



Marrickville Legal Centre

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# JOB INFORMATION KIT

## Tenant Advocate

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## 1. About Marrickville Legal Centre

*Working with our communities to provide free and independent community legal services, fearlessly, to those who need it most.*

Marrickville Legal Centre is a community legal centre of more than 35 years standing, which provides free legal information, advice and casework services. The Centre also provides community legal education and pursues law and policy reform.

Marrickville Legal Centre's large geographical catchment area crosses 12 former Local Government Areas.<sup>1</sup> The Centre specialises in servicing culturally and linguistically diverse clients and targets young people, tenants and women in domestic violence situations. The Centre prioritises service delivery to indigenous people, people with a disability, people with a mental illness, older people, gay, lesbian and transgender people, economically disadvantaged people and homeless people.

Marrickville's Legal Centre operates four main services:

- **General Legal Service (GLS)**

The GLS provides advice and assistance for a wide variety of legal problems including victims compensation, complaints about police or government agencies, discrimination, debt, consumer complaints, family, minor criminal matter, motor vehicle accidents and employment.

- **Youth Legal Service (YLS)**

The YLS provides legal information, advice and assistance for young people up to 25 years of age as well as to youth workers and parents on behalf of young people in relation to a wide range of legal issues. The YLS also provides community legal education to young people, and those who work with young people. The YLS convenes the Youth Justice Coalition, a network of legal and non-legal youth justice agencies. This is a state-wide service.

- **Inner West Tenants' Advice and Advocacy Service (IWTAAS) & Northern Sydney Area Tenants Service (NSATS)**

The IWTAAS & NSATS provide information, advice and representation in the NSW Civil & Administrative Tribunal to residential tenants and boarding house residents. The tenancy services can help with a variety of issues, including repairs and maintenance, rent increases, termination and evictions, rental bond and negotiating with landlords and real estate agents.

- **Family and Domestic Violence Support Service**

The FDV Support Service provides casework assistance, support, information and referral to people experiencing family and domestic violence.

- **NSW Strata Collective Sales Advocacy Service**

The Strata Collective Sales Advocacy Service provides advice and advocacy to strata lot owners in relation to NSW strata collective sales legislation. This is a state-wide service.

Marrickville Legal Centre provides services from its offices based in Marrickville and Dulwich Hill, and conducts outreach services in Rockdale, Bankstown, Lakemba, Liverpool and Newtown.

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<sup>1</sup> The Local Government Areas are the former Councils of Ashfield, Auburn, Bankstown, Burwood, Canada Bay, Canterbury, Hurstville, Kogarah, Marrickville, Rockdale, Strathfield and Sutherland.

## **2. Guide for Job Applications**

The information contained in this document has been prepared to provide assistance in preparing applications for vacant positions within **Marrickville Legal Centre**.

Prior to completing your application, you should read each section to gain an appreciation of the selection process and the basis for selection of successful applicants.

### **2.1 Choosing the best person**

Appointment to positions at Marrickville Legal Centre is on the basis of merit. *'Merit'* is decided with reference to the nature of the duties of the position and the abilities, qualifications, experience, standard of work performance and personal qualities of an applicant, only as they are relevant to the position.

#### **Abilities**

This refers to skills and capacities based on knowledge, practice and aptitude, which are relevant to effective performance in the position e.g. communication skills, liaison skills, supervisory skills, program management skills, capacity to undertake research or to work in a team.

#### **Qualifications**

These may be in the form of specific educational requirements e.g. a certificate, diploma or degree or a particular trade or professional requirement e.g. membership of a professional association.

#### **Experience**

Relevant experience might be in a specific field e.g. personnel, information technology, or finance or it might be in a specific function such as supervision, research, policy implementation, or investigation.

#### **Standard of work performance**

This refers to the quality of the work performed or produced and/or the level of output relevant to the position e.g. speed and accuracy in certain positions, quality of written work, quantity of items produced quality of advice given, thoroughness or reliability. Referees' reports as well as the applicant's demonstration of standards achieved are relevant to the assessment made.

#### **Personal qualities**

These should be unambiguously demonstrated to be relevant to job performance and should be defined as particular and identifiable work behaviour.

The selection process is governed by Equal Opportunity Principles. Fair and open competition applies to every advertised position within Marrickville Legal Centre.

The selection criteria provide the basis for the selection process. During the selection process none of the selection criteria specified can be overlooked and no new criteria can be introduced.

## **3. Applying for the position**

You will need to apply in writing. Your job application determines whether you will get an interview. It is your opportunity to show the selection panel that you have the knowledge, skills, experience and ability to do the job.

You should take the following steps when preparing your application:-

- Read the selection criteria for the position you are applying for.
- Read the job advertisement and other job information material closely as it includes a description of the job, the job requirements and the selection criteria.

- Your application should include a response addressing *all* of the selection criteria. This should be separate to any resume or cover letter. **Each criterion should appear as a heading with your response below.** Be clear and concise, and show how your skills, qualifications, abilities and training are relevant. This is your opportunity to demonstrate how well you meet the selection criteria

**Applicants who do not individually address each of the selection criteria might not be called for an interview.**

#### **Attach your resume**

Attach to your application a brief resume with details of your skills, education and employment history. If you have gained skills or experience outside of work or overseas include them in your resume.

#### **Name two Referees**

Include the names and phone numbers of at least two referees who can comment on your work performance or provide personal references.

#### **Send your application**

Ensure that your application reaches the address specified in the advertisement by the stated closing date and time.

The selection panel can only accept late applications if the request for late application is granted prior to the position's advertised closing date. Late applications are not considered after the selection panel has met to select candidates for interview.

### **3.1 The Selection Process**

#### **The Selection Panel**

A Selection Panel of at least three people carries out selection of applicants. There are usually two internal representatives and one external representative on the Panel. The Panel is responsible for selecting the applicant who best satisfies the selection criteria.

#### **Consideration of written application**

The Panel will examine your written application to see how well you meet the selection criteria. Based on your written application, you may be selected to attend an interview.

#### **Interview**

If you are selected for interview, you will usually be given at least three (3) days notice. You may be asked to bring samples of your work to the interview.

If you have any special requirements (e.g. disabled parking, wheelchair access, sign language interpreter), tell the contact person so that appropriate arrangement can be made.

The Selection Panel will ask you questions related to the selection criteria.

Prior to interview, try to anticipate questions that may be asked by the Selection Panel. Generally, the Panel prepares its questions by analysing the job advertisement and position Description. You should also analyse the advertisement and position Description and think about questions you would ask to assess an applicant's claim for the position, if you were a Panel member.

If invited to interview, you may ask what material, if any, to bring to the interview. If you are unable to attend the interview at the appointment time, it may be possible to organise an alternative time, but this is subject to the availability of the Selection Panel members.

At the interview the Panel will be seeking to determine each candidate's relative strengths and weakness in relation to the particular job.

You will have the opportunity to ask questions, giving the chance to demonstrate your interest in and understanding of the position and its duties.

Below are some suggestions for your presentation and performance at the interview:

- Speak clearly, so that members of the Panel can hear without difficulty.
- If you already work in the organisation, don't assume that internal representatives of the panel will be fully aware of your background.
- Stress the relevance of your qualifications and experience to the position for which you are applying.
- Present the Panel with any appropriate papers concerning qualifications and relevant previous work, but do not overload the Panel with documentation.

### **Referees reports**

The view of referees may be obtained for applicants being given final consideration for appointment. Where this is done, the Convenor of the Selection Panel will contact the referees nominated by the candidate. The Convenor will ask similar and specific job related questions of each referee.

### **The Selection Panel's Decision**

The selection panel makes a decision based on information gained from your written application, interview, referee reports and any other methods of assessment, if used. If no applicant meets the minimum criteria specified in the selection criteria the Panel will recommend that the position be re-advertised.

## **3.2 What happens next?**

If you are selected for the job, Marrickville Legal Centre will contact you with a job offer, usually within 10 days of the interview. If you accept the job, the offer will be confirmed in writing. If your application is unsuccessful, you will be notified in writing usually within 14 days of the interview, after the successful candidate has accepted the offer.

Unsuccessful applicants may request a discussion with the Convener of the Selection Panel. This can help you understand the Panel's decision and to discuss ways that you can improve your application or interview performance when you next apply.

#### 4. POSITION DESCRIPTION

<b>Position Title:</b>	Tenant Advocate
<b>Salary Range:</b>	\$67,484.80 - \$86,463.76
<b>Position Status:</b>	Permanent, part-time (21 hours)
<b>Position Reports to:</b>	NSATS Co-ordinator and Managing Principal Solicitor
<b>Primary Responsibilities:</b>	Provide advice and advocacy to vulnerable renters and social housing tenants, including representation at the Consumer, Trader and Tenancy Tribunal.

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#### Role and Context of the Position

Marrickville Legal Centre (MLC) provides access to justice through the provision of legal services, law reform and community legal education. In particular, MLC assists people who are disadvantaged by their social and economic circumstances.

The primary aim of the tenancy service is to help vulnerable renters and social housing tenants to assert and advance their rights, assisting them to control and resolve their own disputes. The service also engages in law reform and policy work to address systemic disadvantage and provides legal education to community workers.

#### Delegated Authority

As per chart of delegations.

#### Supervision

As per Marrickville Legal Centre policy.

#### Annual Performance Appraisal

As per Marrickville Legal Centre policy.

#### Organisation Expectations

This section describes expectations that apply to all employees regardless of their role.

##### 1. Governance and Accountability

All employees will:

- a. Adhere to Marrickville Legal Centre Constitution, philosophy, policies and procedure
- b. Comply with relevant state and federal legislation, funding body service agreements, the National Association of Community Legal Centre's Risk Management Guide and industry standards
- c. Document work in line with required standards
- d. Undertake data collection
- e. Perform all reasonable duties requested by the Board or their delegate
- f. Attend supervision sessions

##### 2. Teamwork

All employees will:

- a. Attend staff, team and casework meetings when required and contribute to decision making
- b. Contribute to Marrickville Legal Centre planning relevant to own work, including implementation of the Strategic Plan.
- c. Contribute to a positive and cooperative work environment

- d. Follow through on commitments
- e. Contribute to housekeeping tasks
- f. Notice and discuss areas for process improvement
- g. Act to support volunteers, management and other staff members
- h. Perform own basic administrative tasks

### **3. Development**

All employees will:

- a. Participate in required training and ongoing professional education

### **4. Work Health and Safety**

All employees will:

- a. Understand the WHS Policy, and how they can participate and support the implementation of the WHS Policy

### **Position Expectations**

This section describes the expectations that apply to Tenant Advocates.

### **5. Casework**

The Tenant Advocate will:

- a. Conduct telephone and face-to-face advice and casework to vulnerable renters and social housing tenants, in line with casework guidelines
- b. Identify the advice and advocacy needs of clients in catchment area
- c. Provide referrals for clients to appropriate services
- d. Assist in the preparation of matters for the Consumer, Trader and Tenancy Tribunal including representation when required as per casework guidelines
- e. Develop and implement access and equity principles to ensure that the service is accessible to all clients
- f. Maintain and develop the casework resources of the service
- g. Ensure accurate record keeping of advice and collection of statistical data

### **6. Community Legal Education**

The Tenant Advocate will:

- a. Assist in designing the tenancy services community legal education strategy to meet the needs of clients in the catchment area
- b. Develop and maintain community legal education sessions and resources
- c. Deliver community legal education sessions to tenants, boarders and lodgers and community workers

### **7. Policy and Law Reform**

The Tenant Advocate will:

- a. Assist in developing proposals for law and policy reform on issues related to tenancy
- b. Advocate and develop strategies to promote law and policy reform

### **8. Liaison**

The Tenant Advocate will:

- a. Liaise with other tenancy services in NSW and the Tenants' Union of NSW to ensure accessible and equitable service delivery to tenants in the region and across NSW
- b. Network with other tenancy services and the Tenants' Union of NSW to improve the rights of tenants across NSW
- c. Liaise with government organisations as required

## **9. Administration**

The Tenant Advocate will:

- a. Assist in preparing internal and external reports
- b. Assist in tasks shared by all staff
- c. Assist in training and supervision of new staff, practical legal training students and volunteers, as required



## 5. Selection Criteria

The following are essential criteria that the candidate must satisfy in order to perform the role:

- Demonstrated experience in advocacy, mediation and negotiation
- Demonstrated high level oral and written communication skills
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team, to take initiative and accept responsibility
- Knowledge of and commitment to the rights of tenants and other vulnerable renters in NSW
- Experience working with, and an understanding of, the needs of people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island, people with disabilities or other groups who face disadvantage in access to legal or other services
- A strong commitment to social justice

The following are additional desirable criteria that would assist the candidate to perform the role:

- Demonstrated experience in the provision of advice and representation in a legal or non-legal setting
- Experience working in tenancy, housing, community legal sector or other community organisation
- Ability to speak a community language
- Working knowledge of the Residential Tenancies Act 2010
- Demonstrated skills in the development and delivery of community education