

<b>POSITION TITLE:</b>	Advocate, Independent Mental Health Advocacy		
<b>REPORTS TO:</b>	Manager, Independent Mental Health Advocacy		
<b>PROGRAM AREA:</b>	Civil Justice	<b>LOCATION:</b>	Geelong
<b>CLASSIFICATION:</b>	VLA3	<b>POSITION TYPE:</b>	Ongoing

## POSITION SUMMARY

Provide representational advocacy to people on compulsory treatment orders, assist people to understand and exercise their rights and to enable them to participate in decisions about their treatment, care and recovery.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Provide high quality non-legal advocacy services to people on compulsory treatment orders to enable them to participate in decisions about their treatment, care and recovery by:
  - a. Listening, clarifying and trying to understand what the person wants.
  - b. Assisting the person to understand his or her rights, the processes available to exercise these rights and the consequences of his or her choices.
  - c. Supporting the person to self-advocate, or as directed, represent their views or preferences to others.
2. Make and receive referrals and triage inquiries from users of the program, mental health organisations and services including, but not limited to, hospitals, peer support workers, social workers, lawyers, caseworkers and other advocates.
3. Contribute to the implementation and continuous improvement of IMHA program including the development and review of policies, procedures and guidelines.
4. Contribute to positive engagement with consumers and consumer organisations to ensure consumer needs are at the centre of service delivery.
5. Participate in public promotion and education to assist internal and external stakeholders to understand the service and the role of an advocate.
6. Contribute to the health and wellbeing of self and others by participating in individual and team debriefing and mentoring.
7. Participate in individual and team professional development and keep up to date with relevant policies, legislation and maintain an understanding of issues impacting the broader mental health sector.
8. Collaborate with other VLA staff and contribute to the VLA strategy and other broader organisational forums, projects and events.

## KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

1. Demonstrated experience in consumer leadership and engagement, with an understanding of the challenges impacting Victorians when accessing mental health support services.
2. Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, and a demonstrated ability to influence and negotiate with people across all levels of the organisation and with external stakeholders.
3. Proven ability to work both independently and collaboratively in a team environment.
4. Knowledge of mental health conditions and treatments; and understands relevant policy and legal frameworks including the *Mental Health Act 2014 (Vic)*, *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)* and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.
5. Understands or has experience in the mental health sector and understands supported decision making and representational advocacy.

## QUALIFICATIONS/ EXPERIENCE

- Experience in community development, consumer advocacy, mental health advocacy, community sector advocacy, social work, mental health service provision or other similar fields (mandatory)
- Post-secondary qualification (certificate, diploma or degree) in a relevant field such as health, community development, community health, community mental health or social work (highly desirable)
- Mental health consumer experience (highly desirable)

## OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

- To be eligible to apply for this position you must be an Australian or New Zealand citizen, permanent resident or hold a valid work permit or visa.
- You may be required to consent to a police check. Please note that people with criminal records are not automatically prevented from applying for this position and each application will be considered on its merits.
- You may be required to undergo or hold a current Working with Children Check.
- 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.
- This position may require you to independently travel to outreach services and hospitals in Barwon regions, as well as Warrnambool and Footscray.

## ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

VLA provides legal aid services to members of the community in-house, through contracted private lawyers and funding to community legal centres. Our services include the provision of duty lawyers at courts, legal representation on individual cases, legal information, and community legal education. Our in-house practice is divided into four programs: Criminal Law, Family, Youth and Children's Law, Civil Justice and Access and Equity. VLA also conducts research into and makes submissions concerning legal aid and law reform issues.

## ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

Services are delivered through the Melbourne head office and 14 branch offices across the state. Five are situated in metropolitan Melbourne (Broadmeadows, Dandenong, Frankston, Ringwood, and Sunshine) and nine in regional Victoria (Bairnsdale, Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Horsham, Morwell, Mildura, Shepparton and Warrnambool).

The **Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA) service** sits within the Civil Justice Program. The Civil Justice Program includes the Mental Health and Disability Advocacy, Migration, Equality, Commonwealth Entitlements and Social Inclusion subprograms. While the IMHA program is distinct and independent from other Victoria Legal Aid services, it complements and enhances our existing mental health legal services. Our services in this area have recently expanded across the state to deliver improved outcomes for people who are receiving involuntary treatment under the *Mental Health Act 2014 (Vic)*. The IMHA program is a non-legal advocacy service that supports the goals of the *Mental Health Act 2014 (Vic)*. The service is statewide, and we have four teams based in VLA offices in Melbourne, Bendigo, Dandenong and Geelong. Advocates provide services to all Designated Mental Health Services in Victoria. IMHA has a phone line staffed by advocates and visit all mental health inpatient units.

## OUR VISION & VALUES

### Our vision

A fair and just society where rights and responsibilities are upheld.

### Our purpose

To make a difference in the lives of our clients and for the community by:

- resolving and preventing legal problems.
- encouraging a fair and transparent justice system.

### Our values

#### *Fair*

We stand up for what is fair.

We aim to be fair when making choices about who and how we help people.

#### *Care*

We care about our clients and the community in which we live.

We look out for and take care of each other.

#### *Courage*

We act with courage backed by evidence about what is best for clients and the community.

We act with courage to be the best we can be.

***VLA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and is committed to promoting a diverse and inclusive workforce. We encourage people from culturally diverse backgrounds, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, to apply for positions within our organisation. We will make reasonable adjustment where possible for people with disabilities.***

*Position Description authorised by Acting Resourcing Manager.*



Signed:

Date: 29 March 2018.