



women's  
legal  
service  
tasmania

**Financial Counsellor**  
Position Description

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. All offices will operate as Domestic Violence Units offering social supports. This includes access to a financial counsellor and social workers to assist clients consider their legal options.

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 (including family violence), 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.

WLST operates from three sites in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie. Statewide, the WLST team consists of the Chief Executive Officer, Principal Solicitors, casework and advice line solicitors, a social worker and a financial counsellor, supported by a Finance Manager, an Operations Manager, and Administration Officers.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the day-to-day running of WLST, the strategic direction of the organisation and the management of the team reporting monthly to our Board. The Principal Solicitors will be responsible for the operation of the legal practice and will provide guidance, support and supervision of the legal work completed within the legal practice.

The team of solicitors meet regularly to share information, discuss case management issues, collaborate on projects, plan community legal education, plan outreach, plan service promotion opportunities, and attend to planning and meeting our funding and administrative requirements.

WLST operates under a governance model with a volunteer Board of Management who provide leadership in relation to the strategic direction of the organisation, and oversight of the financial position of the organisation. The Board of Management consists of members with diverse backgrounds and professional experience, meeting once each month.

## Financial Counsellor

### POSITION DETAILS

Employment Status	<b>Full Time</b>
Classification	By Reference to <b>SCHADS Level 5 (to be determined)</b>
Reports To	<b>CEO and Principal Solicitor</b>

### POSITION OBJECTIVE

Under the supervision of the CEO and the Principal Solicitor, the Financial Counsellor will provide specialist family violence financial counselling services that assist women who have experienced or who are experiencing family violence to build their financial health, and to better understand their financial options during a separation or contemplation of separation.

The Financial Counsellor will work collaboratively with lawyers and social workers to support women to understand their consumer rights, and advocate to creditors, service providers and government, through face-to-face and telephone client interactions.

The Financial Counsellor will also deliver financial management community education programs and financial literacy programs.

The Financial Counsellor will also be required to attend monthly employee team meetings and contribute to a monthly report to the Board of Management.

Some intrastate travel may be required from time to time.

This position is made available through a grant from the Financial Counselling Foundation, which runs until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

### KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provide quality services in accordance with national standards for financial counsellors, and follow WLST policies and procedures.
- Assist to provide casework for clients to find a solution to their financial concerns and to gain an improved ability to manage their financial affairs in accordance with national standards for financial counsellors, including:
  - Assessing a client's overall financial position and formulate the client's financial action plan.
  - Providing current and accurate information on all possible options to address the client's specific problem, and the implications of these for her financial situation.

- Advocate and negotiate on a client's behalf with relevant stakeholders, including credit providers, as required, and to assist the client to develop the skills necessary to address their situation.
  - Be aware of other resources, groups and services in the community and refer clients where appropriate.
  - Work collaboratively with a multi-disciplinary team including solicitors and social workers within WLST and other community service professionals in a professional and respectful way to support women with an experience of family violence to build their financial health.
- Increase the knowledge and understanding of women and the community of family violence and financial abuse in particular by developing, implementing and co-delivering community education concerning family violence in the community and promote financial management and financial literacy, maintaining positive channels of communication with community service providers and key stakeholders.
  - Assist with reform of systems to help advocate for social change.
  - Maintain accurate client records and contribute to program reporting and evaluation through the provision of a monthly statistics report, the provision of a written consideration of the impact of the work delivered, the provision of a bi-monthly case study which illustrates the impact of the Financial Counsellor position, or other reporting methods as directed.
  - Assist with evaluation and documentation of the financial counselling program and other components of WLST interaction with clients through the inclusion of lived experience feedback of all services WLST provides (legal, financial counselling and social supports), and contribute to strategies to address these.
  - Attend and participate in WLST team meetings, access supervision to use debriefing processes, and maintain professional support through interaction with the wider financial counselling profession in Tasmania.
  - Engage in professional development activities through a connection with the Financial Counselling Australia (FCA) or another similar professional affiliation and maintain an up-to-date knowledge through accessing professional journals and related resources.

## **ESSENTIAL CRITERIA**

1. Hold a Financial Counselling qualification, and be eligible to become a member of Financial Counselling Australia (FCA) or another similar organisation.
2. Demonstrate personal attributes consistent with the philosophy of WLST, including modelling respectful behaviour in interactions with all clients and stakeholders, working within a feminist framework.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of financial issues affecting women, a conceptual understanding of the social and political contexts in which financial counselling services function and assist clients.

4. Demonstrate an understanding of legal issues affecting women, including barriers to justice, a knowledge of the law as it relates to family violence and an understanding of trauma informed practice.
5. Knowledge of relevant government regulations and other statutory requirements that are applicable to financial counselling services.
6. Competent counselling and interpersonal skills including negotiation and conflict resolution skills, and the ability to counsel clients in a supportive, non-judgemental manner, as well as an ability to advocate and negotiate on a client's behalf.
7. Ability to assess a client's financial situation through telephone and face-to-face interactions, including through outreach clinics, to identify possible options and communicate this knowledge to clients in a clear and effective way, supporting the client to develop self-determination skills.
8. A demonstrated ability to work alone or with minimal supervision, whilst taking direction from the CEO or Principal Solicitor.
9. Promote financial management programs and financial literacy in the community, identify opportunities and maintain positive channels of communication with community service providers and key stakeholders relevant to the WLST financial counselling program.
10. Proven strong level of initiative and organisational abilities, including time management skills and the ability to plan, organise and prioritise workloads.
11. Ability to maintain accurate and complete client file records in accordance with WLST procedures and good file management, as well as an ability to collate statistics and prepare written reports.
12. Commitment to professional and personal development, and willingness to develop further professional skills relevant to the workplace.
13. Hold a current Tasmanian Working With Vulnerable People (WWVP) Employment registration.
14. Hold a current and clear National Police Check (no more than twelve months old).
15. Aptitude in using Mac computers and Microsoft Office programs (such as Word and Excel) necessary to complete required tasks.

#### **DESIRABLE CRITERIA**

16. Hold a current unrestricted drivers licence.