



## Position Description – Senior Family Lawyer

Position:	Senior Family Lawyer
Reports to:	Principal Legal Officer – Family Law
Salary:	\$80,000 - \$85,000
Location:	Head Office - 273 High Street, Preston, Victoria This position may require regional and interstate travel
Employment type:	Full-time 24 Month Contract

### About us

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 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.



## About the team

### Legal and Client Services

This section is responsible for delivering client focussed quality services for Aboriginal Victorians in contact with the justice system.

Legal and Client Services are co-located in this unit 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 Aboriginal people have with the justice system.

In conjunction with Executive and Corporate Services this section also advocates for improved justice outcomes and prepares specialist advice on legislation change.

The Director, with the PLOs ensures all legal standards and CLC Risk Management guidelines are met.

The PLO Tasmania Aboriginal Community Legal Service reports direct to the CEO but maintains a functional relationship with this section to ensure collegiate and professional support for delivery of high quality legal services.

Similarly the Practice Manager Balit Ngulu reports to the CEO but maintains a functional relationship with this area.

## About the position



### Overview

The Senior Family Lawyer is to have 3-4 years of practice experience in family law. This position is to provide high quality legal services, including information, advice, representation, casework, negotiation and dispute resolution, and outreach services primarily in Family Law matters with a focus on family violence and related hearings in the Magistrates' Court of Victoria and the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia on behalf of members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in Victoria. This position also requires a willingness to conduct child protection matters.

To engage with and participate in VALS projects, policy and law reform initiatives, and community and professional legal education programs.

It is important that you are endorsed or eligible to become a Panel Certifier on Victorian Legal Aid's Family Law Panel.

### Key Performance Indicators, Duties & Responsibility

1. Appear as an advocate on behalf of VALS clients in Family Law proceedings in the Magistrates' Court of Victoria and the Federal Circuit and Family Courts of Australia, and at other statewide locations as required.
2. Deliver high quality legal services, including information, advice and casework on behalf of VALS clients in Family Law matters and other related matters as required.
3. Maintain a substantial caseload in Family Law matters.
4. Prepare and comply with applications for grants of legal assistance and reporting requirements for matters eligible for Victoria Legal Aid funding.
5. Attend, participate and contribute to the planning, service delivery and continuous improvement of the Family Law Practice and VALS.
6. Contribute to VALS projects, policy and law reform initiatives, and community and professional legal education programs as required.
7. Contribute to the collaborative relationship with Victoria Legal Aid and other community organisations with which VALS interacts.
8. Keep up to date with relevant legal developments and procedures by attending professional legal education programs and maintain an understanding of issues, risks and trends impacting upon the provision of relevant legal services and members of the ATSI community in Victoria.

### Key Selection Criteria

9. Admitted or eligible for admission as a legal practitioner in Victoria and in the High Court of Australia,
10. Demonstrated ability to act as an advocate, deliver information, advice, casework and outreach services, and undertake negotiation and dispute resolution on behalf of VALS clients in Family Violence, Intervention Order and, to a lesser extent, Family Law matters,
11. Knowledge of and 3-4 years of practical experience in relevant law and procedure, with a focus on Family Violence Intervention Orders, Family Law and a willingness to conduct child protection matters,
12. Sound interpersonal skills and the capacity to communicate effectively with members of the ATSI community, VALS staff and other community organisations with which VALS interacts,



13. A commitment to and understanding of the legal issues faced by members of the ATSI community,
14. Demonstrated ability for quick and accurate decision-making and the ability to work under pressure and meet deadlines,
15. Demonstrated ability to work collaboratively with others to foster a co-operative and supportive team environment,
16. A knowledge of and commitment to the principles and values of the VALS, and
17. Competency in the use of MS Office software (Word, Excel, E-mail) and the capacity to quickly acquire competency in the use of the VALS' client database.

#### Key Capabilities

18. Demonstrates high levels of enthusiasm
19. Demonstrates respect for self and colleagues
20. Works with team in a collaborative manner
21. Adheres to organisation policies and procedures
22. Communicates workloads to assist with the planning and allocation work
23. Meets deadlines - communicates deadline difficulties in a timely manner
24. Builds rapport with clients & stakeholders
25. Develops a practical and client centric approach
26. Participates in learning and knowledge sharing activities such as team meetings and training programs
27. Complies with risk management protocols and relevant law relating to professional practice
28. Ensures files are up to date, easily accessible to others

#### How to apply

Please send your Resume/ CV together with a Cover Letter which addresses the Key Selection Criteria to [jobs@vals.org.au](mailto:jobs@vals.org.au).