

Position Description

Job Title:	Aboriginal Community Justice Report writer
Employer:	University of Technology Sydney (Professor in Law Dr Thalia Anthony)
Located at:	Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (primarily Preston office)
Rate:	\$61.97 per hour (inc. 25% loading and 30% oncosts)
Hours / duration:	20 reports (50 hours allocated per report) over 18 month period 2020-21 (Total 1000 hours / \$61, 970)
Employment type:	Casual

This is an identified position - this is an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander designated position, classified under Section 12 Special Measures of the Equal Opportunity Act 2010. This employment opportunity is only available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Overview of Role:

An Aboriginal Community Justice Report writer will be employed to prepare up to 20 reports for Aboriginal women who will be sentenced in Koori and mainstream County courts in Victoria (with a focus on Melbourne, Broadmeadows and Latrobe Valley). The purpose of these reports is to convey the background experiences of the Aboriginal women and their community that is relevant to their offending circumstances, needs, strengths and sentence options.

The role will form part of a pilot project funded by the Australian Research Council. The project is being jointly implemented by the University of Technology Sydney (UTS), the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS), Griffith University, the Australasian Institute of Judicial Administration (AIJA) and Five Bridges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation based in Queensland.

The project is a partnership that involves implementation of reports by VALS and research oversight by UTS. Accordingly, the report writer will be employed by UTS, but the role will be located at VALS. Day-to-day activities will be supervised by VALS, although Professor Anthony will provide more general oversight and feedback.

The Report writer will interview the Aboriginal women, relevant people from family and community to prepare the report. The Report writer will work with a case worker to ensure that the report reflects the case workers' identification of needs and ongoing engagement with the Aboriginal woman. They will also undertake research on the community's services, history and challenges. They will then write the report under the supervision of Professor Thalia Anthony and VALS staff in preparing these innovative

reports. This position would ideally suit Aboriginal women candidates who have worked closely with their community, have an interest in the criminal justice system and have strong organisational and report writing skills.

Main capabilities:

- Capacity to work with and take direction from an Aboriginal-owned legal service
- Capacity to work with Aboriginal women in the criminal justice system and Aboriginal community more broadly
- Capacity to work independently while taking direction from supervisors
- Capacity to undertake socio-historical-legal research
- Writing skills
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills

Responsibilities and Duties:

- Schedule and arrange interviews with project participants and their families including providing them with prior information about the interview process and explaining what they can do to prepare for their interview;
- Work collaboratively with the project case-worker who will provide appropriate referrals and professional supports to project participants including helping to identify individualized sentence options;
- Conduct interviews with 20 individuals and members of their family and/or community members;
- Conduct additional research as required, for example, the impact of Aboriginal child removal on a particular region or family group or broadly,
- Prepare concise, accurate and impartial reports based on evidence gathered from interviews and other relevant sources;
- Attend court to answer any questions or provide clarification to the Judge as may be required
- Willingness to travel to La Trobe Valley and some other locations around Melbourne as may be required from time to time;
- Consult with key project stakeholders and provide progress updates at regular intervals;
- Attend project meetings, seminars or subject-related conferences from time to time.

Qualifications and Experience

Essential:

- Demonstrated involvement with and understanding of Victorian Aboriginal communities including cultural awareness and protocols;

- Demonstrated ability to relate to and communicate with project participants and their families in a culturally safe and appropriate manner;
- Strong ability to identify the needs and strengths of Aboriginal women
- Strong ability to interview and elicit personal, cultural and community information from project participants and their families or community members which may be highly sensitive or distressing at times;
- Ability to adhere to privacy laws and manage confidential information securely;
- Understanding of the criminal justice system and the sentencing process in particular;
- Strong ability to conduct independent research;
- Comprehensive report writing skills;
- Strong ability to multi-task and work to deadlines whilst remaining flexible and adaptable.

Desirable:

- Undergraduate qualifications in law, psychology or social sciences **or current students** from those disciplines
- Previous experience preparing essays, reports, papers, submissions or policy documents
- Knowledge of or experience of criminal justice system (including one's own or family / community members' experience)

About VALS

VALS was established as a community-controlled organisation in 1973 to address the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the criminal justice system. The organisation has a long and proud history of providing legal and service support for Aboriginal Victorians who are experiencing or at risk of experiencing negative contact with the justice system and advocating locally, nationally and internationally for the rights of Aboriginal people.

The organisation has grown over the years (with further expansion options being pursued) and now offers criminal, family and civil law services, client services support, community legal education and a range of community justice support programs in both Victoria and Tasmania.

VALS strives to:

- Promote social justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;
- Promote the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to empowerment, identity and culture;
- Ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples enjoy their rights, are aware of their responsibilities under the law and have access to appropriate advice, assistance and representation;

- Reduce the disproportionate involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the criminal justice system; and
- Promote the review of legislation and other practices which discriminate against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

VALS Values

Respect

We advocate for and demonstrate the right of every person to be treated with dignity and respect.

Culture

We remember what we are here for and how our organisation came into being and ensure we are centred within our communities.

Commitment

Our team is committed to improving the lives of Aboriginal people. We keep our word and stand by our commitments.

Self-Determination

We respect and promote the principle of self-determination in everything that we do. We will achieve change for Aboriginal communities and ensure the realisation of self-determination.

Independence

We are Apolitical. We are independent.

Integrity

We are steadfast in our adherence to our values. We take every reasonable measure to protect our clients. We offer independent, professional and high level legal representation.

Equality

We fight for our communities to be equal before the law and to rectify the over-representation of Aboriginal people in the justice system. VALS promotes the right to be different, free from discrimination and valued as an individual

Please provide a CV and cover letter that addresses the criteria to apply for this job.

Send to: thalia.anthony@uts.edu.au

Closing Date: 30 September 2020. You will need to be available for training during October and November.

For further information contact Thalia Anthony on 0413 992 523 or thalia.anthony@uts.edu.au