

Paralegal Program

Office of the Director
of Public Prosecutions
New South Wales

Overview



Overview

The ODPP, established by the *Director of Public Prosecutions Act 1986*, provides for the people of New South Wales a dynamic prosecution service recognised for its excellence and leadership. It commenced operations on 13 July 1987.

The ODPP conducts prosecutions for serious offences in the Childrens, Local, District and Supreme Courts and conducts appeals and other matters in the District and Supreme Courts, Court of Criminal Appeal and the High Court of Australia.

The ODPP conducts prosecutions of all child sexual assault matters where the complainant is currently under 16 years.

Our office locations

- Sydney CBD (Head Office)
- Campbelltown
- Parramatta
- Penrith
- Dubbo
- Gosford
- Lismore
- Newcastle
- Wagga Wagga
- Wollongong



What is the Paralegal Program?



Paralegal Program

In 2024, the ODDP's Legal Development Program (LDP) was reviewed and discontinued. The Paralegal Program is being piloted in its place.



Paralegal Program

The Paralegal Program is for talented and enthusiastic law students who have completed Foundations and Criminal Law or have a minimum 12 months relevant work experience. As a paralegal you will gain valuable work experience in criminal prosecutions. The program offers the flexibility of full time and part time opportunities subject to student availability and operational requirements of the ODPP.

Paralegals contribute to building relationships with key stakeholders including ODPP staff, members of the NSW Police Force, defence legal practitioners, court staff and others within the criminal justice system.

The Paralegal Program provides opportunities and employment pathways at all stages of the prosecution process. Paralegals work closely with Solicitors and Crown Prosecutors as part of a legal team. This is a fantastic opportunity to develop your legal research and analytical skills and learn from talented and experienced Solicitors and Crown Prosecutors.



What is involved in the Paralegal Program



Induction and Training

Program Description	Key Accountability	How Success will be measured
The Office will provide a practical legal induction and on-the-job training during the program.	- Comply with the ODPP's legal guidelines, procedures and protocols. - Comply with the ODPP Code of Conduct, maintain professional and ethical standards. - Comply with legislation, ODPP's policy and practices of employment including anti-discrimination, equal employment opportunity and occupational health and safety.	- Undertake ODPP training and development programs. - Compliance with Director's Prosecution Guidelines and legal and ethical practice and procedures. - Feedback from Managing Solicitors regarding demonstrated skills from learning activities and on-the-job training.



Short Matters

Program Description	Key Accountability	How Success will be measured
Short Matters are all non-trial proceedings conducted by the ODPP. These include: • sentences in the District Court • appeals by defendants against the conviction and/or severity of penalties imposed in the Local Court • Crown appeals against the inadequacy of penalties imposed in the Local Court • callups for breach of good behaviour bonds • Notices of Motion seeking a variety of orders before the court • bail applications in the District Court • return of subpoenas.	• Prepare Short Matter files to ensure that all relevant information and documents are available for the solicitor appearing. • Request and obtain all relevant files for the rostered solicitor and update court results on MATTERS (ODPP database). • Attend promptly to any follow up tasks. • All work carried out in accordance with the Director's Prosecution Guidelines, ODPP Standard Operating Procedures and criminal law practice and procedures.	• Feedback from Managing Solicitors and solicitors appearing regarding file preparation and recording of accurate file notes and comprehensive court notations and Activity Based Costing completed within set timeframes. • All results updated accurately on MATTERS within set timeframes. • Follow up work completed including notifying victims of outcomes related to prosecutions within set timeframes. • Communication and team work skills assessed from feedback from managers and colleagues. • Liaison skills will be assessed from feedback from colleagues, police, court registry staff and witnesses.



Supreme Court Bail Applications

Program Description	Key Accountability	How Success will be measured
• Preparing and attending call overs before Registrars for the listing of Supreme Court bail applications. • Attending to administrative functions and assisting the rostered solicitors appearing to prepare matters for Supreme Court bail applications.	• Prepare Supreme Court bail files ensuring that all relevant information and documents are available for the solicitor appearing. • Update all relevant court results on MATTERS and attend to all follow up work, including advising victims and police of outcomes of applications within set timeframes.	• Feedback from Managing Solicitors and ODPP solicitors as to information obtained and files prepared accurately and within set timeframes. • All court documents filed and served on relevant parties within required timeframes. • Court results accurately updated on MATTERS within set timeframes. • Follow up work attended to as soon as practicable, including notification of result to police.



Local Court

Program Description	Key Accountability	How Success will be measured
• To assist solicitors appearing in ODPP Local Court lists to obtain files and prepare matters. • To provide general assistance to solicitors appearing in summary hearings and committal proceedings.	• Request and obtain all relevant files for the Local Court list, and update court results on MATTERS. • Assist solicitors as requested in the preparation of matters for Local Court summary and/or committal hearings. • Assist solicitors to compile and prepare briefs of evidence for the court and/or Solicitor Advocates and Crown Prosecutors.	• Files requested and obtained within the set timeframe. • Court results updated within the set timeframe on MATTERS. • Follow up work attended to as soon as practicable upon return of file from court.



Assist in the preparation of Trial matters

Program Description	Key Accountability	How Success will be measured
Involves attending to all aspects of preparing a matter for trial, assisting as required during the trial and attending to post trial work: • Prepare briefs of evidence • Issue subpoenas • Draft legal and procedural notices • Prepare correspondence under direction • Liaise with Police OIC and witnesses under direction and arrange conferences • Follow up requests to police for further information/evidence • Arrange for interpreters and witness travel • Prepare matters for referral to psychiatrists for mental health assessments • Attend to technology requirements and review digital evidence • Manage exhibits • Research law and procedure • Prepare matters for sentence including requesting and obtaining relevant material • Cull and complete files.	• Good file and records management. • Undertake all work related to preparing a matter for trial. • Under instruction from the solicitor with carriage; respond to enquiries of and from police, legal practitioners, witnesses, court registry staff and other areas of the Office to provide assistance relating to the process and progress of matters. • Complete all MATTERS related tasks as required. • Obtain all sentence related material.	• Briefs of evidence prepared within set timeframes and in accordance with ODPP procedures. • Subpoenas sent out in accordance with ODPP policy and procedures. • Requisitions followed up within timeframes. • All legal and procedural notices completed and served on relevant parties in compliance with relevant time standards and Director's Prosecution Guidelines. • Accurate and complete records maintained. • Victims' obligations met in accordance with the Director's Prosecution Guidelines and the Charter of Victims Rights. • MATTERS accurately updated within set timeframes. • Activity Based Costings completed promptly. • Assessment and feedback will be obtained from Crown Prosecutors, Managing Solicitors and ODPP solicitors regarding the quality and efficiency of work undertaken.



Program and skill developmental opportunities



Programs and skill development opportunities

The Programs offers:

- Full-time and part-time opportunities of paid practical legal experience in criminal prosecutions for a period of up to 12 months with the possibility of contract extensions.
- Experience working with solicitors and Crown Prosecutors
- On-the-job training and access to professional development
- Formal feedback, mentoring and informal networking
- Excellent working conditions including flexible work practices
- Challenging work that makes a difference.

The Programs will provide opportunities to develop and enhance your:

- Organisational skills
- Analytical skills
- Legal research skills
- Legal drafting and written communication
- Knowledge of criminal law, practice and procedure
- Communication skills
- Teamwork skills.



Pathway to a level 1 Solicitor role



This program serves as a pathway to a level 1 Solicitor role at the Office, making it an attractive opportunity for students in their penultimate and final years.

The program offers relevant work experience for students prior to admission as a Solicitor.

Paralegals will also have access to the Office's extensive resource library and training opportunities that support program participants to embed their knowledge of criminal law.



What are the challenges?



Challenges

- Balancing competing priorities.
- Working to strict timeframes under the instruction of multiple solicitors and Crown Prosecutors.
- Working with external stakeholders to obtain material and information required in the preparation of matters within short timeframes.
- Liaising with victims of crime, witnesses and stakeholders to relay procedural information and appropriately refer individuals to a solicitor.
- Dealing with traumatised victims and being exposed to confronting and sensitive material.



What are we looking for?



Candidates

To be equipped to undertake the Paralegal Program you will have demonstrated:

- an interest in the practice of criminal law and the functions of the ODPP
- the ability to provide high level legal and administrative support and work co-operatively within a professional team
- strong communication skills
- the ability to use initiative and meet conflicting deadlines.

We have ten offices throughout the State and are looking for people prepared to work regionally.



The Office offers a range of mechanisms to help you deal with the confronting nature of our work and to support your health and wellbeing, such as:



Employee assistance program



ODPP Wellcheck program



Fitness passport eligibility



Structured learning and development



Resilience and vicarious trauma training



Meetings and feedback from Managing Solicitors



Mentoring Program

