



Position Description

Senior Legal Counsel - Generalist

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| Reporting to: | Director Legal Services |
| Unit: | Secretariat |
| Location: | 130 Lonsdale Street Melbourne (Wesley Place) |
| Tenure: | Full Time (four days a week (0.8) considered) |
| Hours per week: | 37.5 |
| Cost centre: | C065:6600 |
| Date: | August 2025 |

Employee

Signature

Date

Manager

Signature

Date

Uniting Church in Australia Synod of Victoria and Tasmania

The Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) is a uniquely Australian Christian organisation that began in 1977 with the union of the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian churches. It is one of the largest religious organisations in Australia.

The Uniting Church in Australia Synod of Victoria and Tasmania (**Synod**) is a regional Council of the UCA and exercises pastoral, executive, administrative and disciplinary responsibilities and oversight in relation to the presbyteries and congregations within its bounds.

Property assets relating to the Synod are held in charitable trusts by corporate trustees established under *The Uniting Church in Australia Act 1977 (Vic)* and *The Uniting Church in Australia Act 1977 (Tas)* (**Property Trusts**). These Property Trusts act as trustee for a large portfolio of assets held for both general and special purposes including many historical properties from prior to UCA's formation and various bequests from deceased estates.

The Synod also has numerous unincorporated and incorporated UCA institutions. Our incorporated institutions are not for profit and deliver a diverse range of services. They include:

- Uniting (Victoria and Tasmania) Limited, one of the largest community service providers in Victoria and Tasmania;
- Uniting Housing (Victoria) Limited and Uniting Housing (Australia) Limited, social and affordable housing providers;
- Uniting AgeWell Limited, an aged care, retirement living and allied services provider; and
- Uniting Ethical Investors Limited, an ethical investment business.

Secretariat

The Secretariat is an operational unit of the Synod covering strategic direction, governance administration, legal services, property services, trust services, safe church support and resources, and ministry services. It incorporates a range of responsibilities to ensure that compliance and risk, strategic, pastoral and relational activities align with the Synod's strategic direction and fulfilling Constitutional responsibilities, in particular under paragraph 32, Uniting Church in Australia Constitution.

The Secretariat plays a pivotal role in nurturing relationships and building partnerships and connections. The Secretariat administers Synod Ministries and Operations to ensure good governance, accountability, and that collaborative, light and simple work systems exist to benefit congregations and presbyteries.

Legal Services Team

The Legal Services team provides services to the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, Property Trusts, UCA institutions, presbyteries and congregations.

The team provides advice and services in many areas of law and governance, including, general commercial, real property, procurement and related probity issues, intellectual property, corporations law, not for profit and charities law, compliance, claims, insurance and indemnity, charitable trusts and bequest administration.

Role purpose

The Senior Legal Counsel - Generalist provides accurate and timely legal advice on a broad range of commercial, trusts and property matters.

As a true generalist the role exercises a flexible, experienced and commercial mindset to manage end to end corporate and commercial legal matters. The role also handles property and trusts matters and working within a small team of skilled lawyers provides support in areas such as charities, disputes and privacy as required.

As a Senior Legal Counsel – Generalist, the role acts as a mentor to others, promotes and champions legal literacy across the organisation and with senior stakeholders and clients.

Key selection criteria

Qualifications and experience

This position requires the following knowledge and experience:

- Bachelor Degree in Law
- Admission to practice as an Australian Legal Practitioner
- 7-8+ years post admission experience (mixture of law firm and in house experience preferred)

Skills and abilities

The successful applicant will have the following skills and abilities.

1. **Legal expertise:** ability to undertake legal research and document reviews, provide sound advice and accurately draft legal documents related to a range of legal matters including in relation to commercial contracts, corporate governance, property and trusts law; ability to translate legal terminology and complex concepts into plain English and communicate with a wide range of people.
2. **Project management:** ability to develop project plans with clearly defined objectives and actions; to regularly communicate with stakeholders and team members; to ensure project objectives are met by anticipating and managing potential and emerging issues; to hold the team accountable for delivery of projects within budget and in line with plans.
3. **Client service:** ability to provide outstanding levels of service, within the organisational context, to a client or stakeholder, to be highly accountable and responsive to service issues that arise; and to manage risks to service delivery.
4. **Team-work:** ability to cooperate and work well with others in pursuit of team goals; to collaborate and share information; to show consideration, concern and respect for others' feelings and ideas; to accommodate and thrive in context of others' different working styles.
5. **Problem solving:** sound ability to think through a problem and analyse a situation from different perspectives to come up with a solution.
6. **Attention to detail:** strong drafting and attention to detail; observes fine details, identifies gaps in information; looks for logical sequences of information; highlights practical considerations of plans and activities.

Personal competencies and qualities

The successful applicant will also have these personal competencies and qualities.

7. **Communication skills:** excellent verbal and written communication skills; excellent interpersonal skills and ability to effectively interact with a diverse range of individuals, groups and committees.
8. **Openness to growth and learning:** open to new challenges such as learning or researching unfamiliar areas of law or issues and taking on new tasks as required including flexibility to cover other team members during periods of leave or high workflow.
9. **Discretion and confidentiality:** ability to discern sensitive information and determine appropriate responses and information flows.
10. **Awareness of culture and diversity:** awareness of issues related to inclusion and fairness; understanding of diversity in culture (importance of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse – CALD – communities), ability, age, gender and sexuality (issues related to Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex – LGBTI + – communities); capacity to embrace the values and benefits of diverse communities, including in faith-based gatherings and workplaces.

Other requirements

Applicants may be required to obtain a Working with Children's Check, and their employment will be subject to satisfactory completion of a National Criminal History Check.

Flexibility is required in terms of working hours, with work on weekends and/or in evenings necessary from time to time. Travel within Victoria and interstate may be required.

All staff are responsible for maintaining records and data related to their role responsibilities and work area in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures.

Applicants must be willing to work within the UCA's Workplace Values and Characteristics (see below). They must support the direction outlines in the Synod's document 'Our Vision Statement, Mission Principles, Statements of Intent, Strategic Priorities and Areas of Focus' (including any amendment or replacement).

Key accountabilities and activities

| Key accountabilities | Key activities |
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| Provide comprehensive legal advice, administration and services | <p>Manage legal matters and provide high quality, effective and timely level advice and services to a range of internal stakeholders including the Moderator, General Secretary and the Chief Trusts Officer, Property Officer and the relevant personnel of Synod, the Property Trusts and applicable institutions under shared service arrangements.</p> <p>Provide insightful and accurate legal advice on a full range of matters including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Governance advice and support• Commercial contracts and tenders• Procurement / service and consultancy agreements |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafting Memoranda of Understanding and other relationship agreements between church agencies and institutions • Privacy, data breach and confidentiality agreements • Regulatory and compliance advice • Intellectual Property • Information technology • Property leases, acquisitions & disposals • Property development and associated funding • Trusts interpretation, administration and cy pres applications • Dispute resolution, redress, disciplinary procedures and minor litigation <p>Prepare briefs and instruct external legal counsel. Monitor service delivery, accounts and billing to ensure accurate expenditure and service delivery.</p> <p>Provide contract management advice, conduct contractual reviews and ensure legal procurement follows correct processes.</p> <p>Prepare accounts and financial statements for legal services rendered as relevant.</p> <p>Observe matter management and documentation retention protocols and procedures.</p> <p>Contribute to the development of precedent and capture of intellectual property.</p> <p>If requested complete matter time recording (although this is not presently required for day-to-day tasks).</p> <p>Champion governance and the legal function across the life of the Synod and Synod Ministries and Operations (SMO).</p> <p>Refer matters to relevant subject matter experts and business functions in the SMO teams including Finance, Risk and Insurance, IT, People and Culture, Synod Trust team, and Property Services.</p> <p>Support the development and management of relevant policies and procedures.</p> |
| Work in partnership | <p>Develop and maintain effective relationships across the life of the Synod.</p> <p>Demonstrate a nuanced understanding of purpose and mission when providing advice and services.</p> <p>Pro-actively negotiate and establish effective communication and workflow systems.</p> |
| Communicate effectively | <p>Confidently convey ideas and information in a clear and interesting way, understanding the target audience and objectives of any</p> |

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| | <p>communication. Use feedback to refine communication, and handle difficult and sensitive communications.</p> <p>Write briefs, emails and reports, using clear, concise and grammatically correct language. Edit written communications to ensure they contain the information necessary to achieve their purpose.</p> <p>Use multiple communication channels to tailor communication to relevant audiences.</p> |
| Demonstrate leadership | <p>Coach and mentor junior Legal team members where required, and role-model the UCA's Workplace Values and Characteristics.</p> <p>Be a key support for the Director, Legal Services (including any short-term Acting Director responsibilities if requested).</p> <p>Maintain clarity of purpose relevant to the aims of the Legal Services team as a whole.</p> <p>Prepare own annual work plan with agreed measurable outcomes.</p> <p>Contribute to Building and maintaining a team culture that thrives on mission, expertise and service orientation</p> |
| Demonstrate teamwork | <p>Openly share insights with others. Maintain effective and respectful relationships.</p> <p>Participate in team meetings and conversations with peers in a way that encourages collaboration, connection, and lighter and simpler systems.</p> <p>Remain open and flexible to new ideas and the sharing of resources, to ensure the wisest use of the Synod's resources.</p> <p>Demonstrate enthusiasm for the strategic direction and the purpose and goals of the team and broader Secretariat.</p> <p>Resolve any conflict that may arise through effective reconciliation methods.</p> <p>Participate in team development activities and exercises to enhance own leadership and foster a culture of teamwork across Synod ministries and operations.</p> <p>Undertake other duties as agreed.</p> |
| Manage self | <p>Prepare own work plan annually with agreed measurable outcomes.</p> <p>Demonstrate a commitment to developing self, learning new skills and gaining new insights into own effectiveness.</p> <p>Actively participate in the annual Performance, Planning and Development Program (PPD).</p> |

Synod Vision

Following Christ, walking together as First and Second Peoples, seeking community, compassion and justice for all creation.

Synod Ministries and Operations Mission

To inspire, resource and enable presbyteries, congregations and agencies to live Synod's vision.

Values and Characteristics

Trust – *a dependable partner* - being a dependable partner that builds trust through: respectful, just and honest action; acting with integrity; ensuring the safety of all children and vulnerable people is paramount; aligning policy and practices; and fulfilling promises.

Collaboration – *a shared responsibility* - taking responsibility and collaborating through; knowledge sharing; inclusive decision making; and walking together as First and Second Peoples.

Growth – *an expansive culture* - embracing a culture of generosity and growth by: nurturing new ways of doing things; continuous improvement to practices, systems and processes; hearing all voices, contributions; welcoming diversity and consultative leadership.

Sustainability – *a healthy ecosystem* - maintaining a vibrant environment by: the intentional use of resources and ensuring we have the right skills, development, gifts and talents where we and our work flourish.