Committees.
- Contribute to the development and implementation of creative, effective and tailored strategies to:
 - build the capacity of legal officers in the Family law Division
 - support the legal work undertaken through regional offices, outreach and Family Law projects, and
 - respond effectively to legal and systemic issues affecting vulnerable or disadvantaged clients.

Key relationships

Who	Why
Internal	
Executive Director	Support and Guidance
RPC and Regional Admin Coordinator	Resourcing Assistance
Solicitors	Providing direction and guidance, mentoring
External	
Clients, stakeholders and Barristers	Representing clients and instructing in trial matters

Role dimensions

Reporting line

Solicitor in Charge
Regional Program Coordinator
Senior Solicitors
Executive Director

Direct reports

Legal Officers I-III
Legal Officers IV

Essential requirements






Legal Qualifications
Practising Certificate
Drivers Licence if in a regional office

Capabilities for the role

The NSW Public Sector Capability Framework applies to all NSW public sector employees. The Capability Framework is available at www.psc.nsw.gov.au/capabilityframework

Capability summary

Below is the full list of capabilities and the level required for this role. The capabilities in bold are the focus capabilities for this role. Refer to the next section for further information about the focus capabilities.

NSW Public Sector Capability Framework		
Capability Group	Capability Name	Level
 Personal Attributes	Display Resilience and Courage	Adept
	Act with Integrity	Adept
	Manage Self	Intermediate
	Value Diversity	Adept
 Relationships	Communicate Effectively	Adept
	Commit to Customer Service	Adept
	Work Collaboratively	Adept
	Influence and Negotiate	Adept
 Results	Deliver Results	Adept
	Plan and Prioritise	Adept
	Think and Solve Problems	Adept
	Demonstrate Accountability	Intermediate
 Business Enablers	Finance	Foundational
	Technology	Intermediate
	Procurement and Contract Management	Foundational
	Project Management	Foundational
 People Management	Manage and Develop People	Adept
	Inspire Direction and Purpose	Adept
	Optimise Business Outcomes	Adept
	Manage Reform and Change	Intermediate

Focus capabilities

The focus capabilities for the role are the capabilities in which occupants must demonstrate immediate competence. The behavioural indicators provide examples of the types of behaviours that would be expected at that level and should be reviewed in conjunction with the role's key accountabilities.

NSW Public Sector Capability Framework		
Group and Capability	Level	Behavioural Indicators
Personal Attributes Act with Integrity	Adept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represent the organisation in an honest, ethical and professional way and encourage others to do so • Demonstrate professionalism to support a culture of integrity within the team/unit • Set an example for others to follow and identify and explain ethical issues • Ensure that others understand the legislation and policy framework within which they operate • Act to prevent and report misconduct, illegal and inappropriate behaviour
Personal Attributes Manage Self	Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapt existing skills to new situations • Show commitment to achieving work goals • Show awareness of own strengths and areas for growth and develop and apply new skills • Seek feedback from colleagues and stakeholders • Maintain own motivation when tasks become difficult
Relationships Communicate Effectively	Adept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailor communication to the audience • Clearly explain complex concepts and arguments to individuals and groups • Monitor own and others' non-verbal cues and adapt where necessary • Create opportunities for others to be heard • Actively listen to others and clarify own understanding • Write fluently in a range of styles and formats
Relationships Influence and Negotiate	Adept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiate from an informed and credible position • Lead and facilitate productive discussions with staff and stakeholders • Encourage others to talk, share and debate ideas to achieve a consensus • Recognise and explain the need for compromise • Influence others with a fair and considered approach and sound arguments • Show sensitivity and understanding in resolving conflicts and differences • Manage challenging relations with internal and external stakeholders • Pre-empt and minimise conflict
Results Deliver Results	Adept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take responsibility for delivering on intended outcomes • Make sure team/unit staff understand expected goals and acknowledge success • Identify resource needs and ensure goals are achieved within budget and deadlines

NSW Public Sector Capability Framework

Group and Capability	Level	Behavioural Indicators
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify changed priorities and ensure allocation of resources meets new business needs Ensure financial implications of changed priorities are explicit and budgeted for Use own expertise and seek others' expertise to achieve work outcomes
Results Plan and Prioritise	Adept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take into account future aims and goals of the team/unit and organisation when prioritising own and others' work Initiate, prioritise, consult on and develop team/unit goals, strategies and plans Anticipate and assess the impact of changes, such as government policy/economic conditions, on team/unit objectives and initiate appropriate responses Ensure current work plans and activities support and are consistent with organisational change initiatives Evaluate achievements and adjust future plans accordingly
Results Demonstrate Accountability	Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take responsibility and be accountable for own actions Understand delegations and act within authority levels Identify and follow safe work practices, and be vigilant about their application by self and others Be alert to risks that might impact the completion of an activity and escalate these when identified Use financial and other resources responsibly
Business Enablers Project Management	Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan and deliver tasks in line with agreed schedules Check progress against schedules, and seek help to overcome barriers Participate in planning and provide feedback about improvements to schedules
People Management Manage and Develop People	Adept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define and clearly communicate roles and responsibilities to achieve team/unit outcomes Negotiate clear performance standards and monitor progress Develop team/unit plans that take into account team capability, strengths and opportunities for development Provide regular constructive feedback to build on strengths and achieve results Address and resolve team and individual performance issues, including unsatisfactory performance in a timely and effective way Monitor and report on performance of team in line with established performance development frameworks
People Management Manage Reform and Change	Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote change processes and communicate change initiatives across the team/unit Accommodate changing priorities and respond flexibly to uncertainty and ambiguity Support others in managing uncertainty and change