

Position title	Lawyer – Prison Support Program
Group	Legal Services
Employment status	Full time, Ongoing
Salary Range	As per SCHCADS Award
Position reports to	Managing Lawyer
Location	Melton
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 or are experiencing family violence. AFVLS delivers the Prison Support Program for clients at the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre and HM Prison Tarrengower. 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.

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.

Aboriginal women are significantly overrepresented in the Victorian prison population, and an overwhelming majority have experienced family violence. Lawyers working in AFVLS' Prison Support Program provide legal advice and representation to Aboriginal women in prison who have experienced family violence, including post-release.

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, including Aboriginal women in prison, who have experienced family violence in the areas of Family Violence Intervention Orders, Child Protection, Family Law and Victims of Crime Assistance.
- 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.
- 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 stakeholders, including: Dame Phyllis Frost Centre and Tarrengower, 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 as required.
- Conduct outreach services at Dame Phyllis Frost Centre on a regular basis (approximately weekly), Tarrengower where needed and other services across Metropolitan Melbourne as required.

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.

Law Reform

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

Supervision

- Supervise non-legal work, and the day to day mentoring & development of Paralegal Support Workers.

Administration

- Maintain client files and ensure they comply with AFVLS's file management policies, processes and procedures.
- Enter data and other information in an accurate and timely manner using various databases and online systems such as CLASS, ATLAS and the Commonwealth Courts Portal.
- Prepare work plans, statistical analysis and other reports as required.
- Contribute to the ongoing development of relevant policies and procedures for Djirra and AFVLS.

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, 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

- Develop and maintain thorough and current knowledge of the law in AFVLS's practice areas.
- Demonstrate strong client engagement skills and ability to handle challenging situations with sensitivity, cultural appropriateness and tact.
- Develop and maintain knowledge of best practice regarding trauma informed and culturally safe service delivery.
- Ability to work at times with minimal supervision but to consistently consult and report appropriately.
- Demonstrate a flexible and collaborative approach to working with other staff and 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 Lawyers, 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

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.
- 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.
- Ability to supervise and mentor the work of paralegal support workers, volunteers or other staff.

Desirable

- 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.
- Experience in providing legal advice or representation in Family Law or Child Protection matters.

Competency

- Well-developed written communication skills, commensurate with high quality legal work; and ability to represent clients in Courts, Tribunals and dispute resolution conferences.
- 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 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.

Technical Skills

- 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

Essential:

- Eligible to hold a legal practising certificate in Victoria.
- A degree in law.
- A Working with Children Check Card
- A Police Check
- A current driver's licence is essential. Some out-of-hours travel, regular regional travel and/or overnights may be required.

Desirable:

- At least one year of practical experience in a community legal, family violence or justice related setting.



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.



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: / /