

CONSUMER ACTION LAW CENTRE

POSITION DESCRIPTION – Standards Project Coordinator (January 2010)

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REPORTS TO: Director – Policy & Campaigns

ABOUT CONSUMER ACTION:

Consumer Action Law Centre (**Consumer Action**) is an independent, not-for-profit, campaign-focused casework and policy organisation.

Consumer Action provides free legal advice and representation to vulnerable and disadvantaged consumers across Victoria, and is the largest specialist consumer legal practice in Australia. Victoria Legal Aid provides the majority of Consumer Action's funding for the delivery of consumer casework services.

Consumer Action is also a nationally-recognised and influential policy and research body, pursuing a law reform agenda across a range of important consumer issues at a governmental level, in the media, and in the community directly. Consumer Affairs Victoria provides funds for the delivery of policy and campaigning work and the provision of legal advice to community based workers.

Since September 2009 we have also operated a new service, *MoneyHelp*, a not-for-profit financial counselling service funded by the Victorian Government to provide free, confidential and independent financial advice to Victorians facing or experiencing job loss or reduced working hours to help them manage their money and debt.

POSITION DESCRIPTION:

Standards Australia is the key organisation for developing standards for use throughout Australia. These range across a wide variety of issues including product safety, health, essential services and the environment. For example, standards have been developed for the integrity and authenticity of organic and biodynamic produce, the safety of children's toys, prams and strollers, the effectiveness of sunscreen agents and access for people with disabilities to the built environment. Current standards development projects include the Draft International Standard for Social Responsibility, standards for buildings in bushfire prone areas, standards for forensic analysis and standards for cricket balls.

The Consumers' Federation of Australia (**CFA**) has a project – the *Consumer Representatives on Standards Australia Committees Project* – under which it nominates volunteer consumer representatives to around thirty technical committees of Standards Australia, and receives funds from Standards Australia to manage the project and reimburse representatives' expenses related to attending meetings (the **Standards Project**). Consumer Action manages the Standards Project and administers the funds on behalf of the CFA, and the Standards Project Coordinator is an employee of Consumer Action who administers the Standards Project.

The volunteers represent the CFA on these standards development technical committees, and a primary focus of the work of the Standards Project Coordinator is

to recruit suitable consumer representatives, support their efforts, and act as a conduit between these representatives, the CFA and the broader consumer movement.

REPORTING:

The Standards Project Coordinator reports to Consumer Action's Director – Policy and Campaigns. The Standards Project Coordinator also reports to the CFA Executive at their monthly teleconference. In addition, the Standards Project Coordinator provides occasional written reports to the Consumer Action Board and quarterly written reports to Standards Australia.

DUTIES:

Core duties

- To locate suitable expert consumer representatives for appropriate Standards Australia committees.
- To support consumer representatives by arranging any necessary travel, reimbursing expenses and assisting with issues resolution and consumer consultation.
- To obtain regular reports from CFA representatives.
- To maintain the allocated budget for reimbursement of consumer representatives' expenses.
- To invoice Standards Australia quarterly for costs associated with the Standards Project and present detailed acquittal information.
- To maintain a database of consumer representatives.
- To facilitate training for consumer representatives.
- To encourage and facilitate consumer comment on draft Australian standards.
- To manage and increase within budget limitations the number of positions for consumer representatives on Standards Australia technical committees.
- To determine the appropriate response to all invitations from Standards Australia to provide consumer representatives for technical committees.
- To provide guidance to representatives based on CFA policy and established general consumer policies and advice to help CFA representatives identify consumer issues within the scope of committee work.
- To maintain a general knowledge of the work of each committee on which the CFA has a representative by reading committee correspondence and by regular communication with the committee member.
- To compile articles from time to time based on the reports of CFA representatives for inclusion in newsletters such as the CFA newsletter or Standards Australia newsletter.

Reporting and stakeholder relations

- To liaise with the CFA Executive and government, industry and consumer groups on standards related issues, including through written submissions.
- To respond to government and industry inquiries in relation to standards issues (particularly where Standards Australia or other standards development organisations are involved).
- To participate in Standards Australia's Consumer Standing Forum and use this as a conduit for raising current consumer issues with Standards Australia staff.

- To contribute to the preparation of reports on policy and campaign activity to the Consumer Action board and/or funding bodies.

Staff Management

None.

Budget Management

- To manage the annual budget of funds provided by Standards Australia.
- To prepare an annual budget submission to Standards Australia.

General

- To attend Consumer Action staff meetings and policy intake meetings.
- To contribute content to the informal internal Consumer Action newsletter and the external Consumer Action e-newsletter.
- To prepare articles on the Standards Project for each issue of the CFA e-bulletin.
- To undertake other relevant duties as directed by the Director – Policy & Campaigns from time to time.
- To assist the CFA in recruiting for other consumer representative roles related to standards development.

KEY SKILLS:

Professional Skills

- Skills in managing time, setting priorities, planning and organising work.
- Ability to read through written communications and materials efficiently and prioritise issues raised for response and/or action.
- Ability to manage, maintain and report against a budget.
- Computer literacy including word processing.
- An interest in and ability to understand a variety of different social and policy issues.
- A commitment to advancing the public interest.

Interpersonal Skills

- Excellent oral and written communication skills.
- The ability to work cheerfully in a small team.
- The ability to work autonomously and self-motivate.
- The ability to get along with many different types of people.

Qualifications and Experience

- A working knowledge of and/or interest in technical standards would be an advantage, as would be working knowledge and/or interest in consumer and/or social policy.

SALARY:

The Standards Project Coordinator is a part-time position equivalent to two days per week. It can be worked as two full days per week or the 15 hours may be spread over 3 or more days per week as agreed with Consumer Action.

A salary of \$45,064, plus superannuation, pro rata for 0.4 FTE, is offered.

Consumer Action is fringe benefits tax exempt, and salary packaging could increase the value of the annual FTE salary by approximately \$4,500, depending on personal circumstances (in other words, salary packaging could bring the value of the salary to approximately \$49,500, pro rata for 0.4 FTE, depending on personal circumstances.)