

## Position description

<b>Position title:</b>	Executive Director, Civil Justice
<b>Reports to:</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>Program area:</b>	Civil Justice
<b>Location:</b>	Naarm / Melbourne CBD, on Wurundjeri Country
<b>Classification:</b>	SES2

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## Position Summary

The Executive Director, Civil Justice, provides strategic leadership to Victoria Legal Aid's (VLA's) Civil Justice directorate, leading the delivery and continuous improvement of high-quality civil justice services across Victoria.

Our Civil Justice services comprise mental health and disability, migration, economic and social rights, equality law and the statewide Independent Mental Health Advocacy service.

The Executive Director leads VLA's civil justice policy, advocacy and law reform work, using client and lived experience, practice insights and evidence to drive systemic improvements and influence fairer laws, policies and systems. The role works closely with government, the legal assistance sector and other stakeholders to advance positive outcomes for clients and the broader community.

The role leads a large and diverse directorate, providing strategic direction, supporting a high-performing leadership team and fostering a positive and inclusive culture, while ensuring the effective management of people, resources, governance, risk and organisational change.

As a member of VLA's Executive Management Group (EMG), the Executive Director contributes to the organisation's overall leadership, performance and integrity. The role contributes to organisation-wide decisions, strategy and resource allocation, balancing directorate and organisational priorities to achieve the best outcomes for VLA, its clients and the justice system. The Executive Director also models VLA's values and leadership practices and contributes to a strong organisational culture.

## Responsibilities

1. Provide high-quality strategic leadership and drive innovation in the planning, design, delivery and performance of VLA's civil justice programs across the state, including VLA's statewide Independent Mental Health Advocacy service, ensuring effective, high quality and appropriately targeted services are delivered.
2. Drive system change, including by leading and overseeing strategic advocacy and strategic litigation, ensuring that this work is informed by the experiences of our clients and consumers,

our practice experience, and that it is done in consultation with partners in the legal assistance and civil justice sectors.

3. Provide evidence-based advice to influence VLA's strategic and policy directions and culture, ensuring that these reflect and enable the organisation to fully realise our role in the legal services sector as a contributor to systemic improvements and law reform, including the provision of recommendations and options to EMG and VLA's Board.
4. Lead and manage change associated with critical or large-scale organisational and/or legal service delivery reforms, ensuring strong governance and effective risk management, and that the Civil Justice leadership team and staff are engaged and enabled to achieve the highest possible standards of practice and outcomes for our clients and the community.
5. Build, maintain and lead effective relationships with key internal and external stakeholders, including across the organisation, government, the courts, the legal assistance sector and justice system. Influence and collaborate to achieve organisational and system outcomes, navigate complex or sensitive issues, and represent VLA with credibility and impact.
6. Plan, prioritise and be accountable for the allocation of resources, including financial and staffing, for the effective operation of the Civil Justice directorate.
7. As a member of EMG and the Senior Leadership Team, contribute to and, as appropriate, share responsibility for the overall leadership, performance, culture and integrity of VLA.
8. Take shared accountability for the effective, equitable and sustainable allocation of organisational resources, including making and supporting organisation-wide prioritisation decisions.
9. Model and promote organisational values, expected leadership behaviours and a cohesive culture across the Directorate and in all locations.

## Essential standards and capabilities

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

- Tertiary qualifications in law, public policy or a related field, and/or significant equivalent professional experience.
- Experience leading a large legal practice and/or other advocacy service.
- Significant experience in civil justice, human rights and/or social justice environments, with a strong understanding of the legal and systemic issues affecting people experiencing disadvantage.
- Experience collaborating across government departments/ agencies and non-government organisations to influence and deliver services in line with government policy.
- A current Australian practising certificate which entitles you to practise in Victoria as a government legal practitioner is highly desirable.
- Demonstrated experience working with Victorian First Peoples communities, including an understanding of First Peoples cultures, cultural protocols and self-determination, and the demonstrated ability to lead culturally safe practice, build respectful partnerships and improve outcomes for First Peoples (highly desirable).

- Lived experience or experience in working with lived experience experts to contribute to the design of services is also highly desirable.
- You must have the right to work in Australia (i.e., be an Australian or New Zealand citizen, permanent resident, or hold a valid visa).
- VLA follows a hybrid work structure where employees work from the office or remotely as required to perform the duties specific to each role. All VLA employees are subject to minimum levels of in-office and/or at-court attendance, as determined by operational needs. Hybrid work arrangements may on occasion be reduced or not available for this role due to the nature and responsibilities of the role.
- 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.
- 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.

### **Occupational health and safety responsibilities at Victoria Legal Aid:**

- This leadership position will require you to lead by example in actively supporting, promoting and implementing the requirements of VLA's health and safety management system – policies, procedures and processes. Managers at VLA actively support staff in participating in programs and initiatives that positively promote their health, safety and wellbeing.
- 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. Demonstrated experience influencing organisational decision making through strategic, evidence-based advice and innovative recommendations.
2. Deep understanding of emerging, state-wide and national issues in legal assistance service delivery, with a proven ability to set strategic direction, formulate long term plans to mitigate risk, maximise opportunities and ensure the achievement of VLA, sector and government priorities.
3. Proven ability to lead and oversee critical stakeholder engagement and to advise and influence a diverse range of senior stakeholders on highly complex issues impacting policy development and service delivery. Successful record of co-creation and co-design of services with lived experience and user-group stakeholders.
4. Demonstrated ability to integrate strategic policy, regulatory, service delivery and/or program initiatives across multiple business units or functions, including the development and management of budgets, finances, procurement, workforce plans and expenditure.
5. Demonstrated experience operating at a senior executive level with organisation-wide responsibilities, including contributing to organisational strategy, leading complex decision-

making, managing competing priorities, and driving performance, culture and outcomes across a large, complex organisation.

6. A proven track record of leading high performing, values-led teams and fostering a culture that supports performance, accountability, inclusion and continuous improvement.
7. Strong change management and leadership capability, with experience in managing transformational or large-scale organisational change and embedding sustainable outcomes.
8. 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.

## Civil Justice

The Civil Justice program's vision is a fairer, stronger and more inclusive community. We advocate for equality, enable people to protect their rights and promote accountability of systems. Together with our partners in the legal and community sectors, and with our clients and consumers at the centre, we use the law so people can access justice and secure better, fairer outcomes in relation to issues that affect their lives, including their housing, income, mental and physical health, visa status and ability to live and work free from discrimination.

The Civil Justice program consists of sub-programs including Mental Health and Disability Law, Independent Mental Health Advocacy, Migration, Economic and Social Rights, and the Equality Law Program, with approximately 200 staff and an operating expenditure of over \$20 million.

## 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.

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## Other relevant information

- This position leads a team of approximately 200 FTE and is responsible for a budget of approximately \$21.3 million. The Executive Director is supported by an Executive Assistant and a management team.
  - All appointments are subject to reference checks and pre-employment misconduct screening, which may include a police check. A preferred candidate with an adverse conduct history or criminal record will not necessarily be precluded from employment with VLA and each application will be considered on its merits.
  - **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 to support principles of self-determination by increasing employment of First Peoples 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 Peoples children, which we respect and value.
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**Position Description approved by:**

Position Title: Associate Director, People Operations

Date approved: June 2026