

ORGANISATION NAME: Office of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel

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Major Practice Areas

The Office of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel (OCPC) is the legislative drafting office for the State of Victoria. The primary role of the Office is to enable the implementation of government policy by transforming drafting instructions into Bills for Cabinet and then Parliament. OCPC lawyers draft legislation across the full spectrum of State law, and frequently develop substantial expertise in one or more fields. Bills may deal with a diverse range of subjects, including constitutional law, administrative law, human rights law, tax law, environmental law, property law and criminal law.

Graduate Recruitment

The Office does not offer ongoing graduate employment to students.

Vacation Employment for Law Students

In **2011/2012** the Office will offer **vacation employment** over summer (Nov 2011-Feb 2012) for law students (max 2 positions, preferably about to commence their last year, or having just completed their last year of Science/Law, Arts/Law, Commerce/Law, Economics/Law). These placements are usually for 6 weeks.

Students may be asked to research case law that is relevant to legislation being drafted in the Office. These research tasks will increase awareness of the interrelationship between the common law and written law. Other duties may involve (under supervision), assisting in the settling of Regulations and drafting of legislation. Students will be able to leave the office with an improved knowledge of the scope of Victorian Law, including its structure, how to find the latest law, how to track amendments and the inter-relationship of laws. Such knowledge can be invaluable to those later taking up legal practice or considering alternative careers working with the law.

Applications close 31 March, 2011.

Interview Process: Short interview for short listed applicants
Advice for Applicants: Please include a list of subjects undertaken, results to date and a brief letter outlining reasons for applying.

A Career in Drafting

As a lawyer at OCPC, you have the chance to pursue a unique and rewarding legal career at the very heart of State Government.

Legislative drafting is one of the most important legal tasks carried out by lawyers in government. A lawyer in private practice may draft a legal instrument that affects the rights and interests of a handful of parties, but in drafting legislation OCPC lawyers draft legal instruments that may affect the lives of millions of people. This impact is also often long-lasting—as any law student or lawyer knows, statutes can remain on

the books for decades or even longer. It would be difficult to find anything in private legal practice that offers a lawyer a similar chance to engage in work of such lasting importance to the community.

A career with OCPC also offers a great opportunity for those with an interest in the workings of Parliament. Naturally, the main role of OCPC is to draft Bills for the Government. However, OCPC lawyers also draft Bills for private members, and amendments to Bills as they make their way through Parliament. From this vantage point, OCPC lawyers gain a unique insight into the procedures and political processes of Parliament.

OCPC lawyers also have a critical role to play in the development of subordinate legislation. Every statutory rule made in Victoria is either drafted or settled by our lawyers. OCPC helps to ensure that subordinate legislation is legally valid as well as legally effective. This is an important and interesting task – a substantial amount of subordinate legislation is made each year regulating a wide range of activities, which makes this task as significant in its impact on society as the preparation of Bills for Parliament.

An OCPC lawyer must have a solid grounding in the law in general, but that is only the foundation of what we look for. In addition, the following are all essential traits for becoming a legislative drafter—

- clarity of thought;
- creativity and problem-solving skills of a high order;
- a flair for the written word coupled with a commitment to plain English;
- attention to detail and a passion for precision.

The entry level requirement for ongoing legislative drafting roles with the Office is to have been admitted, or be qualified for admission, as a barrister and solicitor of the Supreme Court of Victoria. The Office advertises all new drafting positions through the Victorian Government Careers Website www.careers.vic.gov.au. Instructions on how to apply will always be found on the website if a position is advertised. There is no set time for the advertisement of new positions - this will depend on vacancies becoming available within the Office.

For more about the Office visit our website at www.ocpc.vic.gov.au