

Role Description

Senior Solicitor, In-house Counsel Unit



Cluster	Stronger Communities
Agency	Legal Aid NSW
Division/Branch/Unit	In-House Counsel Unit
Classification/Grade/Band	Legal Officer Grade V
ANZSCO Code	271311
PCAT Code	2118192
Date of Approval	2 November 2020 Reviewed 12 March 2025
Agency Website	www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au

Agency overview

Legal Aid NSW is the largest legal aid agency in Australia, comprising a Central Sydney office and 28 regional offices in metropolitan and regional centres across NSW including two satellite offices located at Walgett and Bourke and a number of specialist services and advice clinics. It was established under *the Legal Aid Commission Act 1979* as an independent authority to assist economically and socially disadvantaged people to understand and protect their rights in the legal system. People with disabilities, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, women and children, Indigenous people and people with mental illness are some groups who may experience difficulties when enforcing and defending their rights.

Working in partnership with private lawyers, Legal Aid NSW provides legal advice, information and minor assistance and legal representation to eligible people in many areas of law. Legal Aid NSW also provides alternative dispute resolution services, community legal education programs, and publications on legal issues.

Primary purpose of the role

Provide complex legal advice to the Board, Executive and staff on a range of complex matters including advice to in house solicitors on client legal privilege and professional obligations as well as administrative law, employment law, subpoenas, contracts, information and privacy laws, funding agreements, litigation and the interpretation of the Act. Supervise and mentor a team of legal staff.

Key accountabilities

- Provide timely complex legal advice to the Board, Executive and staff of Legal Aid NSW and prepare executive or Board papers on complex legal issues;
- Represent the agency as a solicitor within the In-house Counsel Unit in litigation, complex inquiries and/or complex complaints in Courts, Tribunals and relevant Commissions;
- Draft and advise on contracts, agreements and memorandum of understanding, related to the operation of the agency;

- Proactively identify areas of legal risk to the agency and Executive;
- Provide advice on legal professional obligations including the ethical conduct of solicitors and
- Provide advice and assistance to the Legal Aid Review Panel and Secretariat
- Determine complex applications made to Legal Aid NSW under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (GIPA) and the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* (PPIPA) and provide advice and support to staff in the area of access to information and privacy; and
- Contribute to the awareness of and develop legal resources and training on legal issues for Legal Aid NSW staff including obligations under privacy and GIPA legislation.

Key challenges

- Prioritising conflicting demands, while maintaining the Unit’s internal practices and procedures to ensure advice is provided quickly and accurately in accordance with the Unit and Legal Aid NSW objectives.
- Quickly acquiring an awareness of many areas of law, as well as an overall understanding of the operation of the justice system and the place of Legal Aid NSW within it.
- Timely provision of complex legal advice, addressing issues of merit, compliance and, risk

Key relationships

Who	Why
Internal	
Manager, In-house Counsel Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocation of work, direction and support.
Members of Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice and consult regarding legal matters and legal aid policy and law reform submissions.
Solicitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receiving or providing guidance and mentoring within the Unit
External	
Solicitors and Barristers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructing or liaising with external legal advisers.
Board of Legal Aid NSW and the Legal Aid Review Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of legal advice, addressing issue of merit, compliance and, risk

Role dimensions

Decision making

The role operates with autonomy in respect in their day to day work priorities and the coordination of work and resources to meet service levels. The role provides and receives advice and decision making to solicitors within the unit.

Reporting line

Manager, In-house Counsel Unit

Direct Reports

Solicitor I-III x 2

Essential requirements

Capabilities for the role

The [NSW public sector capability framework](#) describes the capabilities (knowledge, skills and abilities) needed to perform a role. There are four main groups of capabilities: personal attributes, relationships, results and business enablers, with a fifth people management group of capabilities for roles with managerial responsibilities. These groups, combined with capabilities drawn from occupation-specific capability sets where relevant, work together to provide an understanding of the capabilities needed for the role.



The capabilities are separated into focus capabilities and complementary capabilities

Focus capabilities

Focus capabilities are the capabilities considered the most important for effective performance of the role. These capabilities will be assessed at recruitment.

The focus capabilities for this role are shown below with a brief explanation of what each capability covers and the indicators describing the types of behaviours expected at each level.

Focus capabilities

Capability group/sets	Capability name	Behavioural indicators	Level
	<p>Display Resilience and Courage Be open and honest, prepared to express your views, and willing to accept and commit to change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be flexible, show initiative and respond quickly when situations change Give frank and honest feedback and advice Listen when ideas are challenged, seek to understand the nature of the comment and respond appropriately Raise and work through challenging issues and seek alternatives Remain composed and calm under pressure and in challenging situations 	Adept
	<p>Communicate Effectively Communicate clearly, actively listen to others, and respond with understanding and respect</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present with credibility, engage diverse audiences and test levels of understanding Translate technical and complex information clearly and concisely for diverse audiences Create opportunities for others to contribute to discussion and debate Contribute to and promote information sharing across the organisation Manage complex communications that involve understanding and responding to multiple and divergent viewpoints Explore creative ways to engage diverse audiences and communicate information Adjust style and approach to optimise outcomes Write fluently and persuasively in plain English and in a range of styles and formats 	Advanced



Work Collaboratively

Collaborate with others and value their contribution

- Encourage a culture that recognises the value of collaboration
 - Build cooperation and overcome barriers to information sharing and communication across teams and units
 - Share lessons learned across teams and units
 - Identify opportunities to leverage the strengths of others to solve issues and develop better processes and approaches to work
 - Actively use collaboration tools, including digital technologies, to engage diverse audiences in solving problems and improving services
- Adept



Deliver Results

Achieve results through the efficient use of resources and a commitment to quality outcomes

- Seek and apply the expertise of key individuals to achieve organisational outcomes
 - Drive a culture of achievement and acknowledge input from others
 - Determine how outcomes will be measured and guide others on evaluation methods
 - Investigate and create opportunities to enhance the achievement of organisational objectives
 - Make sure others understand that on-time and on-budget results are required and how overall success is defined
 - Control business unit output to ensure government outcomes are achieved within budgets
 - Progress organisational priorities and ensure that resources are acquired and used effectively
- Advanced
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
Project Management





Understand and apply effective planning, coordination and control methods

- Understand all components of the project management process, including the need to consider change management to realise business benefits
- Prepare clear project proposals and accurate estimates of required costs and resources
- Establish performance outcomes and measures for key project goals, and define monitoring, reporting and communication requirements
- Identify and evaluate risks associated with the project and develop mitigation strategies
- Identify and consult stakeholders to inform the project strategy
- Communicate the project's objectives and its expected benefits
- Monitor the completion of project milestones against goals and take necessary action
- Evaluate progress and identify improvements to inform future projects





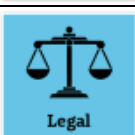
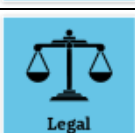

Complementary capabilities

Complementary capabilities are also identified from the Capability Framework and relevant occupation-specific capability sets. They are important to identifying performance required for the role and development opportunities. Note: capabilities listed as 'not essential' for this role are not relevant for recruitment purposes however may be relevant for future career development.

Capability group/sets	Capability name	Description	Level
 Personal Attributes	Act with Integrity	Be ethical and professional, and uphold and promote the public sector values	Adept
 Personal Attributes	Manage Self	Show drive and motivation, an ability to self-reflect and a commitment to learning	Intermediate
 Personal Attributes	Value Diversity and Inclusion	Demonstrate inclusive behaviour and show respect for diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives	Intermediate
 Relationships	Commit to Customer Service	Provide customer-focused services in line with public sector and organisational objectives	Adept
 Relationships	Influence and Negotiate	Gain consensus and commitment from others, and resolve issues and conflicts	Adept
 Results	Plan and Prioritise	Plan to achieve priority outcomes and respond flexibly to changing circumstances	Adept
 Results	Think and Solve Problems	Think, analyse and consider the broader context to develop practical solutions	Adept

	Demonstrate Accountability	Be proactive and responsible for own actions, and adhere to legislation, policy and guidelines	Adept
	Finance	Understand and apply financial processes to achieve value for money and minimise financial risk	Intermediate
	Technology	Understand and use available technologies to maximise efficiencies and effectiveness	Intermediate
	Procurement and Contract Management	Understand and apply procurement processes to ensure effective purchasing and contract performance	Adept

Occupational Specific Complimentary Capabilities

Capability group/sets	Capability name	Description	Level
	Statutory Interpretation	Interpret legislation, subordinate legislation and instruments in accordance with legislation and accepted legal principles	Level 3
	Legal Research	Undertake legal research	Level 3
	Legal Advice	Provide quality independent legal advice and explanation of legal issues	Level 3
	Legal drafting	Prepare legal documents to achieve client outcomes	Level 3
	Litigation and Dispute Resolution	Litigate and resolve disputes effectively in relevant forums and jurisdictions	Level 3
	Advocacy	Act as an effective and ethical advocate	Level 3
	Legislative Development and Drafting	Provide legal services relating to legislative proposals and legislative drafting	Level 2