

**PRINCIPAL SOLICITOR - POSITION DESCRIPTION**

**1 ABOUT RAILS**

RAILS is a community legal centre which has been providing free legal advice and representation to disadvantaged people since 1980. It is the only community legal centre in Queensland that specialises in refugee and immigration law. RAILS works closely with other community organisations and with government to provide a network of support for the most vulnerable clients.

RAILS operates under a community management committee and is staffed by a Director, Principal Solicitor, Education Coordinator, Caseworkers (solicitors and/or migration agents), and financial and administrative staff. The work of RAILS is supported by a large team of volunteers.

The primary functions of RAILS are to:

* provide free immigration advice and, in appropriate cases, ongoing representation
* provide appropriate referrals to other community organisations, government agencies or private practitioners
* encourage and support preventative approaches to legal problem solving through the development of culturally appropriate community legal education programs
* initiate and participate in law reform activities
* provide training and support to volunteers.

RAILS staff members are expected to work professionally and as a team, and to demonstrate the flexibility often required by a community organisation. Staff members are responsible to each other, the Director and the management committee. Staff meetings are held regularly. All staff are expected to attend and contribute constructively to those meetings.

**2 ABOUT THE POSITION**

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| **Job Title:** | Principal Solicitor |
| **Hours:** | 38 hours per week, 5 days  (flexible working hours are available around core hours of 10am-4pm, subject to operational requirements) |
| **Salary:** | $91,286.51 to $95,171.88 plus superannuation  (as per SCHCADS Award – Level 7)  Salarly sacrifice is available as RAILS has PBI status |
| **Responsible to:** | * Director * Management Committee |
| **Direct Reports:** | The Principal Solicitor currently supervises the full-time equivalent of 6 caseworkers (solicitors and/or migration agents) as well as several legal volunteers. |

**3 POSITION DESCRIPTION**

The position description below is an overview of the position. The service’s work plan for the year will determine the emphasis. The items listed are indicative and not exhaustive.

1. **Manage RAILS’ legal service delivery** including:
   1. overseeing and ensuring staff compliance with Queensland, Commonwealth and Professional Indemnity Insurance Standards for lawyers and migration agents
   2. overseeing and ensuring staff compliance with organisational policies and guidelines relating to legal service delivery (eg risk management policies, casework guidelines)
   3. overseeing and ensuring that legal service delivery is compliant with funding obligations (including key performance indicators and contractural targets)
   4. holding regular supervision and casework meetings and being responsible for the efficient and timely allocation and overall management of casework files
   5. overseeing the quality of advice given by volunteers during evening advice sessions, including checking advice sheets for completeness/correctness and undertaking/delegating follow up work as required
   6. overseeing and ensuring that statistical data in relation to legal service delivery is collected in accordance with organisational policies and funding obligations
   7. performing any other task relating to management of legal service delivery as reasonably directed by the management committee and/or the Director.
2. **Manage legal volunteers** by co-ordinating the induction, training, use, and supervision of volunteers for legal service delivery in accordance with organisational policies and guidelines.
3. **Assist in the coordination and supervision** of student clinics as determined by the Director.
4. **Provide legal services directly** as 20% of the overall position workload (or such other proportion as is directed by the management committee) by undertaking casework, and providing telephone advice and face-to-face advice.
5. **Account to the Director and Management Committee** for performance of key responsibilities including by:
   1. meeting with the Director on a regular basis and reporting to the Director on legal service delivery
   2. briefing the Director on issues relating to legal service delivery as required from time to time
   3. providing written monthly reports to the management committee in a format approved by the Director.
6. **Participate in law and policy reform activities** in relation to refugee and migration issues in collaboration with the Director, including by participating in key stakeholder and strategic networks at a State and national level.

**4 SELECTION CRITERIA**

**Essential**

1. possession of an unrestricted legal practising certificate (and is therefore eligible for immediate registration as a migration agent)
2. experience of at least five years in legal practice
3. demonstrated commitment to, and understanding of, the principles of social justice and the role of a community legal centre operating within a social justice framework
4. demonstrated ability to manage, supervise and mentor legal staff
5. demonstrated ability to work efficiently and effectively, both independently, and as part of a team
6. demonstrated high level legal skills, including oral and written advocacy, and managing a large caseload
7. understanding of issues facing culturally diverse communities and ability to work and communicate effectively with people from diverse cultural backgrounds
8. demonstrated word processing skills

**Desirable**

1. knowledge of refugee and/or Australian migration law
2. experience in law reform activities