



2019-2020

CAREERS GUIDE



AUSTRALIAN LAW STUDENTS ASSOCIATION



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PRESIDENT'S WELCOME



As reflected in discussion in ALSA Council discussions, and in the Careers events of the respective Law Students' Societies and Associations, there is no one pathway for law graduates. This is amplified by three large factors.

First, the "disruption" of technology and diversity of jobs available to law graduates are changing the career pathways of young lawyers, who are moving away from traditional graduate positions.

Second, the globalisation of job opportunities means that not only are more graduates working for multinational companies and international firms, but they are also moving overseas for work in large numbers.

Third, as students become increasingly aware of concerns of the impacts of workplaces on lawyers' Mental Health and Wellbeing, as well as Bullying and Harassment and its prevalence in workplaces, students are asking more questions and demanding more from their employers - and rightfully so.

Inside this guide, you will find information on careers in each of the Public Law, Government, Public Service, Community and Non-government sectors. Whether you are considering a career in one of these areas or not - or maybe you have no idea what path you want to take, I hope you find the information, tips and articles contained in this Guide insightful.

I would like to thank Briony Whyte (ALSA Career's Officer), Alison Jones (ALSA Marketing Officer) and the Careers Subcommittee Members (Amy Bradley, Vuma Phiri and Juan Roldon) for their hard work in putting together this publication.

I hope that you enjoy reading the ALSA Public Service, Public Interest Careers Guide and I wish you luck on your futures careers - whatever path you may take!

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads 'Erin Ritchie'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a dark purple color.

ERIN RITCHIE

President

Australian Law Students' Association 2019

CAREER OFFICER'S WELCOME



Welcome to the 2019 Australian Law Students' Association *Public Interest Public Sector Careers Guide*. If you're reading this Guide, we assume you fall into one of a few categories. Either you're:

- a current student who is yet to determine what they want to do when they graduate;
- a penultimate or final year student who has been unsuccessful in the race for clerkships, and is concerned about career prospects;
- a graduate seeking employment; or
- a qualified land practising lawyer who has decided commercial practise is not for them.

It doesn't matter if you don't fall into any of the above categories or not. The aim of this Guide is to show you that a career in commercial legal practice is *not* the only career path you can take following law school, and to emphasise that there are innumerable career paths for which your legal training has prepared you.

Rather than focus specifically on the jobs you can do with a law degree, we have tried to feature your future employers – those organisations and businesses that employ lawyers and law graduates, both in legal practice roles and outside of them. This Guide has a heavy focus on public service careers, for many of which you merely need a *degree*, not necessarily a *law-specific degree*.

Where we have listed public service organisations, we have focussed on employment at the Commonwealth level. However, the majority of these organisations will be replicated at the state and territory level, and a number of them also function at the local government level. We have left the 'Googling' to you because it would be an insurmountable task for us to list every organisation that hires lawyers but, please, don't be put off by the fact that we have listed only the website for the Commonwealth organisation.

This year we have included a number of profiles in the Guide. Each person that is profiled is a law graduate, and none of them are working in 'traditional' commercial legal practice. Some of our profiled lawyers and law graduates undertook clerkships – some didn't. Some did 'traditional' graduate programs – others didn't. Some practice law as solicitors and barristers, while others put their analytical and drafting skills to use as mental health and wellbeing advocates and authors.

We hope that these people serve to inspire you and to show that, whilst universities seem to emphasise a career in traditional legal practice as the only option for you following university, and the clerkship process can make you feel like you have no other option than to apply in order to find gainful employment, your degree is a springboard for any number of careers.

The reality is, the skills you learn at law school are transferable, and if there is a job that you would like to do, chances are, you already have the skills needed to do it – all you need is to be able to convey that you your future employer.

To this end, check out the 'How to write a Government Application' article on page 27. While the intention of that article is to assist you in writing applications for roles in the public service, it contains great advice about ensuring your cover letters hit on key application criteria and the use of evidence based examples to highlight transferable skills, which is a useful ability to have when writing just about any job application.

We hope that this years' Careers Guide inspires you, educates you and helps you to find fulfilment in your career, whether that be in the public service, in a public interest role or in some totally unrelated field where you can put your outstanding reading, analytical, drafting and editing skills to good use.

Good luck!

BRIONY WHYTE
2019 Careers Officer

AOIFE CLIFFORD

Author



About the author

Aoife Clifford was born in London of Irish parents, studied Arts/Law at the Australian National University, and now lives in Melbourne. Aoife is the author of the literary crime novels *All These Perfect Strangers* and *Second Sight*, also published in the UK and US. *All These Perfect Strangers* was long-listed for both the ABIA General Fiction Book of the Year and the Voss Literary Prize. *Second Sight* is currently short-listed for Davitt Award (Adult Fiction). Her short stories have been published in Australia, UK and US and she has won the two premier short story prizes for crime fiction in Australia as well as being runners up for both – the Scarlet Stiletto and Ned Kelly Award among other prizes.

What to do with your law degree when you don't want to be a lawyer

When I was studying law, I was always intrigued by the case summaries at the top of cases. What was a snail doing in a ginger beer bottle? How could anyone believe that something called a carbolic smoke ball was going to be good for your health? Did the building in *Waltons Stores v Maher* ever get built? In truth, I was far more interested in those three bolded sentences at the top of the page than I was in the twenty pages that followed full of ratio and obiter.

Occasionally those snippets of words on a page we read in our textbook or heard about in our lectures actually involved people who I had met. It reinforced that what we were dealing with was people's lives, and often the worst part of it. I was shocked to study the tragic case of H in class, a boy who had lived a block from my house, who as a young child had acquired HIV and then AIDs, a death sentence at the time, through a blood transfusion. A fellow student in a Politics tutorial turned out to be related to the family whose dispute had given rise to the legal authority we were then studying in Contracts.

Perhaps it was because of this concern for the people behind the cases that the area of law I became most interested in during my studies was industrial relations law. I would argue that industrial relations is a quite practical area of law, often being more focused on outcomes. I found it frustrating in other areas where legal cases would follow precedents that made sense legally but would lead to outcomes that seemed unjust. To give but one example, when I started at law school 'terra nullius' was still a legal truth and there was zero expectation that would ever change. Thankfully, by fifth year, an 'activist' High Court finally fixed that with the landmark *Mabo v Queensland (No 2)*.

Industrial relations may not legally glamorous. It wasn't about wigs, robes, academic point scoring and theory but it was an arena where politics, law, class and gender duked it out. This was about the everyday things that affected almost everyone in Australian society – wages, working conditions, awards, safety net, equal pay, living wage, unfair dismissal. It was the real world. I wrote my honours thesis on gender and enterprise bargaining, snappily titled *Enterprising Women at Bargain Prices*, and when I finished my law degree, I headed to a graduate position at the Department of Industrial Relations. After a short stay there, I moved to Melbourne and joined the National Union of Workers.

Every day at the union was different. The work was tough and combative. At times when I was negotiating enterprise agreements, the most time-consuming part of my job, I was the only woman in the room and often the youngest by a good 15-20 years. I had the privilege of meeting a wide cross-section of people, listen to them talk about their lives, and work with them to make those lives better. It was there that I came to better understand the power of the collective, that together we are stronger and can change the world for the better.

After eight years in the union movement, it was time to start a family. While I was at home with small children, I realised that I wanted to do something for that part of my brain that seemed to be disappearing – the analytical side that used complicated words and full sentences – I decided to start writing crime fiction. I began with short stories. By the time my youngest started to sleep through the night, I challenged myself to tackle a full-length novel. I wanted to wrestle with some of the big concepts that the criminal law grapples with – how we measure guilt, the difference between not guilty and innocence and how the ideals of our justice system are often compromised by human frailty – but I went further than that and tried to capture a little of what it was like to actually study law. My protagonist in *All These Perfect Strangers* is Pen Sheppard, a first year law student, leaving her country town for law school as I did. While the campus she lives on has a passing similarity to ANU, where I studied, her adventures, murderous and otherwise, are entirely her own.

Often when readers think of crime fiction involving lawyers it is all about the drama of the courtroom. What lawyers know is that a case is shaped as much by decisions made outside the courtroom as in it. In my second novel, *Second Sight*, my protagonist, Eliza Carmody, is a solicitor working on the biggest case of her life, defending a class action for her client, Colcart Power, against victims of a bushfire. In the novel I explore some of the tactics used pre-trial such as the use of 'dirty' and 'clean' expert witnesses.

It is hard to claim that writing is a career in the way that being a lawyer is. The old adage that 'crime doesn't pay but the hours are good' could be adapted to writing except for the hours part. It is estimated that the average income earned from writing in Australia is about \$14,000 annually. The majority of writers earn their living wage from something else and for quite a few of them that is the law. Recently, I was on a panel of four writers where three of us had law degrees and the last had started a law degree but swapped it for criminology. Solicitors, QCs, prosecutors, defence lawyers, in-house counsel and even one ex-High Court judge have made the time to the write. Part of the drive, I think, is to escape the reality of legal life for a while but also because I suspect that like me, they might have been students who wondered what lay beyond those three sentences at the top of the page.

OFFICE OF PARLIAMENTARY COUNSEL

If you're interested in policy, legal interpretation and legal writing, you might consider a career in legislative drafting. Drafting is an intellectually stimulating career requiring you to understand a complex policy or idea and translate it into plain English, whilst maintaining the legal effect intended by parliament.

The Office of Parliamentary Counsel (**OPC**) is the office of the Federal Government that is responsible for drafting proposed legislation, subordinate legislation and amendments to legislation, drafting and publishing the Government Gazette, and publishing laws. To law students, they are probably best known for their role in maintaining the Federal Government's legislative database, the Federal Register of Legislation. Each state and territory government has a similar office, in charge of drafting and maintaining the States' legislation and databases.

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

Careers Information

The OPC does not offer clerkships or a graduate program – it hires candidates once they have qualified and been admitted as lawyers. However, this doesn't mean you can't gain relevant experience prior to becoming admitted. If you're interested in 'dipping your toe in' when it comes to legislative drafting, consider applying for a job at a state government level as a 'Legal Officer'. Many smaller departments and offices draft their own legislation which is then sent to PCO for review and editing. If you're interested in legislative drafting, these roles will likely require you to do other tasks normally required of a government lawyer, but often involve drafting of legislation related to that department's key focus areas.

[General Recruitment](#)

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT SOLICITOR

The Australian Government Solicitor's Office is a branch within the Australian Government Attorney General's Department that provides legal services to the Australian Government's and all Commonwealth Government Agencies. The Australian Government Solicitor is Michael Kingston, and his team at the AGS is divided into three structured groups: the Office of General Counsel (OGC), AGS Dispute Resolution and AGS Commercial.

The AGS practices in five key areas of law:

1. workplace, industrial relations and compensation;
2. public law;
3. corporate and commercial law;
4. property and environmental law; and
5. litigation and dispute resolution.

It also provides advice to its (government) clients in 'Tied Work' (work associated with the Constitution, national security and public international law), taxation and competition and consumer law.

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

Careers Information

The AGS employs more than 325 lawyers as well as numerous legal support staff across each Australian capital city, and their staff work with government officials from all areas of the public service.

The AGS does not offer an internship program but it does employ graduates, which it sources through the Attorney General's Department graduate recruiting process. You can read more about the Attorney General's Department's graduate employment opportunities on page 14. You should note that the majority of the AGS positions are based in Canberra with some few positions in the Sydney and Melbourne offices. This will mean that successful applicants may need to relocate, but financial assistance may be offered to if this is the case

[General Recruitment](#)

[Graduate Recruitment](#)

OFFICE OF THE COMMONWEALTH OMBUDSMAN

The Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman is an independent and neutral complaint-handling and investigation service open to all people engaged in dealings with the Australian Government. The Ombudsman considers issues in respect of the services provided by Federal Government and through a neutral, guided process of alternative dispute resolution, resolves those problems and influences change in the way that the agencies in question, and similar agencies (both nationally and internationally) handle complaints and maintain principles of good governance.

The Ombudsman's office is in charge of managing complaints, performing investigations, conducting audits and inspections and undertaking specialist roles for various agencies in respect of VET student loans, the Defence Force, Immigration, Law enforcement, overseas students and Private Health Insurance.

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

Careers Information

The Ombudsman does not offer internships or graduate positions, but its role as a negotiator, mediator and intermediary means that dispute resolution roles with the Ombudsman are well suited to law graduates. The Ombudsman maintains a temporary employment register for short term available roles in any of their capital city offices.

[General Recruitment](#)

THE AUSTRALIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

The Australian Human Rights Commission is a body independent from the Government that is tasked with protecting and promoting human rights both in Australia and internationally. Specifically, the Commission manages discrimination complaints, hosts public enquiries, creates educational resources, provides legal advice, makes submissions to parliament and government agencies and instigates and undertakes research into human rights and discrimination issues

Some areas in which the Commission focuses on include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice, Age Discrimination, Children's Rights, Race Discrimination and Asylum Seekers and Refugee Rights. Each of these areas are overseen by a different Commissioner.

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

Careers Information

The Commission runs an (unpaid) internship program with two intakes annually, which are advertised on the below web page in March/April and September/October. The Commission does not have a formal Graduate Program; however, graduates are encouraged to apply for vacant positions. Ideally, a candidate would be able to demonstrate a practical understanding of human rights promotion and protection.

The Human Rights Commission advertises jobs on its website, and also on the Australian Public Service jobs website. More information on the APS Jobs website can be found at page 12.

[Internships](#)

[General Recruitment](#)

FAMILY LAW PRACTICE

If a person engages a lawyer, it can be almost guaranteed that they are going through a rough time - if things are going well, people don't need advocates to speak for them. There are a few areas of practice though, in which you can be sure that the person seeking your counsel is going through the worst period of their lives. This is true in many areas of practice, such as criminal defence, plaintiff law and personal injury, and family law.

Of course, there may be bright sides to your practice as a family lawyer, like helping people through the adoption process, but for the most part, people seeking the assistance of a family lawyer will be in a legal dispute with the people that they loved (or perhaps still love) more than anyone else, and that makes their disputes much, much more difficult for them.

If you are a compassionate, people driven person who got into law to really help others, then family law may be the career path for you. Under the guidance and control of the Family Law Act 1975 (Cth) family lawyers work in areas like family law, property law, contract law (think 'pre-nups'), trusts and estates, torts and taxation. Additional legislation applies to family law practice, but it varies from state to state and, as you can tell from the spread of practice areas listed above, you may come across a number of different laws on any one day.

Family law might also be for you if you're interested in advocacy and dispute resolution. With a strong focus on mediation and alternative dispute resolution, family law involves plenty of opportunities for practitioners to get involved in litigation and dispute resolution.

Unlike a career in commercial law there is rarely a clear pathway laid out for those interested in practising as a family lawyer. Some family law firms do offer clerkships but with many family law practices operating at a boutique level, it can be difficult to find those that do. If you're struggling to find a clerkship in a family law firm, consider contacting the firm directly and expressing your interest in some work experience or a paralegal position. There are also CLCs that operate in the family law sphere, and many women's legal clinics offer family law services if you are interested in volunteering.

For more on family law practice, check out the article on the next page by Jeff Hewitt of MKI Legal, a Perth based firm with a focus on Family Law.

I have been a family lawyer for 16 years.

Out of all the lawyers I've dealt with over the years, I can only think of one whose ambition from day one was to specialise in family law. Every other family lawyer I know, including myself, sort of fell into it.

In a way, this makes sense. After all, what sort of kid says, "When I grow up, I want to become...a divorce lawyer!" It simply doesn't have the same cachet as astronaut or fireman.

I completed my law degree at the University of Western Australia in 2001. I then took on an articled clerkship at a small general practice law firm in Fremantle.

It was an invaluable learning experience. Working in a small law firm requires an "all hands on deck" approach, so I very quickly found myself meeting with clients, drafting correspondence and legal documents, and even attending court for small debt recovery matters. Working in a general practice law firm also allowed me to try different areas of the law and see what interested me. I tried civil and commercial litigation, debt recovery, personal injuries, workers compensation, criminal injuries compensation, road traffic offences, and wills and probate.

For one reason or another, none of these areas particularly grabbed me. Medical reports in personal injuries cases made me feel squeamish, and I lost count of how many Wills I drafted. And whilst this was happening, I saw humming away in the background the family law section, and it fascinated me. I've always had an interest in psychology and human behaviour, and family law seemed to be a gold mine in this regard. Family law cases also seemed to have the best gossip and the best stories.

So I pivoted in the direction of family law, and from my restricted practice year onwards, I made the fateful decision to specialise in family law.

Over the past 16 years, I have worked in a number of small and medium-sized law firms. I have worked in both general practice law firms and specialist family law firms. At one stage, I also went part-time for about five years. This came about after I found myself working too hard and burning myself out. It then became a lifestyle choice, especially after my first child was born. Working part-time allowed me to be present for the first couple of years of my son's life, which was invaluable.

Family law can be challenging because it requires practitioners to deal with diverse and complex legal issues as well as very emotional situations.

A family lawyer will find herself dealing with diverse issues such as financial settlement, superannuation splitting, valuation of a business, parenting disputes, divorce, spousal maintenance, child support, restraining orders, relocation, family violence, child abuse, child protection, mental health issues, and parental alienation.

Divorce is well established as one of the most stressful life events, up there with the death of a loved one or going to jail. Family lawyers therefore tend to deal with, on a daily basis, people who are going through one of the most stressful and harrowing experiences of their lives. It requires empathy, mental toughness, and also some professional distance so you can actually focus on doing your job. You don't do your client any favours if you end up being as emotional and upset as them.

My day-to-day work involves meeting with clients, attending court hearings, attending mediation conferences, drafting letters and emails, drafting court documents, and also of course reading a lot of documents, whether it's correspondence, disclosure documents, court orders, court documents, supervision reports, valuation reports, or single expert witness reports.

Family law can be challenging but also very fulfilling, as it allows you to help people who are going through a difficult time in their lives, and hopefully steer them towards a sensible resolution. Family law is essentially problem-solving, and it can be extremely satisfying when you settle a case against all odds, or solve a seemingly intractable problem. As one barrister (and now Family Court judge) put it to me, the biggest challenge in family law is steering people towards a sensible, commercial resolution in very emotional circumstances.

My advice to students considering a career in family law is to know what you're in for. Ask yourself if dealing with teary clients all the time is really for you. Do you have the requisite degree of emotional intelligence and patience required to do the job? Obviously, get work experience in a family law firm if you can. See what it's like up close. And whilst you do get to deal with a diverse range of issues, most family law disputes are essentially about kids or money or both - so ask yourself if that's what you want to be dealing with all the time.

Most importantly, whatever you decide to do, make sure that you look after yourself and actively work towards that sometimes elusive work/life balance. It is fundamental to both your well-being and success as a legal practitioner.

**JEFF
HEWITT**
Family Lawyer,
MK1 Legal



*Jeff Hewitt is a Family Lawyer
at MK1 Legal*

CRIMINAL LAW PRACTICE

Criminal lawyers normally fill one of two key roles: prosecution and defence. Whereas a prosecutor may become involved in a criminal matter at any point following an accused person being charged, the role of a defence lawyer requires involvement much earlier in the piece. A client may be arrested or detained at any time of the day or night, a defence lawyer might have to work odd hours, and your firm could be very busy one day and very quiet the next.

As a criminal defence lawyer, among many other tasks, your role might entail anything from maintaining contact with the police and prosecution, assisting in interviews, advising on strategy, drafting pleadings and negotiating on your client's behalf. Although a client is innocent until proven guilty you will, above all else, be their advocate and their mouthpiece, providing them with legitimacy and dignity in the lead up to, and during their trial.

Like family law, criminal practice tends to be in boutique firms that specialise in crime. This means that the pathway to a career in criminal law is not always clear-cut, and many criminal lawyers will spend time in both prosecution and defence roles during their careers. If you are interested in a career in criminal law, consider approaching a local firm to undertake work experience, or enquire with a criminal barrister as to whether you can shadow them and perhaps gain some experience in that fashion.

Criminal Law Jobs are advertised in the traditional manner, across law firm web pages, seek, LinkedIn and on other jobseeker forums. Additionally, you should keep your eye on your state Law Society's jobs board. There are also CLCs that operate in the criminal law sphere, and if you are interested in volunteering for experience, you could consider approaching a barrister and asking to 'shadow' them, which involves helping with trial preparation and attending court with them.

Going to the Bar

What's a typical day for a barrister? Very few days are the same.

Often, we finish the day having learned something new. On good days, we head home thinking we may have made a difference. At the end of the best days, we know we've helped someone to go to bed at home tonight, not prison.

Still, the bar is not for everyone. Some of my solicitor friends say they prefer making the bullets than firing the bullets. I think the hardest thing about the bar is the ups and downs of this style of practice. Many junior barristers are not quite sure what they will be doing in 4 weeks' time. It could be a hectic week. Or maybe that trial will settle, and you will be sitting by the phone waiting for a call (or jumping on a plane for a week off in Paris).

Those ups and downs are not for everyone. If you can handle that, I believe that practise at the bar is the best way to practice law. The reason is: independence. Independence first in the sense of individual autonomy (which is great). More importantly - in gaining a more objective perspective on the administration of justice. This is hard to describe in the confines of this article. As I explain below, ask me about that over coffee some time...

Let's assume that you would like to go to the bar. What's the best way to get there? There was a time when you really needed to be an established and senior solicitor. Essentially, you had to be a partner first. In WA at least, we are seeing more junior practitioners coming to the bar. Where barristers could once demand to be briefed in a particular manner, increasingly solicitors and inhouse counsel want a bit more flexibility. Sometimes, that means the millennial junior who knows their way around research, pleadings (and Adobe Professional) can have a better start than the more senior practitioner who has been spending more of their time on BD and HR than legal problems.

Having said that, don't come too soon. A general rule of thumb is: go get 5 years of experience before hanging up your shingle. At the bar, you need judgment. You need to be able to make a call. There will always be senior barrister you can discuss things with. But you do need to back yourself. That comes with some experience.

What can you focus on now? I'd suggest that the best start is an associateship in a Court or Tribunal. It can provide a year for you to observe some of the best counsel in the jurisdiction. Other than that, I'd recommend gaining diverse experience. In some states, it's necessary for junior barristers to be known for a specialty. In those jurisdictions, it's sensible to stay relatively settled in a practice area. In smaller markets, including Perth, it is still possible to be a generalist. Here, it helps to have a wide variety of skills. It means that you can accept briefs in a number of areas.

It's also a good thing to meet some barristers. The single largest source of work for junior barristers is referrals from colleagues who are not available to do a particular matter (and who put your name forward as a possible replacement).

Some chambers, including Francis Burt Chambers, have a formal pupillage program. It's possible to apply to join as a pupil. This means a period of discounted rent, and a "cell" of four more senior barristers (generally including one or two Silks) who can assist and guide a junior barrister in their first year at the bar. Even with no formal program, you can reach out for a chat with a barrister. We love coffee. If we're not having a busy week, we will probably say yes to an invitation. If we don't say yes (or if we don't reply), do send another invite. But perhaps wait a few weeks first.

Finally, I also commend getting some experience in crime. Unlike commercial law, so many criminal matters do proceed to trial. It's also the best jurisdiction to gain a real understanding of the rules of evidence. I think there is a view that criminal law is easy. The most difficult legal problems I've tackled have not been in criminal law. But without exception, the most difficult matters I've had have been in criminal law.

In the same way that not everyone can be a barrister, not everyone can do crime. It takes resilience, ethical fortitude and emotional intelligence beyond any challenges I've seen in commercial disputes. But if you can do it, and if you're present when an innocent person regains their liberty - I can't imagine anything better.

NICHOLAS
VAN HATTEM
Barrister



Nicholas van Hattem is a barrister at Francis Burt Chambers and is 2020 President of the the Law Society of Western Australia

Everyone has had some experience with a barrister, whether it's a day spent at court during a clerkship or a day spent on the couch binging on quality Australian films and admiring Dennis Denuto's skilled interpretation of the Constitution, but for many of us, the idea of actually going to the bar ourselves is a distant dream.

You may be interested to hear that these days, you don't need to have been practising law at the partnership level before you can make the move to the bar.

The process is different in every state, so it is difficult for us to clearly outline the steps you need to take to pursue this career path, but if there is one person who can tell you how to go about it, it's someone who has done it before.

We asked Nicholas van Hattem, a barrister at Francis Burt Chambers in Perth, to take us over the ins and outs of a barrister's practice, and to give you some tips on how to begin to move towards a career at the bar.

AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC SERVICE

While there are a number of government departments that do take law graduates in a legal practice capacity, most government departments value the skills which law graduates (and especially those with combined degrees) can bring to the department outside of the legal role. Areas like governance, policy making, drafting and implementing legislation and enforcement and regulation all benefit from the analytical, policy and logic skills that law students and lawyers develop throughout their training and career.

Careers in the Australian Public Service (**APS**) positions are highly sought after given their extensive training, favourable work conditions, defined career path, supportive environment for personal development, and geographic and employment-based mobility. As well as offering roles in the legal teams for a number of government departments and offices, the APS provides numerous opportunities for law graduates to put their skills into use in governance, policy, compliance, regulation and enforcement.

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

Careers Information

The APS jobs website provides a detailed and comprehensive jobs portal linking applicants to all sorts of positions in the APS, the Department of Parliamentary Services and various other government agencies. The website provides a handy directory listing of all public service graduate, entry-level and work experience opportunities, is updated every day and allows you to set defined search criteria and receive email updates when new and relevant listings become available.

There are PS roles available at every level of government, so don't just check out the federal positions: look into state and local government jobs too. The APS Jobs website maintains a list of links to the equivalent public service employment directories in each Australian State or Territory, so you can start there if you're not sure where to look.

If you're looking for more information, the Australian Public Service Commission (**APSC**) produce a free and highly informative guide containing a useful information about applying, interviewing for PS jobs, which are known to be a bit of a minefield to those who are used to writing applications for private practice, and the website provides further information and resources regarding the APS' hiring, recruitment, diversity, merit and equality protection mechanisms.

For more information on how best to write an application for a government or public service role, see the article on page 27.

[Graduate Recruitment](#)

[State and Territory directory](#)

[Cracking the Code: How to Apply for Jobs in the Australian Public Service](#)



Megan Jones is a solicitor at the Department of Transport, WA

In-house Government Lawyers: Practical, approachable and in possession of the elusive work-life balance

When I completed my Bachelor of Laws, I didn't know my current role even existed. It was not an option that I contemplated because I simply didn't realise it was there. The world of an in-house government lawyer is sometimes shrouded in mystery – people ask me but what do you actually do?

In-house government law, much like any in-house role, requires you to be a trusted advisor and legal translator. The key aspect of the role is providing advice to the Department of Transport (DoT) about the legislation we administer, manage and enforce. DoT administers over 30 Acts, spanning topics as obvious as drivers licensing to those more surprising such as aviation and maritime.

Working in a large government organisation, a key component of the role is assisting staff within the Department to understand and correctly exercise our obligations, functions and powers under the legislation. However, the role of an in-house government lawyer is extremely diverse. As well as providing specialist advice to staff, we review commercial contracts, consult on legislative amendments, sit on project working groups and appear in Courts and Tribunals for criminal, civil and administrative law matters.

There are three skills I believe every in-house government lawyer needs to possess to succeed in this role - be approachable, practical and convincing.

As a lawyer for an organisation with over 1400 employees* of diverse levels and with varied understanding of legal concepts, it is vital to ensure that colleagues feel they can approach you with their legal queries, and that you provide advice that is understandable, useful and practical. This can be a challenge when you are trying to explain often complex legislation and legal concepts in a way that is easily understood, but not easily misinterpreted. I suppose you could say, those Plain English Writing tutorials in first year law really do come in handy!

Although there are no river views or free lunches, the government in-house lawyer does possess one of the biggest perks – the elusive work-life balance. There may be the occasional day where I'm required to come in early, stay late and take work home, but those days are few and far between. When this does occur, I am actually required to record my additional hours and take them off later as 'flexi-time.' For someone that values their personal life, but still wants to work in high-energy, interesting and at times challenging legal field, an in-house government role could not be a better choice.

*Per Public Sector Commission *State of the Sector Statistical Bulletin 2018*

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

The Attorney General's Department is the government body in charge of improving and enhancing the Australian legal framework. The Attorney General's Department delivers programs and policies to maintain and improve Australia's law and justice framework, and to facilitate jobs growth through policies that promote fair, productive, flexible and safe workplaces. Through the Australian Government Solicitor, the Attorney General's Department also provides legal services to the Commonwealth, including legal advice and representation.

The Attorney General's Department provides for numerous career paths in fields like civil justice, family law and legal assistance, criminal justice, law enforcement, national and protective security international law, native title and corporate services. In particular, the AG Department is heavily involved in the planning and facilitation of the Australian Government's Royal Commission process, which provides legally trained individuals the opportunity to work on some of the biggest policy, regulation, compliance and enforcement issues facing Australian society today.

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

Careers Information

The Attorney General's Department does not currently host an internship program, but it does offer a graduate program. The Attorney-General has a Graduate Program which offers the opportunity to work on a variety of interesting policy issues and legal matters of great significance to the Australian legal landscape. Attorney General's Department graduates are given the opportunity to interact with real clients and other government jurisdictions to help achieve the Australian Government's policy and legal objectives.

The 12-month program involves three work placements across the department and, in addition to law students, welcomes graduates from many other disciplines including business, economics and finance. With the successful completion of this program, graduates have the opportunity to gain a permanent placement within the department. As is the case with most Australian Government graduate programs, the hiring process begins in early 2020 for a role beginning in 2021, and you must be an Australian Citizen to apply. Graduates are funnelled into one of two streams: policy or practice (the latter being in the Australian Government Solicitor's Office), and within each stream, graduates undergo up to four rotations. While the majority of positions are based in Canberra, there are a small number of positions available in the Legal Practice stream in both Sydney and Melbourne.

The Attorney General's Department also participates in a number of other employment programs including the ASPC Pathways program which provides traineeships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and the Stepping Into Program for students with disabilities. The department maintains both an online job board and a temporary employment register for interested applicants.

[Graduate Recruitment](#)

[General Recruitment](#)

AUSTRALIAN HEALTH PRACTITIONER REGULATION AGENCY

The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (**AHPRA**) is the national body responsible for the regulation and enforcement of the national law regulating health practitioners across Australia.

AHPRA brings together each of the 'discipline-specific' health boards which regulate their specific practitioners (including dentists, doctors, nurses and midwives, optometrists, pharmacists, psychologists and even practitioners of Chinese medicine and acupuncturists), and assists in developing, and enforcing the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. In doing so, AHPRA works closely with a number of different advisory panels, develops appropriate registration standards, codes and guidelines, assists the work of each of the 18 discipline specific boards, and maintains the national registration and renewal of registration of practitioners.

AHPRA also receives complaints from the public, conducts investigations into those complaints and engages in enforcement action and prosecutions against practitioners.

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

Careers Information

AHPRA has offices in each Australian state and territory and maintains a national office in Melbourne.

AHPRA don't only hire lawyers, and their roles are often policy based or regulatory, as opposed to legal practice focused. If you're looking for an alternative to legal practice, consider a role in enforcement or a job as a Notifications Officer.

AHPRA maintains a list of current vacancies, and provides recruitment and selection information on its careers page.

[General Recruitment](#)

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, (DFAT), is the branch of government dedicated to promoting and protecting Australia's interests in the international sphere, and contributing to economic growth and stability, especially in the Australia Pacific region.

DFAT is responsible for staffing and maintaining Australia's embassies globally, as well as developing and implementing foreign policies, negotiating and effecting treaties and providing international aid. DFAT describes the majority of its employment opportunities as 'generalist' roles, but it specifically encourages people with legal experience to apply.

DFAT employees fill a broad range of roles for the department, from developing and implementing foreign, international development or trade policy; to advising the Federal Government about strategic, political, development, economic and trade issues, treaties and other international legal matters; to delivering passports and consular services to Australians.

<https://dfat.gov.au>

Career Opportunities

DFAT do not offer clerkship or internship opportunities; however, they do offer a graduate program. The grad program, which is Canberra based, involves 4 rotations across 2 years in a number of practice areas. Applications for the program open early, so if you think you'd like to work for DFAT in 2021, you need to be prepared to start writing your application in February 2020.

[General Recruitment](#)

[Graduate Recruitment](#)

DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS

The Department of Home Affairs is responsible for Australia's immigration and customs border policy as well as national security and law enforcement policy, crisis management and disaster recovery, counter terrorism and cyber security policy and coordination, countering foreign interference, critical infrastructure protection, multicultural affairs and transport Security

The department protects Australia's borders and manages the movement of people and goods. They also manage Australia's migration, citizenship, trade and customs, border force and immigration detention centres. The Department has offices located in every Australian state and territory and around 50 international locations.

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

Careers Information

The Department of Home Affairs offers a graduate program suitable for graduates from all backgrounds and which is designed to provide experience across a number of areas within the department. The Department seeks out candidates who are problem solvers, are able to think critically, have good judgement and decision-making skills and possess excellent written and verbal communication skills.

In this sense, the role is well suited to law graduates, and graduate positions are stated to be especially suitable for students with experience in criminal law, criminology, forensic science, international security, public administration and public policy.

While there are a limited number of positions available across state and territory offices, the majority of graduate positions are located in Canberra, so you should be willing to relocate to Canberra if you're thinking about applying. The graduate program runs for 10 months and candidates will become ongoing full-time employees upon completion of the program. All employees of the Department of Home Affairs are required to obtain and hold a security clearance.

[Graduate Recruitment](#)

AUSTRALIAN CRIMINAL INTELLIGENCE COMMISSION

The Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) is Australia's national criminal intelligence agency. The ACIC estimates that crime costs the Australian public \$36 billion annually and it works with a number of state and territory agencies and departments to collect and share information in order to improve the national response to crime in Australia.

The ACIC operates within the portfolio of the Department of Home Affairs and it is the conduit through which all state, territory and Commonwealth law enforcement agencies are able to share criminal and intelligence information. It provides national criminal information and intelligence services to more than 70,000 police officers and others on a daily basis.

Although it is a Commonwealth organisation, the ACIC operates within each Australian State and Territory under supporting legislation, allowing it to undertake its day to day operations which include, among others, national criminal history checks and the provision of national policing information, which can be garnered using the ACIC's coercive powers (similar to those bestowed upon a Royal Commission).

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

Career Opportunities

The ACIC offers a graduate program, for which it recruits candidates through the Department of Home Affairs' graduate hiring process, and through the Australian Public Service Commission's Indigenous Graduate Pathway program.

See the previous page for more information on the Home Affairs recruitment process, page 13 for more on the APS, and if you have any questions about the ACIC program, contact the Entry Level Programs Team on (02) 6268 7691, or send them an email at entrylevelprograms@acic.gov.au.

[General Recruitment](#)

COMMONWEALTH DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS

The Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions (**CDPP**) is an independent prosecution service that prosecutes alleged offences under Commonwealth law, such as fraud and complex commercial crimes; money laundering; serious drug offences; people smuggling, human trafficking and slavery; child exploitation; terrorism; cybercrime; illegal acts impacting the environment; cyberbullying; and a wide-ranging variety of other crimes against the Commonwealth. The CDPP is also involved in the prosecution of trans-national crime and works with foreign governments to implement Australian and International laws on extradition and mutual assistance.

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

Career Opportunities

The CDPP employs staff in 10 offices around Australia, including Adelaide, Brisbane, Cairns, Canberra, Darwin, Hobart, Melbourne, Perth, Sydney and Townsville. They largely employ lawyers, but also employ numerous legal support staff in roles like litigation support and librarian roles.

The CDPP does not publish information regarding graduate programs or clerkships, but it maintains a jobs board listing current vacancies

[General Recruitment](#)

AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE

The Australian Defence Force (**ADF**) offers a unique experience for law graduates in a number of different functions and entry levels. The Opportunities for a legal career within the ADF are diverse and vary widely between the ADF's three services; Army, Navy, and Air Force.

As a whole, the Defence Legal Division is responsible for the provision of legal advice and other legal services to the ADF, the Department of Defence and the Ministers on Defence-related legal matters. The Defence Legal Division is comprised of both service and civilian lawyers. Although most civilian lawyers are located in Canberra, service lawyers are posted both around Australia and overseas.

The primary duty of a Legal Officer in the Defence Legal Division is to advise Defence's command and management. The Defence Legal Division operates as an in-house legal service to the ADF, providing advice on the core legal areas of military legal practice; discipline, military administrative law and military operations law (including humanitarian law). Legal officers may also appear as advocates in Defence inquiries, or as prosecuting or defending officers before Court-Martials and Defence Force Magistrate trials.

<http://www.defence.gov.au/Department/>

Careers Information

The application process to join the Australian Defence Force requires you to complete a series of aptitude tests including verbal, spatial and numerical ability tests, and a general mathematics test. There are also security clearances and a medical and physical fitness assessment.

In addition, to be eligible to be Legal Officers in the ADF, you must be admitted as a barrister or solicitor of the Supreme Court of an Australian State or Territory, or as a barrister and solicitor of the High Court of Australia; and be an officer (or have completed an application to become an officer) in the ADF.

There are a number of entry pathways to get to this point, so don't be disheartened by the apparently high qualification requirements. If you are already degree-qualified, and have completed your graduate diploma of legal practice, you can go in as a 'qualified applicant', with or without previous military experience.

There is also an opportunity to be sponsored by the ADF to complete tertiary studies at a civilian university in an Australian State or Territory after successful completion of your first full year of study. Subject to approval, you will also be reimbursed the costs of prescribed textbooks and equipment essential to your course of study.

To read more about the eligibility requirements, take a look at the Defence Legal website and the the Legal Officer Specialist Officer Career Structure (LOSOCS) Policy:

http://www.defence.gov.au/Legal/LOSOCS_Policy_Document

To learn more about the position in each of the three ADF services, visit the relevant page on Defence jobs:

[Navy](#)
[Army](#)
[Airforce](#)

You can also call Defence Force Recruitment on 13 19 01 to discuss your eligibility and potential options with a qualified recruiter.

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

The Australian Federal Police (**AFP**) provides a range of investigation and operational support, security risk management, security vetting and information services to assist police at a federal level. AFP Legal comprises professional legal and support staff, who provide legal advice and assistance to all areas of AFP business, both on the domestic and international level.

AFP Legal provides advice on a variety of diverse matters including, law enforcement matters, civil litigation against the AFP, commercial matters and information management (such as freedom of information matters, privacy issues, and responses to subpoenas and summons) by the AFP.

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

Career Opportunities

While there is no clerkship option, the AFP does offer a graduate program. The graduate program is not specialised, but graduates are recruited based on organisational requirements for specific skillsets each year. Graduates will undertake rotations during the 12-month program which allows graduates to gain a variety of skills and a deeper understanding of the organisation's work. At the end of the year grads are recruited into one of the teams they rotated through. The program does not automatically qualify you as a police officer: should you wish to do so you can undergo the police recruitment process, but the graduate program aims to develop the AFP's future organisational capability in the 'Professional' stream. Applications open in February for roles beginning in February/March of the following year. For more on the application process, visit the Graduate Program website.

If you're already in the workforce, and you're not looking for a graduate role, you can also transfer into the AFP laterally. As well as legal roles, there are plenty of options that will allow you to use your legal skills within the organisation without practicing. For example, how about a job as a Telecommunications Interception Monitor, where you consider, interpret and analyse (all easy skills for a lawyer!) operational information in the course of criminal proceedings.

[Graduate Recruitment](#)

[General Recruitment](#)

AUSTRALIAN SECURITIES & INVESTMENTS COMMISSION

The Australian Security and Investments Commission (**ASIC**) is an independent body that is responsible for acting as a regulator for businesses and the financial services industry. ASIC is administered under the *Australian Securities and Investments Commission Act 2001* (Cth) and carries out work pursuant to the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth). The legislation requires the Commission to:

- maintain, facilitate and improve the performance of the financial system and the entities in it;
- promote confident and informed participation by investors and consumers in the financial system;
- administer, enforce and give effect to the law effectively and with minimal procedural requirements;
- receive, process and store, information that is given to it; and
- make information about companies and other bodies available to the public.

<https://asic.gov.au>

Careers Information

ASIC has offices in all Australian capital cities. The commission's work mainly involves the interpretation of investment and securities regulations. As a result, many of the opportunities at ASIC have a legal focus. ASIC also works closely with a range of law enforcement agencies, foreign regulators and international organisation to maintain stability in the global financial markets of the modern world.

Generally, all applicants are required to create a career profile on ASIC's website and will receive a 'job alert' when an opportunity or vacancy arises that aligns with the individual's career aspirations. ASIC also offers a graduate program to eligible applicants from a variety of different disciplines including law, accounting and statistics. Graduates will gain practical skills from training programs and will learn from the skills and experience of their peers through a program that strives to achieve a balance between personal independence and mentoring from

[Graduate Recruitment](#)

[General Recruitment](#)

STEPHEN CLARK Complaints Officer



Stephen Clark is a Complaints Officer at the Western Australian Department of Mines, Industry and Safety (DMIRS)

I work as a Complaints Officer at the Western Australian Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety ('DMIRS').

After graduating with a Bachelor of Legal Studies (Criminology) from Murdoch University in 2007, I started my career working as a Juvenile Justice Officer for the Western Australian Department of Corrective Services in 2008. In 2009, I decided to return to university to study law at the University of Notre Dame.

Studying law at the University of Notre Dame equipped me with many of the skills I use in my everyday role. These include effective time management, the ability to work well under pressure and having a keen eye for detail. I would recommend law students to get involved in as many extracurricular competition activities as possible. From my first year at law school, I threw myself into various competitions, including negotiations and client interview.

I had the privilege of representing the University of Notre Dame at the ALSA's national law students' competitions in the client interview completion. This was a great opportunity to apply the practical skills I acquired from my law school studies.

One of my favourite units at law school was trial advocacy. It taught me how to think on my feet and remain composed under pressure. This unit would later assist me in my advocacy roles before the various state and federal courts and tribunals. Studying the alternative dispute resolution unit gave me a practical skill set outside of the traditional substantive areas of legal practice. I was attracted to the idea of bringing parties together through mediation and other forms of alternative dispute resolution, rather than the traditional adversarial approach of litigation.

After graduating with a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Notre Dame in 2011, I started my career working in-house as a paralegal in a construction company, handling construction and contractual disputes. This role provided me with a foundational understanding in construction disputes.

After this role, I worked for various private law firms in construction, commercial, insolvency, estates and migration law, primarily in a litigation and dispute resolution capacity. In these various roles I developed skills in research, preparing witness statements, drafting pleadings, briefing counsel, attending court hearings and providing general legal advice. Working in the above roles helped develop my skills in advocacy and effective time management.

In 2018, I decided that I wished to return to the Western Australian public sector, where I had first began my career. What particularly attracted me to the role of Complaints Officer within the Building and Energy Division at DMIRS was the aspect of public service. I believe that it is important to work within an organisation which mirrors your personal values. Whilst this may not always be possible, I would propose that it is an ideal that is worth holding on to.

A day in the role of Complaints Officer within the Building and Energy Division of DMIRS can be both dynamic and rewarding. In my current role, I am able to apply the skills I have learnt at law school. It requires effective analysis, interpersonal and time management skills. As a part of the public service, members of the public expect you to uphold public sector values of fairness, impartiality and respect.

I apply the analytical skills I acquired in law school to develop a good understanding of the relevant issues of fact and law in the complaints I have conduct of. The ability to interpret and apply legislation is also key. Part of the role involves educating both home owners and builders of how the legislation operates and how to meet the legislative requirements when submitting a complaint.

One of the most rewarding aspects of the role is conducting conciliation conferences, where building service and contractual disputes are resolved by the consent of the parties under the Building Services (Complaint Resolution and Administration) Act 2011.

It has been a great way to apply the skills I've learnt both at law school from studying substantive and elective units (including alternative dispute resolution), and the client interview and negotiation competitions.

During conciliation conferences, it is important to listen to and understand the parties' positions and assist the parties to understand each other's positions. This will usually provide the right framework to allow the parties to come to a resolution of the complaint.

I personally find a great deal of satisfaction in serving the public by resolving the parties' disputes in a conciliatory, cost effective and timely manner.

I would encourage any law student thinking about a career in the public service to give it serious consideration. The opportunity to work with great people, enjoy a healthy work-life balance and have a varied and interesting career, make it a worthwhile decision.

AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Established in 1932, the ABC is Australia's national broadcaster. The organisation maintains a wide range of services including [abc.net.au](https://www.abc.net.au), four ABC broadcast services supported by iView, ABC News and Current Affairs online, four continuous broadcast national radio networks with 60 additional local radio services, 51 ABC Shops and 84 ABC Centers, a publishing and licensing service, an international media and development service, and worldwide partnerships.

The organisation maintains a large staff across 71 offices spread across Australia and overseas. The work of the organisation is undertaken pursuant to the *Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act 1983* (Cth) which incorporates the ABC Charter and the Election Coverage Review Committee. Additional regulatory oversight occurs through the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Cth), *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (Cth), *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth), *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013* (Cth) and the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth).

<https://www.abc.net.au>

Careers Information

The ABC offers a range of employment opportunities for individuals of all disciplines, backgrounds, interests, skill levels and locations. The organisation maintains a comprehensive range of training and development, leadership and scholarship programs, as well as an Indigenous mentoring program.

The ABC maintains a jobs board for all open vacancies, including those in the organisation's Business and Legal Affairs department, and it also offers a 'structured work experience' program in various areas such as Broadcasting/TV Production, Journalism, Radio, Technical Production/Sound Engineering, IT/Technology and Marketing/Audiences. For those interested in putting their combined degrees to good use, the organisation also offers eight ABC News Cadetships annually.

[Work Experience](#)

[Cadetships](#)

[General Recruitment](#)

RESERVE BANK OF AUSTRALIA

The Reserve Bank of Australia (**RBA**) is Australia's central bank. The RBA enforces monetary policy, monitors and strengthens Australia's financial system and oversees issuance of Australian banknotes. The RBA also provides banking services to Australian government agencies, overseas central banks and institutions, manages Australia's gold and foreign exchange reserves and controls the cash-rate and monetary policy with a view to mediating Australia's economic growth and inflation.

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

Career Opportunities

The RBA offers both an internship and comprehensive graduate careers program, based in Sydney.

The internship is an eight week paid vacation program involving research work and culminating in a research paper that is presented to your peers and senior staff. Other tasks may include notes on data releases, analysis of developments in financial markets, or other work that provides an insight into working at the RBA as a graduate. Interns also attend targeted training and interactive information sessions designed to provide them with a more comprehensive understanding of the role of the Reserve Bank of Australia, and how they can contribute to the work of the RBA. At the end of the placement, Interns may be offered a place on the Graduate Program, commencing the following year. Interns who accept an offer as a graduate will be provided with financial support during their final year of study.

The graduate program run for two years and involves a number of rotations. Applications open each February for roles beginning the following year. The recruitment process is a rolling one: applications will be reviewed as they are received and candidates may be invited to undertake assessments (such as on-line skills tests and video interviews) immediately. Ad hoc graduate recruitment also happens throughout the year and roles are advertised on the graduate program page as they become available. Opportunities are also available for qualified candidates, and there are a number of possible roles that utilise legal knowledge and skills without requiring a candidate to be a practicing lawyer, such as roles in contract management and administration.

[Internships](#)

[Graduate Recruitment](#)

[General Recruitment](#)

ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS TRIBUNAL

The Administrative Appeals Tribunal (**AAT**) performs merit review of administrative decisions made by Australian Government ministers, departments and agencies in accordance with more than 400 Commonwealth laws. Most commonly, this includes reviewing decisions concerning child support, Commonwealth workers' compensation, family assistance, paid parental leave, social security, migration and refugee visas, taxation and veterans' entitlements.

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

Career Opportunities

The AAT offers employment opportunities for senior legally qualified persons as members of the decision-making Tribunal. It does not offer internships or graduate positions, but it does offer a number of other opportunities for younger lawyers and law graduates, managing the AAT's registries, conducting conferences, undertaking legal research (i.e. Associateships) and providing client and support services to Members of the Tribunal. The AAT also offers short-term (temporary) employment. Positions may become available in any of their offices in all Australian states and the ACT.

[Temporary Employment Pool](#)

[General Recruitment](#)

AUSTRALIAN COMPETITION & CONSUMER COMMISSION

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (**ACCC**) is Australia's peak competition and consumer protection agency and is responsible for a large number of different tasks designed to ensure fair trading, competition and fair national markets, in the interests of consumers generally. The ACCC and comprises six full-time members that are appointed by the Governor-General for periods of up to five years. The ACCC is responsible for enforcing the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010* (Cth) and the Australian Consumer Law which deal with product labelling, unfair market practices, price monitoring, anti-competitive conduct, industry codes and regulation, and mergers and acquisitions.

This involves a combination of complaint handling, independent research and investigations, prosecutions, education and advice, assistance to industry, administrative resolution and legal action. The ACCC is also integrated with the Australian Energy Regulator, who oversees regulation of the national energy market, provides support to the National Competition Council, and works closely alongside state and federal consumer protection agencies and other related organisations.

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

Careers Information

The ACCC offers a graduate employment program that is open to recent graduates from law, public policy, financial modelling, industrial economics and econometrics. Graduate participants participate in three 14-week long rotations in areas such as market analysis, economic regulation research, complaint investigation, consumer liaison, product safety, compliance research or corporate work. The organisation also maintains an online job register that advertises current vacancies and both Graduate and Intern opportunities.

[Graduate Recruitment](#)

[General Recruitment](#)

AUSTRALIAN LAW REFORM COMMISSION

The Australian Law Reform Commission (**ALRC**) is the Commonwealth's specialist organisation in charge of reviewing federal laws. Through the recommendations it provides in its reports, the Commission aims to ensure the relevance of the Commonwealth's law in current conditions and match the laws to the needs of the community. It also aims to improve and simplify federal law to provide improved access to justice.

The ALRC undertakes various inquiries to review Commonwealth laws which are referred by the Attorney General of Australia. In 2018, over 86% of recommendations were implemented as law. Moreover, the prevalent role of the ALRC in the development of federal law is further highlighted by the fact that 61% of all of its reports have been substantially implemented.

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

Careers Information

The ALRC is not currently offering internships or a graduate program, but it advertises vacancies are advertised on its website and through the APS Gazette. The ALRC also maintains a temporary employment register for people who hold law degrees and have experience in policy development and/or law reform. All postings are in Brisbane.

[General Recruitment](#)

AUSTRALIAN PRUDENTIAL REGULATION AUTHORITY

The Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (**APRA**) is an independent statutory body that promotes the stability of the Australian financial system and is responsible for the supervision of banking, insurance and superannuation businesses.

APRA undertakes a range of functions including establishing prudential standards for regulated institutions, monitoring supervised licensed institutions and acting as the main national financial sector statistics agency. APRA also supports the stability of the Australian financial system by administering the Financial Claims Scheme, which acts as a safety net for consumers where a financial institution fails.

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

Career Opportunities

APRA is based primarily in Sydney but also has offices in Melbourne, Brisbane, Canberra, Adelaide and Perth.

APRA's Legal Group maintains two teams. The Advice and Drafting team advise on corporate governance, secrecy and whistleblowing, administrative law, and banking and financial system regulation. This team is also responsible for APRA's financial regulations. The Litigation and Enforcement team appear on behalf of APRA in legal proceedings and provide direct legal advice to APRA's enforcement teams. Other employment teams where legal skills may prove particularly useful include the Policy Development, Statistics, and International Relations team, the Enforcement team, and the Governance, Communication and Information team.

APRA maintains a job board advertising all vacancies available with the organisation, and a general expression of interest for other ongoing opportunities. Generally, APRA look to recruit employees who are able to build upon and develop their leadership qualities whilst being able to effectively apply the organisation's core values.

APRA offers a graduate program, applications for which open in February each year. This is an 18-month graduate program and involves three rotations across the organisation's frontline supervision, policy development and data analytics divisions. The program gives graduates the opportunity to develop the core foundations of prudential regulation through ongoing mentoring and professional development assistance.

[Graduate Recruitment](#)

[General Recruitment](#)

How to prepare a government application

Introduction

If you are reading this Guide, you will have noticed that a large number of the organisations profiled are Government entities. If successful, you will join a workforce of thousands of employees which are committed to delivering vital services to the Australian public in different capacities but, while it may not be immediately obvious, an application for a role in government varies greatly from an ordinary job application. Certainly, one of the things you may notice is a greater emphasis on specificity as you draw on your knowledge and experience to meet a set criterion.

This is because Government departments and agencies recruit employees based on merit and only candidates which meet the requirements of the role, as well as the needs of the particular agency, will be successful. Because each government agency varies in its roles and functions, it is important to tailor your application to the advertised position in order to stand out.

Understanding the position description

It is important that you carefully read the position description along with any other documents attached to job posting before you begin writing your application. This document details the organisation's values, the responsibilities associated with the role, the responsibilities of the department advertising the role, key selection criteria ('KSC') and the minimum qualifications and/or capabilities required for the position.

Key tip: save a copy of the position description and any attached documents as they may not be accessible after the job closes.

Preparing your key documents

Be sure to diarise the opening and closing dates of the application and contact the relevant person if you have any questions about the job post. Once you have all the information you need, you can begin to prepare your application.

Each government agency maintains different application requirements, so it is important to understand which documents you are actually required to submit. When applying for a position in the public sector, you will be required to produce a combination of either of the following documents:

- resume;
- cover letter; and/or
- response to selection criteria.

During the online application process, you may need to upload these documents or copy and paste their contents into the given field.

Key Tip: The main aim of submitting your application documents should be progress you through to the next stage, and not land you the position. Make sure you are accurate, concise, and try to ensure there are no spelling or grammatical errors.

Resume

Your resume should present your personal information, education, volunteer and work experience in a clear and concise format. This document will demonstrate to the employer who you are, what you have to offer and how you will add value to the organisation by communicating your responsibilities and achievements. Resumes are usually two to four pages in length, and it is advisable to communicate in bulleted lists in place of paragraph structure. You should tailor your resume to the position by incorporating the selection criteria as much as possible into the body of the document.

How to Prepare a Government Application written by Juan Roldan & Briony Whyte

GOVERNMENT APPLICATIONS

How to Prepare a Government Application written by Juan Roldan & Briony Whyte

Cover letter

Just like your resume, your cover letter will communicate your skills and experience in a clear and concise fashion. However, the content of your cover letter should be tailored to the organisation you are applying for so you demonstrate what you have to offer and how you can add value to that specific organisation. In addition to providing a formal introduction to yourself, it is also an opportunity to showcase your written communication skills. Generally, cover letters should be no longer than one page long and may require you to provide a 'global response' to a question or an engaging pitch about yourself.

Response to key selection criteria

You will very likely be required to provide responses to the KSC in the position description. This is perhaps the most difficult part of a government application, and it can take some time to learn to do it well. This may be required to be submitted in a separate document, or it may be required to be addressed in your covering letter. In either case, you must address the selection criteria by outlining the important qualities you possess that you will need to do the job and by communicating your personal values, knowledge, skills and experience clearly to the reader. Your responses will be used to assess your suitability for the position.

The STAR method can help you structure your written responses and make each answer more precise and relevant:

- **Situation** – describe and background and your personal involvement. Set the scene and be as specific as possible.
- **Task** – explain the specifics of your responsibility and what you were required to achieve and by when.
- **Action** – what did you personally do to perform the task? How did you do it?
- **Result** – what was the outcome generated by the action that you took?

To help you prepare your responses, we recommend creating a comparison table with the KSC on one side and a short response, between 50 and 100 words on the other side (see the example below, taken from the Victorian Government's [Careers.VIC](https://careers.vic.gov.au) website). You should provide specific, evidence-based examples of your past experience show the contact person that you understand the position requirements and that you are capable to perform the role.

State Government of Victoria, *How to Reply to Selection Criteria* (2018) Careers.Vic <<https://careers.vic.gov.au/how-to-reply-to-selection-criteria>>.

Key Selection Criteria	Response
KSC1: Problem solving – Seeks all relevant facts. Liaises with stakeholders. Analyses issues from different perspectives and draws sound inferences from available data. Identifies and proposes workable solutions.	Problem solving has been a critical part of my roles over the past five years. While working as Customer Complaints Officer at Acme Department Stores, I dealt with a variety of problems. While many could be resolved easily, two to three per week were more complex and required a detailed process to resolve. I had to investigate what had happened from the staff and customer's points of view, clarify the facts, and work out what had gone wrong and why. I then had to propose suitable solutions and negotiate a mutually satisfactory outcome. I was often commended by my manager for my sensitive handling and speedy resolution of these problems. Less than one per cent of complaints had to be escalated.
KSC2: Advanced computer skills - Uses a wide range of software features for word processing, spreadsheets, etc. Helps others solve problems with software.	As Personal Assistant to the Marketing Manager at SYZ Enterprises, about half my time was spent preparing letters and reports for clients using Microsoft Word. I also used Excel spreadsheets to prepare graphs and tables of detailed information, to demonstrate the results of our market research and to analyse client company performance. I often prepared major PowerPoint presentations for my manager and maintained a database of her contacts. I also managed many daily emails and conducted research on the Internet to answer questions.
KSC3: Sound communication, interpersonal and negotiating skills, including well-developed written and oral skills, and the ability to develop and deliver interpretation and education services.	In my five years as a teacher, strong communication, negotiation and interpersonal skills have been essential. I have dealt with a wide range of people, including parents, colleagues and students. I was involved in a community project where I co-wrote a booklet on helping children learn and have fun. As part of this project, I led successful negotiations with the local council and three schools in the area who agreed to run a series of weekend family science programs for kids in the area.

The application process

When you apply for a job, normally you will receive notification emails at key points throughout the process. Generally, those stages include some or all of the following:

1. The organisation or department will send confirmation that your application has been received and is being processed.
2. You will be notified that your application has been assessed at some point after the application period ends.
3. The first assessment will involve the organisation or department reviewing your application against the requirements of the role. This is where your KSC statement comes in handy – the better your statement, the more likely you will progress past this stage.
4. If you make it past the initial review stage, you may be required to undertake capability testing such as: online testing, case studies, role plays and sample tasks.
5. Throughout the process the most suitable candidates are shortlisted and, following successful completion of the capability testing, you may be contacted for an interview.
6. Interviews generally consist of behavioural style questions based around the role's KSCs. You should be prepared to be interviewed by more than one interviewer. Occasionally the interviews are held in a group setting.
7. After the interview a panel of decision makers from within the organisation or department will discuss the candidates and select the preferred one(s). They will then contact the candidate's referees and conduct other reference checks such as:
 - o a Police check, or an international police check (for applicants who lived overseas for 12 months or longer in one country in the last 10 years).
 - o a confirmation of the candidate's qualifications, registration and certification;
 - o a confirmation of the candidate's eligibility to work in Australia; and
 - o a search of previous public sector redundancies.
8. If a candidate's reference checks are successful, they are offered the job. If declined, the next most suitable person will receive an offer.

How to Prepare a Government Application written by Juan Roldan & Briony Whyte

Conclusion

We hope that this provides you with some guidance to help you prepare your public service applications. As mentioned at the beginning, when drafting these applications, you must learn to be very concise and specific, and to use evidence-based examples when preparing your documents, especially your response to the selection criteria. A successful application will clearly communicate the candidate's capabilities and values and ensure they stand out from the crowd.

LEGAL PRACTISE MANAGEMENT

With the numbers of legal practices across Australia increasing annually, demand for qualified, specialist practice managers grows too. Legal practise managers are a firm's key strategists; managers who specialise in management, strategy, leadership and recruitment and talent management.

Suitable for individuals with a developed knowledge of the legal industry and a keen understanding of business, legal practice management can be a highly rewarding and enriching career. In particular, the growing number of niche and mid-tier legal service providers comes hand in hand with a need for more capable, business minded individuals who are interested in management positions.

This career would be well suited to those who are interested in the development and future of the legal profession, who work well in a team environment, and who are capable in leadership and management positions.

Careers Information

Although you don't technically need a qualification to become a legal practice manager, the College of Law does offer a Legal Practice Management Course.

If you are interested in becoming a Legal Practice Manager, the Law Council of Australia maintains a Law Management Hub for those individuals interested in keeping on top of the future of the profession and/or looking to develop their practice management skill set.

Once you've undertaken a practice management course, or if you have the transferable skills and are looking for present employment, the Australasian Legal Practice Management Association (ALPMA), a professional organisation designed to connect Legal Practice Management professionals, maintains a job bank for practice management positions across Australia and New Zealand.

[College of Law Practice Management Course](#)

[Law Management Hub](#)

[ALPMA Jobs Board](#)

LEGAL RECRUITMENT

The legal industry is changing. It used to be that once you got an articulated position, you stayed with the same firm for your entire career, eventually making partner and possibly taking the solo step of going to the bar.

Nowadays, the industry is fluid, and lawyers move from firm to firm throughout their careers and because of this, legal recruiters are an in-demand resource for the legal industry. From a firm's perspective, a recruiter helps to source staff who fit the firm's culture and have sufficient experience to fill a role. From a lawyer's perspective, individual lawyers engage recruiters to help make their next big career leap, or to find them the dream job they've been envisaging.

If you think that human resources might be the field for you and have the desire and ability to match potential employees to their ideal firm, recruitment offers a more flexible and vastly different daily workload to that of a traditional law role. These days, some recruitment firms are even branching out into temporary staffing agencies – you've heard of a secretary 'temping', but did you know that lawyers can 'temp' too?

Careers Information

Legal Recruitment vacancies are generally advertised through 'traditional' sources such as [seek.com](#) and on individual firm websites.

For more information and for the personal story of one lawyer-turned-legal-recruiter, check out the article on the next page by Sam Turton, Legal Counsel and Consultant at KBE Legal Hub.



Sam Turton, Legal Counsel and Consultant at KBE Legal Hub

Legal Recruitment

Author's role and journey

I completed a Bachelor of Commerce (majoring in Business Law) at Curtin University, and a Bachelor of Laws at Edith Cowan University. I started my legal career working in a boutique generalist firm as a law clerk/paralegal, where I gained some incredible experience and I was able to live the life of a lawyer through my Principal's shoes.

I was admitted to the Supreme Court of Western Australia in 2018. Once I became admitted, I was seeking my next challenge. I did the usual thing any graduate/junior lawyer would do. I applied for jobs on seek, approached a number of firms and reached out to a number of lawyers in the profession to get their advice.

One of these applications was for KBE Legal Hub. I had heard about KBE Legal Hub and its Executive Chairman, Chris Bates, and I did what any good junior lawyer would do and conducted some further due diligence and researched in more detail what KBE Legal Hub does.

I was fortunate enough to bump into KBE's Principal Consultant/Hub Team Manager, Siemone Neutgens, at an industry event last year. Once I spoke with Siemone and she explained the role to me in more detail; I was intrigued by the variety of the position, being both a Legal and Consulting role. I interviewed with Siemone and Chris in late November 2018 and accepted the role as both a Legal Counsel and a Consultant that very same week.

I am so lucky to be able to work for KBE Legal Hub, which is Western Australia's leading legal recruitment and contracting firm. Our team consists of Managing Partners, In-House Legal Counsel, Senior Lawyers, Legal Recruitment Consultants and Law Firm Futurists. For Western Australia's best lawyers - we provide unrivalled access to career defining roles with Western Australia's leading law firms and most sought after in-house legal teams. For Western Australia's leading law firms and in-house teams - we provide unrivalled access to the best lawyers in Western Australia, as and when you need them. We live and breathe the Western Australian legal community and always strive to add value to our networks, every step of the way.

After my first position in the generalist firm, I was after something different and KBE Legal Hub was the answer. I use my legal training and experience to advise lawyers and law firms to help make the Western Australian legal profession an even better place. In my current role as Legal Counsel and Consultant I have the best of both worlds; I am able to work across some interesting legal matters on the Legal Counsel side and meet/work with some incredible lawyers on the Consulting side.

My role as Legal Counsel, consists of working closely with our General Counsel/Managing Director Rebecca Johnston on legal matters related to KBE Legal Hub. The interesting element about KBE Legal Hub is that we are the only Western Australian recruitment firm that offers full-service legal recruitment which means the whole spectrum from permanent, fixed-term and contracting (for in-house teams). I assist Rebecca in drafting and negotiating contracts with the lawyers and firms/businesses we work with. This also comes into play when we work with law firms and lawyers on permanent recruitment as well.

My role as Consultant with KBE consists of me working across a number of practice areas and consulting/recruiting for permanent positions. The practice areas I recruit for are Family Law, Commercial Litigation, Construction Litigation, Insolvency, Workplace Relations and Insurance. I advise and work closely with Lawyers with 1+ years' PAE to Special Counsel. I help connect Lawyers to the right firms and guide them in taking the next steps in their careers, whilst working closely with firms to secure the right lawyer with the right values to join their firm.

SAM TURTON

Legal Counsel
& Consultant



*Sam Turton, Legal Counsel and
Consultant at KBE Legal Hub*

Typical day

In my role there is no typical day. I can have the best plans/to do list at the start of the week or even at the start of each day, but then I can be required to work across different urgent matters and I then need to re-prioritise and refocus my day.

I generally start my day by writing out my plan for the day and my most important tasks that I want to complete.

On the Legal Counsel side, I may be required to: draft new contracts for lawyers/firms; prepare internal policies/procedures for KBE Legal Hub; review, summarise and provide opinions for any new contracts, or proposed amendments to contracts, we receive from clients; and, any other tasks that our General Counsel requires assistance with. This will change from week to week depending on the work-load.

On the Consulting side my general tasks for a week include: liaising with lawyers and law firms to meet to discuss their career plan; multiple meetings with lawyers and law firms (typically 10+ per week); reaching out to lawyers within my network and other forums including our own events; and, researching the latest trends and happenings in the legal market.

How to get involved

My role at KBE was made easier due to the fact that I hold a law degree and I am a practising Lawyer. Now I have been sitting in this position for coming up to 10 months I couldn't imagine myself in a different role. One of the additional benefits of my role is that it allows for genuine flexibility. For this role or any role that isn't a traditional legal role, I think the most important thing that you can do is keep an open mind. I am able to work across a range of complex legal matters and I meet and advise lawyers to find their ideal roles. They say that one of the top three most stressful times in your life is when you change jobs and I am able to help lawyers navigate this process, which I find to be incredibly rewarding.

IN-HOUSE COUNSEL/LEGAL COUNSEL

In-house counsel are lawyers who work for private companies on all the legal matters that might arise throughout the day to day running of a business.

Organisations that tend to hire in-house counsel include academic institutions; non-governmental organisations; and privately owned, publicly listed companies in sectors like banking and finance, telecommunications and media, wholesale or consumer services, energy and resources and manufacturing and construction.

While specialisation in a particular area of the law might help to land an in-house job (i.e. experience with mining law might land you a role with BHP) an in-house role encompasses so much more than a single practice area commercial role might, and in-house lawyers are jacks of all trades. An in-house lawyer might work on matters including advertising and intellectual property, employment, property, consumer law and contracts, all in the space of a single day.

In-house counsel roles are also increasingly providing opportunities for involvement in organisational leadership and strategic planning within a company (advertisements for 'In-house Counsel and Company Secretary' positions are common). However, the role does bring with it a number of difficult and well documented ethical challenges.

The number of in-House Counsel positions is increasing, as more and more organisations seek to internalise their legal work. Most organisations recruit legal staff following prior experience in practice, often for a large commercial firm (who may be introduced to the company via secondment). For this reason, it is rare that clerkships or graduate roles spring up for in-house positions.

Careers Information

If you are interested in work experience, consider approaching your manager at your current casual retail or fast food job and asking if they will help you get in contact with the legal team in relation to a few weeks of holiday work. The worst they can say is no! If you think this sounds impossible, take a look at the profile on Lauren Miranda (over the page) who completed a couple of weeks work experience in the Legal and Compliance team with her employer, women's fashion label Kookai.

If you think you might be interested in an in-house position, on a more permanent basis, you can also check out the article on page 35 by Jessie Porteus, founder of The Learned Crew and Legal Counsel at Coca-Cola Amatil to find out what a 'day-in-the-life' of an in-house lawyer is like.

If you're interested in an in-house role, most positions are recruited directly with vacancies advertised on company websites and local jobseeker channels. Keep your eyes on Seek and on more traditional advertising channels and contact your preferred company directly to register an expression of interest or request information on any available vacancies. You could also try the Association of Corporate Counsel's Career Centre page, which lists plenty of currently available in-house roles.

[Association of Corporate Counsel General Recruitment](#)

LAUREN
MIRANDA
LLB Student



Lauren Miranda, LLB Student at the University of Notre Dame Australia (Fremantle)

An In-house Clerkship

I have worked for *Kookai Australia* as a casual sales assistant since June 2017 whilst at university gaining my Bachelor of Laws/Bachelor of Science double degree. I have always loved the brand and have felt valued as an employee since my first day. In my penultimate year at university last year, I was seeking legal experience that was unique and would set me apart from every other student with experience in a 'traditional' law firm. When I learnt that *Kookai* offered work experience in their Melbourne Head Office to current employees, I jumped at the opportunity.

I found the experience to be extremely unique. I felt that the work I was given actually made a difference to the company, as well as providing me with an insight to the behind-the-scenes legal aspects of a retail company that you don't often consider when working on the shop floor. When applying, I only had a vague idea of the kind of work I would be exposed to. I expected to be working mainly in employment and contract law, which I later learnt to only be a fraction of the work undertaken. On my first day the head of Legal and Compliance, Lisa, talked me through the different legal areas that the team work in. This list was so expansive that it took her about five minutes just to name everything.

Even after learning of the large variety of legal areas that the team worked on, I did not expect to be given exposure to many of these areas. I was given experience in privacy, intellectual property, employment, leasing, and consumer law. The kind of work ranged from legal research to a phone audit of all stores in Australia and New Zealand to drafting company policies. What was most exciting about the work was that I saw how the tasks I was doing directly assisted and changed the company. I expected to be allocated menial tasks, but I was instead presented with work that was meaningful in the context of the business. Seeing the policies that I'd had a direct hand in drafting be implemented was a proud moment and it made me feel that the work I had done in Head Office had contributed value to *Kookai*.

I have since had some experience in a commercial firm and whilst this experience is also valuable, if you are like me and wanting some unique experience whilst studying, I highly recommend reaching out to your current employer for the opportunity to work with their in-house legal team. I look back on my experience with great fondness and strongly believe that everyone has a lot to gain in looking outside the box when it comes to legal experience.



Lauren outside *Kookai Australia* Head Office, November 2018.



Jessie Porteus is founder of The Learned Crew and in-house legal counsel at Coca-Cola Amatil

In-House Lawyers – the GPs of the Legal World

In-house legal is currently one of the fastest growing segments of the Australian legal profession, representing around 30% of Australian lawyers (according to the Association of Corporate Counsel Australia, 2017). Gone are the perceptions of a cushy job with cushy hours (and with respect to Harvey Specter from Suits, in-house lawyers are not 'paper pushers' thank you very much). The role of the in-house lawyer has certainly changed and grown over the years. So what is an in-house lawyer exactly and what do they do?

The in-house lawyer is a commercially driven, highly trusted legal adviser who works solely for one organisation (i.e. its employer), often having a seat at the decision-making table as well. In-house lawyers are 'more than just lawyers' – working on high value transactions and advising the boards on strategy and risk, as well as advising on day to day legal issues. In-house lawyers are expected to be legal advisors and business people at the same time. They are the client, and advise the client all at the same time (which does come with complexity when it comes to ethics and discharging a lawyer's duty to law and the court).

In-house counsel are often generalist lawyers. I like to call them the "GPs of the legal world" – always diagnosing and assisting with everyday issues faced by the organisation. However, if there is a particularly specialised or unusual matter, then an in-house counsel can refer to a specialist to assist (and that is where the role of the law firm or law firm panel comes in).

To compare to private practice, in-house lawyers generally don't have billable hours or targets (win!). But don't let this fool you – this doesn't mean there is less work to be done. While you may have a little bit more flexibility and may not have to work until midnight every night, the hours that you do work during the day can be very intense – as you might work on 10-20 different things in a single day that are all urgent! There is also more and more pressure on in-house lawyers to deliver more value, and 'do more with less' – it is not just about the legal work, it is also about the proactive projects too – like automation projects, training, tip sheets, legal clinics and more.

A typical day in-house

No two days are the same in-house, so this heading is a little bit of an oxymoron! The work is extremely varied, and really depends on the organisation you work for. There can be a lot of pressure to respond to matters urgently, and there is a lot of 'putting out fires', but there is also an incredible opportunity to be proactive and creative too. On a typical day, you might work on anything from contract law, to competition and consumer law, property law, employment, intellectual property, dispute resolution, mergers and acquisitions, insolvency, privacy law, and just about anything in between. This is all the 'business as usual' (BAU) work. You may also be working on team initiatives to improve the way the legal team works and how it services its clients – which are the 'nice to have' projects.

Here is an example of a typical day:

- **8am:** check emails, prioritise your tasks for the day and respond to the quick questions.
- **9am:** attend legal team meeting to discuss workload and share insights with team members.
- **9.30-10.30am:** attend your legal clinic, where business clients can turn up and ask quick questions and obtain legal advice.
- **10.30am-12.30pm:** review a large sales agreement and type up your changes in tracking. You need to call the sales team to clarify some questions before you send them the typed-up contract.

JESSIE PORTEUS

Founder of The Learned Crew & In-House Legal Counsel at Coca-Cola Amatil



About the author

I've been working in-house for 4 years - but I've also been lucky to have a varied career full of different legal experiences before going in-house (the legal profession truly is amazing for all the opportunities it creates!). I learned from the best advocates and judges in the country as a Federal Court Judge's Associate, advised on commercial and IP matters at top tier law firm King & Wood Mallesons, represented asylum seekers in a challenging legal environment at community legal centre RACS, and broadened my legal and business skill base at my current role as in-house Legal Counsel at ASX 100 company Coca-Cola Amatil (since 2015). Last year I started a legal training business called The Learned Crew (<https://thelearnedcrew.com>), which prepares law students for the real world of law and aims to bridge the gap between what students learn at law school and what they need to know to thrive in practice. Our training uses active learning techniques and experiential simulations that authentically mimic legal professional life in various contexts, with the goal of empowering students with confidence in any legal career. We offer online courses (including one on being in-house!), practical skills workshops, career mentoring, e-book guides, and a free blog on study and career tips. We also offer consulting and legal training programs to law schools and legal teams.

- **12.30-1pm:** lunch at your desk while reading emails and posting on the legal team's social media page about the latest legal trend.
- **1-2pm:** meeting with marketing team on their new marketing campaign, including a new tagline which they've asked you to apply for as a trade mark. You advise on any consumer law and IP issues with the tagline, and then email your IP law firm to start a trade mark search.
- **2-3pm:** you receive an urgent email about an employee issue. You put aside the sponsorship agreement you had planned to review at this time, to advise HR on what to do next.
- **3-4pm:** review the sponsorship agreement that has been sitting in your inbox for a few days. You see that the client hasn't used the right template so you call them to let them know where to find the right template (which is on the intranet page you created). You also respond to some emails that have come through, and notice that 5 more contracts have been sent to you for review. You put them in your to-do list and schedule time in your calendar to attend to them.
- **4-6pm:** the major M&A deal that has been bubbling away in the background has started gaining momentum - you review some documents that have come through on the dataroom, and call the business strategy team and external law firm to discuss next steps. You set aside the next few days to work on review of these documents, and schedule a call with the UK team for late that evening to discuss strategy.
- **6-7pm:** the sponsorship agreement comes back in the correct format, so you review this document and send it back to the sponsorship team.
- **7pm:** you send emails to the clients who sent you work during the day to acknowledge you've received them and will get back to them as soon as you can.
- **11pm:** have a conference call with the UK team working on the M&A deal.

Being an in-house lawyer is amazing. It is a huge learning curve when you first start, and really, the learning never stops. It opens up so many opportunities for learning, personal and professional development, for travel and even for non-legal roles such as business roles (if that tickles your fancy). The opportunities are endless.

Skills you need and how to get there

If you are commercially driven, strategic, creative, open-minded, love variety, empathetic, client-focused, and able to 'issue-spot' and ask the right questions, perhaps a career in-house is for you!

Most in-house legal roles currently require a couple of years of private practice training and experience first, however I see there could be a change in this trend in future (particularly if we create fantastic training for junior in-house lawyers to be able to hit the ground running!). Some really big companies do offer graduate in-house roles, so if you are interested in going straight from law school to in-house it is possible to do so. If you are working at a law firm but are considering a move in-house, you may be able to do a client secondment to get some insight into in-house life. Otherwise, keep your eye on organisations that interest you and align to your values, to see whether any in-house roles come up, and keep an eye out on job sites and on LinkedIn for opportunities.

If you would like to be on the waiting list for The Learned Crew's "In-House Counsel Course" (an interactive in-house simulation where you can gain some key in-house legal skills and insights into in-house life), please sign up at TheLearnedCrew.com. We will keep you posted as soon as it is ready to launch!

PLAINTIFF LAW PRACTICE

Plaintiff Law Practice, or Personal Injury Law, is a litigious practice specialising in recovering compensation for injured parties who can't recover their losses under contracts. Many students begin a career in law with the intention of helping people – if this is what you're interested in then Personal Injury Law will help you to help people from all walks of life. If you loved Torts, Consumer Law or Workplace Standards and Compensation law, this might be the practice for you.

Personal Injury lawyers often represent individual clients, and the work involves getting to know these people, and understanding the whole of their story. This means that Personal Injury lawyers spend plenty of time engaging with clients, both via telephone and face to face.

The work is heavy on dispute resolution, and can be quite litigious, with the principal aim of the personal injury lawyer being achieving an outcome in your client's favour by way of settlement or court proceedings. The work undertaken by 'plaintiff law' firms spans a number of areas such as class actions, personal injury, medical negligence, industrial law and employment law.

Careers Information

There are a small number of larger firms that specialise in plaintiff law and offer opportunities for students and graduates across Australia, but the practices that focus on this area of the law are often mid-tier or boutique, so make sure you check out Seek, or contact your state Law Society for further information on potential job vacancies. If you find a firm that does practice in this area, but isn't offering clerkships or a graduate program, consider approaching them directly with an expression of interest, should anything arise in future.

COURT/LAW LIBRARIAN

Universities, Courts, law firms and governments all maintain hard copy libraries around the country, but how many times have you used a book to research a case in the last year?

The role of a law librarian is changing and while a librarian's job has always been about data management, these days it's as much about technology as it is about analogue. If you're into books, history, legal technology or legal research, you may find a career as a law librarian rewarding.

You actually don't need a law degree to become a law librarian, but it's probably a useful background to have! To qualify as a librarian of any kind, most people undertake a degree (either undergraduate or post-graduate) in Librarianship (Information Studies) or a Diploma of Library and Information Services (to become a library technician).

Careers Information

The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) is a national professional organisation for librarians and information services professionals.

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

ALIA doesn't offer librarian and information specialist training itself, but it lists a number of accredited courses on its website, including Bachelor level degrees offered by Charles Sturt University, Graduate Diplomas offered by Curtin University, the University of South Australia and the University of Technology Sydney, and Masters' degrees offered by Charles Sturt University, Monash University and the University of Technology Sydney. ALIA also provides useful industry information and maintains a jobs board.

[ALIA Accredited](#)

ASSOCIATESHIPS

Although offered in most courts across Australia, a role as a Judge's Associate (also known as Tipstaff, if you're in NSW) is difficult to clearly define. Generally, an Associate acts as some combination of personal assistant, research and/or court assistant to a specific Judge. However, the work and activities which each individual undertakes is largely at the discretion of their appointing Judge.

Judge's Associates are exposed to a wide range of work, both inside and out of Court, and in doing so, they become intimately familiar with court documents, proceedings and processes. They work alongside some of the leading barristers, solicitors and other practitioners - not to mention Judges - and this allows them to observe and learn from the most skilled advocates in the profession.

Highly regarded by future employers, Judges' Associates go on to do many different things after completing a term with their Judge, and often find that the skills, knowledge, networking and confidence gained from working as an Associate assisted their transition into private practice, upon being called to the Bar, or pursuing an academic career.

Careers Information

Associateships are one of the most rewarding, exciting employment opportunities available to lawyers. Despite that, the fact that they are subject to the interests of the individual judges mean there is little uniform hiring procedure. Advertisement of current opportunities can be last minute or can be done up to five years in advance. If you'd like to be an associate, keep an eye on the employment pages of the various Court websites and let your Law Students' Society/Association Careers Officer know, as the roles are sometimes emailed directly to the LSS/LSA email accounts.

STENOGRAPHY

Over the last few years as a student you've probably read hundreds of cases and memorised at least a few lines of *obiter*, but did you ever stop and think about where it came from? Stenographers are courtroom typists, whose key role is to record a word-for-word transcript of what happens in the courtroom.

Stenography, or court reporting, is a flexible and engaging occupation for individuals with developed typing and language skills, and an interest in the law and court proceedings. Stenographers are employed by Courts and similar bodies, such as Parliament to prepare word-perfect transcripts of hearings and other Court Proceedings.

To succeed as a stenographer, the main requirement is accurate and efficient keyboard skills (real-time stenographers require a shorthand typing speed of 200-300 wpm), as well as a good grasp of grammar and language. Stenographers use a stenograph machine, or 'steno', which has fewer keys than a traditional keyboard, and by utilising a form of typing shorthand, allows stenographers to type syllables and even entire words and phrases in the stroke of a few keys.

[How Steno Works](#)

Careers Information

Using a steno machine is not a commonly taught skill, so you may need to learn how to type on one before you can begin a career as a Stenographer. The Steno School (previously known as the National College of Court Reporting) provides a machine shorthand course which can be completed in one year and is designed to facilitate skills and improved typing speeds.

As well as employment opportunities through freelance or independent contract work, a number of different organisations employ stenographers and Court reporters:

The High Court of Australia maintains an employment register for casual Court Reporting employees, which is advertised each year. Vacancies are intermittent, and interested employees are required to transcribe at a speed of approximately 75 wpm.

The Department of Parliamentary Services oversees *Hansard* and related services for Commonwealth Parliament. DPS maintains a casual employment register, similar to that of the High Court.

There are also private companies, such as Auscript and Pacific Transcription, that provide a range of legal transcription-related employment opportunities.

[The Steno School](#)

[High Court Temporary Employment Register](#)

[DPS General Recruitment](#)

[Auscript](#)

[Pacific Transcription](#)

COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES

A community legal centre is a community-based organisation responsible for the provision of free and accessible legal services to people. Depending on the centre, a CLC may provide legal advice, referrals to other centres or law firms, non-legal support and duty advocacy services.

CLCs are key entities in the justice system, providing free and accessible legal services to ensure that all people, no matter their socio-economic status, are able to access justice.

Community Legal Centres operate all over Australia, and they work in many different spheres including

- Indigenous legal services;
- women's legal services;
- LGBTIQ legal services
- environmental law;
- employment law;
- consumer law;
- banking and credit;
- mental health; and
- property and tenancy.

<http://www.naclc.org.au>

Careers Information

CLCs rarely have sufficient funding to operate to meet the demand for their services, so they do not always hire large numbers of staff. Their staff roster is usually supplemented by volunteer lawyers, clerks and paralegals who donate their time to ensure the work is done. They do; however, require the services of one or two permanent lawyers in order to ensure the day to day running of the practice, so there are opportunities available to those who may be interested in them.

Working in a CLC is a tough yet rewarding career. If you're interested in getting a taste of it, you could consider approaching a local CLC and offering your services as a volunteer. If you'd like to build a career working in community legal services, the National Association of Community Legal Centres maintains a jobs board, and you could even consider undertaking your practical legal training work experience in a CLC, or enrolling in the Piddington Justice Project – a (Perth-based) practical legal training program that places students in CLCs desperate for assistance and even donates a portion of your fees to the centre that takes you on for the duration of your training.

[Piddington Justice Project](#)

[NACLCL Jobs Board](#)



Richa Malaviya of Law Access Western Australia

Non-Lawyer Roles in the Community Legal Sector

Graduate lawyer roles within the Community Legal Sector are often scarce in regions like Western Australia, especially within the metropolitan areas. Community legal Centres or Legal Services are not likely to offer fixed graduate programs and there aren't set hiring periods. However, despite all the difficulties in obtaining a legal role as a graduate lawyer, there is often scope and flexibility in gaining a non-lawyer role.

A non-lawyer role may be a Practical Legal Training Placement, paralegal, clerk, intern, receptionist or legal secretary, among many others.

Doing one of these roles, especially as a law graduate, can be incredibly invaluable. Not only will you see a variety of different areas of law and work with clients from diverse backgrounds that may be different to yours, you will be able to assess where your skill set currently sits, and what you may need to improve on before you become a lawyer. The reason you will be able to upskill at often accelerated rates, is because in the Community Legal sector there is often many things you can assist with, even in a non-lawyer role.

Throughout my law degree, and since graduation, I have worked in various Community Legal Centres. I was given many opportunities that allowed me to develop my legal and professional skillset. For example, while at law school, I was given opportunities to complete one-on-one client appointments where I would complete personal statements and affidavits, I had appearances in the Magistrate Court of Western Australia as a friend of the Court, and I was able to develop my drafting skills. Essentially, I was given the opportunity to interact as much as a lawyer would, without providing any legal advice.

Since graduating law school, I completed my practical legal training and was later employed at Law Access in Western Australia (Please note that this organisation differs from the NSW Law Access). Law Access is a not-for-profit organisation that coordinates the giving of pro bono (free or reduced cost) legal assistance by the Western Australian legal profession.

I work in a small team with four other staff members, and with the support of volunteer lawyers, interns, secondees and students. There is a demand for our service and we have a constant supply of applications from a variety of areas of law. There is also large amount of files we have opened at any one time. Due to the heavy workload and the legal areas we cover, it is essential to have a skillset that includes attention to detail, time management, and understanding of whether a matter has legal merit. If you do not have these skills when you start, you will develop them fairly quickly.

Therefore, being employed in a non-lawyer role within the Community Legal Centre can be incredibly invaluable. As you are working in often under resourced places you won't have the opportunity to fall back on other people or have to request for more legal work, allowing you to develop your abilities and improve your skills.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Amnesty International is one of the world's largest independent human rights organisation. Independent of any political ideology, economic interest or religion, Amnesty investigates alleged human rights abuses, and produces reliable research in order to lobby governments, raise awareness and bring justice to those people who suffer those abuses.

In Australia, Amnesty assists with a myriad of human rights concerns in Australia by working closely with Indigenous communities and people seeking asylum. Additionally, Amnesty is active in women's and LGBTI activist networks campaigning on gender and sexuality issues.

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

Careers Information

Amnesty hires staff on an as-needs basis, but their roles are often well suited to law graduates as the organisation's focus is on research, justice and advocacy, and is heavily influenced by both local and international law.

Amnesty do offer a number of internships that provide students with the opportunity to help Amnesty International Australia respond to requests for assistance and reports of human rights concerns in Australia. One particular internship for current law students is the Case Work Program.

In the Refugee and Human Rights Casework program students are involved in receiving and triaging requests for assistance from asylum seekers and refugees and providing referrals to appropriate service providers in respect of simple requests; responding to more complex requests for assistance from asylum seekers and refugees in immigration detention; and compiling written reports of relevant country information to assist asylum seekers applying for protection in Australia.

Unfortunately, Amnesty only offers these internships if completed as part of a university program; however; if your university does not offer the program, but you lodge a strong application may offer you a volunteer placement. All internship and volunteer placements with Amnesty are unpaid.

[Casework Program](#)

[General Recruitment](#)

INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) is a non-governmental organisation whose role is to defend human rights and the rule of law on a worldwide scale. The Commission comprises of 60 judges and lawyers from all regions of the world who assist in the promotion, protection, development and implementation of human rights and international humanitarian laws.

The ICJ cooperates with governments that are committed to improving their human rights performance, balancing of diplomacy, constructive criticism, capacity building, and where necessary, 'naming and shaming'. Through its 60-strong Commission is comprised of judges, senior lawyers and legal academics, and through their connections, it is able to directly access to judiciaries implementing international standards and to ensure improved legislation across the globe.

The ICJ also guides, trains and protects judges and lawyers worldwide to ensure they are able to uphold and implement these raised standards and work towards access to justice for victims, survivors and human rights defenders, in particular from marginalised communities.

<https://www.ici.org>

Careers Information

While the ICJ does offer paid roles, including in legal practice, it relies heavily on the additional human resource capacity, commitment and dedication of volunteers, and the contribution of its research interns and graduates highly benefits the ICJ's work. Interns at the ICJ gain practical experience of human rights legal and advocacy work at an international level, as well as a better understanding of how an NGO is structured; are exposed to the practical functioning of the United Nations bodies and mechanisms; and build professional and personal relations with multilingual and multiethnic colleagues.

Interns' responsibilities are based on the needs of the Commission and the candidate's interests. Interns are integrated into the ICJ's staff and are encouraged to participate in the day to day workings of the Commission. Key tasks may involve research into human rights issues, drafting papers and reports, maintaining information databases, and providing support and interns are often invited to attend lectures and other human rights related events.

Priority is given to law graduates, or students that are studying postgraduate law, especially human rights or international law. In addition, fluency in a language other than English is favourable. The internship post is in Geneva, Switzerland, and non-EU passport holders will be engaged for between four months and one year. Interns are responsible for all expenses and costs incurred during their internship.

[Internships](#)

[General Recruitment](#)

LAWYERS WITHOUT BORDERS

Lawyers Without Borders is a not-for-profit organisation that coordinates and the provision of pro bono service to rule of law projects, capacity building and access to justice initiatives by volunteering lawyers from around the world. Working in several countries world-wide, Lawyers Without Borders are involved in work in categories such as trial advocacy training; mediation training; neutral trial observation; community outreach programs; civic education; and research, technical assistance and policy guidance.

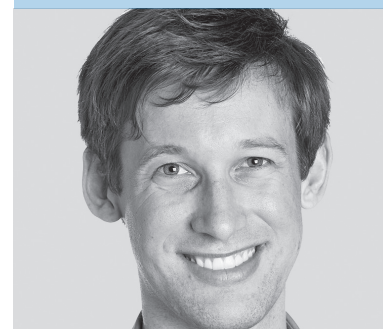
<https://lawyerswithoutborders.org>

Careers Information

Lawyers Without Borders offer internships in their New Haven (Connecticut) and Washington (DC) offices - students based outside of the USA will generally only be considered for a long-term full time (three months or longer) internship due to paperwork and visa requirements. Law student interns are not guaranteed that they will be able to undertake legal research; however, Lawyers without Borders does undertake to make an effort to provide at least one or more meaningful, large-scale legal research assignments.

[Internships](#)

[General Recruitment](#)



Heath McCallum is a Legal Advisor to Non-Government Organisations

Careers in Global Non-Government Organisations

My name is Heath McCallum and I graduated from Flinders University in 2012 with degrees in law and international studies. I'm now an international lawyer specialising in international human rights and humanitarian law, rule of law development, and working with police and security forces working mostly in Africa.

My career path

I recently finished a year as the Legal Advisor (Africa) for Legal Action Worldwide – a small, global NGO which specialises in legal responses to sexual and gender-based violence, access to justice, and accountability for human rights violations. I was based in Nairobi, Kenya, but mostly worked on Somalia and travelled frequently to Mogadishu. Somalia is a fascinating and complex country with many challenges, mostly stemming from the fact it has been a failed or weak state for the past twenty years. The laws are a mix of colonial era Italian legislation and customary Islamic law which is used to resolve most disputes in the community (particularly criminal or land issues).

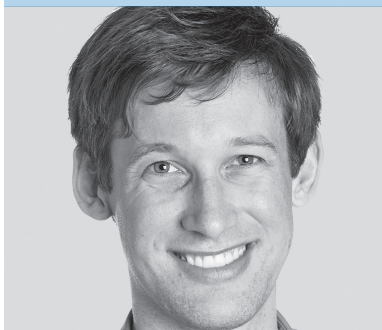
Security is a major challenge – Al-Shabaab still controls most of rural Somalia, and regularly carries out attacks in Mogadishu and, less frequently, other East African countries. When I visited Mogadishu, I'm confined to the African Union peacekeeper-controlled airport compound in which most major NGOs, the UN, and embassies are based. In order to leave this area, we need an armed and armoured escort as the risk of kidnapping is high for foreigners. This obviously limits the work that is possible in Somalia, and a lot of the actual implementation needs to be done by Somali partners – I mostly did monitoring, meetings with organisations or the government, and training paralegals or other staff. My role also included monitoring legal and political developments across Africa, writing reports of funding applications, and meeting with partners.

Before Kenya, I was based in Malawi as a Program Lawyer for Irish Rule of Law International. I was seconded to the Malawi Police Service and based at a police station in Lilongwe, the capital. I advised on prosecutions, monitored due process rights for detainees, and particularly worked with police officers to ensure children who were arrested were treated according to the (excellent) child protection legislation. This involved daily monitoring of the police holding cells, mentoring the police officers, and running training programs on child protection. As my first overseas development role, it was a wonderful learning experience. Malawi has different challenges to Somalia – it is one of the poorest countries in the world and has very limited resources. I could get a street kid who had been arrested released, but if it was simply to return to the streets, that wasn't really acceptable, and the police often didn't have enough vehicles (or petrol in the vehicles) to transport the kid to one of the few temporary safe homes. Issues that would be easily resolved in Australia simply were not a priority in Malawi due to the limited resources and this can be really tough to deal with. Like most African countries, corruption is rampant and it's a constant battle in this line of work as it's often impossible to get anything done unless there is some money involved.

Before Malawi, I worked in international humanitarian law at Australian Red Cross in Canberra. I focused on government advocacy and training on IHL issues, such as nuclear weapons and the protection of civilians. In hindsight I was lucky to land this job as my first out of my studies – it allowed me to do the international jump which is the hardest part of working in the industry.

The good and the bad of international development careers

I love living as an expat and working in international law. A lot of the stereotypes are true – there are too many meetings, endless jargon, and so much report writing and it can be really frustrating when things don't work (and this happens a lot), but when things do you can make a real difference. The law is fascinating too – the issues I work on are challenging, dynamic and combined with religion, cultural issues, and geo-politics.



*Heath McCallum is a Legal Advisor to
Non-Government Organisations*

A big downside is job insecurity – most contracts are six to twelve months. You can find an organisation you click with and develop a career with them, but most people jump around and spend time out of work. This is a huge bonus too – no need to worry about leave when you can build three months break between contracts and go travelling! Expect not to spend much time in Australia too – the flight costs from Africa are horrific so I've only been back twice in four years.

Early career pay will be well below Australian standards. You'll always be comfortable thanks to cheaper living costs though, and mid or late career (and consultancies) the pay is excellent – especially if you're willing to live in a conflict/hardship location.

Living overseas as an expat in a developing country is challenging and rewarding but is certainly not for everyone. Dealing with power and water cuts, terrible infrastructure, incapable government services, and health issues is a constant drain so if you aren't getting energy from your work, it will be a struggle. The people you meet – both from the expat and local communities – are incredible and the friendships you form will be for life. The travel opportunities are endless too.

Developing a development career

If you're interested in human rights, international criminal, or humanitarian law, there are plenty of great jobs out there and my best advice for anyone wanting to pursue an international career is start thinking about it early. Getting your first international job will be a struggle – almost everyone spends time in unpaid or funded volunteer positions to start off. Start LinkedIn stalking people and check job websites for cool jobs (start with Devex, Devnet, and Impact Pool). Look at the requirements and start building your experiences to meet them. Better yet, find someone who can act as a career mentor for you – an academic, a family friend, or even just email someone out of the blue. Most people will be more than happy to help since everyone has been there.

I got my first post-university job at Australian Red Cross because I'd been volunteering extensively with the organisation for years beforehand in emergency response, monitoring immigration detention centres, and in governance roles. I'd also done plenty of volunteering with my LSS, ALSA, and other organisations. It's not just about CV-filling though – it's about showing you are job-ready and have already developed career interests. Specifically for international roles, it's vital to be able to show that you can 'hack it' in a developing country. I'm asked in every interview to give examples to prove I'm not just going to arrive, whinge about the power cuts, bad roads, and lack of nice wine and leave in a couple of months. It's the same with other skills on job ads – you can't just say you possess them; you need to have experiences that prove that you do.

There's no well-trodden path to an international career but there are a few general rules. You'll need to have a Masters in your early/mid-career so think about it now. Languages are always useful but it depends on where you want to work – I've managed so far without a second fluent language but am currently taking time off to work on my French. Remember you're up against Europeans for jobs and they will often have multiple languages and a masters at an earlier age than most Australians.

Finally, you need to be fascinated with the way the world works to excel in international aid and development. I've started every day with an hour reading the international news for years. International law isn't black and white reading of cases and legislation – it's a living beast that reflects the world we live in. If you're not all over Brexit, the Rohingya crisis, and the geopolitics of the Syrian war, you need to be. There are tons of great apps, podcasts, and news services – start off reading Al Jazeera, listening to the BBC world service, and setting up some Google alerts in a few things that interest you. Also, do the Jessup moot!

THE UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations is an international organisation comprised of 193 member States that was founded in 1945 in response to the loss, destruction and devastation caused by World War Two. Each of the Member States has signed onto the purposes and principles contained in United Nations founding Charter and it is due to this unique international character and to the powers vested in the Charter that the UN is able to take action in the manner that it does.

The UN is dedicated to ameliorating and eventually eradicating the issues confronting us in the 21st century, like conflict, climate change, sustainable futures, human rights, disarmament, terrorism, humanitarian and health emergencies, gender equality, governance, food production, and many more. The UN General Assembly acts as a forum for its members to express their views in a number of Councils, bodies and committees in order to enable dialogue between its members, and to mediate between governments to find areas of agreement.

<https://www.un.org/en>

Careers Information

With so many member states, the UN has offices all over the world, and offers the potential for a truly global career. There are numerous legal roles within the organisation, as well as roles in fields like crime prevention and law enforcement, research, analysis, policy development and governance.

The United Nations offers numerous internships ideal for those looking to work in the fields diplomacy and public policy, as well as in environment, criminal law and enforcement, and climate change, among numerous others. The Legal Affairs Internship provides a first-hand impression of the day-to-day working environment of the UN. Participants work directly with professionals and senior management, and tasks may include conducting legal research, analysing laws and policies, drafting and editing orders and decisions, and advising on press and policy matters.

Interns may also observe hearings and deliberations, attend meetings of the President with interlocutors inside and outside the Mechanism, assist in the preparation of reports to the United Nations Security Council and United Nations General Assembly, and prepare drafts of speeches. If you're interested, you should note that internships are unpaid and full-time and the duration of an internship ranges from a minimum of three months to a maximum of six months.

[Internships](#)

[General Recruitment](#)

MARIA P. FALAS

Head of Mental Health &
Wellness, Life Insurance



Maria P. Falas is Head of Mental Health & Wellness, Life Insurance, Zurich Financial Services Australia

A VERY UNCONVENTIONAL CAREER PATH...

Growing up I wanted to be a vet. I've always loved animals and felt that it wouldn't feel like work if I was paid to help sick animals. That was until a teacher told me that vets also had to put animals down. I then decided a plan B was needed!

There wasn't one career to which I felt I was entirely suited, so I chose to study commerce at the University of Sydney. I majored in marketing (because I thought it would be fun) and econometrics (because I always loved maths). My commerce degree was only a three year course. After graduating I wanted to study more and keep my enjoyable university life alive. I was discussing possible courses with my family. Somewhat tongue in cheek, my mum suggested that I study law; apparently from a young age I'd taken the role of defence attorney for my two older brothers and myself.

I liked the idea so I studied Bachelor of Laws as a graduate at the University of Wollongong. I thoroughly enjoyed studying law, I felt it tapped into a different part of my psyche. In looking back on this period of my life, I am grateful for the opportunity to have studied two completely different courses at two fantastic universities. My qualifications were unique, even though I wasn't sure where they would take me. The diversity of my study is likely to have contributed to my diverse career path.

There are four distinct chapters in my career to date. Below I will share with you a very unconventional career of a lawyer that has led me to where I am now; in a job that I truly love and enjoy more than words can express.

Summer Clerkship at Ebsworth & Ebsworth (now HWL Ebsworths)

In 1999 I was fortunate to be part of the summer clerkship program at Ebsworth & Ebsworth (E&E) in Sydney. After which I stayed on as a paralegal while studying full time. I enjoyed the challenge of working and studying. Having the context of my paralegal work also helped me better understand my studies. I would highly recommend working as a paralegal (even one day per week) whilst studying. It's a great way to meet people in the firm, learn about different areas of practice, the firm's culture and be exposed to different opportunities.

The partners and lawyers I worked with gave me opportunities to research and work with them on key matters. It was here that I discovered my interest in insurance law. Once I graduated and was admitted into legal practice in February 2001, I stayed on for a couple more years as a lawyer in the insurance advisory team. I continued to learn and grow and in the process had a lot of fun and made life-long friendships.

Lawyer - Blake Dawson Waldron (now Ashurst)

Looking back on my time as a lawyer with Ashurst, this is where I developed and grew exponentially. I truly believe no matter where your legal career path takes you, spending some time in a law firm environment is crucial to your development. The skills I acquired here coupled with my experience at E&E helped me become an effective communicator. I learned to write a letter in plain English while still talking about complex legal matters. I learned the importance of providing advice to clients in simple language that addresses their specific legal issue. I learned the importance of communicating confidently and openly to clients. These skills were all invaluable to me in my next role and beyond.

Compliance & Risk Management - ING, OnePath, ANZ Wealth

The opportunity to deviate from my traditional legal path was very tempting and one that I felt compelled to explore. After Ashurst I completed a community based millinery course for fun (I have zero talent in hat making!). After which I decided to try something different and accepted a compliance specialist role with ING. I thoroughly enjoyed being a partner of the business where my role was to provide compliance support.

MARIA P. FALAS

Head of Mental Health &
Wellness, Life Insurance



Maria P. Falas is Head of Mental Health & Wellness, Life Insurance, Zurich Financial Services Australia

I joined ING at an exciting time when a new flagship life insurance product called OneCare was being developed. As I grew with the role, there were opportunities to branch out into risk management, board governance and reporting. I had a hands-on manager who was focused on people development. She encouraged me to explore broader opportunities within our business. Through my business interactions I developed some great connections. My next role would come following a coffee with one of these business partners.

Client Solutions Manager – Group Insurance, OnePath

This was my first role 'in the business' and boy did I love it! I felt like I was part of a team focused and driven to provide a great life insurance product and service to our customers. The challenges and opportunities were new and exciting to me. The business language around 'prioritisation' and 'customer focus' had me intrigued.

In my previous role, everything was important as it related to regulatory matters and board reporting. Being 'in the business' the discipline was different. There were profit and loss statements at play, customer centric solutions, projects, priorities, targets, tenders, audits, technology and so much more. My role was centered on addressing the needs of our group clients, generally superannuation funds and corporates. I was involved in the development of an innovation roadmap with a focus on our client solution priorities including technology, digitisation and engagement. It was in this role that I had exposure to the prevalence of mental illness in our insurance portfolio. My next role would evolve from this exposure and new experience.

Head of Mental Health & Wellness, Life Insurance, OnePath & Zurich

I have always had a passion for mental health and wellbeing. I value connecting with others without judgment and sharing life experiences, tips for getting through challenges, stories of resilience and the human spirit. Working for Zurich, as a life insurer, we see the toll that mental illness is having on our customers and communities. The opportunity to head up the mental health and wellbeing strategy for the life insurance business was a "pinch me" moment. Like my previous role, a very unconventional path for a lawyer to take but one that felt right. I have been in the role for almost 2 years and feel proud of what our business is achieving for our customers and partners. We are on a journey to deliver our strategy to provide market leading solutions to our customers with a focus on service, customer wellness and prevention. I am excited about the growth opportunities that this role brings now and in the future.

Apparently, the average person has 4-5 careers in their lifetime. I'm on my fourth now and nowhere near retirement!

Take away tips to remember:

- 1) Care about your career and development. Take the time to invest in yourself including self-care, wellbeing and mindfulness.
- 2) Take opportunities even if you don't tick all the boxes. Someone believes that you can do it, so believe in yourself!
- 3) Have a mentor, sponsor, life coach or someone that can support and guide you in your career.
- 4) A law degree can take you places you never imagined possible so be open minded about your career prospects.



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