



Position Description – Family Law Paralegal

Position:	Paralegal – Family Law
Reports to:	Principal Legal Officer – Family Law
Salary:	LO Level 1.1 - \$53,390
Location:	Head Office - 273 High Street, Preston, Victoria This position may require regional and interstate travel
Employment type:	Full-time

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

To support the work of the VALS legal team by providing a point of first contact and triage for people seeking to access the legal team's legal services. To ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Victoria who require legal assistance are given the best opportunity to access that assistance, whether through VALS or other external organisations.

Key Performance Indicators, Duties & Responsibility

1. Conduct initial intake for people seeking legal assistance, primarily over the phone but also from time to time in person at the VALS Preston office.
2. Taking thorough and concise intake notes for legal enquiries, as well as collecting and recording mandatory client data for reporting purposes.
3. Manage large volumes of client data and intake material within VALS' client database.
4. Ensure follow up tasks related to intake and processing are being effectively managed.
5. Manage and collaborate with volunteers, by allocating tasks and work throughout the day that will best enable them to support the work of the paralegal.
6. Make timely, appropriate and effective referrals for individuals the VALS team is unable to assist, including to external organisations as well as within VALS, for both legal and non-legal matters.
7. Actively participate in weekly case planning meetings, to assist the team to determine the extent of any further assistance the VALS is able to offer.
8. Manage simple casework files under the supervision of the senior solicitor.
9. Participate in community legal education projects, law reform and other VALS projects as required.
10. Contribute to the collaborative relationship between Victoria Legal Aid and other community organizations to support warm referrals to other legal professionals where VALS cannot assist the client.

Key Selection Criteria

1. Sound interpersonal skills and a demonstrated ability to interact and communicate effectively with persons seeking legal assistance.
2. A commitment to and understanding of the legal issues faced by members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities in Victoria.



3. The ability to quickly attend to tasks in an efficient and precise manner, with attention to detail, and a demonstrated capacity to balance multiple responsibilities in a high-pressure environment.
4. Basic knowledge of the law and court procedures with a focus on the areas of law the legal practice focusses on.
5. A demonstrated ability to communicate and liaise in a professional manner with VALS external stakeholder organisations and their representatives, including pro bono law firms, other CLCs, Court and Tribunal staff etc.
6. The ability to work collaboratively with others and to foster a co-operative and supportive team environment.
7. Strong skills in the use of MS Office Software (particularly MS Word, Excel, E-mail) relevant to a legal practice, and the capacity to quickly acquire competency in the use of VALS' client data base.

Qualifications

1. Enrolled in or completed a Bachelor of Laws or similar practical training qualification, or be otherwise eligible for admission as a legal practitioner in Victoria.
2. The incumbent will be required to obtain a Working with Children check.

Key Capabilities

1. Gains insight into VALS's vision and goals.
2. Demonstrates respect for self and colleagues.
3. Approaches each task with enthusiasm.
4. Manages competing demands.
5. Meets client demands where possible and practicable.
6. Completes writing and documentary tasks at an excellent standard.
7. Participates in knowledge sharing activities such as team meetings and training programs.

How to apply

Please submit your application to jobs@vals.org.au, using the subject line: **Paralegal – Family Law**, by **5:00pm on 15 July 2018**.



Please include:

- Cover letter outlining who you are and why you are suited to this position
- Statement addressing the key selection criteria
- CV, including education and training, professional experience and two referees.

Applications submitted without a statement addressing the key selection criteria will not be accepted.