



# VSA Assignment Description

<b>Assignment Title</b>	Legal Research Assistant
<b>Assignment Modality</b>	Standard
<b>Assignment Number</b>	42158
<b>Country</b>	Solomon Islands
<b>Location</b>	Honiara
<b>Partner Organisation</b>	High Court - National Judiciary
<b>Duration</b>	10 months
<b>Sustainable Development Goals</b>	 

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## 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 has nine judges. Each judge has an associate and an executive assistant. The work done by the judges and their support staff is important for ensuring that justice is carried out in a time manner and with the information required. Research is a key component of this work.

## 2. Assignment Overview

The High Court - National Judiciary needs volunteer to support Judges with legal research. There is an online database with national and Pacific statutes, case law, verdicts, cases and references that can be used, access to Court files, and the National Judiciary library. The volunteer will conduct research to high quality and ensure that reference materials are filed and are accessible for future use on similar cases. They will also support judges by drafting legal documents that include memos, rulings and other documents.

## 3. Goal/Outcomes/Outputs

### Goal

Judges at the High Court receive high quality legal research assistance and support.

### Outcome 1

Judges have files that have sufficient legal information for them to case manage and rule on the matter before them.

- Become familiar with legal databases, search tools and other legal resources available to find statutes, case law, verdicts, contracts, judicial decisions, and documents that judges need to address a case or legal matter.
- Assist judges' associates to conduct research using relevant laws, legal decisions, documents, and other information required for decision making.

## **Outcome 2**

Judges have rulings written to a high quality.

Working alongside judges' associates:

- Discuss cases with judges and prepare opinions, memoranda, drafts and other documents as required by judges
- Draft documents as required to facilitate direction hearings and trials
- Proofread and discuss documents with judges and associates

## **Outcome 3**

Ongoing support is provided when required.

- Provide ongoing coaching and mentoring of associates and support staff as may be required
- Provide advice and guidance on research initiatives that may be put in place while assignment is ongoing

## **4. Reporting, Working Relationships and Capacity Building**

On a day-to-day basis the volunteer will work alongside the judges and their associates. The volunteer will report directly to Justice Bird and will be accountable to her.

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**

- Bachelor's degree in Law.
- Strong research and analytical skills.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office Suite.
- Attention to detail.
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team.
- Prior experience in legal research or related field is preferred, but not required.

#### **Desirable**

- Strong interpersonal skills.
- Prior experience in legal research.

## Personal Specifications

### Essential

- Willingness to learn and speak Solomon Islands Pijin.
- Ability to work unsupervised.
- Effective time management.
- Patience, tolerance, empathy, and flexibility.
- Willingness to work in a different environment and cultural context.
- A preparedness to work with limited resources within a challenging environment.

## 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

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/Learn-About-the-Solomon-Islands\(solomons.gov.sb\)Welcome|TourismSolomons\(visitsolomons.com.sb\)](https://vsa.org.nz/what-we-do/countryregion/solomon-islands/Learn-About-the-Solomon-Islands(solomons.gov.sb)Welcome|TourismSolomons(visitsolomons.com.sb))

## 8. Living and Working Situation

VSA Solomon Islands team will source basic, comfortable and furnished accommodation in a safe location in Honiara. Accommodation will be relatively close to your place of work and/or close to a bus stop.

The High Court is located at Town Ground opposite the office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. It is on the main road. There is security present throughout the day and after hours. A desk will be assigned to the volunteer and there will be internet connection at the office.

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## **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**

Partners or dependent children cannot accompany Univols.

### **Fundraising**

VSA funding stakeholders are both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and donors. We ask volunteers 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 inoculated, 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. The volunteer may be entitled to an establishment grant to help them set up in their country of assignment. The volunteer's contract will specify any grant entitlements.
2. The volunteer will receive a monthly living allowance of SBD 7,500.

#### *Accommodation*

Basic, comfortable furnished accommodation will be sourced by VSA. For security purposes volunteers in Honiara can expect to share accommodation and/or be housed in a compound with other volunteers.

#### *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.**