

FIRST NATIONS LAWYER

Position description

This role will help develop and implement EJA's program to support First Nations communities in Victoria to care for Country. You will work closely with First Nations individuals, organisations and communities to understand their legal needs and develop strategies to overcome the legal barriers that stop First Nations peoples from exercising their caring for Country rights and obligations.

This is one of two roles for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates that will be recruited at the same time to work together to deliver the project. The other role will be a Community Engagement Officer. We will be looking for a balance of seniority and skills across the two roles, with one of the roles taking on the project leadership – see details under 'Responsibilities' below and contact us if you want to find out more about leading the project. You will be given support and training as needed to help you succeed in this position.

This is an Aboriginal Designated Position, classified under 'special measures' of section 12 of the Equal Employment Opportunity Act 2010. Only Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people are eligible to apply.

About us

Environmental Justice Australia is a leading public interest legal organisation. Our lawyers and campaigners act on behalf of people and community organisations to safeguard health; protect magnificent forests, rivers and wildlife; and tackle the climate crisis. We partner with communities and other social justice organisations because we are stronger together.

Using innovative approaches, we find the best legal solutions to climate and environmental issues. Our team works inside and outside the courtroom to make the system fair and just for all. We work on issues and in areas of Australia where we can have the most impact.

Our vision of healthy, empowered communities depends upon a broader vision of a reconciled, just and healthy Australia.

Our values

Collaboration: We work in partnership with community and other organisations because we are in this together.

Respect: We treat everyone with respect and we value different perspectives as we know we can learn something from everyone.

Ambition: We aim high and are at all times focused on achieving maximum impact for nature, climate and communities.

Positivity: We maintain hope and a positive approach because we believe we can change the world.

Justice: We are driven by our sense of justice – it's at the core of everything we do.

Responsibilities

Alongside a First Nations Community Engagement Officer person, this role will:

- Design and deliver the caring for Country project.
- Investigate and identify intersections between environmental and natural resource management laws and Indigenous interests in Victoria.
- Engage with First Nations communities to identify their legal needs around caring for Country and collaboratively develop options for responding to these needs.
- In conjunction with other EJA lawyers, deliver legal and/or policy strategies (litigation, law reform, other legal services) for clients and partners.
- Provide high-quality legal advice (both written and oral) and representation to Aboriginal individuals, organisations and communities in matters related to environmental law.
- Provide ongoing support to EJA's partners and clients in pursuing legal outcomes.
- Help deliver a series of presentations and written case studies to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations interested in our approach and outcomes.
- Contribute to the EJA team and the running of the organisation and office, including volunteer supervision, and participate in all relevant aspects of EJA planning, review and reporting.

If the candidate is suitable for and interested in the program leadership role, the following responsibilities are also applicable:

- Lead the caring for Country program at EJA including representing EJA in meetings and the media, managing budgets, establishing and maintaining funding relationships, and program reporting.
- Support and supervise team members to provide high-quality legal advice and representation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, partners and communities.

Selection criteria - skills, qualifications and experience required

Essential

- Currently admitted or eligible for admission to practise law in Australia.
- Post-graduation legal experience 2+ years in Australia (with additional legal or other relevant experience desirable for the program lead).
- Excellent written and oral communication skills including demonstrated ability to communicate legal concepts in clear language and to prepare written legal advice.
- Ability to work well under limited supervision.
- A strong understanding of the issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and a demonstrated commitment to justice for First Nations people.

If the candidate is suitable for the program leadership role, the following is also required:

- Initiative, self-motivation, the ability to work effectively both independently and as part of a collaborative team environment, and the ability to work to tight deadlines.
- Experience in planning, organising, and managing projects and events.
- Experience managing and supervising staff.

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Desirable

- Experience in public or administrative law, ideally environmental law.
- Volunteer management experience.
- Commitment to environmental and social justice issues.

Location

Naarm (Melbourne).

Terms and conditions

Terms and conditions for these roles will be negotiated based on the following:

- The position is full time, but 4 days a week will be considered.
- The role is fixed-term for 2 years, with the possibility of extension beyond this date depending on funding.
- The role is based in Naarm (Melbourne) at our office in Carlton.
- The role will require travel in Victoria and interstate.
- Out of hours work is required occasionally.
- The position reports to the program lead (or the co-CEOs if program lead).
- Terms and conditions of employment are based on the Community Legal Sector Multi-Business Agreement with competitive over-agreement salary and conditions. Salary range is dependent on experience - \$70,300-\$75,250 for a team role, \$90,740-\$98,060 for the program leadership role (plus superannuation).

How to apply

Send us your brief application comprising:

- your curriculum vitae; and
- a statement of no more than 3 pages detailing why you want to work with us, addressing the selection criteria outlined above.

Email your application to recruitment@envirojustice.org.au

Enquiries: Elizabeth McKinnon and Nicola Rivers, co-CEOs, 03 8341 3112 or by email to recruitment@envirojustice.org.au

Closing date: Sunday 31 October 2021 at 11.59pm (AEST)