

Position Description

Solicitor



POSITION DETAILS

Employment Status	Full Time
Classification	SCHADS Level 4-6 (to be determined)
Reports To	Principal Solicitor
Location	Launceston

ORGANISATIONAL OVERVIEW

WLST provides a statewide community legal service for women in Tasmania, providing legal advice and information about legal and non-legal options through a dedicated telephone advice line, as well as face to face appointments, community legal education, outreach, drafting of law reform submissions and referrals to appropriate support services. Our clients are also supported by in-house financial counselling and social work services. WLST operates from three offices in Hobart, Launceston, and Burnie.

WLST is a community legal service funded by the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department in recognition that in addition to the general legal problems that can affect everyone, there are some areas of law in which a woman's experience is different – as a victim of a crime, as a primary carer of children, or through discrimination or lack of equal opportunity in employment or business.

Some women also face additional barriers in accessing justice due to factors such as cost, childcare responsibilities, and feelings of intimidation in going to Court or dealing with a male dominated legal profession and judiciary. Our work focuses on the needs of vulnerable women who often have experienced family violence, sexual abuse, child sexual abuse and or other forms of discrimination or abuse. We understand that this is challenging work, and we offer staff a supportive environment that aims to maintain their resilience. Other issues such as language barriers, cultural backgrounds, disability, sexuality, or geographical isolation can compound to make access to a legal service intimidating and difficult. Workers at WLST are sensitive to the diverse needs of women as individuals and as a part of the community.

WLST are committed to addressing the structural barriers that prevent women from accessing their legal rights as identified in the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. We strive for gender equality in all its forms.

POSITION OBJECTIVE

Under the supervision of the Principal Solicitor, the Solicitor will provide a high level of supportive, plain language legal advice, information and referral to women who contact the telephone legal advice line, the provision of face-to-face advice, preparation of written documents and correspondences, representation in court proceedings, and other legal work will be undertaken.

A large percentage of clients assisted by Women's Legal Service Tasmania have family law issues. However, calls and advice can relate to any area of law, and a commitment to professional development is important. It is expected the Solicitor will be able to sensitively take instructions from clients who have experienced family violence, sexual abuse, child sexual abuse and or other forms of discrimination and abuse, and provide support, advice and referral options within a trauma-informed framework.

The provision of community legal education (CLE) workshops, drafting of law reform and lobbying submissions, along with organisational and administrative responsibilities are also a component of this position.

Some intrastate travel may be required from time to time.

A full-time employee, the normal hours of work will be 38 hours per week, between 9:00am and 5:06pm, inclusive of a 30-minute lunch break.

KEY ROLE RESPONSIBILITIES

Legal Services

- Provide high-quality legal advice, information, referral, casework, and representation to clients in both State and Federal jurisdictions, ensuring efficient, appropriate and plain language service delivery, including preparation of documents, forms and correspondence.
- Provide an integrated and holistic client service, working with social workers and financial counsellors to address both legal and non-legal needs of clients.
- Assist to develop and co-deliver community legal education activities and resources, training and outreach programs in line with the work of the organisation, working collaboratively with key stakeholders to deliver these services.
- Maintain and develop relationships with key stakeholders in order to deliver outreach services to the community, with a focus on working in an integrated and collaborative manner.
- Assistance with research, preparation and presentation of law reform and lobbying submissions, working in consultation with other staff and key stakeholders to prepare submissions with reference to Women's Legal Service Tasmania's Strategic Plan.

Organisational Responsibilities

- Carry out the responsibilities of the position in accordance with the position description, the funding requirements and the overarching vision, mission and values, policies and procedures and Strategic Plan of Women's Legal Service Tasmania.
- Collaborate with multidisciplinary teams, including financial counsellors and solicitors, to provide holistic client services. Participate in regular case management meetings and contribute to team knowledge sharing.
- Contribute to organisational reporting, including reports to the Board, funders and other organisations.
- Be responsible for your own administrative work. The administration team provides some administrative support, however the nature of funding for community legal services does not enable full administrative support.
- Demonstrate the competencies in accordance with Women's Legal Service Tasmania's Core Competency Model. For reference, the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services (SCHADS) Award competencies for Level 5 are listed within this document.

KEY ROLE COMPETENCIES

Universal Competencies

Collaborative Approach

- Takes time to listen to and understand the perspectives of others.
- Uses language that demonstrates respect for colleagues and stakeholders at all times.
- Helps others consider new perspectives.
- Treats constructive feedback as a developmental opportunity.

Diverse and Inclusive

- Displays a willingness to engage with all people in a non-judgmental or non-discriminatory way.
- Ensures own conduct aligns with the values of Women's Legal Service Tasmania.
- Identifies and challenges behaviours that contravene the values of Women's Legal Service Tasmania.

Efficient and Contemporary

- Sets priorities, plans outcomes and organises work, and establishes the most appropriate ways to deliver a program.
- Provides reports on progress of program activities, including recommendations.
- Actively completes planning, study or research for particular projects, service design or implementation of procedures and presentation.

Healthy Workplace

- Practices self-care for good mental health and wellbeing.
- Recognises the significance of policy and procedures that guide workplace behaviours.

Quality Practices

- Displays motivation to engage in quality improvement projects and processes.

- Improves practices, increasing effectiveness and achieving efficiency and actively supports the application of sound quality practices.

Organisational Culture

- Actively engages in supervision and professional development opportunities.
- Establishes, builds and sustains effective relationships with colleagues and stakeholders.
- Acknowledges others' skills and expertise, encourages and contributes to the sharing of knowledge, and creates learning opportunities for others.

Client Related Competencies

Evidence based best practice

- Has an understanding of trauma and its impact across the lifespan.
- Identifies important issues for clients (e.g. mental, physical, social, occupational and spiritual needs) and collaborate with other team members at Women's Legal Service Tasmania to integrate support.
- Delivers a variety of appropriate interventions demonstrating a high level of knowledge and expertise.

Client focused

- Establishes, builds and sustains effective relationships with clients and their supports.
- Seeks to understand service needs from the client's perspective and ensures that the client's standards are met.
- Seeks to understand how the client relates to their own culture/s and community and, where relevant, how the client relates to the culture of their family.

Knowledge and application

- Provides care and support to clients within the boundaries prescribed by law and professional, national and local requirements, and codes of ethical practice.
- Engages in reflective practice.
- Demonstrates an extensive knowledge of resources and services for information and referral of clients.

Outcome evaluation

- Invites and involves clients in providing feedback on services and in service planning.
- Demonstrates program effectiveness with data.

SELECTION CRITERIA TO BE ADDRESSED IN AN APPLICATION

Essential

1. Admission as a Solicitor in the Supreme Court of Tasmania and the Federal Court of Australia with demonstrated knowledge of laws relevant to women, including but not limited to family law, family violence and child safety matters, and the ability to advocate, negotiate and liaise effectively on a client's behalf in a non-judgmental manner, assessing their safety, identifying risks and developing effective strategies which address their needs in a trauma informed way.
2. Excellent verbal communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to engage effectively with diverse groups, including working collaboratively within a team environment, supporting colleagues and contributing to a positive workplace culture.
3. High level written communication skills, including the ability to maintain accurate and complete client files in accordance with Women's Legal Service Tasmania procedures, and the ability to draft complex reports, collating statistics to demonstrate program effectiveness and case studies highlighting client outcomes.
4. Well-developed organisational and time management skills and ability to set priorities and monitor workflow.
5. High level computer and system skills, including Microsoft Office suite, word processing, spreadsheets, databases, email and calendars, and competence in Apple computers preferred.
6. Ability to work within and positively advance the mission and values of Women's Legal Service Tasmania, including a commitment to the social justice, equity, and empowerment of women, with an ability to drive innovation and continuous improvement in service delivery.
7. Hold a current Tasmanian Working with Vulnerable People (WWVP) Employment registration, and current and clear National Police Check (no more than twelve months old) or ability to obtain.

Desirable

1. Some knowledge of integrated and trauma-informed practice, as well as a familiarity and understanding of the role and challenges faced by the community services sector.
2. Demonstrated success in developing and maintaining community networks.
3. Current First Aid Certificate.
4. Full driver's license.
5. Prepared to travel intrastate as required.