

Job Profile

Position: Senior Social Worker

Division: Court Services – Coroners Court

Remuneration: AHP2

THE ORGANISATION

The Courts Administration Authority (CAA) 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 Coroner's Court.

THE CORONERS COURT

The Coroners Court is an inquisitorial court responsible for investigating deaths that are reportable pursuant to the *Coroners Act 2003*. The Coroners Court provides a broad range of services to the community by assisting bereaved families to understand the coronial investigation process. The cornerstone of coronial inquiry is to provide a thorough and impartial service to the community when investigating the cause and circumstances surrounding reportable deaths.

The coronial jurisdiction is a unique environment which deals with highly sensitive information and evidence relating to the circumstances and causes of a person's death and all staff must adhere to the strictest confidentiality practices.

THE ROLE

The role of Senior Social Worker at the Coroners Court necessarily involves exposure to traumatic details of death, both written and graphic.

The objectives to be met by the Senior Social Worker are:

- Support grieving people to understand the emotional, social, and physical effects of bereavement by offering clients initial support through brief counselling and providing information and referrals to appropriate agencies for longer term support

- Assist grieving and traumatised people to understand the legislative requirements of the *Coroners Act 2003* and the process of coronial investigation
- Uphold the legislative requirements of the Court when dealing with reportable deaths
- Contribute to policies and procedures related to coronial activities

KEY RELATIONSHIPS

Reports to the Deputy Manager, and through them to the Manager Coroner's Court.

This position maintains key working relationships with:

- State Coroner
- Deputy State Coroner
- Special Counsel Assisting the Coroner
- Coronial Investigation Section and other members of SAPOL
- Forensic Science SA
- Public Trustee
- Births, Deaths, and Marriages
- Administrative personnel in relation to coronial functions

KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES / RESPONSIBILITIES

Ensure the delivery of an effective coronial social work service by:

- Providing information, both verbally and in writing, to people from a broad range of backgrounds about coronial investigations such as differing levels of postmortem examinations, organ retention, and the status of the coronial process
- Maintaining administrative systems including the coronial database and keeping records and statistics pertaining to performance activities
- Appropriately identifying and applying relevant legislation, policies, and procedures
- Facilitating viewings of deceased persons at the Forensic Science SA Mortuary as requested by families
- Facilitating the coronial organ retention process as it relates to next of kin notification to ensure accuracy, timeliness, and respect to families
- Participating with other key agencies and personnel in responding to disaster and emergency events involving multiple fatalities

Provide crisis intervention support and counselling (predominantly by telephone) including:

- Assessment and counselling of individuals in the initial stage of grief
- Assessment of family dynamics when a death occurs
- Short-term crisis advice to individuals and families
- Referral of individuals and families to appropriate agencies for ongoing support
- Providing information about the status of coronial investigations

Provide information to clients prior to, during, and following coronial inquests, including:

- Explaining inquest procedures to demystify court proceedings
- Facilitating access to the coronial brief once a file has been closed
- Liaising between relatives and the Coroners Court
- Providing support and assistance on the day of an inquest
- Providing information about the outcome of an investigation

Maintain professional working relationships by:

- Liaising and consulting with a range of Government and non-Government agencies involved with services to the bereaved
- Providing presentations to other agencies as requested on the role of the State Coroner and the Coronial process
- Liaising with the Deputy Manager and Manager on matters of practice, principles and policies relating to the management of senior next of kin and other family

SELECTION CRITERIA

Essential

- Demonstrated ability to quickly develop rapport with distressed clients to enable initial assessment of need, short-term counselling, and referrals to appropriate agencies for longer-term support
- Demonstrated experience in trauma-informed practice and an understanding of trauma responses
- Demonstrated ability to communicate at a professional level, verbally and in writing
- Ability to develop a sound understanding of legislation relevant to the Coroners Court
- An ability to clarify situations with reference to the Coroners Act 2003 and other relevant legislation, and to act impartially to devise workable solutions
- Experience in determining work priorities in a high-pressure environment
- A sound understanding of vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue, and the need for self-care strategies to ensure empathic and ethical social work practices
- Experience in the use of Microsoft packages, Outlook, and the ability to use the Coroner's Court Case Management System

Desirable

- Experience in providing a social work service within a multi-disciplinary or inter-organisational context
- Demonstrated experience in providing advice to senior staff and stakeholders on client needs, and service standards
- An understanding of the principles of judicial independence
- Knowledge and understanding of medical terminology

Qualification

- Appropriate degree or equivalent qualification which gives eligibility for full membership of the Australian Association of Social Workers

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
- May be required to undertake work-related intrastate travel, which may require driving a motor vehicle and overnight absences