

MANAGING CIVIL LAWYER

Application Pack

1800 898 251
reception@naaja.org.au
www.naaja.org.au
North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency Limited
ABN: 63 118 017 842

Darwin
61 Smith Street
Darwin NT 0801
Tel: 08 8982 5100
Free: 1800 898 251

Katherine
10 Third Street
Katherine NT 0850
Tel: 08 8972 5000
Free: 1800 897 728

Alice Springs
Level 2, 16 Hartley Street
Alice Springs NT 0870
Tel: 08 8950 9300
Free: 1800 636 097

Tennant Creek
61 Paterson Street
Tennant Creek NT 0860
Tel: 08 8962 1332
Free: 1800 636 097

About North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA)

NAAJA is contracted by the Commonwealth and Northern Territory governments to provide law and justice-based services to Aboriginal people and their families in the Northern Territory.

With a history dating back more than 50 years to the establishment of the Top End's first Aboriginal legal aid office, NAAJA is at the forefront of pursuing justice for Aboriginal people.

NAAJA's overarching vision is dignity, respect, and justice for Aboriginal people.

NAAJA operates in a unique environment—Aboriginal Territorians experience some of the highest rates of disadvantage of any Australians, which drives interactions with the justice system and the need for legal services.

As an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation, NAAJA understands its clients' unique and complex needs. Its culturally responsive, holistic services seek to empower individuals, their families, and communities.

With offices in Darwin, Palmerston, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine, NAAJA employs more than 200 people providing the following services:

- criminal law
- civil law
- remote community legal services
- youth justice services
- community legal education
- Aboriginal prisoner release programs (including Throughcare services)
- a custody notification service (CNS)
- policy and law reform.

In addition to providing legal services, NAAJA operates as a policy and advocacy body for the interests of Aboriginal people. Its work has earned national and international human rights awards.



Our Civil Team

NAAJA's Civil Team helps Aboriginal people across the Northern Territory understand their rights, address legal problems and challenge unfair treatment. Its work concerns matters that can profoundly affect a person's life, including their housing, family relationships, access to services and treatment by public institutions.

The practice spans areas including discrimination, child protection, tenancy, administrative law, guardianship, coronial inquests and torts. Working across multiple offices and servicing regional and remote communities, the team delivers culturally safe, trauma-informed legal assistance that responds to clients' circumstances and community priorities.

Civil legal work also provides opportunities to address problems beyond an individual matter. Through strategic litigation, collaboration and contributions to policy and law reform, the team helps identify and challenge systemic barriers affecting Aboriginal people. It works alongside NAAJA's criminal lawyers, Throughcare, community legal education and Strategic Policy teams to strengthen responses to interconnected legal and social needs.

The team brings together lawyers and administrative staff working across a geographically dispersed practice. Strong supervision, shared learning, sound professional judgement and respectful relationships are central to delivering effective services and supporting staff through complex and demanding work.



About the Role

As Managing Civil Lawyer, you will lead the strategic direction, operations and professional standards of NAAJA's civil law practice across the Northern Territory. Based in Darwin and reporting to the Principal Legal Officer, you will be a member of NAAJA's Senior Management team, contributing to organisational strategy and the delivery of high-quality, trauma-informed and culturally safe legal services.

Strategic leadership and organisational direction

- Lead the civil law practice across multiple offices, setting clear priorities aligned with NAAJA's mission and strategic plan.
- Contribute to organisational strategy and decision-making as a member of the Senior Management team.
- Provide briefings and recommendations to the Principal Legal Officer and CEO on civil practice priorities, emerging issues and opportunities, and present to the Board as required.
- Drive service innovation and continuous improvement to strengthen the quality, accessibility and effectiveness of civil legal assistance.

Legal practice and professional standards

- Oversee the quality, compliance and ethical delivery of civil law services across the Northern Territory.
- Ensure the practice meets legal professional obligations and operates consistently with NAAJA's policies and procedures.
- Maintain effective practice risk management, including workload monitoring, file audits and client feedback mechanisms.
- Ensure cultural safety and trauma-informed approaches are embedded in the delivery of legal services.

People leadership and workforce development

- Lead a culturally diverse and geographically dispersed team of lawyers and administrative staff with empathy, integrity and clear expectations.
- Support and mentor staff, building legal capability and confidence through professional development and continuous learning.
- Manage recruitment, performance development, training and workforce planning for the civil law section.

- Build an inclusive and accountable team environment that supports collaboration, cultural safety and high standards of practice.

Strategic litigation and law reform

- Identify legal needs and opportunities for strategic litigation in areas including discrimination, child protection, tenancy, guardianship and human rights.
- Work with NAAJA's Strategic Policy team and other sections to progress policy and law reform initiatives.
- Connect issues arising through civil practice with opportunities to address systemic barriers affecting Aboriginal people.
- Represent NAAJA in public forums, working groups and advocacy initiatives at local, Territory and national levels.

Community relationships and collaboration

- Build and maintain trusted relationships with Aboriginal communities, government, courts, the legal assistance sector and other partners.
- Identify and respond to civil legal needs in consultation with Aboriginal communities, ensuring community priorities inform service delivery.
- Strengthen collaboration across NAAJA's criminal law, Throughcare, policy and communications, and community legal education teams.
- Travel to regional and remote communities as required to support the work of the practice and its relationships.

Service effectiveness and accountability

- Contribute to data collection, reporting and service evaluation to assess effectiveness, identify gaps and inform improvements.
- Contribute to funding proposals and reporting requirements that support the delivery and development of civil legal services.
- Use practice information and client feedback to strengthen service quality, accountability and responsiveness.
- Participate in Senior Management, management and staff meetings, and undertake other duties within the scope and skillset of the position as directed.

What we are looking for

The successful applicant will bring the following:

- Admission, or eligibility for admission, as a legal practitioner in the Northern Territory, with at least five years' post-admission experience in civil law.
- Demonstrated leadership and people management skills, ideally within a legal or advocacy environment.
- Proven experience providing legal services to Aboriginal clients, including demonstrated cultural competency and trauma-informed practice.
- Significant civil law expertise in one or more areas of discrimination, child protection, tenancy, administrative law, coronial inquests or torts.
- Strong organisational, time management and strategic planning skills, ideally including experience leading geographically dispersed teams.
- High-level written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to influence stakeholders and advocate on systemic issues.
- A demonstrated commitment to social justice, law reform and community-led approaches to service delivery.
- Knowledge of current civil justice issues affecting Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory.
- The ability and willingness to travel to regional and remote communities as required.



Benefits and working with us

This senior leadership role offers the opportunity to shape civil legal services across the Northern Territory, alongside NAAJA employment benefits that support your wellbeing, family and cultural responsibilities.

BENEFIT	WHAT IS AVAILABLE
Annual leave	Six weeks per annum with 17.5% leave loading
Personal leave	Three weeks per annum
Cultural leave	Five days, plus an additional two days for Aboriginal staff on request
Personal wellbeing	$800 per year to be utilised on a wellbeing provider of your choice
Remote area allowance	$3,400 per annum
Relocation assistance	Up to $4,000
Paid parental leave	Twelve weeks for primary carers and four weeks for secondary carers
Salary packaging	Up to $18,500 in tax-free salary packaging benefits through SMART Salary Packaging
Language allowance	Where a local Aboriginal language is spoken and utilised as part of the role

Living and working in Mparntwe

Based in Darwin, this role offers the opportunity to build a rewarding leadership career while enjoying the Top End's tropical lifestyle. Waterfront dining, outdoor markets, diverse food and cultural experiences, and spectacular sunsets provide plenty to enjoy beyond the working day.

Working across the Northern Territory also brings opportunities to build relationships with Aboriginal communities and gain a deeper understanding of the places, experiences and priorities that shape NAAJA's work. With relocation assistance and six weeks' annual leave, you will have support to make the move and time to explore your new surroundings.



How to Apply

Please submit your resume and a cover letter outlining your relevant experience and addressing the five screening questions below. You may attach your responses as a separate document if that makes your application easier to read.

Applications must be submitted online.

Screening Questions

1. Do you identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?
2. Please describe your experience providing civil legal services to Aboriginal clients. How have you applied culturally safe and trauma-informed approaches, and responded to the civil justice issues affecting the communities you have worked with?
3. Tell us about your experience leading and developing a legal or advocacy team, including across multiple locations where relevant. How have you supported staff capability, managed workloads and maintained professional standards?
4. Please describe your civil law expertise, particularly in discrimination, child protection, tenancy, administrative law, coronial inquests or torts. Provide an example of a complex matter or strategic litigation, advocacy or law reform initiative, explaining your contribution and the outcome.
5. Tell us about your experience setting strategic priorities and improving a legal service or practice. How have you worked with communities, senior leaders and other stakeholders to manage risk, strengthen service delivery and assess the results?

Preparing your responses

For questions 2–5, provide practical examples that demonstrate your suitability for the Managing Civil Lawyer role. Briefly explain the context, your responsibilities, the actions you took and the outcome or learning. Make your own contribution clear, including how you exercised professional judgement, worked with others and responded to client or community needs.

Closing date and enquiries

Applications close on Wednesday 02 December 2026. Applications will be assessed as they are received, so we encourage you to apply early.

For a confidential conversation about the opportunity, contact Anna Gill on (08) 7936 8304 or anna.gill@naaja.org.au.

For application enquiries, email peopleandcapability@naaja.org.au.

North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency

Position description

Position details	Managing Civil Lawyer
Salary	SM Level 3-4
FTE	Full-Time 37.5 hours per week
Department	Civil
Location	Darwin
Reports to	Principal Legal Officer

Position overview

As a member of the senior leadership team, the managing civil lawyer leads and oversees the strategic direction, operations, and professional standards of NAAJA's civil law practice across the Northern Territory. This role is critical to ensuring the delivery of high-quality, trauma-informed and culturally safe civil legal services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The managing civil lawyer will drive service innovation, maintain legal excellence, advocate for systemic reform, and mentor a geographically dispersed team of lawyers and administrative staff. They will also contribute to organisational strategy and collaboration across legal and non-legal program areas.

Duties

1. Provide visionary leadership and management of the civil law practice across multiple offices located throughout the Northern Territory.
2. Oversee and ensure the quality, compliance, and ethical delivery of civil law services.
3. Set and deliver strategic objectives in alignment with NAAJA's mission and strategic plan.
4. Contribute to data collection, reporting, and continuous improvement initiatives to ensure service effectiveness, quality and accountability.
5. Contribute to cross-program collaboration across criminal, Throughcare, policy & communications, and community legal education teams.
6. Identify needs and opportunities for strategic litigation work in areas including discrimination, child protection, tenancy, guardianship, and human rights. Collaborate with other sections of NAAJA, including the Strategic Policy team, to progress NAAJA policy and law reform initiatives.
7. Provide briefings and recommendations on areas of NAAJA civil practice to the Principal Legal Officer and CEO and present to the NAAJA Board as required.
8. Lead a culturally diverse team with empathy and integrity, fostering a high-performance, inclusive, trauma-informed workplace.
9. Manage recruitment, performance development, training, and workforce planning for the civil law section.
10. Embed a culture of continuous learning, accountability, and cultural safety within the team.
11. Represent NAAJA in public forums, working groups, and advocacy initiatives at local, Territory and national levels.

12. Build and sustain trusted relationships with Aboriginal communities, government, courts, legal assistance sector, and other partners.
13. Actively identify and respond to legal needs in consultation with Aboriginal communities.
14. Maintain effective risk management practices, including workload monitoring, file audits, and client feedback mechanisms.
15. Contribute to funding proposals, reporting, and service evaluation activities.
16. Ensure compliance with legal professional obligations and NAAJA's internal policies and procedures.
17. Attend and contribute to Senior Managers, management and staff meetings.
18. Other duties within the scope and skillset of the position as directed.

Selection criteria essential

1. Admission or eligibility for admission as a legal practitioner in the Northern Territory, with at least five years post-admission experience in civil law.
2. Demonstrated leadership and people management skills, ideally in a legal or advocacy environment.
3. Proven experience in providing legal services to Aboriginal clients, including demonstrated cultural competency and trauma-informed practice.
4. Significant expertise in civil law, particularly in one or more areas of discrimination, child protection, tenancy, administrative law, coronial inquests or torts.
5. Strong organisational, time management and strategic planning abilities, ideally including experience in leading geographically dispersed teams.
6. High-level written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to influence and advocate on systemic issues.
7. Demonstrated commitment to social justice, law reform and community-led approaches to service delivery.
8. Ability and willingness to travel to regional and remote communities as required.
9. Knowledge of current civil justice issues affecting Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory.
10. Ability to obtain a working with children clearance (ochre card) upon commencement.
11. Satisfactory criminal history check and no history of disqualification from employment by a legal practice.

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