

In conversation with...

Kelly Policy Team



What does your role involve?

My role involves providing strategic policy advice to the Public Guardian and coordinating and developing written policy submissions on matters relating to OPG's functions to promote and protect vulnerable people's rights and interests.

What is your professional background?

I am a lawyer with degrees in law and arts, but I began my career at the Office of State Revenue (OSR) where I worked with the administrative review unit for more than two years. I was encouraged to apply for a policy role at OPG by a former colleague who knew about my work at OSR and my home life helping my parents to care for my younger brother with a disability. I immediately recognised this as a fantastic opportunity and a perfect match for my professional background and lived experience as a carer. As they say, the rest is history! It is extremely rewarding to work for an organisation that is so focused on supporting and protecting the rights and interests of vulnerable Queenslanders, including people like my brother.

How does your role help promote OPG clients' human rights?

OPG's purpose is to advocate for our clients' human rights and this is deeply embedded in my job in the policy unit. We are responsible for developing and promoting the Public Guardian's strategic policy position on matters impacting our clients. Our unit's primary function is to advocate for our clients on a collective basis through submissions to the State and Federal Governments and other relevant non-government entities. The purpose of these submissions is to promote our clients' human rights, highlight critical issues affecting our clients, challenge proposals that will adversely affect our clients, identify opportunities for reform, and advocate for changes that will benefit our clients. We influence government and non-government decision making on the basis of our clients' rights, interests, experiences and inclusion.

What does your typical work day look like?

A typical day begins with an assessment of the day's priorities which are ever-changing due to the unpredictability of urgent requests which may arrive from government and non-government entities at any given time. After that, my day usually involves a lot of writing, seasoned with research, business unit collaborations, external stakeholder interactions and executive consultations. My role is characterised by strong working relationships with both the business units at OPG and external stakeholders with whom I engage with on a daily basis to seek and share information. I also provide policy support to the business units as needed.

What are some challenges you've faced?

One of the main challenges is that OPG has such a broad range of responsibilities for both our adult clients and children and young people, so our team has to be across a lot of issues and respond to all sorts of government and non-government consultations. As a result, our team has to work collaboratively and quickly to be able to respond in a timely manner.

Another challenge is being patient as the results of our strategic policy work are not always immediately evident. These things don't happen overnight but they eventually do happen and this is something I always look forward to.

What is the best part of your job?

The best part of my job is seeing the fruits of my labour first-hand, where OPG's collective advocacy through strategic policy submissions has resulted in a positive outcome for our clients. This is what drives me to do my best and is the ultimate reward for a job well done.

Also at a personal level my role at OPG has taught me to be a better carer and advocate for my brother, which I feel speaks strongly to OPG's purpose in advocating for our clients' human rights.