



DJIRRA

POSITION DESCRIPTION

| POSITION DETAILS | |
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| POSITION TITLE | Paralegal Support Worker, Prison Support Program |
| REPORTING STRUCTURE | Reports to: Senior Lawyer or Managing Lawyer (as designated) Direct reports: None |
| POSITION DIMENSIONS (BUDGET) | NA |
| PURPOSE - Why does this position exist? | |
| <p>The Aboriginal Family Violence Legal Service (AFVLS) is a program of Djirra. AFVLS provides legal and non-legal assistance and facilitates access to justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have experienced family violence or sexual assault. AFVLS's legal services include advice, representation and advocacy in the areas of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • child protection • family violence intervention orders • family law; and • victims of crime assistance. <p>AFVLS operates a culturally safe, trauma informed, holistic and intensive client service model. Clients are assisted by Lawyers and Paralegal Support Workers to access a variety of legal, social, psychological, cultural, health and other support services to address their complex needs and issues.</p> <p>Paralegal Support Workers provide wrap-around support within this model, including: emotional support; court support; direct financial support; support in interactions with police; support with access to legal aid; support accessing transport; and connecting clients with culturally safe counselling and support services to address the underlying social issues giving rise to the client's experience of family violence and associated legal issues.</p> <p>Aboriginal women are significantly overrepresented in the Victorian prison population, and an overwhelming majority have experienced family violence and/or sexual assault. The role of the PLSW in AFVLS' Prison Support Program is to provide holistic wrap around support to Aboriginal women at Dame Phyllis Frost Centre (DPFC), including post-release. The PLSW also performs a vital role in enhancing access to justice for Aboriginal women at DPFC by linking them with AFVLS Lawyers for legal advice and representation.</p> | |

RESPONSIBILITIES

Client support

- Work collaboratively with the Lawyer to ensure clients of the organization who are incarcerated at or have been recently released from the Dame Phyllis Frost Correctional Centre are supported to address their various and complex legal and support needs.
- Assess safety and support needs of individual clients and provide information and referrals to appropriate services, such as family violence, housing, counselling, health and other support agencies as needed.
- Provide support to clients as follows and as approved by the Lawyer:
 - in person at the Dame Phyllis Frost Correctional Centre twice per week
 - at court and tribunal hearings;
 - when making applications for intervention orders;
 - when making reports to police;
 - at DHHS case plan meetings;
 - at other external client appointments when support and advocacy is needed.
- Assist clients to access flexible support packages, including devising safety plans and undertaking risk assessments.
- Provide support and information to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients in a culturally safe and appropriate manner.

Administration

- Under supervision of the Lawyer, provide paralegal assistance in relation to client work, including but not limited to:
 - Client intake, including (metro staff only) duty rosters at the Northcote office and Koori Women's Pace and at Dame Phyllis Frost Centre;
 - Assisting lawyers with the day-to-day management of client files;
 - Assisting clients with inquiries and coordinating internal and external appointments;
 - Accurate and timely client data entry using CLASS and SHIPP databases;
 - Assisting with drafting of letters and documents;
 - Assisting with preparation of legal aid applications using ATLAS database;
 - Filing court documents, including via the Commonwealth Law Courts portal;
 - Coordinating client related document requests;
 - Preparation of briefs to barristers;
 - Assisting with legal and other required research;
 - Liaising with external service providers in relation to client matters;
- General office duties including reception duties, word processing, filing, scanning, photocopying, faxing and maintaining records of incoming and outgoing communications.

Networking, Liaison and Community Outreach

- Develop and maintain relationships with a broad range of regional stakeholders, including: Dame Phyllis Frost Correctional Centre staff; Aboriginal cooperatives; Aboriginal Health Services; family and children's services; other Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations providing support to victims of family violence and sexual assault; mainstream health, mental health, housing, alcohol and drugs, and counselling services; police, courts and legal assistance services.
- Regularly attend stakeholder meetings and events.
- Conduct regular outreach services across the region, including two days per week at Dame Phyllis Frost Correctional Centre.



Community Legal Education

- In conjunction with the lawyers and other staff, assist in the development and delivery of community legal education (CLE) workshops, including on a monthly basis at Dame Phyllis Frost Centre
- In conjunction with the lawyers and other staff, assist in the development of CLE publications
- Support the implementation of community development projects.
- Support and assist Djirra's Early Intervention and Prevention programs including Sisters Day Out, Dilly Bag, and Young Luv.

Accountability

- Comply with AFVLS's Service Standards.
- Attend training as directed relevant to the support of Aboriginal victims/survivors of family violence and sexual assault.
- Attend supervision as directed.
- Undertake travel to support the work of Djirra as required.

Occupational Health and Safety

- Implement, follow and help others to follow all health and safety procedures, and initiate, implement and participate in all relevant training and complete and manage timely reporting of any hazards, injuries or incidents.
- Proactively report on opportunities for improved health and safety.

Skills and attributes

- Maintain a flexible, collegial and professional approach to working with other staff within AFVLS and Djirra;
- Maintain an ability to work both independently and as a member of various teams within the service;
- Maintain a high level of attention to detail in all activities, including record keeping, data entry and filing;
- Maintain confidentiality and demonstrate consistent ability to handle challenging situations with sensitivity, cultural appropriateness and tact.

DECISION MAKING AUTHORITY

Recognise when to involve / escalate issues to the Lawyer or Senior Lawyer.



| KEY INTERACTIONS | |
|--|--|
| <p>Internal: Colleagues, Lawyers, Senior Lawyers, Managing Lawyer, Legal Services Manager, Community Engagement staff.</p> | <p>External: Clients and members of the Aboriginal community, Community Organisations, Government Agencies, Courts, other legal and non-legal professionals.</p> |
| QUALIFICATIONS | |
| <p>Essential: N/A</p> | <p>Desirable: Qualification in community service or paralegal studies.</p> |
| EXPERIENCE & SKILLS | |
| <p>Essential: Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies and cultures and the issues affecting these societies, including family violence, sexual assault, family law and care and protection of children as well as the underlying contributing factors. Demonstrated high level oral communication and listening skills with particular capacity to communicate effectively and build strong trusting relationships with Aboriginal people and with clients who have experienced trauma. Experience or the capacity to gain experience in the provision of case management/support in the area of family violence/sexual assault or other crisis response, including knowledge of relevant service providers. Prioritising work in a high volume work area to meet competing demands with conflicting and critical deadlines in order to maintain a high quality output. Contributing to the team environment and adapting to changing priorities as needed. Computer literacy, including database operation to maintain AFVLS's client management database (CLASS) proficiency in the use of MS Outlook, MS Word and Excel. The ability to prepare clear, concise and well-presented written material. A current driver's license is essential. Some out-of-hours and/or overnight travel will be required.</p> | <p>Desirable: Experience working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. A minimum of 1-3 years' experience in client support or paralegal roles. Experience working with people experiencing family violence and/or sexual assault.</p> |



DJIRRA POSITION DESCRIPTION

This is a designated position established as a special measure pursuant to sections 12 and 28 of the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic). Applications for this position are open to female candidates only. Preference will be given to women of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent. Djirra has been granted an exemption to employ women only in this role pursuant to section 44 of the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth). (Australian Human Rights Commission, Notice of Grant of a Temporary Exemption, granted on 6 August 2013).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Position Description and have read and understand its contents.

Employee Signature: _____

Date: / /

Name: _____

Direct Manager Signature: _____

Date: / /

Name: _____

HR CHECKLIST

- Return one copy of completed form and any attachments (e.g. current Organisation Chart) to the employee to keep.
- Place one copy of completed form and any attachments on the employee's Performance File.
- Retain original completed form and any attachments on the employee's Personnel File.

Initials: _____ **Date:** _____