

JOB DESCRIPTION

Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service



**Victorian
Aboriginal
Legal Service**

JOB TITLE:	Senior Lawyer				
DEPARTMENT:	Balit Ngulu				
LOCATION:	273 High Street, Preston VIC 3072				
SALARY:	\$101,410.40 - \$105,905.80	<input type="checkbox"/> Pro-rata	CLASSIFICATION:	VALS LC 1.1 – 1.3	<input type="checkbox"/> Above Classification
REPORT TO:	Principal Managing Lawyer, Balit Ngulu				
EMPLOYMENT TYPE:	Full Time, Fixed Term				

ABOUT VALS

Victoria Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS) is an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO) and the state's only specialist legal and support service dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Established in 1973, we provide culturally safe legal advice and representation across criminal, family, civil and human rights law, youth justice, and specialist litigation. Our broader supports include a 24/7 Custody Notification Service, transitional housing for women exiting custody, family violence programs, one-to-one client support, and community legal education.

We are committed to diversity, equity and inclusion. Applicants from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, LGBTISBQ communities, and diverse cultures are strongly encouraged to apply. We welcome requests for adjustments throughout recruitment and employment to ensure accessibility and support.

ABOUT BALIT NGULU, YOUTH JUSTICE

Balit Ngulu (meaning "Strong Voice" in the Woi Wurrung language) is a specialised youth program within the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS). The program was established to ensure that Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people have access to culturally safe, holistic, and specialised legal assistance.

Balit Ngulu provides legal advice and representation primarily in the area of criminal law, supporting young people who come into contact with the criminal legal system. The program operates across Melbourne and Greater Shepparton, working to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth in the legal system.

In addition to legal support, Balit Ngulu provides wrap-around case management and advocacy through its Balit Ngulu Aboriginal Community Engagement (ACE) Worker, ensuring that Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people receive holistic and culturally safe care that is responsive to their cultural, social, and developmental needs.

The program is grounded in the principles of self-determination, cultural safety, early intervention, and community empowerment, and is a key part of VALS' broader commitment to justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

ROLE SUMMARY

The Senior Lawyer role leads the delivery of high-quality, culturally safe legal services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people facing criminal charges in the Children's Court (Criminal Division), Koori Courts, Magistrates Court and higher jurisdictions. The role includes senior advocacy, supervision and mentoring of junior lawyers, participation in case-planning, and contributing to community legal education, law reform, and diversion-focused initiatives.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Plan and deliver high-quality legal services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, including appearing as a senior advocate in the Children's Court (Criminal Division), Koori Courts, Magistrates' Court and other higher jurisdictions.
- Supervise, mentor, and support legal staff within the Balit Ngulu team, contributing to professional development, training, and capacity-building initiatives.
- Participate in and contribute to community legal education (CLE), law reform, and other VALS or Balit Ngulu projects, with a focus on early intervention, and culturally safe outcomes for young clients.
- Participate in case-planning meetings to ensure consistent oversight of criminal law casework and client outcomes.
- Maintain positive and collaborative relationships with key stakeholders, including Victoria Legal Aid, the Victorian Bar, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs), Youth Justice and other legal firms and community organisations.
- Stay up to date with legal developments, procedures, and broader youth justice issues, particularly those affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, through continuous professional development.

Ad Hoc

- Perform other tasks as reasonably directed.
- Undertake regional or interstate travel as required.
- Assist with ad hoc documentation, reporting, or operational support.
- Provide support for events, meetings, or projects as requested.

KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

- At least 3+ years experience as a legal practitioner, with demonstrated capability to work as an advocate and caseworker in complex matters involving children and young people.

- Substantial knowledge of, and practical experience in the law and criminal court procedures related to young people.
- Ability to supervise, mentor and train less experienced lawyers and contribute to the development of their knowledge and skills
- Comprehensive understanding of the youth justice issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, including their interactions with the child protection system.
- Sound interpersonal skills and the capacity to communicate effectively with members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, including young people.
- Excellent organisation, time management, communication and interpersonal skills, including the ability to work collaboratively with others and to foster a co-operative and supportive team environment
- Basic competency in the use of MS Office Software and the capacity to quickly acquire competency in the use of VALS' client data base.

QUALIFICATIONS & MANDATORY CHECKS

- Admitted as a legal practitioner in Victoria, with an unsupervised practising certificate.
- A current Employee Working with Children Check card
- A valid Victorian Driver's license
- A National Criminal History Check
- Proof of work rights in Australia, such as an Australian passport, birth certificate, or valid visa documentation

EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This position description outlines the core responsibilities and expectations of the role. Management retains the right to assign additional reasonable duties that may not be included in this document but are consistent with the role's purpose and level of responsibility.

This document is not intended to be exhaustive and may be updated or amended from time to time in consultation with the employee to reflect organisational or role changes.

By signing below, the employee acknowledges that they have read, understood, and agree to the responsibilities and expectations outlined in this position description.

Employee Name: _____

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____