

Special Counsel - Climate

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 climate crises and help achieve environmental justice for communities.

The Special Counsel will act as an in-house litigation specialist on our climate law cases. You will work collaboratively with the Principal Lawyer and Senior Specialist Lawyer – Climate Lead 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 and colleagues 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 a full-time ongoing position (but 4 days per week will be considered), to start immediately, and reports to the Principal Lawyer.

The candidate must be admitted to practice in Australia and must have at least 7 years of post-graduation legal experience, including litigation experience, in Australia in an area of public or administrative law. A demonstrated understanding of climate law and climate science is desirable.

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.

We're committed to an accessible selection process. Please let us know if you'd like us to make adjustments to support your application, e.g. providing interview questions beforehand or making adjustments in the interview. Asking for these adjustments will in no way impact or bias candidates, other than to provide a more fair and equal chance of every candidate being able to do their very best.

Applications close 2 November 2025 at 11.59pm (AEDT).

About us

Environmental Justice Australia is a leading public interest legal organisation. Our lawyers and campaigners 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. EJA has a Reconciliation Action Plan, has a Treaty pledge in Victoria, and is committed to First Nations justice, particularly in caring for Country.

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, in matters related to climate and environmental law.
- Build relationships with community and NGO clients, and provide them with advice.
- Supervise the work of other lawyers on matters assigned to Special Counsel.
- Support and mentor colleagues in the climate team 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, as 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 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 practising certificate.
- Experience briefing barristers and experts in litigation matters and running cases in Australian courts.
- 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 mentoring and supervising the work of other lawyers, in particular in the litigation context.
- 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

- Knowledge of public interest climate law and climate science.
- Experience in using the law as part of social justice change campaigns.
- Experience working collaboratively with communications and fundraising staff.

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 this role will be negotiated based on the following:

- The position is a permanent full-time position but 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 Victorian CLCs Multi-Enterprise Agreement with over-agreement salary and conditions. Salary range is dependent on experience and 1.0FTE is \$135,000 to \$142,000, 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.
- Ongoing professional development opportunities.
- Access to our Employee Assistance Program and wellbeing support.
- Our Carlton office has secure bike parking and is close to public transport as well as countless cafes, restaurants and shops.
- 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 2 pages detailing why you want to work with us and addressing the selection criteria outlined above.

Email your application to recruitment@envirojustice.org.au

Enquiries: Alina Leikin, Principal lawyer, 0422614298, alina.leikin@envirojustice.org.au

Closing date: Sunday 2 November 2025 at 11.59pm (AEDT).

Applicants who wish to submit applications for both the Senior Specialist Lawyer - Climate Lead role and the Special Counsel - climate role can submit one application, and note in their cover email that they would like to be considered for both. Please note that the Senior Specialist Lawyer - Climate Lead role closes 19 October 2025.