POSITION INFORMATION: Drug Outreach Lawyer

Fitzroy Legal Service is a community-based organisation, independent of government, dedicated to assisting marginalised and vulnerable members of the community with legal information, advice and representation, as well as championing law reform and conducting public interest litigation. Our services are offered across the Cities of Darebin and Yarra, and the inner north of Melbourne.

For further information please visit our website www.fitzroy-legal.org.au.

POSITION OUTLINE

Classification and conditions

The terms and conditions of employment are set out in the Community Legal Centres 2006-2009 Multiple Business Agreement (MBA) and Fitzroy Legal Service policies. This position is classified at Level 5 of the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services (SCHCADS) Industry Award and is offered as a five day per week position. (All positions at Fitzroy Legal Service are subject to the continuation of external funding. Employer funded superannuation is paid in accordance with the Superannuation Guarantee (Administration) Act 1992, and is in addition to the salary offered. The benefits of tax-effective salary packaging are also provided.

Duration

Contract position – Monday 6 January 2020 to Friday 18 December 2020

Location

This position will be based at the Fitzroy office and will involve travel to outreach locations and the Reservoir office.

Responsible to

Senior Drug Outreach Lawyer

Direct Report/s

Nil

How to apply

Candidates are requested to email the following as one PDF document:

- A covering letter, no longer than one page;
- A response to the Key Selection Criteria; and
- A resume which includes details of education, work and volunteer experience.

Applications should be emailed no later than 5pm Friday 29 November 2019 to jblack@fls.org.au. Enquiries can be directed to Jen Black on 0421 782 603.
POSITION OBJECTIVE
By providing casework services, legal advice, referrals and advocacy, the Drug Outreach Lawyer will aim to address and assist marginalized drug users in the City of Yarra with legal problems related to drug use. The position works closely and collaboratively with our clients and our health partners in providing a holistic legal service with the broader social goal of contributing to improved wellbeing / quality of life amongst people who use alcohol and other drugs. The Drug Outreach lawyer works closely and collaboratively with community to advocate for laws and policies that respect the right of people who use drugs and reflect a harm minimization approach.

Current program partners are:

- YSAS (Youth Support and Advocacy Services):
- Living Room (Youth Projects)
- Inner Space (Co-Health)
- North Richmond Community Health Centre
- Odyssey House

The Drug Outreach Lawyer will have a small monthly billing target to meet.

RESPONSIBLE TO
The Drug Outreach Lawyer reports to the Senior Drug Outreach Lawyer.

Working with clients
- Meet with new and existing clients at various outreach locations:
- Provide one-off advice and referrals and/or conduct casework (with an emphasis on criminal law and infringements) to individuals that meet our guidelines. Case work may also involve other legal assistance in areas such as tenancy, family violence and VOCAT.
- Appear in court on a weekly basis on behalf of clients in matters including pleas of guilty, contest mentions, committal mentions, and bail applications and brief barristers to represent clients at court where appropriate;
- Help clients to better engage with non-legal services;
- Apply for grants of Legal Aid, where appropriate, and ensure compliance with Victoria Legal Aid guidelines; and
- Communicate with other stakeholders regarding their clients’ legal and related non-legal issues.

Working with health partners
- Communicate and provide appropriate and understandable legal advice to our health partners regarding common clients (ie secondary consultations);
- Develop and participate in community legal education programs to address the needs of health partners and our clients; and
- Continue to develop and strengthen partnerships, to ensure high quality and accessible delivery of legal services.

Advocacy
- Liaise, consult and build networks with AOD and broader community sector agencies, government, the legal profession, Yarra Drug & Health Forum, VAADA, Victoria Legal Aid, other community legal centres and other relevant organisations; and
- Work with other FLS staff on systemic advocacy/policy reform as identified.

Reporting & accountability
- Assist with collection of data and preparation of reports and other accountability documentation, including case studies;
- Prepare quarterly reports to the Department of Health and Human Services and other funding bodies as required;
• Ensure compliance with relevant professional and ethical standards relating to legal practice, including the Legal Profession Act 2004 and the National Risk Management Guide of the National Association of Community Legal Centres.

General
• Support the achievement of the FLS Vision, Values and Behaviours, adhering to organizational policies and procedures;
• Attend internal staff and planning meetings, supervision and performance review processes;
• Assist in the induction, training and supervision of volunteers;
• Participate in professional development as required;
• Involvement in fundraising and other events as required; and
• Perform other duties as directed and necessary to the proper performance of the role.

KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

Qualifications
• Law degree with some post-admission experience;
• Australian Lawyer presently eligible to become an Australian Legal Practitioner

Essential
• Strong commitment to social justice and the philosophy of FLS, including a commitment to working in a community development framework with a health focus;
• Experience working as a lawyer in relevant areas of law (particularly criminal law), including strong court based advocacy skills;
• Good understanding of issues arising for individuals with drug problems and an ability to work within a harm minimization framework;
• Demonstrated ability to communicate effectively (both written and oral) with clients and stakeholders, including police, health and welfare service providers, in providing legal services and legal education programs in non-conventional settings;
• Understanding of / demonstrated commitment to the necessary professional and ethical approaches and boundaries required to work in an outreach model with clients;
• Proven ability to self-start, manage competing demands and work within a small staff team; and
• Good self-care and stress management skills.

Desirable
• Experience in the provision of health justice partnerships, integrated service model or outreach services, preferably with substance users and people with complex needs; and
• Experience in, or an understanding of, community legal centres, including demonstrated experience or an understanding of working with volunteers.

To be eligible to apply for this position you must be an Australian or New Zealand citizen, permanent resident or hold a valid work permit or visa.

Due to funder requirements for this position, an offer of employment with Fitzroy Legal Service will be subject to the completion of a National Police Check.

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people are encouraged to apply.