**Thank you for your interest in this position.**
**We look forward to receiving your application, please read the information provided below.**

## THE ORGANISATION

The Tenants' Union is an independent community legal centre formed by a group of tenants who came together to promote the rights and interests of people renting their homes in the ACT. Although we are called the Tenants' Union, we help all renters, which means both tenants and occupants. TU members include private, public and community housing tenants, as well as boarders and lodgers, people living in student accommodation, caravan parks and emergency accommodation, and others interested in supporting the work of the TU.

Many of the problems renters face can be too big for one individual to tackle alone. Renters need a group that will talk to government, media, landlord groups and real estate agents on our behalf. Renters need a group that can express their views and concerns.

The Tenants' Union is committed to addressing the inequities that exist between renters and property investors. To tenants and occupants, our houses are our homes, but to the owner they are simply an investment. With your support the Tenants' Union can provide a stronger voice for tenants and occupants. TUACT is managed by a voluntary Management Committee and funded by the ACT Department of Justice and Community Safety. Funds are sourced from the interest earned on tenants bonds lodged with the ACT Office of Rental Bonds.

TUACT employs an Executive Officer, a Principal Solicitor, a Tenancy Advice and Project Worker, a part-time Tenancy Advice Worker and a part-time Office Coordinator.

## WHO WE ARE LOOKING FOR

TUACT is looking for someone who is committed to social justice and who wishes to make a difference for tenants. They will have knowledge of, or ability to rapidly acquire knowledge of, ACT residential tenancy laws and related issues. They will hold or be eligible to hold an ACT unrestricted practising certificate.

## WHAT WE CAN OFFER

We offer a unique opportunity to build on skills in the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal and ACT tenancy law and to assist people who are experiencing difficulties with their homes.

TUACT is a highly respected organisation and our expertise in tenancy law well regarded. We have an influential role in the development of tenancy and related law in the ACT and there is ample scope for work on law reform. There is also scope for work in community legal education and promotion of rights.

TUACT has a strong, supportive organisational culture. We are a small team and can offer work hours with some flexibility to suit your needs. We work 37.5 hour week and have 4 weeks annual leave plus paid Christmas shutdown period. There is also significant scope for autonomy and playing an important part in the strategic directions of the organisation.

This is your chance to be part of a team committed to achieving social justice for marginalised members of society.

**APPLICATIONS**

All applications for this position must be in writing and addressed:
President
Tenants' Union ACT
PO Box 8
Civic Square ACT 2608

Applications may be mailed to the above address or emailed to info@tenantsact.org.au

**Applications must address selection criteria and must be received by COB Friday 7 September 2012.**

# Position Description

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| **Position:** | Principal Solicitor |
| **Status:** | Permanent full – time |
| **Classification:** | Level 8 as per Community Sector Multiple Enterprise Agreement 2009 (Australian Capital Territory) |
| **Salary range:** | $73,659 - $80,000 |
| **Conditions of Employment:** | As per the Community Sector Multiple Enterprise Agreement 2009 (Australian Capital Territory) |
| **Hours:** | 37.5 hours per week plus reasonable time-in-lieu provisions |
| **Location:** | Havelock House, 85 Northbourne Ave Turner (free staff parking) |
| **Accountability:** | All staff are accountable to the Executive Officer and ultimately to the Management Committee. This position is accountable to the Executive Officer for all staffing matters including performance appraisals. |
| **Approved:** | March, 2011 |

**Purpose of the Position:** To manage the TUACT legal practice and supervise advice and casework of the Tenants' Advice Service. To provide legal advice and casework services to tenants and other renters including representation in appropriate circumstances. To assist the Executive Officer with policy, planning, reporting and other matters relating to the legal practice.

## Duties and Responsibilities:

The Principal Solicitor works closely with the Executive Officer.

**Specific Duties:**

**Co-ordination and supervision of TUACT's legal practice**

The Principal Solicitor is responsible for the conduct of the legal practice. In broad terms, the Principal Solicitor is responsible for ensuring that the advice and casework service is conducted in a co-ordinated, consistent, efficient and effective manner. This involves overseeing the effective induction, support and monitoring of legal advice workers (paid and volunteers) and may also involve the negotiated redistribution of casework loads amongst workers.

More specifically, the Supervising Solicitor is responsible for:

- checking and signing off on advice given by advice workers;
- providing regular and ongoing advice to, and supervision of, all advice workers;
- co-ordinating procedures to ensure that all advice workers remain up to date on legislative and policy developments in relation to the provision of advice and casework;
- developing and implementing the general Casework Guidelines in consultation with the EO and advice workers;
- co-ordinating and supervising the Tuesday Night TAS, including volunteers;

- monitoring and fulfilling all requirements of the Law Society and the National Association of Community Legal Centres, in relation to the conduct of the legal practice, Professional Indemnity Insurance, and practice issues;
- convening and chairing fortnightly legal practice meetings and regular legal issues meetings;
- dealing with legal practice complaints in accordance with the organisation's policies;
- ensuring effective induction and training for new advice workers and ongoing training and development for existing advice workers, in conjunction with the EO;
- dealing with professional indemnity insurance issues; and
- providing regular reports to the Management Committee outlining the operations of the legal practice.

**Casework and other general functions**
The Principal Solicitor is a solicitor within the organisation, and as such is generally responsible for:

- providing advice, casework and other general functions which may be adjusted from time to time in line with the overall responsibilities and requirements of the position;
- interviewing, advising and providing advocacy on behalf of clients;
- reviewing own cases as allocated through the legal practice meeting;
- conducting Tribunal hearings as required;
- following casework policies, procedures and practices as determined from time to time; and
- Identifying wider policy issues arising out of casework.

Other duties as listed below or nominated from time to time, include:

- assisting with community education and training programs including the preparation of community legal education materials and the conduct of workshops and seminars as required;
- policy analysis and submission preparation as necessary;
- contributing to publications as required;
- attendance at staff meetings; and
- liaising with other agencies and representing the Centre in the wider community as necessary.

**Co-ordination of staff recruitment and staff development**
In conjunction with the EO, the Principal Solicitor is responsible for:
- engendering a collaborative and co-operative work environment and
- developing and implementing support, professional development and supervision mechanisms for TAS staff.

**Editorial responsibility:** The Principal Solicitor will have final responsibility for the content of any legal materials produced by the Centre, including factsheets, booklets, brochures, newsletters and website content.

**Public spokesperson:** The Principal Solicitor is a public spokesperson for the organisation in the absence of, and as directed by, the EO.

**General Duties:**

- Work towards achieving the aims of the TUACT and comply with all organisational policies and procedures;
- Work as a member of a team with other staff and Management Committee;
- Participate in the Union's delivery of tenancy advice, advocacy and general resourcing of tenants and tenant advocates;
- Contribute to the development of TUACT law reform and policy;
- Participating in any planning, review and evaluation activities of TUACT;
- Undertake administrative duties associated with the performance of the position's specific duties.
- Other duties as specified by the Executive Officer or the Management Committee.

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# Selection Criteria

- Must hold or be eligible to hold an unrestricted practicing certificate for solicitors in the ACT.
- A commitment to the principles of social justice.
- Knowledge of, or ability to rapidly acquire knowledge of:
    - ACT residential tenancy laws and related issues;
    - housing policy issues;
    - sector issues.
- Ability to work independently and as a member of a small team.
- Good conceptual, analytical and organisation skills including case management skills.
- Highly developed verbal and written communication skills.
- High level interpersonal skills, including an ability to negotiate and advocate on behalf of clients of the Tenants' Union ACT.
- Demonstrated experience supervising staff
- Ability to relate to people from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds.

## Information for Applicants

Please apply in writing to The President, Executive Officer, Tenants' Union ACT, PO Box 8, Civic Square ACT 2608. You may email your application to info@tenantsact.org.au if you wish.

**Applications**: The TU does not use application forms. You should apply in writing for the position, addressing the selection criteria.

If you do not address the selection criteria, you will not be considered for the position.

You should include a resumé, setting out your personal details (name, address and contact details), education, previous positions and experience, and two/three referees (names and contact details).

**Acknowledgment of Applications:** We will acknowledge receipt of applicant by email.

**Copies of degrees, diplomas etc.:** It is not necessary to include these with your application.

**Selection Committee:** The Management Committee of the TU appoints a selection committee as required. Usually the selection committee consists of a Committee representative, a staff representative and an external representative (usually from a similar organisation or with particular expertise in the relevant field.) The selection committee shortlists applications, conducts interviews, checks references and makes a decision.

**Short Listing:** The selection committee will make arrangements to interview short listed applicants. Letters will be sent to other applicants advising them their applications were not successful.

**Interviews:** We will advise short listed applicants by phone of the date and time of their interview.

**Final Selection:** Successful applicants will be contacted by telephone and sent a written offer of appointment. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by letter.

**Employment Contract:** The successful applicant will be sent a letter of appointment enclosing a draft employment contract and a copy of the Job Description.

**Flexible working hours:** The TU is able to offer staff a reasonable level of flexibility as to working hours including opportunities for study leave and attendance at relevant conferences and forums. Staff are required to contribute fully to the Centre's activities. This can include working some evenings and extended hours from time to time.

**EEO**: The Tenants' Union ACT is an equal opportunity employer and staff are expected to initiate and/or comply with current equal opportunity principles.

**Smoke free environment:** The TU maintains a smoke-free working environment.

**Orientation:** The successful applicant will be provided with an orientation program during their first two weeks of employment. New employees will be expected to familiarise themselves with all relevant Tenants' Union policies and procedures.

For more information, please access our website at www.tenantsact.org.au