# Position description

**Position title:** Legal Assistant

**Reports to:** Administrative Services Manager

**Program area:** Various

**Location:** Morwell and Bairnsdale

**Classification:** VLA2 - V2AO3D

**Position type:** Maximum term

## Position Summary

Legal Assistants provide administrative support and reception duties (where required) to a team of lawyers and administrative staff within a VLA Office or Program Area.

The role is responsible for updating the corporate case management system, word processing and scheduling appointments. Legal Assistants usually spend significant time liaising with clients, private practitioners and community groups and providing information about Legal Aid services.

*The Responsibilities below are the core of legal assistant roles across all VLA’s legal practice areas and locations. Your role may focus more on some responsibilities than others, depending on the position’s location and legal practice/s.*

## Responsibilities

1. Provide a wide range of legal administrative support services, which may include audio typing, word processing, data entry, file management, client coordination and reception services.
2. Receive client inquiries at the office or in court, record outcomes and refer clients to internal or external specialists as needed.
3. Provide information and referrals to the public, legal practitioners and community agencies about VLA’s and external services, including the intake assessment of client needs to determine the most appropriate VLA service to offer.
4. Update and maintain VLA’s client database and case management system, so that it meets VLA’s policies, procedures and practice standards, as well as local operating needs.
5. Book client appointments and manage changes through the client booking system, including video conferencing and telephone appointments.
6. Assist the administrative services manager with:
7. developing and implementing procedures to improve legal and administrative work practices within the office and across VLA;
8. day-to-day management of the sub-program or office, including training and welcoming new staff to the area and team; and
9. community legal education seminars where necessary.
10. Financial administration: process invoices for payment, including cash handling, account enquiries and taking follow up action when required.

## Key selection criteria

1. Demonstrated skills to provide administrative support including excellent organisational skills and the ability to prioritise workloads, meet timelines and work under pressure.
2. Demonstrated ability to provide client-focused services in a complex, confidential and sensitive environment.
3. Good interpersonal skills and able to communicate easily with people from many backgrounds, including clients who are often people who are socially and economically disadvantaged, people with a disability or mental illness, children, the elderly and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
4. Sound problem solving and decision-making skills to ensure that clients and other members of the public receive efficient and effective delivery of VLA services.
5. Able to learn new systems and processes quickly, for a good understanding and working knowledge of VLA’s client database.
6. Good word processing skills and experience using Microsoft Office suite (e.g. Word, Excel etc).
7. Proven ability and commitment to working collaboratively in a team environment.
8. A knowledge of the general business of VLA and a commitment to our vision and values.

## Qualifications and experience

* Experience providing administrative &/or reception support, ideally within a legal environment (highly desirable).
* Experience of the law, the legal system and legal procedures (highly desirable).

## Other relevant information

* To be eligible to apply for this position you must have the right to work in Australia (i.e., be an Australian or New Zealand citizen, permanent resident or hold a valid work permit or visa).
* All appointments are subject to reference checks and pre-employment misconduct screening, which may include a national police records check and/or a current Working with Children Check. A preferred candidate with an adverse conduct history or criminal record will not necessarily be precluded from employment with VLA and each application will be considered on its merits.
* It is a requirement that all VLA employees reside in Victoria, or a nearby border community, and attend for office-based days at their primary work location. This position may also require you to independently travel to meeting venues, outreach services, courts and tribunals to deliver quality services to our clients or for meetings and/or professional development.
* Occupational health and safety responsibilities at Victoria Legal Aid:
  + All staff at VLA are expected to champion proactive and positive health and safety practices in the workplace 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.

## Organisational context

VLA provides legal aid services to the Victorian community through our in-house practice, contracted private lawyers as well as by funding community legal centres. We have 15 offices across Victoria.

Victoria Legal Aid is a statutory authority that serves the broader community by providing information, legal advice, and education with a focus on the prevention and early resolution of legal problems. We prioritise more intensive services, such as legal advice, legal representation, non-legal advocacy, and family dispute resolution, for those who need it most.

We recognise the intersections between legal and social issues in how we do our work and advocacy. We also work to dismantle the barriers that prevent people from accessing the justice system by participating in systemic reforms and strategic advocacy.

VLA’s [Strategy 26](https://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/strategy-26) outlines our strategic directions across the first four years of our [Outcomes framework 2022–30](https://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/outcomes-framework): an eight-year view of the difference we make for our clients, the Victorian community, our partners, and the services and systems we work with.

Our in-house legal practice covers three program areas: Criminal Law; Family, Youth and Children’s Law; Civil Justice and Access and Equity.

## Our VLA vision and values

### Our vision

Our Vision is for a fair, just and inclusive society where people can get help with their legal problems and have a stronger voice in how laws and legal processes affect them.

### Our purpose

To make a difference for clients and the community by helping to effectively address legal problems, supporting the coordination of a strong and dynamic legal assistance sector and working with partners to create fairer laws and systems.​

### Our values

#### Fairness

We are committed to fairness in society and to facilitating fair and equitable access to legal support.

#### Care

We care about our clients and the community and we approach our work with an awareness of the effects that trauma and discrimination can have. We treat each other with kindness and respect.

#### Courage

We approach our work with strength and confidence. We are guided by our values and what matters most to our clients and society.

#### Inclusion

We provide an inclusive environment for clients, staff, and referral partners

## Victoria Legal Aid (VLA) is an Equal Opportunity Employer committed to promoting a diverse and inclusive workforce

We strongly encourage people from diverse backgrounds and abilities, including First Nations Australians and refugees to apply for positions within our organisation. We will make reasonable adjustments to enable everyone to participate in our recruitment processes and to work productively and safely.

It is a key priority of VLA’s[Reconciliation Action Plan](https://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/reconciliation-action-plan)to support principles of self-determination by increasing First Nations Australians’ employment across all areas of VLA. We recognise that our workforce can benefit greatly from the unique knowledge, skills and expertise of a diverse workforce including First Nations Australians and in achieving a culturally safe and responsive service for our clients.

## VLA is a Child-Safe organisation

VLA is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and recognises that children’s rights need to be respected, their views welcomed and valued, and their concerns taken seriously. We additionally acknowledge and appreciate the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Australian First Nations children, which we respect and value.

##### Position Description approved by People and Workplace Services

Position Title: Strategic Resourcing Manager

Date approved: 12 December 2022