



## Position Description – Lawyer, Civil Law and Human Rights Practice

Position:	Lawyer, Civil Law and Human Rights Practice
Reports to:	Principal Managing Lawyer – Civil Law and Human Rights Practice
Salary:	LO Level 3.1 – 3.5 (SCHADS Level 4) \$64,788 to \$74,819 per annum plus superannuation and salary sacrifice
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)
	<p><b>We are always actively looking for applicants from a diverse range of gender identities, sexual orientations cultures, language groups, abilities, and experiences.</b></p> <p><b>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.</b></p>

### 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.



## 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.

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 of Legal Services, with the Principal Managing Lawyers ensures all legal standards and CLC Risk Management guidelines are met.



## About the position

### Overview

We are looking for a solicitor passionate about the social and legal issues impacting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with 18 months to 4 years PQE to join our Civil and Human Rights practice.

As a civil lawyer, you will provide high quality legal services, including, advice and information, casework, representation and referral in civil law matters to members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Victoria. While the civil lawyer will undertake casework in core areas of legal need for Aboriginal communities, the role will have a particular focus on assisting clients affected by family violence who are seeking assistance with fines and tenancy matters.

This is a full-time position based at the VALS office in Preston, Victoria. However, occasionally you may be required to travel to deliver services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in regional areas.

### Key Performance Indicators, Duties & Responsibility

1. Assist clients with the provision of culturally safe and trauma informed advice, referrals and ongoing casework in core matters of legal need for Aboriginal communities in Victoria, including fines and infringements, tenancy, debt, consumer, Working With Children Check suspension and cancellation, employment, discrimination, Personal Safety Intervention Orders and coronial matters.
2. Taking a key role with the Principal Managing Lawyer in the coordination of the VALS Infringements Clinic, including responsibility for supervision of casework and advice given by clinic volunteers.
3. Appear personally as an advocate, and/or brief counsel to appear, in various courts and tribunals in civil law matters.
4. Supervise non-clinic volunteers working within the civil legal team.
5. Participate in community legal education projects, law reform and other VALS projects as required.
6. Maintain positive and collaborative relationships with key stakeholders, including Victoria Legal Aid, pro bono law firms, the Victorian Bar and other community organisations from both the legal and non-legal sectors.
7. Keep up to date with relevant civil legal developments and procedures by attending professional legal education programs and maintain an understanding of broader issues impacting the justice system and members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities.
8. As directed, undertake other duties which are incidental and peripheral to the main tasks, provided that such duties are reasonably within the employee's skills, competence and training.

### 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 (i.e. equal employment opportunity, health and safety, cultural safety) and mandatory training specific to position.

#### Key Selection Criteria

1. Admitted to practice as a legal practitioner in Victoria, with at least 18 months post-admission experience.
2. A commitment to and understanding of the civil legal issues faced by members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities in Victoria.
3. Experience working with people affected by family violence.
4. Experience assisting clients with fines and infringements matters will be highly regarded.
5. Capacity to work as an advocate and caseworker in civil law matters in the core practice areas outlined above.
6. Knowledge of and practical experience in the law and court procedures with a focus on the civil law jurisdiction, particularly in relation to the areas of law detailed above.
7. The ability to work collaboratively with others and to foster a co-operative and supportive team environment.
8. Sound interpersonal skills and the capacity to communicate effectively with members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
9. A knowledge of the principles and values of the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service.
10. Competency in the use of MS Office Software (particularly MS Outlook, MS Word, Excel, E-mail) to a legal practice and the capacity to quickly acquire competency in the use of VALS' case management system.

#### Key Capabilities

- Provides high quality legal advice and representation.
- Analyses the situation and formulates the legal question to be answered.
- Listens attentively - shows empathy when appropriate.
- Develops and fosters positive working relationships both internally and externally.
- Develops expertise in areas of specialisation.
- Gains insight into the client and stakeholder needs, priorities and expectations.

#### 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 ;
- 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, or ability to obtain one; and
- you will be required to complete a current Criminal History Police Check.
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**Victorian  
Aboriginal  
Legal Service**



**South Eastern Australian  
Aboriginal Justice Services  
Limited**

**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)

**Acceptance on position offer**

I understand and am clear of the position expectations and requirements

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

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

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