



## **VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL LEGAL SERVICE CO-OPERATIVE LIMITED**

### **POSITION DESCRIPTION**

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<b>POSITION:</b>	<b>Legal Secretary</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE TO:</b>	<b>Legal Secretary – Team Leader Director Legal and Client Services</b>
<b>SALARY:</b>	<b>VALS AO 4 – 6.3 (\$41,640 - \$54,520)</b>
<b>LOCATION:</b>	<b>Head Office (Preston)</b>
<b>STATUS OF EMPLOYMENT:</b>	<b>Full time (contract)</b>

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### **THE ORGANISATION**

We were established as a community controlled organisation in 1973 to address the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the criminal justice system. The organisation has a long and proud history of providing direct legal and service support for Aboriginal Victorians who are experiencing or at risk of experiencing negative contact with the justice system and advocating locally, nationally and internationally for the rights of Aboriginal people.

We strive to:

- Promote social justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;
- Promote the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to empowerment, identity and culture;

- Ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples enjoy their rights, are aware of their responsibilities under the law and have access to appropriate advice, assistance and representation;
- Reduce the disproportionate involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the criminal justice system; and
- Promote the review of legislation and other practices which discriminate against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The organisation has grown over the years (with further expansion options being pursued) and now offers criminal, family and civil law services, client services support, community legal education and a range of community justice support programs in both Victoria and Tasmania. The Tasmanian operation was established in 2015, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community Legal Service (TACLS), a semi-autonomous operation for Tasmania. We also established another semi-autonomous service in 2017, Balit Ngulu, a dedicated children and youth legal service for Aboriginal people in Victoria.

### **LEGAL AND CLIENT SERVICES**

This section is responsible for delivering client focused quality services for Aboriginal Victorians in contact with the justice system. Legal and Client Services are co-located in this section to drive an integrated, flexible and innovative approach to meeting client needs. The section liaises and networks with other Aboriginal organisations and works with stakeholders to reduce negative contact of Aboriginal people with the justice system. The section, in conjunction with Executive and Corporate Services also advocates for justice outcomes and prepares specialist advice on legislative, policy and program change.

The section oversees the provision of legal advice and legal aid, incorporating case management and planning with Solicitors and CSOs and specialist support staff particularly for more serious cases and clients experiencing complex issues. Solicitors, Paralegals and Legal Secretaries are located in this section to provide a clear line of accountability, and authority for management of the full range of legal functions.

Client and Community Programs include CSOs, Local Justice Workers, Community Justice Panels, Post Release Support and Community Legal Education. Their co-location with legal services provides the opportunity to integrate and adapt these services to meet the needs of clients as they enter and move through the justice system, and to work more broadly with communities to reduce negative contact with the justice system.

VALS has recently undertaken an organisational review to, amongst other things, ensure that its structure is aligned with and able to drive and support the future directions of the organisation.

## **POSITION OVERVIEW**

To provide high quality secretarial and support services to the legal staff in the provision of criminal, family and civil law assistance to members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in Victoria.

1. **KEY SELECTION CRITERIA (Applicants will be assessed against these criteria). These should include knowledge, experience and abilities required listed in order of importance.**
  - 1.1. Demonstrated ability and experience as a legal secretary.
  - 1.2. Advanced skills in the use of MS Office Software (particularly MS Word, Excel, E-mail) to a legal practice and the capacity to quickly acquire competency in the use of VALS' client data base.
  - 1.3. Professional and courteous phone manner and interpersonal skills and the capacity to communicate effectively with members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
  - 1.4. A commitment to the legal issues faced by members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community in Victoria.
  - 1.5. The ability to work collaboratively with others and to foster a co-operative and supportive team environment.
  - 1.6. A knowledge of the principles and values of the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service.

## **2 KEY DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- 2.1 Undertake all secretarial tasks and associated file management tasks as provided by solicitors in relation to the ongoing file management of clients of the Service in areas of Criminal, Civil and Family law.
- 2.2 Prepare documentation for briefing Counsel or other professionals as directed, including photocopying, collating and arranging delivery.
- 2.3 Receive phone calls on behalf of individual solicitors and follow up enquiries or record messages for action by solicitor.
- 2.4 Assist in arranging appointments for clients or making contact with clients directly.
- 2.5 Undertake filing of reports and other documentation on behalf of clients.
- 2.6 Update data base and electronic files as required.
- 2.7 Lodge and maintain Victoria Legal Aid grant applications within the ATLAS system as required.
- 2.8 Undertake relief work on reception, as rostered and participate in duties associated there.
- 2.9 Participate in the processing of ingoing and outgoing mail for the organisation.
- 2.10 Keep up to date with relevant procedures by attending professional education programs and maintain an understanding of issues impacting the justice system and members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community.

## **3 QUALIFICATIONS:**

- 3.1 3+ year experience as a legal secretary
- 3.2 Word proficient to 80 words per minute.
- 3.3 The incumbent will be required to obtain a Working with Children check.

## **4 OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION:**

The employee, prior to commencement, will need to disclose any pre-existing condition or injury that he/she knows about which could be reasonably foreseen to be affected by the described work duties.

Pursuant to s82(7) of the Accident Compensation Act 1985, the failure to disclose information will mean that, if employed, the employee will not be paid compensation for such condition.

All staff are required to obtain a working with children check.

<b>Reviewing and approving this Position Description</b>		
<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Person responsible</b>	<b>Approval</b>
Annual	Human Resources Officer	CEO Director Legal and Client Services Principal Legal Officer - Criminal

<b>Position Description review and version tracking</b>			
<b>Review</b>	<b>Date Approved</b>	<b>Approved by</b>	<b>Next Review Due</b>
1	February 2018	Director Legal and Client Services	February 2019
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