# Position Description Regional Practice Lead, Aboriginal Families Law

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| Position: | Regional Practice Lead, Morwell/Gippsland, Aboriginal Families Law |
| Reports to: | Principal Managing Lawyer, Aboriginal Families Law |
| Salary: | $100,000 - $115,000 per annum – depending on experience, plus superannuation and leave loading.  Salary packaging allows up to $15,900 each year to be tax free. |
| Location: | Morwell Office – 16 George Street, Morwell, Vic, 3840  This position will also require some travel within Victoria. |
| Employment type: | Full-time fixed term until 30th of June 2025. Subject to funding and performance will continue beyond this term. |
| *VALS is strongly committed to diversity, equality and inclusion.* *We are proud of our diverse workforce and are working towards our Rainbow Tick accreditation. We actively seek applicants from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the LGBTQI+ community and diverse cultures, language groups, abilities, and experiences.*  *We will make adjustments at all stages of the recruitment and retention process to encourage and support people with disabilities, health and neurodiverse conditions at VALS. If you require any adjustments to the recruitment process to support your application, please email* [jobs@vals.org.au](mailto:jobs@vals.org.au) *or ring or drop in at VALS Preston office.* | |
| **VALS in brief** | |
| Established in 1973, VALS is the only specialist legal and support service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Victoria. Over time, VALS has expanded its services. In 2022, our practice areas include criminal law, family law, civil and human rights law, a dedicated youth justice service and a specialist litigation unit, unique amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal services nationally.  VALS provides a range of other key supports for Victoria’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This includes a 24/7 Custody Notification Service, transitional housing support program for women with complex needs leaving custody, family violence programs, 1:1 client support officers and community legal education to equip Aboriginal people with the knowledge and skills to confidently self-advocate for their rights. And we keep developing with plans to do much more.  VALS is implementing a decentralised service framework that includes regional legal assistance and support hubs. These hubs locate culturally safe legal services where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live in Victoria. This offers Aboriginal people more choice. There is more scope for more early intervention, prevention and targeted community legal education and partnerships relevant to local Aboriginal communities. Regional Practice Leads have day-to-day responsibility for VALS legal assistance in the region (in collaboration with the principal), developing local partnerships and overseeing and implementing relevant client support and community legal education. | |
| **VALS is dedicated to providing a flexible and positive work environment for all of our employees that includes a 35 hour working week with time off in lieu, 5 extra days paid leave, access to a staff counsellor, training and wellbeing initiatives, paid parental, ceremonial and cultural leave and other generous terms and conditions.** | |
| **About the position** | |
| Overview The Regional Practice Lead will have 4+ years of practical experience in family law and act as a lead advocate for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people interacting with the family law and child protection system across Morwell/Gippsland. This position will:   * Provide high quality legal services in the family law, child protection and family violence jurisdictions; and appear in the Magistrates’ Court of Victoria and the Federal Circuit and Family Courts on behalf of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people in the Morwell/Gippsland region. * Engage with Aboriginal community stakeholders to identify, develop and deliver community legal education (CLE) and other types of Family Law assistance relevant to the regional and local context. This includes Family Law clinics for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people at the Hub office and other locations within the region. * Link with, and oversee the development of, partnerships and referral and support pathways within the Morwell/Gippsland region to assist VALS clients with access to other legal assistance and services relevant to them. This includes oversight of Aboriginal client service officers (CSOs) and administrative support based at the VALS Morwell Office.   The role holder will have the endorsement or is eligible to become a Panel Certifier on Victorian Legal Aid (VLA) Family Law Panel, albeit grants of aid will be approved through VALS headquarters. Key Performance Indicators, Duties & Responsibility  * Appear as an advocate on behalf of VALS clients in Family Law proceedings in the Magistrates’ Court of Victoria and the Federal Circuit and Family Courts, and at other state-wide locations if required. * Deliver high quality legal services, including information, advice and casework on behalf of VALS clients in Family Law matters and other related matters as required. * Maintain a substantial caseload in Family Law matters. * Prepare and comply with applications for grants of legal assistance and reporting requirements for matters eligible for VLA funding. * Partner with service providers and Aboriginal community stakeholders in the region to plan and deliver CLE, Family Law clinics and professional legal education. * Oversee the work of CSOs within the team including in 1:1 assistance to clients and in developing referral pathways and partnerships relevant to VALS clients. * Develop collaborative relationships with VLA and other community legal centres and service providers with which VALS interacts. * Keep up to date with relevant legal developments and procedures and maintain an understanding of issues, risks and trends impacting upon the provision of legal services to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people in Victoria. * Participate in ongoing training and staff development and acts and remains professional at all times, upholding VALS values. * 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. | |
| Personal accountability  * Compliance with all VALS Values, code of conduct, policies and procedures and relevant government legislation and standards where relevant; * Demonstrate a commitment to the principles of social justice and aim to ensure every individual is treated with dignity and respect regardless of their background, ability, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation or religion; * Ensure appropriate use of resources; * Actively participate in initiatives to maintain, build upon and promote a positive and collaborative workplace; * Take reasonable care for your own health & safety, and health and safety of others (to extent required) including promptly responding to and report health and safety hazards, incidents and near misses to management; and * Attend mandatory training sessions (i.e., equal employment opportunity, health and safety, cultural safety) and mandatory training specific to position.    Key Selection Criteria  * Admitted or eligible for admission as a legal practitioner in Victoria and in the High Court of Australia (with an unrestricted practising certificate) * Demonstrated ability to act as an advocate, deliver information, advice, casework and outreach services, and undertake negotiation and dispute resolution on behalf of VALS clients in Family Violence, Intervention Orders and, to a lesser extent, Family Law and Child Protection matters. * Knowledge of, and 4+ years of practical experience in relevant Family Violence, Intervention Orders, Family Law and Child Protection law and procedure. * Ability to supervise, mentor and train staff and volunteers and contribute to the development of individuals and their knowledge and skills in Family Law; * Sound interpersonal skills and the capacity to communicate effectively with members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and more broadly with multidisciplinary colleagues and VALS partners * A commitment to and understanding of VALS and the legal issues faced by members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Victoria; * Competency in the use of MS Office Software (particularly MS Word, Excel, E-mail) and the capacity to quickly acquire competency in the use of VALS’ client management system. | |
| **Mandatory Requirements** | |
| On offer of this position, you must provide:   * A copy of your current **Employee Working with Children Check** 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 * **COVID-19 Proof of Vaccination Certificate** or **current and valid medical exemption certificate** * Copies of any certificates or degrees relevant to this role | |
| **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) | |

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| **Acceptance on position offer** |
| I understand and am clear of the position expectations and requirements  Name:  Signature:  Date: |