



women's
legal
service
tasmania

Financial Counsellor
Position Description

Women's Legal Service Tasmania (WLST) provides a state-wide 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 operate as Domestic Violence Units, offering social supports to clients. 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. State-wide, the WLST team consists of the Chief Executive Officer, Principal Solicitors, casework and advice line solicitors, an allied health team consisting of social workers and a financial counsellor, supported by an Operations Manager, Administration Officers, and a Finance Administrator.

The state-wide team 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.

POSITION DETAILS

Employment Status	Full Time
Classification	By Reference to SCHADS Level 4-5 (commensurate with experience)
Reports To	Senior Social Worker and Chief Executive Officer

POSITION OBJECTIVE

Under the supervision of the Senior Social Worker, the Financial Counsellor will provide specialist financial counselling services to women who have experienced or who are experiencing family violence to build their financial health, and to better understand their financial options.

The Financial Counsellors within WLST work collaboratively within our integrated practice with lawyers and social workers to support women to understand their consumer rights, advocate to creditors, service providers and government through face-to-face, telephone and online interactions. Supporting clients in an outreach capacity is an expectation where the client can be supported in community and service partner locations. The Financial Counsellor also works within the allied team to help deliver financial management community education programs.

As WLST is a state-wide service, some intrastate travel may be required from time to time.

We encourage applications from Aboriginal women and women from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds. These applications may be subject to different criteria in line with special measures to promote equal opportunity in our workplace.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provide quality services in accordance with national standards for financial counsellors and follow WLST policies and procedures.
- Maintain accurate and complete client records and assist with collating statistics and case studies for reporting purposes and an evaluation of the program to illustrate the impact of the work delivered.
- 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 clients overall financial position and formulate the clients financial action plan.
 - Provide 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 entities, and assist the client to develop the skills necessary to address their situation.
- Work collaboratively with a multi-disciplinary team including solicitors, social workers, and financial counsellors 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. Assist with reform of systems to help advocate for social change.

- 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 and maintain professional support through interaction with the wider financial counselling profession in Tasmania.

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

1. Hold a Financial Counselling qualification with minimum two years' experience and experience or interest in community engagement, education, and training. Eligibility 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 and an understanding of and an ability to work in a trauma informed way, or the willingness to learn. Demonstrated high level interpersonal skills and the ability to manage conflict and difficult situations with resilience and confidence.
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. Ability to identify possible options and communicate this knowledge to clients in a clear and effective way, supporting the client to develop self-determination skills.
4. Competent counselling and interpersonal skills, and the ability to present in group settings in an outreach capacity. The ability to 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.

DESIRABLE CRITERIA

5. An understanding of legal issues affecting women, including barriers to justice, a knowledge of the law as it relates to family violence.
6. Competency in using Mac computers and familiarity with Microsoft Office for daily use.
7. Current unrestricted driver license for travel to outreach and community education sessions in rural and remote Tasmania.