



**Principal Solicitor –
Seniors and Mental
Health Specialist
Legal Services**

Position Description

Position:	Principal Solicitor – Seniors and Mental Health Specialist Legal Services
Hours of Work:	Full Time (35 hours per week)
Duration:	Ongoing
Reporting To:	Chief Executive Officer
Position Description Review Date:	Annually, or as required
Position Description Last Reviewed:	July 2025

Overview & Purpose of Position

The Centre's Principal Solicitor – Seniors and Mental Health Specialist Legal Services (**SMHSLS**) is supervised by and reports directly to the Centre's Chief Executive Officer. The Centre's Principal Solicitor – SMHSLS will have responsibility for the Cairns Senior Legal Support Service (SLASS), Senior Legal Social Support Service Cape and Torres (SLASSS), Mental Health Review Tribunal Service and Cairns Mental Health Legal Service.

While responsibility for these programs remains with the Principal Solicitor – SMHSLS there will be times when staff will be required to perform duties across a number of programs, so therefore consultation will be required with the Principal Solicitor Generalist and Family Specialist Legal Services.

When required, there will be an expectation that the Principal Solicitor- SMHSLS will back fill for the Principal Solicitor – Generalist and Family Specialist Legal Services.

The Principal Solicitor - SMHSLS is currently one of two of the Centre's 'Responsible Person' and is responsible for supervising and leading the Centre's legal and non-legal team to deliver quality legal services, in accordance with the Centre's strategic initiatives and operational matters determined by the Centre's Chief Executive Officer, and across all of the Centre's service programs.

The Principal Solicitor - SMHSLS is also engaged to provide direct client and other services across all of the Centre's service programs, and in accordance with the Centre's strategic initiatives and operational matters determined by the Centre's Chief Executive Officer. This includes the provision of:

- information and referrals
- legal advice and ongoing casework
- community education, awareness raising, networking, liaison and promotion
- law reform work; and
- other work functions/activities as required.

The Principal Solicitor - SMHSLS is also required to assist and support the Centre's Chief Executive Officer with Centre service development matters, and to otherwise work with the Centre's Senior Management Team to ensure the smooth running of the Centre.

Qualifications and Prerequisites

Bachelor of Laws Degree, with substantial experience.

Admission as a solicitor enabling you to practice as a solicitor in Queensland.

Holder of unrestricted practising certificate enabling unsupervised legal practice in Queensland.

Reporting and Accountability

The Centre's Principal Solicitor - Senior Legal Support Services is supervised by and reports directly to the Centre's Chief Executive Officer.

Qualities

Must be able to demonstrate conduct that reflects the Centre's values.

Essential Knowledge, Skills, Abilities

You are required to undertake a range of functions requiring you to:

- have a comprehensive knowledge of the requirements relevant to your discipline and work area
- exercise specialist knowledge, skills and expertise relevant to your work area
- provide expert advice and assistance relevant to your work area, including in relation to matters of complexity within your work area
- apply a high level of interpersonal skills
- apply a high level of time management and organizational skills
- set outcomes for your work area so as to achieve the Centre's objectives
- have a detailed knowledge of program activities and work practices relevant to your work area
- have a comprehensive knowledge of the Centre's policies and procedures
- have knowledge of the Centre's structures and functions
- appreciation of the long term goals of the Centre; and
- otherwise exercise knowledge, skills and experience characteristic of an employee at your level as required.

Duties of the position

Supervision, Management and Team Leadership

Supervise, manage and lead the Centre's legal and non-legal team to achieve results that meet and are in accordance with the Centre's strategic initiatives and operational matters determined by the Centre's Chief Executive Officer - including:

1. induction, training, co-ordination and supervision of legal and non-legal staff and volunteers including to:
 - a. develop and maintain induction and training materials for legal and non-legal staff and volunteers
 - b. ensure appropriate orientation is provided for new legal and non-legal staff and volunteers
 - c. provide additional direction and guidance, where necessary for a period of time
 - d. ~~assign and proactively co-ordinate work distribution among team members~~

- e. explain how work is to be done and duties are to be performed
- f. describe what level of performance and conduct will meet organisational expectations
- g. monitor work of legal and non-legal staff and volunteers, including daily checking of service checks, ensuring that cases open satisfy requisite eligibility criteria, and carrying out of regular case file reviews and legal and non-legal supervision meetings
- h. ensuring that legal and social work is otherwise carried out in accordance with program guidelines and Centre requirements
- i. develop and implement work practices in order to meet professional indemnity insurance and other requirements
- j. provide expert advice to legal and non-legal staff and volunteers where required, including complex legal and non-legal problem solving.

2. ongoing legal and non-legal staff development including to:

- a. provide regular feedback to legal and non-legal team members; including in relation to technical and procedural matters, behaviour and conduct
- b. assess and determine training and development needs of each team member, subject to

- expenditure approval
 - c. develop and monitor progress in relation to staff workplans and carry out appraisals for legal and non-legal staff, in conjunction with the Centre's Chief Executive Officer
 - d. promptly report under performance of legal and non-legal staff to the Centre's Chief Executive Officer and assist the Centre's Chief Executive Officer in the performance management of legal and non-legal workers as required.
- 3. dealing with requests for time off by legal and non-legal staff including:
 - a. approval of legal and non-legal staff leave and time off in lieu, subject to availability and other Centre requirements, and co-ordinate this with the team to ensure coverage of work is maintained
 - b. monitoring and taking of necessary steps to manage legal and non-legal staff's TOIL.
- 4. foster a collegiate, supportive and productive team environment, including to:
 - a. monitor and facilitate a positive working environment
 - b. foster teamwork and co-operative behaviour and conduct
 - c. model and promote effective communication between legal and non-legal staff and other workers
 - d. identify and resolve conflict involving legal and non-legal staff as required
 - e. act as a role model for the Centre's organisational culture.

Risk management and compliance

- 5. Develop and maintain the Centre's precedents and legal resources, ensuring that they are adequate, current and up to date.
- 6. Ensure that other legal resources held by the Centre, including fact sheets, self-help kits and other legal information brochures are adequate, current and up to date.
- 7. Implement the Centre's policies, procedures, guidelines, service standards and practices as they relate to the Centre's legal practice.
- 8. Monitor and identify risks relevant to the Centre's legal practice and ensure that staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities and comply with the Centre policies, procedures, guidelines, service standards and practices as required in the provision of their work.
- 9. Immediately report to the Centre's Chief Executive Officer any risks, incidents or non-compliance with legal or other requirements relating to the Centre's legal practice, as guided by the Centre's risk consequence matrix. Otherwise, action risks, incidents or non-compliance of legal or other requirements relating to the Centre's legal practice, as guided by the Centre's risk consequence matrix.

Direct Client Services

Across all of the Centre's service programs as required, and in accordance with the Centre's strategic initiatives and operational matters determined by the Centre's Chief Executive Officer, and as guided by the Centre's policies, procedures, guidelines, service standards and practices as they may exist from time to time:

- 10. Provision of legal advice, legal task assistance, representation and ongoing casework services, together with information and referrals, including:
 - a. the provision of legal advice, including via the Centre's Telephone Advice & Walk-In Service, as well as advice clinics and outreach services via face to face and other means as required

- b. the identification and provision of legal task assistance including drafting, settling and preparing letters and other documents, making telephone calls and undertaking other liaisons on behalf of clients
- c. the provision of duty lawyer services
- d. identification and carriage of ongoing casework and representation including:
 - i. drafting, settling and preparation of letters and other written communications
 - ii. drafting, settling and preparation and completion of forms, applications and other documents
 - iii. effecting negotiations for and on behalf of clients including but not limited to liaison and negotiation with government agencies, non-government service providers, legal and non-legals and other stakeholders
 - iv. effecting representation of clients including appearing before various Courts, Tribunals and Commissions
 - v. undertaking other casework tasks aimed at the provision of ongoing legal services
- e. the provision of information and referrals that seek to ensure that clients are provided with a holistic service, including to: establish and maintain an up-to-date knowledge of key referral points; identify key referral needs of clients, and link clients to those referral points.

11. Provision of other direct client services, as required.

Community Education, Awareness Raising and Law Reform Work

Across all of the Centre's service programs as required, and in accordance with the Centre's strategic initiatives and operational matters determined by the Centre's Chief Executive Officer, and as guided by the Centre policies, procedures, guidelines, service standards and practices as they may exist from time to time:

12. Identify areas in which the Centre can:

- a. develop community education materials
- b. carry out and provide community education, awareness raising and related activities; and
- c. undertake law reform work.

13. Supervise and co-ordinate the Centre's legal and non-legal team's provision of:

- a. community education, awareness raising and related activities including but not limited to allocation of requests for talks, radio interviews and other community education activities
- b. law reform work.

14. Supervise and co-ordinate the Centre's legal and non-legal team's development of community education materials and ensure that the content of community education and law reform work undertaken is legally accurate, does not contain defamatory material and is otherwise in accordance with Centre requirements.

15. Deliver and provide community education, awareness raising and related activities as required.

16. Undertake law reform work as required.

Networking, liaison and promotional work

17. Supervise and co-ordinate involvement of the Centre's legal and non-legal staff in networks, promotional and other related activities as determined by the Centre's Chief Executive Officer.

18. Otherwise assist and support the Centre's Chief Executive Officer to establish, maintain, develop and strengthen the Centre's links with relevant networks and organisations; and undertake networking, liaison, promotional and related work, as required.

Service Matters

19. To have a comprehensive knowledge of the Centre's various policies, procedures, guidelines service standards and practices as they may exist from time to time, together with a good understanding of the Centre's long term goals.
20. To assist and support the Centre's Chief Executive Officer with the implementation of Centre service development matters and other initiatives as required, including but not limited to implementation of the Centre's operational planning requirements.
21. To otherwise work co-operatively with the Centre's Senior Management Team to ensure the smooth running of the Centre.

Reporting

22. To assist and support the Centre's Chief Executive Officer with reporting and related matters, including but not limited to ensuring:
 - a. collection of statistical and other service information as required, including to ensure that all service checks are completed and submitted by legal and non-legal staff and volunteers in accordance with Centre requirements
 - b. that monthly service reports are completed as required
 - c. that LAQ session reports are completed and internally submitted as required
 - d. that SLASS/FPS hourly reporting spreadsheets, Milestone Reports and Client Assessment Forms are completed as required
 - e. co-ordination and collation of completed case studies as required
 - f. co-ordination and undertaking of other reporting as required.
23. Maintenance of the Centre's various rosters, booking spreadsheets and related materials.

Meetings, Training & Development

24. Convening of regular legal and non-legal staff meetings; and ensuring the retention of agenda and minutes of those meetings in accordance with requisite requirements.
25. To attend and participate in regular supervision meetings with Centre's Chief Executive Officer, meetings of the Centre's Senior Management Team and other meetings as required.
26. To attend and participate in other meetings with Centre team members including:
 - a. staff meetings
 - b. legal and non-legal staff meetings; and
 - c. other meetings as required.
26. To undertake legal and non-legal development and training as required.

Other General Matters

27. Research.
28. To undertake administrative tasks relevant to the position including computing, word processing/typing, filing, and photocopying.

- 29. To share internal housekeeping chores.
- 30. To comply with the policies, procedures and guidelines of the Centre, and as they may exist from time to time.
- 31. To undertake other duties as directed from time to time.