

Position Description

Paralegal



POSITION DETAILS

Employment Status	Full Time
Classification	SCHADS Level 3
Reports To	Assistant Principal Solicitor/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

Working within our dedicated teams, the Paralegal will have the opportunity to work closely with our legal and allied professional teams to provide integrated, trauma informed legal support to our clients. Under the supervision of the Assistant Principal Solicitor or the Principal Solicitor, the Paralegal will provide practical support to all staff to achieve the objectives of the organisation.

This position will focus on the services provided through either the National Legal Assistance Partnership (NLAP), the Domestic Violence Units (DVUs), Temporary Visa Holders Experiencing Family Violence Program (TVP) or the Working Women's Centre (WWC) funding streams. More specific details will be provided within the position advertisement.

With offices right around Tasmania, 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

- Assistance with intake services for clients, including those contacting the 1800 telephone advice line, including gathering client demographic information, scheduling client appointments and entering information into our dedicated legal information database.
- Work under the guidance of the legal team to assist with taking instructions for and drafting documents, correspondence and agreements, and engaging in legal research where directed, with responsibility for document management, including proofreading, producing file notes, and attending to electronic and physical filing.
- Produce client correspondence and prepare court documents as required, specifically in the legal areas of family law, family violence, child safety matters, migration or employment related matters.
- Assistance with planning and provision of community legal education sessions, workshops, conferences and service promotion.
- 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.
- Provide some administrative services for legal and allied team members, including management of calendars, shared email inboxes, scheduling of appointments and meetings.
- Work collaboratively with team members, sharing knowledge, supporting colleagues, and contributing constructively through participation in regular case management meetings, professional development opportunities, and organizational reporting requirements.
- 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 3 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.
- Employs effective skills in oral and written communication with colleagues and stakeholders.
- Demonstrates an ability to support and guide Level 1 and 2 colleagues and volunteers with clarity and understanding.

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.
- Understands the rights of others to accept or reject assistance.
- Develops authentic professional relationships with colleagues and wider communities while maintaining safe and professional boundaries.

Efficient and Contemporary

- Solves problems of limited difficulty using knowledge, judgement and organisational skills.
- Undertakes planning and coordination of activities within a clearly defined area.
- Demonstrates a basic knowledge of the principles of human resource management, and able to assist Level 1 and Level 2 staff or volunteers with on-the-job training.
- Establishes goals and outcomes for their own work program or project.
- Undertakes planning and co-ordination of activities within a defined area or program.
- Manages and plans own work and that of volunteers, where relevant.
- Gathers relevant information about the context of issues and use this to guide practice.

Healthy Workplace

- Practices self-care for good mental health and wellbeing.
- Recognises the significance of policy and procedures that guide workplace behaviours.
- Demonstrates thorough knowledge of required work activities and relevant policies and procedures.
- Ensures Level 1 and Level 2 staff follow procedures and have an opportunity to increase their knowledge.

Quality Practices

- Exercises initiative in the application of established work procedures and establishes goals and outcomes for a particular work program or project.
- Solves problems of limited difficulty using knowledge, judgement and work organisational skills.
- Displays motivation to engage in quality improvement projects and processes.
- Seeks out resources and equipment to improve task completion.

Organisational Culture

- Participates in professional development relevant to role and professional interests.
- Actively engages in supervision (reflective practice).
- Establishes, builds and sustains effective relationships with colleagues and stakeholders.
- Readily identifies opportunities to exchange knowledge and information with peers and colleagues.
- Shares information and knowledge with Level 1 and Level 2 staff and volunteers.

Client Related Competencies

Evidence based best practice

- Contributes to adjusting services in response to client feedback.
- Ensures Level 1 and Level 2 staff follow procedures and have an opportunity to increase their knowledge.
- Has an understanding of trauma and its impact across the lifespan.
- Gathers relevant information about the context clients operate in and uses this to guide practice.

Client focused

- Establishes, builds and sustains effective relationships with clients and their supports.
- Seeks feedback on client satisfaction with the service provided.
- Expresses hope and optimism, applying a strengths-based approach and valuing client and family or carer knowledge.
- Engages in family focused practice, acknowledging clients sit within a context of family and community.
- Checks what client already knows before providing information and checks their understanding of information provided.

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.
- Solves problems of limited difficulty using knowledge, judgement and organisational skills.
- Undertakes planning and coordination of activities within a clearly defined area.
- Demonstrates a basic knowledge of the principles of human resource management, is able to assist Level 1 and Level 2 staff and volunteers with on-the-job training.
- Demonstrates thorough knowledge of required work activities and relevant policies and procedures.

Outcome evaluation

- Exercises initiative in the application of established work procedures and establishes goals and outcomes for a particular work program or project.

SELECTION CRITERIA TO BE ADDRESSED IN AN APPLICATION

Essential

1. Knowledge and experience of legal practice, with a demonstrated ability to prioritise tasks and achieve task completion to a high standard, with attention to detail. This includes the capacity to manage priorities, demonstrate flexibility, identify problems, propose practical solutions and implement improvements in administrative workflows.
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. Demonstrated ability to be objective and to manage client related situations with empathy and understanding for people under stress, while maintaining confidentiality and an awareness of trauma informed principles.
4. 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.
5. 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. 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.
3. Current First Aid Certificate.
4. Full driver's license.
5. Prepared to travel intrastate as required.