



Position Description – *Practice Manager / Lawyer*

Position:	Practice Manager / Lawyer
Reports to:	Chief Executive Officer
Direct reports:	5 including 1 lawyer, 2 youth support officers and 2 administrative support staff
Salary:	Level PLO (SCHADS Level 6) Salary \$89,719.24 per annum plus superannuation Salary Packaging also available
Location:	Head Office - 273 High Street, Preston, Victoria This position may require regional and interstate travel
Employment type:	Full-time (fixed term until 30/06/2024) to be extended on confirmation of funding
	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

VALS was 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. VALS 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 changed and grown over the years (with further expansion options being pursued). VALS now offers criminal, family and civil law services, specialist litigation services, client services support, community legal education and diverse community justice support programs in both Victoria.

The core function of Balit Ngulu is to provide Aboriginal children and young people with appropriate legal advice and representation as well as diverting Aboriginal children and young people from the justice system and support their empowerment and resilience within its service areas. Balit Ngulu will aim to:



- Provide quality and timely legal services to Aboriginal children and young people for matters within Balit Ngulu's specified service locations of the Children's Court of Victoria.
- Support Aboriginal children and young people with legal assistance and services to help them grow within the community.
- Seek incarceration alternatives for Aboriginal children and young people in contact with the justice system, including supporting and prioritising bail applications those who are at risk of being remanded or are remanded in custody within Balit Ngulu's specified service locations.
- Provide consistent contact and legal support with children and young people in the legal system.
- Provide legal education activities to vulnerable Aboriginal children and young people within service areas and those located in custody.

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

This section is responsible for delivering client focussed quality services for young Aboriginal Victorians in the Melbourne metropolitan area and greater Shepparton area 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 Policy, Communications and Strategy this section also advocates for improved justice outcomes and prepares specialist advice on legislation change.



In conjunction with the Director of Legal Practice and Principal Legal Officers, the team ensures all legal standards and CLC Risk Management guidelines are met.

The Practice Manager Balit Ngulu Legal Service reports direct to the CEO but maintains a functional relationship with the Legal Practice to ensure collegiate and professional support for delivery of high-quality legal services.

About the position

Overview

The Practice Manager for Balit Ngulu team works to achieve VALS' goals and objectives. The role coordinates and delivers a range of projects, policy and law reform initiatives, strategic litigation work, and community and professional legal education programs. The purpose of the role is to provide high quality legal services, including duty lawyer services, representation, advice and information in criminal law matters to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth in Melbourne metropolitan area and Shepparton and its neighboring areas such as Echuca and Bendigo City.

The position also manages the day to day functioning of the Balit Ngulu program.

Key Performance Indicators, Duties & Responsibility

1. Plan and deliver a quality legal service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth in Melbourne metropolitan area and Shepparton and its neighboring areas at various courts including the Children's Court Criminal Division and Children's Koori Courts in order to represent clients of Balit Ngulu Legal Service.
2. Supervise, manage and mentor staff and contribute to the organisation through professional legal education and training
3. Effectively manage the legal practice unit, including coordinating case-planning meetings
4. Appear as a senior advocate in various courts in order to represent clients of Balit Ngulu Legal Services.
5. Participate in community legal education projects, law and policy reform and other Balit Ngulu Legal Service projects as required
6. Liaise with Government and non-Government organisations on legal issues relevant to Phase Four of Burra Lotjpa Dunguludja, the Aboriginal Justice Agreement (AJA)
7. Contribute to, and participate in, the collaborative relationship between Victoria Legal Aid, Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, Community Legal Centres and other community organisations with whom Balit Ngulu Legal Services interacts
8. Keep up to date with relevant legal developments and procedures by attending professional legal education programs and maintaining an understanding of issues impacting members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth Communities
9. You will be required to undertake some travel within Victoria to deliver services to Aboriginal youth within the service locations of the program. Sometimes this travel will occur outside of usual business hours.
10. Other duties as required

Personal accountability

- Compliance with all VALS Values, code of conduct, policies and procedures and relevant government legislation and standards where relevant.



- 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
- Ensure appropriate use of resources
- Actively participate in initiatives to maintain, build upon and promote a positive and collaborative workplace.
- Take reasonable care for your own health & safety, and health and safety of others (to extent required)
- Promptly respond to and report health and safety hazards, incidents and near misses to management.
- Attend mandatory training sessions (i.e. Equal employment opportunity, health and safety, cultural safety) and mandatory training specific to position.

Key Selection Criteria

1. Comprehensive understanding of the youth justice issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities, including in respect of child protection and the Aboriginal placement principle
2. Capacity to work as an advocate and caseworker in complex matters
3. Substantial knowledge of and practical experience in the law
4. Ability to supervise, mentor and train staff and contribute to the development of individuals and their knowledge and skills
5. Sound interpersonal skills and the capacity to communicate effectively with members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth community
6. A minimum of five-years post-admission experience in youth justice related matters and be eligible to obtain a Principal Practicing Certificate.
7. Demonstrated computer literacy skills and proficiency using the Microsoft Office and other relevant software. The capacity to quickly acquire competency in the use of VALS's client data base (ActionStep).
8. Ability to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and acknowledge their diverse backgrounds, personalities and varying needs and the unique cultural ways in which they may be expressed
9. Experience working in the non-profit sector.

Desirable

1. A member, or eligible to be a member, of Victoria Legal Aid's Youth Crime Subset practitioner panel
2. An LIV Accredited Specialist (Children's Law, Criminal Law or Family Law)

Qualifications – Required.

1. Admitted, or eligible for admission, as a legal practitioner in Victoria

Key Capabilities

- Develops a team structure to enable effective collaboration and delegation
- Develops and shares team vision in line with organisational goals - communicates goals - motivates team



- Supervises team members - understands individual strengths and interests and provides varied and challenging work.
- Anticipates, plans and prioritises work - manages competing demands.
- Is approachable, accessible and responsive.
- Builds knowledge of client, stakeholders and community environment - supports lawyers in the organisation to build this knowledge.
- Meets client and stakeholder expectations in a timely, reliable and consistent manner - ensures that others meet expectations.
- Develops the capability of colleagues to deliver high quality legal advice through on the job and formal training, and knowledge sharing in team meetings.

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 Driver's License that is valid in Victoria.
- 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 Practicing Certificate

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

Acceptance on position offer

I understand and am clear of the position expectations and requirements.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____