

## Job Profile

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Position	<b>Special Counsel Assisting the State Coroner and Deputy State Coroners</b>
Division	Court Services - Coroners Court
Remuneration	LE5

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### THE ORGANISATION

The Courts Administration Authority is constituted by the *Courts Administration Act 1993*. The Act established the State Courts Administration Council as an administrative authority independent of control by executive government and to confer on the Council power to provide courts with the administrative facilities and services necessary for the proper administration of justice.

Participating courts of the Authority are the Supreme Court, District Court, Environment, Resources and Development Court, Youth Court, Magistrates Court, and the Coroners Court.

### THE CORONERS COURT

The Coroner's Court is responsible for investigating reportable deaths under the *Coroners Act 2003*. The Coroner's Office provides a broad range of services to the community by investigating these deaths in order to identify serious and systemic safety issues while recognising the need to assist bereaved families to understand the coronial process.

The coronial jurisdiction is a sensitive and unique environment that requires adherence to the highest level of confidentiality. Staff working within this jurisdiction may be exposed to court evidence that at times will be graphic or disturbing.

### THE ROLE

Special Counsel Assisting is responsible for providing legal services to the State Coroner and Deputy State Coroners. The primary duty of Counsel Assisting is to prepare and present coronial inquests, often in quick succession and occasionally in country areas. Other aspects of the role include overseeing coronial investigations, providing advice on whether to hold an inquest into particular matters and engaging with bereaved families.

### KEY RELATIONSHIPS

The position reports to the State Coroner and Deputy State Coroners, and the Manager Coroners Court.

This position maintains key working relationships with:

- State Coroner
- Deputy State Coroners
- Manager Coroners Court and other stakeholders in relation to coronial functions

## **KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES / RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Prepare matters for inquest.
- Appear in inquests as Counsel Assisting the State Coroner or Deputy State Coroner, including detailed examination of witnesses including experts.
- Conduct research into relevant areas of the law and advise the State Coroner and Deputy State Coroners on appropriate recommendations.
- Communicate clearly and sensitively with grieving families.
- Provide complex verbal and written legal advice to the State Coroner and Deputy State Coroners.
- Appear at hearings in other jurisdictions to represent the interests of the State Coroner and/or the Coroners Court from time to time.
- Ensure that legal services are provided in accordance with professional standards, including ethical principles, confidentiality obligations, and the Public Sector Code of Conduct.
- Liaise with the State Coroner, Deputy State Coroners, Special Counsel Assisting and other personnel in relation to all coronial functions.
- Liaise with and provide direction to investigators from SAPol, Medical Practitioners, and other agencies and individuals.
- Ensure that in dealing with all issues pertaining to social, ethnic and cultural sensitivities, that the dignity and rights of those involved in coronial proceedings are respected and upheld.
- Provide oversight of investigations in accordance with the protocol established following the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.
- Prepare and deliver presentations to external stakeholders pertaining to the coronial jurisdiction from time to time.
- Other tasks arising from time to time requiring the skill and experience of a senior legal practitioner.

## **SELECTION CRITERIA**

### **Essential**

- Experience in counsel work, involving witness examination, demonstrating highly developed advocacy skills and experience.
- Theoretical and practical understanding of criminal and/or civil litigation.
- Clear understanding of the coronial process and relevant legislation.
- Demonstrated ability to provide legal advice in an accurate and timely manner, while balancing competing interests such as court work.
- Highly developed communication skills at a professional level both verbally and in writing.
- Demonstrated experience in providing independent and impartial judgment.
- Thoroughness in research and presentation of issues, with strong attention to detail.

- A high degree of organisational ability and self-driven initiative.

**Desirable**

- Experience in examination of expert witnesses.
- An understanding of medical terminology.
- Experience dealing with bereaved families in a sensitive manner.
- Demonstrated ability to deal with voluminous materials in the preparation of litigation.

## **Minimum Qualification**

A Degree in Law (plus admitted Practitioner of the Supreme Court of South Australia and eligible to hold a practising certificate).

## **SPECIAL CONDITIONS**

The following special conditions apply to this position:

- Appointment is under the *Courts Administration Act 1993*. Terms and Conditions of employment are governed by the *Public Sector Act 2009*.
- Appointment is dependent upon a current National Police Certificate that the CAA finds satisfactory.
- As a justice agency, the CAA may receive details of spent convictions as part of any Criminal History Screening and use this information in the selection process.
- Special Counsel Assisting must not hold a concurrent substantive position with the Crown Solicitor's Office or any office which may provide, or be perceived to provide, a potential conflict of interest.
- Remuneration may be offered at the equivalent level to LEC5.