



**Legal Aid NSW Judge Bob Bellear Legal Pathways
2023 Aboriginal Identified Graduate Program – FAQs**

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1. What are the essential requirements for this role?

Candidates must be:

- An Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person.
- have sound academic grades in a LLB (or equivalent law qualification) from an accredited body.
- be eligible to hold a NSW Practising Certificate by the commencement of the roles in early **March 2023**.
- have less than 12 months post admission legal work experience.
- be willing to undertake a Criminal Record Check. Certain roles will also require a Working With Children's Check.
- be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 before you start work with us.

2. What Legal Qualifications do I need to be eligible for the Program?

- **Aboriginal Identified Placements:** Sound academic grades in a LLB (or equivalent law qualification) from an accredited body and eligible to hold a current NSW Practising Certificate with less than 12 months post admission legal work experience.

As well as:

- The equivalent of one year, full-time experience as a supervised articled clerk in a law firm **or** the completion of an approved practical legal training course (PLT)
- A NSW Practising Certificate issued by the NSW Law Society that allows you to be a legal practitioner within NSW obtained before the commencement date (March 2023).

3. What if I completed my LLB earlier but graduated later?

Provided you have not had more than 12 months post admission legal work experience and a NSW Practising certificate, you are eligible to apply. The date of your graduation is not relevant to the application process.

4. Do you need a copy of my academic transcript?

You need to show proof of your academic record. An academic transcript or record needs to be submitted for your application to be considered.

5. Can you be part way through your PLT when applying?

Yes, as long as you have passed and completed all elements of PLT and have your NSW Practising Certificate issued before your start date (March 2023). Legal Aid NSW reserves the right to refuse an offer if you have not attained all of the elements of eligibility along with the necessary evidence of your eligibility.

You cannot undertake PLT while participating in the Graduate Program as you will need to be able to undertake the full role of a legal practitioner in this role without constant supervision (i.e., conducting interviews, giving advice to clients).



6. I am not eligible for the program. Are there any other programs such as seasonal clerkships and PLT placements?

Under the Judge Bob Bellear Legal Pathways program, Legal Aid NSW also offers two Practical Legal Placements to Aboriginal law graduates and cadetships to Aboriginal students who are studying law at university. These programs will be advertised on www.jobs.nsw.gov.au, in the Koori Mail and through tertiary institutions.

For Aboriginal specific information regarding working at Legal Aid NSW, our Aboriginal network, career development opportunities and support systems please email aboriginalservices@legalaid.nsw.gov.au

All other temporary and ongoing vacancies including those for Solicitors and Legal Support Officers are advertised on www.jobs.nsw.gov.au.

Throughout the year, Legal Aid NSW offers a civil law fellowship in partnership with the University of NSW which is open to applicants who are studying at University of NSW. Details of the fellowship are advertised on the University of NSW website as opportunities arise.

7. Is there an age limit for people who apply?

No. All participants are selected on their demonstrated competence against the key accountabilities & capabilities outlined in the role description. We do not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, ethnicity or having a disability. We select candidates based on merit.

8. Does all of my work experience after my course have to be as a legal practitioner?

No. We would like you to be clear in your application about the length of time you have worked in the capacity of a solicitor, paralegal, legal clerk/ support role or in roles outside of the legal profession.

9. How do I apply and what is the selection process?

Please refer to the guidelines on how to apply attached to the job advertisement.

10. When do applications close and when will recruitment take place?

We need to receive your application by the closing date, advertised via IworkforNSW.

Late applications will not be accepted.

The recruitment process (interviews and assessments) will take place in **October - November 2022**. You will be notified by December 2022 if you have been successful in earning a role or successful in gaining entry into our talent pool.



11. If I am successful, will you pay relocation expenses and interview travel expenses?

No. We do not pay for interview travel expenses, accommodation, living costs or relocation costs.

12. Are there any checks required of successful applicants prior to commencing placement?

Any candidates that are successful in gaining a placement in the 2023 Graduate Program must undergo a Criminal Records Check prior to commencing their placement. Some candidates may also need to provide a 'Working with Children's check' due to some placements in Family Law or the Children's Legal Service which are subject to disclosure under the NSW Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012.

13. When will I start work if I am successful and is the start date flexible?

All successful applicants will commence in March 2023. This should give you the flexibility to finish any travels, qualify as a solicitor and complete any other studies you are currently undertaking full time. If you are successful in gaining a placement on the program, you must be available to start on this day.

14. What skills are you looking for?

We seek to recruit people with talent, enthusiasm and a commitment to both internal and external customer service. We want people to be committed not only to the ideal of social justice but also with the ability to deliver services to our disadvantaged clients in practice.

Voluntary and paid work experience is highly valued. Our staff and clients come from diverse backgrounds, and we value both professional and "life" experience. We are looking for teamwork, motivation, problem solving ability, initiative and flexibility/adaptability, the ability to work well under pressure: both in the nature and the volume of the work we undertake and the capacity to develop advocacy skills.

You will find a full list of capabilities and level required for this role in the attached Role Description. Please refer to the 'Applying for a role in the NSW Public Service' for further information on applying for the role.

15. How many placement positions are there and where?

In 2023, we will be offering **two** Aboriginal Identified positions. There will be opportunities in our Criminal, Family and Civil Law Practices, both in the Haymarket Office (Sydney CBD) but also potentially in our metropolitan or regional offices.



16. Can I choose the practice area for my rotations?

We would like to know your practice preferences and we will endeavour to place you in a practice of your choice in the first or second year. However, work demands, business priorities and the preferences of other applicants will impact on our capacity to offer you your preferred placements.

We recommend you apply if you are open and willing to work in any of our service delivery areas in our legal divisions.

17. What is your rotation system for Solicitors?

Graduates will usually undertake two jurisdiction rotations between our Criminal, Family and Civil Divisions. Sometimes, you may rotate twice within a Division (for example to get both Local Court and Indictable experience in Criminal Law).

18. What happens if I am already studying for a post graduate award (other than PLT) and do you support further studies?

You must tell us of any commitments that will affect your full-time work capacity and if there is any conflict of interest. We encourage further study in law and other practice-related fields; many of our legal practitioners go on to do postgraduate studies and secondments in the NSW public sector as well as work overseas.

We have a generous study and learning and development policy, in terms of time and financial assistance, where studies are relevant to employment. You can apply to further your studies and each application is reviewed on a case by case basis. Study time leave and the Further Education Fees Assistance Program (FEFAP) will be available to graduates with more than 12 month continuous employment at Legal Aid NSW.

19. What is the starting salary?

Graduates commence on a starting salary of \$79,398 pa in March 2023.

20. What sort of training is there?

The majority will be hands on, on the job training, supported by a supervisor and a buddy within your practice jurisdictions. There will also be more structured training which will involve orientation, corporate training, and legal practice training including MCPD and formal internal and external training sessions. We currently employ a significant number of legal experts in-house and also run business training courses to support people in managing their work environment and caseloads.

21. What support is available while I complete the program?

- **Aboriginal Staff Network**

Legal Aid NSW provides support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff through the Aboriginal Staff Network. The network consists of all Aboriginal staff within Legal Aid NSW and meets twice a year (in Sydney).



All staff are invited to attend, and managers are encouraged to release their staff to attend. The network meetings are an important opportunity for networking, career development and to discuss issues relevant to staff within their respective locations.

- **Aboriginal Services Branch**

The ASB is available to provide support and guidance to managers and graduates, in relation to all aspects of the program, including those covered in this guide, or any issues that arise during the placement. The ASB can also provide advice on cultural support if needed.

22. What sort of feedback can I expect to receive on my performance?

We encourage our staff to seek feedback on their performance, and we believe that effective feedback is crucial to achieve the best from our people. Your achievements will be assessed against rotation checklists for each jurisdiction and we encourage managers to provide structured feedback to you on your progress against key accountabilities. Each practice area also has a file review system with a more senior solicitor. These processes complement the Legal Practice performance review process.

23. Will I get a permanent (ongoing) contract at the end of the Program?

No, but we encourage you to apply for the relevant talent pools to be eligible for selection in Criminal Law, Family Law or Civil Law recruitment during the second year of your rotation. We note there is an expectation that you will complete the program and as such, you are not eligible to apply for other temporary opportunities that would commence prior to the completion of the Graduate Program.

24. What opportunities exist after I finish the program?

Any organisation likes to retain its best talent and Legal Aid NSW is no different. If you move on at the end of the program, we will be wholeheartedly supportive in helping you get where you want to be, just as we will be if there is an opportunity for you to stay on with us.

The program opens up additional career possibilities across the entire organisation. Legal Aid experience is highly regarded externally, and we have a strong alumni and highly respected figures within the legal field that have moved into practice at the bar, private practice as solicitors, appointment as Magistrates, employment as DPP prosecutors and a range of senior positions in other government agencies.

Most importantly you will have had the opportunity to build on your practical skills, your confidence and reflect on what legal practices you found the most rewarding and make informed choices about your future career goals.

