



Position Description

Tenant Advocate

Position Title	Tenant Advocate
Tenure	Ongoing subject to sufficient & continued funding
Division	Legal Services
Location	Frankston
Classification	Social, Community, Home Care & Disability Services Industry (SCHADS) Award 2010 2B Level 5
Approved By	Chief Executive Officer

POSITION OBJECTIVE

The Tenant Advocate role is to assist vulnerable and disadvantaged Victorians to identify and resolve their tenancy issues through the delivery of high quality advice, casework and advocacy services.

The Advocate also contributes to other aspects of Program operation such as networking and relationship building, delivery of outreach services, identification of systemic issues, reporting and administration.

KEY ACCOUNTABILITY AREAS

1. Deliver high quality advice, casework and advocacy services

- Provide information, advice, advocacy, negotiation and referral services, in accordance with the *PCLC Advice and Casework Guidelines* and Program requirements, to people who are seeking assistance in relation to their rights, entitlements and obligations in residential tenancy matters.
- Conduct ongoing casework in accordance with the *Advice and Casework Guidelines* and Program requirements.
- Provide support to and representation for tenants/residents in initiating and defending matters in the Residential Tenancies List of the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.
- Assess capacity, encourage and support clients to undertake self-help actions related to the resolution of their matter, as appropriate.
- Operate a caseload as directed.
- Maintain an appropriate case management system, including undertaking regular file reviews.

- Maintain accurate and up to date records, such as file notes, service delivery, client and casework statistics and prepare information for narrative reports and case studies.
- Develop and maintain up to date knowledge of relevant legislation, procedures and practices relevant to the position.
- Develop and maintain up to date knowledge of relevant information, resources and referral options for clients.
- Participate in regular casework supervision and caseworkers meetings. Conduct all work within the requirements of the Centre's professional indemnity insurance and the policy and procedures.
- Support activities of Rooming House Outreach as required, this may include accompanying the Worker on visits to rooming houses.

2. Participate in networking and community liaison

- Liaise with relevant organisations and workers to promote PCLC services, facilitate appropriate referrals and access complementary client services/resources.
- Represent Peninsula Community Legal Centre at relevant community, government and other forums as directed.

3. Contribute to systemic advocacy and policy development activities

- Identify and report trends and issues arising from advice and casework practice.
- As directed, participate in activities which seek to ensure greater legislative and practical protection for PCLC clients, such as submission writing and participation in campaigns.

4. Work as part of a team

- Actively and constructively participate in team meetings.
- Support other team members in undertaking client and Program related duties.

5. Contribute to reporting and accountability

- Report to and participate in regular supervision meetings with Manager.
- Discuss casework matters with Principal Lawyer and take direction as required.
- Assist with collection of data and preparation of reports and other accountability documentation/processes as required.

6. Training and Professional Development

- Participate in training and professional development as appropriate.
- Attend bi-monthly PCLC staff meetings.
- Participate in annual staff appraisal process.

7. General

- Undertake administrative and associated tasks associated with work role.
- Contribute to general administrative and operational duties as directed.
- Other duties as directed

ORGANISATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Reports to:	Practice Manager, General Director, Legal Services Chief Executive Officer
Direct Reports:	No reports to this position

ACCOUNTABILITY, AUTHORITY AND DECISION MAKING

The position reports directly to the Practice Manager, General.

All work and conduct is to be performed in accordance with PCLC Policy and Procedures, Program Guidelines, Program Work Plan and PCLC Advice and Casework Guidelines.

Professional judgement is exercised in the performance of routine tasks and clients services.

Direction is sought prior to engaging in non-routine tasks and client services.

SELECTION CRITERIA

- Tertiary qualifications in a relevant field such as community services, community development, social work or law/legal studies.
- Demonstrated knowledge of residential tenancies legislation and understanding of the housing and homelessness sector.
- Excellent verbal communication skills, including demonstrated experience in public speaking.
- Excellent written communication skills, including demonstrated experience in developing presentations and preparing reports and submissions.
- Excellent interpersonal skills.
- Experience in, or demonstrated capacity to undertake, direct service delivery, including provision of information, advice and referral services, negotiation and advocacy on behalf of clients, representation of clients in formal settings.
- Well developed organisational and time management skills.
- Demonstrated ability to exercise sound professional judgement and to work independently.
- Knowledge of the Victorian law and legal system, with capacity to understand, interpret and apply relevant legislation and procedures.

- Experience in the community sector and commitment to the philosophy and principles of community legal centres.
- .Competency in using word processing and electronic communication programs.

OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

- Holds a current Victorian Driver Licence;
- Undertaking a National Police Records Check forms part of the pre-employment process.
- You will be required to undergo or hold a current Working with Children Check
- Three month probation period which may be extended to six months
- You will be required to travel to PCLC branches, PCLC service locations and Courts and Tribunals. Access to a reliable and comprehensively insured motor vehicle is a requirement.
- Cooperate with PCLC in relation to any actions taken to comply with the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 and ensure that actions taken by the employee do not interfere with or place at risk the health, safety or wellbeing of the employee or any person in the workplace.
- Ensure compliance with all Privacy Legislation and treat all information of a personal and sensitive nature concerning the business of PCLC and its clients, in a professional and confidential manner in accordance with PCLC's information and records management procedures.
- Ensure that all PCLC policies, procedures, systems and work practices are implemented and adhered to, in particular, in human resource management, risk management, financial management, governance, procurement, and customer service.
- Act in a professional manner at all times while performing duties for and/or representing PCLC in line with the Staff Code of Conduct.
- An attractive remuneration package will be negotiated with the successful applicant. Salary packaging is available.

ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

Peninsula Community Legal Centre (PCLC) is one of 50 community legal centres in Victoria. It operates across six local government area in the south east of Melbourne – Cardinia, Casey, Frankston, Glen Eira, Kingston and Mornington Peninsula. PCLC is headquartered in Frankston and has branch offices in Bentleigh, Cranbourne, Pines and Rosebud.

The Centre works to empower and support disadvantaged community members of the South Eastern and Westernport region to use the law and legal system to protect and advance their rights and broaden their awareness of their responsibilities. The Centre offers general legal advice and casework services, specialist family law, tenancy, consumer law and family violence programs, and is active in community legal education and law reform work.

Peninsula Community Legal Centre receives funding from Consumer Affairs Victoria to deliver specialist tenancy services to people who are experiencing some form of vulnerability or disadvantage that limits their ability to participate effectively in

actions, negotiations and more formal procedures (such as Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal proceedings) relating to the resolution of their issues. As part of the Tenancy Advice and Advocacy Program, PCLC provides targeted tenancy information, advice and referral services to rooming house residents, and is involved in identifying systemic issues and non compliance by rooming house operators.

The PCLC Tenant Advocacy Program is delivered in the Southern Melbourne and Bayside metropolitan regions

Although a specific Program within the PCLC organisational structure, the Tenant Advice & Advocacy Program operates within the broad requirements of the PCLC legal practice.

PCLC VISION AND VALUES

Vision

A fair and inclusive society that promotes and protects human rights and equality before the law.

Values

- Fairness
- Empowerment
- Accessibility
- Respect
- Independence
- Quality

Mission

To advance justice through the provision of free legal services, education and advocacy in a community development framework.

Objectives

1. To effectively and innovatively utilise, manage and expand resources to achieve our mission.
2. To provide free and accessible legal advice, casework and representation in the Centre's catchment area, targeted to assist the most vulnerable.
3. To provide community legal education to empower and inform the community about legal rights and responsibilities.
4. To initiate and participate in law reform and legal policy activities relevant to the Centre's client base.
5. To develop, maintain and monitor relationships with stakeholders.
6. To effectively promote services.