



Position Description – Director, Legal and Client Services

Position:	Director, Legal and Client Services
Reports to:	CEO
Salary:	\$90,000 - \$110,000
Location:	Head Office - 273 High Street, Preston, Victoria This position may require regional and interstate travel
Employment type:	Full-time
Identified Position:	This is an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander designated position, classified under Section 12 Special Measures of the Equal Opportunity Act 2010. This employment opportunity is only available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

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

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 Director, Legal and Client Services is a member of the Executive Management Team and as part of the Executive Team works to achieve the VALS' goals and objectives.

The Director, Legal and Client Services manages the delivery of quality legal and client services to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community and stakeholders. This position oversees the provision of client services, legal advice and legal aid, incorporates case management and planning with Solicitors, Client Services and Administrative Staff in Victoria. In addition, this position is responsible for ensuring that legal practice standards are met, including pro-actively delivery of in house training.

Key Performance Indicators, Duties & Responsibility

1. Establish and lead the Legal and Client Services Section.
2. Directly and through appropriate delegation;
 - 2.1. Supervise and manage the solicitors, paralegals, legal secretaries and community justice programs of the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service.
 - 2.2. Co-ordinate the work of all subordinate staff directly and/or indirectly through appropriate delegation, including legal casework of solicitors.
3. Establish and lead the Legal and Client Services Section.
4. Directly and through appropriate delegation:
5. Supervise and manage the solicitors, paralegals, legal secretaries and community justice programs of the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service
6. Co-ordinate the work of all subordinate staff directly and/or indirectly through appropriate delegation, including: legal casework of solicitors
7. Take an active, corporate and constructive role as a member of the Executive Management Team.
8. Directly and through appropriate delegation oversee the preparation of legal representation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders clients in criminal, civil and family law matters.
9. Directly and through delegation oversee and develop innovative community justice programs to achieve integrated and relevant client support.
10. Directly and through appropriate delegation monitor and evaluate the performance of solicitors, paralegals, secretaries and community justice staff employed by the organisation. This will include completion of performance agreements, provision of feedback and preparation of reports on all staff, as well as performance management where required.
11. Ensure adherence to all relevant organisational policies with particular focus on service delivery and stakeholder engagement.
12. Provide counsel and guidance to the solicitors, as appropriate, on matters of law and case management.
13. Ensure that the organisation and its solicitors, paralegals, legal secretaries and community justice staff meet their professional and ethical obligations, adhering to all legislative and contract requirements and ensure that solicitors maintain the highest ethical standards.
14. Provide input on the development of the legal and client services budget. Implement and monitor a yearly budget, including brief-outs.
15. Co-ordinate, supervise and, where appropriate, undertake the training of new staff.
16. Train all staff in the delivery of advocacy from basic to more complex matters.
17. Ensure all solicitors complete appropriate continuing legal education.
18. Provide on-going training and up-dating of legal knowledge for all VALS' staff.



19. Liaise with community legal groups and other stakeholders in the legal system to promote the commitments and work of the organisation.
20. Prepare papers, submissions and policy statements on behalf of the organisation as the need arises.
21. Develop and maintain effective working relationships with key interest groups, major stakeholders and partners of the organisation to advance our work and strategic directions
22. Initiate high level stakeholder engagement that facilitates greater involvement of external stakeholders and partners in supporting the organisation; and
23. Prepare high level briefings, reports and presentations to the Board, and Chief Executive Officer as required.
24. Provide timely and accurate operational reporting on the function of the legal and client services practice to the Chief Executive Officer and Board of Directors.
25. Other duties as directed.

Key Selection Criteria

1. A current, unrestricted Victorian Practising Certificate and eligible to receive a Principal of Law Practising Certificate.
2. Comprehensive understanding of the issues confronting Aboriginal people in relation to the delivery of legal services and associated issues.
3. Demonstrate cultural sensitivity and a commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, access to justice principles and human rights standards.
4. Extensive professional experience in the practice of law.
5. Demonstrated experience in managing and supervising solicitors, support and other relevant staff.
6. Demonstrated experience in the development, informing and delivery of training to solicitors, staff, community and stakeholders.
7. Capacity to liaise with Government and non-government organisations on legal and associated issues relevant to the Organisation.
8. Capacity to represent the organisation at a range of forums relevant to organisation at local, regional, state, national and international levels.
9. Demonstrated achievements in strategic planning.
10. Demonstrated ability to undertake program management in a service delivery environment and the capacity to innovatively develop client centred legal and service solutions that reduce negative justice outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
11. Demonstrated capacity to work in an environment of continuous improvement, innovation and change.
12. Excellent written, verbal and interpersonal skills.
13. Demonstrated ability to work as part of a team in a multi-skilled and multi-discipline working environment.
14. Excellent computer and word-processing skills.

Key Capabilities

1. Possess self-awareness – has insight into own leadership style and effect on team performance.



2. Nurtures a high-performance team – manages high performance and underperformance effectively.
3. Anticipates, plans and prioritises work – manages competing demands.
4. Is approachable, accessible and responsive.
5. Manages conflict, complaints and concerns effectively
6. Undertakes continuous learning and development.
7. Adheres to organisations policies and procedures.

How to apply

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