POSITION TITLE: Manager, Independent Mental Health Advocacy Service

REPORTS TO: Program Manager, Mental Health and Disability Advocacy

PROGRAM AREA: Civil Justice, Access & Equity

LOCATION: Melbourne

CLASSIFICATION: VLA5

POSITION TYPE: Maximum term (3 years)

POSITION SUMMARY

To manage the state-wide Independent Mental Health Advocacy Service (IMHAS) providing representational advocacy to people on compulsory treatment orders, assist people to understand and exercise their rights and to enable them to participate in decisions about their treatment, care and recovery.

IMHAS is a new non-legal advocacy service that will be staffed and led by professionals with backgrounds in social work, mental health service provision, mental health advocacy, community sector advocacy or other similar fields.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Lead and manage the mental health advocacy service and collaborate with the Program Manager Mental Health Disability Advocacy (MHDA) in the development, implementation and evaluation of the service.

2. Lead and manage a diverse team of non-legal advocates geographically located across Victoria by:
   a. Building the capability of the advocates to ensure the provision of high quality advocacy services.
   b. Supporting the senior advocates based in Melbourne, Dandenong, Bendigo and possibly Geelong to establish and deliver mental health advocacy service in their regions.
   c. Developing appropriate supervision and debriefing practices and processes to ensure the development, health and wellbeing of the advocates.

3. In collaboration with the Program Manager MHDA, contribute to strong stakeholder relationships by:
   a. Meaningfully engaging with consumers and consumer organisations to ensure their insights and expertise inform a consumer-focused approach to service delivery.
   b. Developing respectful and collaborative relationships with external stakeholders including mental health organisations, services and professional bodies to ensure high quality service delivery.
   c. Fostering supportive and productive relationships between advocates and other VLA staff, and with internal stakeholders to ensure successful implementation and ongoing delivery of the service.

4. Support the Program Manager MHDA to undertake systemic change and innovative development of the mental health program taking into account emerging issues, risks and trends impacting upon the provision of mental health
RESPONSIBILITIES

5. Participate in and contribute to broader organisational forums, projects and events and, as a member of the Civil Justice Leadership Group, contribute to the planning, service delivery and continuous improvement of the Civil Justice Program.

KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

1. Leadership experience in the provision of non-legal advocacy services in health, community service, social work or other similar sectors.
2. People management experience including a demonstrated ability to lead a high performing team, nurture the skills and talents of a team with diverse professional experience and, where necessary, provide supervision and debriefing to non-legal advocates.
3. Program management skills with demonstrated experience in service design, implementation and evaluation.
4. Demonstrated understanding of the principles and objectives of the Mental Health Act 2014 (Vic).
5. Demonstrated ability to manage and drive change through broad consultation and buy-in, and the ability to influence and sensitively negotiate with stakeholders including consumer groups.
6. High level of interpersonal skills with demonstrated ability to build rapport, actively listen and collaborate with staff and consumers.
7. Demonstrates resilience, calmness and maturity under pressure and the ability to effectively manage challenges, changes and set backs in undertaking work.

QUALIFICATIONS/ EXPERIENCE

- Significant experience in the social work, mental health service provision, mental health or other community sector advocacy. (mandatory)
- Tertiary qualification in a relevant field such as health, community development, community health, community mental health or social work. (highly desirable)
- Mental health consumer experience. (desirable)

OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

- To be eligible to apply for this position you must be an Australian or New Zealand citizen, permanent resident or hold a valid work permit or visa.
OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

- You may be required to consent to a police check. Please note that people with criminal records are not automatically prevented from applying for this position and each application will be considered on its merits.

- As required by the Legal Profession Act 2004 (Vic) you will be required to disclose to VLA any offences against Division 2 Part 1 of the Crimes Act 1958 or corresponding offences of the Commonwealth or in a foreign country. Relevant offences include theft and similar or associated dishonesty offences. If you are a lawyer you will need to disclose if you have had your practising certificate suspended, cancelled or not renewed, removed from the roll of legal practitioners or are the subject of a disqualification order.

- You will be required to undergo or hold a current Working with Children Check.

- From time to time you will be required to travel between various office locations to deliver quality services to our clients or for professional development.

- This position may require you to independently travel to outreach services, hospitals and the Loddon-Campaspe, Westemport and Barwon regions.

- This position will have 12 direct and indirect reports.

ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

About the position

This position will work closely with the Program Manager MDHA and the Director, Civil Justice, Access and Equity to develop, implement and promote the non-legal mental health advocacy service including contributing to service design and delivery. Once the service is established, this position will be responsible for its ongoing service delivery. There is also an opportunity for this position to undertake some advocacy work.

Crucial to the success of the service will be the establishment of important relationships and the ongoing communication with internal and external stakeholders. Alongside the Program Manager MDHA, this position will engage and collaborate with the Department of Health and Human Services and consumer groups to inform the development and ongoing delivery of the service. The position will also contribute to internally and externally communicating and promoting an understanding of the service.

In the first few months, the Manager will play a crucial role in recruiting and developing a team of advocates to provide services across the state. The Manager will provide ongoing people leadership including developing workforce capabilities and ensuring the health and wellbeing of the advocates. As a leader in the Victoria Legal Aid, this position will role model organisational values, motivate and inspire staff and foster a collaborative and supportive team environment.

This is a unique position requiring leadership, strategic influence, stakeholder engagement and an understanding of the mental health sector. VLA is seeking someone who is resilient, able to drive change and is highly motivated to ensure an effective and accessible service.
ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

About the mental health advocacy service

Victoria Legal Aid has been awarded funding from the Department of Health and Human Services to provide an independent mental health advocacy service. This service, which will begin operating in the second half of 2015, will give non-legal support to people on compulsory treatment orders and is part of broader reforms supporting the implementation of the Mental Health Act 2014 (Vic).

While this service will not be providing help about legal matters, it fits in well with many areas of our everyday work and focus: supporting people who are disadvantaged, giving early and timely help, ensuring people know about their rights, and supporting them if they need to access other services. This service will work closely with and complement our existing legal advocacy service for people on compulsory treatment orders.

The service will employ approximately four senior advocates and eight advocates who will help people with a mental illness to have a voice in decisions about their treatment and recovery, and to understand and take up their rights. The team will be based in Melbourne and across the state at our Dandenong, Bendigo and possibly Geelong offices. The advocates will come from a variety of backgrounds including, but not limited to, social work, mental health service provision, mental health advocacy or other community sector advocacy.

About the Civil Justice Program

This service will sit within the Civil Justice Program. The Civil Justice Program includes the Mental Health and Disability Advocacy (MDHA), Migration, Equality, Commonwealth Entitlements and Social Inclusion subprograms. While this service will be distinct and independent from other Victoria Legal Aid services, it will complement and enhance our existing mental health legal services. Our services in this area have recently expanded across the state to deliver improved outcomes for people who are receiving involuntary treatment under the Mental Health Act 2014 (Vic).

OUR VISION & VALUES

VLA is a leading and responsible force for community access to the legal system and for social justice.

VLA is committed to:

- Serving our clients and community professionally and ethically
- Acting with integrity, fairness and transparency at all times
- Respecting and valuing diversity
- Pursuing continuous improvement across the organisation

In embracing these values, VLA promotes teamwork, open communication and effective knowledge sharing. We are committed to lifting our profile in the public arena and building partnerships with other organisations in the justice system.

Our mandate is to protect legal rights, with an emphasis on the rights of the marginalised and economically disadvantaged people.

We provide high quality and cost effective legal representation, advice and information and adhere to strict public standards.
OUR VISION & VALUES

of financial accountability and responsibility.

For further information on our services, objectives and values please visit www.legalaid.vic.gov.au

VLA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and is committed to promoting a diverse and inclusive workforce. We encourage Indigenous Australians and people from culturally diverse backgrounds to apply for positions within our organisation. We will make reasonable adjustment where possible for people with disabilities.

Position Description authorised by Resourcing & Remuneration Manager.

Signed: 

Date: 12 February 2015