



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

Organisation environment

Djirra¹ is an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation with over 20 years' experience accompanying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, and their children, on their individual journeys. We find solutions through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women sharing their stories, journeys, and experiences. Djirra celebrates women's strength and resilience. We are committed to a future without family violence.

We deliver holistic, culturally safe, specialist family violence support, legal services and case management, alongside cultural and wellbeing workshops, and programs. Our services have state-wide reach, touching every part of Victoria to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. Self-determination is the foundation of everything we do.

Djirra amplifies the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. We advocate for system-wide change to improve access to justice, eliminate systemic violence, and strengthen women's resilience.

We are an active member of the National Family Violence Prevention and Legal Services Forum, the peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are experiencing or at risk of family violence.

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.

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.

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. • A current driver’s license is essential. Some out-of-hours and/or overnight travel will be required.
Technical Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

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.
 - A Working with Children Check Card
 - A Police Check

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 e.g. – First Aid training, Fire Warden, etc.

Information about these policies is 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’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 is contained in Djirra’s Human Resources Policy Manual.

All Djirra workers - including employees, volunteers, contractors, and students on placement - must either:

- be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, or
- hold a completed and signed Australian Immunisation Register medical exemption.

Djirra requires this of anyone who is working remotely or virtually with or for Djirra, as well as those working face to face. This is to ensure we are consistently promoting, supporting, and re-enforcing the importance of vaccination for the communities Djirra works with, and for all our staff.

We require evidence from each person we engage that they meet the requirements.





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:

Mary Morison

Manager's Signature:

Date: 16/06/2023

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: / /