

Recruitment Pack

Research Director

Full-time or Part-time (0.9 FTE)



Supporting better justice through research, education and grants

Diversity and inclusion

We encourage people from all backgrounds, abilities, and identities to apply for our vacancies. The VLF is committed to a workforce that represents many different cultures, backgrounds and viewpoints. The more diversity we have in our team, the more perspectives we have, and the more bright ideas we can share and develop. We strive to foster a professional and inclusive environment where everyone is respected, valued and feels safe.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are encouraged to apply.

The VLF will employ appropriate, effective and flexible strategies to improve opportunities, and will make reasonable adjustments to policies, practices and requirements where necessary to provide equal opportunity.

We understand that balance between work and other parts of our lives is important, and we support flexible work across all our roles.

If you require support in applying for this role, please contact the Victoria Law Foundation on 9604 8123 or email hr@victorialawfoundation.org.au

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1 The Victoria Law Foundation

The Victoria Law Foundation (**VLF**) was established in 1967 and is a statutory entity under the [Victoria Law Foundation Act 2009](#) (VLF Act).

VLF is led by the Executive Director, Dr Rebekah Farrell, and a Board representing the diversity of the justice sector, led by The Honourable Justice Greg Garde AO RFD.

We are a small team of 28 staff, with expertise across research, education and events, grant making, business services, and engagement and communications. Our work supports the justice sector to better understand and engage with the communities it serves and builds community understanding of and confidence in the legal system, particularly in civil law. Our work is evidence-informed and connected across our different functions, with staff encouraged to share ideas and work collaboratively to achieve the greatest impact.

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 just over \$4 million, it is essential that VLF makes the most of our resources to deliver effective and targeted programs.

2 About our Research function

Our research focus is described in the *Victoria Law Foundation Act 2009* as investigating the *legal and related needs of Victorians through research on the justice system, especially in matters relating to access to justice, legal services and civil justice*. We recognise access to justice as a core element of a functioning democracy.

VLF's research examines both community experience of the law and the operation of the institutions and services that make up the civil justice system. Our work focuses particularly on legal need, legal capability and the factors that contribute to fair and just outcomes.

A major foundation of this work is the Public Understanding of Law Survey (PULS), a significant primary research project providing new insights into legal need and legal capability in Victoria. Alongside PULS, VLF uses administrative data and independent research to better understand how the justice system operates, where barriers arise and what approaches may contribute to better outcomes.

Our research is intended to provide a strong evidence base for policy, practice and service delivery, and to contribute to collaboration and knowledge sharing across the justice, community and research sectors.

Our research program has included four interconnected areas of work, providing a strong foundation for the next phase of VLF's research.

Mapping justice <i>Examining administrative data in the Victorian civil justice system</i>	Map the availability and content of institutional data across a broad range of civil justice bodies, including courts, tribunals and the legal assistance sector, so that we can understand how legal matters progress, see possible issues with legal processes and identify barriers to access to justice. Mapping Justice was completed in 2023–24 and continues to provide an important foundation for VLF's work with justice system data.	Click here
Surveying legal literacy <i>Understanding how people experience, understand and engage with the law</i>	Victoria-wide Public Understanding of Law Survey (PULS) to discover what Victorians know about their justice system, its institutions and the role they see it play in their lives.	Click here
Researching programs and activities <i>Understanding what works in responding to legal need</i>	Measure for Measure: Tailoring Everyday Justice explores effective and tailored justice solutions in Victoria. The project showcases examples of initiatives that address legal needs, emphasising solutions tailored to individuals and specific issues. This work will investigate responses to some of the gaps revealed in the PULS and identify the attributes of their success and the challenges they deal with.	Click here

Coordinating and sharing research	Build a network connecting the justice, community and academic sectors to enable knowledge sharing, encourage collaboration, extend the reach of our work and help us to learn from the experience of local and international experts.	Click here
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For more information regarding the **research function** [click here](#).



To access published **research reports** [click here](#).



History: VLF's dedicated civil justice research function was established in 2018 following changes to the Victoria Law Foundation Act 2009, arising from recommendations of the Victorian Government's Access to Justice Review. Since then, VLF has developed a substantial program of independent research focused on legal need, legal capability and the operation of the civil justice system.

3 About the role

Job title	Research Director
Location	Melbourne, Australia
Reports to	Executive Director
Direct reports	Principal Researcher Senior Researchers Research Programs Manager Data Analyst
Key relationships	Management team Strategic Communications team External stakeholders
Contract type	Full-time or 0.9 FTE
Salary range	Available upon request

This is a unique opportunity to lead the next phase of VLF’s highly regarded research program and make a significant contribution to improving access to civil justice in Victoria, while contributing to national and international thinking.

The Research Director will lead a highly skilled team and shape a program of rigorous, independent and applied research that strengthens understanding of legal need, legal capability and the operation of the civil justice system. Working closely with the Executive Director and leadership team, the Director will build strong partnerships across the justice, community, government and academic sectors and ensure VLF’s research is translated into knowledge that can inform policy, practice and service delivery.

VLF’s research function is highly regarded and well connected in Victoria, Australia and internationally. We engage with policymakers, researchers, the legal profession, community organisations and justice institutions to develop and share research and evidence that can contribute to fair, equitable and accessible justice.

VLF has delivered significant research, including the Public Understanding of Law Survey (PULS), a major study of legal need and legal capability in the Victorian community, and research examining the availability and use of administrative data across the justice sector.

The Research Director will bring significant research expertise and leadership experience in civil justice, access to justice or a closely related field. They will provide strategic leadership, direction and oversight of VLF’s Research function and play an important role in shaping its future direction.

Responsibilities

Strategic

- Provide strategic and intellectual leadership for VLF’s Research function.

- Shape and lead VLF's research agenda in collaboration with the Executive Director and aligned with VLF's strategic priorities.
- Identify emerging research priorities and opportunities relevant to access to justice, legal need and the operation of the civil justice system.
- Strengthen the translation and impact of VLF's research, ensuring evidence is accessible and useful to policy, practice and service delivery.
- Build strategic relationships and opportunities for collaboration across the justice, government, community and academic sectors.
- Work collaboratively as a member of the Leadership Team to ensure research contributes to and is connected with VLF's broader work.
- Ensure strong research governance, quality and integrity.

Operational

- Lead the delivery of VLF's research program, ensuring projects are well designed, effectively managed and delivered to a high standard.
- Set and maintain high standards of methodological rigour, research quality and integrity.
- Maintain knowledge of developments in research methods, access to justice and civil justice research.
- Build and maintain strong relationships with research partners and stakeholders across the justice, government, community and academic sectors.
- Oversee the preparation and communication of research findings for a range of audiences.
- Provide authoritative research advice and expertise within VLF and to the broader justice sector.
- Work collaboratively across VLF's Research, Education, Events, Grants and Strategic Communications activities.
- Effectively manage the Research budget and resources to deliver VLF's strategic and annual priorities.

Staff management

- Lead and manage the Research team, providing clear direction, expectations and support.
- Build the capability, knowledge and confidence of team members through active coaching, feedback and professional development.
- Create a positive, inclusive and high-performing team culture based on collaboration, accountability and mutual respect.
- Support effective performance, workload management and prioritisation across the Research team.
- Foster collaboration and knowledge sharing within the Research team and across VLF.

The role will suit a person with:

- postgraduate qualifications in a relevant discipline, with a PhD highly desirable
- a strong research background and demonstrated research leadership
- experience leading, managing and developing high-performing teams
- a highly collaborative style and the ability to build strong relationships with a wide range of partners and stakeholders
- strong knowledge of the justice, legal or related public policy sector, or demonstrated ability to quickly develop a sophisticated understanding of the sector
- demonstrated ability to lead multiple projects and priorities at different stages of development
- exceptional critical thinking, analytical and problem-solving skills
- sound judgement, diplomacy and discretion
- strong organisational and project management skills
- strong interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence
- exceptional written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to communicate complex research effectively to diverse audiences
- a strong commitment to VLF's purpose and to improving access to justice.

Criteria for success

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

- established a clear strategic direction and priorities for VLF's Research function, aligned with VLF's strategic direction and Business Plan
- developed a three-year research plan that builds on VLF's existing research and positions the function for its next phase
- established an effective team structure, with clear roles, priorities and development opportunities
- built a strong, collaborative and high-performing Research team
- strengthened the translation and impact of VLF's research, including how research is communicated, shared and used
- developed strong relationships across the justice, government, community and academic sectors, in Victoria, nationally and internationally
- built strong and trusted working relationships with the Executive Director, Board, Research Subgroup, Leadership Team and staff across VLF
- contributed actively to VLF's broader organisational priorities and strategic direction

Benefits

As a member of the team, you'll have access to –

- hybrid working, with a mix of office-based and work-from-home arrangements
- flexible working hours
- additional paid leave over the Christmas/New Year period
- an annual reading week to support professional development
- free and confidential Employee Assistance Program services
- organisational and professional development opportunities
- 14 weeks' paid parental leave after 12 months' service
- salary packaging options.

4 Selection criteria

Core skills

Qualifications and experience

- postgraduate qualifications in a relevant discipline; a PhD is highly desirable
- a substantial record of high-quality research and demonstrated research leadership
- extensive expertise in quantitative and qualitative research methods
- demonstrated ability to design, lead and deliver significant research programs
- demonstrated ability to critically assess research methodology, analysis and findings
- experience translating complex research into accessible and useful insights for policy, practice and diverse audiences
- experience developing research partnerships and collaborations
- experience attracting research funding and/or developing funded research partnerships
- strong knowledge of the justice, legal or related public policy sector, or demonstrated ability to quickly develop a sophisticated understanding of a new sector and its operating environment
- knowledge of access to justice, legal need, legal capability or civil justice research is highly desirable.

Project management and communication

- demonstrated ability to build and sustain productive relationships with senior stakeholders and research partners, including effective consultation, collaboration and negotiation
- demonstrated ability to lead and oversee multiple complex projects, priorities and budgets simultaneously
- exceptional written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to communicate complex research clearly and persuasively to diverse audiences
- demonstrated ability to present research and evidence effectively to senior, specialist and non-specialist audiences
- sound judgement and the ability to operate effectively in a complex stakeholder environment
- strong alignment with VLF's purpose, values and commitment to improving access to justice.

Team management

- demonstrated experience leading, managing and developing a high-performing professional team
- demonstrated ability to provide clear direction, set expectations and effectively manage performance and competing priorities
- experience coaching and developing staff, including supporting professional growth and building capability
- demonstrated ability to foster a positive, inclusive and collaborative team culture
- strong interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence and sound judgement
- demonstrated ability to work effectively as a member of a senior leadership team and contribute to organisation-wide priorities.

5 Recruitment process

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

The recruitment process is being managed by our recruitment partner Revolve.

How do I apply?

Applications can be submitted via email to aaronpearson@revolvepartners.com.au

Applications **must** include the following documents:

- **Curriculum vitae** outlining relevant roles, achievements and professional qualifications, including dates.
- **Covering letter** outlining your interest in the position and your suitability for the role.
- **Response to the selection criteria**, addressing the Core Skills set out in this recruitment pack.

Applications close midnight Australian Eastern Standard time, Monday 2nd November 2026

About the selection process

Following the closing date, applications will be shortlisted for interview. Shortlisted applicants will be contacted by Revolve Partners to arrange an interview.

The selection process will involve **two stages of panel interviews**.

Applicants who are not shortlisted will be notified of the outcome of their application by email.

Who do I contact for more information?

For information about the role or selection process, please email Aaron Pearson on aaronpearson@revolvepartners.com.au