



Job Description Form

Senior Legal Officer

Office of the Public Advocate

Position details

Classification Level: Specified Calling Level 4

Award/Agreement: Public Service Award 1992 / Public Service CSA Agreement 2024 (and subsequent agreement/s)

Position Status: Permanent

Organisation Unit: Office of the Public Advocate

Physical Location: Perth CBD

Reporting relationships

Responsible to: 023331 – Principal Legal Officer – Specified Calling L6

This position: 023332 – Senior Legal Officer – Specified Calling L4

Direct reports: Nil

Overview of the position

The Office of the Public Advocate (OPA) promotes and protects the rights of adults with decision-making disabilities to reduce their risk of neglect, exploitation and abuse through the provision of its statutory services in accordance with the functions of the Public Advocate under *Guardianship and Administration Act 1990* through community education, advocacy and investigation, and guardianship services.

The position assists the Principal Legal Officer regarding OPA's management of complex legal matters and the legal team. The Senior Legal Officer is responsible for undertaking complex legal matters for OPA and to support the development of policies and procedures to ensure statutory compliance and effective service delivery.

Job description

As part of the Office of Public Advocate, the Senior Legal Officer will be expected to:

- Operate within the Department's Corporate Governance Framework, policies and procedures and ensure effective transparency and accountability of all Department activity.
- Operate within the chain of command to coordinate activities required to meet the Department's strategic objectives.
- Work collaboratively to achieve common goals and best practice and facilitate business improvements as appropriate.
- Work to improve communication and model integrity and respect in all interactions.
- Work to facilitate cultural and management reforms within OPA through leadership and engagement.
- Represent OPA's interest as required.

Role specific responsibilities

Provide Strategic Legal Advice and Representation

- Support the Principal Legal Officer to contribute to OPA's strategic and business planning processes including the development and implementation of broader strategies and planning initiatives.
- In conjunction with and as directed by the Principal Legal Officer, provide legal advice and guidance to service delivery teams on legal issues, including Guardianship and Administration matters, and intersecting Commonwealth and State legislation (including legislation associated with NDIS and Aged Care).
- Conduct legal proceedings for the Public Advocate where OPA needs to have representation in court and tribunal matters.
- Provide reports, advice and undertake actions that contribute to the review and development of legislation, including review of drafting instructions for amendment of regulations and legislation.
- Undertake legal research and draft a wide range of legal documents including complex and sensitive cases and court and tribunal documents spanning the control of the OPA's legal service.
- Monitor trends and emerging risks to inform legal advice and policy development.
- Support the Principal Legal Officer in liaising with the State Solicitor's Office (SSO) and other legal stakeholders, to resolve escalated legal matters.
- Contribute to the development of internal policies and operational procedures to enhance legal service delivery.
- Contribute to the review and development of legislation, including preparation of drafting instructions for amendment of regulations and legislation.
- Maintain expert awareness of relevant trends and legal matters pertaining to the OPA's responsibilities.

Support and Develop Legal Team and Train OPA staff

- Support the Principal Legal Officer in managing in-house legal services, including mentoring junior legal staff and overseeing workflows.
- Provide feedback and support to the legal team and incorporate feedback into the team's professional practice in conjunction with the Principal Legal Officer.
- Collaborate with the Principal Legal Officer to develop and deliver legal training for OPA staff (including on key legislative frameworks, including the *Guardianship and Administration Act 1990*, NDIS, aged care, and mental health legislation).

Stakeholder Relationships

- Forms partnerships with stakeholders across the Department to ensure an informed, timely and, where appropriate, proactive legal service is provided, seeking to comprehensively understand the business, service delivery functions and potential risks.
- Conducts high level liaison with stakeholders on legal matters and seeks guidance from the Public Advocate in preparation for more contentious issues.
- Assists stakeholders with the interpretation of legal advice relevant to the Public Advocate's authority and OPA service delivery functions.
- Represent OPA in external engagements as allocated by the Principal Legal Officer.

Work Health and Safety Responsibilities

- Take reasonable care for your own health, safety and wellbeing at work, and that of others who may be affected by your actions or omissions; and comply and cooperate with safety and health policies, procedures and applicable legislated requirements.

Corporate Responsibilities

- Demonstrate a commitment to adhere to the Department's Code of Conduct, Public Sector Commission's Ethical Foundations and Equal Employment Opportunity legislation
- Demonstrates the expected behaviours of the context for this role
- Other duties as required in accordance with strategic objectives, business plans, local workload priorities and performance management plans.

Job related requirements

In the context of the roles specific responsibilities, the ability to demonstrate the following skills, knowledge and experience.

Shapes and Manages Strategy

The ability to; understand the Department's objectives and links to the whole-of-government agenda, understand the strategic direction and objectives of the business unit and the factors that may impact on work plans and operational goals, scan the environment to monitor priorities and keep self and other stakeholders informed on critical factors and issues, think laterally,

be innovative, identify and work collaboratively to overcome challenges and implement reform program initiatives are important for this role.

Achieve Results

The ability to; evaluate project/program performance, identify areas of improvement and initiate changes to ensure positive outcomes, deal positively with uncertainty and cope in a changing environment, able to determine appropriate actions despite a lack of clarity, a focus on quality, adherence to current procedures and managing projects to completion within a set timeframe are fundamental to this role.

Builds Productive Relationships

The capacity to network effectively in order to build and sustain relationships with key stakeholders, team members and other staff in the agency, to actively listen to staff, colleagues and stakeholders involved in the reform program and encourage engagement and contribution to the process is a requirement for this role.

Exemplifies Personal Integrity and Self-Awareness

A demonstrated; high level of personal commitment to integrity, professionalism, probity and personal development; adherence to the Code of Conduct; ability to constructively challenge issues, discuss alternatives to progress issues, meet objectives, follow up to finalise work, maintain a positive outlook. Engage with risk by providing impartial and clear advice, constructively challenging issues and proposing solutions. Actively identifies potential risk issues and reports to management.

Communicates and Influences Effectively

A demonstrated ability to present messages confidently and persuasively and to successfully listen, understand and adapt to a range of audiences is a requirement for this role.

Role Specific Criteria

Eligibility

A lawyer performing this position is deemed to be a government legal practitioner as defined in the *Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2022* (WA) and therefore the occupant is required to hold, or be eligible to hold, a current Australian practising certificate issued by the Legal Practice Board of Western Australia.

Qualifications

Bachelor of Laws Degree AND admission as a practitioner, however described, of the Supreme Court of Western Australia OR a legal practitioner from outside Western Australia whose qualifications for admission in Western Australia have been approved by the Legal Practice Board of Western Australia.

Experience

Experience in providing legal advice particularly in guardianship, administration, or a related field.

Ability

Strong legal research and drafting skills, including the ability to prepare high-quality legal documents.

Communication & stakeholder engagement

Good communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to liaise effectively with internal and external stakeholders.

Special requirements/equipment

The position holder may be required to travel within Western Australia and/or interstate for operational purposes.

This position is classified Specified Calling as per Clause 12 of the Public Service Award 1992 and the Government Officer's Salaries Allowances and Conditions Award 1989.

Certification

The details contained in this document are an accurate statement of the duties, responsibilities and other requirements of the job.

Public Advocate

Signature: _____
HR certification
date: _____

Date: _____

18 August
2025

August 2025