HOUSING FOR THE AGED ACTION GROUP INC.

OLDER PERSONS HOUSING RIGHTS ADVOCATE

POSITION: Older Persons Housing Rights (OPHRS) Advocate

CLASSIFICATION: HAAG Enterprise agreement. Social and community services employee level 5 (pay point 3) of the SCHADS Award. Attractive salary packaging available.

TERMS: 0.6 – 0.8 FTE (negotiable) ongoing

FUNDING: Consumer Affairs Victoria

Housing for the Aged Action Group (HAAG) operates the Older Persons Housing Rights Service (OPHRS), an integrated statewide housing rights service for older Victorians across private rental, social housing, retirement housing and residential parks. OPHRS works with older renters and residents of retirement villages, residential parks and other housing types.

The service also provides information, advice and referral to community-sector workers supporting older people with housing issues. The role contributes to accessible service delivery, including telephone and in-person assistance, home visits and outreach where appropriate.

HAAG AIMS

Housing for the Aged Action Group exists to work towards the alleviation of housing related poverty for older Australians and to provide housing support services to disadvantaged older Victorians.

POSITION GOAL:

The OPHRS Advocate provides client-centred information, advice, referral, casework and non-legal advocacy as part of an integrated multidisciplinary OPHRS team. The position aims to:

a) Protect older Victorians' housing rights and help resolve housing issues across different housing types.
b) Prevent avoidable housing loss or homelessness through early intervention and support to sustain housing.
c) Provide assistance ranging from information and referral to negotiation, non-legal advocacy and support with dispute-resolution processes, with more intensive assistance where clients experience disadvantage, housing insecurity, family violence or other complex circumstances.

d) Support coordinated, client-centred responses alongside other non-legal advocates and specialist lawyers.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Program management:

- Assess and triage enquiries, identifying housing issues, client goals, risks and support needs to inform an appropriate response.
- Provide information, advice and referral, and non-legal advocacy and casework for older people across private rental, social housing, retirement housing and residential parks
- Work collaboratively with other non-legal advocates, specialist lawyers, other HAAG programs and community-service partners to support coordinated, client-centred responses.
- Identify when specialist legal expertise is required; coordinate referrals and warm handovers to the appropriate specialist lawyer, contributing relevant non-legal and client-context information with appropriate consent.
- Maintain knowledge of housing rights, relevant housing sectors and community services to provide accurate assistance within the non-legal scope of the role.

Client management:

- Provide culturally safe, trauma-informed and accessible assistance, adapting communication and support to older people's needs and circumstances.
- Negotiate with housing providers and other relevant parties, and support clients with dispute-resolution and tribunal processes, including the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal. Refer matters requiring legal advice or legal representation to the appropriate specialist lawyer.
- Conduct outreach, home visits and accessible telephone and in-person assistance where appropriate; connect clients with housing, aged care, family violence and other community services according to their need.
- Maintain appropriate service standards in all client and partner interactions, including confidentiality, consent, information quality, client dignity and cultural safety.

Advocacy

- Identify trends and systemic housing rights issues from casework with the OPHRS team and other HAAG staff, and contribute to systemic advocacy and service improvement.
- Contribute relevant housing rights information to HAAG publications, website content, newsletters and social media.

Administration:

- Maintain accurate, timely client file notes and records, documenting assessments, assistance, referrals and outcomes.

Housing for the Aged Action Group (HAAG) is committed to the principles of social justice and aim to ensure every individual is treated with dignity and respect regardless of their age, cultural background, ability, ethnicity, gender identity, intersex variation, sexual orientation or religious beliefs.

- Collect service data and contribute to accurate internal and external reporting.

Accountability

- Attend and contribute to regular HAAG staff meetings.
- Participate in OPHRS team meetings and supervision as required.
- Share relevant casework and client-context information appropriately with colleagues and partners to support continuity and coordinated responses, while maintaining confidentiality and consent.

SUPPORT PROVIDED

The advocate works collaboratively within the integrated multidisciplinary OPHRS team, including other non-legal advocates and specialist lawyers. Peer support includes casework discussion. HAAG provides an Employee Assistance Program, external group supervision and flexible work arrangements. Professional development opportunities include training delivered by Tenants Victoria.

SELECTION CRITERIA

- An understanding of housing rights across private rental, social housing, retirement housing and residential parks, or the ability to rapidly develop this knowledge and apply it within a non-legal advocacy role.
- Strong communication and negotiation skills, with the ability to document casework clearly and maintain accurate, confidential client records.
- Demonstrated capability in advocacy and complex casework, including relevant experience in the community sector.
- Initiative and the ability to work independently and under supervision, recognising the limits of the role and seeking specialist assistance when required.
- Demonstrated ability to collaborate in a multidisciplinary team and with community-service partners in a sometimes demanding work environment.
- Demonstrated capability in culturally safe, trauma-informed and accessible practice with diverse communities, including older people, LGBTQIA+ people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Demonstrated ability to work sensitively and effectively with older people and people experiencing disadvantage, housing insecurity, family violence or other complex circumstances.
- A commitment to social justice and protecting older people's housing rights.
- An ability to work appropriately alongside legal practitioners while maintaining a clearly non-legal role, recognising matters requiring legal expertise and supporting referrals, warm handovers and coordinated client responses.

Desirable:



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- Current drivers licence.
- Tertiary degree or related qualifications.
- Experience in housing rights advocacy roles and/or working in a member-based organisation.
- Understanding of the specific and diverse needs of older people.

For more information: Shane McGrath shane.mcgrath@oldertenants.org.au

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