

Refugee Legal:

Position Description – Solicitor Full-Time (One Year)

A. Overview of organisation

Refugee Legal is an independent community legal centre specialising in refugee and immigration law, policy and practice. Refugee Legal has been assisting asylum seekers, refugees and disadvantaged migrants in the community and in detention for over 33 years and has substantial casework experience and expertise. Refugee Legal's work involves provision of key legal assistance to people who could not otherwise obtain it due to financial and other forms of distinct disadvantage often related to their cultural or linguistically diverse backgrounds or experiences of torture or trauma. Refugee Legal also conducts extensive law reform, advocacy and education programs.

B. Position Summary

The solicitor position combines casework, training/teaching of immigration and refugee law, policy and procedure, in addition to general immigration and refugee advice, policy, law reform and advocacy development, and community education/information. It is anticipated that the position will consist of 75% casework, 10% teaching/training, 10% advice services and 5% policy and other projects. The solicitor will be expected to regularly participate in and supervise Refugee Legal's weekly Monday Evening Advice Service. As the work at Refugee Legal is varied, a significant degree of flexibility is required.

The solicitor reports directly and is responsible to the Executive Director who in turn is responsible to the Refugee Legal Management Committee.

C. Duties and Responsibilities

Casework (approx. 75%)

The solicitor will be responsible for managing a substantial caseload of asylum seeker, refugee and migrant clients under the direct supervision of a senior solicitor. Casework will include initial advice, preparation of applications, representation and advocacy at all administrative levels, including the Department of Home Affairs, the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) and the Immigration Assessment Authority (IAA).

Refugee Legal accepts cases according to our principles of case prioritisation and eligibility requirements, subject to the capacity of the service. The position requires participation in weekly meetings with other staff to jointly decide on client eligibility, and to discuss a wide range of other related policies and procedural issues. The range of casework undertaken includes representation of: asylum seekers (including those in detention), refugees, applicants for family stream visas (including spouse, carer, child and orphan relative visas), other temporary and permanent visas available under migration legislation and visa cancellation.

It is possible that the solicitor will be asked to represent asylum seekers in remote detention centres, including Christmas Island. The solicitor must be prepared to travel at short notice to participate in detention centre visits either alone or with other staff. A travel allowance in addition to accommodation is paid for remote detention centre visits.

Refugee Legal:

**Defending the rights
of refugees.**

**Refugee & Immigration
Legal Centre Inc.**

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Teaching/Training (approx. 10%)

Refugee Legal delivers training and education in all aspects of Australia's refugee and immigration program. The successful candidate must have a good working knowledge of refugee and immigration law, practice, policy and procedure. Good public speaking, teaching and research skills are required.

The solicitor will be required to contribute to Refugee Legal's Community Legal Education Program, including the preparation and delivery of community education and public presentations in a variety of community-based fora.

Refugee Legal conducts Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Seminars for registered migration agents. CPDs are run regularly throughout the year in Melbourne and may also be conducted in other states or territories. The solicitor will liaise closely with the Legal Education Coordinator, and will be required to research, prepare and present CPD Seminars, which are conducted by Refugee Legal throughout the year, on a variety of immigration or refugee law topics

Advice Services (approx. 10%)

The solicitor will be required to provide telephone and face-to-face immigration advice as required. The solicitor will be expected to give approximately 3-4 hours of advice per week for Refugee Legal's telephone advice service. The solicitor will also be expected to be available on nominated Monday nights to participate in and supervise legal advice provided by volunteers and staff at Refugee Legal's Evening Advice Service. In addition, the position requires participation in and supervision of legal advice provided by volunteers and staff at Refugee Legal's Clinics, including Refugee Legal's Afghanistan Legal clinic.

Policy and other projects (approx. 5%)

Refugee Legal is strongly committed to assisting disadvantaged migrants, refugees and asylum seekers by actively contributing to the refugee and immigration policy debate in Australia, as well as encouraging and promoting law reform. The solicitor will be asked to participate in other projects related to these activities, which are conducted from time-to-time at Refugee Legal. Activities may include formulation of policy/law reform positions, undertaking special project work, such as strategic litigation and Medevac, and the preparation of community and sector fact sheets.

Particular areas of interest for Refugee Legal in this area include: Australia's domestic and international human rights obligations in the refugee and immigration law contexts; Australia's policy of mandatory detention of asylum seekers; the impact of immigration and refugee law and policy on particularly vulnerable groups in Australian society (including children, victims of family violence, persons of alleged 'character concern' and students); family reunion and citizenship.

D. Selection Criteria**Essential attributes**

- Capacity and/or experience in performing casework and advice on refugee and general immigration matters, including good working knowledge of laws, policies and procedures in the jurisdiction.
- Capacity and/or experience in public presentations, research and teaching, preferably on legal issues.
- Capacity and/or experience in the formulation of policy/law reform positions, advocacy and community-based presentations on such matters.
- Proven interest and experience in advising and assisting people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, including those who are in situations of disadvantage.
- Ability to work quickly and effectively under pressure.

- Capacity to pay close attention to detail while working in a fast-paced environment and juggling multiple tasks.
- Ability and willingness to work flexible hours, including outside standard business hours on weekdays, and on weekends.
- Ability and willingness to travel to and work interstate and overseas, including at remote immigration detention centres.
- Capacity and/or experience in the supervision of legal and other work, particularly of work undertaken by volunteers.
- Holder of current legal practising certificate and Migration Agents Registration by commencement of employment.

Desirable attributes

- Proven familiarity with and experience in working as a staff member and/or volunteer in a non-profit community sector setting as part of small team, including demonstrated ability to work both collectively and, where necessary, with initiative and self-reliance.
- Detailed appreciation of, interest and experience in current issues confronting people of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds in the refugee and immigration law areas, including law reform and advocacy issues.
- Interest and experience in teaching and other public presentations on topics concerning immigration and refugee law, policy and procedures.
- Strong appreciation of, interest and experience in working with people of distinct disadvantage, including victims of torture or other trauma.
- At least three years' experience in legal practice.

E. Employment Conditions

Hours: Full-time, Monday-Friday, or as required on weekends. (Flexibility in relation to work times is essential.)

Location: Level 6, 20 Otter Street, Collingwood or other locations where required (however, during COVID-19, working from home arrangements apply).

Salary: Salary range is negotiable, depending on qualifications and experience, plus superannuation. Attractive salary packaging benefits are also available.

Conditions: The position is full-time for a one-year period. There will be a 6-month probationary period. Refugee Legal is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Application Process: written applications must address the selection criteria and be received by **5.00pm Monday 18 October 2021**. Applications should be addressed to "The Executive Director", marked "Private & Confidential", and sent by email to linda@refugeelegal.org.au.