



## Position Description

# Senior Lawyer

**Aim:** To provide effective supervision of the Legal Service and high quality advice and advocacy to clients.

### Context:

The Tenants Victoria operates a community legal centre, the Tenants Victoria Legal Service (the Legal Service), as a discrete service within the broader organisation.

The purpose of the Legal Service is to provide legal advice and assistance to residential tenants under the Residential Tenancy Act. This generally includes any person who pays rent for their principal place of residence. Clients include private rental tenants, tenants in public and community housing and rooming house and caravan park residents.

The Legal Service currently employs twelve staff in a range of roles. A Principal Lawyer is employed as a supervising legal practitioner to take responsibility for the services delivered as required by the *Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2014*. The Senior Lawyers assist the Principal with providing direct technical supervision of the other advice and advocacy staff.

The Legal Service is required to operate in accordance with a range of statutory requirements, funding and service agreements and internal guidelines.

### Objectives:

- 1. Effective development and implementation of Legal Service policies and procedures that meet relevant professional standards and legal requirements;**
- 2. Effective implementation of procedures that ensure the appropriate legal support and supervision of all Legal Service staff;**
- 3. Effective delivery of tenancy advice and casework;**
- 4. Effective legal vetting to ensure accurate publications, training and policy advice produced by other areas of Tenants Victoria;**
- 5. Identification of systemic issues affecting residential tenants and Legal Service clients.**

### Duties:

To further the above objectives the key duties of the position include but are not limited to the following:

- Assist the Principal Lawyer with the overall supervision of the Legal Service including acting as the Principal Lawyer if required due to absence or vacancy.
- Maintain and apply a comprehensive working knowledge of the relevant legislation, social housing policies and procedures and approved Legal Service practice.
- Assisting with the monitoring and technical supervision of Legal Service staff including ensuring compliance with the requirements of the *Legal Service Practice Manual*
- Participate in the advice service as required and provide correct and appropriate advice to clients including organisational clients.
- Undertake advocacy and conduct casework on behalf of approved clients including complex matters and Supreme Court appeals as required.
- Maintain compliance with relevant professional standards including Professional Indemnity Insurance and legal practice requirements.
- Assisting with the continuous improvement of the Legal Service.
- Review and where possible improve the support and supervision processes for Legal Service staff.
- Participate in the delivery of community training programs as required.

- j Participate in vetting of publications and resources as required including induction training and training for legal and non – legal tenancy advocates across Victoria
- k Provide legal advice for policy development and legal submissions as required.
- l Identify areas of law requiring clarification and improvement consistent with our policy directions and target casework accordingly.
- m. Maintain legal resources including the legal services library, precedents, relevant cases and decisions.
- n. Participate and provide constructive feedback in the VCAT Residential Tenancies List Users Group and other relevant external forums as required, including other organisations operating in a similar field.
- o. Assist with the orientation, training and development of Legal Service staff.
- p Undertake other relevant duties as required by the CEO or Principal Lawyer

### **Special Requirements:**

1. Senior Lawyers must hold or be entitled to hold an **unrestricted** practising certificate under the *Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2014*.
2. Senior Lawyers may be delegated responsibilities as a “**nominated person**” under the National Association of Community Legal Centres Risk Management and CLC Practice Guide by the Principal Lawyer.
3. All Legal Service staff must undertake a Police Check and Working with Children Check prior to employment.

### **Corporate Responsibilities:**

All TUV staff are expected to behave at all times in a manner consistent with our:

- > Statement of Strategic Intent
- > Values and Style Statement
- > Quality Management System
- > Legal Service Practice Manual

Any breach of these responsibilities will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

**Accountability:** Senior Lawyers are accountable to the Principal Lawyer and the CEO.

Senior Lawyers are accountable for their individual performance and their contribution to the performance of the Legal Service overall.

### **Selection Criteria**

1. Demonstrated high-level of professional skill and legal knowledge relevant to the work of the TVLS. Preference given to applicants with at least 5 years’ post admission experience;
2. Demonstrated ability to address legal problems in a structured, coherent and efficient manner and to work within established time limits and deadlines;
3. Demonstrated experience with supervising legal staff including paralegals or volunteers;
4. Demonstrated ability to successfully manage client interactions;
5. Experience in dealing with clients from diverse backgrounds and clients with complex needs;
6. Experience with Court or Tribunal based advocacy;
7. Demonstrated ability to work appropriately within a team;
8. Effective computer skills particularly with Microsoft Office applications;
9. Commitment to social justice and tenants’ rights.