PRINCIPAL SOLICITOR VACANCY

FAR WEST COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE

**Have you dreamt of working in outback Australia?**

Are you inspired and motivated to manage an exciting and responsive community legal service and implement creative solutions in a co-operative and collaborative manner with a strong and vibrant team?

Along with the Chief Executive Officer and Board of Management of the Far West Community Legal Centre Limited, the Principal Solicitor of the Far West Community Legal Centre (FWCLC) will provide dynamic leadership to the FWCLC Ltd and to the Far West NSW. This position is based in Broken Hill.

**Who are we looking for?**

We are seeking passionate and self-motivated candidates with a collaborative management approach, high order advocacy and written communication and problem solving skills, demonstrated legal practice experience and a strong social justice ethic.

**The role of the Principal Solicitor?**

The Principal Solicitor is responsible for supervising the legal practice as "solicitor on the record," and ensuring that it is compliant with the National Association of Community Legal Centre's risk management framework and legal and regulatory requirements.

The Principal Solicitor operates the legal practice in a manner which is consistent with the organisation's Strategic Plan and provides a leadership and coordination role in the development of the Centre's intake, advice, casework, information and referral service, community engagement building, community legal education and law reform activities, and ensuring all aspects of the Service's practice are working effectively and efficiently.

The Principal Solicitor demonstrates integrity, clear communication, long term and sustainable thinking and best available evidence to direct the work of the FWCLC, giving direction and leadership that is strategic, reasoned, ethical, compassionate and boundaried.

The Principal Solicitor provides expert advice to the FWCLC Limited’s Board and the Chief Executive Officer on matters concerning the legal practice, legal service delivery and the strategic direction of the Centre.

The Principal Solicitor drives the development and expansion of the legal practice to meet the organisation's strategic goals and assists the Chief Executive Officer to monitor the performance of the Centre against its strategic objectives.

The Principal Solicitor provides advice and maintains personal carriage of a casework load as well as undertaking community legal education, community development, law reform and policy work

The Principal Solicitor is expected to adopt and implement a respectful and multi-disciplinary approach to practice and work collaboratively with all staff.

**Benefits available for the successful applicant?**

Excellent remuneration, ongoing training, on the job support and assistance will be provided to the successful applicant.

Travel will be undertaken in an organisational vehicle. Some overnight travel may be required in the region.

**Vision:**

Far West Community Legal Centre (FWCLC) will strive to provide an accessible, responsive and professional community based legal service, addressing the met and unmet legal and social needs of disadvantaged people, accessing legal advice and assistance in a remote region.

The goal of the FWCLC is to promote social justice and provide free and accessible legal services to people of the Far West Region of NSW particularly those who experience social and economic disadvantage.

**Values:**

FWCLC believes that people have the right to legal information which is accessible and relevant to their lives. FWCLC aims to utilise both legal and advocacy processes to promote an agenda of social justice, and to work towards fairer legal and social outcomes for those most disadvantaged in our community. FWCLC is committed to providing the community with a broad range of legal services that are delivered in diverse ways and in co-operation with existing community networks and resources.

**Mission:**

To provide an accessible professional legal service, responsive to the needs of the most disadvantaged in our community, particularly those experiencing financial disadvantage, and which promotes just and lasting solutions to legal and social issues in our community by:

* Providing the people of the Far West with trustworthy, free, confidential and comprehensive legal information, advice and assistance;
* Advocating for access to justice for all people within our region;
* Advocating for access to justice for those who are geographically, socially and culturally disadvantaged and vulnerable within our region;
* Conducting casework targeted to prioritise young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, older persons, people experiencing or at risk of domestic violence, people of a CALD background and people with a disability or mental illness;
* Ensuring that the services we provide to the people of the Far West are high quality, professional and non-judgmental.

**Areas of Law in which we currently provide advice:**

FWCLC has a focus on Family Law and Family and Domestic Violence and currently provides advice in the following areas:

* Child Support
* Child/Spousal Maintenance
* Parenting Orders
* Divorce & Separation
* Family/Domestic Violence
* Property divisions in Marriage or De Facto Relationships for financially disadvantaged people (where the net estate is less than $50,000.00; FWCLC will not complete the conveyancing process but provides clients with referral to private solicitors for same)
* Child Protection
* Credit & Debt
* Government Administrative Law
* Government Pension Benefits & Allowances
* Consumer Complaints
* Wills & Probate and Powers of Attorney
* Victims Compensation
* Discrimination
* Employment
* Neighbourhood Disputes
* Traffic Offences

**The Far West Community Legal Centre Limited Auspices:**

* The Far West Community Legal Centre (FWCLC)
* Warra-Warra Legal Service (WWLS)
* The Far West Women's Domestic Violence Advocacy Service (WDVCAS)
* Staying Home Leaving Violence Broken Hill (SHLV)
* The Far West Cooperative Legal Service Delivery Program (CLSD)

Please email the FWCLC Ltd CEO at [cathy.farry@farwestclc.org.au](mailto:cathy.farry@farwestclc.org.au) if you have any questions about the role.

**POSITION DESCRIPTION**

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| **1. POSITION IDENTIFICATION** |

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| **Title** | Principal Solicitor |
| **Functional Area** | Legal - FWCLC |
| **Reports to** | Management Committee through the CEO |
| **Employment Status** | Full Time Permanent |

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| **2. POSITION OBJECTIVE** |

Responsible to the Management Committee answerable to the Chief Executive Officer for the development and maintenance of the general legal service and responsible for the overall management of the Centres legal practice, in accordance with the association objectives and funding obligations.

The primary role of the Principal Solicitor is to apply best practice standards to the delivery of the Legal Unit’s services. These must be consistent with Service operating procedures and with core NSW and Australian legal practitioner values including:

* integrity and ethical conduct
* accountability to the client, the auspicing agency and the Government program;
* protection of client information;
* respect for the client and fellow legal practitioners; and
* a high standard of staff supervision and promotion of a team approach within the Unit;
* where appropriate a business-like approach.

The role extends to managing and participating in the development of initiatives to improve community awareness of the role of FWCLC.

As manager of the unit the Principal Solicitor reports to the CEO in Far West CLC but is responsible for observance by the Unit of

* Legal Professional Standards in force in NSW and Australia
* FWCLC operating procedures and guidelines
* All relevant Workplace Health and Safety policies
* EEO and anti-discrimination policies
* Relevant MCLE and other staff training and development for members of the Unit.

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| **3. COMPETENCIES REQUIRED** |

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| **Communication** | * Exceptional Written and Verbal communication * The ability to target communication style to suit a range of people * Demonstrated high order of oral and written communication skills including presentation skills. * Demonstrated negotiation and conflict resolution skills. * Demonstrated good interpersonal skills dealing with staff and clients. |
| **Team work** | * Demonstrated good team player. |
| **Self-Management** | * Demonstrated ability to work independently and manage own workload. * Demonstrated commitment to achieving goals and meeting deadlines and reputation for achieving a good work/life balance. |
| **Planning and organising** | * Demonstrated ability to think strategically on legal and organisational issues * Demonstrated ability to participate in development of funding and resourcing proposals including organisational review * Commitment to the objectives of the association |
| **Technology** | * Having a range of IT skills especially in the Microsoft Suite * Ability to learn new computer software in a timely manner |
| **Learning** | * Managing own learning to meet the requirements of the MCLE |
| **Management** | * Management / Supervisory Skills (essential unless otherwise indicated) * Demonstrated experience managing staff in a small work unit. * Demonstrated capacity to apply in house rules and guidelines in a supervisory capacity. |

| **4. KEY PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES** | |
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| **Outputs** | **Key Performance Indicator** |
| Information, Advice and Casework | * Undertake casework in accordance with FWCLC guidelines, (including intake policy and disbursement guidelines). * Develop and maintain relevant Policy and Guidelines for Information, Advice and Casework in association with the CEO. * Undertake Advice and Casework in accordance with Annual Strategic Planning targets. * Ensure that all file work is completed in accordance with PII Manual. * Ensure that all work undertaken by the Far West Community Legal Centre complies with the Legal Profession Uniform Law. |
| Supervision of Legal Work and Centre Solicitors | * Supervise the Centre’s legal staff and volunteer solicitors’ legal advices and casework. * Ensure that all legal work undertaken complies with the requirements of PII Manual. * Implement regular performance appraisal and evaluation of all centre solicitors. |
| Community Legal Education | Planning:   * Develop a six month work plan that incorporates:   + Any needs analysis conducted by CLC or other bodies.   + Inquiries for CLE from agencies / individuals / service providers.   + Priorities set by CLE Planning Day.   + In response to law reform issues.   + Developed in consultation with the CEO. * Develop and maintain CLE teaching materials. * Maintain an awareness of current CLE teaching methods * Assist in maintaining library materials. * Conduct CLE Projects * Deliver CLE, including conducting workshops and disseminating educational materials. * Produce original CLE materials relevant to the region. * Where relevant, document the different strategies and processes undertaken, as a resource for future CLE. * Conduct evaluation of CLE. |
| Law Reform | * Contribute to identifying law reform issues and integrate responses with:   + FWCLC workers including management and volunteers.   + CCLGC subcommittees.   + Regional Service Providers. * Make recommendations for law reform, focusing on the needs of the Far West residents. * Promote and participate in Law Reform activities relevant to the Practice and the Far West Community Legal Centre Objectives. |
| Liaison and Networking | * Develop and maintain networks with centre outreach locations. * Represent FWCLC on relevant external committees. * Develop and maintain links with relevant Broken Hill and Far West agencies, government departments and the private profession. * Maintain network links with Legal Aid, Other State Bodies, Legal Centre Councils and Community Legal Centres. * Promote the service in the community and motivate community support for the service. |
| Administration | Responsible for:   * The preparation of own materials including word-processing and photocopying. * Assist in data entry of CLASS (National Data Collection Software) client details. * Oversight of manual file creation. * Assist in reception duties.   Team Work   * To provide assistance to the assistant coordinator in supervision of volunteers. * Work co-operatively in a multi-disciplinary team. * Attend and participate in regular staff meetings. * Contribute to Centre service evaluations. * Contribute to FWCLC decision-making processes, this includes Centre planning and evaluation policy development and input into development of the Centre. * Plan and participate in regular peer supervision.   Training and Development   * In consultation with the CEO develop and undertake in-house and external training and provide in-house training for staff and volunteers |

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| **5. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY** |

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| All employees are responsible and accountable for:   * Compliance with workplace policies and procedures for risk identification, risk assessment and risk control * Active participation in activities associated with the management of workplace health and safety * Identification and reporting of health and safety risks, accidents, incidents, injuries and property damage at the workplace * Correct utilisation of appropriate personal protective equipment |

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| **6. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES** |

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| Generally maintain supervision, oversight and co-ordination of the service’s legal practice in accordance with the requirements of Management Committee, the funding body and relevant legislation.  The Principal Solicitor is responsible for the development and maintenance of the Generalist Legal Service as well as the overall management responsibility of the Centre’s legal practice.   * + - * + Complete quarterly report to Board of Management or as requested by Board.         + In consultation with the CEO, undertake work in accordance with the Strategic Plan.         + Complete Reports for Annual Report     - Provide legal advice, information and referral, at the outreach locations, such as Menindee, Tibooburra and Wilcannia both by telephone and face to face, on a selected time frame. * Other duties as directed and as required |

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| **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT** |

This job description has been designed to indicate the general nature and level of work performed by employees within this classification. It is not designed to contain or be interpreted as a comprehensive inventory of all duties, responsibilities and qualifications required of employees assigned to the role.

**SELECTION CRITERA**

The following competencies are required for this position please address the following criteria in your application:

**Essential Criteria:**

* Eligible hold an unrestricted practicing certificate as a solicitor in NSW
* Demonstrated extensive casework experience, including litigation, Family Law and at least one other area of law relevant tot the legal needs of disadvantaged people such as victims’ compensation, discrimination, administrative law, employment law, consumer law or debt
* Demonstrated ability to adopt a strategic approach in casework, community legal education and law reform work
* Proven leadership and management skills in a legal and/or justice environment, including high level skills in staff supervision.
* Demonstrated commitment to the philosophy of community-based legal centres, the promotion of human rights, social justice and meeting the needs of disadvantaged groups.
* Demonstrated capacity to work collaboratively and establish and maintain professional relationships with all stakeholders.
* Proven excellent interpersonal, oral and written communication skills, including the ability to relate to people from diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds.
* Excellent time management skills and demonstrated experience in working to deadlines in a high volume legal practice
* Demonstrated experience working with Aboriginal communities
* Ability to undertake own administrative duties and excellent computer skills
* Current drivers’ license

**Desirable Criteria:**

**Desirable Criteria:**

* Experience working in a rural setting

Please also include an up to date CV and the names and contact details of two referees.

Please send your application to the CEO Cathy Farry via email to cathy.farry@farwest.clc.org.au