



POSITION DESCRIPTION

Senior Lawyer

Our vision and purpose

Villamanta aspires to a community where people with disabilities have equality of rights, opportunity, and voice. We promote laws and systems which better protect the human rights of people with disabilities. We work with people with disabilities to navigate legal problems.

What we do

Villamanta Disability Rights Legal Service Inc. (Villamanta) is a state-wide community legal centre that works with people with disabilities on their disability related legal and justice issues. Villamanta's main purpose is to ensure that Victorian people who have a disability know about the law and their rights and can access legal advice and casework, as needed. Villamanta's focus is on the rights of people with cognitive disabilities.

Villamanta is a free legal service that is funded by the Federal Government via the National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP), National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and the National Legal Assistance Program (NLAP).

Services offered by Villamanta include information, advice, referrals, advocacy (casework), community and clinical legal education, and policy and law reform (systemic advocacy). Villamanta also delivers training and secondary consultation services to legal and advocacy organisations and stakeholders.

About the role

1. Casework

Villamanta's Senior Lawyers are primarily responsible for undertaking legal work and providing direct supervision and support to a small team of junior lawyers and volunteers; while ensuring compliance with Villamanta's legal practice standards and Community Legal Centres Australia (CLCA) risk management framework, and all other applicable legal and regulatory standards.

Under direction of the Legal Practice Manager, duties include:

- a) undertaking legal action on behalf of clients. Legal action may include providing information, advice, referrals, advocacy (casework) and representation, community legal education and policy and law reform (systemic advocacy).
- b) ensuring all legal work follows current legislative requirements and legal practice standards.
- c) participating in the development and continual review of legal intake, advice, and casework guidelines in line with Villamanta's strategic goals and funding requirements.
- d) participating in continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities for legal and non-legal staff in collaboration with the legal services team and overseen by the Legal Practice Manager.

- e) providing high quality legal advice and casework to clients; including representation in Victorian and Federal tribunals and courts.
- f) having ongoing carriage of legal files as delegated by the Legal Practice Manager.
- g) providing regular supervision and mentoring to legal staff including monitoring caseloads and capacity.

2. Law reform and systemic change work

- a) contributing to submissions that clarify issues, propose alternatives, and seek to improve outcomes under our purpose and service priorities.
- b) planning and delivering community and clinical legal education workshops and training to stakeholders.

3. Organisational responsibilities

- a) maintenance of templates, tools, and precedent systems, including legal precedents.
- b) comply with Villamanta's data entry requirements, file management and data systems.
- c) participate in Villamanta's casework team meetings.
- d) support volunteers and students as needed.
- e) undertake Continuing Professional Development (CPD) including per legal regulations.
- f) comply with Villamanta's policies and procedures.
- g) other projects, activities and duties that may be decided in collaboration with the Legal Practice Manager and the Chief Executive Officer.
- h) engage with and support change management processes that have a positive impact on staff, clients, and effective service delivery.

4. Reporting

Provide regular reports to the Legal Practice Manager who reports to the Chief Executive Officer and the Villamanta Board as needed.

Key selection criteria

1. Essential

- a) eligible to hold a practising certificate from the Legal Practice Board (LSB).
- b) an understanding of the issues that affect people who have a disability.
- c) ability to work collaboratively and perform as an efficient and productive team member.
- d) provide high quality legal advice, casework services and tribunal or court representation.
- e) experience supervising the legal work and workload of junior lawyers.
- f) excellent verbal and written communication skills suitable for a range of audiences, including strategic and community stakeholders as well as stakeholder management and negotiation skills.
- g) proven strong level of initiative and organisational abilities; including time and project management skills and the ability to prioritise while managing a diverse caseload.
- h) demonstrated commitment to the protection and advancement of human rights.

- i) advanced computer skills relevant to the operation of Microsoft programs and Villamanta's data systems.

2. Desirable

- a) knowledge of relevant disability legislation, government policies and current issues
- b) experience collaborating with people who have a disability, in particular people who have an intellectual disability or cognitive impairment.
- c) hold a current drivers' licence.

Hours of work

The ordinary hours of work are 9 am and 5 pm, Monday to Friday unless otherwise agreed.

Accountability

The Senior Lawyer is directly accountable to the Legal Practice Manager, who is in turn responsible to the Chief Executive Officer on a day-to-day basis.

Overall governance responsibility sits with the Villamanta Board

Conditions of Employment

In accordance with Villamanta Disability Rights Legal Service Inc.'s Enterprise Agreement and the Victorian SCHADS Award (2010).

- Salary packaging is available.
- The position is based in Geelong West.
- You may be required to travel within rural Victoria and Melbourne, and from time to time be required to undertake work outside normal business hours, and sometimes involving overnight stays.
- Villamanta is committed to ensuring a safe working environment without risk to the health of employees under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic).