# Position Description Regional Practice Lead, Civil Law (Warrnambool)

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| Position: | Regional Practice Lead, Civil Law |
| Reports to: | Principal Managing Lawyer, Civil 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: | Warrnambool Office – 173 Lava Street, Warrnambool, Vic 3280 |
| 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 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* *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** |
| OverviewThe Regional Practice Lead will have 4+ years of practical experience in civil law and act as a lead advocate for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people interacting with the civil justice system across the Warrnambool region. This position will:* Provide high quality legal services in Civil Law matters, including duty lawyer services, representation, advice and information to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people in Victoria.
* Engage with Aboriginal community stakeholders to identify key community legal education (CLE) needs relevant to the regional and local context.
* Link with, and oversee the development of, partnerships and referral and support pathways within the Warrnambool 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 Warrnambool Office.

The role holder will have the endorsement or is eligible to become a Panel Certifier on Victorian Legal Aid (VLA) Civil Law Panel. Key Performance Indicators, Duties & Responsibilities* Deliver a quality legal service by conducting casework in Civil law matters, including serious indictable matters, for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander clients in the Warrnambool region.
* As a back-up, participate in the on call after hours roster to provide emergency advice to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Victoria. As a priority, providing legal assistance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in police custody.
* Prepare and comply with applications for grants of legal assistance and reporting requirements for matters eligible for VLA funding.
* Participate in case-planning meetings with the civil law section weekly.
* Partner with service providers and Aboriginal community stakeholders in the region to plan and deliver CLE 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.
* Participates 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.
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| 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).
* Capability to work as an advocate and caseworker in complex civil law matters, with knowledge of, and practical experience in the law and court procedures within the civil law jurisdiction.
* Ability to supervise, mentor and train staff and volunteers and contribute to the development of individuals and their knowledge and skills in civil 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.
* Basic 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.

Desirable * Member or eligible to be a Victoria Legal Aid Panel member for summary, indictable and youth matters
* Accredited Civil Law Specialist
* Experience working in the non-profit sector.
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| **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
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| **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** |
| **Acceptance on position offer**  |
| I understand and am clear of the position expectations and requirementsName: Signature: Date:   |