

## **The University of Sydney Chinese Law Student Society**

**Name of employer:** Buttar, Caldwell & Co Solicitors

**Background of the employer:**

A small Sydney-based firm located in the CBD near the Family court, district court and Downing Centre. The firm consists of six full-time staff and three part-time clerks. Currently, there are three qualified legal practitioners working in the firm (one principal solicitor and two junior solicitors). The firm aims to provide high standard customer service and multilingual legal services to all groups of the community. The firm is very strict on office etiquette and returning client enquiries within twenty-four hours. More information can be obtained from their website [www.buttarcaldwell.com.au](http://www.buttarcaldwell.com.au)

**Practice:**

The firm handles a whole range of files, but mainly specialises in personal injury matters. These include workers compensation, motor vehicle injuries, superannuation and other life insurance claims. The principal solicitor, Mr Buttar is also a registered migration agent and occasionally there are migration appeals in the migration reviews tribunal. Recently, there have also been some interesting cases in anti-discrimination law. The firm is suitable for anyone who is interested in torts and administrative law.

**No. of clerkship and trainees intake per year (if appropriate):**

The firm only accepts law students as part-time legal clerks once the positions become available. Fluency in another language is highly preferred.

**Position(s) of the clerk being interviewed:**

Part-time legal clerk

**Job description:**

As a part-time legal clerk, you are expected to work at least two days a week (flexible according to your timetable). Your standard working hours are from 8:30am – 5:30pm, however most of the time you are expected to work a little overtime. Your main duties are to assist the solicitors in a range of matters and liaise with clients, barristers and other third parties. The main advantage of working in a small firm is the amount of responsibility you get given and the ability to work on a variety of matters. I worked on workers compensation, victims compensation, superannuation, life insurance, anti-discrimination and migration matters. However, I was mainly responsible for

victims compensation and superannuation claims. Hence, you become specialised in one or two areas, yet you are still able to find out what the other areas involve.

At work, I would be given a file to work on from scratch to finish. This means starting from the very first thing of initial phone calls and interviews with the client, drafting costs agreements to submissions and appeals.

In a small firm, it is also much easier to talk to the solicitors (including the principal) and obtain assistance. Your work is non-repetitive and you become really close to the clients by regular interviews and phone calls. Occasionally, you are required to attend counsel conferences which are meetings with the barrister and the client to discuss the case. These conferences are great learning experiences and the barrister really picks out the main issues of the case for you. Sometimes, you will also attend commission hearings and conciliation conferences.

### **Interview tips:**

The interview usually consists of two stages – initial phone interview and final in person interview. It is important to dress professionally and be prepared to answer questions such as give 5 reasons why you want to work for the firm.

### **Comments:**

I highly recommend this firm to anyone who has no or little experience in law. You will receive excellent training from the lawyers and staff at this firm.