



**2022**

# **Criminal and Family Law Careers Guide**



**Criminal & Family Law Association**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

*The CFLA acknowledges that we operate on the lands of the Wurundjeri people who have been custodians of this land for thousands of years. We acknowledge and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.*

## SPONSORED BY

**DOOGUE+GEORGE**  
defence lawyers

**STARY  
NORTON  
HALPHEN** | CRIMINAL  
LAW SPECIALISTS

**Taussig Cherrie Fildes.**  
SPECIALIST FAMILY LAWYERS

**FORTÉ**  
FAMILY LAWYERS

*gsa*  
GRADGROUPS

---

**1** Overview of the CFLA  
PAGE 4

---

**6** Government Agencies  
PAGE 54

---

**2** Subject Guide  
PAGE 8

---

**7** Community Legal Centres  
PAGE 61

---

**3** Internal MLS Opportunities  
PAGE 14

---

**8** Organisations and  
Associations  
PAGE 76

---

**4** Criminal Law  
4.1 Sponsor Firm Profiles  
4.2 Prosecution  
4.3 International Criminal Law  
PAGE 18

---

**5** Family Law  
5.1 Sponsor Firm Profiles  
5.2 International Family Law  
PAGE 39

---

Criminal and Family Law Careers Guide

# CONTENTS

# 1

Criminal and Family Law Careers Guide

# OVERVIEW OF THE CFLA

# OVERVIEW OF THE CFLA

The Criminal and Family Law Association (CFLA) is a student association based in the Melbourne Law School. As the only student association at the law school focused on criminal and family law, we are dedicated to diversifying the narrative on career pathways for JD students by providing resources in these areas and widening the breadth of student experience whilst at the law school.

We aim to achieve this by, firstly, providing students at the Melbourne Law School with access to opportunities and information regarding careers in criminal and family law through the provision of resources such as this guide. Secondly, by launching events and initiatives that are designed to educate, inform, and engage the student body on legal issues in criminal law, family law and the intersection of these two practice areas.

To achieve these aims the CFLA is informed by the need to promote discussion, research and engagement with criminal and family law; paying particular attention to raising awareness of the over-incarceration and structural injustices faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia.

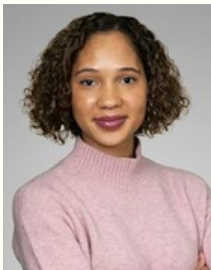
The association is made up of a Managing Officer, Executive Officer, Treasurer and five portfolios: Careers, Justice, Marketing, External Relations, and Engagement. Each portfolio plays a crucial role in furthering the mission of the CFLA and ensuring that we are able to bring the MLS community informative, varied, and useful initiatives that are delivered thoughtfully, inclusively, and professionally in collaboration with external stakeholders in the criminal and family law fields.

We hope this guide provides you with some valuable insight into all the opportunities that await you as a future criminal or family lawyer.

If you have any questions for the CFLA or want to learn more about how you can get more involved with our association, we are always happy to hear from you!

Contact: [general.cfla@gmail.com](mailto:general.cfla@gmail.com)

## 2022 Careers Officers



Summer Lyle-Holmes



Jamie Oslington

# 2022 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



**Sophie Hondros**  
Managing Officer



**Jessica Bruce**  
Secretary



**Zoe Tang-Chong**  
Treasurer



**Jamie Oslington**  
Careers Officer



**Summer Lyle-Holmes**  
Careers Officer



**Lan Nguyen**  
Justice Officer



**Ruby Lin**  
Marketing Officer



**Isabelle Keen**  
Marketing Officer



**Louisa Zhang**  
Justice Officer



**Anna Stegehuis**  
Engagement Officer



**Josephine Dunne**  
Engagement Officer



**Brandon Dean**  
External Relations Officer

# 2022 CO-OPTS



**Daniel Chen**  
Careers Co-Opt



**Jasmine Azemi**  
Careers Co-Opt



**Isabella Scarpato**  
Careers Co-Opt



**Leona Zhu**  
Careers Co-Opt



**Hayley Bedson**  
Justice Co-Opt



**John Stuckey**  
Justice Co-Opt



**Adrianna San Jose**  
Marketing Co-Opt



**Will Tinney**  
Engagement Co-Opt



**Sania Naiknavare**  
Engagement Co-Opt



# 2

Criminal and Family Law Careers Guide

# SUBJECT GUIDE

# COMPULSORY SUBJECTS

## **Criminal Law and Procedure (LAWS50034)**

<https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/subjects/laws50034>

**Subject coordinator:** N/A

**Availability:** Semester 2, Parkville, On Campus

**Summary:** This subject is a compulsory course for all students that looks at criminal law from both a substantive law perspective (definitions, regulations) and a procedural perspective. The central question is thus the question of attribution of responsibility. The general doctrines, theories and operation of the criminal justice system will be critically studied, with consideration for criminal law reform, discretions and controversies.

### **Assessment:**

Syndicate task\* – written paper by the syndicate on an assigned exercise (redeemable assessment), 2000 words: 20%

Take home examination: 80%

### **Semester 2 contact information:**

Email: [law-aso@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:law-aso@unimelb.edu.au)

Phone: +61 3 8344 4475

Website: [law.unimelb.edu.au](http://law.unimelb.edu.au)

## **Evidence and Proof (LAWS50037)**

<https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/2022/subjects/laws50037>

### **Subject coordinators:**

2023 Semester 1 – Jeremy Gans

2023 July – Judith Marychurch

### **Availability:**

Semester 1, Parkville, On Campus

July, Parkville, On Campus (quotas apply)

**Summary:** Evidence and proof explores the rationales behind the regulations and practices that surround legal fact-finding. The regulations of criminal charges and investigations will be analysed in great depth. As well as the current rationales used, alternative judicial reasonings will be explored, including comparative jurisdictions and law reform.

### **Assessment:**

Take Home Examination, 5000-6000 words: 100%

# ELECTIVE SUBJECTS

## Criminal Law

### Criminal Institutions (LAWS90136)

<https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/2023/subjects/laws90136>

**Availability:** Semester 1

**Subject coordinator:** Peter Rush

**Summary:** The central theme of this subject is the laws of criminal procedure and the ecology of institutional forums and officials that compose contemporary criminal law. This includes prosecution offices, anticorruption agencies, Royal Commissions, and courts, as well as correctional prisons and allied custodial environments. Students will learn to critically analyse what contemporary criminal law is doing, how it does so and why.

### International Criminal Justice Clinic (LAWS90060)

<https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/2018/subjects/laws90060>

**Availability:** Not available in 2023

**Subject coordinator:** N/A

**Summary:** The International Criminal Justice Clinic is organised in partnership with Amnesty International to investigate and prosecute crimes of international human rights, such as genocide, war crimes, torture and more. Through real life legal practice, students develop advocacy skills. In addition, participants complete a legal research project assigned at the start of semester. Seminars will also explore contemporary human rights issues.

### Murder (LAWS50106)

<https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/2022/subjects/laws50106>

**Availability:** Not available in 2023

**Subject coordinator:** Peter Rush

**Summary:** Drawing from legal texts, judgments and public culture, the law of homicide will be explored in detail through three overarching themes: "encounters between legal and cultural responses to the crime of murder; the nature of the difficulties that murder presents for criminal law and public culture; narratives of community, memory and responsibility constructed by responses to murder and its aftermath."

### International Criminal Law (LAWS50052)

<https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/2019/subjects/laws50052>

**Availability:** Not available in 2023

**Subject coordinator:** N/A

**Summary:** This subject explores the language and institutions of international criminal law, and their intersections with criminal law at large, international law, human rights and transitional justice.

### Criminal Justice: Drugs in Asia (LAWS50125)

<https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/subjects/laws50125>

**Availability:** Not available in 2023

**Subject coordinator:** N/A

**Summary:** Focus on drug use, cultivation, manufacture and trafficking in Western countries accompanied by a series of studies of significant and/or high-profile cases from various Asian countries through a comparative lens.

# ELECTIVE SUBJECTS CONT.

## Criminal Law Cont.

### **Sexualities, Gender, Activism and the Law (LAWS90190)**

<https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/2022/subjects/laws90190>

**Availability:** Not available in 2023

**Subject coordinator:** N/A

**Summary:** The subject takes a theoretical, doctrinal, critical and practical approach to the law as it affects gender, sexuality and sexual orientation and identity. It will explore how the law creates and responds to issues and experiences of diverse communities, and the role of lawyers to achieve legal reform for those communities.

## Family Law

### **Family Law (LAWS50047)**

<https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/2023/subjects/laws50047>

**Availability:** Semester 1

**Subject coordinator:** Belinda Fehlberg

**Summary:** This subject covers a broad range of issues and concepts surrounding contemporary Australian family law. Key matters of family violence, property division, child support and partner maintenance will be explored alongside key criticisms of current practice and sites of law reform.

## Advocacy/Skills Development

### **Legal Internship (LAWS50059)**

<https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/subjects/laws50059/>

**Availability:** Multiple, see handbook

**Subject coordinator:** Kate Fischer-Doherty

**Summary:** Legal internship gives students the opportunity to gain practical experience and skills. Students complete at least 15 days of unpaid practical legal work at a public interest organisation, including government departments, regulatory and statutory bodies, courts and tribunals, or community legal centres.

### **Advocacy (LAWS50055)**

<https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/2023/subjects/laws50055>

**Availability:** February, Semester 1, July

**Subject coordinator:** Gary Cazalet

**Summary:** This subject centres on the development of the specialised skills and expert judgment needed for trial advocacy. Students will prepare for and perform in a mock trial.

### **Mediation (LAWS90039)**

<https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/subjects/laws90039>

**Availability:** Semester 1

**Subject coordinator:** Andrew Moffat

**Summary:** This subject builds on concepts studied in Disputes and Ethics. Students will learn both the practice and theory of current mediation law.

# ELECTIVE SUBJECTS CONT.

## Advocacy/Skills Development

### Jessup Moot (LAWS50042)

<https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/2023/subjects/laws50042>

**Availability:** Applications due in August, full-time training runs from November - January

**Subject coordinator:** N/A

**Summary:** Students can apply to be a part of the five-person mooting team that represents Melbourne Law School in the prestigious Philip C Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition. This consists of a simulated case before the International Court of Justice (ICJ). The national oral round is typically held in Canberra and the international finals are held in Washington DC in April.

### Negotiations (LAWS50131)

<https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/2023/subjects/laws50131>

**Availability:** Summer Term, July (both online)

**Subject coordinator:** Jasper Kim

**Summary:** This subject aims to equip students with the theory and practice of legal negotiations in relation to the strategic legal process. Mainly, students will learn: (1) concepts/strategies (theory) presented; (2) simulation and role-playing scenarios applying such concepts/strategies (practice); and (3) a de-briefing of the two components (theory and practice).

### Street Law (LAWS50102)

<https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/subjects/laws50102>

**Availability:** Semester 2

**Subject coordinator:** Kate Fischer-Doherty

**Summary:** This subject allows students to visit diverse secondary schools and public interest organisations in Melbourne for the purpose of delivering community legal education sessions.

### Indigenous Legal Advocacy Clinic (LAWS90209)

<https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/2023/subjects/laws90209>

**Availability:** Semester 1

**Summary:** This clinic engages with current law and policy issues impacting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Students will work in partnership with an Indigenous organisation or campaign on a range of law and policy issues. Students will receive a research memo or brief from the partner organisation/s and will work to produce this major project over the course of the semester.

## MLM SUBJECTS

### International Criminal Law (LAWS70033)

<https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/2023/subjects/laws70033>

**Availability:** October

**Summary:** This subject explores the procedures and doctrines behind the institutions of international criminal law. The history of international criminal processes is analysed along with contemporary developments and sites of reform.

# MLM SUBJECTS CONT.

## **Criminal Law, Poverty and Justice (LAWS70413)**

<https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/2022/subjects/laws70413>

**Availability:** Not available in 2023

**Summary:** Principle topics of policy, mass incarceration, law reform and the intersection between human rights and criminal law will be explored in great depth with a framing of reforms for the future.

## **Comparative Family Law (LAWS90156)**

<https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/subjects/laws90156>

**Availability:** Not available in 2023

**Summary:** This subject explores core principles of family law in a comparative view over different jurisdictions, with acknowledgement of the specific legal, cultural, and social traditions of each jurisdiction.

## **White Collar Crime (LAWS70385)**

<https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/2023/subjects/laws70385>

**Availability:** February

**Subject coordinator:** Stephen Speirs

**Summary:** This subject examines how corporate crimes are dealt with under Australian rules on criminal responsibility, procedure, proof, and punishment.

## **Institutional Abuse and Legal Redress (LAWS90153)**

<https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/2023/subjects/laws90153>

**Availability:** October

**Subject coordinator:** Bill Madden

**Summary:** This subject examines the history and current understandings of child abuse in institutional settings. It also explores recent and proposed tort law reforms, and the new Australian 'Redress Scheme'.

## **Criminalising Speech in the Internet Age (LAWS70184)**

<https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/2023/subjects/laws70184>

**Availability:** December

**Subject coordinator:** Jonathan Gill

**Summary:** This subject explores the limitations on free speech that arise as a result of proceedings and processes initiated by arms of the state and prosecutorial authorities: legislative, executive and judicial, and from censorship of sexually-explicit material to restrictions applying to the advocacy of terrorism.

## **Sexual Crimes, Sexual Conduct and Law (LAWS90247)**

<https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/subjects/laws90247>

**Availability:** July

**Subject Coordinators:** Julie Dodds-Streeton and Simon Whelan

**Summary:** The subject aims to explore the legal issues raised by recent transformative developments, including the applicable legislative framework, statutory definitions and criteria as well as relevant judicial approaches and responses to sexual conduct and crimes.

# 3

Criminal and Family Law Careers Guide

## **INTERNAL MLS OPPORTUNITIES**

# INTERNAL MLS OPPORTUNITIES

## 1. MLS Mentor Program

This program matches students with a working professional as a mentor for two semesters. Students could be paired with a professional with expertise in criminal or family law. Mentorship matches are made according to a student's nominated areas of legal interest, gender preference, and location. Other factors such as personal hobbies and educational background are also taken into account.

Every mentorship is different. Mentors have a variety of legal backgrounds. Through this program, mentors can provide advice on educational opportunities and provide insight into what their working life is like.

To complete the program, mentees are required to:

- Initiate contact with their mentor after the match is confirmed, and maintain communication with their mentor for the duration of the mentoring period
- Meet with their mentor three to four times in the mentoring period
- Bring the Mentor Program Agreement to their first meeting to discuss and complete with their mentor
- Consider topics of discussion and questions for their mentor before each meeting
- Be punctual to meetings and honour all commitments
- Communicate regularly and promptly with their mentor
- Thank their mentor at the end of the mentoring program
- Keep shared information confidential.

Students can register to become mentees here:

[https://mentoring.unimelb.edu.au/p/p4/membership\\_requests/new](https://mentoring.unimelb.edu.au/p/p4/membership_requests/new)

## 2. Being a Family Law Intern with Victoria Legal Aid

This subject provides students with the opportunity to receive practical experience in a legal environment. The Family Law Internship aims to provide students with real exposure to family law. It can also enhance students' awareness of the social and policy issues relevant to family law. It will also allow students to reflect upon and enhance their professional skills and workplace performance.

Students can apply for this through the university, and it will be credited under the Legal Internship subject (LAWS50059).



As a general guide there are two main periods to undertake the Legal Internship:

- November–June (Summer period, Semester 1): Applications open the previous October
- July–November (Semester 2): Applications open the previous April

For more information, see the handbook entry:

<https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/subjects/laws50059/>

### **3. Doing an Independent Legal Internship**

This allows students to arrange an independent legal internship with an organisation of their own choosing. This can be credited towards their degree under the Legal Internship subject (LAWS50059).

Students may be hosted by any public interest organisation - whether domestic or overseas - that will facilitate a student undertaking unpaid, legally-oriented work. Therefore, students may arrange an internship with a public interest criminal or family law organisation, and this could be credited towards their degree. All applications must be approved by the Subject Coordinator to ensure that they meet the subject requirements.

For more information, see the university's website:

<https://law.unimelb.edu.au/students/jd/enrichment/mls-clinics/subjects/legal-internship>

# 4

Criminal and Family Law Careers Guide

# CRIMINAL LAW

# OVERVIEW

Most criminal matters, whether arising under Commonwealth, State or Territory law, are dealt with by State and Territory courts.

Each State and Territory court system operates independently. All States have Supreme Courts and some also have a Court of Criminal Appeal which is the highest court of appeal in a State. Supreme Courts hear cases of the most serious nature or appeals from lower courts. District or County Courts hear serious cases. In these higher courts a judge presides over the court to determine law, while a jury determines the guilt or innocence of a defendant. Local or Magistrates' Courts or Courts of Petty Session hear the majority of cases that come before courts. They have no jury and the magistrates decide the guilt or innocence of the accused. They also refer more serious cases to the higher courts. Children's Courts or Juvenile Courts hear cases where the defendant is under 18 years of age (or under 17 years in some jurisdictions).

**Summary offences** can be tried in a Magistrates' Court. The Magistrate decides the guilt or innocence of the defendant. These offences are usually of a less severe nature and carry lower penalties. Offences such as shoplifting or traffic violations are summary offences.

**Indictable offences** are triable by a higher court, and hence, by a jury. They are usually of a more serious nature and carry heavier penalties. Offences such as murder, rape and armed robbery are usually indictable offences. For some indictable offences, a defendant may choose to waive the right to be tried in the higher courts by a jury.

**Police Prosecutors** prosecute summary offences in the Magistrates' Court.

**Office of Public Prosecutions** conducts cases on behalf of the Director of Public Prosecutions who represents the Victorian community. The OPP prosecutes indictable crimes such as murder, sexual offences, drug trafficking, serious assault and fraud. OPP solicitors prepare each case and brief counsel to appear in court on behalf of the DPP. This could be a Crown Prosecutor, private criminal barrister, or an OPP solicitor advocate.

**Crown Prosecutors** are appointed by the Governor-in-Council to prosecute offenders on behalf of the Crown. All Crown Prosecutors are members of the Victorian Bar with extensive criminal law experience.

- Senior Crown Prosecutors are appointed on the same terms and conditions as County Court judges. Other Crown Prosecutors are appointed for fixed terms.
- Crown Prosecutors neither conduct private practices nor accept private briefs.

## THE MAIN STEPS IN A CRIMINAL CASE

- Police investigate the crime and put together a brief of evidence
- Police decide whether to lay charges
- If police decide to charge a person with an indictable crime, the case is referred to the OPP
- Initial hearings take place in the Magistrate's Court
- A filing hearing where the court sets dates for the police to provide a brief of evidence to the accused and the OPP and for the committal mention hearing
- Committal mention hearing is to confirm whether any witnesses will be required at the committal hearing and to set a date for the committal hearing
- Committal Hearing is for the magistrate to consider the evidence and decide whether it is sufficient for the case to proceed to trial in the County or Supreme Court. At the end of this hearing the accused can plead guilty or not guilty
- If the accused pleads guilty
  - There will be a plea hearing in the County or Supreme Court
- If the accused pleads not guilty
  - The OPP will review the evidence and a Crown Prosecutor will decide whether the case can go to trial by applying the prosecution test:
    - There must be a reasonable prospect of conviction
    - The prosecution must be in the public interest
- The Trial
  - A trial is before a judge and a jury of 12 people
- Sentencing Hearing
  - Accused may appeal against the verdict or sentence within 28 days
  - DPP can appeal a sentence but not a verdict

# 4.1

Criminal and Family Law Careers Guide

# CRIMINAL LAW FIRM PROFILES

# DOOGUE + GEORGE

**A Foundation Platinum Sponsor of the CFLA**



One of Melbourne's leading criminal defence law firms

**About:** Boasting a team of industry recognised criminal law specialists and five metropolitan locations, Doogue + George caters to a diverse client base interacting with all areas of the criminal law. As a member of the Australian Defence Lawyers Alliance and a firm that is a constant fixture of Doyles Best Lawyers Guide and the Victorian Legal Awards, Doogue + George has an industry reputation befitting its strong practice.

With over sixty years of combined experience, name partners Bill Doogue and Andrew George are influential figures in Victoria's criminal law industry and have been involved in Royal Commissions, jury trials, IBAC proceedings and hearings across multiple jurisdictions.

This versatility is reflected by the expertise of Doogue + George's lawyers firm-wide. Demonstrated by their representation of thousands of clients from politicians on both sides of the aisle, to employees subject to disciplinary proceedings, corporations accused of white-collar crimes, people involved in international matters, and suspected terrorists.

The firm's offices in Melbourne, Broadmeadows, Heidelberg, Moorabbin and Sunshine are well placed for appearing at the Magistrates Courts which are at the heart of the criminal justice system.

The lawyers at Doogue + George come from a wide range of backgrounds including national and international experience in government, law reform, and the community legal sector, indicative of the firm's civic awareness. In service of this role, the firm has curated an impactful social media presence and published numerous insightful eBooks and online guides providing accessible, real time legal information for those who need it.

This forward-thinking approach drives the firm's continuous growth as one of Victoria's most dynamic and influential criminal law defence firms.

**For more information visit:** <https://www.criminal-lawyers.com.au/>

# DOOGUE + GEORGE

**A Foundation Platinum Sponsor of the CFLA**

**Firm Contact:**

Andrew George  
andrew@doogue.com.au  
(03) 9670 5111

**Firm focus:** Criminal Defence Law

**Location:** There are five locations in Melbourne including: Melbourne CBD, Broadmeadows, Heidelberg, Sunshine and Moorabbin.

**Clerkship/Junior Opportunities:** Do not offer clerkship or graduate lawyer opportunities. The founder has suggested getting involved in community legal centres and applying to the Criminal Defence firm following this.

**Experience sought:** Prefer candidates to come into the firm with some background in the legal industry. Specifically, they often hire individuals who have experience in defence, being a research assistant or an Associate. Other options may include being active with other organisations such as LIV or VALS.

**Other unique features:** The business structure of the firm places emphasis on having counsel employed by D+G rather than outsourcing to barristers that represents their clients. This allows the defence firm to minimise expenses.

D+G aims to provide resources to their clients. This is demonstrated by having extensive resources on their website, including a wide range of offences or information on how to find criminal defence lawyers.

D+G regularly releases research articles from employees via their LinkedIn.



# DOOGUE + GEORGE

## CFLA Platinum Sponsor Firm Testimonial



**Name**  
Annamiek Van Loon

**Title**  
Associate

### **How would you describe the culture of Doogue + George?**

There is a strong family feel to the business. It is a close, supportive workplace. We work hard (individually and collectively) and are lucky to be rewarded with many social events and outings to ensure we spend time enjoying each other's company in a relaxing context!

### **What advice would you give to a student who is interested in pursuing criminal law once they graduate?**

The power of the network is critical. Get to know people in the field. I don't enjoy traditional networking but through my work experience and love for people, I was able to build a network which has made recruitment and the work itself easier and enjoyable. Shadow lawyers / barristers / judicial officers, intern, apply to be a Judge's associate. The more you expose yourself to, the more opportunities there will be.

### **Why did you choose to work in criminal law?**

It all started at an excursion to Barwon prison during legal studies in high school. Talking to convicted offenders showed them in a light I had not perceived. They had things to say and sympathetic circumstances. I am a people person when I started my JD, I quickly realised I wanted to solve people problems, not business problems. I was taught growing up of the importance of standing up for myself and others. It was a combination of these factors that attracted me to criminal defence work.

### **Why did you choose to work at Doogue + George, what makes working there unique?**

Before starting, what I knew about the firm is that it was led by dedicated, well renowned and experienced directors, and that it set itself apart from other firms by being extremely well run, dedicated to the heart and soul of defence work and its unique structure that includes in-house counsel. Upon starting, I was excited to learn that the firm provides weekly training, interstate travel for amazing conferences and a great social culture.

### **What other jobs and/or experiences have helped you as a practising criminal lawyer?**

Before this role, I worked as a legal assistant for a small defence practice in Essendon and was a Judge's Associate at the County Court of Victoria for 18 months.



# STARY NORTON HALPHEN

**A Foundation Platinum Sponsor of the CFLA**



**About:** Sary Norton Halphen is one of Victoria's largest and best regarded criminal law defence firms. With five offices across Victoria, its team of dedicated lawyers including a number of accredited criminal law specialists are highly skilled advocates who regularly appear in the Supreme, County, Magistrates' and Children's Courts of Victoria. Sary Norton Halphen has offices in Melbourne CBD, Sunshine, Geelong, Werribee, and Ringwood.

Sary Norton Halphen has seven partners: Sam Norton; Andrew Halphen, Tim Schocker, Jim McGarvie, Louise Conwell, Nick Jane and Clare Morris. Current partners Sam Norton, Andrew Halphen and Tim Schocker have been recognised by Doyle's Guide as leaders in their fields. The firm has seven accredited specialists and defends some of the most high profile cases in Australia. Lawyers at Sary Norton Halphen have gone on to be members of the Judiciary and hold leadership roles in the community legal sector, tertiary education and advocacy bodies like Liberty Victoria and LIV. The firm provides high quality and expert legal advice and representation.

**Practice Areas:** The firm caters to a diverse client base and has handled high profile cases including terrorism, homicide and organised crime matters. Sary Norton Halphen act in some of the most serious and significant criminal matters across Australia. The firm also prides itself on its commitment to access to justice, undertaking a high volume of matters for legally aided clients as well as representing private clients. Sary Norton Halphen addressed the barriers to access to justice by assisting some of the most marginalised members of the community facing prosecution by the State.

**Typical cases the firm takes on include:**

- Murder and Manslaughter
- Culpable driving and Dangerous driving causing death
- Any dishonesty, theft or fraud offences;
- Sexual offences;
- Drug matters;
- Possessing firearms;
- Assault and Property Damage;
- Bail applications; and
- Family violence cases.

# STARY NORTON HALPHEN

## A Foundation Platinum Sponsor of the CFLA

**Opportunities for Graduates and Law Students:** Stary Norton Halphen offers regular opportunities to newly admitted and early career practitioners seeking to challenge themselves and to develop as lawyers and advocates in a supportive environment with a high degree of autonomy.

We also welcome applications from lawyers with practice experience whether in criminal defence, as community lawyers, or elsewhere within the industry.

In addition we provide traineeships for those completing their Practical Legal Training as a precursor to admission. Usually we offer one or two positions per year announced via our website. Any part-time and volunteer positions are also listed on our website when available.

Stary Norton Halphen provides significant work experience opportunities to students undertaking professional and sub-professional legal courses.

**Successful Candidate Attributes and Skills:** Successful candidates demonstrate consistent focus upon criminal defence through their studies and extra-curricular activities. The firm encourages applicants to demonstrate their commitment to access to justice in their applications.

Candidates may have experience as volunteers in a community legal centre setting or similar, or may have shadowed or worked as an assistant to a criminal barrister or in another law firm. Many practitioners come to us following time spent as a judge's associate.

Experience in customer service - whether in retail, hospitality, or in any kind of service environment that develops skills in dealing with members of the public from all walks of life is an advantage.

**For more information visit:** <https://www.starylawn.com/>

# STARY NORTON HALPHEN

## CFLA Platinum Sponsor Firm Testimonial



**Name**  
Alexandra Murrell

**Title**  
Lawyer

### **Why did you choose to work in Criminal law?**

I was drawn to criminal law by a desire to make a difference. In criminal law, the stakes are higher, and you are working directly with people who are often at their most vulnerable and need your help to navigate a system which is overpowering and complex. The work is varied, interesting, challenging and you get to be in court and advocate for your clients every day.

### **Why did you choose to work at Stary Norton Halphen and what makes working there unique?**

Stary Norton Halphen is one of the biggest and most respected criminal law firms in Melbourne. With that size and reputation comes a wealth of knowledge, ethics and good practice which you adopt very quickly. You are encouraged to take on new challenges, and there is never a shortfall of interesting and diverse cases which you are free to take and run with. You will be run off your feet, however you will learn new things and grow as a lawyer every day.

### **How has any prior experience, opportunities or classes assisted you in your journey? What suggestions do you have for a law student that is seeking a career in criminal law?**

If the class has capacity, I strongly recommend completing the subject Advocacy which is strikingly similar to what you will be doing as a criminal lawyer. The witness examination competition is also supremely helpful. You don't need to complete a clerkship – there aren't any in criminal law – however prior to joining Stary Norton Halphen, I was lucky enough to work as a legal research assistant within the David Ross Chambers assisting criminal barristers to prepare for trials. The criminal law community is small, and the connections you make by working in chambers is fantastic and will often – as in my case – get you a job.

### **How would you describe the culture of Stary Norton Halphen?**

While the job is demanding, every single lawyer, associate or partner is willing to help you and answer questions on any matter or area of law. You will come to rely on your colleagues, and they will do the same for you and cover any matters or court appearances that you can't attend. As a result, the culture is welcoming, positive and tight-knit, and you'll most certainly be invited to a Friday evening knock-off drink. I have also had the pleasure of witnessing two very deserving female senior associates be promoted to partner, which is an excellent progression for the firm and industry.

### **What is the most prevalent area of criminal law cases you come across?**

I am completely sincere in saying that you will deal with different cases and come across new charges every day. Your case load will be varied, interesting, and you will be constantly surprised with what comes across your desk. Unlawful assault, theft, criminal damage, breaches of FVIO orders and driving matters will probably comprise your most common matters when you start out. If there's anything you're uncomfortable with, you can absolutely steer clear. But you'll often find that you're excited for a challenge.

### **What advice do you have for someone who is interested in pursuing a career in criminal defence once they graduate from law school?**

Reach out to barristers and criminal law firms. Do your research online, but most importantly speak to people in the industry and find out which firms are great and which ones to avoid. Ask what the work is like. Introduce yourself, send in a CV and ask for a coffee or a phone call. Volunteer your services and ask if there are any employment opportunities available (although please note you will need to fund your own PLT and balance those commitments). There is no uniform graduate intakes, so build your network, and keep a look out for employment opportunities. I would also recommend taking a trip down to the Melbourne Magistrates' Court. Ask the registry which court room is the busiest and sit back and watch the drama unfold. You will learn a lot and see if the industry is right for you.

### **Additional comments**

It's often demanding, stressful and organisational skills are key. But it's incredibly rewarding, and I promise you it's great fun.

# STARY NORTON HALPHEN

## CFLA Platinum Sponsor Firm Testimonial



**Name**  
Louise Conwell

**Title**  
Partner

### **Why did you choose to work in Criminal law?**

During my studies, I took every opportunity I could to expose myself to different areas of the law. Over time, it became clear to me that criminal law best aligned with my values and interest in being an advocate. Working in criminal law can be challenging, but it is extremely rewarding. I feel very privileged to genuinely love my job and feel as though I am making a difference in the community.

### **Why did you choose to work at Stary Norton Halphen, what makes working there unique?**

For a criminal firm, Stary Norton Halphen is quite large. We also have a number of very highly regarded and skilled senior staff. As a result, lawyers at Stary Norton Halphen get exposure to interesting and challenging work at every stage of their career. The firm encourages lawyers to engage in all areas of the criminal law and to appear as solicitor advocates in a significant number of Court hearings.

It is a privilege to be able to work alongside colleagues that are so committed to just and fair outcomes for their clients.

### **How would you describe the culture of Stary Norton Halphen?**

Stary Norton Halphen prides itself on continually striving to ensure that the culture of the firm is positive, and our staff find value and satisfaction in the work that we do. A major contributor to the excellent culture is that our staff are committed to the core values of access to justice.

We focus on ensuring that lawyers have career development opportunities and assist our lawyers in reaching their specific professional goals. Our partners, as well as People and Culture Manager, meet regularly with staff to understand their goals and ensure that the firm is supporting the lawyers as they do their fantastic work.

### **How has any prior experience, opportunities or classes assisted you in your journey? Is there any suggestions you have for a law student that seeks a career in criminal law?**

My advice to law students looking for a career in criminal law is to become as familiar as possible to the criminal justice system. This can be achieved by working in administrative or support roles for firms, CLCs, barristers, local courts or any number of organisations that do advocacy work in the area. Any type of work that sees you engage with vulnerable community members will assist in the day-to-day work of a criminal lawyer.

I was fortunate to be able to do placements and practical subjects that gave me exposure to criminal law and people that worked in the industry. These types of experiences are valuable when first applying for positions as a criminal lawyer.

### **What is the most prevalent area of criminal law cases you come across?**

Given the size of the firm, lawyers at Stary Norton Halphen have the benefit of being able to work broadly within the jurisdiction. I work predominately on serious indictable matters, but also regularly defend clients charged with offences heard in the Magistrates' Court. My practice includes homicides, drug and property offences as well as offences against the person.

### **What advice do you have for someone who is interested in pursuing a career in criminal defence once they graduate from law school?**

If you are looking to work in criminal defence after graduating, there are a lot of great opportunities to develop skills for your future career. Part time work, placements, internships and practical subjects are a great place to start. It is also important to engage in the jurisdiction, through such organisations as Liberty Victoria. When hiring, we look for candidates that have demonstrated a genuine interest in criminal law but also those that have experience working with challenging, fast-paced environments.

I also think it is very important to try to develop relationships with people that work in the criminal law. Persistence is admired in criminal law, and there is no better time to start developing that skill than at the start of your career.

# 4.2

Criminal and Family Law Careers Guide

# PROSECUTION

# COURT PROFILES

## **Magistrates' Court**

The Magistrates' Court is the first level of the Victorian court system. Sitting in 51 locations, it hears most matters that reach court. There is no jury and each matter is heard and determined by a judicial officer. The Magistrates' Court hears both family and criminal law matters.

## **Criminal Law Matters**

The criminal jurisdiction of the Magistrates' Court hears and determines all summary offences, some indictable offences and conducts committal hearings.

## **Koori Court**

This is a court for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have taken responsibility and pleaded guilty to a criminal offence.

The Koori Court has been developed to reflect cultural issues and operates in a more informal manner. In Koori Court, those involved will sit around a table – called the bar table – with the magistrate, Aboriginal Elders, a Koori court officer, the prosecutor, community correction officer, the defendant's lawyer, and family. Koori owned and controlled agencies may also be in attendance in the courtroom to contribute to the conversation and offer support.

When it comes to sentencing, all parties are encouraged to take part in a sentencing conversation by having a yarn and avoiding using legal language. Aboriginal Elders or respected persons may give cultural advice to help the magistrate make a judgment that:

- Is culturally appropriate
- Helps reduce the likelihood of reoffending.

## **County Court of Victoria**

The County Court hears civil, criminal and criminal appeal matters before a judge and/or jury.

The County Court hears more serious criminal matters such as armed robbery, dangerous driving and sex offences. Civil matters more than \$100,000 are also heard in the County Court.

## **Children's Court of Victoria**

The Criminal Division hears:

- Matters relating to criminal offending by children and young persons

The Family Division hears:

- Applications relating to the protection and care of children and young persons at risk; and
- Applications for intervention orders.

The Children's Koori Court (Criminal Division) hears:

- Matters relating to criminal offending by Koori children and young persons, other than sexual offences.

The Family Division of the Children's Court of Victoria is sometimes confused with the Family Court of Australia. The Family Court is a Federal Court and operates under Australian government law. The Family Court has responsibilities which include the dissolution of marriage (divorce) and associated matters such as child residence and contact arrangements, maintenance and property issues.

To learn more about the different courts dealing with family and criminal law matters, see: <https://www.mcv.vic.gov.au/court-system>

# THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS (OPP)

## ABOUT

The Office of Public Prosecutions (OPP) is Victoria's largest criminal legal practice. The OPP prepares and conducts indictable (serious) criminal matters on behalf of the DPP.

The OPP also provides advice to external agencies, litigates proceeds of crime and contributes to law reform, all on behalf of the DPP.

## OPPORTUNITIES

**The Seasonal Clerkship Program** is available to students who are in their final or penultimate year of study. Our Seasonal Clerkship Program provides law students with an opportunity to gain practical criminal law experience, develop their skills and explore different kinds of interesting and challenging work at the OPP.

Law students may also apply for our Legal Support Officer roles with the OPP. Through the Legal Support Officer role, students can apply for the Law Student Development Program who would like to work as lawyers in the future. This is a fast-track program designed to help participants gain the skills and experience they need to apply for a junior solicitor role at the OPP or elsewhere.

### **Are these opportunities paid or on a volunteer basis?**

Paid.

### **Is there a pathway between these opportunities and graduate opportunities?**

Yes, successful interns/clerks/volunteers are often offered full-time employment after graduation.

### **Entry Level Positions Available to New Graduates**

We select Legal Trainees from candidates who have completed the Seasonal Clerkship Program. The Legal Traineeship Program is a unique start to your legal career. Legal trainees rotate through different practice areas of the OPP and participate in the preparation and conduct of different kinds of matters, under the guidance and supervision of senior lawyers.



Those who are admitted to practice may like to apply for the Junior Solicitor role. This position is designed to attract solicitors who are recently admitted to practice. The Junior Solicitor position is designed to attract solicitors who have exposure to the criminal jurisdiction or are interested in establishing and consolidating a strong criminal practice skill base through the preparation and conduct of criminal litigation, particularly at the Magistrates' and County Court level.

**Do you hire the majority of your legal staff as new graduates, as experienced hires working in the same field, or as lawyers crossing over from other areas of law?**

A mix.

**Do lawyers within your firm/organisation specialise?**

No, it's important to be open to any work that comes your way.

**Could you provide some information on salary ranges at different stages of your career?**

Terms and conditions of employment at the OPP are set out in the Victorian Public Service Enterprise Agreement 2020 (Agreement) and the Public Administration Act 2004.

**Should your full-time employees expect to work weekends?**

No.

**For further information visit:**

<https://www.opp.vic.gov.au/work-with-us/>

# THE COMMONWEALTH DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS (CDPP)

## ABOUT

The Office of the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions ('CDPP') is an independent service responsible for prosecuting offences under Commonwealth law. As such, the CDPP aims at providing 'an effective and efficient independent prosecution service that contributes to a fair, safe and just Australia where Commonwealth laws are respected, offenders are brought to justice and potential offenders are deterred'. This service is led by the Director, who is appointed by the Attorney-General for a term of up to seven years, and operates as an independent agency within the Attorney-General's portfolio.

## PRACTICE AREAS

The role of the CDPP is primarily that of conducting Commonwealth prosecutions. As a federal prosecution service, the CDPP prosecutes a range of criminal offences. Not only does it prosecute offences set out in the *Criminal Code*, but it also conducts prosecutions relating to offences established in other Commonwealth legislation.

## National Practice

Since 2014, the CDPP has operated a national model of practice groups. This model ensures that every matter is allocated to a team of prosecutors with specialist skills in the relevant area. Currently, there are five practice groups:

- Legal Capability and Performance, which brings together a range of practice group functions to assist prosecutors in their day-to-day casework;
- Fraud and Specialist Agencies;
- Serious Financial and Corporate Crimes;
- Human Exploitation and Border Protection; and
- Organised Crime and National Security.

## **International Practice**

With transnational crime, investigations and prosecutions becoming more prevalent, the CDPP has been involved in two main categories of international work: Extradition and Mutual Assistance. These are international systems allowing cooperation between governments to investigate and prosecute criminal matters. The CDPP coordinates this international work within the International Assistance and Specialist Agencies Practice Group.

## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR LAW STUDENTS/LAW GRADUATES**

Although currently there is no direct program advertised by the CDPP, there are entry level employment programs for students and recent graduates within the Attorney-General's Department ('AGD'). This is discussed in the AGD profile. Aside from that, regular vacancies are advertised on the CDPP's website.

**For further information visit:**  
<https://www.cdpp.gov.au/careers>

# 4.3

Criminal and Family Law Careers Guide

## **INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL LAW**

# INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

## ABOUT

The International Criminal Court is an organ of the United Nations that was established by the Rome Statute treaty in 1998. The ICC is the world's first permanent international criminal court and has jurisdiction to investigate and try individuals regarding four crimes: genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and the crime of aggression.

The ICC is intended to complement, not to replace, national criminal systems; it prosecutes cases only when States do not, or are unwilling or unable to do so genuinely. The ICC is composed of four organs: The Presidency, the Judicial divisions, the Office of the Prosecutor, and the Registry.

## Judicial Divisions

The ICC's 18 judges are elected by the Assembly of States Parties for their qualifications, impartiality and integrity, and serve 9-year, non-renewable terms. There are pre-trial judges, trial judges, and appeals judges.

## Office of the Prosecutor

Like the judges of the Court, the Prosecutor and Deputy Prosecutor are elected by the ASP for a non-renewable mandate of nine years.

The office employs approximately 380 dedicated staff members from over 80 different nationalities, including members of the legal profession, investigators and analysts, psycho-social experts, individuals with experience in diplomacy and international relations, public information and communication.

The current Prosecutor is Mr. Karim Khan KC from the United Kingdom and his Deputies are Mr. Mame Mandiaye Niang (Senegal) and Nazhat Shameem Khan (Fiji).

## OPPORTUNITIES

The ICC offers numerous and varied opportunities for law students and graduates including internships and visiting professional placements. Go to <https://www.icc-cpi.int/jobs> for current openings.

**If you are interested in international criminal law and the ICC system take a look at the following:**

- **The ICC Forum:** a legal journal and world-wide discussion forum on complex legal issues facing the International Criminal Court. <https://iccforum.com/>
- **International Criminal Court Bar Association:** <https://www.iccba-abcpi.org/home>

## **The ICC Legal Process: Example Investigation and Case**

Source: <https://www.icc-cpi.int/about/how-the-court-works>

### **Preliminary Examinations**

The Office of the Prosecutor must determine whether there is sufficient evidence of crimes of sufficient gravity falling within the ICC's jurisdiction, whether there are genuine national proceedings, and whether opening an investigation would serve the interests of justice and of the victims.

### **Investigations**

After gathering evidence and identifying a suspect, the Prosecution requests ICC judges to issue:

1. An arrest warrant: the ICC relies on countries to make arrests and transfer suspects to the ICC; or
2. A summons to appear: suspects appear voluntarily (if not, an arrest warrant may be issued).

### **Pre-Trial Stage**

Initial appearance: Three Pre-Trial judges confirm suspect's identity and ensure suspect understands the charges.

Confirmation of charges hearings: After hearing the Prosecution, the Defence, and the Legal representative of victims, the judges decide (usually within 60 days) if there is enough evidence for the case to go to trial.

### **Trial Stage**

Before three Trial judges, the Prosecution must prove beyond reasonable doubt the guilt of the accused.

Judges consider all evidence, then issue a verdict and, when there is a verdict of guilt, issue a sentence. The judges can sentence a person to up to 30 years of imprisonment, and under exceptional circumstances, a life sentence.

Verdicts are subject to appeal by the Defence and by the Prosecutor.

Judges can also order reparations for the victims.

### **Appeals Stage**

Both the Prosecutor and the Defence have the right to appeal a Trial Chamber's decision on the verdict (decision on guilt or innocence of the accused) and the sentence.

The victims and the convicted person may appeal an order for reparations.

An appeal is decided by five judges of the Appeals Chamber, who are never the same judges as those who gave the original verdict.

The Appeals Chamber decides whether to uphold the appealed decision, amend it, or reverse it. This is thus the final judgment, unless the Appeals Chamber orders a re-trial before the Trial Chamber.

### **Enforcement of Sentence**

Sentences are served in countries that have agreed to enforce ICC sentences.

# INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

## Testimonial

### **Name**

Claire Henderson

### **Title**

Office of the Prosecutor ("OTP") of the International Criminal Court ("ICC")

### **How did you find out about your current role and what was the application process?**

I was interning at the OTP in 2014, when the position of Associate Trial Lawyer was advertised. The application process consisted of submitting an application through the ICC's online system, sitting a written test, and finally being interviewed by the selection panel. As there is no internal promotion system within the ICC, I also went through a similar selection process before taking up my current position as Trial Lawyer.

### **What does your day to day work look like?**

Anyone who watches ICC proceedings being broadcast or looks at the profile photos of ICC trial lawyers on LinkedIn probably thinks we spend most of our days in the Courtroom grilling witnesses. The reality is a little less exciting - these are long trials that require years of collecting, analysing and finally presenting evidence. And calling live witnesses is only one of the many ways we present evidence. In most trials, we also introduce thousands of pieces of documentary evidence. That is not even to mention the many more documents that we have to review and prepare for disclosure to the Defence. Wrestling with such huge databases of evidence and information is what takes up a lot of our time day-to-day.

### **What is your favourite part of your job?**

Although time spent in the Courtroom is just the tip of the iceberg of the work, it is nevertheless the most satisfying. After all the preparation, it is gratifying to see witnesses, including victims, finally getting a chance to tell their stories. It's also a chance to dust off the advocacy skills I gained in my previous life as a domestic prosecutor.

### **What was the most unexpected skill you have needed?**

During high school and university, one of my favourite subjects was French. It was always impressed upon me that, while it was a beautiful language, it would never come in handy for much more than watching films and travelling. At the ICC, as well as in the UN system, this is

not the case. The two official working languages of the ICC are English and French. Having worked on cases where a large part of the evidence is in French, I've used my French language skills just about every day working in the OTP.

### **What sets your workplace experience apart?**

I work in a truly international and multicultural environment. The ICC itself employs a hybrid common law / civil law approach, although in many ways it more closely resembles the former. Working with colleagues from so many different backgrounds and cultures, including legal cultures, has opened my eyes to the different ways to go about working together to conduct a case.

### **What advice would you give to current students interested in working for your organisation/in a similar role?**

The ICC has an internship and visiting professional programme that principally allows students or young professionals to get a taste of the work. In terms of securing an ongoing position though, my advice would be to first qualify as a lawyer and build up some years of experience in a national jurisdiction. The competition in recruitment is fierce, such that even entry-level positions are increasingly taken up by people with many years of experience elsewhere.

# 5

Criminal and Family Law Careers Guide

# FAMILY LAW IN AUSTRALIA



# OVERVIEW

## **Areas of Family Law**

Family law deals with familial relationships, including marriage, de facto partnerships and parent-child relationships. Although there is a popular conception of family lawyers as dealing exclusively with divorce and custody agreements, the reality of practicing as a family lawyer is far more complex and varied. Lawyers in this practice area are often jacks of all trades, routinely working with property law, bankruptcy law, dispute resolution, and family violence, to name a few.

As the world becomes more globalised and families are increasingly multinational, jobs are more likely to take people overseas, and people more prone to invest their wealth across borders, working in family law presents more opportunities to work on international matters and meet the challenges of a fast moving world.

## **Family Law Disputes**

Family law disputes are generally heard in the Magistrates' Court of Victoria or the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia.

## **The Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia (FCFCA)**

The Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia (the Court) has been established by the *Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia Act 2021*, bringing together the Family Court of Australia and the Federal Circuit Court of Australia.

The Court's family law jurisdiction includes applications for divorce, proof of divorce, applications for spousal maintenance, property and financial disputes, parenting orders, enforcement of orders, location and recovery orders, warrants for the apprehension or detention of a child, and determination of parentage.

The Court comprises two divisions:

Division 1: (a continuation of the Family Court of Australia) deals with family law matters. Division 1 has 35 specialist family law judges hearing both trials and appeals.

Division 2: (a continuation of the Federal Circuit Court of Australia) deals with family law, migration and general federal law matters. Division 2 has 76 judges; 55 of which are specialists in family law and the remainder experts in various areas of general federal law and migration.

## **Jurisdiction of the Magistrates' Court**

The Magistrates' Court of Victoria can hear cases involving parenting orders, family violence intervention orders, and property orders.

The Magistrates' Court of Victoria does not deal with divorces and some venues may not hear family law matters. Issues involving family relationships such as adoption, divorce, and child custody are heard by the Magistrates' Court.

The Magistrates' Court does manage family violence intervention orders. This is a court order to protect a person, their child and their property from a family member, partner, or ex-partner.

In general, the Magistrates' Court will hear the following family law matters:

- Parenting orders
- Family violence intervention orders and parenting orders
- Property orders

## **For More Information**

The Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia:  
<https://www.fcfcoa.gov.au/about>

The Magistrates' Court:  
<https://www.mcv.vic.gov.au/family-matters/family-law#:~:text=The%20Magistrates%27%20Court%20can%20hear,matters%20about%20parenting%20and%20property>

Family Violence:  
<https://familyviolencelaw.gov.au/>

Entering Family Law as a Grad:  
<https://gradaustralia.com.au/career-planning/family-law-area-of-practice>

Doyles Guide - Family Law Firms:  
<https://doylesguide.com/leading-family-divorce-law-firms-australia-2022/>

## **To Keep up to Date with Developments in Family Law and Current Areas of Reform**

The Family Law Section (free membership available for students):  
<https://www.familylawsection.org.au/>

# 5.1

Criminal and Family Law Careers Guide

## **FAMILY LAW FIRM PROFILES**

# TAUSSIG CHERRIE FILDES

**A Foundation Platinum Sponsor of the CFLA**



**About:** Taussig Cherrie Fildes ('TCF') is a leading Australian specialist family law firm. The firm has an exceptional reputation and is ranked by Doyles as a "First Tier" Firm for Family & Divorce Law in Australia. TCF acts for clients on many complex matters that are located at the intersection of commercial and family law, giving TCF lawyers a diverse understanding of property, trusts and commercial issues. Through this understanding they are able to provide their clients with robust representation in both relational and financial disputes.

The firm represents high-profile clients and treats their matters with commensurate confidentiality and discretion thereby achieving the best possible result while maintaining their clients' privacy.

One of the benefits of working at TCF is the flexibility the firm affords its clerks. The firm provides opportunities for students to work and receive training whilst successfully balancing classes. In the past, multiple clerks have been able to work from overseas while still completing their tasks with TCF.

TCF prides itself on being a leader in the area of complex family law matters, epitomized by their appearance in the High Court in *Hsiao v Fazarri* [2020] HCA 35. As described by Debra Cherrie, a principal at TCF, the key takeaway from this unique case was the importance of providing all available evidence to the court at the beginning of the trial. TCF was successful, the appeal was quashed, and the trial judge's decision was affirmed.

The firm provides lawyers and support staff, including law students, with well-balanced exposure to commercial and family law matters.

**For more information visit:** <https://www.tcflawyers.com.au/>.

# TAUSSIG CHERRIE FILDES

## CFLA Platinum Sponsor Firm Testimonial



**Name**  
Amy Toomey

**Title**  
Associate

### **Why did you choose to work in Family law?**

I knew that I wanted to be a lawyer for a long time, but throughout university when there was such a focus on a commercial career I quickly realised that one of the things most important to me in my career was the 'people dynamic' – being able to interact with people and deal with their concerns directly. As soon as I was introduced to family law, I knew it was for me.

### **Why did you choose to work at Taussig Cherrie Fildes and what makes working there unique?**

TCF has long held a reputation as being Melbourne's preeminent boutique family law firm. I was drawn to TCF by the high-quality work I witnessed them undertake during my time working as an Associate, recommendations from members of counsel in discussions as to prospective next-steps in my career, and also borne out of a desire to challenge myself to take on a position that would require me to develop a whole new range of skills. Aside from our reputation as a leading family law firm, what makes working at TCF so unique is that it is a very supportive environment where we exchange ideas, discuss different approaches to matters and take advice and guidance from one another. What also makes TCF so unique is the clear commercial element to our practice – for example, a number of our clients have significant commercial interests which form part of the matrimonial property pool. This requires us to have an in-depth knowledge of commercial practice areas, including trusts, property, tax, corporate and insolvency issues, and contracts and equitable principles. This overlap with a commercial practice means that our skills traverse across both litigation and transactional abilities.

### **What is the most prevalent area of family law matters you come across?**

TCF deal with both financial and parenting matters, taking a holistic and client-focused approach to each of our matters, to support people as they move through what is usually a difficult separation into the next chapter of our lives. It is a sad reality of the work that we do that so many of our matters (whether parenting or property matters) are characterised by some extent by the existence of family violence in the context of the relationship, separation or sometimes even post-separation.

### **Clerkship/Junior opportunities:**

Clerkship opportunities are available and depend on openings. These continue throughout the year and are based on the firm's need.

### **Experience sought:**

Taussig Cherrie Fildes hires candidates with a variety of backgrounds. This can include hiring directly from law school or after having experience in an associateship, clerkship, VALS or other community legal centres.

### **Other unique features**

TCF has many clients with complex financial circumstances, these may include large businesses, inter-generational wealth, trust structures. This is why lawyers at TCF develop a strong understanding of many areas of law.

TCF have advised de facto partners, married couples and this includes same-sex partners on their legal circumstances.

# FORTÉ FAMILY LAWYERS

**A Foundation Platinum Sponsor of the CFLA**

## FORTÉ FAMILY LAWYERS

**About:** Forté Family Lawyers is a top-tier family law firm that prides itself on providing accurate advice and being at the forefront of changes in family law. The firm's expertise extends beyond family law with many of their matters having complexities in other sectors, such as effective management of property and financial settlements, family violence and international matters. The success of Forté has been recognised through being awarded a leading family law firm by Doyle's Guide to the Australian Legal Market 2023.

Partners at Forté Family Lawyers excel in international family disputes. This is recognised by three of their partners being fellow of the International Academy of Family Lawyers.

Forté Family Lawyers utilise their diverse professional expertise and genuine personality to make the culture of the firm stand out beyond others. This combination allows them to serve their clients in the best manner possible.

### **Practice Areas**

- Children and Parenting
- Property and Financial Settlements
- Prenuptial and other Financial Agreements
- Divorce and Separation
- Family Violence
- Child Support and Spousal Maintenance
- Same-Sex Relationships
- International
- Complex Financial Structures
- Bankruptcy and Insolvency
- Superannuation
- Dispute Resolution
- Third Parties

### **Partner Profile: Jacky Campbell**

Jacky Campbell of Forté Family Lawyers is an accredited arbitrator and a family lawyer of over 35 years' experience. Jacky is an Accredited Specialist in Family Law and a Fellow of the International Academy of Family Lawyers. Jacky is well known for writing in family law publications for other lawyers and speaking to family lawyers, particularly regarding property, financial agreements, de facto relationships, superannuation and bankruptcy.

**For more information visit:** <https://fortefamilylawyers.com.au/>

# FORTÉ FAMILY LAWYERS

## CFLA Platinum Sponsor Firm Testimonial

**Name**

Oliva Andoniouff

**Title**

Lawyer

**How would you describe the culture of Forté Family Lawyers?**

Collaborative, collegiate, high standard of professionalism.

**What advice would you give to a student who is interested in pursuing family law once they graduate?**

Gain experience in the area whilst you are a student, either at community legal centre, at legal aid, in private practice or otherwise.

Also, attend court and go watch some hearings take place.

These are particularly helpful to expose yourself to the types of matters which you might be involved in prior to deciding whether you want to specialise in the area.

If you can manage to score an associateship at the FCFCOA prior to entering practice, this is also invaluable.

**Why did you choose to work in Family law?**

I studied a psychology and criminal undergraduate degree. I wanted to work in a legal field with client contact and where I would have an impact at an individual and personal level with clients (rather than corporate clients).

**Why did you choose to work at Forté Family Lawyers and what makes working there unique?**

I wanted to work in a collaborative working environment where I would have room for and support in growth and professional development.

**What other jobs and/or experiences have helped you as a practising family lawyer?**

Volunteering at community legal centre and VLA family law division.

The greatest assistance I had in my career, before my role at Forte, was as an associate at the Federal Circuit Court (as it was then) working with a Judge who heard family law matters mainly.

I found this to be a massive leg up in finding a role as a lawyer than going straight from university to practice (this is because my role as an associate exposed me to litigation, court processes and networking with the family law profession).



# 5.2

Criminal and Family Law Careers Guide

## **INTERNATIONAL FAMILY LAW**

# INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL SERVICE AUSTRALIA (ISS)

## **ABOUT**

Very specialised area of family law with international elements in the not-for-profit space.

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

Legal work experience including research, drafting and client contact.

### **Are these opportunities paid or on a volunteer basis?**

Both.

### **Do you offer a seasonal clerkship program?**

No.

### **Is there a pathway between these opportunities and graduate opportunities?**

No, there is no pathway between involvement as a law student and employment following graduation.

### **What entry level positions are available for graduates?**

Our lawyer positions usually require 2 years PAE.

### **Do you hire the majority of your legal staff as new graduates, as experienced hires working in the same field, or as lawyers crossing over from other areas of law?**

A mix.

### **Do lawyers within your firm/organisation specialise?**

Yes, we hire directly into a certain practice area.

### **What does your organisation/firm look for when hiring?**

Strong communication and drafting skills, empathetic, professional, team player.

**For further information visit:**

<https://www.iss.org.au/>

# INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL SERVICE AUSTRALIA (ISS)

## Lawyer Testimonial

### **Name**

Monique Angeleri

### **Workplace**

International Social Service Australia (ISS)

### **How did you find out about your current role and what was the application process?**

ISS advertises their roles through Ethical Jobs. After reading about the work that ISS does in relation to international parental child abduction (IPCA) I was interested to learn more about international family law so decided to apply for a Paralegal role. The application process was straightforward; I submitted my resume and cover letter and was then invited to interview. The interview was conducted by a panel of two lawyers and I instantly felt that I connected with the team and the work during this interview.

### **What did you do before beginning your current role?**

Prior to working at ISS I worked in domestic family law. I worked primarily on domestic violence matters which prepared me well for the type of matters that we work on at ISS.

### **What does your day to day work look like?**

A typical day at ISS starts with the morning 'hello's' through the Zoom group chat. ISS is a national service with offices in Melbourne and Sydney and staff located in Melbourne, Sydney, Perth and Adelaide. Therefore, we stay connected throughout the day through Zoom group chats and video calls. After catching up with the team, I check my emails and find out what I have on for the day. Typically my days involve preparing the initial draft of a return application and affidavit under the 1980 Hague Convention. To begin this task I will read up on the file by checking the file notes taken during the client intake as well as looking over the questionnaire which our clients are asked to fill out. From there I begin putting together the affidavit, drawing on any relevant materials including message transcripts, letters, flight itineraries and more.

My role also includes answering the ISS legal phone line. I will speak to clients and answer any general enquiries they may have. Where they require legal advice I will complete an intake with the client (collecting their information and finding out more about their situation and the advice they require) before passing it onto a lawyer. Once a week we have a legal team meeting where we discuss all the new cases we have taken on and they will be assigned to a lawyer. In the afternoons I typically finalise any drafting tasks I had from the morning or that have come through throughout the day and may also work on compiling the annexures so that our applications can be sent to the client for signing. I often also work on drafting letters of advice to clients, based on the telephone advice provided by the lawyer, and may also assist with any miscellaneous tasks including transcribing video footage, translating documents, conducting legal research and sorting through message transcripts. The work at ISS is varied and interesting, you get a lot of opportunity to work directly with clients and deep dive into different cases.

### **What is your favourite part of your job?**

My favourite part of working at ISS is the client engagement. I enjoy speaking with clients and walking them through their application to fill in the blanks over the phone. This work deeply effects the lives of our clients as we are assisting them to seek the return of their children from overseas. Therefore all the engagement we have with clients is very rewarding and a fantastic learning experience.

### **What was the most unexpected skill you have needed?**

Working in international family law means a lot of the materials we receive are in foreign languages. Therefore, my ability to quickly find accurate means of translating all sorts of different types of materials from court orders to messages and videos has been a valuable skill that I hadn't initially anticipated I would need this much!

### **What sets your workplace experience apart?**

The people and the nature of the work. Firstly, the people at ISS are wonderful. Despite being scattered all over the country, ISS operates as a close knit team and from day one I felt at home. It is fantastic to come to work with such a wonderful group of likeminded people who are passionate about helping others.

Secondly, international family law is a very unique area of law to operate in. I have learnt so much about the legal systems of different countries and it always fascinates me to find out the intricacies of the court systems and principles applied in overseas jurisdictions.

**What advice would you give to current students interested in working for your organisation/in a similar role?**

Legal drafting and having a high attention to detail are the most important skills for working at ISS or in family law generally. Seeking out opportunities to enhance these skills will set you up for success when applying for roles in family law.

# EXPATRIATE LAW

## ABOUT

Expatriate Law is an international family law firm specialising in international divorce and family law for clients with a family connection to England or Wales. Advise international clients in the UK and British expats or multinational families residing outside of the UK on the complex legal issues arising from international divorce and other areas of family law including on jurisdictional issues.

Expatriate Law also advises other family law firms on their international family law matters.

The firm has offices in the United Kingdom, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates.

## PRACTICE AREAS

- Exclusively International Family Law, including:
- Financial Claims
- Child Support and Maintenance
- Custody
- Child Abduction
- Prenuptial and other Agreements
- Enforcement
- Alternatives to Litigation

## Required Qualifications

Must be admitted in England and Wales.

## Firm Culture/Environment

Hybrid work model.

**Recruiting Contact:**  
alexandra@expatriatelaw.com

# 6

Criminal and Family Law Careers Guide

# GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

# DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE (DFAT)

## ABOUT

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) is the department of federal government responsible for Australia's foreign relations. Its stated purpose is promoting and protecting Australia's international interests to support security and prosperity in the Australian region. The department works with state and non-state actors to tackle global challenges, increase trade and investment opportunities, promote international law and assist Australians overseas.

## PRACTICE AREAS

Four primary areas of International Criminal Law in which DFAT operates:

- Supporting the International Criminal Court and its goal of ending impunity for the perpetrators of the most serious crimes;
- Supporting the United Nations' anti-terrorism initiatives through international cooperation;
- Providing support for the justice system in post-conflict nations such as Cambodia, Timor-Leste, the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands and Bougainville and Papua New Guinea; and
- Implementation of UN Security Council sanctions regimes and management of serious criminal offences under domestic Australian law arising from breach of these sanctions.

There are prospects to work in DFAT in Australia and overseas.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRADUATES

**Graduate program:** Each year DFAT selects a mix of new graduates and graduates with several years of professional experience. Successful applicants will complete three placements and get first-hand experience across a range of DFAT's priority areas including international criminal law. Graduate program roles are based in Canberra with the opportunity to be posted overseas after completing the program.

**Indigenous program:** DFAT is participating in centralised recruitment through the Indigenous Graduate Pathway. As an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander you will be able to complete one application and be considered



for multiple Agencies and Departments within the Australian Public Service (APS). DFAT is also participating in the Indigenous Apprenticeships Programme and the Indigenous Australian Government Development Program which offer alternative pathways to join DFAT.

## **WORKING AT DFAT**

### **Do lawyers/legal officers at DFAT specialise?**

The majority of employees are 'generalists'. Generalists do not require specific qualifications or professional expertise to do their job, but use skills and experience gained through study, training and other roles within the department and elsewhere. As a generalist with a legal background (and interest in international criminal law) you will have the opportunity to undertake specialised legal work in the areas outlined above and any other matter which evolve alongside Australia's interests.

**For further information visit:**

<https://www.dfat.gov.au/>

# ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

## ABOUT

The Attorney Generals Department (AGD) is a department of the federal government of Australia responsible for delivering programs and policies to maintain and improve Australia's law and justice framework. There are significant opportunities in the AGD to work in International family law and international criminal law.

## PRACTICE AREAS

### International Family Law

- The Australian Central Authority in the Attorney-General's Department is responsible for administering the 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction and the Hague Convention on Jurisdiction, Applicable Law, Recognition, Enforcement and Cooperation in Respect of Parental Responsibility and Measures for the Protection of Children (the Child Protection Convention).

### International Criminal Law

- Administration of International crime cooperation arrangements by processing all incoming and outgoing extradition requests, requests for mutual assistance from overseas jurisdictions and dealing with the transfer of detainees under the Council of Europe Convention on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons.
- Represents Australia, together with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, at the Assembly of State Parties to the Rome Statute (the ICJ's management oversight and legislative body).
- Administration and implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime. This includes domestic measures to tackle transnational organised crime in addition to the adoption of extradition, mutual legal assistance and law enforcement cooperation frameworks.
- Represents Australia at the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice as an observer and plays an active role in the discussions and consultations on resolutions.
- The Office of International Law within the AGD provides legal and legal policy advice to the Australian Government on matters concerning:
  - International security law
  - Compliance with United Nations Security Council sanctions and autonomous sanctions
  - Disarmament, non-proliferation and counter-proliferation of both conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction.

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Opportunities for law students**

There are a variety of entry level employment programs at the department for students at all stages of their degrees, and for recent graduates. For example, my team offers research, policy and casework experience to law students on a part-time basis. The department also manages and supports the Australian Government Legal Service (AGLS). The AGLS is the formal professional network for all Australian Government Lawyers.

### **Are these opportunities paid or on a volunteer basis?**

Paid.

### **Is there a pathway between these opportunities and graduate opportunities?**

Generally you apply separately for the graduate program.

### **For further information visit:**

<https://www.governmentlawyers.gov.au/>

### **Opportunities for Graduates**

The Attorney-General's department participate in the following entry-level employment programs:

- The Indigenous Australian Government Development program (IAGDP)
- Australian Government Indigenous Graduate Pathway program

This Graduate Program is a 12-month, structured and comprehensive learning and development program, where graduates will take part in work rotations across various areas of the department. Through hands-on experience, graduates develop a strong professional grounding and exposure to public governance in a range of business areas. This program provides a pathway to ongoing AGD employment.

- Stepping Into Program (Winter)
- Attorney-General's department graduate program that includes the Australian Government Solicitor

This graduate program is a 12-month development opportunity with rotations across our 3 practice areas. You will have the opportunity to work with an in-house legal team within a Commonwealth agency and with a community legal centre/charitable organisation as part of AGD pro bono program. You will be mentored and have access to a variety of learning and development activities, including the opportunity to complete your practical legal training to be admitted to practice.

## **Salary ranges**

The AGD enterprise agreement is publicly available and provides a salary broadband for different APS work levels. For example, recent graduates generally start at the department at the APS3 or 4 level.

Link to the enterprise agreement: <https://www.ag.gov.au/about-us/publications/attorney-generals-department-enterprise-agreement-2019>

## **Should your full-time employees expect to work weekends?**

No, this is pretty rare. APS staff are also entitled to 'flex time' - this means that if you work outside of an average 8.30-5pm day, you're able to claim that overtime as time off.

## **Working at AGD**

AGD has a range of supports and flexible working arrangements in place to ensure that all staff from a range of backgrounds and experiences can fully participate in the workplace. There are also employee 'networks' (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Network, Celebrating Ability Network, PRIDE in AGD Network, Women's Network, Indigenous Employee Network and Sustainability Network) which staff can voluntarily join that work to promote inclusion and advance a positive workplace culture. Employee wellbeing is also a priority for the department.

**Further information about these programs can be found here:**

<https://www.ag.gov.au/about-us/careers/entry-level-employment-programs>

# ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

## Testimonial

### Name

Georgia Van Der Westhuizen

### Title

Legal Officer, International Family Law Section

### What did you do before beginning your current role?

Before joining the Australian Public Service (APS) I worked throughout uni as a research analyst at a property/corporate solutions firm, with a brief stint at the Delegation of Palestine in Canberra. I started my APS career at the Department of Social Services, and then joined the Attorney-General's Department as a graduate. I've since moved around the department internally a few times, rotating through the Strategy & Governance Branch, Information Law Branch, and International Cooperation Unit (all without a law degree!).

### How did you find out about your current role and what was the application process?

I heard about my current role through an internal 'mobility' process that allowed me to move laterally within my work area. The application process was a one-page 'statement of claims' against the selection criteria and the capabilities expected of my work level.

### What does your day to day work look like?

I currently work in a fast-paced policy area providing advice on Australia's international family and child protection obligations in the private international law space. The job is a mix of research and policy development, drafting of briefs and submissions to the Attorney-General, and meetings with government and judicial stakeholders.

### What is your favourite part of your job?

I love brainstorming sessions with my team where we get to discuss problems, share ideas, and map out the different approaches we could take to difficult policy problems.

### What was the most unexpected skill you have needed?

Good people skills are incredibly important in this role. This includes the ability to build rapport with stakeholders who don't agree with you, manage staff, communicate ideas in an influential way to higher-ups, and most importantly the emotional intelligence to support your team when difficult subject matter comes through.

### What sets your workplace experience apart?

I think my experience was certainly non-linear in that I took a step back after working at the Department of Social Services to effectively take a demotion to be a graduate at AGD! I'm pretty open about why I did this - I felt like I was lacking the birds-eye-view of a department that being a graduate gives you, and a core understanding of how the public service works. But that's not to say being a graduate is the only way to get that perspective, it just happens to be the way that I addressed those knowledge gaps.

### Do you hire the majority of your legal staff as new graduates, as experienced hires working in the same field, or as lawyers crossing over from other areas of law?

All of the above! I would say the majority of my team are career public servants who have moved from other departments, or from within AGD. But I certainly have worked with many lawyers who have joined the public service later in their careers, and there is certainly movement between AGD and the Australian Government Solicitor (AGS).

### Do lawyers at DFAT specialise?

They certainly can, but I would say that the majority of lawyers that I have worked closely with would consider themselves generalists.

### What does your organisation/firm look for when hiring?

I would say personal qualities are probably more important than particular hard skills or experiences. This includes the ability to work with diverse groups of people, to work independently and problem solve when needed, manage urgent requests and tight deadlines and stay calm under pressure!

### What advice would you give to current students interested in working for your organisation/in a similar role?

Don't get too stuck on getting into the department in a particular way or in a particular team. There are plenty of opportunities outside of the graduate program, and movement around the department is very common.

**If you are interested in working for the AGD and would like the opportunity to chat with Georgia, please reach out to [careers.cfla@gmail.com](mailto:careers.cfla@gmail.com)**

# 7

Criminal and Family Law Careers Guide

# COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES

# VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL LEGAL SERVICE (VALS)

## **ABOUT**

The Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service ('VALS') is a community legal centre providing free legal assistance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the State of Victoria. The service strives to promote the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to empowerment, identity, and culture by maintaining a strong client-oriented focus.

## **PRACTICE AREAS**

VALS offers legal services in Family, Civil and Criminal law. A specialised youth justice program, 'Balit Ngulu', has been recently introduced within VALS to provide legal assistance to young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have been charged with summary or indictable offences. VALS also provides for their Wirraway Specialist Litigation practice, which advocates for the rights of people in prison or custody, improved policing as well as corrections accountability.

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

The best way to get involved at VALS is by volunteering. VALS regularly advertises volunteer opportunities in several areas within the organisation. Not only does volunteering at VALS allow law students/graduates to gain practical experience, but it also gives them the opportunity to progress into a paid position. Specifically, VALS often recruits internally by advertising open positions to current volunteers and/or staff.

Aside from volunteering, open positions are advertised on VALS' website. Said positions include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander designated positions as well as positions open to all applicants.

**For further information visit:**

<https://www.vals.org.au/>

# VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL LEGAL SERVICE (VALS)

## Lawyer Testimonial

**Name**

Yusif Shamoon

**Title**

Criminal Lawyer

**How did you find out about your current role and what was the application process?**

When I commenced my career in Criminal Law, I quickly noticed my desire to provide assistance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Consequently, I regularly searched the VALS website to see if any positions were available and relevant to me. The application process was straightforward in that I was contacted by VALS in the same week I submitted my application for the Criminal Lawyer position.

**What did you do before beginning your current role?**

Previously, I was working as a Victims of Crime Lawyer before making the shift to Criminal Law. I have always had a niche for assisting people in a vulnerable situation and making a real impact in people's lives.

**What does your day to day work look like?**

If I am not in Court advocating for clients, I am in the office discussing legal matters with my clients and Prosecution. There is an extensive administrative side to my role when not in Court. However, these built the foundation for a successful day in Court.

**What is your favourite part of your job?**

Making a genuine impact in people's lives and the interactions I make with my clients. Specifically, learning about community and culture whilst doing so and understanding my client's situations.

**What was the most unexpected skill you have needed?**

Learning how to communicate effectively with community and being culturally respectful. I am now able to have a yarn with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders about Country and what 'home' means to them.



**What sets your workplace experience apart?**

Being a firm that only represents Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, we all work towards one objective share the same desire to be able to provide our knowledge and experience to individuals that require it most.

**What advice would you give to current students interested in working for your organisation/in a similar role?**

It is an experience like no other. I don't see myself working for another firm and encourage anyone interested in making a real difference to apply at VALS!

# VICTORIA LEGAL AID (VLA)

## **ABOUT**

Victoria Legal Aid (VLA) provides legal advice and representation to the Victoria community. In particular, our clients are often people who are socially and economically disadvantaged, people with a disability or mental illness, children, the elderly, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and those who live in remote areas.

We prioritise more intensive legal services such as legal advice and representation for people who meet eligibility criteria, based on their financial situation, the nature and seriousness of their problem and their individual circumstances. We also conduct strategic litigation to change policies and processes and remedy legal problems for individuals and the broader community.

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

Victoria Legal Aid (VLA) has a variety of pathways and clerkship programs for students and graduates. An example is our New Lawyers Program which is offered to first-year post-admission lawyers and runs over two years. The program encompasses four six-month placements with the opportunity to practice in a Melbourne metropolitan office, as well as in our regional Victorian offices.

We also run Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Clerkship, and Graduate Programs which support First Nations students, and recent graduates yet to undertake their PLT.

Additionally we encourage our law students to consider applying for non-legal job vacancies such as our Legal Assistant roles whilst studying. These opportunities can provide insight into the legal sector which can complement your studies and potentially open to other career opportunities within the organisation once you are admitted and obtained your practising certificate.

### **Are these opportunities paid or on a volunteer basis?**

Both.

### **Do you offer a seasonal clerkship program?**

No.

### **Is there a pathway between these opportunities and graduate opportunities?**

Yes, we try to give preference to previous interns/clerks/volunteers when opportunities become available.

### **What entry level positions are available for graduates?**

There are opportunities to commence your career as a lawyer through our recruitment drives. Additionally we are often recruiting for non-legal roles, as such legal assistant positions, which can complement your studies.

### **Do you hire the majority of your legal staff as new graduates, as experienced hires working in the same field, or as lawyers crossing over from other areas of law?**

A mix.

### **Do lawyers within your firm/organisation specialise?**

Yes, we hire directly into a certain practice area.

### **What does your organisation/firm look for when hiring?**

We look to candidates who are able to demonstrate mix of both their legal and non-legal skills such as:

- Capacity to act as an advocate, deliver legal advice and casework and undertake negotiation and dispute resolution on behalf of legal aid clients.
- High level interpersonal and communication skills and demonstrated ability to liaise and communicate effectively with disadvantaged clients, staff and external stakeholders and organisations.
- Understanding of the complex needs of clients and underlying systemic issues contributing to their legal issues and the important role external organisations, community and welfare groups play in providing appropriate services.

Candidates who are able to demonstrate a connection to VLA's organisational vision and values, interest in social justice issues, and previous work or volunteering roles supporting community can also assist in your job application.

We are an equal opportunity employer and encourage people from culturally diverse backgrounds, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, to apply for roles within our organisation. We will make adjustments where possible to suit your unique circumstances.

Our clients come from all walks of life and so do we. We hire great people from a wide variety of backgrounds and foster a work culture that is inclusive as well as diverse.

**For further information visit:**

[www.legalaid.vic.gov.au](http://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au)

# VICTORIA LEGAL AID (VLA)

## Lawyer Testimonial

**Name**

Myra Bigger

**Practice Area**

Mental Health and Disability Law

**How did you find out about your current role and what was the application process?**

I transitioned from Victoria Legal Aid's ('VLA') New Lawyers Program ('NLP') into my current role. I found out about my current role while undertaking a placement as a part of the NLP.

The NLP is a program at VLA where you undertake placements in different legal practice areas at different VLA offices across the state. You rotate to a different role every 6 months for 2 years. At the end of the program, you transition into ongoing employment at VLA if you satisfy the work expectations during the NLP.

As I was in the NLP, I expressed my interest to continue working in the Mental Health and Disability Law team (MHDL). Discussions were held and my position in MHDL was subsequently made ongoing.

I went through an application and interview process to gain my position on the NLP. This involved submitting a resume, answering key selection criteria, and participating in a panel interview. This is the usual application procedure for gaining employment at VLA.

### **What did you do before beginning your current role?**

Whilst completing my studies, I volunteered my time at various internships at legal services which had a focus on social justice work. From my internship experience, I was offered a Legal Assistant role at VLA whilst I was completing my studies. I then progressed to employment as a criminal lawyer at VLA. From there, I was successful in gaining a position in the NLP at VLA.

### **What does your day to day work look like?**

I have three rostered duty lawyer days during the week. For two of those days, my role is to speak to inpatients in psychiatric facilities and prepare and appear in Mental Health Tribunal hearings. I also cover a day on phone advice duty. For phone advice duty, I monitor an email inbox and give legal advice over the phone to clients with a question specific to the practice areas covered by MHDL.

During the days of the week that I am not rostered on as a duty lawyer, I will be completing file work. I have files in Guardianship and Administration matters, Crimes Mental Impairment, NDIS appeals etc. I will often have court/tribunal hearings listed in VCAT, AAT, County Court and the Supreme Court. For hearings, depending on the matter, I will either appear myself or instruct counsel. I have a hybrid working agreement in place. This means I work from home part of the working week and attend the VLA office/psychiatric hospital/court on other days. This flexibility is very beneficial for me retaining a work/life balance.

### **What is your favourite part of your job?**

My work involves ensuring access to justice for people who can be considered the most economically and socially disadvantaged in Victoria. I enjoy working with clients to help them achieve a positive outcome in what are often complex legal situations. For me, there is no better professional reward than this.

### **What was the most unexpected skill you have needed?**

File management is a skill which is often overlooked. For me, having neat and accessible files makes the work a lot easier. This sounds like a straightforward skill, however, when you are busy working on multiple matters at once (which includes recording hundreds of documents), to tight deadlines, while worrying about other aspects of your role as a lawyer, it is helpful to have file management being second nature to you. It is a skill I have built over time and does take practice to do well. I would recommend any new lawyer to get into the habit of efficient file management early.

**What sets your workplace experience apart?**

What sets my workplace apart is the supportive environment. As a new lawyer, it is common to find the work required complicated and sometimes overwhelming. Having a positive team environment goes a long way to help you achieve success in the area you choose to practice in. A supportive team also helps you learn. It is a major learning curve when you start practicing law. I am very fortunate to start my legal career in a workplace where experienced lawyers are generous with their time and there are no 'stupid' questions. Being within a workplace environment like this, I found the first years of legal practice more manageable, enjoyable, and successful.

**What advice would you give to current students interested in working for your organisation/in a similar role?**

If you are interested in social justice work, I would strongly suggest gaining practical experience in this sector early in your studies. I personally completed multiple unpaid volunteering roles in the social justice sector prior to securing employment at VLA. Gaining this practical experience certainly helped my skillset as a lawyer which subsequently assisted me to obtain employment in this area of law. In my view, practical experience is of equal importance to academic achievement. The skills you gain from volunteering/internships is very different to what you learn in university. As a lawyer in the social justice sector, you require a skillset you cannot gain from textbooks alone.

# LAW AND ADVOCACY CENTRE FOR WOMEN

## **ABOUT**

Our service operates in the areas of criminal law, VOCAT, child protection, infringements and IVOs. We are set apart by our holistic approach as we also have case managers to assist clients with their non legal needs.

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

Volunteering, paid roles as paralegals and admin assistants and internships.

### **Are these opportunities paid or on a volunteer basis?**

Both.

### **Do you offer a seasonal clerkship program?**

No.

### **Is there a pathway between these opportunities and graduate opportunities?**

Yes, we try to give preference to previous interns/clerks/volunteers when opportunities become available.

### **What entry level positions are available for graduates?**

Paralegal roles and graduate lawyer roles.

### **Do you hire the majority of your legal staff as new graduates, as experienced hires working in the same field, or as lawyers crossing over from other areas of law?**

A mix.

### **Do lawyers within your firm/organisation specialise?**

We are a specialist criminal practise and also undertake family violence, child protection and VOCAT related matters.

### **What does your organisation/firm look for when hiring?**

A passion for social justice, previous experience in CLC sector.



**Could you provide some information on salary ranges at different stages of your career? We acknowledge that students and graduates have a range of financial responsibilities and endorse salary transparency where possible.**

Salary is comparable to other CLCs.

**Should your full-time employees expect to work weekends?**

No.

**For further information visit:**

<https://lacw.com.au/>

# LAW AND ADVOCACY CENTRE FOR WOMEN

## Lawyer Testimonial



Name

**Sarah Abell**

Title

**Lawyer**

### **How did you find out about your current role and what was the application process?**

I was a volunteer at LACW while I was studying the JD at Melbourne Uni. I then worked as one of the paralegals for 18 months and at the conclusion of my PLT I was offered the graduate solicitor role, so there was no real application process. Once I had completed 12 months as a graduate solicitor was promoted to solicitor.

### **What did you do before beginning your current role?**

I was previously a graduate solicitor at LACW for my first 12 months in practice. I spent 6 months doing predominately criminal defence work and then 6 months doing criminal work and civil work - child protection, VOCAT and IVOs.

### **What does your day to day work look like?**

I will usually have to attend a Magistrates' Court somewhere in Victoria. Our lawyers service all courts in the state - so I could be deployed as far as Geelong or as close as Melbourne, and meet or appear on behalf of multiple clients. The matters can be small - like an adjournment request - or more extensive like an application for bail or plea and could also involve discussions with prosecutors at court. I then jump on the train and return to the office to prepare for my other upcoming matters, which would ordinarily involve reading and analysing police briefs, calling clients and prosecutors and speaking with other people supporting my clients.

**What is your favourite part of your job?**

My favourite part of the job is working with the clients. They are most often extremely vulnerable people who are traversing a criminal justice system that can be confusing and stressful, and has the power to make extraordinary and sometimes unjust changes to their life. I enjoy being able to assist our clients to feel empowered and as though they have been able to communicate their story to the court through us.

**What was the most unexpected skill you have needed?**

The most unexpected skills I have needed are patience and relationship building. It is not simply a matter of telling a client what you think they should do with their case and then instructing you to do that - there is often a lot of hard work required to gain someone's trust and for them to properly and fully understand what their options are before they can then instruct you as to how they would like to proceed. Often this needs to happen in a very short time, such as in the foyer at court or with them calling from a public phone to the office at 6pm - which really requires these skills to kick in.

**What sets your workplace experience apart?**

We are a workplace of women only which is certainly a big difference to other organisations! More broadly, however, we are often required to think about issues other than our client's legal issues such as whether they are struggling with housing, family violence or issues with drugs and alcohol. We work with our in house social workers to try and help our clients to sort these issues out, which is very different from what lawyers are expected to do in most other firms.

**What advice would you give to current students interested in working for your organisation/in a similar role?**

If you are worried about your grades or about your previous experience, don't hesitate to still put your name forward! There is a lot more to being an advocate than knowing the law and being able to apply it to a set of facts. If you are empathetic, have a passion for social justice and you are good under pressure, you would fit right in.

# INNER MELBOURNE COMMUNITY LEGAL

## ABOUT

Formerly the North Melbourne Legal Service, IMCL provides free legal advice and assistance to the inner city community.

IMCL merged with Flemington and Kensington Community Legal Centre (FKCLC) in 2022.

IMCL has a small but dedicated team of staff who are generously supported by volunteer solicitors, barristers and law students.

## PRACTICE AREAS

- Criminal Law - Magistrate's Court
- Family Law
- Family Violence
- Police Complaints
- Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal
- Respectful Relationships Education

## OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteer opportunities available for law students.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Phone: 03 93281885

Communications Lead Email:  
connie.agius@imcl.org.au

Website: <https://imcl.org.au/>

# WOMEN'S LEGAL SERVICE VICTORIA

## ABOUT

A not-for-profit organisation providing free legal services addressing relationship breakdown or violence to women experiencing disadvantage.

WLSV works within a feminist, anti-paternalist framework focused on empowering their clients.

WLSV's work focuses on supporting their clients holistically.

WLSV has three core programs: client services, legal education, and policy.

## PRACTICE AREAS

- Family Law
- Family Violence
- Child Protection
- Victims of Crime Assistance

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Address: Level 10, 277 William Street  
Melbourne VIC 3000

Phone: 03 8622 0600

Email: [admin@womenslegal.org.au](mailto:admin@womenslegal.org.au)

Website:

<https://www.womenslegal.org.au/>

# 8

Criminal and Family Law Careers Guide

# ORGANISATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS

# EXTRA CREDIT

The below associations and organisations engage in research, host events, and help shape law reform in the areas of criminal and family law.

**Australian Academy of Forensic Sciences**

<https://forensicacademy.com.au/>

**Australian Law Reform Commission**

<https://www.alrc.gov.au/>

**Criminal Bar Association**

<https://crimbarvic.org.au/>

**Family Bar Association**

<https://www.vicbar.com.au/public/bar-associations/family>

**Family Law Section**

<https://www.familylawsection.org.au/>

**Judicial College of Victoria**

<https://www.judicialcollege.vic.edu.au/>

**Law Institute of Victoria**

<https://liv.asn.au/>

**Victorian Law Reform Commission**

<https://www.lawreform.vic.gov.au/>

# INTERNATIONAL

Organisation/Association	Description
<p><b>The Hague Academy of International Law - Winter Courses &amp; Summer Courses</b>  <a href="https://www.hagueacademy.nl/programmes/">https://www.hagueacademy.nl/programmes/</a></p>	<p>Since 1923, thousands of students and young professionals have been able to attend the Academy's famous annual Summer and Winter Courses on Public and Private International Law. In addition to these flagship courses, The Hague Academy also organizes a variety of other courses and tailor-made programmes for advanced study and research in the field of international law, at the Peace Palace in The Hague as well as abroad.</p>
<p><b>International Law Association - Australian Branch</b>  <a href="https://www.ila.org.au/about-us/ILAReporter">https://www.ila.org.au/about-us/ILAReporter</a>  <a href="https://ilareporter.org.au/">https://ilareporter.org.au/</a></p>	<p>The ILA is a body for the study, clarification and development of public and private international law and the furtherance of international understanding and respect for international law. The ILA also has consultative status with a number of the United Nations specialised agencies. The ILA is responsible for publishing the Australian International Law Journal and the ILA Reporter, which is the official blog and provides leading analysis, commentary and discussion on issues in public and private international law as well as job opportunities in the field.</p>
<p><b>International Law Students Association</b>  <a href="https://www.ilsa.org/what-we-do/">https://www.ilsa.org/what-we-do/</a></p>	<p>The international law students association is a non-profit association of students and lawyers who are dedicated to the promotion of international law, ILSA provides students with opportunities to study, research, and network in the international legal arena. The organization's activities include academic conferences, publications, the global coordination of student organizations, and the administration of the Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition.</p>
<p><b>Public International Law and Policy Group</b>  <a href="https://www.publicinternationallawandpolicygroup.org/">https://www.publicinternationallawandpolicygroup.org/</a></p>	<p>The Public International Law &amp; Policy Group is a global pro bono law firm providing free legal assistance to parties involved in peace negotiations, drafting post-conflict constitutions, and war crimes prosecution/transitional justice. PILPG represents a diverse array of pro bono clients including states, sub-state actors, opposition groups, self-determination movements, civil society, and marginalized actors, including women and youth.</p>

<p><b>Asian Academy of International Law</b></p> <p><a href="https://aail.org/membership/">https://aail.org/membership/</a></p>	<p>The Asian Academy of International Law is an independent and non-profit making body, set up in Hong Kong to further the studies, research and development of international law in Asia, to enhance and reinforce Asia's role and participation in the formulation of international law and international relations. AAIL aims to provide specialized education and training to practitioners, national judges, students and government officials in areas of international law.</p>
<p><b>Young Australians in International Affairs</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.youngausint.org.au/">https://www.youngausint.org.au/</a></p>	<p>Young Australians in International Affairs is a not-for-profit organisation committed to connecting, engaging and empowering the next generation of leaders in international affairs, and to building the high calibre leaders necessary to navigate Australia's future in the Indo-Pacific century. Launched in March 2014, today YAIA engages around 40,000 people each month via our online channels and provides a platform for young Australians to contribute fresh perspectives and insight into current international events and policy discussions.</p>
<p><b>Young Diplomats Society</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.theyoungdiplomats.com/">https://www.theyoungdiplomats.com/</a></p>	<p>Young Diplomats Society is a not-for-profit, volunteer-run organisation whose aim is to strengthen the community of young people (18 - 28 years old) passionate about global affairs. Getting involved with YDS will bring you opportunities to get your writing featured in one of the largest youth-led International Relations publications in Australia, attend events featuring academics and experts, access career resources, and overall earn a deeper understanding of global affairs.</p>
<p><b>Australian Institute of International Affairs</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/about-us/about-the-aiia/">https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/about-us/about-the-aiia/</a></p>	<p>The AIIA is Australia's longest-existing private research institute on politics and international relations. The AIIA holds more than 150 events across the country each year. Most of these are now accessible online, both live and as recordings. These events range from intimate discussions and workshops, to large lectures, conferences, and seminars which provides forums for debate.</p>





[WWW.CFLA.COM.AU](http://WWW.CFLA.COM.AU)