



VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL LEGAL SERVICE CO-OPERATIVE LIMITED

POSITION DESCRIPTION

POSITION:	Client Service Officer - Metro
RESPONSIBLE TO:	Coordinator Community Justice Programs Director Legal and Client Services
SALARY:	CSO Level 1.1 – 1.2 \$47,470 - \$49,140
LOCATION:	Head Office (Preston)
STATUS OF EMPLOYMENT:	Full time (contract)

Please note: 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.

THE ORGANISATION

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 direct 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.

LEGAL AND CLIENT SERVICES

This section is responsible for delivering client focused quality services for Aboriginal Victorians in contact with the justice system. Legal and Client Services are co-located in this section 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 of Aboriginal people with the justice system. The section, in conjunction with Executive and Corporate Services also advocates for justice outcomes and prepares specialist advice on legislative, policy and program change.

The section oversees the provision of legal advice and legal aid, incorporating case management and planning with Solicitors and CSOs and specialist support staff particularly for more serious cases and clients experiencing complex issues. Solicitors, Paralegals and Legal Secretaries are located in this section to provide a clear line of accountability, and authority for management of the full range of legal functions.

Client and Community Programs include CSOs, Local Justice Workers, Community Justice Panels, Post Release Support and Community Legal Education. Their co-location with legal services provides the opportunity to integrate and adapt these services to meet the needs of clients as they enter and move through the justice system, and to work more broadly with communities to reduce negative contact with the justice system.

VALS has recently undertaken an organisational review to, amongst other things, ensure that its structure is aligned with and able to drive and support the future directions of the organisation.

POSITION OVERVIEW

The Client Service Officer [CSO] acts as liaison between the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service Co-Operative Limited [VALS] and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples taken into custody by the police. The CSO has an educational role in crime prevention and reduction, and, in conjunction with other facilities, to provide for alternative programs to Koori communities.

1. KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

- 1.1 A demonstrated knowledge of the Victorian legal system.
- 1.2 An understanding of the legal issues faced by Victorian Aboriginal communities.
- 1.3 Excellent written, verbal communication and interpersonal skills.
- 1.4 A commitment to and understanding of Victorian Aboriginal culture and community, and the ability to communicate effectively with members of those communities.
- 1.5 The ability to work in a multi-skilled environment.
- 1.6 Computer skills.

2. KEY DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1 Respond to E*Justice Notifications, the On-call CSO, the Aboriginal Community Justice Panel [ACJP] or Victoria Police when advised that an Aboriginal person is being held in custody,
- 2.2 Make contact with the Aboriginal person in custody, provide basic information and exercise discretion as to whether the on-call solicitor should be contacted. Reassure the client and explain legal terminology and processes used by the police and legal profession, not using legal jargon. Where appropriate, take notes of the history of the client's case and provide them to the solicitor,
- 2.3 Attend at court to support the client and the solicitor,
- 2.4 Attend prison locations to see clients and complete documentation for referrals on the solicitors behalf,

- 2.5 Liaise and network with other Aboriginal organisations and agencies to promote VALS and be aware of programs that will assist in the prevention or reduction of crime within the Victorian Aboriginal communities,
- 2.6 Liaise with police and other persons within the justice system to ensure delivery of a culturally relevant service,
- 2.7 Perform a range of administrative tasks to ensure the effective delivery of services to VALS clients,
- 2.8 Provide activity reports on a timely basis, attend staff meetings as required, participate in ongoing training and staff development, and act at all times in a professional manner, upholding the organisation's core values, and
- 2.9 As directed, undertake other duties which are incidental and peripheral to the main tasks, provided that such duties are reasonably within the employee's skills, competence and training.

3. MANDATORY

- 3.1 Aboriginality or Torres Strait Islander person,
- 3.2 Working With Children's Check,
- 3.3 Undergo a Police Records Check,
- 3.4 A current Victorian driver's license, and
- 3.5 A high level of responsibility and initiative.

4. OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

The employee, prior to commencement, will need to disclose any pre-existing condition or injury that he/she knows about which could be reasonably foreseen to be affected by the described work duties.

Pursuant to s82(7) of the Accident Compensation Act 1985, the failure to disclose information will mean that, if employed, the employee will not be paid compensation for such condition.

All staff are required to obtain a working with children check.

Reviewing and approving this Position Description		
Frequency	Person responsible	Approval
Annual	Human Resources Officer	CEO Director Legal and Client Services Coordinator Community Justice Programs

Position Description review and version tracking			
Review	Date Approved	Approved by	Next Review Due
1	February 2018		February 2019
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
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