

Legal Secretary

Statement of Duties – October 2017

Title	Legal Secretary
Number	356953
Award	TSSA
Classification	Band 2
Output Group	Department of Justice
Full Time Equivalent	0.5 FTE
Division	Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania
Branch	Civil Practice – Mental Health & Disability Unit
Supervisor	Civil Practice Manager
Direct Reports	Civil Practice Manager
Location	Launceston
Terms of Employment	Fixed term 3 years
Position category and funding	Legal Aid

The Department of Justice

Aim

A safe, fair and just Tasmania.

Purpose

To support the Tasmanian Government to promote the rule of law by

- ensuring an effective, efficient and accessible justice system.
- protecting and respecting rights.
- improving laws.
- influencing positive behaviour and enforcing responsibilities.

Visit the [Department of Justice website](#) for more information.

Divisional Information

The role of the Legal Aid Commission is to deliver a range of high quality legal services to disadvantaged Tasmanians. Our vision is for a safer and fairer Tasmania through enhanced access to justice. These aims

are achieved by the granting of legal aid to both the private profession and the in-house practice to represent clients. The Commission also provides State-wide services for mediation, face-to-face legal advice, telephone advice, duty lawyer services, community legal education and Safe-at-Home and mental health assistance programs.

The Commission is jointly funded by the Commonwealth and State, and has a current budget in the order of \$14 million. The Commission's functions encompass both Commonwealth and State jurisdictions. The Commission is accountable to both Commonwealth and State Attorneys-General for the expenditure of allocated funds and effective provision of legal aid services.

The Commission is an independent body governed by a Board of Commissioners. It conducts its operations in an independent manner, its staff are provided under the *Legal Aid Commission Act 1990* by the Secretary of the Department of Justice and are employed under the *State Service Act 2000*. The Commission supports all of its functions, programs and business streams from its own organisational structure and resources.

Visit the [Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania website](#) for more information.

About the position

Objective

The position is responsible for:

- providing a high level of secretarial and administrative support to Mental Health Law practitioners within the Legal Aid Commission. co-ordinating an efficient flow of information in documentary, electronic and face-to-face communications on behalf of the Commission's Mental Health Law practice to clients, practitioners, courts, registries and any other agency as may be required from time to time;
- maintaining current knowledge of changes to appropriate court procedures and requirements.

Duties

1. Provide Mental Health Law secretarial and administrative functions for legal practitioners to ensure best practice delivery of services to clients.
2. Be the first point of contact between Mental Health practitioners and clients, members of the public, legal profession and staff in other government agencies and instrumentalities, and receive all mail and incoming telephone calls on behalf of the Commission's Mental Health practice.
3. Provide secretarial and administrative support in the Commission's Mental Health and Disability Unit including:
 - a. the maintenance of practitioners' files within the Commission's computer system, resubmit systems, diary and any other systems used for support of the in-house Mental Health practice;
 - b. the carrying out of electronic lodgement of application forms for legal assistance, electronic claims on behalf of Mental Health practitioners and disbursement invoices, and electronic closing of files on completion of each matter;
 - c. Produce and process confidential documents and correspondence using a broad range of computer software, audio equipment and word processing systems.
4. At the direction of the Civil Practice Manager, perform such other secretarial or administrative functions in other business units of the Commission as required.

Level of responsibility

- Responsible for the effective and efficient delivery of services in accordance with the directions, policies and guidelines of the Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania and within allocated resources and agreed timeframes.
- Expected to exercise initiative, discretion and sensitivity in the resolution of both routine and non-standard issues. Responsible for maintaining current knowledge of relevant departmental policies and procedures.

Direction and supervision received

- This position reports to the Civil Practice Manager.

Selection criteria

The following specific selection criteria must be addressed by candidates by describing their relevant personal and professional skills and abilities; qualifications, training and competencies; past achievements; and potential for development. The position objective and duties can also be used to assist in addressing the selection criteria.

1. A demonstrated ability to undertake Mental Health secretarial and administrative duties, including the efficient operation of keyboard, digital dictation, word processing equipment and possess a current knowledge of the Mental Health processes.
2. A high level of communication skills including the ability to negotiate and liaise effectively with a wide range of people and to deal empathetically with potentially difficult clients.
3. Well developed organisational skills and a demonstrated ability to set priorities, manage variable workloads and show initiative and autonomy when working without direct supervision.
4. A demonstrated ability to handle sensitive matters in dealings with professionals within and outside the Commission and to maintain strict confidentiality.
5. Experience in using contemporary office technology for communication and information management and knowledge of the Commission's e-business platform, including electronic lodgement of applications for legal assistance.

Working environment

Employment in the State Service is governed by the *State Service Act 2000*. Both employees and officers are required to uphold and comply with the State Service Principles (Section 7) and the Code of Conduct (section 9). In particular the expectations are as follows:

Department of Justice state service employees:

- treat all users of our services with respect and courtesy;
- listen to what users of our services have to say;
- personalise services to the needs and circumstances of each user of our services where practical;
- always do what they say they are going to do, or update the appropriate people promptly if things change, offering an explanation for the change;
- respond to enquiries promptly and efficiently; and
- consult the public and users of our services about their service needs.

The minimum standard of behaviour expected of all Department of Justice employees is to:

- Consider people equally without prejudice or favour.
- Act professionally with honesty, consistency and impartiality.
- Take responsibility for situations, showing leadership and courage.
- Place the public interest over personal interest.
- Appreciate difference and welcome learning from others.
- Uphold the law, institutions of government and democratic principles.
- Communicate intentions clearly and invite teamwork and collaboration.
- Provide transparency to enable public scrutiny.
- Be fiscally responsible and focus on efficient, effective and prudent use of resources.

Further information about employee expectations is on the Department of Justice Intranet site under Statement of Intent.

The department is committed to high standards of performance in the application of contemporary management practices and principles including workplace health and safety and workplace diversity. The department recognises and uses the diversity of the community it serves. In doing this it acknowledges the individual differences that can contribute to the capacity of a person to perform the inherent requirements of the duties. All employees are expected to participate in maintaining safe working conditions and practices and to promote and uphold the principle of fair and equitable access to employment/promotion, personal development and training and the elimination of workplace harassment and discrimination.

All employees are responsible for participating actively and constructively in discussions regarding performance and for the implementation of agreed outcomes in accordance with the Performance Management policies and strategies of the Department.

Smoking is prohibited in State Government workplaces and vehicles.

Requirements

Essential requirements

- Nil.

Desirable requirements

- Significant current secretarial experience in the Mental Health Law jurisdiction or in a similar or related setting.