

POSITION DESCRIPTION –REGIONAL SUPPORT TENANCY LAWYER

Who we are

Tenants Victoria is the specialist tenancy law community legal centre in Victoria. We provide legal assistance to tenants and advocate for reform to residential tenancy law and practice. Through our education and training programs we support other community agencies to build capability to assist their clients.

We provide a tenancy law advice line, email advice, negotiation assistance, representation and advocacy. We also provide a rooming house outreach service which visits residents of rooming houses, and provides them with practical assistance, information and referrals. Many of these residents have other complex needs in addition to their precarious housing. They are the people least likely to access mainstream advice services.

Our office is based in Fitzroy, Melbourne. However due to COVID-19 restrictions, much of our work is currently done from home.

Position details

Job title	Regional Support Tenancy Lawyer (12 month contract)
Purpose	To provide efficient and effective tenancy legal assistance in complex tenancy law matters for tenants living in regional, rural and remote (RRR) areas, including those impacted by the 2019-20 bushfire disasters. This includes through the establishment and maintenance of partnerships and networks with RRR community services.
Scope	<p>The Regional Support Tenancy Lawyer is a new role that will be responsible for providing legal assistance to RRR tenants experiencing disadvantage through accessible legal outreach services delivered in partnership with RRR community support services whose clients have high tenancy legal need. The role has a particular emphasis on assisting tenants impacted by the 2019-20 bushfire disasters, including through the supported and appropriate referral of primary producers and small businesses from bushfire affected areas.</p> <p>The Regional Support Tenancy Lawyer will provide legal advice and referral, and casework assistance through these outreach services, as well as advocacy and some court representation as required.</p> <p>The Regional Support Tenancy Lawyer will also raise awareness of tenancy legal issues through community legal education and training for community</p>

	workers, as well as through supporting relevant law reform, policy and community development activities of Tenants Victoria.
Contract term	12 months – 1.0 FTE (five days/week), 7.5 hours/day <i>Part-time and flexible work conditions will be considered</i>
Reports to	Principal Lawyer / Director of Legal Services
Direct reports	0
Key responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing high quality, appropriate and timely tenancy law advice, referral, advocacy and casework assistance to RRR tenants including those from bushfire affected areas, including small businesses and primary producers. • Participate in the roster of advice services including triage, phone, in-person, e-mail services and other programs as and when required. • Provide representation and advocacy services to clients, generally before the Victoria Civil & Administrative Tribunal, either by personal appearance or by briefing Counsel. • Properly maintain advice notes, casework files and service data in accordance with Tenants Victoria policies, procedures, service guidelines and other requirements. • Provision of legal advice to community workers as required. • Developing and delivering community legal education sessions to community workers, as required. • Working collaboratively with other Tenants Victoria staff on law reform, policy and community development activities. This includes the identification of test cases, law reform and/or policy issues that may advance access to justice for the target client group. • Liaising with other Tenants Victoria staff, and other community workers, with respect to cross referrals of clients and collaborative casework. • Participation in relevant reference/ advisory groups or networks.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafting reports on casework activity for the board, funders and other entities as directed (including collating and analysing statistics). • Achieve key performance activity levels and goals within the limits set from time to time by Tenants Victoria. • Perform other duties as directed by the role's line manager or Director of Legal Services.
Skills, knowledge & attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and maintain thorough and current knowledge of tenancy law, social housing policies and procedures and other relevant legislation. • Behave at all times in a manner consistent with our purpose, values, and policies and procedures. • Demonstrate strong client engagement skills and ability to handle challenging situations with sensitivity and tact. • Develop and maintain knowledge of best practice regarding trauma informed and culturally safe service delivery. • Ability to work at times with minimal supervision but to consistently consult and report appropriately. • Demonstrate a flexible and collaborative approach to working with other staff and external stakeholders. • Demonstrate capacity to provide creative solutions to improve effectiveness of service delivery for clients. • Proactively manage workload and self-care. • A commitment to social justice.
General duties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to the purpose and values of Tenants Victoria. • Work cooperatively with all staff members to advance Tenants Victoria and strengthen the service delivery model. • Assist with continuous improvement of Tenants Victoria. • Participate effectively in Tenants Victoria planning initiatives, policy & procedure development, and strategic projects as required.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and strengthen networks, engage the support and involvement of a range of individuals and organisations. • Participate in meetings (internal and external) as required.
Special requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lawyers must be legally qualified and hold (or be able to hold) a practising certificate under the <i>Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2014</i>. • Lawyers must undertake a Police Check and Working with Children Check prior to employment. • Current drivers licence and access to a vehicle that can be used to drive to outreach locations.
Key Selection Criteria – Mandatory Skills and Experience	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At least 2 years' post admission experience, with proven experience in the conduct of legal casework from commencement to conclusion. 2. Good understanding of legal and non-legal issues arising for tenants living in RRR areas, including those impacted by bushfires. 3. Demonstrated capacity to work with clients who have complex needs, are vulnerable and who may have experienced trauma. 4. Ability to work with minimal supervision, manage competing demands and provide a consistent level of service at times with little support. 5. Demonstrated ability to communicate effectively (both oral and written) with clients with complex needs and key stakeholders including welfare service providers, in providing legal services and legal education programs in non-conventional settings. 6. High level oral communication and listening skills. 7. Excellent written communication skills, commensurate with high quality legal work and ability to represent clients in courts, tribunals and dispute resolution processes. 8. Demonstrated high level interpersonal, liaison, and teamwork skills. 9. Proven experience in balancing a high volume caseload coupled with strong administrative, organisational and IT skills. 10. Demonstrated commitment to social justice and the rights of tenants.

Key Selection Criteria – Desirable Skills and Experience	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowledge of Victorian tenancy law and experience conducting tenancy law litigation. 2. Experience as a solicitor advocate at VCAT or the Magistrates' Court in civil matters (with a preference for experience in tenancy law matters). 3. A good understanding of the broader social and legal issues that impact on people living in RRR areas. 4. A commitment to taking a multi-disciplinary approach to legal casework and working in a community development framework. 5. Knowledge of relevant community agencies, organisations and services, as well as good networking skills. 6. Familiarity with Community Legal Centres (CLCs) and their functions.
Salary and conditions	<p>In accordance with the <i>Tenants Union of Victoria Enterprise Agreement 2012</i>, applicable legislation, and the requirements contained in the job description, each of which forms part of this contract. Salary equivalent to Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services (SCHADS) Award Level 5 Pay Point 1.</p> <p>Generous salary packaging available, together with annual leave loading, bonus leave over Christmas to New Years, and the option for flexible work arrangements.</p>

This position description outlines the current responsibilities of the position. These will be reviewed regularly with the staff member and are subject to change according to the needs and priorities of Tenancy Victoria.