

**PRINCIPAL LAWYER**

**POSITION APPLICATION KIT**

**OCTOBER 2021**

## About Ruah Legal Services

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Welcome to Ruah where everyone is welcome, and everyone belongs. We are a Community Legal Centre and while you think you might know the community legal sector; we do things differently around here! Ruah Legal Service is the result of an innovative and WA-first merger of a community services organisation (Ruah Community Services) and a community legal centre (Mental Health Law Centre). This merger has allowed us to take bold strides into a new way of delivering legal services to clients.

While many Community Legal Centres focus on providing discrete legal advice services and information, Ruah Legal Services focuses and specialises in the provision of end-to-end legal representation with integrated psycho-social support. What does that mean? It means we help clients from the beginning to the end, in and out of Court, with advocacy and representation and until whatever the end might be. It might be a trial, or a sentencing, but whatever it is, we are there alongside the clients.

Ruah Legal Services' key practice areas include Care and Protection, and Family and Domestic Violence (FDV). Additionally, we continue to trade as the Mental Health Law Centre (MHLC) for the provision of legal services to clients subject to involuntary treatment orders under the *Mental Health Act 2014*. As well as representation before the Mental Health Tribunal, MHLC provides representation for criminal law matters and matters under the *Guardianship and Administration Act 1990*.

We are looking for a Principal Lawyer to guide our growing team through the next phase of our development. Due to new funding, we have redesigned our practice and we are looking for an innovative and energetic leader to help us be the best Community Legal Centre in WA.

What we offer is a cutting-edge workplace, that focuses on using technology to maintain a work-life balance. We believe in working flexibly, and our sophisticated, cloud-based practice management systems enables our staff to do so. At any given hour, our staff might be working from home, in the office, in a quiet corner of a café or at the local park. This flexibility allows our staff to maintain their own wellbeing and the stress of a sometimes-challenging client group. We focus on client need and on business need, and so long as both are being met, you can manage your own flexibility.

### **Our vision**

To be an expert and valued legal service for people with mental health issues in our community.

To achieve this, Ruah Legal Services (RLS) provides clients with free, accessible and high-quality legal advice, advocacy and representation. We also work holistically with the broader community by providing education to address injustice and inequity.

### **Our commitment to diversity**

We are all better off, as a community, as a society, if we are all connected. At Ruah we believe true connection comes from a place free from judgement and discrimination, where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People are welcomed and treated with respect and their culture is celebrated.

Where everyone regardless of ability, age, culture, gender, race, sexual identity or intersex status are free to be themselves. Free to celebrate our differences.

We are building a workplace where difference is embraced and encouraged – and to do this, we need people on our team who are representative of the clients we work with, who are passionate about change and courageous enough to stand up for what is right.

**Everyone is welcome. Everyone belongs.**

## About this role

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The Principal Lawyer position is a key senior management role responsible for leading and managing the legal practice in the provision of legal information, advice, and representation. The role requires a forward-thinking and innovative person to lead an enthusiastic team. You need to be passionate about the law, challenging the status quo and making change. Our clients face adversity against systems that are often weighted against them, and we need lawyers and a leader who recognise the important role we play in being the voice for our clients, and to challenge the systems and its norms wherever we can.

You need to love supervising a skilled and professional team, as the primary focus of the role is the supervision of lawyers, key workers, law graduates and law students, in collaboration with Senior Lawyers and a Volunteer Coordinator.

Our volunteers are a core part of our team, and we cannot operate without them. The provision of discrete legal assistance services is primarily conducted through law student volunteers on the Telephone Advice Line (TAL). Whilst the Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for supervising the administrative aspects of TAL, the Principal Lawyer ensures appropriate supervision for the legal work, ensuring all advice, correspondence and court documents are reviewed by a lawyer.

Guided by the intake processes of our client management system, volunteers conduct most of the intake interviews with prospective clients over the phone. The Principal Lawyer reviews new requests for legal representation across all practice areas, considering relevant client eligibility criteria and current caseloads.

The Principal Lawyer ensures that lawyers and key workers engage in regular file reviews and professional supervision to ensure that they are working to their best ability and caring for their own mental health and wellbeing.

The Principal Lawyer ensures compliance with legal, regulatory and insurance requirements, and works closely with the General Manager to ensure that day-to-day practice management aligns with our strategic plan and direction.

## Remuneration and benefits

We know that our remuneration is lower than in private practice. We also know that remuneration is only one part of why people choose to work for us. We work hard to make sure that what we offer is a great all-round package, including base remuneration, leave, a great culture and looking after your wellbeing.

This is a permanent, full-time position with package up to \$130,000 dependent on experience. We also offer beneficial salary packaging which provides a significant after tax benefit.

You will receive 5 weeks paid leave including paid leave during Christmas period shutdown, the option to purchase an additional 3 weeks of leave, paid maternity leave and an employee assistance scheme.

## Lodging your application

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We hope the information in this Position Application Kit will give you a better understanding of our recruitment and selection procedures and help you in preparing and submitting your application.

Applicants are asked to complete the following in order to apply for this role:

- Covering letter addressing mandatory selection criteria in no more than 3 A4 pages
- Copy of your CV

Applications that do not adhere to the above requirements will not be considered.

Please send all applications to [legalservices@ruah.org.au](mailto:legalservices@ruah.org.au), attention Sarah Toovey, General Manager. The closing date is 7 November 2021 however applications will be considered as soon as they are received.

### Addressing selection criteria

You must clearly detail how you meet each selection criteria by addressing them separately. If you do not address the selection criteria, it is unlikely you will be considered for the position.

- Be admitted as a lawyer of the Supreme Court of Western Australia with at least 5 years PAE.
- Extensive criminal law and/or family law advocacy experience.
- Demonstrated competence in advocacy before Tribunals and Courts.
- Experience supervising legal staff.
- Negotiation and conflict resolution skills to manage workplace issues.
- Excellent communication skills and ability to work co-operatively.
- Exceptional time management skills and demonstrated ability to prioritise tasks.
- Willingness and ability to work within and contribute to the vision, mission, core values and the guiding principles of the organisation.

For each of the selection criteria, make a separate heading and then detail your knowledge, skills, abilities and experience and ensure you emphasise your major achievements by giving examples. Also include any non-working or volunteer activities, such as involvement in a community organisation.

It is your responsibility to convince the selection committee you are the best candidate for the position. You should ensure the information you provide is adequate for the selection committee to assess the strength of your application.

### Resume/CV

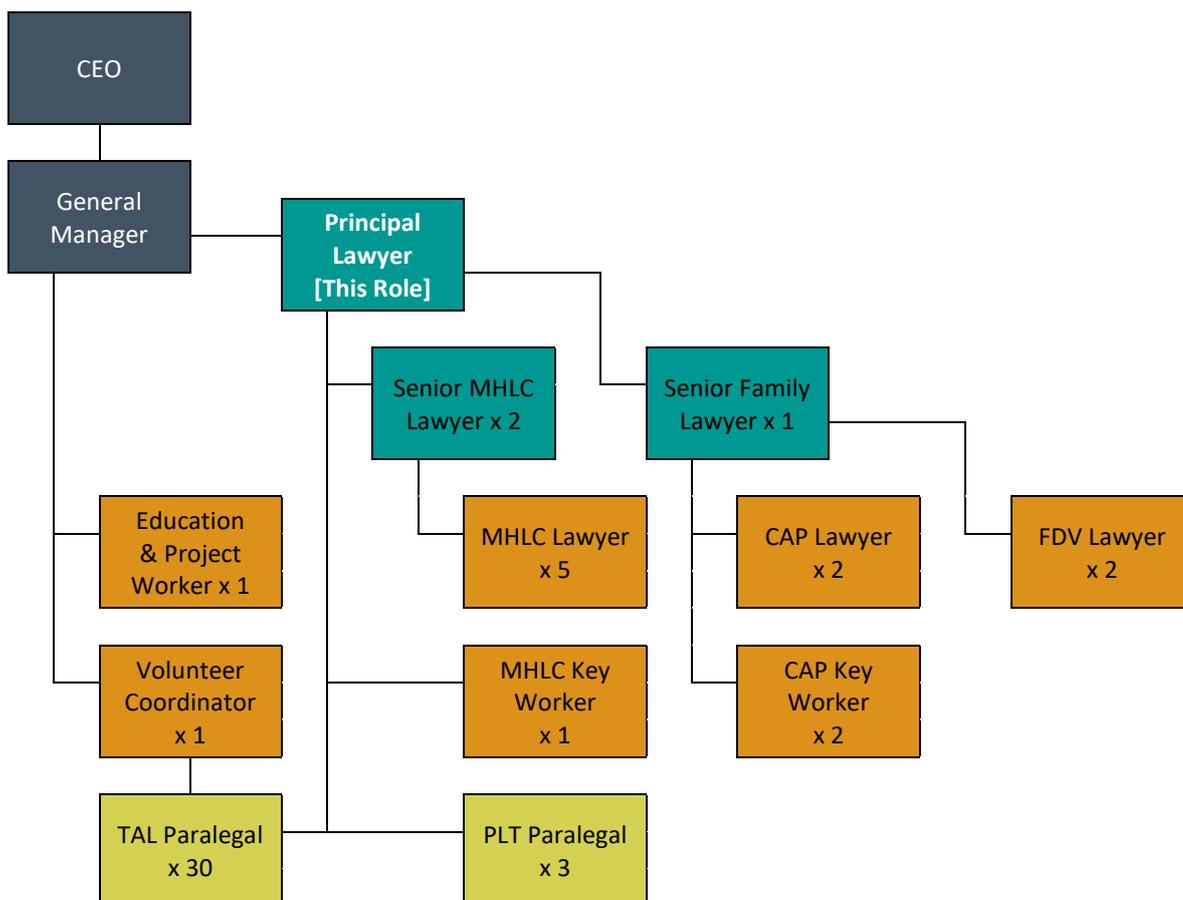
Your CV should set out:

- Your personal details
- Education and training
- Employment history – name of organisation, period of employment, job title, major duties and responsibilities, main achievements
- Skills/experience gained – inside and outside of work
- Name, address and contact telephone numbers of at least two referees who can provide the selection committee with information on your knowledge, skills, ability and experience in relation to the requirements of the advertised position. Advise your referees that you are applying for the position.

## Position Description

<b>Business area</b>	Ruah Legal Services
<b>Position Title</b>	Principal Lawyer
<b>Code</b>	Various
<b>Division</b>	Operations
<b>Classification</b>	Common law
<b>Salary range</b>	Up to \$130,000 package, depending on experience
<b>Reporting to</b>	General Manager Legal Services
<b>Supervision of</b>	Senior Lawyer x 3, Lawyers x 9, Key Workers x 3, and team of Volunteer Paralegals.

## Organisational structure



## Key tasks

<b>Mission and Values</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively promoting and demonstrating behaviours and conduct that champion Ruah's values and commitment to ethical practice on behalf of clients.</li> <li>Maintains confidentiality in accordance with Ruah policies.</li> <li>Ensures adherence across the area of <b>Legal Services</b> to policies and procedures.</li> </ul>
<b>Responsibilities regarding the Legal Practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oversee and supervise the legal practice of Ruah Legal Services, including the mentoring of legal and non-legal staff.</li> <li>Manage case allocation and the case workload of the staff to ensure appropriate skills match and that targets in any funding agreement are met if not exceeded.</li> <li>Participate in regular reporting meetings with the General Manager and CEO to report on caseload.</li> <li>Oversee provision of legal advice and legal services for clients in relevant matters, including, but not limited to, matters under the Mental Health Act 2014; the Guardianship and Administration Act 1990; criminal matters; care and protection matters, and family law matters connected with cases of family and domestic violence.</li> <li>Oversee lawyers' representation before the Mental Health Tribunal, the State Administrative Tribunal, the Magistrate's Court, District Court, Children's Court, and similar jurisdictions such as the Mentally Impaired Accused Review Board.</li> <li>Review and evaluate the outcomes of cases conducted by the Practice.</li> <li>Supervise the legal work of volunteer paralegals.</li> <li>Ensure all legal advice drafted by paralegals is reviewed and approved by a lawyer.</li> <li>Manage the Practice's compliance with legal, regulatory and insurance requirements, including pursuant to the legislation in force in Western Australian governing legal practices and practitioners and in compliance with the NALC's Risk Management Guide.</li> <li>Ensure legal staff are aware of the above requirements and are meeting these requirements.</li> <li>Identify risks of non-compliance and minimise those risks in consultation with the General Manager and CEO.</li> <li>Attend Community Legal WA PII Committee Meetings.</li> <li>Work with the General Manager and CEO to maintain, and increase where appropriate and feasible, the legal services provided by the Practice; and</li> <li>Keep up to date with legislative and other developments.</li> </ul>
<b>People Coordination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supports, motivates, and develops a high performing team.</li> <li>Ensures that the needs of clients are addressed through competent, capable, and empowered staff.</li> <li>Promotes an active learning and development culture.</li> <li>Builds cohesion within the team around purpose, mission, and values.</li> <li>Identifies opportunities for staff to gain professional development experience.</li> <li>Provides performance coaching when necessary to assist staff deliver services to meet contractual obligations.</li> <li>Review and develop workforce need and requirements to ensure the achievement of current and emerging strategic outcomes.</li> </ul>
<b>Stakeholder Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develops and maintains respectful and responsive relationships with key government agencies and community organisations.</li> <li>Monitors, reviews, and revises existing stakeholder engagement strategies and identified gaps in building and sustaining continuing relationships.</li> <li>Actively contributes to the positive public profile of Ruah.</li> <li>Represents Ruah Legal Services on relevant government and community committees and attends events as appropriate.</li> </ul>
<b>Education and Training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan and develop a strategy for Community Legal Education relating to mental health law issues and areas of practice.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare and deliver training sessions and resources to promote an increased understanding of the relevant laws within the community and in the legal profession</li> <li>• Work closely with the General Manager and Volunteer Coordinator to ensure that volunteer paralegals are appropriately inducted, trained and supervised.</li> <li>• Assist and participate in staff recruitment processes as required.</li> <li>• Identify policy and law reform issues and to conduct research and prepare papers/ reports as appropriate and when requested.</li> </ul>
<b>Quality and Risk Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensures activities and services within the area of Legal Services are undertaken in accordance with accreditation requirements and service agreements.</li> <li>• Ensure the highest standards of data integrity and reporting are reflected in operational practice to give effect to compliance requirements.</li> <li>• Identification and reporting of risk issues to senior management in accordance with Ruah procedures.</li> <li>• Development of effective risk mitigation strategies for known and identified risk areas within the area of Legal Services.</li> </ul>
<b>Other duties</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As directed.</li> </ul>

### Selection Criteria

#### *Essential:*

- Be admitted as a lawyer of the Supreme Court of Western Australia with at least 5 years PAE.
- Extensive criminal law and/or family law advocacy experience.
- Demonstrated competence in advocacy before Tribunals and Courts.
- Experience supervising legal staff.
- Negotiation and conflict resolution skills to manage workplace issues.
- Excellent communication skills and ability to work co-operatively.
- Exceptional time management skills and demonstrated ability to prioritise tasks.
- Willingness and ability to work within and contribute to the vision, mission, core values and the guiding principles of the organisation.

#### *Desirable:*

- Completion of the Legal Practice Management Course (WA)
- Experience with integrated approaches to legal practice which involve collaboration with non-legal support services.

#### *Required Compliance Documents*

- Current drivers' licence