

Trust for Nature

Position Description



Position:	Lawyer: Conservation and Land justice
Program:	Neds Corner Transition Project
Location:	Melbourne Office with frequent travel to Neds Corner Station
Employment status:	Part time or Full time or position (0.6 to 1.0 EFT), 24 month fixed term contract
Remuneration:	TFN Grade 5.1 plus 10.5% superannuation.
Reports to:	Chief Operating Officer

Introduction

Trust for Nature is a not-for-profit organisation that works to protect native plants and wildlife in cooperation with private landowners. The Trust was established in 1972 to provide a way for people to donate money or land to protect native vegetation that is found on private properties across the State. We have since evolved into one of Victoria's primary private land conservation organisations, with several tools to help people protect biodiversity on their land.

Our Mission

We work collaboratively to protect nature on private land forever.

Background: Ned's Corner Transition Project

Trust for Nature acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Neds Corner Station, the First Peoples of the Millewa-Mallee.

Neds Corner Station is a 30,000 ha conservation reserve in the far north-west of Victoria, bordering Murray-Sunset National Park and the Murray River, forming an important cultural landscape on Ngintait Country. Ngintait Traditional Owners lived on and managed the land that includes Neds Corner for many thousands of years. Following colonisation and dispossession of the land from its traditional custodians, the property was hit hard by sheep and cattle grazing, and cropping.

Trust for Nature purchased the property in 2002 and under its management, in collaboration with Traditional Owners, volunteers, donors and other supporters, the landscape of Neds Corner Station has been transformed—its significant cultural sites are being protected and its native vegetation restored.

In February 2022 the Trust for Nature Board made a commitment that Trust for Nature would work towards a two year target timeline to facilitate a transfer of ownership of Neds Corner Station to the First People of the Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation (FPMMAC). This decision represents a major contribution to self-determination for Aboriginal Victorians, and the largest transfer of private land in Victoria to Traditional Owners.

Overall Position Context

The Lawyer: Conservation and Land Justice, supported by external legal advice and input, is responsible for progressing and finalizing key legal and related matters needed to facilitate a transfer of Neds Corner to FPMMAC including:

- Input to the development and co-design of an appropriate permanent protection instrument that would bind any alternative owner and protect the conservation and cultural values of Neds Corner in perpetuity
- Ensuring that the transfer satisfies TFN's statutory, charitable and contractual obligations
- Ensuring consistency with native title rights and any settlement process being pursued by Traditional Owners

- Obtaining Commonwealth approval (as per a funding agreement with TFN)

Reporting to the Chief Operating Officer and working closely with the Senior Biodiversity and Cultural Heritage Manager of the Neds Corner Transition Project, the position will also work in close collaboration with internal and external stakeholders including external legal advisors, the TFN Board of Trustees, FPMMAC, senior TFN Management and the TFN Northwest project team to help deliver the project to key timeframes.

Key Relationships

- Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Statewide Operations Manager, Conservation Science Advisor
- Senior Biodiversity and Cultural Heritage Manager
- External legal advisors
- First People of the Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation (FPMMAC)
- TFN North West region team
- Safe Havens Project team
- TFN legal counsel
- TFN Board and Trustees

Key Responsibilities

- Provide expert guidance on navigating complex land transfer matters, including legal matters
- Identify any further matters that need to be resolved as negotiations progress.
- Advising on project legal risks, land justice issues and property transfer processes
- Briefing, instructing and liaising with external legal firms/advisors
- Establish and maintain strong relationships with stakeholders including FPMMAC
- Providing appropriate governance and legal oversight in accordance with TFN's statutory, charitable and contractual obligations and using the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Trust for Nature and FPMMAC and a framework.
- Provide input into TFN's delivery of the Safe Havens Project at Neds Corner where it relates to the broader relationship with FPMMAC under the MOU.
- Input into external communications regarding this project including identifying legal and reputational risks.

Knowledge and Experience

- Ideally, possesses or is eligible to obtain a Victorian Legal Practicing Certificate that is not subject to supervised practice requirements
- Experience in independent management of complex or sensitive legal matters
- Experience in briefing, instructing and liaising with external legal firms and advisors
- Experience working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations
- Knowledge and practical experience in land transfer and property law preferred
- Experience with the environmental or nature conservation sector will be highly advantageous
- Broad experience in other areas of practice including public sector obligations, not for profit organisations, corporate governance, trust and contract law is desirable
- Experience outside a law firm environment advantageous

Key Selection Criteria

- Currently admitted or eligible for admission to practice law in Australia, with post-graduation legal experience of at least 4+ years
- Experience working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations, including knowledge of land justice issues and property transfer processes
- High level interpersonal and communication skills including demonstrated ability to communicate with a diverse range of stakeholders, and to negotiate innovative and appropriate solutions to complex issues
- Demonstrated ability to both to work independently at a senior level in a highly organised manner, and to take a collaborative approach to working in a small team environment within specific business plan and budget parameters

Trust for Nature Values

Our values underpin everything we do. How we deliver our work is as important as the outcomes we achieve for the Victorian Community. Our values are the foundation of our culture and guide how we work together, with our stakeholders, partners and the community.

The Trust's values form the acronym **CREST** – **C**ollaboration, **R**espect, **E**fficiency, **S**upport and **T**rust.

Specific requirements for all positions at Trust for Nature

- A National Police Check is required to be conducted as part of the selection process
- A current Driver's Licence is valuable for travel within Victoria but not compulsory

Health and Safety requirements

TfN is committed to protecting the safety and wellbeing of its people and ensuring safety is integral to how do our work. In realising this commitment Trust for Nature complies with all relevant health and safety laws including the Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) Act 2004 (with its associated regulations and codes).

Join a Workplace Based on Fair Employment

The Trust offers fair employment and career opportunities where possible. We aim to attract a diverse pool of applicants and focus on the genuine and essential requirements of the job and being consistent and fair in our treatment of applicants.

Balancing your Life

We understand that life balance is an important part of our employees' lives. Wherever possible the Trust offers a range of flexible arrangements to enable you to balance your work with other commitments and activities including family, health, study, carer responsibilities, hobbies and life/career aspirations. We provide various options such as flexible start and finish times, working part time, job sharing, working from home, and paid leave provisions that can be negotiated with your manager to help balance your personal commitments with the demands of the role.

Equal Opportunity Employer

The Trust is an equal opportunity employer and welcomes applicants from a diverse range of backgrounds. It is a policy of the Trust to provide reasonable adjustments for persons with a disability. If you need assistance or

adjustments to fully participate in the application or interview process, please use the contact listed in the role advertisement.

Privacy Notification

The Trust for Nature affirms that the collection and handling of applications and personal information will be consistent with the requirements of the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014.

Other relevant information

- The terms and conditions of employment are similar to those applying in the Victorian Public Service and will be governed by the enterprise agreement applying to Trust for Nature employees;
- The position will require regular travel to and around Neds Corner, and a current Driver's Licence is valuable but not compulsory;
- The position is based at Level 5/379 Collins Street, Melbourne
- The Trust promotes a positive work environment, is an equal opportunity employer, values diversity in its staff and encourages learning and development;

The position description may need to be amended occasionally due to variations in responsibilities and organisational requirements. Changes to the position description will be consistent with the purpose for which the position was established.