



VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL LEGAL SERVICE CO-OPERATIVE LIMITED

POSITION DESCRIPTION

TITLE: Full-time Civil lawyer	
CLASSIFICATION : Legal Officer level 3.4 (\$68,310 per annum) Plus salary packaging	DURATION: This is an ongoing position
DIVISION: Legal Practice Section	SECTION: Civil Law
REPORTS TO: Principal Lawyer – Civil Law	CONTACT FOR APPLICANTS: Patrick Warner Principal lawyer – Civil Law

VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL LEGAL SERVICE – OUR HISTORY, VISION AND VALUES

The Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service Co-operative Limited (VALS) was established as a community controlled Co-operative Society in 1973. VALS plays an important role in providing referrals, advice/information, duty work or case work assistance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the state of Victoria.

Our legal Practice is divided into three areas: Criminal Law, Family Law and Civil Law. Our offices are based in the regions in Morwell, Bairnsdale, Shepparton, Swan Hill, Mildura, Ballarat and Heywood. In each of the regional offices VALS has a Client Service Officer to ensure community has access to the organization and lawyers. VALS also offers a 24 hour per day legal access to both client service officers and lawyers on call.

VALS maintains a strong client service focus which is achieved through the role of Client Service Officers (CSOs) who act as a bridge between the legal system and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Vision: The VALS will have a fair, equitable and accessible legal assistance service system which is available to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

Values: The VALS is committed to caring for the safety and psychological well-being of clients, their families and communities and to respecting the cultural diversity, values and beliefs of clients.

Mission: To improve the access of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to high-quality and culturally sensitive and responsive legal assistance services and to undertake reform activities, so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' rights are protected and promoted.

PURPOSE OF POSITION:

As a civil lawyer, you will be required to provide high quality legal services, including, advice and information, casework, representation and referral in civil law matters to members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Victoria.

This is a full-time position based at the VALS office in Preston, Victoria. However, occasionally you may be required to travel in order to deliver services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

1 KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1.1** Assist clients with advice, referrals and ongoing casework in core matters of legal need for Aboriginal communities in Victoria, including fines and infringements, VOCAT, tenancy, complaints against police and correctional services, discrimination and coronial (deaths in custody) enquiries.
 - 1.2** Appear personally as an advocate, and/or brief counsel to appear, in various Courts and Tribunals in civil law matters.
 - 1.3** Assist with the supervision of volunteers working within the civil legal team, including those conducting work on infringements files as part of the VALS Infringements Clinic.
 - 1.4** Participate in community legal education projects, law reform and other VALS projects as required.
 - 1.5** Maintain positive and collaborative relationships with key stakeholders, including Victoria Legal Aid, pro bono law firms, the Victorian Bar and other community organisations from both the legal and non-legal sectors.
 - 1.6** Keep up to date with relevant civil legal developments and procedures by attending professional legal education programs, and maintain an understanding of broader issues impacting the justice system and members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities.
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KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

2 QUALIFICATIONS

- 2.1** Admitted to practice as a legal practitioner in Victoria, with at least 18 months post-admission experience.
- 2.2** A current Victorian driver's license.
- 2.3** The incumbent will be required to obtain a Working with Children check.

KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

3 Required

- 3.1** A commitment to and understanding of the civil legal issues faced by members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities in Victoria.
 - 3.2** Knowledge of the Victorian infringements system.
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- 3.3 Capacity to work as an advocate and caseworker in civil law matters in the core practice areas outlined above at point 1.1.
- 3.4 Knowledge of and practical experience in the law and court procedures with a focus on the civil law jurisdiction, particularly in relation to the areas of law detailed above at point 1.1.
- 3.5 The ability to work collaboratively with others and to foster a co-operative and supportive team environment.
- 3.6 Sound interpersonal skills and the capacity to communicate effectively with members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
- 3.7 A knowledge of the principles and values of the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service.
- 3.8 Competency in the use of MS Office Software (particularly MS Outlook, MS Word, Excel, E-mail) to a legal practice and the capacity to quickly acquire competency in the use of VALS' client data base.

4 Preferred

- 4.1 Experience working with members of the Aboriginal community, and/or Aboriginal clients.
- 4.2 Experience in providing community legal education and/or law reform, especially with respect to Aboriginal communities.
- 4.3 Knowledge and/or experience in other common areas of need as outlined above at point 1.1
- 4.4 Previous experience in the legal assistance sector.

OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION:

- This position will involve occasional work and travel outside of normal work hours.
- VALS can offer employees generous salary packaging entitlements, which can significantly increase staff members' take home pay.
- 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 s 82(7) of the *Accident Compensation Act 1985 (Vic)*, the failure to disclose information will mean that, if employed, the employee will not be paid compensation for such condition.

APPLICATIONS

Applications should be sent to jobs@vals.org.au and should comprise:

- A cover letter summarising your relevant experience, qualifications and why you would like to join the VALS team (2 pages max);
- A copy of your academic transcript; and
- Your resume.

The covering letter and resume should be combined into a single PDF document, clearly named with your name in the document title. The academic transcript should be a separate document.

The subject line of the email should contain your name, followed by 'FT Civil Lawyer Application'.

Closing date for applications is **5:00pm, 17 October 2017**. Shortlisted applicants will be contacted by telephone for interview in the week commencing **23 October 2017**.

For further information about the position, please contact Patrick Warner at pwarner@vals.org.au.