

Position title	Senior Lawyer
Group	AFVLS
Employment status	Fulltime permanent
Salary Range	As per SCHCADS Award
Position reports to	Reports to: Managing Lawyer Eastern Victoria Direct reports: Paralegal Support Worker/s (as designated)
Location	Northcote
Delegation	

Organisation environment

Djirra¹ is an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO) that works towards a future where all Aboriginal women are strong, safe, independent, healthy and positive in their lives, culture and communities. All Djirra’s work is designed by and for Aboriginal women and is deeply respectful of and connected to community. Self-determination is the foundation of everything we do: it is Our Cultural Way.

Djirra’s vision is to provide high quality culturally appropriate services for Aboriginal women in Victoria who have experienced or are experiencing family violence.

We are committed to ending family violence against Aboriginal women and their children through holistic and culturally safe specialist services, prevention programs and advocacy for change. Our services have state-wide reach.

Djirra offers a range of services including:


- **Holistic and culturally safe legal and non-legal** support to Aboriginal people, particularly women, who experience family violence or sexual assault. Each client is assisted by a lawyer and support worker who together address the multitude of interrelated legal and non-legal issues our women face. Legal advice and representation is provided on intervention orders, child protection, family law and victims of crime assistance.
- **Individual Support Services** is a program of Djirra which provides culturally safe, trauma informed support to Aboriginal women requiring personalised short or longer term interventions to assist in achieving a safe and stable environment for them and their children. Individual Support Services comprises case management with brokerage, face-to-face and phone counselling and an after-hours support line.
- The **Koori Women’s Place (KWP)** provides wrap-around support and works to build trusting relationships with Aboriginal women through our shared connection to culture. Aboriginal women can be referred for an appointment, walk into our space or book into a workshop. Mainstream and Aboriginal service providers are available for appointments within the safety of the KWP.
- Our **community education and engagement programs** provide support for women through personal support and empowerment programs.

Djirra also offers a range of workshops in Melbourne and regional areas:

- **Sisters Day Out®** is a wellbeing workshop where Aboriginal women support each other, get information about legal rights and options, and engage with mainstream and Aboriginal support services.
- **Dilly Bag** is a four-day residential program that draws on cultural principles to promote healing.
- **Young Luv®** is designed for young Aboriginal women aged 13 to 18 and focuses on promoting healthy relationships.

¹ Djirra is the Woiwurrung word for the reed used by Wurundjeri women for basket weaving. Traditionally, when women gathered to weave, important talks took place and problems were solved. Djirra symbolises Aboriginal women today, still coming together to share stories, support each other and find solutions.





Role purpose

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 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.

Senior Lawyers provide legal services including advice, representation and advocacy in the areas of

- child protection
- family violence intervention orders
- family law; and
- victims of crime assistance.

Senior Lawyers also supervise legal and non-legal work undertaken by Lawyers and Paralegal Support Workers.

Key accountabilities

Client work

- Provide high quality legal advice, court advocacy, duty services, casework, assistance and referral to Aboriginal clients experiencing family violence and/or sexual assault in the areas of Family Violence Intervention Orders, Child Protection, Family Law, Victims of Crime Assistance, and other civil matters arising from the experience of family violence and sexual assault.
- Provide representation and advocacy services to clients either by personal appearance or by briefing Counsel to appear at Courts and Tribunals or at family dispute resolution.
- Maintain a significant case load with a focus on matters of greater complexity.
- Provide legal and related services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients in a culturally safe and appropriate manner.
- Work collaboratively with Paralegal Support Workers to ensure clients are supported to access a variety of legal and support services to address their complex needs.

Networking, Liaison and Community Outreach

- Develop and maintain relationships with a broad range of regional stakeholders, including: 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 significant stakeholder meetings and events.
- Conduct regular outreach services across the region and be responsible for the delivery and maintenance of specific outreach projects.

Community Legal Education

- Deliver community legal education, training and information to other Aboriginal community organisations and mainstream services.
- Support and assist Djirra's Early Intervention and Prevention programs including Sisters Day Out, Dilly Bag, and Young Luv.

Training

- Undertake and participate in the development and delivery of legal and support training for legal and other staff employed by Djirra.

Law Reform

- Contribute to and identify issues for Djirra's law reform and policy work.

Day to Day Supervision of PLSWs

- Supervision of legal and non-legal work, and the day-to-day mentoring & development of Lawyers and/or Paralegal Support Workers.
- Carry out management duties delegated by the Managing lawyer following approval by the Manager Legal Services.
- When asked, act up during periods of the Managing Lawyer's leave following approval by the Manager Legal Services.

Administration

- Maintain client files and ensure they comply with AFVLS's file management policies, processes and procedures.
- Accurate and timely data entry using CLASS database.
- Prepare work some plans, statistical analysis and other reports as required.
- Contribute to the ongoing development of relevant policies and procedures for Djirra and AFVLS and identify areas for improvement.

Accountability

- Comply with AFVLS's Service Standards.
- Attend training 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, knowledge and attributes

- Maintain thorough and current knowledge of the law in AFVLS's practice areas.
- Demonstrate excellent client engagement skills and consistent ability to handle challenging situations with sensitivity, cultural appropriateness and tact.
- Maintain knowledge of best practice regarding trauma informed and culturally safe service delivery.
- Ability to work independently with limited supervision and as a member of various teams within AFVLS and Djirra.
- Demonstrate a flexible and collaborative approach to working with other staff and external stakeholders.
- Model collegial and professional standards in the workplace and with external stakeholders.
- Demonstrate capacity to provide creative solutions to improve effectiveness of service delivery for clients.
- Proactively manage workload and self-care.

Decision Making Authority

- Recognise when to involve/escalate issues to the Managing Lawyer.

Key Interactions

- Internal: Colleagues, Managing Lawyer, Manager Legal Services, Community Engagement staff.
- External: Clients and members of the Aboriginal Community, Community Organisations, Government Agencies, Courts, other legal and non-legal Professionals.

Key selection criteria

Professional / Functional Skills	<p>Essential:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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. <p>Desirable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge of and commitment to working toward a trauma informed legal practice in the context of family violence and intergenerational and cultural trauma.• Experience working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.• Eligible to apply for VLA s.29A panel certification in Child Protection, Family Law or Family Violence; or commitment to work towards certification.
Competency	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Computer literacy, including database operation to maintain AFVLS's client management database (CLASS) proficiency in the use of MS Outlook, MS Word and Excel.



Technical Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A current driver's license is essential. Some out-of-hours and/or overnight travel will be required. • 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. • Well-developed written communication skills, commensurate with high quality legal work; and ability to represent clients in Courts, Tribunals and dispute resolution conferences. • Demonstrated ability to provide legal advice and representation to a high standard in family violence related areas of law. • Demonstrated skills and knowledge in the area of family violence and its impact on community. • Demonstrated high-level interpersonal, liaison, teamwork and collaborative skills. • Highly developed organisational skills and the ability to work under pressure and manage competing demands. • Good critical analytical skills in relation to policy and community issues. • Demonstrated leadership skills. • Ability to supervise and mentor the work of lawyers, paralegal support workers, volunteers or other staff. • Demonstrated ability to work autonomously, and to use initiative to solve problems; awareness of when to escalate legal and non-legal matters to Managing Lawyer. • Excellent stakeholder engagement and relationship management skills.
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Qualifications

Essential:

- Eligible to hold a legal practising certificate in Victoria.
- A degree in law.
- At least five years practical legal experience in family violence related law.

Workplace health and safety

Djirra is committed to providing and maintaining the health and safety of its employees.

All staff at Djirra are expected to champion proactive and positive health and safety practices in the workplace and when working offsite by raising health, safety and wellbeing issues or concerns with managers and colleagues. Staff are required to observe all safe work procedures, rules and instructions, and take all reasonable care for their own safety and for the safety of work colleagues by always operating in a safe and appropriate manner.

Information about these policies are contained in Djirra's Human Resources Policy Manual.

We are a Child Safe Organisations

Djirra is a child safe organisation and is committed in everyday practice to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children, at all times. As a child safe organisation, employment with Djirra is subject to a satisfactory Australian Criminal History Check and an *Employee Working With Children Check* (in Victoria).

An International Police Check will also be required if you have resided continuously in an overseas country for 12 months or more in the last ten years.

Other important information

Djirra employees and volunteers are required to act in accordance with Djirra's values and behaviours of:

- Respect for people and culture
- trust
- integrity
- resilience; and
- empowerment

