



Recruitment pack

Senior/Principal Researcher - Evaluation

Full time or Part-time

Research

Education

Grants

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Background information

About us

The Victoria Law Foundation (the Foundation) is an independent statutory body established in 1967 under the *Legal Profession Practice Act 1967* and now governed by the *Victoria Law Foundation Act 2009 (Act)*.

The Act has recently been amended to include a new objects clause and updated functions set out below:

4A Object of the Foundation

The object of the Foundation is to contribute to the development of a justice system that meets the legal and related needs of the Victorian community by improving knowledge and information about the Victorian justice system.

5 Functions of the Foundation

The functions of the Foundation are—

- (a) to conduct, commission and disseminate research on the justice system, especially in matters relating to access to justice, legal services and civil justice, including—
 - (i) collecting and analysing justice system data and information; and*
 - (ii) developing and applying measures to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the justice system; and**
- (b) to promote and undertake education within Victoria to improve community understanding of the law and the justice system; and*
- (c) to educate the legal sector in matters relating to access to justice, including plain language education; and*
- (d) to make grants to organisations to fund projects and programs consistent with the functions or object of the Foundation; and*
- (e) to publish or subsidise the publication of material relating to, resulting from, or connected with carrying out the functions or object of the Foundation.*

We work in three areas: [research](#), [grants](#) and [education](#), set out below.

Research

Recent changes to our legislated functions mean the Foundation has built a research unit focusing on civil justice.

Research at the Foundation will investigate the legal and related needs of Victorians, and over time, will make a significant contribution to improving access to justice. We will contribute to building and analysing the evidence base on legal need and services in Victoria, and look closely at which approaches are working and which are not. Having a strong evidence base from which to make good decisions is critical to contemporary policy development and service delivery.

Grants

The structure and criteria of our Grants Program is also changing. From 2019-20, we will prioritise applications which focus on the collection and use of data, as well as community legal projects which apply an evidence base.

The aim is to help build capacity in community legal organisations to collect and analyse data on legal needs. This is intended to deliver benefits to community and legal assistance organisations: enabling accurate, evidence-based identification of gaps; and supporting the design and delivery of effective responses.

Education

Our calendar of community events is highly successful in demystifying the law and its institutions. These include –

- [Law Week](#) – 2018 was our biggest ever
- the ‘Law and You’ Community Forum, focusing on issues of broad community interest
- the VLF Law Oration - an address by a distinguished legal mind.

The programs we co-ordinate for regional and metropolitan schools bring judges, magistrates, lawyers and the odd former Attorney-General to hundreds of students who wouldn’t otherwise have access to this level of legal expertise and insight.

Our Funding

We receive annual funding from the [Victorian Legal Services Board Public Purpose Fund](#) with a small amount of additional income from investments and sponsorship.

With an operating budget of \$2 million, it is essential that the Foundation makes the most of its resources to deliver its programs. Choosing activities that don’t duplicate other services is essential.

Our Board

The Foundation has eight board members appointed under section 7 of the Act. Current members of the [Foundation board](#) are:

- The Hon Hartley Hansen QC, Chair – nominee of the Chief Justice of Victoria
- Belinda Wilson – nominee of the Law Institute of Victoria
- Vacant – nominee of the Victorian Bar
- Claudia Fatone – nominee of the Federation of Community Legal Centres
- Stephen Roche – appointed by the Attorney-General of Victoria
- Melissa Castan – appointed by the Attorney-General of Victoria
- Peter Noble – nominee of the Board of Victoria Legal Aid
- His Honour Magistrate Brian Wright – nominee of the Courts Council

Our staff

The Foundation has a staff of approximately 11 FTE with expertise across research, education, grant making and communications. Staff are encouraged to share ideas and work collaboratively to achieve the best results.

The Foundation is led by its Executive Director, [Lynne Haultain](#). Ms Haultain has a strong background as a senior executive and is a passionate advocate for access to justice. She is Chair of the Board of Management at the Victorian Foundation for the Survivors of Torture and is a former commissioner with the Victorian Law Reform Commission. She has more than a decade's experience working inside all three levels of government, and chaired a seminal Premier's advisory panel on children's services. Ms Haultain also worked with the ABC as a broadcast journalist for 17 years.

About our Research function and team

Background

Victoria Law Foundation recently welcomed the passing of legislation that enables us to carry out the recommendations of the Victorian Government's Access to Justice Review – to become a centre of excellence for data analysis, research and evaluation on issues related to access to justice, legal issues and civil law.

For more background information see:

[Access to Justice Review Report and Recommendations](#)
[Victoria Law Foundation media release](#)

Research at the Foundation

The [Research function](#) will support the Foundation's vision:

To build a better understanding of Victoria's justice system.

Under the [Strategic Plan 2018/19-2020/21](#), the priority for the Research function is to build the evidence base in Victoria through:

- identifying, analysing and building data sources
- investigating what works and what doesn't in the delivery of justice services
- developing options for improvement.

Our Research team is led by Prof Nigel Balmer.

Nigel joined the VLF in December 2018 as its inaugural Research Director. He has been conducting empirical research for over twenty years and is expert in the application of social science and modern quantitative methods to explore how the public understand and interact with the law.

Nigel's research includes work on the role of law in everyday life; attitudes to justice; public experience of and response to legal issues; the interaction between legal and health problems; and design of legal services and legal aid. He is best known for his work on legal need surveys around the world, including recent guidance supporting global access to justice initiatives under the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 16.

Nigel is also Professor of Law and Social Statistics at University College London.

About the role

Job title	Senior/Principal Researcher - Evaluation
Location	Melbourne, Australia (some travel may be required)
Reports to	Research Director
Direct reports	N/A
Key relationships	Research team External stakeholders
Contract type	Full-time or part-time, ongoing
Salary range	\$100,000 – 120,000 (plus 9.5% superannuation) negotiable

Purpose

This is a new role and will be a key member of the Foundation's newly established Research team.

This is a unique opportunity to make a valuable contribution to improving the justice system in Victoria.

The role is primarily responsible for research and evaluation of the civil justice system. It will lead projects to establish an evidence base for how services or programs function, what works well, what does not, what impact they have and what lessons can be learned, with a strong focus on rigorous empirical methods. The key aim will be to conduct research which will have a positive impact on access to justice.

This position description outlines the duties and responsibilities which will be reviewed on a regular basis with the successful applicant and are subject to change according to the needs and priorities of the Foundation.

Key criteria for success

After 12 months in the role the successful applicant will have:

- produced a scoping paper on internal and external evaluation opportunities
- commenced evaluation project/s
- contributed to other research projects, including large-scale survey research on public understanding of the law

Key responsibilities

- lead the Foundation's evaluation research with high methodological standards
- capacity to develop strong relationships with internal and external stakeholders and other research organisations
- identify and resolve data quality issues, including developing initiatives for enhancing the quality and integrity of collected data
- provide accurate and meaningful information to internal and external stakeholders
- assist with the development and implementation of policies and practices that reflect best practice in evaluation
- keep up-to-date with research techniques and issues related to access to justice
- contribute to other programs where relevant, for example assisting Foundation staff or grant recipients with research and evaluation
- contribute to other research projects, including large-scale survey research and use of administrative data
- publish research which has real world impact, methodological rigour and is accessible to a range of audiences

Other tasks and duties as directed.

Selection criteria

Core skills

- post graduate qualifications and exceptional skill and experience in research and evaluation, preferably in civil justice
- demonstrated research and project management skills
- expertise in rigorous research design – quantitative and qualitative
- proven record in conducting and publishing high quality quantitative and qualitative research
- high level skills in presenting to a range of audiences on the work and findings
- demonstrated experience working collaboratively with stakeholders, including liaising, consulting and negotiating at a high level
- understanding of the legal sector in Victoria and issues related to access to justice highly desirable
- experience managing staff, including building skills and knowledge
- experience managing research budgets
- highly developed interpersonal and organisational skills
- proficiency in MS Office including Word, Excel, and Outlook.

Characteristics

- calm, diplomatic and flexible
- energetic and motivated with a can-do attitude – a self-starter
- ability to work autonomously and manage time effectively
- a commitment to the values of the Foundation

Recruitment process

The guidance below will help you to complete your application and understand the recruitment process.

You must apply for the position online.

Applications are managed through the [Victorian Government Careers website](#), but in most cases, you will be able to access this site directly from where the role is advertised. Where this is not the case applications can be made through our website at www.victorialawfoundation.org.au. The job reference number is **VG/VLF090**

Please note that in order to apply through the [Victorian Government Careers website](#) you will need to be registered for this service. When completing your registration, we only require you to complete the compulsory fields.

How do I apply?

Applications **must** include the following documents:

1. **Curriculum vitae** – details of relevant roles and achievements as well as your education and professional qualifications. Please provide dates.
2. **Covering letter** – A covering letter that summarises your interest in this post and includes your response to the [selection criteria](#) (please address the Core Skills).
3. **Referees** – we will not contact them before speaking with you.

When do applications close?

Applications are due on **Friday 24 May 2019**.

About the selection process

Once you have submitted your application you will receive an email acknowledging receipt. After the closing date, applications will be short listed for interviews. We plan to interview within two weeks of the closing date.

Applicants who are not shortlisted will be notified by email; due to limited resources we are unable to provide feedback on applications.

Shortlisted applicants will be notified by phone to arrange an interview.

Interviewees will be notified by phone or email of the outcome of the interview process.

Who do I contact for more information?

For information about the role, please contact
Prof Nigel Balmer, Research Director
contact@victorialawfoundation.org.au
Tel: 03 9604 8144

For information about applying, please contact
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