# Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action

Position Description





## Position details

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| **Position title:** | Principal Solicitor  |
| **Position number:** | 50966771 |
| **Classification:** | Principal Solicitor (VPS 6 equivalent) |
| **Salary range:** | $138,631 - $185,518 plus superannuation |
| **Employment type:** | Ongoing  |
| **Group:** | Corporate Services |
| **Division & Branch:** | Legal and Legislation | Legal |
| **Work location:** | 2 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne Hybrid work arrangement available: [x] Yes [ ]  No  |
| **Reports to:** | Managing Principal Solicitor  |
| **Direct reports:** | [ ]  Yes [x]  No If yes, how many? |
| **Further information:** | Alec Bombell | **T**: 03 8508 0013  |

Position purpose

The Principal Solicitor is a strategic thinker who is highly organised with excellent technical, conceptual and analytical skills and a proven ability to build strong relationships and partnerships across the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) business areas, and with key stakeholders.

The position self-manages and supervises the work of more junior lawyers, contributing to DEECA’s success through providing authoritative advice to senior management and staff on a diverse range of legal, legal policy and legislation-related issues with a focus on leveraging the division’s deep understanding of the department’s legal and legislative frameworks to provide relevant, risk-based and solutions-focused advice and delivery.

The role sits in an all-round government legal team, able to pivot to support DEECA with priority risks and issues as required. A focus for the role is to provide legal and regulatory advice relating to earth resources.

As a high performing and experienced senior lawyer, the Principal Solicitor has deep knowledge and experience in a range of diverse core in-house subject areas including commercial and contract law, government procurement practices, administrative law, regulatory approvals and investigations, corporate governance, contract dispute resolution and litigation, major projects, and statutory interpretation. The position requires an agile professional committed to performing at the highest level with demonstrated initiative, a willingness to take on new challenges, and a proven ability to provide clear, accurate and timely advice. The successful candidate is required to be a qualified lawyer.

Context

*The Group*

Corporate Services comprises six divisions which includes Legal and Legislation, Strategic Communications, Finance Infrastructure and Procurement Services, Information Services, People and Culture and Strategy and Performance. Each deliver services and expert advice that enables the department to be a sustainable, vibrant and efficient organisation.

*The Division*

The Legal and Legislation Division partners with groups across DEECA to optimise success, minimise risk and deliver on government objectives through the provision of expert legal advice on department priorities, the development of legislation, and the provision of prosecutions and freedom of information management. The Division also supports whole of department legal procurement, supports the management of litigation and provides efficient systems for managing transactional legal work.

The Division supports staff development and work is allocated across the Division. Team members are expected to develop and utilise skills in other practice areas and staff may be asked to undertake work for other teams or branches within the Division according to priorities.

*The Branch*

The Legal Branch is responsible for DEECA-wide delivery of legal services related to providing strategic legal advice for government priority policy initiatives, programs, operations and risks, management of litigation and disputes involving DEECA and strategic advice on the management of significant litigation,risk identification and mitigation including advice on protection and management of DEECA’s reputation, management of DEECA’s use of the Victorian government’s legal services panel, developing and managing frameworks for external delivery of transactional legal work, and supporting the Division’s operational systems and processes through legal operations expertise.

Accountabilities

* Deliver – with minimal to no supervision – high quality, accurate and strategic legal advice in the core areas of, administrative law (including operation of government and an awareness of constitutional issues), regulatory approvals and investigations, statutory interpretation, corporate governance, projects (including major projects of varying sensitivity and complexity), litigation and dispute resolution, with a particular focus on earth resources regulation, and as required in the broader department practice areas which include: agriculture, Crown land use and development, energy law, environmental law, First Nations self-determination and related frameworks, natural resource management, and fire and emergency management.
* Protect the interests of the government by pro-actively identifying risks (including emerging risks) and issues in the delivery of legal advice and priority projects, devising strategies and potential solutions to address risks, working collaboratively across the Legal Branch, the Division and the department to bring the right people together to ensure a comprehensive solution is reflected in the advice given or outcomes achieved.
* Develop and advise on proposals for strategic management of legal issues that may arise from the department’s policy objectives and operations in the department’s practice areas, including working on complex and cross disciplinary matters and producing high quality work as required.
* Lead the in-house contribution to the management of disputes (including litigation) and responses to inquiries by providing fit for purpose clear, concise and accurate advice and recommended strategies to responsible policy and program areas, and briefing Counsel as required.
* Act as an ambassador for the department’s Corporate Services Group through working with excellence in customer service, collaboration and relationship building and supporting divisional capability building, reporting and knowledge management through habitual and outstanding file and information management practices.
* Support the work of the Division as a responsive, strategic advisory service on complex, strong alignment high-impact work by proactively contributing to the development of innovative, useful self-service tools and other solutions for routine, transactional work. Identify, lead and / or participate in capability-building training in key risk areas across the department to assist the Division in delivering on its key legal functions where required.
* Lead projects, supervise the work of other lawyers, work in and/or lead (as required) multi-disciplinary project teams across the Branch, Division or the department as required.
* Practice cultural safety by creating and contributing to environments, relationships and systems free from racism and discrimination so that people can feel safe, valued and able to participate.

Key Selection Criteria

The key selection criteria specified below outline the capabilities required for the position.

**Specialist/Technical Expertise/Qualifications**

* An Australian lawyer holding or eligible to hold an Australian practising certificate under the Legal Profession Uniform Law (Victoria).
* Demonstrated ability to perform unsupervised and deliver and supervise the delivery of – in a timely manner and at a level of excellence including when under time pressure – accurate, concise, clear and authoritative legal advice in the core areas of administrative law (including operation of government and an awareness of Constitutional issues), regulatory approvals and investigations, statutory interpretation, , litigation and dispute resolution, and an ability to manage significant and/or high profile litigation. Experience operating at a senior level in two of these areas is mandatory and highly regarded in all.
* Strong experience in either broader general in-house or government legal practice and/or some of the department’s areas of specialisation: environmental law, energy law, First Nations self-determination and related frameworks, agriculture, Crown land use and development, natural resource management and fire and emergency management, commissions and inquiries.

**Capabilities**

* **Stakeholder Management**: Identifies and manages a range of complex and often competing needs, facilitates innovative solutions to resolve stakeholder issues, uses understanding of the stakeholder’s organisational context to ensure outcomes are achieved.
* **Systems thinking:** Assesses situations and identifies the best systems tools for analysing, understanding the system and addressing problems, can apply system archetypes to identify common dynamics that appear in different situations, identifies and understands the impact of particular courses of action on other parts of the organisation or more broadly.
* **Critical thinking and problem solving**: Takes into account wider business context within business unit when considering options to resolve issues, identifies recurring problems and prevents future recurrence by integrating solutions into work process, delivers tangible business outcomes as a result of critically evaluating problems from multiple perspectives and delivering effective solutions.
* **Influence and persuasion**: Gains agreement to proposals and ideas, builds behind the scenes support for ideas to ensure buy-in and ownership; uses chains of indirect influence to achieve outcomes, involves experts or other third parties to strengthen case.

Position specific requirements

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| Financial Delegation Value | Nil. |
| The occupational health and safety requirements of this position may include, but are not limited to: | * Sedentary desk work
* Emergency response work
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| DEECA will conduct relevant checks about applicants and the information provided within an application. Checks will include but are not limited to:  | A Declaration and Consent form consenting to DEECA contacting current and previous employer(s) to substantiate employment history, past conduct and performance is required. A satisfactory National Police Check will be required (for all non-DEECA employees). |
|  Employment terms and conditions | Are governed by the *Victorian Public Service Enterprise Agreement 2024* and the *Public Administration Act* *2004.*Recipients of Victorian Public Service (VPS) voluntary departure packages should note that re-employment restrictions apply.Non-VPS applicants will be subject to a probation period of six months |
| Privacy  | The department affirms that the collection and handling of applications and personal information will be consistent with the requirements of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act* 2014. |

About the Department

We employ approximately 6,300 staff, including around 600 seasonal staff, across more than 86 locations throughout Victoria, across energy, environment, climate action, water, agriculture, and resources portfolios.

Our challenge is to maintain Victoria’s liveability, with a population expected to almost double by 2050, while responding to climate change and protecting our natural environment, infrastructure and heritage for future generations. We take a community-centred approach and involve communities and key stakeholders in decisions and policies that affect them and we collaborate across our portfolios to design and deliver services and programs.

For further information about the department, please visit our website [www.deeca.vic.gov.au](http://www.deeca.vic.gov.au)

Our values

Our values align with the core [Public Sector values](https://careers.vic.gov.au/victorian-public-sector/public-sector-values-integrity) – responsiveness, integrity, impartiality, accountability, respect, leadership and human rights. Additionally, we use our Leadership Model to shape the way we work. Using the principles of ‘Work Together’, ‘Do What Matters’ and ‘Make a Difference’ we create a culture that puts our people at the centre of everything we do. The Leadership Model reminds us of what’s important in our daily interactions with each other, and in the actions and decisions we take to deliver our work.

Our Community Charter

We are committed to the Victorian Government Public Engagement Framework that enables meaningful and inclusive engagement to make better decisions and improve the lives of Victorians. Our Community Charter is our promise to be available, be involved and listen, and take action as we deliver services and create opportunities that supports thriving, productive, and sustainable communities, environments and industries.

Emergency Response and Health and Safety Requirements

The departmentplays a major role in Victoria’s emergency response activities, through an all-hazards, all-emergencies approach. Staff may be directly employed for these roles or may be called upon to support these activities as required following the appropriate training and “fit for work” assessment.

A Diverse, Inclusive and Flexible Workplace

DEECA welcomes applicants from a diverse range of backgrounds and we focus on the essential requirements of the job and being consistent and fair in our treatment of all applicants. Our diversity and inclusion outcome pillars:

1. We are connected to liveable, inclusive, sustainable communities
2. We are diverse
3. We are inclusive and flexible
4. We are safe and respectful

DEECA can provide reasonable adjustments for people with a disability. If you need assistance to fully participate in the application or interview process, please use the contact listed under ‘Position Details’.

**Aboriginal Cultural Safety**

Cultural safety of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians, as an underpinning principle of self-determination, is embedded in everything we do. Under the Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework DEECA is committed to creating a culturally safe workplace, where there is space for culture to live and for spiritual and belief systems to exist. For further information, please contact self.determination@deeca.vic.gov.au.

**Balancing your Life / Hybrid Working**

We understand that a balanced life is important to our employees and we offer a wide range of flexible options to help you manage family, health, carer responsibilities, study, career or personal interests. Options may include working some days from home or other suitable locations, starting early or late, working part time, job share or accessing paid or unpaid leave in line with our flexible working policy.

To receive this information in an accessible format (such as large print or audio) please call the Customer Service Centre: 136 186, TTY: 133 677, or email customer.service@deeca.vic.gov.au