



## Position Description – Client Services Officer

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| Position:            | Client Services Officer  |
| Reports to:          | Team Leader - Regional Community Services  |
| Salary:              | CSO Level 2.1 – 2.4 (SCHADS Level 3)<br>Salary range \$54,181 to 58,876 per annum – depending on experience, plus superannuation<br>Salary Packaging also available  |
| Location:            | Swan Hill, VIC 3585<br>This position may require regional and interstate travel  |
| Employment type:     | Full-time (fixed term until 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2020)  |
| Identified Position: | <b>This is an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander designated position, classified under Section 12 Special Measures of the Equal Opportunity Act 2010.</b><br><b>This employment opportunity is only available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.</b> |

### 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.



## Our Values

### Cultural Values

Our team commit to remember what we are here for, how our organisation came into being and ensure we are centred in the community. We are an organisation with a community focus for the benefit of the community.

### Respect

We advocate for and demonstrate the right of every person to be treated with dignity and respect.

### Compassion

We are aware of the issues and challenges facing Aboriginal communities and strive to ensure our organisation is part of resolving those issues and challenges.

### Commitment

We believe everyone who works at or with VALS is committed to achieving better justice outcomes for Aboriginal communities.

### Hope

We believe we will achieve change for Aboriginal communities. We expect our actions to have a positive impact on Government at all levels.

### Integrity

We are steadfast in our adherence to our values. We take every measure to protect our clients' privacy.

We keep our word and stand by our commitments.

## About the team

### Legal and Client Services

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.

## About the position

### Overview



The Client Service Officer (CSO) acts as liaison between the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS) and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people 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 Aboriginal communities.

#### Key Performance Indicators, Duties & Responsibility

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. Contact 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;
3. Attend court to support the client and the solicitor;
4. As directed, lodge all necessary court documents;
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;
6. Liaise with police and other persons within the justice system to ensure delivery of a culturally relevant service;
7. Perform a range of administrative tasks to ensure the effective delivery of services to VALS clients;
8. Represent VALS at various meetings and report back on those meetings to VALS management;
9. Provide activity reports on a timely basis and attend staff meetings as required;
10. Participates in ongoing training and staff development and acts and remains professional at all times, upholding VALS values;
11. As directed, undertake other duties as directed which are incidental and peripheral to the main tasks, provided that such duties are reasonably within the employee's skills, competence and training.

#### Key Selection Criteria

1. A demonstrated knowledge of the Victorian legal system;
2. An understanding of the legal issues faced by Victorian Aboriginal communities;
3. Excellent written, verbal communication and interpersonal skills;
4. A commitment to and understanding of Victorian Aboriginal culture and community, and the ability to communicate effectively with members of those communities;
5. The ability to work in a multi-skilled environment;
6. Excellent computer skills.

#### Key Capabilities

1. Works with team in a collaborative manner;
2. Proactively seeks out work opportunities – takes ownership and uses initiative;
3. Reports at regular intervals on progress;
4. Anticipates, plans and prioritises work – manages competing demands;
5. Adheres to organisation policies and procedures;
6. Builds rapport with clients and stakeholders;
7. Communicates with senior colleagues to gain insight into the organisation's strategic direction and goals;
8. Ensures files are up to date and easily accessible to the relevant line manager;



**Mandatory Requirements**

On offer of this position, you must provide:

- a copy of your current Employee Working with Children card
- a copy of your current Victorian Driver's License
- you will be required to complete a current Criminal History Police Check
- proof of rights to work in Australia, i.e. a copy of an Australian Passport, Birth Certificate or Immigration VISA documentation
- This is an 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.

**How to apply**

Please send your resume together with a covering letter which addresses the **Key Selection Criteria** (found within the position description) to [jobs@vals.org.au](mailto:jobs@vals.org.au)

**Acceptance on position offer**

I understand and am clear of the position expectations and requirements

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_