

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania

and

Women's Legal Service Tasmania

Introduction

The Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania ('LACT') is a statutory body set up by the *Legal Aid Commission Act 1990* (Tas).

LACT's objectives include:

- Ensure that the right people can access legal services;
- Deliver high-quality legal services to recipients of legal aid;
- Provide the right mix of information, advice and representation services;
- Support an efficient and effective court system; and
- Use taxpayers' funds appropriately by providing legal aid in the most effective, efficient and economical manner.

LACT provides services to people who have experienced and/or perpetrated family violence. This includes:

- Information, advice and representation for people involved in family violence proceedings;
- Information, advice, representation and social support for people involved in family law proceedings where there are allegations of family violence;
- Information, advice and representation for people charged with criminal offences arising from family violence; and
- Community legal education and outreach services about family violence.

The Women's Legal Service Tasmania ('WLST') is a community legal centre set up in Tasmania. It receives funding from the Commonwealth and State governments.

WLST objectives are to:

- Support and empower women and girls achieve gender equality in its many forms throughout their lives;
- Provide specialised legal support services to women who have an experience of family violence, through our Domestic Violence Units based in Launceston and Burnie
- To provide holistic client centred legal services to women within a feminist framework in a trauma informed way;
- To encourage cultural conversations about family violence throughout the Tasmanian community and challenge the dominant culture that is permissive of family violence;
- To responsibly use public funds

WLST provides specialist services to women who have or are experiencing family violence. This includes:

- i) Operating a 1800 advice line for women throughout Tasmania;

- ii) Outreach, including clinics;
- iii) Representation, advice, referrals and information;
- iv) Community legal education;
- v) Financial counselling

WLST also provides other legal support for women to achieve equal access to the law.

Purpose

This agreement, whilst acknowledging the independence of the LACT and the WLST, reflects a joint commitment to the provision of effective and responsive legal services that address family violence.

The purpose of this document is to guide a partnership that strives to:

- ❖ Assist people who have experienced family violence to understand and use the justice system;
- ❖ Improve the co-ordination of family violence services to the Tasmanian community; and
- ❖ Provide a framework for collaboration and exchange of information between LACT and WLS.

Objectives

- To work in partnership to improve the access of women and children who have experienced family violence to high quality legal aid services.
- To identify and maintain opportunities for collaboration to deliver services, including outreach services, in a targeted and cost-effective manner in pursuit of our mutual objectives.
- To share knowledge and skills by setting up professional networks within each organisation and participating in joint training opportunities for staff.

- To foster professional co-operation through personal contact points and regular stakeholder meetings.
- To continue to assist, cooperate and consult with each other so far as is reasonably practicable in meeting these objectives.
- To continue to regularly discuss together how to maximise legal services to women and children who have experienced family violence whilst avoiding duplication.

Agreement

The LACT and the WLST shall work towards meeting the objectives of this agreement by:

1. Sharing professional knowledge, expertise and practice resources.
2. Identifying and providing opportunities for training and mutual support.
3. Setting up a framework for easy and effective communications, with key individuals within each practice area to act as central contact points for information. Meeting between key practice individuals of each organisation shall be held at least quarterly.
4. Sharing information about the services provided by each organisations across Tasmania and exploring ways of improving co-ordination of family violence services.
5. Documenting and improving referral pathways.
6. Maintaining an open dialogue about the needs of people experiencing family violence through regular meetings with each other and with any other identified stakeholders.
7. Sharing statistical information that may identify risks and trends to better-target services.
8. Promoting the services of each organisation and the role of each organisation within the legal assistance sector and within government and the community.
9. Providing support for law reform submissions and research where appropriate.

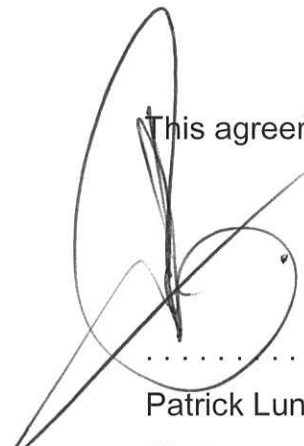
10. Maintaining an effective professional relationship between the LACT and the WLST.
11. Publishing this Memorandum of Understanding on their websites.
12. Encouraging staff to embrace the spirit of the Memorandum and to identify new ways in which both organisations can give effect to the objectives expressed in this document.

Commencement, Review and Termination

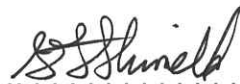
This Memorandum of Understanding:

13. Commences on the date it is signed by both agencies.
14. Will be reviewed every two years on the anniversary of the commencement.
15. May be terminated by either party with 21 days' written notice.

This agreement starts on the 4th day of June 2020.



.....
Patrick Lunn
Chairperson
LACT



.....
Sonia Shimeld
Chairperson
WLST