



# Women's Legal Service Tasmania Community Legal Service Plan

2019-2020

women's  
legal  
service  
tasmania

# Background

Women's Legal Service Tasmania (WLST) was established by the Commonwealth Attorney-General in April 1996, following national consultations by the Australian Law Reform Commission, which identified that women experienced significant barriers to accessing justice through the legal system.

WLST provides free and confidential legal advice and information to women in all areas of Tasmania about their legal and non-legal options, including referral to legal services and lawyers or appropriate support services. The primary means of contacting the Service is through a free-call telephone line.

WLST is committed to making the legal system more accessible and responsive to the issues affecting women in Tasmania. WLST gathers information about Tasmanian women's experience of the law, bringing relevant issues to the attention of government and legal bodies. WLST is also active in raising public awareness of concerns relating to the law and in the field of law reform. The Service is an active member of the Australia wide network of Women's Legal Services Australia (WLSA) which acts as a lobby group on law reform at the national level.

WLST is an active member of Community Legal Centres Tasmania (CLCTAS), and also a member of the National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC). NACLC is the association of state and territory community legal centres, and represents around 200 community legal centres across Australia.

## Service Overview

WLST provides a telephone advice, information and referral line from our Hobart office, which is accessed by women right across the state. Our legal staff are able to provide advice and referral on all legal matters, including family law, family violence, civil and criminal law, estate, property, and employment. In addition to providing telephone advice, we are at times able to take on casework for clients who need representation.

Our Burnie office, a part of the national Domestic Violence Unit (DVU) program, has been operational since April 2016, as part of the Australian Government's response to rising family violence. Our staff in Burnie are able to provide legal information, support and advice on any legal matter to those clients in the north-west and west of the state who are experiencing, or who have experienced, family violence.

In 2018, WLST opened an office in Launceston as an extension of the DVU program, with funding provided through the Australian Government's response to rising family violence and the Tasmanian Government's Family Violence Action Plan, to provide services to women experiencing, or who have experienced family violence. In 2019 we will also offer financial counselling and literacy services as an extension of our DVU offerings.

WLST provides community legal education sessions and workshops throughout Tasmania to groups such as schools, migrant groups, neighbourhood houses, and community groups, also participating in community events, and stakeholder forums and committees. We also produce legal information resources such as brochures, fact sheets, booklets and websites.

# Vision

Women have equal access to justice in Tasmania.

# Mission

We empower women to take control over their own lives by providing holistic, client-centred legal services.

We do this because women experience specific barriers, structural inequality, on account of their different life experiences of factors like poverty, family violence and pay inequality.

# Values

Women's Legal Service Tasmania hold three main values:

- |                   |                                                |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <b>INTEGRITY</b>  | We lead by example.                            |
| <b>COMPASSION</b> | We make the time to listen and care.           |
| <b>RESPECT</b>    | We treat others the way we like to be treated. |

# Principles

Women's Legal Service Tasmania has considered a number of principles when developing this CLSP Plan. In evaluating and determining our properties from year to year we will assess potential activities against these questions before deciding:

1. Does it fit with the needs and priorities of our clients?
2. Does it fit with our Commonwealth targets?
3. Does it fit with our service philosophy?
4. Will it be of benefit to the majority of our clients?
5. Will it provide value for money/investment in WLST?
6. Will it contribute to staff satisfaction and morale?
7. Do we have capacity to do it? Do we have the resources, time and skills required?

# Measures

We will know when we have been successful when we are a thriving, interconnected legal services provider. This will be measured by:

- 1. How much we do.**  
The number of CLEs, advice line telephone calls, representation, outreach, submissions, media appearances, attendance at events and meetings.
- 2. How well we do it.**  
Complying with funding contract KPIs and ensuring financial stability, timeliness of assistance.
- 3. What difference we made.**  
Staff and Board Member retention; staff satisfaction feedback and exit interviews; client case studies; participant feedback on CLE sessions; client service feedback on the telephone advice line and representation (survey 3 to 4 calls per quarter); the number and quality of working relationships (both informal and those formally recognised through MoUs); the organisation's reputation – the number of invitations received and public acknowledgements; the number of proposals jointly initiated through collaborations with other organisations.
- 4. Map identified unmet legal needs.**  
Track data of:
  - a) Representation we are unable to provide;
  - b) Telephone calls unable to be taken immediately or returned within 48 hours from advice line.
  - c) Outreach we are unable to provide
  - d) CLEs we are unable to deliver.
  - e) Geographic areas that are not supported.
  - f) Partnerships we are unable to pursue.

# Layout of The Plan

Women's Legal Service Tasmania has identified eight goals in the course of our Strategic Planning process:

**1. Organisational Culture**

Ours is an engaged, motivated statewide team with a positive culture.

**2. Governance**

Our organisation is professional, values-driven, supportive and proactive.

**3. Representation**

Our clients will get the professional representation they need.

**4. Advocacy and Reform**

We are the leading law reform advocates in Tasmania on issues affecting women.

**5. Outreach**

We operate a quality outreach program that meets the needs of the clients.

**6. Community Legal Education**

We have empowered women through community legal education.

**7. Advice, Information and Referral**

Our clients receive valuable advice, quality information and useful referrals.

**8. Stakeholder Engagement**

We have strong relationships between staff, with Board of Management members and clients, with the legal assistance sector and other stakeholders.

# Goal 1: Organisational Culture

Ours is an engaged, motivated statewide team with a positive culture.

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Action</b>
Share responsibility for cultivating a culture where people feel safe to speak up.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>. We will have monthly all staff meetings.</li><li>. Individual one-on-one meetings with the CEO.</li></ul>
Ensure staff are skilled in managing differences of opinion, dealing with conflict, and having difficult conversations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>. Identify training opportunities for staff.</li></ul>
Ensure staff have opportunities to grow through professional development, mentoring and coaching.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>. Develop mentor relationships between legal staff and members of the profession.</li><li>. Ensure clear supervision pathways.</li><li>. Enable staff to undertake training opportunities as they arise.</li></ul>

# Goal 2: Governance

Our organisation is professional, values-driven and an inspiring place to work.

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Action</b>
Have a common understanding of staff and Board Member roles and responsibilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cultivate a skill mix that is diverse, and using the expertise of Board members.</li><li>• Create a clear delineation of roles in order to ensure Board members are not dealing with operational matters.</li><li>• Ensure role clarity, mission clarity and prioritisation through the Case Management meetings.</li><li>• Regular all-of-staff meetings, discussing pressure points, resources, training, progress against defined activities, team building and to review targets and focus.</li><li>• Develop clear position descriptions, staff appraisal methods and individual work plans for all staff so their contribution is identified.</li><li>• Develop rosters similar to the telephone advice line roster in regard to representation, outreach and community legal education sessions, develop and report against targets.</li></ul>
Ensure the financial sustainability of the organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure clarity around funding received and eligibility for service.</li><li>• Design and develop alternate methods of funding.</li></ul>
Establish clear strategic objectives and planning processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop directional decision, strategic planning, operational plans, individual work plans and a governance plan.</li></ul>

## Strategy

## Action

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Establish clear policies and procedures.

- Edit or develop policies and procedures as necessary on a regular schedule for approval from the Board of Management.
- Ensure staff awareness of policies and procedures at regular all staff meetings.

Reform our Constitution

- CEO and Board of Management to reform the Constitution of WLST to ensure that the CEO reports to the Board, and is not a member of the Board.

# Goal 3: Representation

Our clients will get the representation they need.

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Action</b>
Clarify and source funding for representation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="823 405 1430 479">. Investigate funding options for representation not connected to DVUs.</li><li data-bbox="823 517 1430 555">. Fundraising through private donations.</li><li data-bbox="823 593 1430 674">. Application to the Solicitors' Guarantee Fund for initial seed funding.</li></ul>
Build in-house capacity to provide more representation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="823 741 1430 855">. Determine and develop alternative sources of funding to provide access to strategic litigation.</li></ul>

# Goal 4: Advocacy and Reform

We are the leading law reform advocates in Tasmania on issues affecting women.

Strategy	Action
Produce quality submissions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Consider employing a dedicated law reform officer or allocating time to this specific purpose across teams.</li><li>All legal staff will contribute to a law reform submission annually – either in part or whole.</li><li>Review what was achieved by our submission.</li><li>Clarify eligibility requirements for service.</li><li>Clarify and communicate different activities and eligibility attached to different offices.</li></ul>
Collaborate with legal organisations and service providers. Survey other service providers to map current unmet legal need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>We will have an active involvement in Women’s Legal Services Australia (WLSA).</li><li>We will work with and liaise with the Law Society.</li><li>Actively engage with TAS CLC’s through association.</li><li>Work with LACT to strengthen our working relationship to coordinate and co-deliver outreach, information sessions and CLEs where appropriate. This relationship will be formalised through a MOU.</li></ul>
Create and take up opportunities to contribute to public conversation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Identify collaborative opportunities to work with women’s services outside of the legal assistance sector to provide holistic wrap around service.</li><li>We will take up opportunities to have a public presence and a public voice through media engagements, social media and community education.</li><li>Develop positions on ‘hot topics’ to proactively engage in debate from an agreed position. Use these to provide key messages to staff across service delivery.</li></ul>

# Goal 5: Outreach

We operate a quality outreach program that meets the needs of clients.

Strategy	Action
Plan and operate consistent outreach programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="804 472 1461 546">. We will have consistent programs for each office each quarter, with realistic goals.</li><li data-bbox="804 589 1461 701">. We will gather information from our community to make sure we are servicing our funding and community needs.</li><li data-bbox="804 743 1461 813">. Test health justice partnership approach in the North and North West.</li></ul>
Collaborate with other community legal services and community service organisations to determine need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="804 869 1442 943">. We will build and maintain beneficial relationships with stakeholders.</li><li data-bbox="804 985 1442 1131">. Our senior staff will take suggestions and liaise with prospective stakeholders to organise a schedule of outreach to be completed.</li></ul>

# Goal 6: Community Legal Education

We will raise the awareness of legal issues the community

Strategy	Action
Provide consistent community legal education sessions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="804 412 1461 479">. We will have consistent programs for each office each quarter, with realistic goals.</li><li data-bbox="804 524 1461 636">. We will identify community needs, and seek input from our stakeholders and clients.</li><li data-bbox="804 680 1461 748">. Develop a plan to satisfy our goals and community need.</li></ul>
Promote community legal education sessions online and through our stakeholder networks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="804 936 1449 1128">. We will promote community legal education sessions through our website and social media channels to ensure community awareness of what WLST can provide.</li><li data-bbox="804 1173 1449 1240">. We will use social media to provide information to our community.</li></ul>
Develop more education resources and review existing materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="804 1352 1426 1420">. We will ensure that our education resources are up to date.</li><li data-bbox="804 1464 1426 1576">. We will make our resources more accessible and review them all following Twenty10 training.</li></ul>
Work in partnership with other women's services and the legal assistance sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="804 1675 1294 1742">. Build and maintain stakeholder relationships.</li></ul>

# Goal 7: Advice, Information and Referral

Our clients receive valuable advice, quality information and useful resources.

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Action</b>
Manage and track the service need on the telephone advice line.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>. Clarify our response time.</li><li>. We will improve the phone roster.</li><li>. We will monitor staff compliance.</li><li>. We will ensure we update our website with any changes made to the telephone advice line.</li><li>. We will improve our communication with our clients.</li><li>. We will put into place a mechanism for quality assurance.</li><li>. We will seek to increase staff satisfaction and wellbeing.</li><li>. We will get better at managing the demand for the service, and make decisions regarding our capacity early.</li></ul>
Operate clinics for groups of client cohorts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>. We will consider offering clinic sessions for client cohorts.</li></ul>
Develop strong referral networks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>. Access a referral map for staff, using existing facilities developed by the Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania, FindHelpTas, and Relationships Australia.</li></ul>

# Goal 8: Stakeholder Engagement

We have strong relationships between staff, with Board of Management members and clients, with the legal assistance sector and other stakeholders.

Strategy	Action
Being clear in our communications to clients and funders about our capacity to provide support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Assist with legal and non-legal support for clients, setting clear outlines to ensure clear expectations.</li><li>Regular all-of-staff meetings, discussing pressure points, resources, training, define activities and review targets and focus.</li><li>Revisit eligibility criteria for DVU and NPA funding, clarify the client agreement documents.</li><li>Deliver financial counselling and literacy sessions.</li></ul>
Build strategic relationships with legal assistance sector organisations, community sector organisations, government, courts, private practices and general public.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Greater collaboration with Women's Legal Services Australia (WLSA), National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC) and Community Legal Centres Tasmania (CLCTAS).</li><li>Regular attendance at forums, and active participation in sector meetings.</li><li>Advocate and develop new strategies for warm referrals between community legal centres and the Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania.</li><li>Develop a MOU with LACT.</li><li>Work on relationships with community sector organisations such as neighbourhood houses, and the Migrant Resource Centre.</li><li>Implement and maintain stronger relationships with the courts.</li><li>Investigate developing relationships with LGH and NWRH maternity wards.</li><li>Staff are more engaged and integrated in the broader profession.</li></ul>

## Strategy

## Action

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Work in partnership with other women's services and the legal assistance sector.

Supporting, respecting and promoting women in the legal profession.

- . More contact with private practice, to facilitate a better understanding of what we do, and to foster mentoring, promotion of the service and to assist in creating a referral list.
- . Improve communication with the general public through media, social media, our website and community involvement to promote a better understanding of the service.
- . Build and maintain stakeholder networks to identify innovative ways to respond to need.
- . Contact Tasmanian Women Lawyers, the Law Society and the Young Lawyers Committee to develop connections between women and the legal profession, including mentoring.