

POSITION DESCRIPTION



Position Title	Principal Solicitor	Salary Package	Based on NT Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 8.3
Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Executive</i> (Executive Director, Admin/HR Manager, Principal Solicitor) • <i>Leadership Team</i> (Executive Director, Admin/HR Manager, Principal Solicitor, TAS & SDRS Team Leaders) and • <i>General Legal Service Team Leader</i> 	Conditions	DCLS Enterprise Agreement 2012
Reports to	Executive Director	Employment type	Full time
Direct reports	Team Leader Tenants' Advice Service GLS Community Solicitors Volunteer / Admin Coordinator Paralegal	Duration	2 years plus an option to renew dependant on funding

About DCLS

Darwin Community Legal Services (DCLS) is located Larrakia country. We acknowledge the Larrakia people as the Traditional Owners of the Darwin region and we acknowledge Traditional Owners of lands throughout the Northern Territory. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

DCLS is a free, confidential multi-disciplinary, community legal service which provides legal help, support and advocacy to help people ensure their rights. Some of our services are focused on Darwin or the Top End, and some are Territory wide.

DCLS especially works with people who are vulnerable or marginalised. Now in its 30th year, DCLS continues to work actively and collaboratively to highlight justice issues and gaps in access to justice in the NT. We work to promote awareness and understanding and we advocate and collaborate for change that promotes fairness and justice.

DCLS work includes:

- General Legal Service - information, referral, legal advice and representation in areas of civil law affecting basic rights - Darwin, Palmerston & surrounds, and NT wide where appropriate resources available.
- Tenants' Advice Service – information, referral, legal advice, legal help including representation for tenants - NT wide.



- Seniors and Disability Rights Service - support, advocacy and empowerment by, with and for seniors and people with a disability – especially Top End but NT wide.
- Special projects including Older Person Abuse and NDIS appeals.
- Collaborative community legal education, projects, organising and advocacy for reforms which promotes rights, justice and inclusion.

About this role

The Principal Solicitor is responsible for the DCLS legal practice as a whole. The legal practice consists of the General Legal Service (GLS) and the Tenant's Advice Service (TAS) and the Principal Solicitor is responsible for relevant aspects relating to the DCLS Seniors and Disability Rights Service (SDRS) in accordance with the Community Legal Centres Australia Risk Management Guide.

The Principal Solicitor position aims to ensure that the legal practice delivers quality, accessible legal help and is striving, energetic and effective in advancing social justice.

The Principal Solicitor:

- provides leadership, management and supervision
- carries an appropriate legal caseload
- encourages, supports and empowers staff and volunteers, and
- promotes positive teamwork, collaboration and creativity.

The Principal Solicitor role also includes:

- the GLS Team Leader, the GLS includes the Volunteer Advice Sessions (VAS) with over 60 volunteers,
- a member of the DCLS Executive (with the Executive Director and Admin/HR Manager), and
- a member of the DCLS Leadership Group (the Executive Group with the TAS and SDRS Team Leaders).

The Principal Solicitor prepares the legal practice report to the DCLS Board meetings (usually monthly) and is available to attend Board meetings.

Key duties and responsibilities

Legal Practice

- Lead the DCLS legal practice to deliver and maximise services and positive impacts consistent with DCLS objectives and strategic plan, funding agreements, legal professional requirements, Community Legal Centres Australia Risk Management Guide, National Legal Assistance Data Standards and the DCLS Eligibility and Priority Guidelines.
- Manage and mitigate risk across the service in conjunction with the Team Leaders, Executive Director and Admin/HR Manager.

POSITION DESCRIPTION



- Develop and maintain systems, policies, procedures and ethos for quality, efficient and responsive operations.
- Maintain, implement and improve:
 - Legal practice workflows from the point of first contact.
 - Policies and practices that guide and support the legal practice including case and client management.
 - Legal resources required by the legal practice including electronic tools, forms, templates, precedents, guides, prompts and checklists.
- Actively promote a culture of continuous improvement to consistently meet quality standards and high standards of client and stakeholder service.
- Provide legal assistance on projects conducted by DCLS.
- Facilitate pro bono legal assistance and the involvement of law students in DCLS including through clinical, internship and PLT placements.
- Ensure timely and accurate:
 - Collection and management of client data, and
 - Record keeping regarding service provision in line with quality, documented, procedures
- Collaborate with the Volunteer Coordinator to conduct information sessions and inductions for the Volunteer Advice Sessions.

Community Legal Education

- Maintain, enhance and evaluate DCLS's collaborative community legal education (CLE) efforts.
- Ensure CLE approaches advance DCLS's objectives about increasing voice, inclusion and empowerment.
- Contribute to the CLE program including delivering CLE.

Law Reform

- Maintain awareness of the political, social and economic environment and seize opportunities to ensure that DCLS is at the forefront of pursuing access to justice, including emphasising voice, participation and resources for our community.
- Collaborate in:
 - Identifying and raising awareness of systemic issues affecting our community
 - Advancing responsive proposals for inclusion, reform and justice, and
 - Increasing the capacity of our community, stakeholders, and collaborators to do so.

Leadership/Management

- Provide professional leadership, encouragement, supervision and support for staff and volunteers and support engagement, productivity, and commitment to achieve objectives.



- Lead and manage the legal practice and the GLS Team to deliver high quality, strategic, innovative, and effective legal assistance including representation in, for example, the FWC, AAT and NTCAT.
- Maintain and improve performance and productivity reviews and professional development planning for staff in the legal practice.

Teamwork/collaboration

- Actively contribute to DCLS effectiveness through contextual and situational awareness, support to colleagues, demonstrating respect and empathy, development of strong relationships and taking responsibility.
- Keep team members and colleagues informed of developments/matters as appropriate that may impact their work.
- Maintain professionalism through reliability and punctuality to work related events including meetings, onsite and off-site work and ensure delivery of deadlines and commitments.
- Represent DCLS in a range of strategic networks and develop and maintain strong relationships with other community service providers.
- Support the Executive Director's overall management of DCLS
- Other duties as reasonably directed by the Executive Director

Accountabilities

- Reports to the Executive Director
- Adhere to DCLS values, policies and procedures
- Manage resources to meet strategic objectives and evolving priorities.
- Assist in development of legal services budgets and monitor ongoing expenditure.
- Attend and participate in Executive, Leadership, management and strategic planning meetings
- Attend and participate in Team, casework, non-casework and staff meetings
- Prepare written reports to or for to the Executive Director, the DCLS Board, Annual Report etc
- Develop work plans and report regularly against these, achieving expected results and performance measures

SELECTION CRITERIA

Essential

1. Demonstrated understanding of legal advocacy and awareness of the current issues relating to social justice and law reform in disadvantaged communities and the capacity to work collaboratively by empowering vulnerable and disadvantaged clients.

POSITION DESCRIPTION



2. Extensive casework experience and effectiveness in at least some of the following areas of civil law: social security, family assistance, veterans entitlements; anti-discrimination and human rights; credit and debt; consumer law; employment law; seniors rights; adult guardianship; disability law including NDIS; seniors' rights; and, residential tenancy.
3. Capacity and interest to undertake legal casework including complex matters and to make a substantial and continuing contribution towards meeting legal service targets and objectives.
4. Proven positive contribution to legal leadership and experience leading and developing legal teams and a strong sense of commitment to teamwork.
5. Demonstrated skills in negotiation, organisation, time management, effective communication, and a high level of computer literacy.
6. Familiarity with:
 - a. The National Leadership Partnership (NLAP)
 - b. The Community Assistance Services System (CLASS) and
 - c. National Legal Assistance Data Standards.

Desirable

7. Experience in legal practice and/or other relevant roles in the NT
8. Driving licence

Prerequisites

1. Eligible for an unrestricted legal practicing certificate in the NT.
2. Provide a current national police record check
3. Eligibility for a NT Ochre Card

Salary and other benefits

Based on NT Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 8.3 plus super (10%), with salary packaging options available. 6 week's annual leave (or pro-rata) , including 17.5% leave loading. You'll also be entitled to 12 days personal leave and the use of a mobile phone and laptop. DCLS is an equal opportunity employer.