

POSITION DESCRIPTION

PRINCIPAL SOLICITOR

POSITION DETAILS

Date of Position Description	August 2023
Position Title	Principal Solicitor
Position Grade	20
Directorate Business Unit	Finance and Information Governance and Risk
Reports to	Chief Governance & Risk Officer
Position Location	126 Church Street, Parramatta NSW 2125
Physical Requirements Category	Category 1 – Desk role with Ergonomic Requirements

POSITION OVERVIEW

The Principal Solicitor manages critical legal issues and mitigates legal risk for the Chief Executive Officer and Council. The Principal Solicitor works in collaboration with the Legal Team to ensure legal issues are resolved at a high level and dealt with in a confidential manner. Issues which are politically sensitive will be managed appropriately. The Principal Solicitor will be required to represent the Chief Executive Officer in relation to internal and external matters.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Role Specific

- Manage and support the Legal Team of Senior Solicitors, Associate Solicitor, Legal Support Officers, and the Legal Administration Assistant to provide a high-quality in-house legal service including legal advice in relation to regulatory compliance, property law matters, business structure and acquisitions, employment, litigation, corporate governance, and maintaining privacy obligations.
- Provide high level legal and strategic advice to the Chief Executive Office and Executive management team on a broad and diverse range of issues.
- Manage complex litigation occurring in the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal and High Court handled by external, outsourced legal service providers.
- Oversee the execution of leases and licenses and other transactions/approvals in a local government context.

- Provide support and direction to the Legal Team in preparation for litigation in relation to both claims and appeals in the Local Court, Land and Environment Court and other courts or tribunals.
- Approve the issuing of notices and orders and support appropriate Council Officers.
- Provide support to the Senior and Associate Solicitors in relation to dispute resolution and settlement negotiations between Council and contractors and other third parties.
- Provide expert, professional legal advice, and direction to the Legal Team on a wide range of Council responsibilities relating to government law and information, public access, privacy, and other relevant legislative materials.
- Lead multi-disciplinary teams and external groups on a range of legal and policy issues.
- Provide final approval on matters relating to media announcements and press releases are with the purpose of ensuring legal compliance and protection of the Council's public reputation where appropriate.
- Brief and manage Council's external legal service providers to achieve maximum value and effectiveness and to act as a clearing house for all legal opinions in Council.

Baseline

- Lead, manage, coach, and develop the Legal Team to promote accountability and alignment towards achieving desired organisational outcomes.
- Ensure all processes and actions meet council policies and statutory obligations.
- Ensure highest probity in all activities and ensure systems and processes are transparent and open to scrutiny wherever possible.
- Ensure that all practices are up to date with current and pertinent legislation, statutory regulations, and better practice to ensure a subject-matter-expert mindset is adopted and promoted to all stakeholders.
- Manage the service area's annual budget and provide key inputs to the budgeting and forecasting processes to promote sound financial sustainability.
- Promote continuous improvement and innovation in legal practices, procedures, and recommendations to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery of legal services.
- Promote and maintain effective relationships with all internal and external business partners including community organisations, contractors, and relevant State and Federal authorities.
- Actively lead the health and safety of yourself, employees, visitors, contractors, and volunteers whilst at work, and provide support to junior staff in relation to organisational WHS obligations.
- Promote the value of diversity and inclusion in all practices, engaging with and integrating the views of others.
- Lead and develop organisational effectiveness, by acting ethically, honestly and with fairness.
- Comply with Council's Policies and Procedures, including Council's Vaccination Policy, as amended from time to time.

KNOWLEDGE

Qualifications

- Bachelor of Laws or post graduate equivalent and minimum 10+ years PQE
- Current NSW Practising Certificate

Experience

- Extensive experience in local government specifically in relation to administrative, planning, property contract and/or commercial law.
- Demonstrated experience providing authoritative, expert and strategic legal and policy advice on a range of complex and sensitive matters including conducting litigation.
- Demonstrated ability to reason conceptually, negotiate effectively and to solve complex problems and high priority issues.
- High level of understanding of the legislative, operational and political structure of local governments and all required legislative obligations.
- Extensive knowledge and skills in legislative information access provisions including the Government Information (Public Access) Act and other relevant privacy legislation etc.
- Demonstrated ability to lead, develop and support a team to maximise team effectiveness.
- Demonstrated experience working with an Executive Team and Councillors or similar governance structure.
- Knowledge and skills in managing corporate compliance frameworks.

Skills

- Demonstrated ability to work in a politically sensitive environment.
- High level of research and analytical skills in corporate governance and policy development.
- Strong interpersonal skills to effectively communicate with all customers and all levels of the organisation.
- Ability to build relationships and influence others with an engaging approach and technique.
- Highly advanced change management skills within a highly complex stakeholder environment.
- Excellent presentation, negotiation, and conflict resolution skills.
- Advanced problem solving and decision-making ability, including confidence in working with leaders to resolve high priority, and often sensitive and complex issues and conflict.
- Highly developed commercial acumen.
- Proven ability to maintain confidence and a recognisable level of integrity.