

# CAWLS

Women's Legal Service  
**INFORMATION PACK**

To obtain a placement at CAWLS prospective volunteers must complete a CAWLS Application Form and submit it together with all the required attachments. The Application Form contains a checklist to assist in the preparation of the application.

At the time of applying for a placement at CAWLS, volunteers are also required to have read this Information Pack.

## **Intake**

Applicants should note that an intake of volunteers is conducted on an ad hoc basis and when required by CAWLS.

- All applications will usually go through an interview process. CAWLS decision making process is based upon careful consideration of the requirements of our service.
- Successful applicants commence volunteering with CAWLS on a date suitable to both the applicant and CAWLS.
- Unsuccessful Applicants will be notified by CAWLS.
- For management purposes, volunteers sign a volunteer contract.
- The volunteer contract may be extended by invitation from CAWLS.
- In order to obtain a reference from CAWLS the student volunteer needs to have attended and assisted their chosen office a minimum of 4 weeks.

## **Finalisation of volunteer contract**

A volunteer contract can be finalised prior to the end of the specified period upon request from the volunteer or CAWLS.

A volunteer contract is voided upon a volunteer applying for a position with CAWLS.

## **Continuing in the volunteer program after being admitted**

Applicants who have become admitted while volunteering with CAWLS can continue volunteering until they have been interviewed for a position at CAWLS. Once the volunteer is interviewed for a permanent position with CAWLS the volunteer contract is ended.

Applicants who become admitted while volunteering with CAWLS should note that **THEY ARE NOT PERMITTED TO GIVE ADVICE OR REPRESENT ANY CLIENT OR MEMBER OF ANY OTHER ORGANISATION IN NT COURTS – nor should there be any expectation to do so.** Failure to adhere to this requirement will be considered a **serious** breach and will result in the volunteer's placement being **terminated**.

### **Student Hours**

The CAWLS office operates Monday to Friday 8.30 am and 5.00 pm.

Volunteers **must attend on their rostered day/s** from 8.30 am until 5.00 pm unless other hours have been negotiated with the Business Manager.

The hours can be varied due to university and work commitments with prior approval of the Business Manager.

### **The work**

CAWLS operates throughout Central Australia and the Barkly regions. CAWLS clients are women from all backgrounds however the majority of our clients are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. CAWLS provides legal services in the areas of Domestic Violence, Family Law, Care and Protection of Children, Injury Compensation and Tenancy as well as other civil law matters.

The work at CAWLS can vary from very interesting to mundane tasks. Any student who wishes to undertake a volunteer placement must be flexible enough to accommodate any such work request from their supervisor or other authorised CAWLS staff member.

CAWLS will attempt to accommodate any request made by a volunteer in relation to the type of legal work undertaken. Ultimately this is determined by the requirements of the service.

Volunteers should be aware that CAWLS is instructed in matters such as domestic and family violence, child protection and other matters which may be considered disturbing. The volunteer could be required to work on such files and should be prepared to do so. If a volunteer has concerns they should raise this with their supervisor immediately.

A volunteer may be involved in research to assist the solicitors in the preparation of their cases for the various Courts in which they are representing CAWLS clients. Volunteers may also be asked to conduct legal research to assist CAWLS in law reform activities.

Volunteers may be required to run errands for the office. Such activities may include delivery and collection of documents, lodging documents at Court Registries, service of subpoenas, etc.

Volunteers will undergo an orientation process and will be provided with a copy of CAWLS policies which apply to all staff and volunteers.

**ALL NON ADMITTED SOLICITOR VOLUNTEERS ARE REMINDED THAT, AS THEY DO NOT HAVE A PRACTISING CERTIFICATE ISSUED BY THE NT LAW SOCIETY, THEY ARE NOT PERMITTED TO GIVE ANY FORM OF LEGAL ADVICE TO ANY CLIENT OR MEMBER OF ANY OTHER ORGANISATION (even if that volunteer knows the answer to the question they are asked). Failure to adhere to this requirement will be considered a **serious** breach and will result in the volunteer's placement being **terminated**.**

**ALL NON ADMITTED SOLICITOR VOLUNTEERS ARE REMINDED THAT, AS THEY DO NOT HAVE A PRACTISING CERTIFICATE ISSUED BY THE NT LAW SOCIETY, THEY ARE NOT PERMITTED TO REPRESENT ANY CLIENT OR MEMBER OF ANY OTHER ORGANISATION IN NT COURTS – nor should there be any expectation to do so. Failure to adhere to this requirement will be considered a **serious** breach and will result in the volunteer's placement being **terminated**.**

#### **The office environment**

Smoking is strictly prohibited in every CAWLS office and vehicle. Smoking is to only occur in approved areas and cigarette butts are to be disposed of in an approved manner.

#### **Use of the mobile, internet and email**

Volunteers must comply with CAWLS Information Technology policies. Work/Client related emails should NOT be sent from a volunteer's personal email. Emails relating to a client should be sent from the CAWLS Volunteer Email Account.

CAWLS does not provide mobile numbers or other contact details of its staff or management committee members to clients and therefore volunteers should not use their personal mobiles to contact clients.

#### **Absences**

Volunteers who for some reason will be arriving late, leaving early or needing to have time off during the day are expected to notify the Business Manager in advance, and to restrict such absences to unavoidable commitments: time at the office is to be treated as time in an ordinary working environment. If a volunteer cannot be at the office on a rostered day, they are expected to give advance notice to the Business Manager.

**Unexpected absences are to be notified via a phone call to the office.**

**The primary consideration for any volunteer in this situation is not simply to honour an obligation to attend the office, but to ensure that CAWLS clients' interests are being addressed and maintained.** A volunteer must make suitable arrangements for fellow volunteers or the supervising solicitor to attend to files in the event of a volunteer's absence.

If given tasks to complete on a file, it is expected these tasks will be completed speedily and comprehensively. If the task cannot be completed during the day, the volunteer should inform the solicitor or volunteer coordinator.

### **Dress Code**

Volunteers should bear in mind that they are not only representing CAWLS but also representing CAWLS clients.

At all times all staff must be neatly and appropriately dressed. We are working in a legal environment and therefore will not be able to predict when we will be asked to assist in:

- a Court;
- with clients; or
- serving documents to other agencies.

Smart casual attire in the office is acceptable for the office and staff should be professionally clothed when attending Court. All staff should be dressed in a manner that will allow them to attend to the above at short notice.

Any questions in this regard to CAWLS dress code should be discussed with the relevant supervisor.

### **Motor Vehicle Usage**

Volunteers who drive the company vehicle should be aware of the clauses in CAWLS motor vehicle policy, bearing in mind that the driver shall be responsible for the payment of any parking or traffic infringement incurred.

Volunteers will be asked to provide a copy of their current Drivers Licence to the Business Manager on commencement.

### **Ethical Conduct**

CAWLS staff and volunteers conduct and behaviour should reflect the character lawyers aspire to have as a profession.

This means that as individuals engaged in the profession and as a profession:

- We primarily serve the interests of justice.
- We act competently and diligently in the service of our clients.
- We advance our clients' interests above our own.
- We act confidentially and in the protection of all client information.
- We act together for the mutual benefit of our profession.
- We avoid any conflict of interest and duties.
- We observe strictly our duty to the Court of which we are officers to ensure the proper and efficient administration of justice.
- We seek to maintain the highest standards of integrity, honesty and fairness in all our dealings.

**For further information in relation to the Central Australian Women's Legal Service (CAWLS) please refer to our website at [www.cawls.org.au](http://www.cawls.org.au)**