



Women's Legal Service Tasmania Community Legal Service Plan

2019-2022

women's
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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.

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:

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| INTEGRITY | We lead by example. |
| COMPASSION | We make the time to listen and care. |
| RESPECT | 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.

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.

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

Goal 2: Governance

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

Strategy	Action
Have a common understanding of staff and Board Member roles and responsibilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="625 383 1142 495">. Cultivate a skill mix that is diverse, and ensure to utilise the expertise of Board members.<li data-bbox="625 539 1142 689">. Create a clear delineation of roles in order to ensure Board members are not dealing with operational matters.<li data-bbox="625 734 1142 846">. Ensure role clarity and mission clarity through the Case Management meetings.<li data-bbox="625 891 1142 1070">. Regular all-of-staff meetings, discussing pressure points, resources, training, define activities, team building and to review targets and focus.<li data-bbox="625 1115 1142 1265">. Develop clear position descriptions, staff appraisal methods and individual work plans.<li data-bbox="625 1310 1142 1529">. Develop rosters similar to the telephone advice line roster in regard to representation, outreach and community legal education sessions, develop and report against targets.
Ensure the financial sustainability of the organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="625 1608 1094 1686">. Ensure clarity around funding received.<li data-bbox="625 1731 1094 1798">. Design and develop alternate methods of funding.
Establish clear strategic objectives and planning processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="625 1877 1129 2020">. Develop directional decision, strategic planning, operational plans, individual work plans and a governance plan.

Strategy

Action

Establish clear communication pathways and reporting.

- Improve communication pathway through regular staff meetings.
- Ensure all staff are aware they are able to attend Board meetings.
- Improve staff knowledge of finances and funding, and provide regular finance updates at staff meetings.
- Improve reporting to the Board meetings on operational matters; revise the reporting format and review effectiveness.
- Clarify roles regarding capabilities at the Annual General Meeting.

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.

Strategy	Action
Clarify and source funding for representation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Investigate funding options for representation.• Fundraising through private donations.• Application to the Solicitors' Guarantee Fund.
Build in-house capacity to provide representation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine and develop alternative sources of funding to provide access to strategic litigation.

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 data-bbox="628 423 1126 568">. Consider employing a dedicated law reform officer or allocating time to this specific purpose.<li data-bbox="628 613 1126 725">. All legal staff will contribute to a law reform submission annually – either in part or whole.<li data-bbox="628 770 1126 837">. The we understand what was achieved by our submission.
Collaborate with legal organisations and service providers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="628 931 1126 1037">. We will have an active involvement in Women’s Legal Services Australia (WLSA).<li data-bbox="628 1081 1126 1155">. We will integrate with and liaise with the Law Society.
Create and take up opportunities to contribute to public conversation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="628 1249 1126 1435">. We will take up opportunities to have a public presence and a public voice through media engagements, social media and community education.<li data-bbox="628 1480 1126 1702">. 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.

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="627 421 1129 533">. We will have consistent programs for each office each quarter, with realistic goals.<li data-bbox="627 577 1129 719">. We will gather information from our community to make sure we are servicing our funding and community needs.
Collaborate with other community legal services and community service organisations to determine need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="627 815 1134 927">. We will build and maintain beneficial relationships for stakeholders.<li data-bbox="627 972 1134 1158">. Our senior staff will take suggestions and liaise with prospective stakeholders to organise a schedule of outreach to be completed.

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="627 421 1102 533">. We will have consistent programs for each office each quarter, with realistic goals.<li data-bbox="627 577 1102 689">. We will discover community needs, and receive input from our stakeholders and clients.<li data-bbox="627 734 1102 801">. Develop a plan to satisfy our goals and community need.
Promote community legal education sessions online and through our stakeholder networks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="627 949 1145 1173">. We will promote community legal education sessions through our website and social media channels to ensure community awareness of what WLT can provide.<li data-bbox="627 1218 1062 1330">. We will use social media to provide information to our community.
Develop more education resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="627 1368 1102 1480">. We will ensure that our education resources are up to date.<li data-bbox="627 1525 1070 1592">. We will make our resources more accessible.
Work in partnership with other women's services and the legal assistance sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="627 1688 1118 1762">. Build and maintain stakeholder relationships.

Goal 7: Advice, Information and Referral

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

Strategy	Action
Manage and track the service need on the telephone advice line.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="627 383 1038 423">. Clarify our response time.<li data-bbox="627 461 1051 533">. We will improve the phone roster.<li data-bbox="627 571 1129 611">. We will ensure staff compliance.<li data-bbox="627 649 1129 763">. We will ensure we update our website with any changes made to the telephone advice line.<li data-bbox="627 801 1118 873">. We will improve our communication with our clients.<li data-bbox="627 911 1002 1025">. We will put into place a mechanism for quality assurance.<li data-bbox="627 1064 1090 1135">. We will seek to increase staff satisfaction and wellbeing.<li data-bbox="627 1173 1129 1335">. We will get better at managing the demand for the service, and make decisions regarding our capacity early.
Operate clinics for groups of client cohorts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="627 1417 1106 1489">. We will consider offering clinic sessions for client cohorts.
Develop strong referral networks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="627 1572 1129 1792">. Access a referral map for staff, using existing facilities developed by the Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania, FindHelpTas, and Relationships Australia.

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 data-bbox="627 461 1123 607">. Assist with legal and non-legal support for clients, setting clear outlines to ensure clear expectations.<li data-bbox="627 651 1086 835">. Regular all-of-staff meetings, discussing pressure points, resources, training, define activities and review targets and focus.<li data-bbox="627 880 1098 1025">. Revisit eligibility criteria for DVU and NPA funding, clarify the client agreement documents.
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 data-bbox="627 1077 1129 1335">. Greater collaboration with Women's Legal Services Australia (WLSA), National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC) and Community Legal Centres Tasmania (CLCTAS).<li data-bbox="627 1379 1107 1491">. Regular attendance at forums, and active participation in sector meetings.<li data-bbox="627 1536 1086 1720">. Develop new strategies for warm referrals between community legal centres and the Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania.<li data-bbox="627 1765 1129 1944">. Work on relationships with community sector organisations such as neighbourhood houses, and the Migrant Resource Centre.<li data-bbox="627 1989 1102 2096">. Implement and maintain stronger relationships with the courts.

Strategy

Action

- . 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.
 - . Better communication with the general public through media, social media, our website and community involvement to promote a better understanding of the service.
- Work in partnership with other women's services and the legal assistance sector.
- . Build and maintain stakeholder networks to identify innovative ways to respond to need.
- Supporting, respecting and promoting women in the legal profession.
- . Contact Tasmanian Women Lawyers, the Law Society and the Young Lawyers Committee to develop connections between women and the legal profession, including mentoring.