



Position Description:

Family Violence Lawyer

**Part-time: 2 days (15hrs) per week
12 month position**

PHILOSOPHY OF ST. KILDA LEGAL SERVICE

St. Kilda Legal Service (SKLS) was established in 1973 and provides free and accessible legal advice, referral and casework services to members of the community within the Cities of Port Phillip, Bayside, Stonnington and parts of Glen Eira.

SKLS is committed to redressing inequalities within the legal system through casework, legal education, community development and law reform activities. SKLS conducts a night service three nights a week, staffed entirely by volunteer lawyers, and employs an administrator, a casework lawyer, a community legal education lawyer, a volunteer coordinator and a community drug outreach lawyer.

Whilst SKLS is committed to being available to all residents within the catchment area, there is a strong commitment to assisting low-income earners and other disadvantaged or vulnerable members of the community, such as those experiencing family violence, homelessness or a disability, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

SKLS is co-located with other community agencies at the St. Kilda Community Centre. The Centre offers a range of programs that provide support and assistance to some of the most marginalised people within our community. St.Kilda Community Centre programs provide emergency relief, including provision of food, financial counselling, No Interest Loans (NILs), recreational activities for people with disabilities or who are isolated, support for rooming house residents and public tenants.

PROJECT AIMS

The project aims to increase the safety of women and children experiencing family violence by providing an integrated response, both legal and other support, to women attending Moorabbin Justice Centre. SKLS has aimed to provide an accessible legal service with a regular weekly presence at Moorabbin Justice Centre for the last 3 years. The *Family Violence Lawyer* is a crucial component of the *Community Action for Small Courts – Family Violence Response* Project, funded for the next 3 years by a grant from the Legal Services Board.

The priority target group will be family members applying for intervention orders, who have experienced family violence, and assisting family members that are already protected by intervention orders, due to family violence.

QUALIFICATIONS:

Eligibility to hold a Legal Practising Certificate in the State of Victoria pursuant to the Legal Profession Act 2004.

KEY SELECTION CRITERIA**Essential:**

- Experience as a Solicitor advocate in the Magistrates' Court, preferably experience in appearing in intervention order matters.
- Legal experience in the following areas of law: intervention orders, victims of crime assistance, family law and any other related areas associated with family violence.
- Knowledge of Federal and State laws and procedures and a demonstrated ability to provide appropriate legal advice, casework and advocacy.
- Familiarity with Community Legal Centres (CLC), their functions, and a commitment to social justice and the philosophy of St. Kilda Legal Service.
- Ability to work with minimal supervision, particularly in an outreach location.
- Good communication skills and an ability to work in collaboration with a range of key stakeholders (including court staff, police prosecutors, VLA duty lawyers) and support services (including applicant & respondent support workers) to develop and maintain an integrated and holistic model of support for family members applying for intervention orders.

Desirable:

- Experience in dealing with clients who have complex needs and are vulnerable, particularly family members affected by family violence.
- Demonstrated experience in advocating for the rights family members affected by family violence.
- A commitment to taking a multi-disciplinary approach to legal casework and working in a community development framework.
- Experience in the provision of outreach services.
- Current Driver's Licence and access to a vehicle.
- Knowledge of other community organisations and services, particularly family violence support organisations, as well as good networking skills.
- Ability to work within a small team, and with volunteers.
- Administrative skills and good computer literacy.

RESPONSIBLE TO:

St. Kilda Legal Service is a community based, not for profit, non-hierarchical organisation, with staff members providing written reports directly to the Board of Directors.

SALARY AND CONDITIONS:

- 15 hours per week
- Conditions of employment pursuant to the Community Legal Centres Multi-Business Agreement Victoria. Salary entitlements pursuant to the Federal Social and Community Services (Interim) Award 1995 – CD Class 2B Yr 6. Salary packaging is also available. The position is dependant on continued funding from the Legal Service's Board.
- The Service is an equal opportunity employer.

CORE RESPONSIBILITIES:

The project will involve the *Family Violence Lawyer* attending the Moorabbin Justice Centre for one morning per week when family violence intervention order matters are listed (Mondays). The project will also involve the *Family Violence Lawyer* providing a legal advice and casework outreach service for the target client group.

Role of the Family Violence Lawyer

The *Family Violence Lawyer* will undertake the following duties:

- liaise with court staff and family violence support services at court;
- conduct client interviews, take instructions and provide legal advice;
- negotiate with the respondent or their legal representative;
- assist clients to represent themselves;
- apply for VLA grant for legal representation in contested matters;
- provide legal representation at Court in some cases, such as in directions hearings;
- provide legal information, advice and follow up casework assistance on family law issues, victims of crime applications or other related areas;
- referrals to other CLCs or private solicitors where appropriate;
- provide an outreach legal service in a community setting.

The *Family Violence Lawyer* will also be required to:

- attend monthly court support meetings and project reference group meetings;
- attend Federation of CLC Family Violence Applicant Lawyers network meetings;
- contact and liaise with other community organizations in the city of Bayside that are providing support to family members affected by family violence and making referrals;
- present training sessions for community workers from local agencies around legal issues associated with family violence;
- work closely with other SKLS staff for cross referrals to and from the generalist service, night service and drug outreach program; to assist with volunteer training on relevant areas of legal practice;
- liaise with, and have legal casework supervised by the Principal Solicitor;
- assist with community legal education on family violence; and to provide input into any relevant policy development or law reform.

SHARED COMMON RESPONSIBILITIES

All St. Kilda Legal Service staff are expected to participate in the following activities:

- Provide a written report for SKLS's Annual Report
- Attend staff meetings and Board of Management meetings where required
- Record client data for SKLS's statistical database
- Contribute to reporting requirements by funders where appropriate
- Development and review of SKLS's annual work plan and policies & procedures
- Contribute to any funding submissions where appropriate

For further information contact: Jacinta on 8598 6630

Expressions of interest and curriculum vitae should be sent to:

Jacinta@skls.org.au

Applications close on: 29th February 2012.