

About the Inquiries Practice Group

The Inquiries practice group specialises in assisting and advising in coronial inquests, representing NSW government agencies before royal commissions and other inquiries, assisting at other ad hoc forms of inquiry and providing advice to agencies concerning investigatory powers.

What kind of work can you expect to be involved in as part of this team?

As a solicitor in the Inquiries practice group, you will have carriage of inquest matters, assisting and advising the coroner concerning all aspects of the conduct of the matter. For example, inquests are held for deaths in custody, as a result of police operations, where there are suspicious circumstances, in health and care settings, and for missing persons. As well, coroners are assisted in the conduct of fire inquiries, which are also held under the *Coroners Act 2009*.

In inquests, you can expect to engage with the police officer in charge regarding the coronial investigation, to assess the police brief of evidence, to requisition further evidence on the coroner's instructions and to prepare a coronial brief of evidence. You will also brief counsel assisting the coroner and attend conferences with the coroner. In addition, you will brief a variety of medical and technical experts, identify and liaise with interested parties and the family of the deceased person. You will play a pivotal role at the hearing: taking responsibility for service of all evidence and the calling of witnesses; updating the family or their representative; monitoring media enquiries and non-publication orders; as well as instructing counsel assisting.

You may also be involved in tasks related to the Crown Solicitor's representation of State agencies before royal commissions and other forms of inquiry, including arranging statements and the production of documents, assisting witnesses and preparing strategic submissions.

Work on coronial inquests requires the management of high volumes of material and engagement with multiple interested parties. It can also involve consideration of difficult subject matter and dealing with family members and other persons who are grieving, as well as witnesses who may have experienced trauma. Work can also be required on matters concerning the intersection between inquisitorial and criminal proceedings, which can involve sensitive subject matter. Solicitors in the team should possess resilience, emotional intelligence and good communication skills.

What are we looking for in an ideal candidate?

- Demonstrated ability to conduct complex legal matters independently – i.e. undertake legal research, prepare legal documents, provide high quality legal advice / recommendations to clients and effectively conduct litigation.
- Prior experience managing complex litigation and in public interest areas of practice.
- Demonstrated ability to communicate with multiple stakeholders in the justice system, including vulnerable groups.
- Prior experience in independently identifying and advising clients on applicable legal risks and their strategic implications.
- Demonstrated ability to provide client-focused legal services in line with goals and values of the Crown Solicitor's Office.
- Demonstrated ability to manage stressors associated with working on challenging matters that the Inquiries team is involved in, and the ability to exercise sound judgement in respect of

practice management that enables you and your team to stay engaged and motivated at work (such as debriefing, delegating and seeking help when required).

- ☑ Demonstrated ability to provide professional supervision to other legal roles in:
 - preparing legal advice to assure the quality of the advice provided; and/or
 - the conduct and planning of litigation; and/or
 - in preparing and presenting written and oral submissions which are clear, accurate and persuasive.
- ☑ Emotional intelligence, relationship-building skills, and a team-oriented approach to legal practice.

While knowledge of inquisitorial law, criminal law, administrative law or medical law is desirable, it is not a requirement to qualify for this role.

Additionally, an ideal candidate for the role of Principal Solicitor VI will have:

- ☑ Capacity to situate legal matters within the client's operational and policy context, and to think strategically towards advancing the client's objectives.
- ☑ Ability to formulate and advance major projects, such as continuous improvement and capacity-building initiatives.
- ☑ Ability to mobilise resources in the team efficiently towards providing effective client service.
- ☑ Ability to independently manage competing priorities in a high-volume environment, and to support junior colleagues in managing their legal practices.

For more details about the team visit:

https://www.cso.nsw.gov.au/Pages/cso_ouexpertise/cso_inquiries.aspx