

Position Description

Senior Lawyer

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Location: | Collingwood, Victoria/hybrid arrangements |
| Reports to: | Gellung Warl General Counsel |
| Team: | Legal Team |
| Classification: | Level 5 |
| Salary Range: | From \$113,022 |
| Employment Type: | Full-time |
| Employment Status: | Ongoing |

About Gellung Warl

Gellung Warl - meaning 'tip of the spear' in Gunaikurnai language - is a First Peoples' representative and deliberative body, underpinned by Aboriginal Lore, Law and Cultural Authority.

Gellung Warl is established as a statutory corporation under the Treaty Act. It is made up of three arms that work together:

- the First Peoples' Assembly, the political decision-making arm
- Nginma Ngainga Wara, an independent government oversight and accountability arm and
- Nyerna Yoorrook Telkuna, an independent mechanism for ongoing truth-telling.

Gellung Warl is guided by the Ngarrakeetoong Martongakeeyt (Community Vision) and is answerable to Community through the Larbargirrar Gnuurtak Tulkuuk (Community Governance and Answerability Framework), which sets out how Gellung Warl engages with and is answerable to First Peoples in Victoria.

Gellung Warl's underlying purpose is to promote collective self-government, self-determination and empowerment of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians, including by:

- by representing First Peoples in Victoria and exercising decision making powers in relation to First Peoples in Victoria
- representing First Peoples in Statewide Treaty negotiations with the State, including undertaking ongoing Statewide Treaty negotiations, and supporting Traditional Owner treaty-making
- providing for ongoing truth-telling and healing
- advising the Parliament and the State government in relation to matters that affect First Peoples and holding the State government to account in relation to its commitments to, and the impact of its actions on, First Peoples.

Organisational & Legislative Context

Gellung Warl has been created through the Statewide Treaty between First Peoples in Victoria and the State of Victoria. It operates in a legal landscape where two systems of law exist side by side - Aboriginal Lore and Law, and the laws of the State. As a First Peoples representative body answerable to community Gellung Warl draws on Aboriginal Lore, Law and Cultural Authority for collective decision-making in a self-determined way. It must also comply with the Victorian and Commonwealth laws. The Statewide Treaty Act 2025 (Vic) establishing Gellung Warl as a statutory corporation sets out the powers and functions of Gellung Warl's three arms.

This position supports the operation of the First Peoples' Assembly. The position contributes to the delivery of Gellung Warl's functions, supporting Assembly Members to take up their roles.

The role must comply with Gellung Warl's internal rules and policies, cultural safety standards, and relevant Victorian legislation, including privacy, records management, occupational health and safety, equal opportunity, human rights, and child safety laws.

In performing its duties, the role is expected to engage respectfully and collaboratively with First Peoples, recognising the cultural authority of Traditional Owners. The role will help promote collective self-government, self-determination, and empowerment of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians and contribute to improved outcomes for Community.

Role Purpose

The purpose of this role is to provide high-quality legal advice and support across Gellung Warl's legal and governance matters to advance organisational priorities and Treaty outcomes. The role supports the organisation by advising on a broad range of legal issues, including Assembly business, governance, policy matters, Treaty negotiations and compliance with applicable laws and regulations, and by contributing practical, accurate and culturally informed legal analysis that assists informed decision-making.

This role requires the ability to navigate a complex and politically sensitive environment, ensuring legal advice, drafting and risk management activity uphold Gellung Warl's cultural authority, priorities and values while maintaining constructive relationships with colleagues, Traditional Owners, communities, stakeholders and relevant internal and external partners.

As part of the Legal & Risk Team, the Senior Lawyer provides practical and strategic support across legal advice, governance documentation, contract review, legal risk management and related legal operations, working closely with the Gellung Warl General Counsel and relevant internal stakeholders to ensure legal support is timely, accurate and aligned with organisational priorities. The role helps ensure Gellung Warl's legal work is delivered in support of broader organisational and Treaty objectives.

Key Accountabilities

Core:

- Ensure decisions and actions align with Gellung Warl's governance framework, operational requirements and statutory obligations.
- Engage respectfully with Traditional Owners and uphold cultural authority in all interactions.
- Provide high-quality legal advice and support to assist informed decision-making and effective delivery of organisational priorities.
- Work collaboratively across Gellung Warl to support legal, governance and compliance outcomes and alignment of legal work with organisational priorities.
- Maintain constructive working relationships with colleagues, stakeholders and community representatives to support effective legal and risk outcomes.

Specific:

- Develop sound legal advice for Gellung Warl, including Council and the CEO, and provide legal support as required.
- Prepare clear and concise briefings, memoranda, correspondence and instructions on a range of legal issues, including Assembly business, corporate governance, contract law, employment and OHS issues, privacy and data, Treaty and Indigenous law, complaints, and legislation and regulation applicable to Gellung Warl as a statutory corporation operating in a political environment.
- Draft, review and advise on governance documents, policies and contractual agreements.
- Advise on, and assist in managing, legal risk across the organisation.
- Provide legal advice and support in a culturally considerate manner to Assembly Members, staff and internal stakeholders.
- Support legal compliance across organisational operations by identifying relevant legal issues and helping develop practical responses.
- Assist with the induction, supervision and development of lawyers, secondees and interns.
- Undertake legal practice management and administrative tasks as required in a small team environment.
- Participate in professional development activities, organisational networks and Continuing Professional Development requirements.
- Promote and support the achievement of Gellung Warl's core values and contribute positively to its reputation through high-quality legal practice.
- Undertake other duties consistent with the role's classification and purpose as directed.

Key Selection Criteria

Skills, Competencies & Knowledge

- Strong interpersonal and relationship-building skills, including the ability to collaborate effectively with internal and external stakeholders.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills and the ability to explain and express complex legal ideas in a clear, accessible form to suit the audience.
- Strong analytical skills, attention to detail and the ability to be agile and responsive in providing accurate and pragmatic legal advice as part of a fast-paced in-house team.
- Ability to provide sound legal advice across a range of legal issues relevant to Gellung Warl's work.
- Demonstrated skill and capacity to work effectively and with integrity in the context of a Victorian First Peoples' Representative Body.

Experience & Qualifications

- Degree in Law.
- Holds or is eligible to hold a practising certificate.
- 5+ years post-admission experience.
- Legal experience in one or more of the following areas is desirable: corporate governance, Indigenous legal issues, contracts, employment, privacy and data, regulation and compliance, or public law.
- Experience as in-house counsel is regarded favourably.
- Demonstrated knowledge of Aboriginal communities and organisations within Victoria.
- Demonstrated skill and capacity to work effectively and with integrity in the context of a Victorian First Peoples' Representative Body.
- Experience preparing legal briefings, memoranda, correspondence or governance documentation in a complex environment is highly desirable.
- Experience advising on legal risk, governance documents or contractual matters in an in-house, government, statutory or public-interest environment is highly desirable.
- As part of our commitment to child safety and in line with the Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic), all roles within Gellung Warl require a valid Working with Children Check (WWCC).
- Current full Victorian Driver Licence.

Personal Attributes

- Passionate about being part of a reform to benefit First Nations people in Victoria.
- Able to maintain professionalism at all times to achieve strategic objectives and outcomes.
- Able to perform under pressure and continue to adhere to organisational policies and values.
- Able to show empathy and respect towards colleagues and Assembly stakeholders.

Behavioural Responsibilities

- **Ethical Values & Compliance with Policies:** Upholds the standards of Respect, Accountability, Honesty, Equality, Legal Compliance, and Conflict of Interest, as found in Gellung Warl's Standards of Conduct Policy, and adheres to all other Gellung Warl policies.
- **Team Focus:** Recognises and respects the strengths of others within the team, listens and responds to feedback from managers and colleagues, and understands personal impact upon team goals.
- **Personal & Professional Development:** Actively seeks opportunities for personal and professional growth through ongoing learning and development.
- **Leads with Conviction:** Considers Gellung Warl's values when making decisions within the scope of the role, and presents a mature, balanced and constructive approach in supporting Assembly Members, regional priorities and organisational outcomes.
- **Employee Performance Management:** Conducts regular performance reviews, acknowledges and rewards high-performing staff, implements development plans for employee growth, and manages disciplinary matters in compliance with organisational and legal standards.

Other Relevant Information

Gellung Warl employees need to disclose any pre-existing illness or injury that they know about which could be reasonably foreseen to be affected by the described work duties. Pursuant to section 41 of the *Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013 (Vic)*, failure to disclose such a condition will mean that if employed, you will not be paid compensation for that condition.

Gellung Warl requires declarations and personal information relevant to your employment. The collection and handling of this information will be consistent with the requirements of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)*.

Gellung Warl is committed to creating a workplace of inclusion and diversity. When it comes to our people, we:

- are committed to advancing First Peoples' employment by fostering a culturally safe workplace and supporting the recruitment, retention, and development of First Peoples.
- focus on ability, not disability, and will make reasonable adjustments wherever requested.
- welcome individuals who weren't born in Australia, speak English as a second language, and practice different faiths. We also respect and welcome people who express their gender, sex, and sexuality in different ways
- consider that people with more life experience have a lot of wisdom to offer.

Gellung Warl employees must uphold Gellung Warl's commitment to inclusion and diversity by role modelling inclusive and respectful behaviours, in line with Gellung Warl's values, capabilities and policies.

Gellung Warl is a Child Safe organisation committed to the health, wellbeing and safety of children and young people. This commitment is taken seriously, and all employees are expected to maintain a valid Working with Children Check, and be cognisant of, and act consistently with, Gellung Warl's expectations about child safe principles and behaviours.

Gellung Warl requires all successful applicants to undertake a National Police Check. Employment will be conditional upon a satisfactory outcome.

As per the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)*, Gellung Warl employees must take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and others and not put others at risk by any act or omission. Employees must cooperate with Gellung Warl about any action taken to meet OHS obligations, this includes following safe work practices and reporting incidents and hazards. Employees must not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything at the workplace to support health, safety, and welfare.