# Position Description – Policy, Research and Advocacy Officer

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| Position: | Policy, Research and Advocacy Officer |
| Reports to: | Senior Policy, Research & Advocacy Officer |
| Salary: | RO1 to RO5 - (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 of 12 months |
|  | **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 LGBTQI+ community, people with disabilities, and people with experience seeking asylum to apply.** |

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| 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 Victoria. |

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| 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. CommitmentOur 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 position Overview  Working collaboratively across the organisation, the Policy, Research and Advocacy Officer plays a key role in supporting the Senior Policy, Research & Advocacy Officer to initiate high quality research and to assist with preparing policy submissions & initiatives, focusing on police accountability, and prevention of and accountability for deaths in custody. This is done in the context of developing and promoting VALS as a strong voice for the Aboriginal communities we serve. The successful candidate will demonstrate policy, analytical and communication skills, coupled with an ability to influence stakeholders (government and non-government).  Key Performance Indicators, Duties & Responsibility  *Strategy and Planning*   * Develop VALS policy, research and advocacy agenda in line with the strategic and operational plan and work with relevant colleagues across the organisation to achieve our strategic objectives * Measure impact and review progress with advocacy strategies and plans and ensure ongoing development of these in response to changes in the external environment * Identify and respond to emerging opportunities to influence law and policy   *Policy and Research*   * Research, write and prepare position papers, reports and submissions as relevant, which will contribute to implementation of VALS Policy, Research and Advocacy strategy * Provide support and advice to the CEO and other members of the Executive Team to fulfil their role in representing VALS at conferences, working groups and forums * Support the Senior Policy, Research and Advocacy Officer to represent VALS on relevant working groups and forums as required * Work closely with the Senior Policy, Research and Advocacy Officer and the Communications Officer to achieve VALS policy, research and advocacy priorities through public advocacy * Work with the Senior Policy, Research & Advocacy Officer to translate the concerns of clients and the Aboriginal communities into specific campaigns, policy and advocacy materials * Provide support to develop and implement research projects being run by VALS. * Lead some policy initiatives and submissions in relation to relevant experience. * Work in partnership with the Senior Policy Officer and heads of service provision to endorse implementation of the policy and advocacy initiatives.   *Stakeholder Management*   * Develop and maintain strong working relationships with key internal and external stakeholders, including ACCOs, NATSILS and ATSILS, research institutions, government and community legal organisations * Collaborate with relevant internal stakeholders to deliver policy and advocacy initiatives in partnerships with external organisations and the broader community * Work with the Senior Policy, Research and Advocacy Officer to build the organisation’s profile through the establishment and maintenance of research   partnerships with external organisations and the broader community  *Internal Obligations*   * Commitment to VALS’s strategic plan * Attend and actively contribute at team and working group meetings * Foster collaborative working relationships with colleagues across VALS * Undertake other duties & responsibilities within the scope of the role as directed * Perform other relevant duties as requested by the Senior Policy, Research & Advocacy Officer  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  *Mandatory*   1. Relevant tertiary qualifications (for example politics, law, public policy) 2. Knowledge and experience of political and government policy processes in a campaigning or lobbying role 3. Understanding of and commitment to Aboriginal justice issues 4. High-level written and verbal communication skills relevant to the role such as experience writing policy documents, government submissions and media communications 5. Well-developed research and analytical skills 6. Demonstrated relationship-building and stakeholder engagement skills 7. Ability to work autonomously and to collaborate in a small team environment 8. High level organisational and administrative skills and ability to prioritise workload, to work under pressure and meet deadlines 9. Demonstrated computer literacy skills and proficiency using Microsoft Office and other relevant software   *Desirable:*   1. Training or experience in the legal sector, particularly in areas of social justice and human rights. 2. Experience working in or with Aboriginal legal services and/or Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. 3. Experience working in the non-profit sector 4. Experience campaigning via social media platforms  Key Capabilities  * Plans and prioritises work - manages competing demands * Adheres to organisation policies and procedures * Is approachable, accessible and responsive * Uses and manages email appropriately * Gathers relevant facts through research and interview skills  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 |

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| How to apply |
| Please send your resume together with a covering letter which addresses the **Key Selection Criteria** (found within the position description) to [**jobs@vals.org.au**](mailto:jobs@vals.org.au) |

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| Acceptance on position offer |
| I understand and am clear of the position expectations and requirements  Name:  Signature:  Date: |