



# LEGAL SERVICE CHARTER

The UMSU Legal Service is a specialist Community Legal Service that offers free and confidential legal advice to all currently enrolled students of the University of Melbourne. A telephone advice line is staffed by qualified solicitors between 1:00pm – 4:30pm Monday to Thursday. Legal advice may be provided by appointment or at other times outside the telephone advice line times at the discretion of the solicitors with regards to resources and capacity constraints.

## **The Legal Service provides assistance on various legal matters including:**

- Infringements / fines
- Minor criminal law
- Stalking / family violence
- Discrimination
- Sexual harassment
- Tenancy
- Motor vehicle accidents
- Powers of attorney
- Wills
- Consumer law
- Employment law including bullying

## **What you can expect from us:**

- Information and verbal advice
- Referral where appropriate to legal and non-legal entities
- Casework services, including telephone negotiations and drafting of letters
- Drafting of some documents
- Representation in specific circumstances

## **We cannot provide:**

Assistance where there is a conflict of interest, including:

- Student complaints about another student of Melbourne University;
- Student complaints about the University of Melbourne Student Union Inc (UMSU) staff; and

There are areas of law we cannot provide advice on to students. Most of these areas relate to commercial matters and include:

- Commercial/business law
- Property law including conveyancing
- Tax law
- Migration law
- Complex family law including property disputes
- Foreign laws

We also need to comply with legal ethical rules such as maintaining confidentiality and avoiding potential conflicts of interest which sometimes prevent us providing advice. The Legal Service does not operate a trust account. Therefore, we cannot provide legal services requiring the holding of monies on trust.

### **Legal advice, information and advocacy:**

The provision of legal advice should not be confused with the services offered by the Advocacy Service:

- The Legal Service does not provide advice or representation in matters relating to the university such as discipline and misconduct allegations or grievances and complaints grounded in university policy. These services are provided by the Advocacy Service.
- Where an assessment is made that your matter relates to advocacy or that a component of your legal matter relates to advocacy, the solicitor will refer you to the Advocacy Service.

### **What we expect from you:**

- That you behave in a courteous manner towards the solicitors, volunteers and supporting staff whilst interacting with the Legal Service
- That you contact the office prior to any appointment if you are unable to attend

### **What you can expect from us:**

- To be treated with dignity, courtesy and respect.
- All information will be treated as confidential in keeping with our professional obligations. No information will be divulged without your prior written consent.
- That advice and assistance be given in a timely fashion and that you will be provided with regular updates about follow up work undertaken on your behalf.
- To receive clear and accurate information.

### **Complaints:**

- If you are unhappy with the service you are receiving:
  - Let the solicitor handling your case know and try to work the problem out with them.
  - If you are unable to do this, you should speak to either the Principal Solicitor or the Manager, Advocacy and Legal.
  - If you are still unhappy, you are entitled to put a complaint in writing to the General Manager, UMSU.
  - You can make an external complaint about the conduct of a solicitor to the Legal Services Commissioner:

Legal Services Commissioner  
Level 5, 555 Bourke Street Melbourne 3000  
GPO Box 492 Melbourne 3001  
Reception: 03 9679 8001  
Local call cost: 1300 796 344

If you require assistance with a complaint, please speak with the Student Services Officer.

### **Acknowledgement of Country**

University of Melbourne Student Union Legal Service acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land.

We pay our respects to the elders past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions, the cultures and the hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We recognise the richness and diversity of Australia's First Peoples.

UMSU Legal Service is located on the lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation.