



**GREATER SYDNEY ABORIGINAL  
TENANTS SERVICE**

AUSPICED BY ABORIGINAL LEGAL SERVICE  
(NSW/ACT)LIMITED

**Street:** 8/21 Regent Street  
Redfern NSW 2016

**Phone:** (02) 9698 0873

**Fax:** (02) 9698 0961

**Tenant Advocate Position**

**Western Aboriginal Tenant Advice and  
Advocacy Service**

**DUBBO**

**Permanent Full time  
(Subject to and conditional upon triennial  
funding)**

**April 2017**

*This is an Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander identified position which is a genuine occupational qualification and is authorised under section 14(d) of the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977.*



# ALS

Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) Limited

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## INSTRUCTIONS TO APPLICANTS

The application process for this position is as follows:

Provide a cover letter.

Provide a CV.

Provide a statement addressing each of the relevant selection criteria. ( Pages 6 & 7)

Provide details (including email) from three referees.

E-mail the application (or mail hard copy) by the closing date.

Applicants should ensure mailed applications will be received no later than 12 midnight on 30 April 2017 and marked “**Confidential**” to the contact officer (Ivan Simon, GSATS and WATAAS Strategic Support Manager on email: [ivan\\_gsats@dtarawarra.com.au](mailto:ivan_gsats@dtarawarra.com.au) or post to PO Box 646 Surry Hills NSW 2010.

Enquiries to: Ivan Simon on phone 02 9698 0873 or the email provided above.

**All applications must be received no later than midnight on 30 April 2017**

## ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

The Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/Limited) (ALS) commenced operations on 1 July 2006. The ALS provides legal services to Aboriginal clients across NSW/ACT. It was established as a Public Benevolent Institution and operates to assist economically and socially disadvantaged Aboriginal people to understand and protect their rights in the legal system.

The ALS Board, which consists of the Chairperson and 13 voting Directors includes the Chair and CEO plus 2 Honorary Directors, establishes the broad policies and strategic plan of the ALS. The ALS is the largest agency delivering legal services to Aboriginal clients in Australia, comprising a head office in Sydney (Redfern) and 23 offices in metropolitan, Practice and remote centres across NSW/ACT.

In late 2016, the ALS was successful in winning the contract to manage and administer the Greater Sydney Aboriginal Tenancy Service (GSATS) and the Western Aboriginal Tenant Advice and Advocacy Service (WATAAS).

### The key programs and services provided by the ALS include:

#### 1. General ALS Service

- Legal advice and referral for clients;
- Duty lawyer service in specified court locations;
- Criminal law advice and litigation;
- Care and protection law advice and litigation;
- Family law advice and litigation;
- Work and development orders information and referrals;
- Civil Law information and referrals;
- Policy reform initiatives;
- Community Legal Education and Outreach;
- Community Justice Program (Australian Capital Territory);
  - Prisoner Through Care
  - Interview Friends
  - Galambany Circle Sentencing Support.
- Royal Commission Into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse information & referrals;
- Custody Notification Scheme;
- Cooperative Service Delivery;
- Criminal Law information and referral support; and
- Auspicing of Justice Reinvest NSW

#### 2. The Aboriginal Tenant Advice and Advocacy Services

- **The Greater Sydney Aboriginal Tenancy Service (GSATS)** is currently based in Redfern but will be relocating to St Mary's in April/May 2017;
- GSATS catchment area spans from Gosford to Helensburgh and west to the Blue Mountains;
- **The Western Aboriginal Tenant Advice and Advocacy Service (WATAAS)** is based in Dubbo.

- WATAAS catchment area covers as far as Broken Hill, Bourke, Walgett, Collarenebri, Lake Cargelligo, West Wyalong, Cowra and Lithgow
- GSATS and WATAAS provide advice, advocacy and support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with their tenancy matters.
- Our experienced staff provides assistance to tenants such as: telephone advice regarding the Residential Tenancy Act; negotiations with landlords; assist with applications for housing support including transfers; appeals and attendance at the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT).
- GSATS and WATAAS services along with other Aboriginal and mainstream tenancy services are funded by the NSW Department of Fair Trading via a triennial bidding funding cycle.
- The current funding cycle commenced on 1 July 2016 and these positions will be subject to the continuation of management by the ALS beyond the 3 year funding cycle.
- All Tenant Advice and Advocacy Services are supported by the NSW Tenants Union (TU).
- The TU role and priorities include (but not limited to):
  - informing and educating tenants;
  - advocating for the reform of policies and laws affecting tenants;
  - conducting strategic litigation to advance the interests of tenants;
  - supporting Tenants Advice and Advocacy Services; and
  - training tenancy advocates and other community organisations

## **The ALS Difference**

- ALS still provides the most remote legal assistance service, more than any other legal provider. In some remote areas we are the only lawyers available. No one else delivers services beyond Dubbo, NSW.
- Our lawyers visit every Court in NSW and ACT on court circuits. This is far more than any other legal service provider is achieving.
- Unlike other legal service providers, we work on Saturdays in various remote locations in the Bail court to ensure Aboriginal offenders are not locked up unnecessarily for three nights over the weekend. Some of our field officers are allowed by the courts to represent clients in Bail Court.
- Each ALS office is a community hub for the local township. When an Aboriginal person walks through the door their issue might be about housing, welfare payments, licensing, or family problems, or it might be a legal issue. Each office has local staff who are knowledgeable about their town and the services in it, and they provide every Aboriginal person that walks in with information, and they link people to the appropriate service provider, doctor, financial counsellor or otherwise.
- ALS staff members in urban, Practice and remote communities are essentially Ambassadors for the Service and in consulting and advocating for the legal needs of Aboriginal people.
- Staff regularly attends national, state, and local meetings, committees and forums.
- ALS is one of the largest Aboriginal community organisation employers in NSW, with over sixty Aboriginal employees, including lawyers, field officers, administration officers, managers, and the CEO.

- We are committed to up-skilling our Aboriginal staff and regularly provide further education and training opportunities.
- Each year our organisation is awarded a low-risk rating by the Australian Government Attorney-General.
- Huge numbers of ex ALS employees have gone on to become respected members of the legal fraternity as Judges, Magistrates, Barristers, or in policy areas in government.
- Through our Custody Notification Service, our attendance at national, state/territory and local meetings, and through our local community legal education inputs, we have had a positive cultural influence on organisations and people, including the NSW police force, Corrective Services, and Family and Community Services.

## **NATURE AND SCOPE OF POSITION**

### **MAJOR DUTIES**

The position is responsible to:

- provide advice, advocacy and community education for Aboriginal tenants in the region covering the WATAAS region in conjunction with all tenant advocates;
- identify the advice, advocacy and community education needs of Aboriginal tenants in the region;
- maintain community education statistics for reporting purposes and research;
- work in a cooperative way with other staff members to provide outreach services;
- advise Coordinator of any scheduled community events occurring within the service boundaries;
- develop and implement strategies which give all Aboriginal tenants in the region access to the services provided in conjunction with the WATAAS Team. This is particularly relevant to communities with high needs.
- liaise with regional networks, other tenant services in NSW and the Tenants Union to coordinate the delivery of Community Education services to tenants in the region;
- provide input to the development and review of tenancy law reform and policy in consultation with the Aboriginal Resource Unit, the NSW and Tenants Union and other tenant services across to NSW;
- participate in training which will assist service delivery and enhance skills of advocates;
- assist the Coordinator to fulfil record keeping and reporting obligations to the Funding Body and Auspice Body;
- assist, support and represent tenants at NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) Hearings;
- work in a team environment and attend regular staff, casework, community education and network meetings;
- Advocates will be responsible to the Coordinator of WATAAS;
- confidentiality with all cases and tenants' information must be maintained;
- provide Duty Advocacy as requested and scheduled by the Coordinator;
- assist the Coordinator with the production of written quarterly reports according to the format developed for this purpose;
- positively promote WATAAS at all times;

## **KEY CHALLENGES OR CONSTRAINTS**

- Communicate with, and advocate effectively for Aboriginal clients;
- The position holder often operates with minimal supervision and is required to resolve problems relating to client service delivery, in consultation with the Coordinator;
- The position holder must manage work priorities in a high volume work environment and on occasions with very short timeframes;
- Negotiating solutions with social housing providers and Landlords/Real Estate Agents on behalf of clients;
- Keeping up to date with local community issues/major trends which may impact upon clients, particularly those which relate to social and affordable rental housing initiatives and amendments to policy and legislation regarding the Residential Tenancy Act.

## **DECISION MAKING**

- The position holder makes decisions about prioritising allocated work, ensuring timely intervention and effective administrative support.
- The position holder seeks the advice and support of the WATAAS Coordinator on a regular basis, and also consults with other WATAAS staff.

## **COMMUNICATION**

### **Internal**

- The key relationship is with the WATAAS Coordinator and as appropriate with other GSATS staff.
- Communication and relationship with key management and staff of the ALS will also be required from time to time.

### **External**

- The position holder has regular contact with clients and potential clients requiring advocacy, advice, support, assistance and referral.
- The position holder also creates and maintains positive relationships with other tenancy services and staff, the NSW Tenants Union and social housing providers.
- The position holder creates and maintains positive relationships with Aboriginal Communities, government and non-government service providers.

## **QUALIFICATIONS, KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE**

### **Essential**

1. Identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person and is accepted as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person in the community in which he or she lives.
2. Good understanding and appreciation of the role and functions of the Aboriginal Tenant Advice and Advocacy Services.
3. Good understanding of the Residential Tenancy Act.
4. Good understanding of the public, social and private sector rental housing issues and challenges affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
5. Sound knowledge and understanding of social justice issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and being aware of cultural community protocols.
6. Sound understanding and experience with computer systems, particularly relating to client data input, recording keeping and reporting.
7. Good knowledge of support and referral services available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, including those which are homeless or about to become homeless and those affected by family or domestic violence.
8. Experience in the preparation and delivery of Community Education, including Outreach.

9. Experience in working with communities to establish and maintain effective networks with relevant service providers both government and non-government.
10. Excellent communication, negotiation and problem solving skills.
11. Self-motivated with ability to work with minimal supervision and an ability to work as a part of a team.
12. Ability to be able to travel and stay overnight when required and have a current valid NSW/ACT driver's licence.

### **Desirable**

1. Previous experience working in an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community based organisation.
2. Previous experience working in a tenancy or related.
3. Tertiary or other formal qualifications within a related field.

### **Job notes**

The successful applicant needs to:

1. have strong work ethics.
2. be committed to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients that are in very difficult situations or are experiencing high levels of stress and anxiety.
3. have a willingness to drive in metropolitan and country locations as well as a willingness to travel by plane and stay overnight or longer.
4. be prepared to undergo a Working With Children Check.
5. be prepared to obtain a Criminal History clearance.
6. be prepared to participate in appropriate and relevant training and development courses including Cultural Awareness Training.

### **SELECTION CRITERIA GUIDE:**

1. Read the selection criteria (above) very carefully and establish what each one is asking. To do this, look for key words and determine what they mean. Some examples of key words frequently used are:
  - a. "Demonstrated" or "proven ability" mean that you should have successfully performed the duty or used the skill in the past. Actual experience rather than potential to perform the duty is required.
  - b. "An ability to rapidly acquire" means that if you do not already have the skills, knowledge and abilities you may demonstrate your potential to acquire these by comparing them to relevant tasks or responsibilities you have undertaken in previous positions or through study.
  - c. "Thorough", "sound" or "a high level" indicates that advanced skill or knowledge is required.
2. Ensure that you respond to all components of the selection criteria.
3. Relate the selection criteria back to the key duties and responsibilities for the position (see position description above) however remember that your response should focus on all of your relevant skills, knowledge and experience not just those relating to the duties and responsibilities for the position.
4. Address each selection criterion by outlining how your qualifications, experience, skills and abilities meet those required for the position.

Follow the guidelines below when responding to selection criteria. State each of the selection criteria as a heading and write your response underneath. Include the following in your response:

### **An initial statement**

This should be a clear statement of how you meet the criterion. For example:

- "This is what I do"
- "I possess these skills"
- "My role as X demands that I..."

### **Supporting argument**

Justify your initial statement by showing how you meet the criterion. Identify the key issues for each selection criterion and include these in your response. Provide 1 or 2 examples that best demonstrate your skills, knowledge or abilities and cover as many of the relevant key issues as possible. The examples need to include:

- Content - what occurred and what you did
- Context - your responsibility: whether you were in charge, responsible or part of a team that was responsible
- Outcome - what happened as a result? Was your work approved? Adopted? Successful?
- What difference did your work make to the organisation?

### **Validity statement**

Validate your example by showing supporting evidence. For example:

- "Attached examples verify..."
- "Feedback from clients was..."

### **Concluding statement**

Reinforce again why and how you meet the criterion. Relate your response back to the criterion. For example:

- "I believe that through this I have gained..."
- "This demonstrates..."

It is your responsibility to convince the selection committee that you are the best candidate for the position. As the selection of candidates for interview is based solely on the information provided in the application, you must ensure that the information you provide is sufficient for the selection committee to assess the strength of your application.

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**We require a copy of your resume, an application form, responses to the selection criteria plus a copy of your current valid driver's licence/qualifications. Have you provided all requested items?**

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### **SELECTION PROCESS REQUIREMENTS and KEY POLICY AREAS**

All appointments to ALS are based on merit. This means that each applicant is assessed on merit against the knowledge, skills, abilities, experience, qualifications and standard of work performance identified in the position description and selection criteria.

### **THE SELECTION PANEL**

The selection panel is responsible for selecting the best suited candidate for the position. The selection is based on merit and the selected candidate will best satisfy the selection criteria. The selection committee must base its decision on material presented by the applicants in writing, at interview, and from referees. Interview candidates will be advised of the composition of the panel prior to interview.

### **Short listing**

If there are a number of applicants for the position, the selection panel will assess each application in order to identify which applicants will be further assessed.

### **Interviews**

The members of the selection panel have a variety of selection techniques available to them. The most common technique used in the ALS is the interview, which may take the form of:

- A structured interview in which a series of predetermined questions relating to the selection criteria are asked of each applicant. Additionally, questions may be asked which explore issues raised by the applicant's responses
- Case studies in which the panel gives the applicant a realistic scenario and asks them what they would do in the given situation

Applicants are ranked according to how well they address the selection criteria, both in their written application and during the interview.

### **Reference Check**

In your application, nominate at least two referees who have firsthand knowledge of your work performance - preferably your current or most recent supervisor. Be sure that you state their name, position, organisation/department and phone number.

The checking of references is a technique that confirms or clarifies claims that you have made in your application, interview or other selection activities. At the end of the interview process, the selection panel will contact the identified referees for those applicants who are being considered for the position.

If you have not mentioned your current supervisor as a referee, the selection panel may still wish to contact them if you are considered for appointment. Your consent will be required prior to any contact being made.

Your responsibilities to your referees

- Ask if they will act as a referee for you and notify them when you apply.
- Make sure that your referee is comfortable with your application and that they consider that you have the necessary skills to undertake this type of position.
- If you are short listed for an interview, give them a copy of the position description, which includes the selection criteria. This allows them time to think about their responses.

### **Appointment**

As a result of the selection process, the "best fit" is offered the position. All applicants are advised in writing whether they are successful or unsuccessful.

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### **PROTECTION POLICY**

ALS is committed to the safety and protection of clients in our care. As part of our policy regarding this, prospective applicants may need to give permission for the organisation to conduct a Criminal History Check and if appropriate a Working With Children Check. Applicants are also asked to agree to provide information about any outstanding charges and, in the event of employment, agree to advise of any charges referred throughout the period of employment.

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### **PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL CONDUCT**

ALS has a responsibility to its stakeholders to ensure the professional and ethical conduct of its employees. As such it is important that prospective applicants understand the core values of our Code of Conduct policy as the standard of conduct required. These core values are:

- Treat all the people that we come into contact with respect and dignity
- Uphold the law, respect community standards, and act accordingly
- Use ALS property responsibly and in the best interests of ALS and its reputation, and
- Accept that we are responsible for our actions and accountable for the consequences.

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### **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

ALS is committed to Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and providing a working environment free from discrimination, intimidation, victimisation and harassment (direct or indirect). ALS applies EEO principles to all recruitment and selection activities.

ALS values its EEO and Anti-Discrimination Policy aims to create an environment where all workers are valued and respected and have opportunities to develop their full potential and pursue a career path of their choice.

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### **WORK HEALTH and SAFETY**

ALS is committed to providing a safe and healthy working environment. The organisation believes that all illnesses and injuries can be prevented and supports early intervention in the rehabilitation process. The organisation will adhere to all relevant laws and regulations regarding safety and implement a comprehensive Occupational Health & Safety Program focused upon consultation and continuous improvement.



# ALS

Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) Limited

## CONFIDENTIAL APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

A CV or Resume will not be accepted as a substitute for this form. Please complete using either **BLOCK** capitals, typewritten format or electronically. This form should be **signed** and dated. Information provided on this form will be used for the short-listing process. It is therefore your responsibility to ensure that you demonstrate, on this form, what makes you suitable for employment at the ALS. ALS reserves the right to exclude any application from the selection process when the instructions outlined on this form have not been followed.

### **PERSONAL DETAILS**

First Name

Surname Name

Title

Address

Telephone (Evening)

Date of Birth (optional)

Telephone (Day)

Email:

Telephone (Mobile)

Please provide the full details of any previous names:

### **WHERE DID YOU SEE OR HEAR OF THIS ADVERTISEMENT:**

ALS Web, ALS Facebook, ALS Employee, Koori Mail, Ourmob.com, Community Notice Board, SEEK, Friend, Others?

### **DRIVERS LICENCE**

Do you have a current valid NSW driver's licence?

Yes

No

If yes, please provide a copy of your driver's licence

### **HEALTH**

Do you have any medical conditions or disabilities which the ALS should be aware of? This question is asked to enable consideration to be given to the provision of **CONFIDENTIAL** assistance to you, if you request such assistance. This would be to your benefit in the event of an emergency. (Optional)

**CONVICTIONS**

Have you been charged or convicted of a criminal offence, a child related offence, a domestic violence offence?    Yes    No

If yes, give details

Please provide all details if you are currently subject to any Court Order (including an Apprehended Violence Order or interstate/overseas equivalent)

It should be noted that convictions for certain offences do not necessarily deter an applicant from obtaining employment

**REFEREES (if not noted on your Resume)** Please give details of two referees from any suitable person (over 18 years and not related to you).

**A WRITTEN REFERENCE FROM THE TWO REFEREES IS PREFERRED.**

Name:

Address:

Phone No:

Relationship:

**DECLARATIONS**

I hereby certify that the information I have provided on this form and in the attached documents is true and correct in every respect.

I hereby certify that if I am successful in obtaining a placement at ALS, I will comply with all lawful and reasonable directions from my manager.

I hereby certify that by signing this Application form that I authorise the ALS to contact either by letter, telephone or any other means, any person/organisation that the ALS considers necessary to confirm any of the information I have provided in this Application form. I also acknowledge that, if necessary, the ALS may need to obtain other information about me, for example conducting a Criminal Reference Check / Working With Children Check.

**I understand that any misrepresentation by me will lead to the withdrawal of any offer of employment or my employment being terminated.**

Signed:

Date:

**CHECKLIST:**

**I have attached:**

- **A covering letter explaining why this role sounds suitable to your skills and experience**
- **A copy of an up-to-date CV**
- **ALS application form**
- **A statement responding to our Selection Criteria**
- **A copy of your current NSW driver's licence**