

VSA Assignment Description

Assignment Title	Judges' Associate
Assignment Modality	Standard
Assignment Number	41952
Country	Solomon Islands
Location	Honiara
Partner Organisation	High Court of Solomon Islands
Duration	15-18 months

Sustainable Development Goals



1. Partner Organisation Overview

The High Court of Solomon Islands has unlimited original civil and criminal jurisdiction and presides over serious criminal and civil cases. It also has appellate jurisdiction, hearing appeals from the magistrates' courts and from the Customary Land Appeal Court (on points of law only for the latter). The High Court's rulings on appeal from the Customary Land Appeal Court are final. Other High Court rulings are subject to appeal to the Court of Appeal.

The Chief Justice presides over the High Court which also has eight judges. Each judge has an associate and an executive assistant. Current associates do not have legal training and perform mostly administrative tasks required by judges.

2. Assignment Overview

VSA is seeking a volunteer to work alongside judges at the High Court to understand the type of support they require from an associate and the support required to upskills current associates. Areas of focus include file management, development of resources that will result in reduction of time it takes to deliver rulings from hearings and ensuring that associates have the relevant skills to support judges effectively.



3. Goal/Outcomes/Outputs

Goal

Efficient and effective management of court cases.

Outcome 1

Streamlined filing systems are being used to advance cases efficiently and effectively.

- Observe how files are handled by judges and associates.
- Discuss with each judge and associate the type of support required to advance cases.

Outcome 2

The time taken to deliver rulings following hearings is reduced.

- Support Associates to understand how to include reviews of the authorities referred to by Counsel.
- Develop protocols for review of files so that the necessary information is before each judge.
- Develop training resources and materials to support learning and development.
- Develop manuals and/or other resources that can provide guidance to Associates.

Outcome 3

Associates have confidence and the relevant skills to support judges and commissioners.

- Coach and mentor Associates in different aspects of their work.
- Discuss files with associates to help them to present neat file that can be easily followed by the judge, with material filed chronologically so documents are easily located.

4. Reporting, Working Relationships and Capacity Building

The Judges' Associate Adviser will work with judges and associates in a manner that supports shared learning in case management. The volunteer will report directly to one of the high court judges as agreed at the time the assignment begins. They will be accountable to the Chief Justice.

The volunteer will design and deliver initiatives that support ongoing learning, mentoring and coaching of associates.

The volunteer and the High Court will have an ongoing relationship with the VSA Programme Manager in terms of assignment monitoring, reporting, professional advice and personal support.

As needs on the ground may change over time, the volunteer is encouraged to review and update the Assignment Description on arrival in consultation with the partner organisation and VSA Programme Manager. By their very nature, development situations can involve significant change, so it is advisable that the volunteer periodically reviews and reflects on the Assignment Description throughout the Assignment to ensure the best development outcomes are being achieved.



5. Selection Criteria/Position Requirements

Professional Specifications

Essential

- Sound academic background in law with experience appearing in Court
- Good organisational skills
- Sound legal research skills
- Prior experience mentoring and coaching people working in a legal system

Desirable

- Experience developing training materials and/or other resources
- Experience in criminal and family law
- Prior experience working in a Melanesian country

Personal Specification

Essential

- Ability to observe and listen carefully
- Experience creating and maintaining relationships
- Ability to work with limited resources
- Culturally sensitive and competent
- Ability to adapt to changing situations
- Patience and flexibility

6. VSA Essential Attributes

- Commitment to volunteering, to VSA and to the partner organisation
- Cross cultural awareness
- Adaptability and a willingness to approach change or newness positively
- Able to form good relationships, both personally and professionally, with work colleagues and in the community
- Resilience and an ability to manage setbacks
- Initiative and resourcefulness
- An ability to facilitate learning through skills exchange

7. Country Context

For more information about [country] , see [link to relevant country programme page on VSA website]

8. Living and Working Situation

Honiara is the business centre of Solomon Islands and as such is a melting pot for people from all the island groups that make up the diverse nation. A hot and dusty place, Honiara offers most facilities albeit in a rudimentary form. You are strongly encouraged to build relationships in the local community and socialise with Solomon Islanders at every opportunity, as this will enrich your experience of living in Solomons. However, entertainment options are few and far between so there is also a very active expatriate social scene. There are various clubs and social groups in Honiara, which you will get to know with time.

VSA will provide basic, furnished accommodation with gas facilities for cooking. In Honiara, you will have access to power (although power outages can occur), phone, internet, piped water, restaurants, a variety



of shops and a large expatriate population. Public transport is very cheap within Honiara. The local bus service is provided by a plethora of vans, and some larger buses. A single fare of SBD3 applies, regardless of the length of the trip. Taxis charge a moderate fare (currently SBD10 per kilometre) but it is wise to establish a fare before commencing a journey.

Most volunteers feel safe in Solomon Islands, but it is important to know the risks and take personal responsibility for your safety. As in many countries, foreigners tend to be the target of petty crime, so always be alert and take precautions. In general, there are no problems moving around the majority of Honiara during the day, but it is not safe to walk or catch public transport alone in Honiara after dark.

For more information, see <https://vsa.org.nz/what-we-do/countryregion/solomon-islands/>.

Additional Information

Residency status

VSA volunteers must be New Zealand citizens or have New Zealand permanent residency status, and currently living in NZ.

Pre-departure briefing

As part of the volunteer's contract, successful candidates will be required to take part in a pre-departure briefing course run by VSA in Wellington and complete all required pre-reading.

Final appointment

Final appointment will be subject to satisfactory medical and immigration clearances (costs covered by VSA), partner organisation acceptance, and successful completion of the pre-departure briefing course.

Family status

VSA supports partners to accompany volunteers on assignments of six months or longer. However, volunteers with accompanying dependents will not be considered for this assignment.

Fundraising

VSA funding stakeholders are both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and donors. We ask volunteers and accompanying partners to fundraise to help cover the cost of sending volunteers throughout the Pacific and beyond. Fundraising can be as simple as doing something you enjoy with a group or friends, and our Fundraising team is available to help you every step of the way.

Vaccination requirements

Potential volunteers are advised that VSA's insurers require volunteers to be vaccinated, prior to departure, in accordance with the instructions of VSA's medical adviser. VSA covers the cost of any required vaccinations.

Children's Act

While on assignment, VSA volunteers may be required to work with children and/or may choose to participate in informal activities in their own time that involve interactions with children (such as coaching teams or teaching English). VSA is committed to the protection of vulnerable children and adults, which also includes meeting our commitment under the Children's Act 2014.

The information requested during the application process is necessary to assist VSA to determine applicant suitability to work and/or interact regularly with children and is part of a series of pre-selection checks undertaken on all applicants for VSA assignments.

Volunteer package

The volunteer's package includes the following:

Reimbursements and grants



1. Volunteers will receive an establishment grant of NZ\$750 to help them set up in their country of assignment. For volunteers with an accompanying partner (whether or not that partner is also a VSA volunteer), VSA will pay an establishment grant of NZ\$1,100 per couple.
2. A resettlement grant of NZ\$200 will be paid for each month the volunteer is on assignment. This is payable on completion of the assignment.
3. The volunteer will receive a monthly living allowance of NZ\$7,500.

Accommodation

Basic, comfortable furnished accommodation will be sourced by VSA. In some circumstances volunteers may be asked to share accommodation.

Airfares and baggage allowance

VSA will provide the volunteer with economy airfares to and from New Zealand for their assignment plus a baggage allowance.

Insurance

VSA will provide travel insurance to cover baggage and personal property, and non-routine medical expenses for the duration of the assignment. Further details of the insurance cover will be provided during the volunteer pre-departure briefing.

Utilities

VSA will reimburse volunteers reasonable expenses for household utilities while on assignment.

Final terms and conditions relating to the specific volunteer assignment will be confirmed in a personalised volunteer contract prior to departure.

