Expression of Interest

External review officers

Legal Aid Queensland (LAQ) is seeking applications from experienced legal professionals to undertake independent reviews of decisions made by LAQ’s Grants Division regarding applications for legal assistance in criminal, family, and some civil law matters.

The main functions of LAQ include:

* Ensure legal assistance is given to persons in the most effective, economic, commercial and efficient way
* Manage its resources to make legal assistance available at a reasonable cost to the community and on an equitable basis throughout the State
* Control and administer funds given to it by the State or Commonwealth under a legal assistance arrangement or otherwise.

LAQ’s Grants Division is responsible for assessing applications for legal assistance. It is a high-volume processing environment that receives over 40,000 applications per year. Over 75% of applications are approved. Where an application for legal assistance is refused, or conditions are placed on a grant of legal assistance, an applicant may seek a review of the decision. LAQ has an internal review process prior to external review. Where an application is refused or conditions are imposed at internal review, an applicant can seek a review of the decision by an external review officer. Approximately 300 matters per year are considered by our team of external review officers.

**About LAQ’s external review process**

Under the *Legal Aid Queensland Act 1997* LAQ is required to establish a review mechanism it considers appropriate to review decisions made by LAQ about legal assistance. The Grants Policy Manual outlines the review mechanism adopted by LAQ’s Grants Division.

External review officers also determine whether it is appropriate to allocate different lawyers in the same law practice to represent co-defendants.

All review decisions are made regarding the *Legal Aid Queensland Act 1997*, the Grants Policy Manual and the Grants Handbook published by LAQ and in accordance with natural justice. External review officers are required to consider all relevant information held by LAQ, any further information provided by an applicant, and to speak with applicants over the phone if they request this. The external review officer will make a new decision which may confirm, vary or replace the internal review decision. They are required to provide written reasons for their decision.

The decision of the external review officer is the final avenue of review within LAQ. Where there has been a material change in circumstances, a matter may be re-listed before the external review officer.

The external review officer is bound by the secrecy provisions of the *Legal Aid Queensland Act 1997.* Normal rules relating to conflict of interest apply to the external review officer and LAQ indemnifies external review officers for any liability that could be incurred in the performance of their duties as an external review officer.

**Eligibility criteria**

Applications will be considered on the following eligibility criteria:

**Mandatory qualifications**

* You must be admitted as a legal practitioner in Queensland.
* You must have recent legal practice (within the last two years) and a current practising certificate or volunteer practising certificate.

About you

* You have extensive experience and skills as a legal professional (minimum of 10 years post admission and recent experience) practising in either criminal, family, civil or administrative law.
* You have outstanding and highly developed written and oral advocacy skills demonstrated in cases of the highest level of difficulty and competency.
* You have excellent administrative decision-making capabilities and can critically review case and financial material and make a decision considering policy and guidelines in complex matters.
* You can present and write in a clear, concise and articulate manner, offering balanced rationale.
* You are flexible and adaptable across a broad range of software platforms and can work remotely managing documents electronically. You can also plan ahead and monitor task progress to ensure timely decisions and deadlines are met.
* You can build and sustain relationships within the organisation.

**More information**

* Applicants with experience as a preferred supplier or LAQ in-house lawyer will be highly regarded.
* A background or experience in accounting, business analysis or financial analysis is also desirable.
* A criminal history, bankruptcy and due diligence check will be undertaken for this position on the recommended applicant/s due to the nature of the work involved.
* You may be exposed to explicit and/or graphic material.
* Current employees of LAQ are unable to apply.
* External review officers are paid an hourly rate aligned to LAQ’s solicitor family law scale of fees.
* While there is no guarantee of work, external review officers are expected to be available to conduct external review matters one day per month. Urgent matters may also be referred on an ad hoc basis.
* Successful applicants will be offered a contract of five years.

For more information on the role please contact Bal Reddy, Senior Grants Officer, Legal Aid Queensland, via email Bal.reddy@legalaid.qld.gov.au or via ph (07) 3917 0956.

**How to apply**

Initial expressions of interest for the External Review Officer panel are to be submitted to psupp.coordinator@legalaid.qld.gov.au by COB **Friday 20 December 2024** with the following documents:

* Current resume detailing relevant experience.
* Names and contact details of two referees.

All successful applications will be subject to approval by the Chief Executive Officer of LAQ.