

Position Description

Position:	WDVCAS Court Advocate
Reports to:	WDVCAS Co-ordinator
Award:	Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010
Classification:	Social and Community Services Employee; Level 4
Hours of Work:	As per the Contract of Employment

Position Context:

Warrina Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Services Co-operative Ltd (Warrina) is a not-for-profit organisation providing a range of support services for women and children who are experiencing domestic and family violence.

The North Coast Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (North Coast WDVCAS) is funded by Legal Aid NSW and managed by Warrina. The service provides information, referral, advocacy and support to women and children who are experiencing domestic violence and are considering legal intervention to ensure their ongoing safety and protection.

The North Coast WDVCAS employs a team of seven workers in full-time and part-time positions. Staff operate from the head office in Coffs Harbour, or from outreach offices in Kempsey and Grafton. Services are provided at Coffs Harbour, Bellingen, Macksville, Kempsey and Grafton Courts.

Purpose and Function:

The aim of the North Coast WDVCAS is to provide a holistic service that:

- Assists women and children who have experienced, or are experiencing, domestic violence to obtain effective legal protection from New South Wales Local Courts through applications for Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders (ADVOs);
- Facilitates clients' access to a network of professional services that can assist them with their other legal and social/welfare needs;
- Assists in building the capacity of local services to respond effectively to domestic violence.

The WDVCAS Court Advocate is responsible for assisting in the operation of the North Coast WDVCAS, and for the provision of high quality services to its clients.

This position requires an understanding of the gendered nature of domestic violence and the impact of exposure to domestic violence on children.

Duties and Responsibilities:

The WDVCAS Court Advocate will undertake the following duties:

Specific Responsibilities:

- Assist the WDVCAS Co-ordinator in the overall operation and administration of the North Coast WDVCAS;
- Assist the WDVCAS Co-ordinator to administer and review operational policies, systems and processes for the effective operation of the North Coast WDVCAS;
- Produce reports and documents as directed by the WDVCAS Co-ordinator;
- Work co-operatively and collaboratively with police, court staff, solicitors and other service providers to facilitate referral of clients to the North Coast WDVCAS;
- Provide clients with information about the court process and their options in relation to ADVOs and associated charge matters as requested and appropriate;
- Provide clients with access to information and referral, and advocate for effective and appropriate legal protection, including assisting clients with applications for Legal Aid, or assisting a woman to make an application for an ADVO with the police or Registrar.

- Attend court on allocated “List Days”, and hearing days where resources allow, as required for the effective provision of service to clients;
- Where possible, provide early referral of clients to legal practitioners for advice and representation;
- Work with the Domestic Violence Liaison Officer, police or Prosecutor to ensure ADVO conditions (provisional, interim and final), are appropriate to the clients’ needs;
- Work co-operatively and collaboratively with police, court staff, solicitors and other services providers to achieve the best possible outcomes for clients.
- Through dialogue, prioritise client safety at court and assess future potential safety risks, and provide strategies, information and referrals as appropriate.
- Facilitate clients’ access to relevant services, including but not limited to; legal, health, housing, financial and children’s services, and Victims of Crime Counselling and Compensation.
- Manage client files and data to ensure, where possible, that clients are aware and prepared for future court appearances and hearings;
- Attempt to contact clients following finalisation of their ADVO matters, before closing the file;
- Collect, record and input data as required by service guidelines;
- Co-ordinate discrete projects and services under the direction of the WDV CAS Co-ordinator;
- Represent the North Coast WDV CAS at relevant meetings, forums and seminars as requested by the WDV CAS Co-ordinator;
- Maintain an understanding of the relevant legislations and policies relevant to domestic violence and child protection.
- Other duties consistent with the position, as required by the WDV CAS Co-ordinator.

Team Work and Staff Development:

- Participate in staff meetings, staff development activities, training, supervision and performance appraisals;
- Engage in peer supervision as required;
- Positively participate as a team member within the North Coast WDV CAS and the organisation as a whole.

General Responsibilities:

- Comply with organisational policies and procedures;
- Prioritise workload and meet deadlines.

Organisational Relationships:

- Board of Directors of Warrina;
- Manager of Warrina;
- WDV CAS Co-ordinator
- Other North Coast WDV CAS staff.

Other Relationships:

- Clients of the Service;
- Local police, courts, legal representatives, referral agencies and other service providers;
- WDV CAS Network;
- Funding body.

Physical Demands and Work Environment:

- Due to the nature of the service, there is an inherent risk of violence in the work environment. Organisational policies and procedures are in place to manage the risk to workers and clients.
- The position requires travel between the office and other locations on a frequent basis as a normal part of duties.

Conditions of Employment:

The conditions of employment are those which apply under the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Award 2010, the National Employment Standards, and the Contract of Employment.

Selection Criteria

Position: WDV CAS Court Advocate

Selection Criteria:

The organisation considers that being female is a genuine occupational qualification under Section 31 of the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW).

Essential Criteria

- Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the dynamics, complexities, and legal and social-welfare consequences of domestic violence;
- Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the criminal justice response to domestic violence, including ADVO applications, criminal prosecutions, and related legal matters such as family law, care and protection, migration, and victim's compensation issues;
- Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of Legal Aid NSW policies in relation to grants of Legal Aid for people in domestic violence matters;
- Ability to deliver services in accordance with organisational policies and procedures;
- Ability to implement service delivery strategies aimed at ensuring relevant, accessible and responsive service to a diverse range of women and children;
- Ability to work with the broader community to promote awareness of domestic violence and WDV CAS services;
- Knowledge and understanding of privacy and confidentiality issues;
- Demonstrated negotiation, advocacy and conflict resolution skills;
- Knowledge of, and an ability to work effectively with, interpreter services;
- Excellent communication and networking skills;
- Good organisational, administrative, and time-management skills;
- Good understanding of computers and information technology;
- Ability to pass the "Working with Children Check";
- Current NSW driver's licence and access to a private vehicle for work use.

Desirable Criteria

- Relevant tertiary qualifications.