

Position Title:	Paralegal
Terms of Employment:	Ongoing position
Hours	Full time preferred (part-time applications will be considered for right candidates)
Reporting to:	Practice Manager – (Family Law and Family Violence)
Office Location:	Level 1, 63 Thomson Street Belmont or working remotely if required. Work may also carried out at outreach offices around Geelong and in Colac.
Employment Conditions	In accordance with the Community Legal Centres Multi Business Agreement, Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010 (SCHCADS), and applicable legislation
Probationary Period	A three month probationary period applies, which may be extended by an additional month. Employment is subject to a satisfactory Police Check. Employment may be terminated by the employee or BCLS within the probation period with one week’s written notice
Classification and Pay Rate:	Social and Community Services Employee Level 3 or 4 depending on experience. Annual Salary \$71,136 to \$82,043 for full-time.
Salary packaging	The benefits of tax-effective salary packaging may be available (including access to Accommodation and Meal Entertainment packaging)

Barwon Community Legal Service

BCLS is an independent not-for-profit community-based organisation, serving the local government areas of City of Greater Geelong, Borough of Queenscliff, Surfcoast Shire, Colac Otway Shire and some regions of Golden Plains Shire since 1986. The service is an incorporated association governed by an independent Board of Directors and receives funding from a number of sources to deliver services across a range of program areas.

Services currently offered include legal information, referral, advice, casework, social work and education for members of the local community. Our model of service provision ensures that work undertaken is reviewed for emerging patterns and trends, and that issues requiring structural change or political intervention are identified and addressed through advocacy, community education and social policy initiatives.

Position Context

The Paralegal will work as part of an integrated multi-function team working primarily in our family violence practice but also across a number of different practice areas. Assisting in the delivery of a holistic legal service to clients and the community, the legal practice team undertakes a range of activities including community legal education, community development activities as well as law reform and legal policy work.

The paralegal will provide client intake and administrative support to our lawyers.

Collaborates With

BCLS management, employees and volunteers. centre clients, partner organisations, Magistrates Court of Victoria and members of the community.

Decision Making Authority

Under the supervision of the Practice Manager – (Family Law and Family Violence), the Paralegal will have responsibility for day-to-day work allocated to them. Any work being delegated by the community lawyers on specific client files will remain the responsibility of the community lawyers.

Key Responsibilities**Client Intake – Family Violence Clients**

- Complete conflict checks to ensure clients can access service, including conflict checks of court lists;
- Conduct initial legal needs identification;
- Monitoring and co-ordinating client referrals on Magistrates Court Family Violence Portal;
- Provide information to clients about family violence intervention order processes and procedures;
- Inform people interacting with the legal practice about services available, eligibility criteria and complementary services;
- Provide referrals to a range of internal and external services to assist clients with their related needs, including the monitoring of referral effectiveness within the scope of the position;
- Schedule appointments and type up notes in relation to appointments;
- Conduct ongoing legal needs health check with centre clients before, during and after family violence support provided by service.

Paralegal Support

Assisting community lawyers with day-to-day client work, including but not limited to:

- Drafting letters, court documents and other documents for approval by lawyers
- File management support (including, opening and closing client files)
- Contacting clients, other parties or 3rd party organisations (on behalf of lawyers or reception), to clarify instructions or pass on/find out information
- Drafting file notes, writing memos and emailing lawyers with information when requested
- Undertaking Legal research
- Providing administrative support including minute taking at staff and Legal Team meetings
- Compiling client case studies including obtaining consent
- Updating referral lists
- Other legal work as required

Information Management

Maintain client service records using electronic information management systems. This includes but is not limited to:

- Preparing and processing client files and documents for data entry
- Entering data into database software and checking to ensure the accuracy of the data entered
- Resolving discrepancies in information and obtaining further information for incomplete documents
- Responding to information requests

Reception Back-fill and Relief

During core staff lunch breaks and leave, carry out intake and reception duties as needed including:

- Client Intake as above
- General Reception:
 - Greet all visitors
 - Transfer calls as necessary
 - Receive and dispatch deliveries
 - Take messages and ensure they are passed on to the appropriate staff member on a timely basis

General Administration Duties

- Perform ad-hoc administration duties
- Collect and post mail as required

General Responsibilities

- Attend internal staff and planning meetings
- Prepare material for BCLS Annual Report
- Attend BCLS Annual General Meeting
- Attend other events as required
- Attend conferences as required
- Participate in professional development activities
- Share general office duties
- Other duties as required

Work Arrangements

Some travel may be necessary between office sites and to attend outreach locations and/or meetings alongside a lawyer. Generally, employees utilise their comprehensively insured private vehicles and are able to claim a mileage allowance. Alternatively, taxis are an option.

Key Selection Criteria (Qualifications, Knowledge & Skills, Personal Attributes)**Experience**

- 3+ years' experience providing administrative assistance in a legal office environment or equivalent volunteer experience.

Essential Knowledge and Skills

- Understanding of the areas of law that are commonly encountered in community legal centres
- Good attention to detail and ability to adhere to data processes, with knowledge of the Microsoft Office suite
- High level of organisational and interpersonal skills
- Highly motivated person who can work independently and also as a member of a team
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills – the ability to explain complex processes in plain language and in a culturally sensitive manner
- Experience with technology and data management systems
- Demonstrated capacity for resourcefulness with an ability to manage competing and complex work priorities
- Experience in working with vulnerable client groups and those with complex needs
- Commitment to the principles of equity, access and social justice.

Desirable Knowledge and Skills

- An understanding of community legal centre practices and services
- Understanding of the principles and practice of the community justice sector and appropriate referral pathways
- Experience working with people from diverse ethnic and social backgrounds

Personal Attributes

- Ability to contribute to a positive working environment
- Team orientated
- Ability to work under pressure and handle difficult conversations
- Discrete and professional
- Compassionate and empathetic

Application Process

Applications close Friday 15 December 2023 at 5pm.

Applications including cover letter (max two pages) addressing the selection criteria and resume should be addressed to the Practice Manager (Family Law and Family Violence) and forwarded electronically to employment@barwoncommunitylegal.org.au.

The recruitment process is expected to comprise three stages for short-listed applicants:

- A face-to-face interview with Practice Manager and Principal Lawyer; and
- A second interview with leadership representatives
- Up to three professional reference checks including a direct supervisor

The selection panel may conduct additional interviews or assessments at its discretion. Only short listed applicants will be contacted.

Further Information: www.barwoncommunitylegal.org.au

Enquiries: Please contact Tamara Kotowicz, Practice Manager (Family Law and Family Violence) on 1300 430 599.