

Legal Development Program & Paralegal Program

Office of the Director
of Public Prosecutions
New South Wales

Welcome

Solicitors at the ODPP can undertake an interesting and fulfilling career with great potential for promotion and possible senior appointment. The Office's prosecutors are skilled, experienced and supported at every level of their career.

Our Office is unique in many ways.

We have high staff retention rates - many of our prosecutors started as clerks and level 1 solicitors and we aim to provide a clear career path for all our solicitors. Solicitors can progress to Solicitor Advocates and appointment as a Crown Prosecutor, but there are also paths for those who are interested in appellate work, administration and policy.

We have ten offices throughout the State, four of which are in the greater Sydney area. Career paths are uniform throughout the State and there is scope to move from one office to another. We offer Legal Development Program placements at each of our offices.

Our greatest advantage, and the one that makes us unique, is the work we do.



We are New South Wales' prosecutorial body. No other legal firm or agency does the work we do.

Every criminal matter is different. Our solicitors have carriage of matters including, but not limited to, assault, robbery, and fraud. Our solicitors also instruct Crown Prosecutors in more serious matters, including manslaughter and homicide.

The work we undertake requires a sound legal knowledge, and a willingness to work hard. As a participant in either Legal Development Program or Paralegal Program, you will learn a prosecutor's role from the beginning. We hold our professional development courses in-house, so you will keep your skills honed with presentations from some of the country's most respected criminal solicitors and barristers.

We want you to be good at your job. We want to see you achieve a high level of professional excellence, and we work hard to ensure that you have the support and resources to do that.

In this brochure you can read some first hand experiences from some of our solicitors who started through the Legal Development Program and at the back of this package you can read how to apply for the Legal Development Program or the Paralegal Program.

I look forward to meeting you.

Craig Hyland
Solicitor for Public Prosecutions



Overview



Overview

The ODPP, established by the *Director of Public Prosecutions Act 1986*, provides for the people of New South Wales a dynamic prosecution service recognised for its excellence and leadership. It commenced operations on 13 July 1987.

The ODPP conducts prosecutions for serious offences in the Childrens, Local, District and Supreme Courts and conducts appeals and other matters in the District and Supreme Courts, Court of Criminal Appeal and the High Court of Australia.

The ODPP conducts prosecutions of all child sexual assault matters where the complainant is currently under 16 years.

Our office locations

- Sydney CBD (Head Office)
- Campbelltown
- Parramatta
- Penrith
- Dubbo
- Gosford
- Lismore
- Newcastle
- Wagga Wagga
- Wollongong



What is the Legal Development Program?



Legal Development Program

The Legal Development Program meets the practical legal experience required to attain a Practising Certificate, but equally important is that as a law graduate, you will gain invaluable experience in the conduct of criminal prosecutions in NSW.

You will consult, collaborate and seek advice from Managing Solicitors, Crown Prosecutors, Solicitor Advocates and other legal professionals. The program will contribute to building relationships with key stakeholders including ODPP solicitors, Crown Prosecutors, members of the NSW Police Force, defence legal practitioners, court staff and others within the criminal justice system. You will also gain experience working with victims of crime and Crown witnesses, including experts.



What is the Paralegal Program?



Paralegal Program

The Paralegal Program is being trialled in 2024 as an addition to the current Legal Development Program and is for talented and enthusiastic law students who are entering their final year of their Law Degree or Diploma in 2024. As a paralegal you will gain valuable work experience in criminal prosecutions. The program offers the flexibility of full time and part time opportunities subject to student availability and operational requirements of the ODPP.

The program will contribute to building relationships with key stakeholders including ODPP staff, members of the NSW Police Force, defence legal practitioners, court staff and others within the criminal justice system.



“I have always given the same advice for any person considering a job in criminal law – you must have a passion for it. The work is not easy, it’s not sexy, and there will always be cases that test your fortitude. However, it is the most rewarding career you will ever have.

There is great responsibility in being a prosecutor. You must assist the court to arrive at the truth and to do justice between the community and the accused according to law and the dictates of fairness. Every case you work on involves someone’s life and their livelihood; whether it is the victim of a crime or an accused person. The work you do has the power to make a difference in someone’s life”.

Anneka, Solicitor and LDP Graduate, Sydney



What is involved in the Legal Development & Paralegal Programs?



Induction and Training

Program Description	Key Accountability	How Success will be measured
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The Office will provide a practical legal induction and on-the-job training during the program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Comply with the ODPP's legal guidelines, procedures and protocols.Comply with the ODPP Code of Conduct, maintain professional and ethical standards.Comply with legislation, ODPP's policy and practices of employment including anti-discrimination, equal employment opportunity and occupational health and safety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Undertake ODPP training and development programs.Compliance with Director's Prosecution Guidelines and legal and ethical practice and procedures.Feedback from Managing Solicitors regarding demonstrated skills from learning activities and on-the-job training.



Short Matters (Legal Development Program only)

Program Description	Key Accountability	How Success will be measured
<p>Short Matters are all non-trial proceedings conducted by the ODPP. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sentences in the District Court • appeals by defendants against the conviction and/or severity of penalties imposed in the Local Court • Crown appeals against the inadequacy of penalties imposed in the Local Court • callups for breach of good behaviour bonds • Notices of Motion seeking a variety of orders before the court • bail applications in the District Court • return of subpoenas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare Short Matter files to ensure that all relevant information and documents are available for the solicitor appearing. • Request and obtain all relevant files for the rostered solicitor and update court results on MATTERS (ODPP database). • Attend promptly to any follow up tasks. • All work carried out in accordance with the Director's Prosecution Guidelines, ODPP Standard Operating Procedures and criminal law practice and procedures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from Managing Solicitors and solicitors appearing regarding file preparation and recording of accurate file notes and comprehensive court notations and Activity Based Costing completed within set timeframes. • All results updated accurately on MATTERS within set timeframes. • Follow up work completed including notifying victims of outcomes related to prosecutions within set timeframes. • Communication and team work skills assessed from feedback from managers and colleagues. • Liaison skills will be assessed from feedback from colleagues, police, court registry staff and witnesses.



Supreme Court Bail Applications (Legal Development Program only)

Program Description	Key Accountability	How Success will be measured
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preparing and attending call overs before Registrars for the listing of Supreme Court bail applications.• Attending to administrative functions and assisting the rostered solicitors appearing to prepare matters for Supreme Court bail applications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare Supreme Court bail files ensuring that all relevant information and documents are available for the solicitor appearing.• Update all relevant court results on MATTERS and attend to all follow up work, including advising victims and police of outcomes of applications within set timeframes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feedback from Managing Solicitors and ODPP solicitors as to information obtained and files prepared accurately and within set timeframes.• All court documents filed and served on relevant parties within required timeframes.• Court results accurately updated on MATTERS within set timeframes.• Follow up work attended to as soon as practicable, including notification of result to police.



Local Court

Program Description	Key Accountability	How Success will be measured
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To assist solicitors appearing in ODPP Local Court lists to obtain files and prepare matters.• To provide general assistance to solicitors appearing in summary hearings and committal proceedings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Request and obtain all relevant files for the Local Court list, and update court results on MATTERS.• Assist solicitors as requested in the preparation of matters for Local Court summary and/or committal hearings.• Assist solicitors to compile and prepare briefs of evidence for the court and/or Solicitor Advocates and Crown Prosecutors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Files requested and obtained within the set timeframe.• Court results updated within the set timeframe on MATTERS.• Follow up work attended to as soon as practicable upon return of file from court.



Assist in the preparation of Trial matters

Program Description	Key Accountability	How Success will be measured
<p>Involves attending to all aspects of preparing a matter for trial, assisting as required during the trial and attending to post trial work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare briefs of evidence • Issue subpoenas • Draft legal and procedural notices • Prepare correspondence under direction • Liaise with Police OIC and witnesses under direction and arrange conferences • Follow up requests to police for further information/evidence • Arrange for interpreters and witness travel • Prepare matters for referral to psychiatrists for mental health assessments • Attend to technology requirements and review digital evidence • Manage exhibits • Research law and procedure • Prepare matters for sentence including requesting and obtaining relevant material • Cull and complete files. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good file and records management. • Undertake all work related to preparing a matter for trial. • Under instruction from the solicitor with carriage; respond to enquiries of and from police, legal practitioners, witnesses, court registry staff and other areas of the Office to provide assistance relating to the process and progress of matters. • Complete all MATTERS related tasks as required. • Obtain all sentence related material. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefs of evidence prepared within set timeframes and in accordance with ODPP procedures. • Subpoenas sent out in accordance with ODPP policy and procedures. • Requisitions followed up within timeframes. • All legal and procedural notices completed and served on relevant parties in compliance with relevant time standards and Director's Prosecution Guidelines. • Accurate and complete records maintained. • Victims' obligations met in accordance with the Director's Prosecution Guidelines and the Charter of Victims Rights. • MATTERS accurately updated within set timeframes. • Activity Based Costings completed promptly. • Assessment and feedback will be obtained from Crown Prosecutors, Managing Solicitors and ODPP solicitors regarding the quality and efficiency of work undertaken.



What are the challenges?



Challenges

- Balancing competing priorities.
- Working to strict timeframes under the instruction of multiple solicitors and Crown Prosecutors.
- Working with external stakeholders to obtain material and information required in the preparation of matters within short timeframes.
- Liaising with victims of crime, witnesses and stakeholders to relay procedural information and appropriately refer individuals to a solicitor.
- Dealing with traumatised victims and being exposed to confronting and sensitive material.



Support and Assistance

The Office offers a range of mechanisms to help you deal with the confronting nature of our work and to support your health and wellbeing, such as:

- ODPP WellCheck Program, including Health Assessments
- Access to discounted fitness/lifestyle program
- Flu Vaccination program
- Employee Assistance Program
- The Resilient Lawyer and Vicarious Trauma Workshops
- Regular feedback and meetings with Managing Solicitor
- Mentors.



“For me, criminal law was always the most interesting topic of my legal studies. Through high school and University it was always the focus of my interest and I tailored my electives around that topic. As part of my studies I attended a presentation by the then Director, Nicholas Cowdery QC. Of course, I was always aware of the role of the Crown but it was made abundantly clear how important it was that the ODPP conduct itself like a pillar of the legal profession – the ideal litigant. A combination of these factors made the decision obvious.

My day can include any of the following:

- Preparation and maintenance of files for trial in the District Court and Supreme Court
- Instructing a full spectrum of solicitors in trial – Developmental Solicitor Advocates through to Queen’s Counsel
Appearing in a range of matters in a variety of jurisdictions – Summary Hearings, District Court Mentions, Sentences and Appeals
- Submitting reports and making recommendations to the DPP on a variety of developments in matters within my practice.

There’s a lot I enjoy about the job. One of my favourite tasks is receiving a file before the first mention date and administering it through the criminal process to a conclusion – analysing a brief, researching the law, recommending charge selection, raising requisitions, negotiating with defence, and consulting with victims/complainants through to accepting a plea for sentence or committing that matter for trial.

As an LDP participant you will be thrust into a world vastly different to what you have learnt. Your studies will assist but it is a small attribute when put into practice. The learning curve is steep but thoroughly enjoyable. I am constantly surprised by the variations the legal process can have but each intricacy is a lesson.

There’s constant encouragement to develop and broaden my knowledge and practice, with a system of support to enable it. There is always someone with the expertise to consult, a research unit that can find the answer, a presentation or paper to explain and a mentor to guide.”

Jay, Solicitor and LDP Graduate, Lismore.



Program and skill developmental opportunities



Programs and skill development opportunities

The Programs offers:

- Full-time work up to 35 hours per week paid practical legal experience in criminal prosecutions for a period of up to 12 months. The Paralegal Program offers full-time and part-time opportunities
- Experience working with solicitors and Crown Prosecutors
- On-the-job training and access to professional development
- Formal feedback, mentoring and informal networking
- Excellent working conditions including flexible work practices
- Challenging work that makes a difference.

The Programs will provide opportunities to develop and enhance your:

- Organisational skills
- Analytical skills
- Legal research skills
- Legal drafting and written communication
- Knowledge of criminal law, practice and procedure
- Communication skills
- Teamwork skills.



Am I Eligible to Apply?



Eligibility

To be eligible for the Legal Development Program you must have:

- completed the coursework component of the College of Law's Practical Legal Training Program (or its equivalent) or will have completed it prior to commencing the program
- completed, are currently undertaking or have not started the work experience component of the College of Law's Practical Legal Training Program (or its equivalent). Those participants who have completed all the work experience component need to have done so within the timeframe stated in the recruitment advertisement, as varied from time to time.

To be eligible for the Paralegal Program you must be:

- Commencing your final year of your Degree or Diploma in law in 2024.

Participation in the induction and training components of the program is compulsory.



What are we looking for?



Support and Assistance

To be equipped to undertake the ODPP Legal Development & Paralegal Program you will have demonstrated:

- an interest in the practice of criminal law and the functions of the ODPP
- the ability to provide high level legal and administrative support and work co-operatively within a professional team
- strong communication skills
- the ability to use initiative and meet conflicting deadlines.

We have ten offices throughout the State and are looking for people prepared to work regionally.



"I started work in the ODPP in the Sydney Head Office as a member of the Legal Development Program in 2013. The learning curve is steep yet rewarding. By the end of my time as a Level 1 Solicitor, I was appearing in increasingly complex matters and found myself fortunate enough to instruct our most experienced and outstanding Crown Prosecutors in some of the highest profile criminal matters in NSW.

The work you do can be high profile and attract a lot of public interest, because criminal matters inherently affect a lot of people, both directly and indirectly. On a daily basis you will deal not only with the darkness of human nature, but also the very normal, touching and tragic stories of all of the others involved in the process. You are the number one point of contact between the office and the police investigating the matter, defence representing the accused (or the accused themselves if they don't have a solicitor), and the victim, or, in cases in which the victim is deceased, their families. These interactions shape you as a solicitor and as a person.

The criminal law is especially fast-moving and dynamic. Our positions in the local and trial courts are undoubtedly at the coalface of the criminal law. Seemingly minor points you find yourself debating day to day can have enormous flow on effects on the way the criminal law is practised in this State. It is common enough to see matters you have instructed in proceed to appellate jurisdictions and eventually forge new law. Although you are often behind the crisp printed judgment, you can rest easy knowing that but for your efforts, the matter would never have even made it to trial let alone wind up in the CCA or High Court. "

Luke, Solicitor and LDP Graduate, Lismore

Interested in applying?



Applications

- Positions are advertised annually depending on operational requirements and posted on university notice/jobs boards.
- Register at [Careers | ODPP \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://careers.odpp.nsw.gov.au) and create a profile to ensure you receive notifications of any positions advertised.
- Read the Role Description and address the targeted questions and include your location preferences and your date of admission or expected date of admission.
- If you have any further questions, please contact ODPP Human Resources at Humanresources@odpp.nsw.gov.au.
- After recruitment action, a talent pool of successful applicants will be created and offers made as required.
- Further information about the ODPP and the work we do can be found in our latest [Annual Report](#).





Thank you for your interest in the Legal Development & Paralegal Program

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