



Position Description: Lawyer – Aboriginal Families Practice Team

Position:	Family Lawyer
Reports to:	Principal Legal Officer – Family
Salary:	LO Level 3 (year depending on experience) / SCHADS Level 4
Location:	Head Office - 273 High Street, Preston, Victoria This position may require regional and interstate travel
Employment type:	Full-time (fixed term until 30 June 2025)
	We are always actively looking for applicants from a diverse range of gender identities, sexual orientations cultures, language groups, abilities, and experiences. In particular, we encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, Members of the LGBTIQ+ community, people with disabilities, and people with experience seeking asylum to apply.

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.



Our Values

Respect

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

Culture

We remember what we are here for and how our organisation came into being and ensure we are centred within our communities.

Commitment

Our team is committed to improving the lives of Aboriginal people. We keep our word and stand by our commitments.

Self-Determination

We respect and promote the principle of self-determination in everything that we do. We will achieve change for Aboriginal communities and ensure the realisation of self-determination.

Independence

We are Apolitical. We are independent.

Integrity

We are steadfast in our adherence to our values. We take every reasonable measure to protect our clients. We offer independent, professional and high level legal representation.

Equality

We fight for our communities to be equal before the law and to rectify the over-representation of Aboriginal people in the justice system. VALS promotes the right to be different, free from discrimination and valued as an individual. We are an inclusive workplace that respects and protects equality.

About the team

Legal Services

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

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.



About the position

Overview

To provide high quality legal services, including information, advice, representation, casework, negotiation and dispute resolution, and outreach services primarily in Family Law matters with a focus on family violence and related hearings in the Magistrates' Court of Victoria and the Federal Circuit and Family Courts of Australia on behalf of members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) community in Victoria. This position also requires a willingness to conduct child protection matters.

To engage with and participate in VALS projects, policy and law reform initiatives, and community and professional legal education programs.

Key Performance Indicators, Duties & Responsibility

1. Appear as an advocate on behalf of VALS clients in Family Law proceedings in the Magistrates' Court of Victoria and the Federal Circuit and Family Courts of Australia, and at other state-wide locations as required.
2. Deliver high quality legal services, including information, advice and casework on behalf of VALS clients in Family Law matters and other related matters as required.
3. Maintain a substantial caseload in Family Law matters.
4. Prepare and comply with applications for grants of legal assistance and reporting requirements for matters eligible for Victoria Legal Aid funding.
5. Attend, participate and contribute to the planning, service delivery and continuous improvement of the Family Law Practice and VALS.
6. Contribute to VALS projects, policy and law reform initiatives, and community and professional legal education programs as required.
7. Contribute to the collaborative relationship with Victoria Legal Aid and other community organisations with which VALS interacts.
8. Keep up to date with relevant legal developments and procedures by attending professional legal education programs and maintain an understanding of issues, risks and trends impacting upon the provision of relevant legal services and members of the ATSI community in Victoria.

Personal accountability

1. Compliance with all VALS Values, code of conduct, policies and procedures and relevant government legislation and standards where relevant.
2. Demonstrate a commitment to the principles of social justice and aim to ensure every individual is treated with dignity and respect regardless of their background, ability, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation or religion
3. Ensure appropriate use of resources
4. Actively participate in initiatives to maintain, build upon and promote a positive and collaborative workplace.
5. Take reasonable care for your own health & safety, and health and safety of others (to extent required)
6. Promptly respond to and report health and safety hazards, incidents and near misses to management.



7. Attend mandatory training sessions (ie. equal employment opportunity, health and safety, cultural safety) and mandatory training specific to position.

Key Selection Criteria

1. Admitted as a legal practitioner for a minimum of 2 years in Victoria and in the High Court of Australia.
2. Demonstrated ability to act as an advocate, deliver information, advice, casework and outreach services, and undertake negotiation and dispute resolution on behalf of VALS clients in Family Violence, Intervention Order and, to a lesser extent, Family Law matters.
3. Knowledge of and practical experience in relevant law and procedure, with a focus on Family Violence Intervention Orders and Family Law and willingness to conduct child protection matters,
4. Sound interpersonal skills and the capacity to communicate effectively with members of the ATSI community, VALS staff and other community organisations with which VALS interacts.
5. A commitment to and understanding of the legal issues faced by members of the ATSI community.
6. Demonstrated ability for quick and accurate decision-making and the ability to work under pressure and meet deadlines.
7. Demonstrated ability to work collaboratively with others to foster a co-operative and supportive team environment.
8. A knowledge of and commitment to the principles and values of the VALS.
9. Competency in the use of MS Office software (Word, Excel, E-mail) and the capacity to quickly acquire competency in the use of the VALS' client database.

Key Capabilities

- Demonstrates emotional intelligence - respects self and colleagues
- Anticipates, plans and prioritises work - manages competing demands
- Understands and complies with professional responsibilities as a lawyer
- Listens attentively - shows empathy when appropriate
- Presents clearly and logically - generates dialogue to elicit information
- Develops expertise in areas of specialisation
- Analyses the situation and formulates the legal question to be answered
- Complies with risk management protocols and relevant law relating to professional practice

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



Victorian
Aboriginal
Legal Service



South Eastern Australian
Aboriginal Justice Services
Limited

How to apply

Please send your Resume/ CV together with a Cover Letter which addresses the Key Selection Criteria to jobs@vals.org.au.

Acceptance

I understand and am clear of the position expectations and requirements

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____