



Artwork: *Kinaway tar-wan* by Bitja (Dixon Patten Jnr)

Position description

Position title:	Senior Policy and Projects Officer
Reports to:	Manager, Strategic Advocacy and Policy
Program area:	Barring-ga Balert (First Peoples Services)
Location:	Wurundjeri Country, Naarm (570 Bourke Street, Melbourne) (Flexible)
Classification:	WVR 4.2 – 42LO4B
Position type:	Ongoing

Position Summary

As the **Senior Policy and Projects Officer** within **Barring-ga Balert**, you will support evidence-based strategic advocacy that places First Peoples client experiences and outcomes at the centre of our work. You will contribute to and draft policy submissions and briefs, conduct research and analysis, oversee internal projects, act as a representative in stakeholder meetings and build constructive relationships within VLA and externally, to achieve strategic advocacy objectives.

You will work collaboratively with senior management, internal directorates and practice areas, and First Peoples programs to contribute to positive change to First Peoples experiences within the justice system.

Responsibilities

1. Work collaboratively with the Barring-ga Balert team to contribute and support the planning, design, and delivery of key strategic projects and initiatives aimed at improving:
 - a) the accessibility, cultural responsiveness, and quality of VLA's service delivery to First Peoples.
 - b) the organisations responsiveness and implementation of relevant external inquiries, reports and recommendations.
2. Build, develop, and maintain effective relationships with internal and external stakeholders and support collaboration and partnership activities.
3. Support the development of policy submissions, briefs, project plans, and strategic communications which embed the voices and lived experiences of First Peoples accessing VLA services and navigating the justice system.
4. Identify emerging issues and priorities by monitoring relevant policy, inquiries and consultations, law reform, reports and data and engage with stakeholders internally to collate and record client case studies.
5. Perform other tasks as necessary as directed by the Manager, Strategic Advocacy and Policy.

Essential standards and capabilities

The following standards and capabilities are mandatory and are required to perform the duties and responsibilities of this position.

- This position is only open to First Peoples (mandatory).
 - VLA considers that being a First Peoples person is a genuine occupational requirement for this position under subsection 26(3) or section 28 of the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic).
- Relevant work experience in law, public policy, or a related field
- It is a requirement that all VLA employees reside in Victoria, or a nearby border community, and can attend for office-based days at their primary work location. From time to time, you will be required to travel between various office locations to deliver quality services to our clients or for professional development.
- This position may require you to independently travel to meeting venues and other community-based organisations for project activities. It may also require you to travel interstate to attend events and other meetings from time to time.
- All appointments are subject to reference checks and pre-employment misconduct screening.
 - You will be required to undertake a police check during pre-employment screening or at any point during employment with VLA.
- We require information that supports your identity as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person – this might be a Confirmation of Aboriginality document or some other letter from an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation, or an Elder or Respected Community Person where you are from, or where you now live. We understand that this can be a challenge sometimes so please contact us if this is a barrier.

Occupational health and safety responsibilities at VLA:

- All staff at VLA are expected to champion proactive and positive health and safety practices in the workplace by raising health, safety and wellbeing issues or concerns with managers and colleagues. Staff are required to observe all safe work procedures, rules and instructions, and take all reasonable care for their own safety and for the safety of work colleagues by always operating in a safe and appropriate manner.

Key selection criteria

1. Lived experience working with Victoria's First Peoples, including an understanding of First Peoples cultures, cultural protocols and self-determination, building respectful partnerships and improving outcomes for First Peoples.
2. Knowledge and experience undertaking strategic advocacy, contributing to policy submissions, project implementation, and an understanding of the role of advocacy in effecting best practice and culturally safe systemic change.
3. Highly developed interpersonal and stakeholder engagement skills, and a demonstrated ability to influence and negotiate with people from all levels and develop and maintain relationships with internal and external stakeholders.
4. Excellent verbal and written communication skills, including a demonstrated ability to produce clear and well researched reports, briefs and advice, and, to lead projects.

5. Excellent organisational skills, the ability to work independently and the ability to meet deadlines under pressure.
6. A knowledge of the general business of VLA and a commitment to our vision and values.

Organisational context

Victoria Legal Aid is a cornerstone of Victoria's justice system, delivering essential legal services to the community.

We provide legal advice, dispute resolution, representation, information and advocacy services to hundreds of thousands of Victorians each year for criminal, civil, family violence, child protection and family law problems. We ensure people have access to legal services close to where they live, across metropolitan, suburban and regional locations.

Through non-legal, early intervention and dispute resolution services, we support people to understand their rights, participate in decision-making and resolve matters. We work closely with partners to influence policies and challenge unfair laws and practices to make our society fairer for everyone.

By coordinating legal assistance and information, resolving issues early and supporting people through court processes when necessary, we help prevent problems escalating and reduce harm. We target our efforts and limited resources to help those with the greatest need.

First Peoples Services

The First Peoples Services directorate leads and supports VLA projects and initiatives which aim to address systemic racism and disadvantage and are shaped by self-determination and accountability to First Peoples.

The directorate's four priority domains of influence are:

1. **Leading VLA staff and ways of working with and for First Peoples**. VLA is an employer of choice for First Peoples and a significant provider of services for First Peoples.
2. **Managing key stakeholder relationships**. VLA proactively builds mutually beneficial relationships at the local, state and National level with Aboriginal services and Community-Controlled Organisations, with wide, strategic influence across both (state and federal) government and non-government sectors.
3. **Reforming laws and systems**. VLA pursues law reform and strategic advocacy which seek to meaningfully address systemic racism and injustice and promote the rights of First Peoples.
4. **Responsiveness and accountability to First Peoples communities**. VLA offers accessible, timely, culturally safe and responsive services and supports to First Peoples. VLA works to be informed and guided by client and community experience.

Our VLA vision and values

Vision

Fair and inclusive justice where people have access to help, and laws and systems work for everyone.

Purpose

To help Victorians resolve legal problems and protect their rights, and to work with partners to improve laws and systems so they are fairer and more accessible.

Values

Our values are central to how we make decisions and deliver services. They guide our everyday actions, influence how we respond to legal need, and shape the way we work with clients, partners and each other.

Fairness

We are committed to fairness in society and facilitating fair and equitable access to legal and related support.

Care

We care about our clients and the community, and we approach our work with an awareness of the effects that trauma and discrimination can have. We treat each other with kindness and respect.

Courage

We approach our work with strength and confidence. We are guided by our values and what matters most to our clients and society.

Inclusion

We provide an inclusive environment for clients, staff and partners.

VLA is an Equal Opportunity Employer committed to promoting a diverse and inclusive workforce.

We strongly encourage people from diverse backgrounds and abilities, including First Peoples and refugees to apply for positions within our organisation. We will make reasonable adjustments to enable everyone to participate in our recruitment processes and to work productively and safely.

It is a key priority of VLA's [Reconciliation Action Plan](#) to support principles of self-determination by increasing First Peoples employment across all areas of VLA. We recognise that our workforce can benefit greatly from the unique knowledge, skills and expertise of a diverse workforce including First Peoples and in achieving a culturally safe and responsive service for our clients.

VLA is a Child-Safe organisation.

VLA is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and recognises that children's rights need to be respected, their views welcomed and valued, and their concerns taken seriously. We additionally acknowledge and appreciate the diverse and unique identities and experiences of First Nations children, which we respect and value.

Position Description approved by People and Workplace Services

Position Title: Senior Recruitment and Retention Consultant

Date approved: