

A. Project Overview

The *Seeking Refuge Project* aims to assist residents in the Geelong/Bellarine region and some Western Suburbs of Melbourne who are seeking asylum in Australia, to prepare their applications for Protection visas. Due to severely limited provision of Government-funded legal assistance to Asylum Seekers, Bellarine for Refugees partnered with the Ross Trust, the Wesley Centre for Life Enrichment, and Refugee Legal (previously Refugee & Immigration Legal Centre (RILC)), to develop a free legal assistance service in Geelong.

The *Seeking Refuge Project* will engage Volunteer Lawyers (willing to register as Migration Agents), Migration Agents and Administrative Volunteers to carry out this much-needed work. All volunteers will be trained by Refugee Legal, supported and covered by volunteer worker and professional indemnity insurance. Refugee Legal is an independent community legal centre specialising in refugee and immigration law, policy and practice. Refugee Legal has been assisting Asylum Seekers, Refugees and disadvantaged migrants in the community and in detention for over 26 years and has substantial casework experience and expertise. Refugee Legal's work involves provision of key legal assistance to those who could not otherwise obtain it due to financial or other forms of distinct disadvantage often related to their cultural or linguistically diverse backgrounds or experiences of torture or trauma. Each year Refugee Legal assists over 5,000 people. Refugee Legal also conducts extensive law reform, advocacy and education programs.

B. Duties and Responsibilities

Seeking Refuge Project Migration Agent Volunteers will be required to:

1. Attend evening and/ or weekend clinics as rostered;
2. Work under the supervision and comply with directions given by Refugee Legal supervisors to ensure the provision of high quality immigration advice;
3. Conduct client interviews;
4. Take client instructions;
5. Ensure that detailed file notes are taken of the issues presented by clients and the advice given;

6. Assist and advise in relation to visa criteria and requirements;
7. Assist to complete forms for visa applications to the Department of Immigration and Border Protection;
8. Assist and advise about lodgement of review applications;
9. Assist with preparation of statements/letters/submissions providing further information for consideration in migration matters;
10. Undertake ongoing casework for pro bono cases when required;
11. Provide referrals to specified agencies.

C. Accountabilities

All Migration Agents are responsible for:

1. Communicating availability to attend training, and evening and/or weekend clinics to the Project Worker in a timely manner;
2. Accepting and responding to feedback and complying with all directions given by Refugee Legal staff about the performance of the volunteer role;
3. All Migration Agents are responsible for the completion of their Office of the Migration Agents Registration Authority (OMARA) registration and paying the associated costs (Volunteer registration is \$160 for initial registration and \$105 per annum for re-registration);
4. Volunteers are required to notify OMARA and the Legal Services Board (where applicable) of the commencement or discontinuation of their volunteer role with Refugee Legal through the *Seeking Refugee Project*.
5. Attending an information session, passing a selection interview and participating in required training, prior to acceptance as a Migration Agent Volunteer.
6. Maintaining confidentiality of client information and all other information relevant to volunteering with the *Seeking Refuge Project* as per the Refugee Legal Confidentiality Agreement.
7. Declaring any perceived or actual conflict of interest related to current or past employment or volunteer roles. This will be reviewed by the Project Worker in conjunction with a senior manager at Refugee Legal, and decisions will be made on an individual basis.
8. Complying with relevant Barwon Community Legal Service and Refugee Legal policies as set out in the Barwon Community Legal Service Volunteer Policy, Volunteer Agreement and Code of Conduct, Refugee Legal Volunteer Handbook (including all volunteer policies, equal opportunity, internal complaints, Occupational Health and Safety and accident and incident management).
9. Following the Migration Agent code of Conduct

D. Selection Criteria

Please note you are **not** required to answer the key selection criteria.

Essential attributes:

1. Eligibility for OMARA registration by holding a current legal practising certificate (voluntary or otherwise) issued by an Australian body authorised by law to issue it, or having completed the Graduate Certificate in Australian Migration Law and Practice and passed the 'common assessment items relating to registration', which forms part of the certificate;
 - a) Lawyers who hold a legal practising certificate or eligibility to apply for a legal practicing certificate must register as a Migration Agent to volunteer in this role.
 - b) Migration Agent Registration can be conducted through Refugee Legal.
2. Willingness to work under supervision of Refugee Legal staff including taking direction and feedback;
3. A strong interest in social justice and human rights, particularly Refugee and Asylum Seeker rights and policy in Australia;
4. A sensitivity to the highly vulnerable nature of clients;
5. A willingness to work with people from a variety of backgrounds;
6. Good verbal and written communication skills, including command of the English language;
7. Ability to take instructions from clients and keep accurate and concise file notes;
8. Willingness to work with interpreters either face to face or over the phone.

Personal Attributes

1. Capacity to work under supervision, use initiative, set priorities, organise and manage workloads;
2. High level of energy and enthusiasm.

Other information

1. Support and debriefing will be provided to all volunteers as part of the project.
2. Acceptance as a volunteer into the *Seeking Refuge Project* is subject to a National Police Check, which is part of Registering as a Migration Agent, and a professional reference check.
3. Volunteers are required to maintain their OMARA registration and practising certificate and provide copies of these to the Project Worker.
4. Volunteers are required to disclose any criminal charges or findings of guilt that arise while volunteering and to submit to regular Police Checks if required.
5. A minimum 6 month commitment from all volunteers is required.

6. If volunteers register with OMARA through Refugee Legal processes, this date is registered as the date of acceptance by OMARA.
7. Volunteers who participate at least fortnightly are automatically eligible for all Continuing Professional Development (CPD) sessions offered by Refugee Legal. Alternatively, eligibility for CPDs is at the discretion of the Refugee Legal Volunteer Coordinator.

E. Training, supervision and clinics

All volunteers will be trained by Refugee Legal. Training may take place in Geelong or Melbourne.

All volunteer work will be supervised by Migration Agents and RILC staff.

All work/clinics will be based in Geelong.

F. How to apply

Thank you for expressing your interest in volunteering as a Migration Agent/Lawyer with Refugee Legal and the *Seeking Refugee Project* (Geelong).

Please return your completed application form (if you have not already done so) and a copy of your current CV via email to marijana.graljuk@barwoncls.org.au

The Seeking Refuge Project Worker will contact you to acknowledge receipt of your application. You will then be contacted to attend an information and/or training session. Following this, a selection interview will take place and acceptance into the program will be determined.

For more information regarding the *Seeking Refuge Project*, please contact Marijana on 1300 430 599.

This Position Description may be subject to change throughout the SRP. We will notify you if this occurs.

I confirm that I have read and understood the above position description.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____