

Position Description

Solicitor

POSITION DETAILS

Employment Status	Full Time
Classification	SCHADS Level 5
Reports To	Principal Solicitor
Location	Hobart/Launceston/Burnie

ORGANISATIONAL OVERVIEW

Women's Legal Service Tasmania (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's mission is to promote justice, equality, and safety for women, particularly those who are disadvantaged or facing discrimination. WLST also auspices a Working Women's Centre.

WLST is committed to protecting children, young people and other vulnerable people from harm and will require completion of screening checks prior to finalising employment.

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. Where appropriate, the provision of face-to-face advice, preparation of written documents and correspondence, and other casework will be undertaken. A large percentage of calls received by WLST relate to family law issues, however, calls can relate to any area of the law, and as such a commitment to professional development is important.

The Burnie and Launceston offices were established under the Australian Government Women's Safety Package, and function as a specialist domestic violence unit (DVU) to assist women and their families impacted by or experiencing family and domestic violence.

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 social workers, 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.
- Welcomes the opportunity to discuss competing points of view.

Diverse and Inclusive

- Displays a willingness to engage with all people in a non-judgmental or non-discriminatory way.
- Demonstrates unconditional positive regard toward internal and external stakeholders.
- Ensures own conduct aligns with the values of WLST.
- Identifies and challenges behaviours that contravene the values of WLST.

Efficient and Contemporary

- Sets priorities and monitors workflows, including establishing programs and activities.
- Sets priorities, plans outcomes and organises their own work and that of lower classified staff/volunteers, and establishes the most appropriate ways to deliver a program.
- Provides reports on progress of program activities, including recommendations.
- Delivers a variety of appropriate outputs, demonstrating a high level of knowledge and expertise.
- Undertakes analysis/design for project development, and/or complete programming in specialist areas.
- Meets commitments effectively and efficiently and delivers results on time.
- 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.
- Monitor and interpret legislation, regulations and other agreements relating to occupational health and safety.
- Undertake duties that require knowledge of procedures, guidelines or statutory requirements relevant to the organisation.

Quality Practices

- Displays motivation to engage in quality improvement projects and processes.
- Demonstrates program effectiveness with data.
- Undertakes analysis/design for the development and maintenance of projects in specialist areas.
- Improves practices, increasing effectiveness and achieving efficiency and actively supports the application of sound quality practices.

Organisational Culture

- Actively engages in supervision (reflective practice) 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.
- Provides expert advice to staff classified at lower levels and to volunteers.

Client Related Competencies

Evidence based best practice

- Has an understanding of trauma and its impact across the lifespan.
- Is able to complete comprehensive assessments, identify key stressors and plan support in response.
- Identifies important issues for clients (e.g. mental, physical, social, occupational and spiritual needs) and collaborate with other team members at WLST to integrate support.
- Delivers a variety of appropriate interventions demonstrating a high level of knowledge and expertise.
- Undertakes analysis and design for project development and completes programming in specialist areas.
- Actively completes planning study or research for particular projects, service design or implementation of procedures and presentations.

Client focused

- Establishes, builds and sustains effective relationships with clients and their supports.
- Demonstrates respect for family members and carer roles, acknowledging diverse family capacities and value systems.
- Seeks feedback on client satisfaction and takes remedial action as required.
- Expresses hope and optimism, applying a strengths-based approach and valuing client and family/carer knowledge.
- 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.
- Anticipates client needs and recommends potential solutions in compliance with WLST's regulations, rules and policies.

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.
- Participates in professional development relevant to role and professional interests.
- Engages in reflective practice.
- Supports less experienced colleagues and peers to develop rapport and facilitate engagement and communication with complex clients and families or carers.
- Guides less experienced colleagues and peers in assessing and responding to risk.
- 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.

Leadership Competencies

Supporting and collaborating

- Encourages and values input from others.
- Creates an environment of trust and open communication.
- Provides supervision to assigned staff.
- Actively build cooperation between staff.

Critically evaluating

- Is sought by others for advice and solutions on how to best interpret and use information.
- Establishes clear goals and outcomes for a work area.
- Provides reports on progress of program activities, including recommendations.

Achieving results

- Sets priorities and monitors workflow in specific area.
- Undertakes responsibility for a project or activity, including planning, coordination, implementation and administration.

Leading and deciding

- Provides expert advice to team members and management.
- Actively leads others in achieving outcomes.
- Operates as a specialist in a relevant discipline, making decisions in line with allocated delegations.

Strategic thinking

- Displays high level knowledge of the role of WLST, its structure and services.

Managing resources

- Looks for better ways to perform routine aspects of job or assignments.
- Puts things in sequential and logical order in preparation for accomplishing a goal.
- Identifies emerging risks and takes action to address.

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 experience in family law and an understanding of family and domestic violence through a gendered violence lens.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. Well-developed organisational and time management skills and ability to set priorities and monitor workflow.
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.
1. High level computer and system skills, including Microsoft Office suite, word processing, spreadsheets, databases, email and calendars, and competence in Apple computers preferred. Experience in using legal information programs such as Actionstep will be an advantage for this role.
2. Current First Aid Certificate.
3. Full driver's license.
4. Prepared to travel intrastate as required.