



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

Victoria Legal Aid

## Position description

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| <b>Position title:</b> | First Peoples Employment Specialist                          |
| <b>Reports to:</b>     | Associate Director, Policy, Employment and Cultural Strategy |
| <b>Program area:</b>   | Barring-ga Balert                                            |
| <b>Location:</b>       | On Wurundjeri Country, Naarm (570 Bourke Street, Melbourne)  |
| <b>Classification:</b> | WVR 5.1 – 51AO8C                                             |
| <b>Position type:</b>  | Ongoing                                                      |

## Position Summary

The First Peoples Employment Specialist leads the delivery and implementation of key projects which support Victoria Legal Aid (VLA) to be an employer of choice for First Peoples.

The role focuses on:

- Supporting the organisation to achieve its First Peoples recruitment goals by coordinating the implementation and review of VLA's First Peoples Framework
- Developing and implementing a range of First Peoples pathway programs and professional development opportunities for both legal and non-legal roles across the organisation.
- Providing authoritative advice on culturally safe people management practices and design and develop policies and processes that inform best practice culturally safe attraction, recruitment and retention outcomes.
- Establishing and maintaining networks across Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, government, schools and universities, and other key stakeholders to identify opportunities for collaboration and effective recruitment strategies.
- Ensuring the availability of culturally appropriate and responsive supports and wellbeing offerings for First Peoples staff, including by strengthening operation and governance of VLA's First Peoples Staff Network.
- Providing support and guidance to VLA staff through the development of toolkits and guidelines to inform best practice, attraction, recruitment, retention, and workplace support for First Peoples at all stages of their employment with VLA.

## Responsibilities

1. Lead the review, design and promotion of VLA's First Peoples pathways and professional development initiatives in partnership with People and Workplace Services (PaWS) and Early Careers Specialist. Provide organisation-wide program coordination and expert guidance to senior stakeholders.
2. Develop and deliver a comprehensive implementation plan for VLA's First Peoples employment Initiatives aligned to the First Peoples Framework working with the Associate Director, articulating

clear outcomes, deliverables, timelines, resourcing requirements and accountabilities, and ensuring strong alignment with broader organisational strategies and corporate planning frameworks.

3. Support development of monitoring, evaluation and reporting of First Peoples employment initiatives working closely with the Associate Director, Barrang-ga Balart and the Senior Evaluation Advisor (Barrang-ga Balart) to ensure outcomes are measurable, risks are identified, and continuous improvement is embedded.
4. Build and sustain high-level relationships on behalf of Barrang-ga Balart across VLA and with key external stakeholders including VALS, Djirra, and First Peoples networks and associations (e.g. Tarwirri), to strengthen collaboration, influence outcomes, and advance shared self-determination objectives.
5. Oversee VLA's First Peoples Employment and Staff Networks to strengthen governance, participation and impact while coordinating cultural safety, supervision, professional connections, leadership, cultural activities (Men's and Women's business) and workforce engagement initiatives.
6. Provide culturally safe mentoring and support to First Peoples staff, pathway participants (including clerks, graduates and New Lawyers) and prospective applicants, including providing culturally informed support through recruitment and progression processes and discreet handling of sensitive matters.
7. Act as senior cultural advisor to PAWS and people leaders, providing advice on culturally safe people management, workforce development, mentoring and retention strategies for First Peoples staff.
8. Provide expert advice on role descriptions and workforce structures for First Peoples client services and employment pathways, ensuring alignment with best practice and self-determination principles.

## 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 Australian First Peoples.
  - 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).
- Demonstrated connection to the Victorian First Peoples Community.
- Demonstrated experience and understanding of cultural norms in working with First Peoples, and the ability to communicate sensitively and effectively First Nations communities.
- Demonstrated experience in supporting First Peoples employment related employment programs.
- 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).
- 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.
- We require information that supports your identity as First Peoples – this might be a Confirmation of Aboriginality document or some other letter from an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation 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.

## Key selection criteria

1. Demonstrated deep cultural knowledge of First Peoples communities in Victoria, including systemic, social, economic, health and housing barriers to justice and employment, with an ability to apply this to organisational practice and workforce design.
2. Proven experience designing, implementing and evaluating organisation-wide initiatives (programs, frameworks, tools) to address barriers and advance First Peoples employment, progression and retention.
3. Demonstrated experience providing culturally safe advice and support to First Peoples candidates, staff and senior leaders, including navigating complex and sensitive matters, exercising sound judgement, and providing timely referrals to PaWS or other specialist services as required.
4. Strong capability in leading projects and organisational change through planning, governance, risk management, stakeholder negotiation and issue resolution across teams.
5. Highly developed written communication skills, with demonstrated experience producing clear, authoritative briefs, strategies, reports, business cases and recommendations for diverse audiences, including senior executives and governance bodies.
6. Strong interpersonal and communication skills, with demonstrated ability to build trust-based relationships, exercise cultural authority, and communicate sensitively and persuasively with a wide range of stakeholders, including First Peoples communities, staff, managers and external partners.
7. Demonstrated understanding of the role of VLA within the broader justice system, and a strong commitment to VLA's vision, values, and to advancing self-determination, equity and culturally safe practice.
8. Demonstrated interest in human resource management and/or studies in human resource management or business (or progression towards) will be highly regarded. However, applicants with experience and evidence of a demonstrated commitment to best practice in employment pathway programs are encouraged to apply.

## 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.

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## Who we are

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.

## Barring-ga Balert

The Barring-ga Balert 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.

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## 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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## **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 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 Australian First Peoples children, which we respect and value.

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### **Position Description approved by People and Workplace Services**

Position Title: Senior Recruitment and Retention Consultant

Date approved: 12 August 2026