

## Position description

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| <b>Position title:</b> | Executive Director, Legal Practice and Legal Help |
| <b>Reports to:</b>     | Chief Executive Officer                           |
| <b>Program area:</b>   | Legal Practice and Legal Help                     |
| <b>Location:</b>       | Naarm / Melbourne CBD, on Wurundjeri Country      |
| <b>Classification:</b> | SES2  |

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## Position Summary

The Executive Director, Legal Practice and Legal Help leads key functions that enable people to access legal assistance across Victoria. The role has responsibility for Legal Help, Disaster Legal Help Victoria and Legal Practice, bringing together services that support people from their first contact with Victoria Legal Aid (VLA) through to legal representation and ongoing assistance.

The role provides strategic and operational leadership across legal information and advice, grants of legal aid, quality assurance, practice support and service delivery pathways. It also provides executive oversight of VLA's grants transformation program, a key organisational priority to modernise grants administration and improve the experience of clients, practice partners and staff.

The Executive Director works closely with government and justice sector partners to strengthen collaboration and support an effective mixed model of service delivery, while contributing to and fostering a positive organisational culture and modelling VLA's values and expected leadership behaviours.

As a member of VLA's Executive Management Group (EMG), the Executive Director contributes to the organisation's overall leadership, performance and integrity. This includes contributing 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, while working collaboratively and modelling organisational values.

## Responsibilities

1. Provide high quality strategic leadership across Legal Practice and Legal Help functions. Set clear direction, build a high-performing leadership team and ensure the directorate delivers against VLA's strategy and the needs of clients and the community. in the planning, design, delivery and performance of VLA's Legal Help, Disaster Legal Help Victoria, and Legal Practice functions, in addition to oversight of the significant, whole of organisation grants transformation program.

2. Strengthen the quality, consistency and accessibility of legal aid services, including through effective practitioner panel processes, eligibility settings, transparent and fair decision-making processes and the application of quality standards.
3. Lead system-wide reform to improve access to justice and the experience of help-seekers, clients, practice partners and staff. Drive innovation in how services are designed and delivered, with a focus on people, processes and technology.
4. Lead and manage change associated with critical or large-scale organisational and/or legal service delivery reforms – including the grants transformation program, ensuring strong governance and effective risk management.
5. Shape and influence the legal assistance system through relationships with key stakeholders in government and partners across the sector including private practitioners, Community Legal Centres, the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service, Djirra, Courts and Tribunals, and other Legal Aid Commissions, to undertake collaborative planning and ensure a coordinated approach to the mixed model of service delivery.
6. Plan, prioritise and be accountable for the allocation of resources, including financial and staffing, for the effective operation of the Legal Practice and Legal Help 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 Legal Practice and Legal Help 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.

- Experience collaborating across government departments / agencies and non-government organisations to influence and deliver services in line with government policy.
- Tertiary qualifications in law, public policy or a related field, and/or significant equivalent professional experience.
- A current Australian practising certificate which entitles you to practise in Victoria as a government legal practitioner is desirable, along with experience leading a large legal practice and/or other advocacy service and overseeing high-volume service delivery.
- 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 and/or experience in working with lived experience experts to co-produce or co-design services and resources 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. Strong understanding of developing, applying and monitoring professional practice standards and quality improvement processes to meet regulatory, legislative and compliance obligations.
3. 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.
4. Proven ability to lead and oversee critical stakeholder engagement and to advise and influence a diverse range of senior stakeholders in relation to highly complex issues impacting on policy development and service delivery.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. A proven track record of leading high performing, values-led teams and fostering a culture that supports performance, accountability, inclusion and continuous improvement.

8. Strong change management and leadership capability, with experience in managing transformational or large-scale organisational change and embedding sustainable outcomes.
9. 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.

## Legal Practice and Legal Help

The Legal Practice and Legal Help directorate is comprised of the following programs:

### Legal Practice

Legal Practice provides a central point for whole-of-practice support and is the central point of contact for our practice partners, including private lawyers, VLA lawyers and Community Legal Centres.

Legal Practice's responsibilities include developing and supporting a quality legal practice, training and practice support, and the administration of the legal assistance scheme under the *Legal Aid Act*. It oversees legal practice and quality systems across all VLA's practice areas to ensure consistent and innovative approaches to modern legal management

The Legal Practice areas include:

- Grants Reform
- Grants & Quality Assurance
- Practice Support and Library
- Policy and Projects
- Legal Learning Initiative

### Legal Help

- Legal Help is the key entry point for Victorians seeking legal assistance. It provides an accessible, holistic triage, intake and referral service which quickly identifies help seekers' legal and related issues and assists them to deal with them. Every year Legal Help responds to over 200,000 requests for assistance through its phone and webchat helplines., providing information, legal advice and referrals on a wide variety of issues in more than 20 languages (directly and using the Telephone Interpreter Service). Legal Help operates a number

of specialist channels, including a family violence phone and webchat service, 1300 MOB VLA, prisoner helpline, Victims Legal Service helpline and Disaster Legal Help Victoria's phonenumber.

## 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 \$23.5 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: April 2026