

Special Counsel

Position description

Use your specialist litigation skills to fight for a fairer, healthier planet! We are looking for an experienced public interest litigator for a leadership role with a difference. This is your unique opportunity to use your legal skills to mitigate the extinction and climate crises and help achieve environmental justice for communities.

The Special Counsel will act as an in-house litigation specialist on climate and environmental law cases across the organisation. You will work collaboratively with the Principal Lawyer and Senior Specialist Lawyers to develop and deliver high-impact litigation for a range of community, NGO and First Nations clients. You will provide supervision and mentoring to junior lawyers on cases, helping to skill them up for complex litigation. You will work closely with clients, barristers and partners to deliver incredible outcomes for environmental justice. The role is an ongoing, full-time position to start immediately and reports to the Principal Lawyer.

Environmental Justice Australia is an equal opportunity employer. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, women, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, LGBTQI people and people with a disability are encouraged to apply.

Applications close Sunday 16 February 2025 at 11.59pm.

About us

Environmental Justice Australia is a leading public interest legal organisation. Our lawyers act on behalf of people and community organisations to safeguard health; protect magnificent forests, rivers and wildlife; and tackle the climate crisis. We partner with communities and other social justice organisations because we are stronger together.

Using innovative approaches, we find the best legal solutions to climate and environment issues. Our team works inside and outside the courtroom to make the system fair and just for all. We work on issues and in areas of Australia where we can have the most impact.

Values

Collaboration: We work in partnership with community and other organisations because we are in this together

Respect: We treat everyone with respect and we value different perspectives as we know we can learn something from everyone

Ambition: We aim high and are at all times focused on achieving maximum impact for nature, climate and communities

Positivity: We maintain hope and a positive approach because we believe we can change the world

Justice: We are driven by our sense of justice – it's at the core of everything we do.

Responsibilities

- Develop and deliver complex litigation including scoping new litigation matters for clients, briefing barristers and experts, preparing evidence and instructing in Court.
- Build relationships with community and NGO clients, and provide them with advice.
- Supervise lawyers on matters to which the Special Counsel is assigned.



- Support and mentor colleagues on their litigation matters as required.
- Work with communications and fundraising staff to ensure EJA's work is communicated effectively to multiple audiences, and represent EJA in meetings and the media, if required.
- Effectively use practice management and office management software.
- Contribute to the EJA team and the running of the organisation and office, uphold EJA's values and participate in all relevant aspects of EJA planning, review and reporting.

Selection criteria

Essential

- At least 7 years' post-admission legal experience, working in public interest law in government, private practice or a non-government organisation, with substantial complex litigation experience and an unrestricted practice certificate.
- Demonstrated ability to build and maintain strong relationships with colleagues, community members, partner organisations and other professionals.
- Excellent time management skills, organisational skills, attention to detail and a commitment to delivering a high standard of legal practice management administration.
- Experience managing and supervising lawyers.
- Keenness to work closely with local communities to support their campaigns.
- Demonstrated commitment to environment or social justice issues.
- Initiative, energy, self-motivation, and ability to work effectively both independently and as part of a collaborative team environment, and to work to tight deadlines.

Desirable

- Experience in public interest environmental law.
- Experience in using the law as part of social justice change campaigns.
- Media and communications experience.

Location

Melbourne, with the opportunity to work regularly (but not exclusively) from home. Other locations in Australia will be considered for an exceptional candidate.

Terms and conditions

Terms and conditions for these roles will be negotiated based on the following:

- The position is full time and permanent. 4 days per week will be considered.
- EJA encourages flexible work arrangements and there is some scope for negotiation with respect to days and hours of work.
- The role is based in Melbourne at our office in Carlton, with travel outside Melbourne required occasionally. Other locations will be considered for an exceptional candidate.
- Out of hours work is required occasionally.
- Terms and conditions of employment are based on the SCHADS award with over-agreement salary and conditions depending on experience. Salary range for full-time work is \$131,000 to \$138,000 depending on experience, plus superannuation and leave loading.
- Please note that salary sacrificing is not available.

Benefits of working with EJA

You will be an important part of a lean but high-impact organisation. We are proud to offer our staff a supportive workplace with excellent conditions, including:

- Supportive work environment and opportunity to work regularly from home, with options for flexible work hours.
- Five weeks of annual leave a year plus an additional three days off (pro rata) over the Christmas period.
- 17.5% annual leave loading.
- Above-award salaries, increased each year.
- 16 weeks' parental leave (pro rata).
- A range of other above-award leave offered.
- Ongoing professional development opportunities.
- Access to our Employee Assistance Program and wellbeing support.
- The Melbourne office has secure bike parking and is close to public transport as well as countless cafes, restaurants and shops and the Victoria Market.
- Be part of an organisation that values and celebrates cultural diversity.

How to apply

Send us a brief application comprising:

- your resume; and
- a statement of no more than 3 pages detailing why you want to work with us and addressing the selection criteria outlined above. Note that if you do not address the selection criteria your application cannot be considered.

Email your application to recruitment@envirojustice.org.au

Enquiries: Nicola Rivers and Elizabeth McKinnon, Co-CEOs – 03 8341 3112.

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