

POSITION DESCRIPTION – PD015A

Paralegal/Junior Legal Practitioner (Civil, Criminal and Family Law)

Full Time, Fixed Term

A. CONTEXT, PURPOSE OF THE ROLE AND OPPORTUNITY

About us

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service (Qld) Limited (ATSILS) is a not-for-profit, community-based organisation that delivers innovative, professional, criminal, civil and family law services and early intervention projects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients throughout Queensland. Established in 1972, ATSILS has grown to 24 offices with around 300 staff strategically located across Queensland. We also operate specialist Through Care, Community Legal Education, Law Reform and Coronial Enquiries programmes to supplement our primary legal services across many of our regions.

Our Vision is to lead in the delivery of innovative and professional legal services.

Our Mission is to deliver quality legal assistance services, community legal education, and early intervention and prevention initiatives which uphold and advance the legal and human rights of Aboriginal and Strait Islander people.

Purpose of the role

1. For a paralegal is to provide high quality support services in a busy team environment, in the Civil, Criminal and Family Law jurisdictions;
2. For a Junior Legal Practitioner is to provide the Paralegal duties in 1. above, and legal assistance to clients in the Civil, Criminal and Family Law jurisdictions.

This role allows for an administratively skilled worker who is studying Law, Paralegal, Justice or Legal Studies (or is newly admitted), to work alongside qualified Legal Practitioners in a mentoring and team-based approach.

Opportunity

Depending on your studies, experience, qualifications, and attainment of a Practising Certificate, you will have an opportunity to prepare casework and provide assistance directly to clients – albeit under the direction and guidance of an experienced Practitioner. You can rely on the State-wide resources of the Principal Legal Officer and the Directors of Law (Civil, Criminal and Family) and your immediate legal team. The development of culturally safe legal services is inherent in this role, so you will likely achieve a degree of confidence in this specialist area.

A corporate services team based in Brisbane provides administrative, human resources and public relations support; locally, administration support with regional management ensures a knowledgeable office system. Our Regional Offices providing a rewarding social justice environment for service delivery which is achieved through one-to-one in person, direct community visiting, at our offices and by phone and internet.

B. REPORTING STRUCTURE

Duties are performed under the guidance and direction of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Principal Legal Officer (PLO) and the Directors of Law (Civil, Criminal and Family), and where outside of the Brisbane Head Office, with local reporting to the Regional Manager (also a Legal Practitioner). Legal Practitioners within the same law unit(s) and within the same office may also provide local guidance and direction.



C. SELECTION CRITERIA

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA (6)

1. **Values:** alignment to the values and vision of ATSILS and an appreciation of, and sensitivity to the challenges our clients have faced, and continue to face, in their fight for and their right to justice and equity.
2. **Qualifications:**
 - i. **Junior Legal Practitioner:** be admitted as a Legal Practitioner in Queensland (or be within 12 months of being admitted) with a Bachelor of Laws (or equivalent);
 - ii. **Para-Legal scale 2-3:** be a Bachelor of Laws (or combined Degree) Student; or hold an Associate Degree in Paralegal Studies or a Diploma of Legal/Justice/Native Title or similar qualification, PLUS two years' full-time equivalent experience in a legal or professional office;
 - iii. **Para-Legal scale 1:** be enrolled in a Legal Studies Certificate, Diploma or Degree with at least one year's full-time work experience.
3. **Client representation and data management:** sound interpersonal and communication skills including a demonstrated ability to convey precise information empathetically and efficiently to team members and clients; creating and storing written information and online applications in concise, plain language using Windows Microsoft Office technology and utilising legal knowledge in at least two jurisdictions. A minimum typing speed of 45 wpm, 98% accuracy is an advantage.
4. **Core legal duties:** proven capacity to provide highly confidential legal and administrative support to Legal Practitioners in Family and Civil Law proceedings (including ability to co-ordinate file and case management in accordance with professional standards); AND ability to calmly liaise with the legal services network (after training in Paralegal levels) in attending minor matters including criminal law matters at Court/Tribunals.
5. **Confidence in and knowledge of legislation:** a basic knowledge of key legislation, practices, and procedures across a range of legislation such as the *Succession Act*, *Family Law Act*, *Domestic and Family Violence Law Act*, *Child Protection Act*, *Human Rights Act (Qld)*; the *Criminal Code (1898)*, *Youth Justice Act* etc., plus having a demonstrated knowledge of diversionary alternatives available to Police/Magistrates/Judges.
6. **Access, teamwork, and communication:** preparedness to work after hours if necessary; willingness to assist in a busy office with administrative duties such as case filing and intake processes; organised, flexible and friendly communication and interpersonal skills are essential, as in an ability to develop a culturally safe service after on-the-job training.

DESIRABLE CRITERIA (1)

1. **Mobility, access, and safety:**
 - ✿ a **current Queensland Driver Licence** and ability to drive in all reasonable conditions may be required (therefore an essential criterion) for the role, dependent upon the location.
 - ✿ a willingness to undergo a **Criminal Record Check to achieve a National Police Certificate** (Australia-wide Disclosable Criminal History).

Candidates may be required to disclose misconduct (criminal convictions, prosecution investigations etc.,) that prevent an ATSILS Security clearance in relation to any conviction for fraud or other dishonesty related criminal offences. To this end, a preferred candidate must be prepared to consent to a criminal history check being conducted (if requested). **Note:** A criminal history does not automatically preclude selection for interview, and a preliminary check can be discussed with the HR Manager after a candidate has been shortlisted for interview.

Please apply at <http://www.atsils.org.au/job-vacancies>, writing up to 150 words for each criterion.



D. CORE DUTIES

1. Ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are provided with conscientious, culturally safe, ethical, and enthusiastic representation within the Civil, Criminal and Family Law justice system.
2. Assist in the preparation of specialist **Family Law and Civil Law** casework in various Courts or Tribunals including scheduling and follow-through on appearances in appropriate jurisdictions (including Domestic Violence applications, Family Law matters, Child Protection matters, Wills and Estates); ensure procedures (such as file maintenance) are compliant with required professional standards and assist Legal Practitioners in their responsibilities for same and document these services in prescribed ways in our Database. **When admitted**, also provide expert legal advice in the Family Courts and relevant Tribunals, and under the direction and guidance of a more experienced Practitioner, provide casework assistance (commensurate with experience and capacity). As specifically directed by your manager, provide **Criminal Law** services such as bail applications, pleas in mitigation, and appearing at call-overs.
3. Provide online and hard-copy word processing and, from time to time, data entry services, plus provide intensive file management assistance across a range of caseloads.
4. Instruct Legal Practitioners in Court/Tribunals (if requested to do so) and, as required, interview clients as directed for the purpose of taking statements and, when admitted, taking instructions.
5. Ensure local network data for liaison and referral are kept up-to-date and distributed amongst team members including those in outreach or satellite circuit areas; and liaise with the network (e.g. Office of the Director of Prosecutions, Corrective Services, Child Safety, Court Administration, Legal Aid Offices, Police and Prosecution services and other agencies as required) to ensure a high standard of case management and client service.
6. Maintain a keen interest and understanding of human rights and anti-discrimination justice issues impacting upon Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through continuing education. When admitted, participate in circuit court, after-hours and weekend/public holiday court rosters as required and as supervised. Provide efficient legal advice and minor assistance across the legal spectrum (with appropriate referrals where necessary etc.) and document these services in our Database.
7. Ensure timely filing of documents in Court Registries and service of documents on other parties as required.
8. Contribute to occasional activities with the Directors of Law and other practitioners to promote the Civil, Criminal and Family Law services of the organisation.
9. Provide efficient and timely administrative type services within the Family and Civil Law Section (e.g. filing, teleconferencing, typing, and some telephone services), and liaise with the Criminal Law Court Support/Field Officers on relevant administration tasks as requested by your supervisor.
10. Other duties relevant to the position as reasonably required by your supervisors.

E. TEAM, COMMUNICATION AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT DUTIES

1. **Undertake study or training** which might, from time to time be determined by the Executive, and contribute to the professional development of other team-members (including Court Support Officers) as required.
2. **Take part in workplace health and safety** initiatives and support other team members to do the same.
3. **Contribute to a supportive team environment**, through various workplace activities.
4. **Be prepared to work professionally in a variety of locations**, including any approved home office or secure public facility and as approved by your supervisors.
5. **Participate in annual appraisal of own work**; and attend and document regular supervision sessions with the staff to whom you report, achieving a satisfactory work performance and conduct in accordance with the ATSILS Code of Conduct.



F. CORE COMPETENCIES

Your performance will be evaluated on the following facets:

- ability in the application of your knowledge of law and procedure in Civil, Criminal and Family Law jurisdictions, with reference to supporting Legal Practitioners, and procedurally correct application to minor matters, client service delivery and file management;
- extent to which your communication is relevant, articulate and concise (both oral and written) including developing an ability to present effectively to external stakeholders;
- degree to which your service is friendly, culturally safe and flexible for our clients, staff and visitors;
- capacity to develop supportive, positive and consistent relationships with your team members while embracing diversity;
- ability to juggle competing schedules, (including requirements for professional development or study) inside and outside the office environment reflects your strong organisational skill (including compliance to file management protocols and data reporting); and
- development of your ability to calmly assist clients and staff in a timely manner demonstrating consistent contribution in a well-balanced, stress-managed working environment.

G. ATSILS Qld CONTRACT AND LOCATION

- This position falls under the umbrella of the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award with a remuneration package and conditions as per the ATSILS Contract. The starting gross salary range with qualifications and experience is from \$78,000 (plus superannuation and leave loading) dependent upon experience and legal qualifications, and location.
- This role is currently funded to 30 June 2025.
- As a Public Benevolent Institution, our staff may opt to salary sacrifice a portion of their pre-tax salary up to a threshold set by legislation, reducing their taxable income in a given year.
- At ATSILS we offer structured professional development in conjunction with performance management, and study leave for approved work-related courses after a qualifying period.
- ATSILS adheres to the tenets of Equal Opportunity Employment.

Location: ATSILS offices where this role is offered: Cairns, Mackay, Maroochydore, and Rockhampton.

Our values at ATSILS:

- We **Care** for the human and legal rights, safety and psychological well-being of our staff, clients, and communities.
- We **Share** a common understanding of our clients' challenges and needs and strive to deliver quality and accessible legal services.
- We **Respect** the cultural diversity, values and beliefs of our clients and maintain their confidentiality in the delivery of legal services.

For further information please contact:

Human Resources Manager

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ATSILS acknowledges with appreciation that its delivery service is made possible thanks to funding supplied by both the Commonwealth Government and the Queensland State Government.