



## Position Description

Position:	Lawyer - Child Protection
Reports to:	Principal Legal Officer – Aboriginal Families Practice
Salary:	LO 3.1 to LO 3.7 – depending on experience (SCHADS Level 4)
Location:	Mildura - 1/71 Pine Avenue Mildura <i>This position will also require travel to our Head Office: 273 High Street, Preston from time to time and other locations across Victoria</i>
Employment type:	Full-time (fixed term until April 2022)

### About us

We were established as a community-controlled organisation in 1973 to address the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the criminal justice system. The organisation has a long and proud history of providing legal and service support for Aboriginal Victorians who are experiencing or at risk of experiencing negative contact with the justice system and advocating locally, nationally and internationally for the rights of Aboriginal people.

#### We strive to:

- Promote social justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;
- Promote the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to empowerment, identity and culture;
- Ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples enjoy their rights, are aware of their responsibilities under the law and have access to appropriate advice, assistance and representation;
- Reduce the disproportionate involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the criminal justice system; and
- Promote the review of legislation and other practices which discriminate against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The organisation has grown over the years (with further expansion options being pursued) and now offers criminal, family and civil law services, client services support, community legal education and a range of community justice support programs in both Victoria and Tasmania.

The Tasmanian operation was established in 2015, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community Legal Service (TACLS), a semi-autonomous operation for Tasmania.



## Our Values

### Cultural Values

Our team commit to remember what we are here for, how our organisation came into being and ensure we are centred in the community. We are an organisation with a community focus for the benefit of the community.

### Respect

We advocate for and demonstrate the right of every person to be treated with dignity and respect.

### Compassion

We are aware of the issues and challenges facing Aboriginal communities and strive to ensure our organisation is part of resolving those issues and challenges.

### Commitment

We believe everyone who works at or with VALS is committed to achieving better justice outcomes for Aboriginal communities.

### Hope

We believe we will achieve change for Aboriginal communities. We expect our actions to have a positive impact on Government at all levels.

### Integrity

We are steadfast in our adherence to our values. We take every measure to protect our clients' privacy

## About the team

### Legal and Client Services

This section is responsible for delivering client focussed quality services for Aboriginal Victorians in contact with the justice system.

Legal and Client Services are co-located in this unit to drive an integrated, flexible and innovative approach to meeting client needs.

The section liaises and networks with other Aboriginal organisations and works with stakeholders to reduce negative contact Aboriginal people have with the justice system.

In conjunction with Executive and Corporate Services this section also advocates for improved justice outcomes and prepares specialist advice on legislation change.

The Director, with the PLOs ensures all legal standards and CLC Risk Management guidelines are met.

The PLO Tasmania Aboriginal Community Legal Service reports direct to the CEO but maintains a functional relationship with this section to ensure collegiate and professional support for delivery of high-quality legal services.

## About the position

### Overview

Lawyers within the Family Division are to provide high quality legal services, including duty lawyer services, representation, advice and information in child protection, family violence and family law matters to members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in Victoria.



#### Key Performance Indicators, Duties & Responsibilities

1. Appear as an advocate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients in child protection, intervention orders and to a lesser extent family law matters within the Children's Court of Victoria and Federal Circuit Court of Australia.
2. Provide quality legal services, including legal information, advice and casework, for clients in child protection, intervention order matters as well as family law matters and other related matters as appropriate
3. Participate in community legal education, law reform and other VALS projects.
4. Keep up to date with relevant legal developments and procedures by attending professional legal education sessions and maintain an understanding of issues impacting Aboriginal communities and the justice system.
5. Contribute to the collaborative relationship between Victoria Legal Aid and other community organizations with whom VALS interacts.
6. You will be required to travel across Victoria to deliver services to the ATSI community. Sometimes this travel will occur outside of usual business hours

#### Key Selection Criteria

1. Admitted or eligible for admission as a legal practitioner in Victoria.
2. Demonstrated ability to act as an advocate, delivery legal advice and casework and undertake negotiation and dispute resolution on behalf of clients.
3. Knowledge or practical experience in relevant law and procedure with a focus on the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 and child protection, family law, evidence law and procedure.
4. High level interpersonal and communication skills and the ability to communicate clearly and appropriately with clients, staff and external stakeholders and organisations.
5. Demonstrated aptitude for quick and accurate decision making and the ability to work under pressure and meet deadlines.
6. Demonstrated flexible and adaptable approach to work and collaboratively work with others to foster a cooperative team environment.
7. A knowledge of the general business of VALS and a commitment to our Vision and Values.
8. A commitment to and understanding of the legal issues faced by members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community in Victoria.
9. Basic competency in the use of MS Office Software (particularly MS Word, Excel, E-mail) to a legal practice and the capacity to quickly acquire competency in the use of VALS' client data base.

#### Key Capabilities

1. Anticipates, plans and prioritises work – manages competing demands
2. Seeks to continuously improve the way things are done – thinks creatively
3. Engages with colleagues, stakeholders and clients to identify areas for improvement
4. Develops creative methods for addressing challenges and opportunities
5. Seeks and willingly accepts feedback
6. Seeks assistance where required
7. Reasons through ethical concerns, makes sound decisions that observe duties and obligations
8. Ensures files are up to date, easily accessible to others

#### Mandatory Requirements

On offer of this position, you must provide:

- a copy of your current Employee Working with Children card



- a copy of your current Victorian Driver's License
- you will be required to complete a current Criminal History Police Check
- proof of rights to work in Australia, i.e. a copy of an Australian Passport, Birth Certificate or Immigration VISA documentation
- a copy of your current Practising Certificate

### How to apply

Please send your Resume/ CV together with a Cover Letter which addresses the **Key Selection Criteria** to [jobs@vals.org.au](mailto:jobs@vals.org.au)

### Acceptance on position offer

I understand and am clear of the position expectations and requirements

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_