

Position Description

Assistant Principal Solicitor

POSITION DETAILS

Employment Status	Full Time
Classification	SCHADS Level 7
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 and 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, and reporting to the Principal Solicitor, the Assistant Principal Solicitor will assist to manage legal staff and our numerous funding stream deliverables across the state. The Assistant Principal Solicitor will be responsible for their team's service delivery, reporting of key performance indicators (KPIs) and will support individual staff members through the oversight and quality control of legal practice.

The Assistant Principal Solicitor will commit to their own professional development, be open to receiving feedback on their performance, be committed to the process of self-reflection and to having open and honest conversations with those they manage. While management experience is desirable, WLST is committed to building capacity of women to hold these positions and will support the acquisition of management and leadership skills for an applicant who will commit to a professional development plan and who shares the values of the organisation.

The Assistant Principal Solicitor will also have a key role in ensuring WLST provides a safe workplace for staff, and legal services that deliver on our Strategic Plan and mission to empower women and provide a client centred approach that promotes each woman's economic, civil, social and cultural rights.

This role will also encompass direct service delivery to clients, being able to 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.

Some intrastate travel may be required from time to time to provide support to team members and clients in the other office locations.

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.
- Leadership and guidance in relation to the 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.
- Provide day-to-day management and support to legal staff through the oversight and quality control of legal practice and assistance with clarifying expectations regarding each team members contributions to key performance indicators such as community legal education, outreach, advocacy and reform, legal advice and tasks, and legal casework.
- Provide leadership and guidance to staff to provide service wide trauma informed and multidisciplinary support, empowering women and providing a client centered approach to realizing economic, civil, social and cultural rights.
- Contribute to organisational reporting, including reports to the Board, funders and other organisations, highlighting the achievements of their teams in terms of data integrity, numbers of services delivered, geographical locations, trends, challenges and opportunities. The main reporting focus for this position will be the services provided through the National Legal Assistance Partnership (NLAP), the Domestic Violence Units (DVUs), the Just Healthy Families (JHF) Health Justice Partnership, and the management of the attendant contractual activities.
- 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 7 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.
- Provides constructive feedback effectively
- Uses tact and discretion in dealing with sensitive information, and keeps staff informed of decisions and directives as appropriate.
- Leads effective and efficient meetings.

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 Women's Legal Service Tasmania.
- Uses knowledge of corporate politics to handle complex situations effectively and with discretion.
- Takes prompt and effective action to deal with unprofessional or unethical behaviour.

Efficient and Contemporary

- Allocates and controls financial resources within own area consistent with goals, priorities and budget.
- Organises people and activities, separates and combines tasks into an effective workflow to deliver project outputs according to a clear timeline.
- Is willing and able to provide expert advice to other areas of the organisation.
- Develops appropriate methodology and applies proven techniques for specialised service development.
- Demonstrates complex professional problem-solving skills.
- Provides advice on policy content and contributes to its development.

Healthy Workplace

- Practices self-care for good mental health and wellbeing.
- Recognises the significance of policy and procedures that guide workplace behaviours.
- Is accountable for actions taken and ensures that they are in full compliance with WLST regulations and rules.
- Advises and/or develops practical solutions to address resource issues that impact effectiveness of a team or project and the work to be delivered.
- Demonstrates comprehensive knowledge of policies and procedures.

Quality Practices

- Prepares evaluation research proposals for funding.
- Plans, directs and evaluates operations, including providing analysis and interpretation of outcomes
- Establishes operational procedures which impact on activities undertaken and outcomes achieved by WLST.
- Interprets evaluation findings.
- Assesses the effectiveness of current practices and develops innovative approaches to programme development and implementation.
- Ensures understanding and consistent application of quality management standards by staff members and stakeholders.
- Regularly reviews procedures and/or systems with teams to identify required improvements and apply them to processes.

Organisational Culture

- Establishes, builds and sustains effective relationships with colleagues and stakeholders.
- Actively engages in supervision (reflective practice) and professional development opportunities.
- Encourages staff members to learn continuously and to share knowledge through mentoring, networking and development, and training opportunities.
- Identifies and establishes systems and mechanisms to facilitate development of best practice and knowledge management.

Client Related Competencies

Evidence based best practice

- Is able and willing to provide expert advice to other areas of the organisation.

- Develops appropriate methodology and applies proven techniques for specialised service development.
- Demonstrates complex professional problem-solving skills.
- Provides advice on policy content and contributes to its development.

Client focused

- Establishes, builds and sustains effective relationships with clients and their supports.
- Demonstrates respect for family member and carer roles acknowledging diverse family capacities and value systems.
- Seeks feedback on client satisfaction and takes remedial action, as required.
- Develops, with clients, strategic and operational solutions that add value.
- Anticipates constraints in the delivery of services and identifies solutions or alternatives in compliance with WLST policies.
- Demonstrates commitment to quality services and assess their effectiveness.

Knowledge and application

- Provide care and support to clients and families 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.
- Develops and implements significant operational procedures.
- Undertakes the control and coordination of major work initiatives.
- Develop appropriate methodology and applies proven techniques in providing specialised services.
- Applies a high level of discipline knowledge.

Outcome evaluation

- Invites and involves clients and families/carers in providing feedback on services in service planning.
- Prepares evaluation research proposals for funding.
- Plans, directs and evaluates operations, including providing analysis and interpretations of outcomes.
- Establishes operational procedures which impact on activities undertaken and outcomes achieved by WLST.
- Interprets evaluation findings.

Leadership Competencies

Supporting and collaborating

- Encourages and values input from others.
- Creates an environment of trust and open communication.
- Provides supervision to assigned staff.
- Encourages different opinions and manages constructive conflict effectively.
- Encourages and values teams' input.
- Identifies and responds to underlying attitudes or behaviour patterns that may lead to team disharmony.
- Reacts purposefully to frustrations.
- Prepares and effectively runs meetings to achieve a specific objective.
- Negotiates in a constructive manner when tackling difficult issues.
- Makes realistic compromises during negotiations.

Critically evaluating

- Is sought out by others for advice and solutions on how to best interpret and use information.
- Develops conceptual frameworks that guide analysis.
- Draws sound conclusions based upon a mixture of analysis and experience.
- Reviews operations to determine their effectiveness.
- Establishes and monitors work outcomes.

Achieving results

- Establishes operational procedures which impact on activities undertaken and outcomes achieved by the team.
- Sets challenging goals for their area of responsibility.

- Assess and monitors the risks involved in team operations.
- Undertakes managerial functions across a range of services to achieve results in line with set goals.

Leading and deciding

- Shares new ideas and perspectives to adjust work approaches.
- Encourages others to see the positive outcome of doing things differently.
- Provide clear directions and priorities to teams.
- Delegates responsibility to individuals to make them accountable for successful execution.
- Organises teamwork to encourage co-operation and bring together complementary skills and expertise.
- Credits individual contributions and acknowledges team accomplishments.
- Facilitates the discussion and resolution of conflict or disagreement.
- Develops work practices and procedures for various projects.

Strategic thinking

- Manages complaints, ethical and other issues to protect WLST reputation and respect its obligations.
- Promotes a shared understanding of WLST needs and strategic direction.
- Develops and implements projects, programmes, and processes aligned with WLST strategic direction and needs.
- Actively and continuously expands own network to meet strategic goals.
- Identifies and creates opportunities to initiate new partnerships that will facilitate the achievement of strategic goals.
- Identifies and considers emerging development opportunities and risks when articulating new options and recommendations.

Managing resources

- Seeks ways to reduce costs.
- Ensures required resources and skill sets among staff are in-line with task requirements.
- Monitors budget usage and ensures critical costs are covered.
- Understands outcome requirements and aligns resources to achieve them.
- Responsibly allocates and accounts for the use of resources, weighing alternatives and their benefits.
- Demonstrates an understanding of the relationship between effective resource management and core WLST functions.
- Identifies emerging risks and take action to address.
- Effectively mitigates risks by selecting best methods to manage or avoid the risk.

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 with strong project management skills and the ability to manage multiple legal projects simultaneously, prioritizing tasks and deadlines.
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, with an ability to monitor and evaluate team performance, providing constructive feedback and ensuring accountability for the quality and timeliness of legal work.
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. 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 allocate resources effectively and drive innovation and continuous improvement in service delivery.

6. 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. Demonstrated experience in leading and managing a team of legal professionals, fostering a collaborative and high-performance culture, with an ability to monitor and evaluate team performance, providing constructive feedback and ensuring accountability for the quality and timeliness of legal work.
2. 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.
3. Proven ability to engage with internal and external stakeholders, including senior management, clients and other community services, to deliver effective legal solutions.
4. High level computer and system skills, including Microsoft Office suite, word processing, spreadsheets, databases, email and calendars, and competence in Apple computers preferred.
5. Current First Aid Certificate.
6. Full driver's license.
7. Prepared to travel intrastate as required.