



## Principal Solicitor Closing date Monday 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2010

The Principal Solicitor at IDRS is key to the provision of high quality and innovative legal services to people with intellectual disability in NSW. This is a challenging and rewarding position combining leadership, community legal practice, supervision, education and the pursuit of legislative and systemic change to benefit people with an intellectual disability. This position presents an opportunity to join a multi-skilled team who are passionate about their work.

**Hours:** 37.5 hours per week Flexible working hours apply

**Remuneration:** The starting salary is in the range \$65,347 – \$71,766 (depending on experience) + super + optional salary packaging.

**Enquiries:** Janene Cootes,  
Executive Officer 9318 0144

### Applications must

- include a resume
- include a statement which addresses the selection criteria listed below
- be received on or before Friday 29 January, 2010
- be addressed electronically to:

Email: [info@idrs.org.au](mailto:info@idrs.org.au) with your name and “**Principal Solicitor Application**” in subject line

Or post to:

Principal Solicitor Application  
Intellectual Disability Rights Service Inc  
PO Box 3347  
Redfern NSW 2016

The following provides details of the position and application process. It includes:

- Selection Criteria – **must be addressed in the application**
- Background to Intellectual Disability Rights Service
- Detailed Position Description
- General Information for applicants

CJSN is a service of the Intellectual Disability Rights Service ABN 112 1637 1524

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CJSN - Southern  
PO Box 5460  
Wollongong  
NSW 2500  
Ph: 02 4228 4040  
Fax: 02 4228 4060

IDRS & CJSN - Sydney (H.O)  
Suite 2c, 199 Regent Street,  
Redfern  
NSW 2016  
Ph: 02 9318 0144  
Fax: 02 9318 2887

CJSN - Gosford (Central Coast)  
c/o- Central Coast Disability Network  
29 Webb Street, East Gosford,  
NSW 2250  
Telephone: (02) 4324 2355  
Facsimile: (02) 4324 3187

CJSN - Hunter  
PO Box 458  
Newcastle NSW  
2300  
Ph: 02 4926 5643  
Fax: 02 4927 8147

## **Selection Criteria**

**Each of the following must be addressed in your application**

### **Essential experience and skills**

1. Admitted to practice in New South Wales and have or be eligible for an unrestricted practicing certificate
2. Demonstrated ability to manage the provision of a legal service/practice
3. Ability to effectively manage a high volume workload
4. Experience in providing for the supervision and professional development needs of staff
5. Experience in providing legal advice and conducting casework preferably in both criminal and civil matters
6. Understanding of issues effecting people with intellectual disability and commitment to advancing their rights and interests
7. Ability to advocate for law and policy reform
8. Excellent oral and written communication skills including ability to communicate effectively with people with intellectual disability or other marginalized groups.
9. Ability to work collaboratively within a multi-disciplinary workplace
10. Ability to conduct community legal education

### **Desirable experience and skills**

Understanding of the Community Legal Centre Sector

## **Background to IDRS**

IDRS is a specialist community legal centre working to assist people with an intellectual disability throughout NSW to exercise and advance their rights.

The Principal Solicitor is responsible for the management of the legal team and legal practice within IDRS and contributes to the high quality and responsive delivery of all the services of IDRS which include:

### ***Legal assistance***

Legal advice, information and civil and criminal casework is provided to people with an intellectual disability or others acting on their behalf within NSW.

### ***After hours legal advice***

Volunteer solicitors provide after hours telephone advice to people with intellectual disability who have been arrested.

### ***Criminal Justice Support Network (CJSN)***

The Criminal Justice Support Network (CJSN) is a program of IDRS that provides volunteer support persons at police stations and at court for people with intellectual disability who are victims, witnesses, suspects or defendants in criminal matters.

### ***Parents with Intellectual Disability – Care and Protection Project***

This project assists parents with intellectual disability where care proceedings have been commenced in relation to their children.

### ***Systemic advocacy and policy reform***

IDRS identifies systemic and policy reform issues and advocates in its own right and in partnership with other organisations for change.

### ***Education***

Training is provided to people with an intellectual disability, their carers, advocates and service providers as well as solicitors and others in the legal and justice systems.

### ***Information***

IDRS produces a number of publications and distributes resources.

***Please see Annual Reports on [www.idrs.org.au](http://www.idrs.org.au) for a more complete picture of the work of IDRS.***

## Funding

IDRS receives funding from the Commonwealth Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) and the NSW Department of Human Services – Aging Disability and Home Care. At present we also have project funding from the Public Purpose Fund of the NSW Law Society.

## Current staffing

IDRS current staffing is

- Executive Officer

Legal Staff

- 3.6 full time equivalent solicitor positions including Principal Solicitor
- 1 solicitor on secondment from Blake Dawson
- Volunteer legal students including PLT students
- Volunteer solicitors on after hours roster to provide legal advice to people with an intellectual disability who have been arrested

Other staff

- 2 educators
- Program Manager for the Criminal Justice Support Network
- 4 full time equivalent CJSN staff
- Support and Development Worker - Parents with Intellectual Disability Project
- 2 administration/information positions

**Key Result Areas** for IDRS under its current plan are:

- 1 Direct case work: representing clients and providing advice, support, and referral to assist people with an intellectual disability to get the best possible outcomes when they are involved in the legal system.
- 2 Law reform and system change: improving laws, practices and policies so that the legal rights and dignity of people with an intellectual disability are protected and their needs are met.
- 3 Skilling legal and justice professionals: enabling legal and justice professionals to communicate effectively with and provide quality services to clients with an intellectual disability.
- 4 Skilling people with intellectual disabilities, their associates and organisations in the sector: enabling people with an intellectual disability to exercise their rights.
- 5 Strength and innovation: building a strong and vibrant organisation.

## POSITION DESCRIPTION

### Principal Solicitor

<b>Role Purpose</b>	Manage the legal practice and provide for supervision of IDRS legal staff and volunteers. Ensure compliance with Professional Indemnity Insurance requirements. Ensure quality of legal advice and legal casework. Develop and maintain networks to support the services of IDRS. Provide education. Advocate for policy and systemic change to benefit people with intellectual disability	
<b>Key Areas</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Legal Advice</li> <li>2. Legal Casework</li> <li>3. Legal Practice Management</li> <li>4. Staff &amp; Volunteer management and Support</li> <li>5. Policy work</li> <li>6. Education</li> <li>7. Administration</li> <li>8. Information development</li> </ol>	
<b>Reports to</b>	Legal Practice Matters – IDRS Board Other Matters Executive Officer	
<b>Hours</b>	37.5 hours per week Flexible working hours apply	
<b>Key Areas of Work</b>	<b>Key Tasks</b>	<b>Performance Indicators</b>
Legal Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversee provision of legal advice to people with intellectual disabilities (including their families, carers, service workers and other lawyers on their behalf)</li> <li>• Provide appropriate follow up associated with advice calls</li> <li>• Referral to other sources of legal assistance</li> <li>• Provide after hours legal advice in accordance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of legal advice</li> <li>• Feedback from other IDRS solicitors regarding legal advice</li> <li>• Feedback from Management Committee, stakeholders and other community</li> </ul>

	with roster	<p>organisations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timeliness of legal advice</li> <li>• No of advice calls received and completed</li> <li>• Analysis of complexity of advice given</li> <li>• Client or advocate/support worker feedback via evaluation of advice calls</li> </ul>
Legal Casework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide legal casework in line with agreed intake criteria including research, legal advice and representation.</li> <li>• Conduct strategic litigation that is consistent with IDRS's priority of law reform work.</li> <li>• Refer clients to appropriate services, including legal, community and disability services.</li> <li>• Deal appropriately with interpersonal issues associated with casework (ie. communicating complex issues with clients, their families and their advocates/support persons).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of legal casework</li> <li>• Successful outcomes of legal cases</li> <li>• Feedback from other IDRS solicitors regarding legal casework</li> <li>• No of files opened and closed</li> <li>• Analysis of complexity of files opened and closed</li> <li>• Client feedback</li> <li>• Feedback from advocate/support worker</li> </ul>
Legal Practice Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Oversee and manage legal practice caseload in accordance with casework priorities, strategic value and available resources</li> <li>▪ Ensure balance between advice, casework and law reform work</li> <li>▪ Ensure quality standards are met</li> <li>▪ Ensure Professional Indemnity Insurance requirements are implemented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Feedback from other IDRS solicitors about caseload</li> <li>▪ Sample quality of advice and casework</li> <li>▪ Supervision of other solicitors</li> <li>▪ Feedback from Professional</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish and maintain networks to support the work of IDRS and the interests of its clients</li> <li>▪ Provide support to the Criminal Justice Support Network in providing support person for people with intellectual disability at police stations and at court</li> </ul>	<p>Indemnity Insurance Cross-Check</p>
<p>Policy Work / Law Reform</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research and develop policy positions on issues affecting people with an intellectual disability (e.g. discrimination, sexual assault, rights in employment, care and protection matters and the criminal justice system). Work with other IDRS staff to achieve this.</li> <li>• Advocate for policy and legislative change which will enhance the welfare of people with intellectual disability</li> <li>• Current policy priorities are Criminal Justice and Care and Protection.</li> <li>• Respond proactively and in a timely way to proposed changes in legislation and policy that may disadvantage people with intellectual disability</li> <li>• Prepare submissions and documentation to government, non-government bodies and committees regarding issues affecting people with an intellectual disability.</li> <li>• Participation in relevant committees and networks.</li> <li>• Contribute to funding submissions and project proposals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of policy work.</li> <li>• Number of policy related written submissions</li> <li>• Action taken as a result of submissions and participation in committees</li> <li>• Timeliness of response to proposed changes in the legal system</li> </ul>
<p>Staff &amp; volunteer Management &amp; Support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in the recruitment of new legal staff</li> <li>• Supervise appropriate induction and orientation of new legal staff</li> <li>• Conduct regular supervision sessions with legal staff</li> <li>• Supervise and support staff across all aspects of legal advice, casework and legal policy work</li> <li>• Oversee the professional development and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment of quality legal staff in line with budget</li> <li>• Induction and training of legal staff</li> <li>• Direct report feedback regarding support given to other IDRS</li> </ul>

	<p>training of legal staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct annual performance reviews</li> <li>• Supervise PLT student placements</li> <li>• Oversee the provision of after hours legal advice by volunteer solicitors to people with intellectual disability who have been arrested.</li> <li>• Facilitate the development of legal skills of staff and students</li> <li>• Ensure that solicitors and others comply with professional indemnity insurance requirements</li> <li>• Provide support to educators and Criminal Justice Support Network in relation to areas of joint work</li> </ul>	<p>solicitors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Record of individual meetings exists</li> <li>• Performance reviews with direct reports occur</li> </ul>
Education & Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute to the development and delivery of education programs conducted for people with an intellectual disability, their families, and carers.</li> <li>• Design and present training to solicitors.</li> <li>• Education will involve occasional travel to regional NSW</li> <li>• Contribute to the development and delivery of education and training for solicitors, police and justice agencies</li> <li>• Act as an education and information resource to legal aid and private solicitors representing people with an intellectual disability</li> <li>• Write articles for publication in disability journals, legal journals and other relevant publications.</li> <li>• Prepare conference papers as appropriate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of education programs</li> <li>• Number of education programs completed</li> <li>• Feedback from education programs</li> <li>• Quality of articles on legal issues for relevant publications</li> <li>• Number of articles on legal issues for relevant publications</li> </ul>
Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute to the preparation of project proposals, funding submissions, reports and acquittals.</li> <li>• Consistently and accurately up-date client database and non-legal databases.</li> <li>• Completion of computerised advice sheet for advice calls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accuracy of client information in database.</li> <li>• Quality of file maintenance practices.</li> <li>• Attendance at staff meetings and</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain client files for casework matters</li> <li>• Maintain client data base</li> <li>• Write and circulate all relevant correspondence, including letters, faxes, memos, and e-mails.</li> <li>• Contribute to developing policies and procedures manual for the organisation</li> <li>• Develop individual workplans across a 6 to 12 month period</li> <li>• Contribute to staff meetings and planning sessions.</li> </ul>	<p>planning sessions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work plan in line with strategic direction developed and implemented.</li> </ul>
<p>Information &amp; Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute to the preparation of information and publications about the rights of people with an intellectual disability – e.g. pamphlets, booklets, books, and articles.</li> <li>• Ensure that IDRS publications are legally accurate.</li> <li>• Contribute to the development of internal legal and other resources.</li> <li>• Ensure internal legal and other resources are kept up-to-date as necessary.</li> <li>• Provide comment on the publications of other agencies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of information</li> <li>• Number of contributions</li> <li>• Keeping legal and other resources up-to-date.</li> </ul>

## GENERAL INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

We hope this information sheet will give you a better understanding of the Intellectual Disability Rights Service's (IDRS) recruitment and selection procedures and assist you in submitting your application.

### Applications

IDRS does not use application forms. You should apply in writing for the position, addressing the selection criteria above. **If you do not address the selection criteria, you risk not being considered for the position.**

You should include a resumé that sets out your personal details (name, address and contact details), education, previous positions and experience, and three referees (names, addresses and contact details).

**Closing date for applications is Monday 1 February 2010**

In summary, applications must

- include a resume
- include a statement which addresses the selection criteria listed below
- be received on or before Monday, 1 February 2010
- be addressed electronically to:

Email: [info@idrs.org.au](mailto:info@idrs.org.au) with your name and "**Principal Solicitor Application**" in subject line

Or hard copy to:

Principal Solicitor Application  
Intellectual Disability Rights Service Inc  
PO Box 3347  
Redfern NSW 2016

### Email Applications

When sending your application by email, please **include your name and the name of the position you're applying for in the subject line.**

### Acknowledgment of applications

An email acknowledgement of receipt of your application will be provided.

**Short listing**

The Selection Committee will make arrangements to interview short listed applicants.

**Interviews**

It is likely that interviews will be held in or around the first week of February, 2010. Local applicants will be interviewed in person. Invited applicants unable to attend an interview in Sydney can be interviewed by telephone. Our interview panels normally comprise three or four people.

**Referees**

Referees of preferred applicant/s will be contacted after interviews.

**Final selection**

The successful applicant will be contacted by telephone and sent a written offer of appointment. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by letter.

**Employment Contract**

The successful applicant will be sent a letter of appointment enclosing a draft employment contract.

**Remuneration – Principal solicitor**

The value of starting salary is in the range \$65,347 - \$71,766 + super + leave loading + packaging.

**Conditions**

Working conditions include flexible hours and time-in-lieu provisions.

**Travel**

Occasional travel to regional NSW is involved in this position.

**Start date**

We would like the successful applicant to commence as soon as possible.

**EEO**

IDRS is an equal opportunity employer and staff are expected to actively promote equal opportunity principles.

**Smoke free environment**

IDRS maintains a smoke-free working environment.

