

Principal Lawyer

POSITION TITLE:	Principal Lawyer
REPORTING TO:	Chief Executive Officer
CLASSIFICATION:	EO2, plus 12% superannuation (\$176,699.00)
POSITION BASIS:	Full-time (38 hours per week)

ABOUT TEWLS

The Top End Women's Legal Service ('TEWLS') is a not-for-profit, specialist women's legal service focused on advancing the rights of women and non-binary persons. Located on Larrakia Land in Darwin, we support women across the Top End Region of the Northern Territory to access integrated, trauma-informed, and culturally secure free legal and support services. TEWLS is an accredited community legal centre and a member of Women's Legal Services Australia.

TEWLS provides legal and support services in the areas of family, migration and civil law, with specific expertise held in respect of domestic, family and sexual violence ('DFSV'). As a specialist DFSV legal service, our multidisciplinary team provides legal advice, casework and representation (litigation), legal information and referral, and wraparound support services to our clients, with expertise in assisting clients with intersectional vulnerabilities, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, culturally and linguistically diverse women, migrant women, women experiencing DFSV, women with a disability, and women experiencing financial disadvantage. Our client-centred practice model maintains a significant DFSV and family law legal practice, as well as migration law and an extensive civil law practice including in areas of tenancy and public housing, discrimination, sexual harassment, consumer law, complaints, child protection, and employment law.

TEWLS also provides community legal education and input on law and policy development to build government and community capacity to work towards deeper legal and cultural change to redress power imbalances and address violence and gender inequality.

In 2026, TEWLS is continuing to expand our service capacity to provide legal and support services to more women than ever before across the Top End.

POSITION SUMMARY

As a result of service expansion, a new executive structure has been approved by the TEWLS Management Committee to optimize client service impact, and support growth and sustainability (separating the Chief Executive Officer and Principal Lawyer roles).

The Principal Lawyer is responsible for supervising the legal practice and ensuring the service's compliance with Community Legal Centre Australia's risk management framework, as well as legal and regulatory requirements.

In consultation and collaboration with the TEWLS Chief Executive Officer, the Principal Lawyer will lead and operate TEWLS' legal and client support practices in line with the service's Strategic Plan, providing leadership, coordination and supervision in the provision of high quality, trauma-informed, culturally secure and holistic legal assistance, including legal advice, casework and representation (litigation), and legal information and referral within TEWLS' practice areas. Supervision of the TEWLS legal and client support teams will be shared with the TEWLS Deputy Principal Lawyer. The Principal Lawyer will also lead the service's community engagement building, community legal education ('CLE') and policy and law reform activities.

The Principal Lawyer will demonstrate integrity, clear communication, long term and sustainable thinking, and initiative to direct the work of the legal and client support practices, giving direction and leadership that is strategic, reasoned, and bounded, in collaboration with the TEWLS Chief Executive Officer. The Principal Lawyer will further drive the maintenance, development and as applicable, expansion of the legal practice in line with the service's strategic goals, while monitoring the practice's performance against TEWLS' strategic objectives and funding requirements.

Critically, the Principal Lawyer will have the skills to sensitively take instructions from clients who have experienced and/or are experiencing DFSV, child sexual abuse and other forms of discrimination and abuse by way of trauma-informed best practice principles, and provide support, advice and referral options within a trauma-informed framework.

In addition to the above, the Principal Lawyer will have responsibility for the coordination and/or carriage of complex projects, including complex casework and representation services, CLE and law reform. In undertaking their work, the Principal Lawyer will be expected to adopt and implement a respectful and multidisciplinary approach to practice, working collaboratively with staff in an environment that requires flexibility and adaptability, as well as excellent organisation and analytical thinking skills.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Legal advice and casework

- 1.1. Overseeing and ensuring all legal work and data collection undertaken complies with the *Legal Profession Act 2006* (NT), the CLCA Risk Management Guide, National Legal Assistance Data Standards Manual, relevant Professional Indemnity Insurance

requirements, and any other reasonable directions set by funding and/or regulatory bodies, and in accordance with TEWLS policies and procedures.

- 1.2. Overseeing and ensuring the quality of legal and client support work undertaken by the service is of exceptional standard.
 - 1.3. Maintaining and/or developing legal intake, advice, and casework guidelines in line with the service's strategic goals and/or funding requirements.
 - 1.4. Supervising and mentoring legal and client support staff, including but not limited to;
 - 1.4.1. Conducting regular file reviews with legal, as well as client support staff where appropriate;
 - 1.4.2. Conducting performance reviews with legal, as well as client support staff where appropriate, in collaboration with the TEWLS Chief Executive Officer;
 - 1.4.3. Monitoring legal and client support staff caseloads and overall capacity of the service's legal and client support practices;
 - 1.4.4. Participating in the induction and training of new legal and non-legal staff;
 - 1.4.5. Co-ordinating Continuing Professional Development opportunities for legal and non-legal staff in collaboration with the TEWLS Chief Executive Officer.
 - 1.5. Actively participating in the evaluation and implementation of continuing quality improvement in respect of the TEWLS legal practice.
 - 1.6. Providing high quality legal advice and casework to clients, including court representation at Northern Territory and Federal Courts, and have ongoing carriage of files, particularly those of a complex nature.
 - 1.7. Developing and/or maintaining a strong level of technical competence in TEWLS' core practice areas, including DFSV, and family law.
 - 1.8. Sensitively taking instructions from clients who have experienced DFSV, child sexual abuse and/or other forms of discrimination and abuse, and provide support, advice and referral options within a trauma-informed framework.
2. *Community legal education and law reform*
- 2.1. Planning and delivering CLE workshops and associated materials, as required, ensuring all the accuracy of all materials and mitigation of legal risk.
 - 2.2. Working within the TEWLS team, identifying, researching, and preparing law reform and lobbying submissions, as well as projects and funding applications, that contribute to TEWLS' purpose and service priorities.

3. *Stakeholder engagement*

- 3.1. Representing TEWLS in a variety of public forums to promote the work of the service, including network meetings and consultations.
- 3.2. Proactively developing and maintaining relationships with key stakeholders to deliver outreach services to the community, with a focus on working in an integrated and collaborative manner.

4. *Organisational responsibilities*

- 4.1. In collaboration with the TEWLS Chief Executive Officer, developing and leading change-management processes to implement strategies, projects and/or policies that impact positively on the deliver of TEWLS' services.
- 4.2. Preparing and maintaining precedent systems, including legal precedents.
- 4.3. Preparing and presenting high-quality reports and data to the TEWLS Chief Executive Officer and Management Committee in line with funding specifications and/or the service's strategic goals and objectives.
- 4.4. Accurately capturing all legal and non-legal service data through TEWLS' internal data and file management systems.
- 4.5. Attending and/or leading regular TEWLS staff, legal practitioner and client support meetings and planning day sessions as required.
- 4.6. Participating in regular performance discussions and development reviews.
- 4.7. Undertaking ongoing Continuing Professional Development in accordance with legal professional regulations, as well as service-specific professional development in accordance with TEWLS' policies and procedures, and in consultation with the TEWLS Chief Executive Officer.
- 4.8. Providing supervision to students and other volunteers as requested by the TEWLS Chief Executive Officer.
- 4.9. Ensuring compliance with TEWLS' policies and procedures.
- 4.10. Undertaking personal administrative duties within TEWLS as required.
- 4.11. Such other projects, activities and duties that may be determined in collaboration with the TEWLS Chief Executive Officer.

REQUIREMENTS

1. Admitted to practice/eligible to apply for an unrestricted practising certificate in the Northern Territory.
2. A minimum of seven (7) years' post-admission experience in Family Law and/or DFSV and/or Civil Law and/or Criminal Law, or 10 years' experience in a comparable legal practice.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Essential:

1. An understanding of legal issues facing women in the Northern Territory, including barriers to justice, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) women, migrant women, and women experiencing DFSV.
2. A commitment to promoting the interests of women.
3. An understanding and commitment to working in a trauma-informed framework.
4. Demonstrated resilience in working with clients who are experiencing or have experienced traumatic events.
5. Demonstrated management, legal supervision, mentoring and leadership experience, including demonstrated capacity to work collaboratively and ability to perform and interact as an efficient and productive team member.
6. Demonstrated ability to provide high quality legal advice, casework services, including court representation, with no or limited supervision.
7. Excellent verbal and written communication skills suitable for a range of audiences, including strategic and community stakeholders, as well as stakeholder management and negotiation skills.
8. Proven strong level of initiative and organisational abilities, including time management skills and the ability to prioritise while managing a diverse legal practice.
9. Proven strong level of initiative and organisational abilities, including time management skills and the ability to prioritise while managing a diverse legal and client support practice.
10. Commitment to professional and personal development, and willingness to develop further professional skills relevant to the workplace.
11. An understanding of DFSV through a gendered violence lens.

12. Holder of a current open driver's licence.
13. Aptitude in using Microsoft computers and Microsoft Office programs (such as Word and Excel) necessary to complete required tasks, and a willingness to perform administrative duties, as required.
14. Ability to provide and/or obtain a Northern Territory Ochre Card.

Desirable:

1. Demonstrated experience in the practice of Family Law and/or DFSV and/or Civil Law and/or Criminal Law, including but not limited to victims of crime compensation, discrimination, employment law, tenancy, consumer law, credit and debt, migration law, child protection, superannuation and estates, and general civil law..
2. Relevant experience in the development and delivery of CLE.
3. Relevant experience in law reform and lobbying.
4. Relevant experience in the review and/or development and implementation of practice guidelines, policies and procedures.
5. Relevant experience of working in a community legal centre, particularly a women's legal service.