



### Position Description – Lawyer

Position:	Lawyer
Reports to:	Practice Manager, Balit Ngulu
Salary:	Level LO 4.1 (SCHADS Level B5) Salary \$80,957.24 per annum plus superannuation Salary Packaging also available
Location:	Shepparton Office – Unit 3, 262 Maude Street, Shepparton, Victoria This position may require metro, regional and interstate travel
Employment type:	Full-time (fixed term until 30/06/2024) to be extended on confirmation of funding
	<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

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 Lawyer Balit Ngulu Legal Service reports direct to the Practice Manager 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 Lawyer for the Balit Ngulu team provides high quality legal services, including duty lawyer services, representation, advice and information in criminal law matters to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth in Victoria.

### Key Performance Indicators, Duties & Responsibility

1. Under the supervision of the Practice Manager, plan and deliver a quality legal service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth in Shepparton and its neighbouring 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. Participate in community legal education projects, law reform and other Balit Ngulu projects as required.
3. 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.
4. Keep up to date with relevant legal developments and procedures by attending professional legal education programs and maintain an understanding of broader issues impacting the youth justice system and members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth Communities.
5. 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.
6. You will be required to travel across Victoria to deliver services to the Victorian Aboriginal youth communities. Sometimes this travel will occur outside of usual business hours.
7. 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. Admitted to practice as a legal practitioner in Victoria, with at least 18 months post-admission experience.
2. Knowledge of and practical experience in the law and court procedures with a focus on the Youth Justice System.
3. A commitment to and understanding of the youth legal issues faced by members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth Communities in Victoria.
4. Capacity to work as an advocate and caseworker in complex matters
5. The ability to work collaboratively with others and to foster a co-operative and supportive team environment
6. Sound interpersonal skills and the capacity to communicate effectively with members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth community
7. A knowledge of the principles and values of the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Services
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. 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).
10. Experience working in the non-profit sector.

#### Desirable

1. A member, or eligible to be a member, of Victoria Legal Aid's Youth Crime practitioner panel.

#### Qualifications - Required.

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

#### 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:



Victorian  
Aboriginal  
Legal Service



South Eastern Australian  
Aboriginal Justice Services  
Limited

- a copy of your current Employee Working with Children card
- a copy of your current Driver's License that is valid in the State of 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 Practising 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](mailto:jobs@vals.org.au)

### Acceptance on position offer

I understand and am clear of the position expectations and requirements

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

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

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