

TENANTS ADVICE SERVICE (INC).

Policy and Research Officer

Tenants Advice Service (TAS) is an incorporated not-for-profit community legal centre specialising in residential tenancy advice, information, education and training, and policy and law reform services. TAS directs its services both to residential tenants, particularly those who are disadvantaged, and to agencies that work with tenants. TAS also works with government agencies to promote policy and law reform.

TAS requires a suitably qualified person with a demonstrated track record in a similar role, to undertake research, prepare discussion papers and submissions, and represent the interests of tenants on a variety of committees relevant to policy and law reform activities.

Applicants are advised to respond to the selection criteria as listed in the application pack which is available on the website at www.taswa.org or by calling (08) 9221 9499. Applications that have not addressed the selection criteria will be ruled ineligible. Late applications will not be considered.

Written applications will be received up to 12pm Monday 8 March 2010 and should be addressed to:

Executive Officer
Tenants Advice Service
P.O. Box 6057
EAST PERTH WA 6892

TENANTS ADVICE SERVICE (INC).

POSITION DESCRIPTION: POLICY & RESEARCH OFFICER

February 2010

POSITION: POLICY AND RESEARCH OFFICER

EMPLOYMENT FTE: Part-time (22.5 hrs per week)

EMPLOYMENT: Employment conditions in accordance with the Tenants Advice Service Enterprise Bargaining Agreement.

SALARY: Social and Community Services Award – Level 6 Salary packaging payable in accordance with the Tenants Advice Service Flexible Remuneration Package.

RESPONSIBILITY: The Policy and Research Officer is responsible to the Executive Officer of TAS, and works in collaboration with the Policy Team (Executive Officer, Solicitor, Tenant Advocate and Community Legal Education Coordinator)

SUPERVISION: The Executive Officer supervises this position.

GENERAL OUTLINE OF POSITION: In collaboration with the Policy Team, identifies tenancy research, policy and law reform issues and develops and implements strategies to affect change.

COMMON DUTIES: (10%)

1. Communicate with other staff in relation to tenancy policy and law reform.
2. Work within TAS policy and procedures.
3. Develop and maintain relevant networks and links with relevant organisations.
4. Develop, implement and maintain a work plan.
5. Develop, maintain and store records.
6. Undertake own word processing.
7. Attend staff, strategic, business and organizational meetings.
8. Attend network and other meetings as appropriate.
9. Identify potential media opportunities to support TAS outcomes.

10. Prepare articles for TAS and other publications as appropriate.
11. Assist with the identification of new publications as appropriate.
12. Participate in supervision opportunities as appropriate.
13. Undertake suitable training opportunities.
14. To work within the Australian Training Quality Framework where applicable
15. Other duties as required.

DUTIES:

1. Policy/Law Reform/Research (55%)

In collaboration with the Policy Team:

- 1.1 Work with Policy Team in identifying tenancy research, policy and law reform issues and in developing and undertaking strategies to affect such reform.
- 1.2 Research policies and issues relevant to tenants and the Service.
- 1.3 Research, develop, draft and prepare reports, discussion papers, and submissions, in consultation with the Policy Team
- 1.4 Distribute relevant information to stakeholders.

2. Representation (30%)

In collaboration with the Policy Team:

- 2.1 Develop and maintain TAS' role as a representative of the non-government housing sector on relevant policy and law reform issues.
- 2.2 Represent TAS' views on relevant tenancy and policy matters as required.
- 2.3 Represent TAS on relevant external committees/bodies.
- 2.4 Act as a voice for tenants in negotiations with government and non-government groups with respect to tenancy and housing issues, relevant legislation, and access to justice issues.
- 2.5 Develop and maintain networks and links with relevant organisations.
- 2.6 Undertake and participate in community consultations.

3. Other Duties (5%)

- 3.1 Supervision of students, volunteers and/or participation in project work, as appropriate.

NB: The figures in brackets provide a proportionate indication of the extent to which duties in a particular work area are to be undertaken if measured over an extended time period. These are intended as guides only. It is expected that the proportions will alter in response to needs and other relevant considerations.

SELECTION CRITERIA:

Essential

- Tertiary qualification in a relevant discipline and/or relevant experience.
- Ability to read, analyse and interpret legal and policy documentation.
- Highly developed research and written communication skills, with an emphasis on developing discussion papers, submissions, reports and other documents relevant to policy and law reform at a standard that is suitable for public release.
- Demonstrated negotiation skills and the ability to develop and maintain positive working relationships with stakeholders.
- Demonstrated commitment to social justice and human rights and demonstrated ability to work within a community development framework.
- Demonstrated well-developed interpersonal skills including the ability to communicate and liaise with people at various levels within the community such as people from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds and government and community organisations.
- Good organisational skills, including the ability to manage a varied and sometimes heavy workload.
- Computer and work processing skills (Microsoft Office)

Desirable

- Experience in working in a small multidisciplinary team environment.
- Knowledge and understanding of policies and legislation relevant to residential tenants, including the Residential Tenancies Act 1987.

Position Requirements

Occasional intra and interstate travel may be necessary.

Effective as at February 2010

Tenants Advice Service (Inc.)

Background Information

Background to Tenants Advice Service

Tenants Advice Service (TAS) is an independent, incorporated body managed by a community based management committee elected from TAS' membership of more than 100 organisations and individuals. TAS has been operating for over 30 years and was the first community legal centre established in Western Australia.

TAS' Vision:

A society where the rights of tenants are respected protected and encouraged.

TAS' Values:

TAS is acting within a human rights and community development framework.

TAS' Mission:

TAS is a community based non-government organisation, providing quality information and education for the benefits of tenants.

TAS has three key functions:

- As a specialist community legal centre through funds from the Commonwealth Community Legal Centre Program. TAS provides information, advice, assistance and education to residential tenants in Western Australia; particularly those disadvantaged in the rental market. TAS is the only such specialist tenancy service in Western Australia.
- As a central resource unit and state-wide telephone advice service for the WA Tenancy Network. The network is funded through a Rental Accommodation Fund grant which is administered by Department of Commerce (Consumer Protection division).
- TAS provides community legal education and training in relation to residential tenancy is part of the functions of the resource unit and CLC services.

TAS' objectives are:

- to provide timely, quality and accessible advice and information services on tenancy;
- to provide timely, quality and accessible community education and training services;
- to take a lead role in policy and law reform on tenancy issues;
- to operate responsibly, effectively and efficiently as a viable non-government organisation;
- to provide leadership in best practice service delivery, development, resourcing and support.

Services provided:

TAS provides many services in working towards the above objectives. These include:

- A statewide telephone advice service for residential tenants (currently 35 hours per week).
- Tenancy information sheets (web based).
- Advice to community agencies and others who assist tenants.
- Community education and training workshops to tenants and community workers throughout the State.
- The production and distribution of tenancy publications including: Tenants Rights Manual, Tenants and the Law in WA booklet and A Guide to Renting in Western Australia booklet produced in languages other than English, etc.
- A website, which provides information about TAS, information on residential tenancy, TAS publications and order forms and links to other relevant sites.
- Research and input into relevant reviews and inquiries affecting tenants. Submissions to the Residential Tenancy Act Review, Residential Tenancy Database review, Anti Social behaviour discussion paper and is a member of the Equal Opportunity Commission's Review Committee into the implementation of the "Finding a Place" Report.
- TAS also contributes articles to state and regional newspapers.
- Liaison with relevant industry bodies and other community agencies (such as Shelter WA, Department of Commerce [Consumer Protection Division], Department of Housing, WACOSS, the National Association of Tenant Organisations and Legal Aid WA).

- TAS also seeks to develop and operate effective, efficient and responsive administrative, organisational and management systems to enable the service to meet its objectives, provide quality services to tenants and meet funding body accountability requirements. The Administrator and Administrative Assistant are integral to this goal.

Staffing:

TAS currently employs:

3 Full time staff

Executive Officer, Senior Tenant Advocate, Community Legal Education Co-ordinator

11 Part-time staff

Solicitor (27.5hrs), Community Education Project Officer (15 hrs), Administrator (30 hrs), Administrative Assistant (casual), Publications Officer (21.5hrs), Policy Officer (casual), four part time Tenant Telephone Workers (total 35hrs per wk) and Office Cleaner (casual).

To obtain more information about TAS please visit the TAS website: www.taswa.org

Updated: February 2010