



ALS

Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) Limited

ABORIGINAL APPLICANTS HIGHLY REGARDED

Legal Secretary/Administration Officer Care & Protection and Family Law

Newcastle

Temporary to 22 December 2017

Full time

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We require a copy of your resume, responses to the selection criteria, an application form plus a copy of your current valid driver licence. Have you provided these four items if you choose to apply?

Note: applications for this position close on 5 pm Monday 24 July 2017

1. PURPOSE OF POSITION

Provide support Solicitors in Care and Protection/Family Law matters in accordance with the Aboriginal Legal Service policies, procedures and guidelines and assist in delivering high quality referral and support services to Aboriginal clients..

2. REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

Supervisor: Regional Administration Coordinator

Overall supervisor: Practice Manager

3. ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

The ALS commenced operations on 1 July 2006. The ALS provides legal services to Aboriginal clients across NSW/ACT. It was established as a Public Benevolent Institution and operates to assist economically and socially disadvantaged Aboriginal people to understand and protect their rights in the legal system.

The ALS Board, which consists of the Chairperson and 13 voting Directors includes the Chair and CEO plus 2 Honorary Directors, establishes the broad policies and strategic plan of the ALS. The ALS is the largest agency delivering legal services to Aboriginal clients in Australia, comprising a head office in Sydney (Redfern) and 23 offices in metropolitan, regional and remote centres across NSW/ACT.

The key programs and services provided by the ALS include:

- Legal advice and referral for clients;
- Duty lawyer service in specified court locations;
- Criminal law advice and litigation;
- Care and protection law advice and litigation;
- Family law advice and litigation;
- Custody Notification Scheme;
- Work and development orders information and referrals;
- Civil Law information and referrals;
- Policy reform initiatives;
- Community Legal Education and Outreach;
- Community Justice Program (Australian Capital Territory);
 - Prisoner Through Care
 - Interview Friends
 - Galambany Circle Sentencing Support.
- Royal Commission Into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse information & referrals;
- Cooperative Service Delivery;
- Auspicing of Justice Reinvest NSW
- Aboriginal Tenancy Service.

The Family Law Division provides advice, non-court assistance, duty lawyer and representation of clients in the Federal Circuit Court and the Family Law Court in Parramatta and Sydney. It is also anticipated that in the near future our Family Lawyers will be providing representation on some Regional Circuits. Family Law is provided from one Metropolitan Office (Parramatta). Family Lawyers also conduct regular outreach services and telephone advice to assist distant clients. Lawyers in Family Law also provide community Legal Education.

The Care and Protection Division provides advice, non-court assistance, duty lawyer and representation to clients in matters in the Children's Court, District Court, Supreme Court and the Administrative Decisions Tribunal. Care and Protection lawyers provide these services from one metropolitan and three regional offices (Dubbo, Newcastle Lismore, Wollongong, and Parramatta), many of which also conduct outreach services to assist more distant clients. Lawyers in the Care and Protection Division also provide Community Legal Education.

4. NATURE AND SCOPE OF POSITION

MAJOR DUTIES

1. Provide high level quality secretarial clerical and administrative support to the Family Law and Care & Protection Solicitors.
2. Arranging appointments with the various stakeholders e.g. clients, experts/professionals at various locations e.g. office, court, rehab centres, correctional centres etc.
3. Provide word processing support using Microsoft Office Systems or other computerized document management systems, including correspondence, preparation of court documents, reports and other documents.
4. Use a Dictaphone program for word processing purposes.
5. All input of statistical data to in-house database including opening, closing, archiving files and other general data entry as requested/required.
6. Liaise with professionals, including barristers, solicitors, medical professionals, Court Staff and other ALS staff members and stakeholders.
7. Where appropriate, assist clients with non court matters and referrals.
8. Arranging administrative aspects of community legal education events including invitations and publication support, registration processes, materials preparation including managing copying and distribution, managing participant feedback documentation and attending such events from time to time.

5 KEY CHALLENGES OR CONSTRAINTS

- Being able to communicate with, and advocate effectively for Aboriginal clients who may present as distressed, having a physical or intellectual disability, or having problem behaviours such as drug or alcohol addiction,

- The position holder often operates with minimal supervision and is required to resolve problems relating to client service delivery, in consultation with the Specialist Regional Manager and Care and Protection solicitors and Family Law Solicitors when required,
- The position holder must manage work priorities in a high volume work environment,

DECISION MAKING

The position holder makes decisions about prioritising allocated work, ensuring timely intervention and effective administrative support.

The position holder seeks the advice and support of the Specialist Regional Manager and Care and Protection Regional Principal Legal Officer on a regular basis, and also consults with care and protection solicitors.

COMMUNICATION

Internal

The key relationship is with the Regional Manager. The position holder also interacts closely with the Principal Legal Officer, Care and Protection solicitors, clerical assistants and other solicitors and field officers to distribute and perform the work of the Region.

External

Externally, the position holder has regular contact with clients and potential clients requiring legal assistance in care and protection matters.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Essential

- High level secretarial, data entry and work processing skills including the ability to adjust to change and to learn and adapt to new computerized systems.
- Proven experience in providing administrative support to a Family Law practice is required.
- Proven experience in administrative and clerical support with the ability to work in a team environment under minimal supervision.
- Good organisational and priority setting skills and experience working in a high volume workload environment.
- High-Level customer service skills with experience in assisting members of the public, both face to face and by telephone, especially to people from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds.
- High level interpersonal and communication skills including an ability to identify and deal with sensitive issues.
- Ability to prepare legal documents and quickly acquire knowledge and understanding of the legal environment, including court operations and justice and community support agencies.
- Ability to understand Aboriginal Legal Service policies and procedures.
- Ability to meet deadlines and to manage a diverse workload.

Desirable

- Previous experience working in an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community based organisation.

Job Notes:

The successful applicant will need to have a willingness to drive in metropolitan and country locations as well as a willingness to travel by plane and stay overnight or longer to undertake outreach work or training, as required.

The position offered is subject to the Employee agreeing to undergo:

- Criminal History Check
- Working with Children Check
- Approved access to Correctional Centres, Court and Police cells

SELECTION CRITERIA GUIDE:

1. Read the selection criteria (above) very carefully and establish what each one is asking. To do this, look for key words and determine what they mean. Some examples of key words frequently used are:
 - a. "Demonstrated" or "proven ability" mean that you should have successfully performed the duty or used the skill in the past. Actual experience rather than potential to perform the duty is required.
 - b. "An ability to rapidly acquire" means that if you do not already have the skills, knowledge and abilities you may demonstrate your potential to acquire these by comparing them to relevant tasks or responsibilities you have undertaken in previous positions or through study.
 - c. "Thorough", "sound" or "a high level" indicates that advanced skill or knowledge is required.
2. Ensure that you respond to all components of the selection criteria.
3. Relate the selection criteria back to the key duties and responsibilities for the position (see position description above) however remember that your response should focus on all of your relevant skills, knowledge and experience not just those relating to the duties and responsibilities for the position.
4. Address each selection criterion by outlining how your qualifications, experience, skills and abilities meet those required for the position.

Follow the guidelines below when responding to selection criteria. State each of the selection criteria as a heading and write your response underneath. Include the following in your response:

An initial statement

This should be a clear statement of how you meet the criterion. For example:

- "This is what I do"
- "I possess these skills"
- "My role as X demands that I..."

Supporting argument

Justify your initial statement by showing how you meet the criterion. Identify the key issues for each selection criterion and include these in your response. Provide 1 or 2 examples that best demonstrate your skills, knowledge or abilities and cover as many of the relevant key issues as possible. The examples need to include:

- Content - what occurred and what you did
- Context - your responsibility: whether you were in charge, responsible or part of a team that was responsible
- Outcome - what happened as a result? Was your work approved? Adopted? Successful?
- What difference did your work make to the organisation?

Validity statement

Validate your example by showing supporting evidence. For example:

- "Attached examples verify..."
- "Feedback from clients was..."

Concluding statement

Reinforce again why and how you meet the criterion. Relate your response back to the criterion. For example:

- "I believe that through this I have gained..."
- "This demonstrates..."

It is your responsibility to convince the selection committee that you are the best candidate for the position. As the selection of candidates for interview is based solely on the information provided in the application, you must ensure that the information you provide is sufficient for the selection committee to assess the strength of your application.

We require a copy of your resume, an application form, responses to the selection criteria plus a copy of your current valid driver's licence/. Have you provided these four items?

SELECTION PROCESS REQUIREMENTS and KEY POLICY AREAS

All appointments to ALS are based on merit. This means that each applicant is assessed on merit against the knowledge, skills, abilities, experience, qualifications and standard of work performance identified in the position description and selection criteria.

THE SELECTION PANEL

The selection panel is responsible for selecting the best suited candidate for the position. The selection is based on merit and the selected candidate will best satisfy the selection criteria. The selection committee must base its decision on material presented by the applicants in writing, at interview, and from referees. Interview candidates will be advised of the composition of the panel prior to interview.

Short listing

If there are a number of applicants for the position, the selection panel will assess each application in order to identify which applicants will be further assessed.

Interviews

The members of the selection panel have a variety of selection techniques available to them. The most common technique used in the ALS is the interview, which may take the form of:

- A structured interview in which a series of predetermined questions relating to the selection criteria are asked of each applicant. Additionally, questions may be asked which explore issues raised by the applicant's responses
- Case studies in which the panel gives the applicant a realistic scenario and asks them what they would do in the given situation

Applicants are ranked according to how well they address the selection criteria, both in their written application and during the interview.

Reference Check

In your application, nominate at least two referees who have firsthand knowledge of your work performance - preferably your current or most recent supervisor. Be sure that you state their name, position, organisation/department and phone number.

The checking of references is a technique that confirms or clarifies claims that you have made in your application, interview or other selection activities. At the end of the interview process, the selection panel will contact the identified referees for those applicants who are being considered for the position.

If you have not mentioned your current supervisor as a referee, the selection panel may still wish to contact them if you are considered for appointment. Your consent will be required prior to any contact being made.

Your responsibilities to your referees

- Ask if they will act as a referee for you and notify them when you apply.
- Make sure that your referee is comfortable with your application and that they consider that you have the necessary skills to undertake this type of position.
- If you are short listed for an interview, give them a copy of the position description, which includes the selection criteria. This allows them time to think about their responses.

Appointment

As a result of the selection process, the "best fit" is offered the position. All applicants are advised in writing whether they are successful or unsuccessful.

PROTECTION POLICY

ALS is committed to the safety and protection of clients in our care. As part of our policy regarding this, prospective applicants may need to give permission for the organisation to conduct a Criminal History Check and if appropriate a Working With Children Check. Applicants are also asked to agree to provide information about any outstanding charges and, in the event of employment, agree to advise of any charges referred throughout the period of employment.

PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL CONDUCT

ALS has a responsibility to its stakeholders to ensure the professional and ethical conduct of its employees. As such it is important that prospective applicants understand the core values of our Code of Conduct policy as the standard of conduct required. These core values are:

- Treat all the people that we come in to contact with respect and dignity
- Uphold the law, respect community standards, and act accordingly
- Use ALS property responsibly and in the best interests of ALS and its reputation, and
- Accept that we are responsible for our actions and accountable for the consequences.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

ALS is committed to Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and providing a working environment free from discrimination, intimidation, victimisation and harassment (direct or indirect). ALS applies EEO principles to all recruitment and selection activities.

ALS values its EEO and Anti-Discrimination Policy aims to create an environment where all workers are valued and respected and have opportunities to develop their full potential and pursue a career path of their choice.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH and SAFETY

ALS is committed to providing a safe and healthy working environment. The organisation believes that all illnesses and injuries can be prevented and supports early intervention in the rehabilitation process. The organisation will adhere to all relevant laws and regulations regarding safety and implement a comprehensive Occupational Health & Safety Program focused upon consultation and continuous improvement.



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CONFIDENTIAL APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

A CV or Resume will not be accepted as a substitute for this form. Please complete using either **BLOCK** capitals, typewritten format or electronically. This form should be signed and dated. Information provided on this form will be used for the short-listing process. It is therefore your responsibility to ensure that you demonstrate, on this form, what makes you suitable for employment at the ALS. ALS reserves the right to exclude any application from the selection process when the instructions outlined on this form have not been followed.

PERSONAL DETAILS

First Name

Surname Name

Title

Address

Telephone (Evening)

Date of Birth (optional)

Telephone (Day)

Email:

Telephone (Mobile)

Please provide the full details of any previous names:

POSITION ADVERTISEMENT IN:

ALS Web, ALS Face book , ALS Employee, Koori Mail, NIT , Ourmob.com , AMS Notice Board ,RRR Law Website , Community Notice Board , SEEK, Others ?

DRIVERS LICENCE

Do you have a current valid driver's licence?

Yes

No

If yes, please provide a copy of your driver's licence

HEALTH

Do you have any medical conditions or disabilities which the ALS should be aware of? This question is asked to enable consideration to be given to the provision of **CONFIDENTIAL** assistance to you, if you request such assistance. This would be to your benefit in the event of an emergency. (Optional)

CONVICTIONS

Have you been charged or convicted of a criminal offence, a child related offence, a domestic violence offence? Yes No

If yes, give details

Please provide all details if you are currently subject to any Court Order (including an Apprehended Violence Order or interstate/overseas equivalent)

It should be noted that convictions for certain offences do not necessarily deter an applicant from obtaining employment

REFEREES (if not noted on your Resume) Please give details of two referees from any suitable person (over 18 years and not related to you).

A WRITTEN REFERENCE FROM THE TWO REFEREES IS PREFERRED.

Name:

Address:

Phone No:

Relationship:

DECLARATIONS

I hereby certify that the information I have provided on this form and in the attached documents is true and correct in every respect.

I hereby certify that if I am successful in obtaining a placement at ALS, I will comply with all lawful and reasonable directions from my manager.

I hereby certify that by signing this Application form that I authorise the ALS to contact either by letter, telephone or any other means, any person/organisation that the ALS considers necessary to confirm any of the information I have provided in this Application form. I also acknowledge that, if necessary, the ALS may need to obtain other information about me, for example conducting a Criminal Reference Check / Working With Children Check.

I understand that any misrepresentation by me will lead to the withdrawal of any offer of employment or my employment being terminated.

Signed:

Date:

CHECKLIST:

I have attached:

- **A covering letter explaining why this role sounds suitable to your skills and experience**
- **A copy of an up-to-date resume**
- **ALS application form**
- **A statement responding to our Selection Criteria**
- **A copy of your current NSW driver's licence**

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