

# Role Description

## Senior Caseworker

### Client Assessment & Referral Service (CARS)



Cluster	Stronger Communities
Agency	Legal Aid NSW
Division/Branch/Unit	Client Assessment and Referral Service (CARS)
Classification/Grade/Band	Clerk, grade 7/8
ANZSCO Code	272511
PCAT Code	1119192
Date of Approval	15 August 2014 Revised 19 May 2025
Agency Website	<a href="http://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au">www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a>

#### Agency overview

Legal Aid NSW is the largest legal aid agency in Australia, comprising a Central Sydney office and 28 regional offices in metropolitan and regional centres across NSW including the two satellite offices located at Walgett and Bourke and a number of specialist services and advice clinics. It was established under the *Legal Aid Commission Act 1979* as an independent authority to assist economically and socially disadvantaged people to understand and protect their rights in the legal system.

People with disability, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, women and children, Indigenous people and people with mental illness are some of the groups who may experience difficulties when enforcing and defending their rights.

Working in partnership with private solicitors, Legal Aid NSW provides legal information, legal advice, minor assistance, and legal representation to eligible people in many areas of law. Legal Aid NSW also provides alternative dispute resolution services, community legal education programs, and publications on legal issues.

#### The Client Assessment & Referral Service

The Client Assessment & Referral Service (CARS) is an independent in-house allied professional service (APS) which provides facilitated referrals, service coordination, case management, case consultation and various types of reports for Legal Aid NSW clients and their solicitors. We also provide information to Legal Aid NSW lawyers about services which can support their clients.

The CARS team consists of a Team Leader, Senior Case Workers, a Mental Health Advocacy Service (MHAS) Consultant and an Information and Referral Support Worker. We have significant direct practice experience in the areas of trauma, mental health, cognitive impairment, disability, child abuse and neglect, substance misuse, domestic and family violence (DFV), sexual assault, suicide and self-harm. Many clients referred to CARS come from severely disadvantaged backgrounds, with childhoods characterised by chronic abuse and neglect. Some have had multiple contacts with the criminal justice system. Most are living with trauma. Their support needs typically stretch far beyond their present legal matter to encompass a host of other concerns (housing, employment, counselling, rehabilitation, etc.).

## Primary purpose of the role

Provide trauma-informed, strengths-based direct practice for CARS clients, which addresses the specific concerns for which they were referred by their Legal Aid NSW solicitor as well as those subsequently identified by the Senior Caseworker. This can include undertaking assessments, writing reports, facilitating referrals, case consultation and case management.

## Key accountabilities

- Collaborate with clients to identify, assess and where possible, action their unmet support needs.
- Commit to ongoing professional learning and development to stay across the broad range of topics that the Senior Caseworker will encounter in their direct practice.
- Complete assigned reports and other written tasks to a consistently high standard, applicable to the settings in which they will be used (primarily, Courts and Tribunals).
- Consult with Legal Aid NSW solicitors to assess the psychosocial dimensions of a client matter.
- Contribute to continuous service delivery improvement through active participation in in-house committees, projects, workshops, submissions and other opportunities.
- Deliver a professional service which contributes towards positive client outcomes.
- Maintain accurate records and data collection to ensure client information is current and available in accordance with Legal Aid NSW policies and procedures.
- Undertake comprehensive client assessments (psychosocial, capacity, etc.) that are culturally safe, and which reflect contemporary best practice.



## Key challenges

- Handling complex and challenging client situations in the absence of accessible, appropriate referral out service options, in certain circumstances.
- Preparing and drafting reports to comply with the possibility you may be cross-examined in a Court or Tribunal about the contents of your report.
- Working in a high-volume work environment with strict deadlines and a range of competing demands.

## Key relationships

### Internal

Who	Why
APS Team Leader, CARS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Professional supervision and as required support. .</li></ul>
APS colleagues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Collaborate to ensure the delivery of high-quality client services.</li></ul>
Legal Aid NSW solicitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consulting and assisting in the identification and servicing of clients with socio-legal needs.</li></ul>
Allied Professional Practice Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Peer support, expertise sharing, professional training, and development.</li></ul>

### External

Who	Why
Peak bodies, community-based government and non-government agencies across NSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish and foster effective relationships to facilitate client service provision.</li></ul>

## Role dimensions

### Decision Making

This role acts with a level of autonomy in relation to day-to-day work priorities and coordination of work resources. Seeks guidance from and escalates issues to the APS Team Leader CARS.

### Reporting line

APS Team Leader, CARS

### Essential requirements

- 5 years minimum relevant experience.
- Bachelor's degree (social work, psychology, or other relevant qualification), or a master's degree in social work.
- Registration with the appropriate professional body (AASW, APS, etc.).
- Current Working with Children Check (WWCC).

### Capabilities for the role




The [NSW public sector capability framework](#) describes the capabilities (knowledge, skills and abilities) needed to perform a role. There are four main groups of capabilities: personal attributes, relationships, results, and business enablers, with a fifth people management group of capabilities for roles with managerial responsibilities. These groups, combined with capabilities drawn from occupation-specific capability sets where relevant, work together to provide an understanding of the capabilities needed for the role.


The capabilities are separated into focus capabilities and complementary capabilities.

### Focus capabilities

*Focus capabilities* are the capabilities considered the most important for effective performance of the role. These capabilities will be assessed at recruitment.

The focus capabilities for this role are shown below with a brief explanation of what each capability covers and the indicators describing the types of behaviours expected at each level.

NSW Public Sector Capability Framework		
Capability Group	Capability Name	Level
 Personal Attributes	<b>Display Resilience and Courage</b>	<b>Adept</b>
	Act with Integrity	Adept
	<b>Manage Self</b>	<b>Adept</b>
	Value Diversity	Adept
 Relationships	<b>Communicate Effectively</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>
	Commit to Customer Service	Intermediate
	Work Collaboratively	Intermediate
	<b>Influence and Negotiate</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>
 Results	Deliver Results	Adept
	<b>Plan and Prioritise</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>

	<b>Think and Solve Problems</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>
	Demonstrate Accountability	Adept
	Finance	Foundational
	Technology	Intermediate
	Procurement and Contract Management	Foundational
	<b>Project Management</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>

## Focus capabilities

The focus capabilities for the role are the capabilities in which occupants must demonstrate immediate competence. The behavioural indicators provide examples of the types of behaviours that would be expected at that level and should be reviewed in conjunction with the role's key accountabilities.

NSW Public Sector Capability Framework		
Group and Capability	Level	Behavioural Indicators
<b>Personal Attributes</b> Display Resilience and Courage	Adept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be flexible, show initiative and respond quickly when situations change</li> <li>Give frank and honest feedback/advice</li> <li>Listen when ideas are challenged, seek to understand the nature of the criticism, and respond constructively</li> <li>Raise and work through challenging issues and seek alternatives</li> <li>Keep control of own emotions and stay calm under pressure and in challenging situations</li> </ul>
<b>Personal Attributes</b> Manage Self	Adept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek and respond positively to constructive feedback and guidance</li> <li>Demonstrate a high level of personal motivation</li> </ul>
<b>Relationships</b> Communicate Effectively	Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on key points and speak in 'Plain English'</li> <li>Clearly explain and present ideas and arguments</li> <li>Listen to others when they are speaking and ask appropriate, respectful questions</li> <li>Monitor own and others' non-verbal cues and adapt where necessary</li> <li>Prepare written material that is well structured and easy to follow by the intended audience</li> <li>Communicate routine technical information clearly</li> </ul>

<b>Relationships</b> Influence and Negotiate	Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilise facts, knowledge, and experience to support recommendations</li> <li>• Work towards positive and mutually satisfactory outcomes</li> <li>• Identify and resolve issues in discussion with other staff and stakeholders</li> <li>• Identify others' concerns and expectations</li> <li>• Respond constructively to conflict and disagreements</li> <li>• Keep discussion focused on the key issues</li> </ul>
<b>Results</b> Plan and Prioritise	Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the team/unit objectives and align operational activities accordingly</li> <li>• Initiate, and develop team goals and plans and use feedback to inform future planning</li> <li>• Respond proactively to changing circumstances and adjust plans and schedules when necessary</li> <li>• Consider the implications of immediate and longer-term organisational issues and how these might impact on the achievement of team/unit goals</li> <li>• Accommodate and respond with initiative to changing priorities and operating environments</li> </ul>
<b>Results</b> Think and Solve Problems	Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research and analyse information and make recommendations based on relevant evidence</li> <li>• Identify issues that may hinder completion of tasks and find appropriate solutions</li> <li>• Be willing to seek out input from others and share own ideas to achieve best outcomes</li> <li>• Identify ways to improve systems or processes which are used by the team/unit</li> </ul>
<b>Business Enablers</b> Project Management	Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perform basic research and analysis which others will use to inform project directions</li> <li>• Understand project goals, steps to be undertaken and expected outcomes</li> <li>• Prepare accurate documentation to support cost or resource estimates</li> <li>• Participate and contribute to reviews of progress, outcomes, and future improvements</li> <li>• Identify and escalate any possible variance from project plans</li> </ul>