



Position title	Paralegal Support Worker
Group	AFVPLS
Employment status	Full time, ongoing
Salary Range	As per SCHCADS Award
Position reports to	Managing Lawyer
Location	Abbotsford
Delegation	N/A

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's legal services include advice, representation and advocacy in the areas of:

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

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.

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.

Key accountabilities

Client support

- Work collaboratively with the lawyer to ensure clients of the organisation 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:
 - 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 place;
 - 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: 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.

Community Legal Education

- In conjunction with the lawyers and other staff, assist in the development and delivery of community education workshops and 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

- Internal: Colleagues, Lawyers, Senior Lawyers, Managing Lawyer, Legal Services Manager, 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. • 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.
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	<p>Desirable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
Competency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • The ability to prepare clear, concise and well-presented written material.
Technical Skills	<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. • A current driver's license is essential. Some out-of-hours and/or overnight travel will be required.

Qualifications

Desirable: Qualification in community service or paralegal studies.

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. Staff are encouraged to undertake related training eg – First Aid training, Fire Warden, etc.

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

Djirra's employees and volunteers are required to adhere to relevant policies and procedures including, but not limited, to:

- Code of Conduct Policy
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Social Media Use Policy
- Privacy Information Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Volunteer Policy

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



Sharing stories, finding solutions



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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

Employee name:

Employee signature:

Date: / /

Manager's name:

Manager's signature:

Date: / /

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: / /