



Position Description – Policy, Research & Advocacy Officer

Position:	Policy, Research & Advocacy Officer
Reports to:	Director of Executive & Corporate Services
Salary:	\$60,000 – \$70,000
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

The primary role of this section is to ensure that VALS exercises the highest standard of governance. It does this by ensuring the Board is equipped with the information and advice it needs to fulfil its governance and fiduciary duties and that the internal operations of the organisation meet governance standards.

This section develops systems, monitors and oversees processes to ensure that all members of the team take responsibility for ensuring that governance standards are met. This section also undertakes high quality research, assisting to develop & implement advocacy strategies, & preparing policy submissions & initiatives in line with our strategic plan.



About the position

Overview

Working collaboratively across the organisation, the Policy, Research and Advocacy Officer plays a key role in undertaking high quality research, assisting to develop and implement advocacy strategies, and preparing policy submissions and initiatives. This is done in the context of developing and promoting VALS as a strong voice for the Aboriginal communities we serve.

Key Performance Indicators, Duties & Responsibility

Advocacy Strategy and Planning

- Develop and implement VALS policy, research and advocacy agenda in line with the strategic and operational plan
- Plan lobbying activities aimed at Federal and State government and government-related bodies around the provision of culturally appropriate legal services and community justice initiatives to Aboriginal communities.
- Review progress with advocacy strategies and plans and ensure ongoing development of these in response to changes in the external environment
- Research, write and prepare papers, reports and submissions on relevant issues which will positively impact vulnerable Aboriginal communities
- Prepare policy papers, briefings and position papers to inform the Board and support the Director of Executive & Corporate Services and CEO to fulfil their role of representing VALS at conferences, meetings and other arenas
- Conduct evaluation & research in support of VALS's advocacy work
- Assist the Director of Executive & Corporate Services to translate the concerns of clients and the Aboriginal communities into specific campaigns, policy and advocacy materials and communication strategies

Communications and Relationships

- Develop and maintain strong working relationships with key internal and external stakeholders
- In collaboration with the Director of Executive & Corporate Services, foster links with relevant peer bodies, relevant areas of government, and members in order to develop and maintain policy information networks and a research base.
- In collaboration with the Director of Executive & Corporate Services, develop and maintain links with key stakeholders including parliamentarians, government officials, funding bodies and other relevant organisations
- Build the organisations profile through the establishment and maintenance of research partnership with external organisations and the broader community
- Write and prepare material for inclusion in VALS publications including social media
- Provide presentations on VALS Policy, Research & Advocacy activities at meetings and conferences as requested

Internal Obligations

- Commitment to VALS's strategic plan
- Attend and actively contribute at team and working group meetings
- Contribute to the running of the VALS office
- Undertake other duties & responsibilities within the scope of the role as directed



Professional Development

- Participate in regular supervision meetings and performance reviews with the Director of Executive & Corporate Services and provide reports to the Director of Executive & Corporate Services to ensure accountability for areas of responsibility
- Perform other relevant duties as requested by the Director of Executive & Corporate Services.

Key Selection Criteria

Mandatory

1. Relevant tertiary qualifications (for example politics, law, public policy)
2. Knowledge and experience of political processes and government policy in a campaigning or lobbying role
3. High-level written and verbal communication skills relevant to the role such as experience writing policy documents, government submissions and media communications
4. Demonstrated advocacy, relationship-building and stakeholder engagement skills
5. Well-developed analytical skills and capacity to understand and apply research evidence and legislation
6. Ability to work autonomously and to collaborate in a small team environment
7. High level organisational and administrative skills and ability to prioritise workload, to work under pressure and meet deadlines
8. Demonstrated computer literacy skills and proficiency using the Microsoft Office and other relevant software

Desirable:

1. Training or experience in the legal sector, particularly in areas of social justice and human rights.
2. Understanding of the role of Aboriginal legal services and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.
3. Experience working in the non-profit sector
4. Experience campaigning via social media platforms

How to apply

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