



Catholic Social Services  
**Australia**

# Position Description

**Policy Officer**  
**Catholic Social Services Australia**

**June 2008**

# Position Description

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## POSITION DETAILS

<b>Position Title:</b>	Policy Officer
<b>Work Hours:</b>	37.5 hours per week
<b>Status:</b>	One year contract (with possible extension) - full time
<b>Remuneration Package:</b>	Value depending on experience (salary packaging available)
<b>Reports To:</b>	Manager Policy, Research and Government Relations
<b>Direct Supervision Of:</b>	No supervisory responsibilities
<b>Location:</b>	Curtin, ACT
<b>Date:</b>	June 2008

## ORGANISATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Catholic Social Services Australia is the Catholic Church's peak national body for social services in Australia with 64 member organisations providing social services to over a million Australians a year, delivering services in local communities in metropolitan, regional and remote Australia. Catholic Social Services Australia is an agency of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and is responsible to the Catholic Bishops through a Board of 9 persons appointed by the Conference.

Catholic Social Services Australia's National Office in Canberra operates a policy and research unit that is informed by an extensive service delivery network. This includes over 500 programs nationally. We manage a number of government contracts including Job Network, Personal Support Program, Disability Open Employment Services and we also support a number of Family Relationship Services.

As part of the Policy, Research and Government Relations team the Policy Officer will contribute significantly to the work of the team, however will often need to work independently, and will need to coordinate work with other national office teams, interact with State Branches and the broader Church on the social services agenda through the Manager Policy, Research and Government Relations.

All staff within Catholic Social Services Australia are expected to:

- Contribute to the implementation of the vision, mission and values of Catholic Social Services Australia in a way that promotes a fairer, more inclusive society that preferentially assists people most in need.
- Build organisational culture promoting the Catholic mission, values and vision of Catholic Social Services Australia and foster behaviours and outcomes consistent with that culture.

## PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

- Plan, analyse and write fully substantiated documents in relation to the work of Catholic Social Services Australia's social policy agenda;

## MAJOR ACCOUNTABILITIES

- Undertake social policy research with an emphasis on the causes, incidence and consequences of aspects of poverty and disadvantage in Australia, and on policy options to redress these (Examples of relevant issue areas include: employment policy; welfare policy; locational disadvantage; education; mental health; and the interaction of government policies on welfare benefits, taxation and industrial relations).

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- Prepare policy papers, submissions, briefings and other written material that develop and promote Catholic Social Services Australia policy positions.
- Maintain awareness of current research and developments in social policy and relevant programs.
- Liaise as appropriate with Program Managers and other key personnel at National Office in relevant policy areas.
- Liaise with, collect data from, and assist coordination of research activities undertaken by, Catholic Social Services Australia – most specifically with Catholic Social Services Australia's own Members.
- Maintain networks with Catholic Social Services Australia Member organisations, academics, social service providers, government contacts, social policy researchers, welfare NGOs, Catholic bodies, other Churches, and others concerned about Australians in poverty.
- Represent Catholic Social Services Australia at relevant conferences, networks, public forums, sector meetings, and other forums.

## KEY COMMUNICATIONS

The position reports to the Manager: Policy, Research and Government Relations and has significant contact with National Office staff, other major social policy and research bodies, and Member Organisations of Catholic Social Services Australia.

## DECISION MAKING

The incumbent of this position will assist the Manager: Policy, Research and Government Relations by providing research, critical analysis and informed opinions on policy issues and by completing tasks on Catholic Social Services Australia's Organisational Plan and team work plan within specified timeframes with minimal supervision.

## CHALLENGES

To constructively contribute to Catholic Social Services Australia's policy and advocacy priorities, across a broad range of social policy issues within a small team within a community/non-government organisation and to effectively communicate this message for a range of audiences including the general community, the Catholic Church, governments and bureaucracies, and member organisations – on behalf of Australians experiencing disadvantage.

## KNOWLEDGE and EXPERIENCE

### *Essential:*

- High-level analytical and conceptual skills.
- Experience in policy formulation, policy implementation and/or policy research.
- Excellent written communication skills.
- Well-developed oral communication and liaison/representational skills, including demonstrated capacity to build and maintain professional relationships both within the organisation and externally.
- Strong commitment to social justice and willingness to work toward Catholic principles of social justice.
- Broad understanding of contemporary social and economic issues affecting low-income and disadvantaged people.

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- Some understanding of both governmental structures/processes and the role/workings of the non-government sector.
- Well-developed planning and organisational skills and the ability to work to deadlines, both independently and as part of a team.
- Sound judgement (including awareness of the sensitivity of confidential information).
- Relevant tertiary qualifications from a recognised tertiary institution.
- Familiarity with common computer programs (Word, Excel, etc.).

***Desirable:***

- Demonstrated experience in social policy research and project work.
- Demonstrated experience in social policy formulation and implementation.
- Demonstrated project management experience.
- Strong skills in statistical analysis.

**QUALIFICATIONS**

- A tertiary qualification in discipline relevant to social policy is highly desired.

**TRAVEL**

Interstate travel may be required from time to time.

**VERIFICATION**

This section verifies that the position holder and supervisor have read the above position description and are satisfied that it accurately describes the position.

**POSITION HOLDER**

Signature..... Date.....

**SUPERVISOR**

Signature..... Date.....