



Top End  
**Women's**  
Legal Service

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**2024 - 2027  
STRATEGIC PLAN**



Boston Consulting Group generously donated their time and expertise to support and facilitate the development of our strategy. We are so grateful for your assistance.



The TEWLS office is located on the land on the Larrakia people, Australia's First People and Traditional Custodians. Always was, always will be.



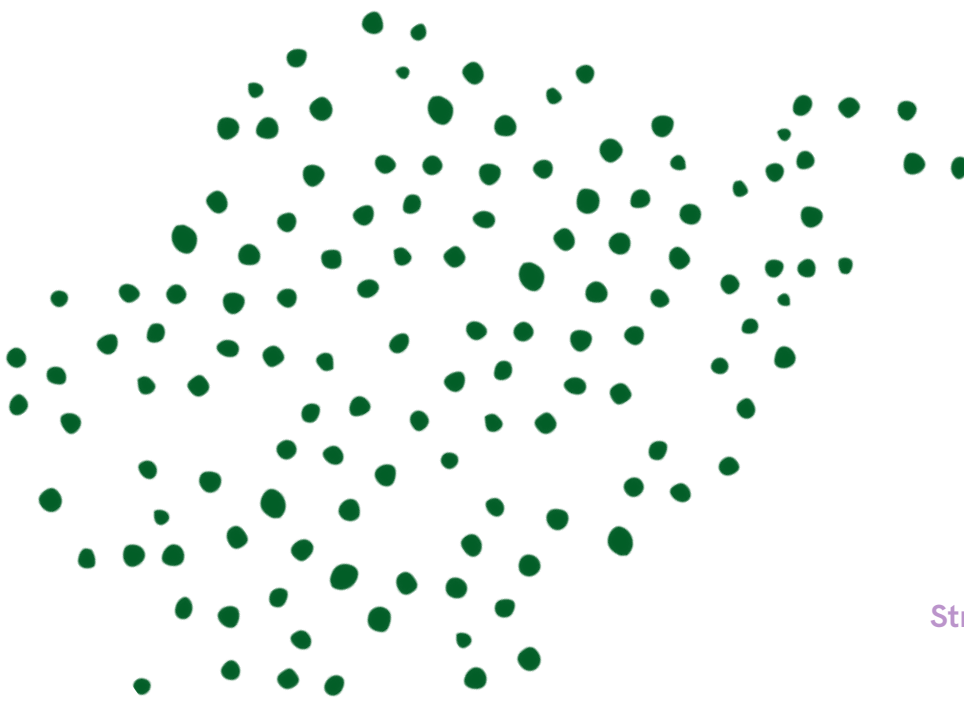
TEWLS is committed to the provision of legal and client support services within an intersectional feminist lens, with our clients encompassing all women and non-binary persons in the Top End.



## ADVANCING WOMEN'S RIGHTS

**Women in Australia continue to encounter disproportionate and significant barriers to justice, safety, and equality.**

**That's why we're working to provide free legal help for women & non-binary persons across the Top End of the Northern Territory.**



## OUR VISION

**A community in which women enjoy and are entitled to legal and social justice.**



### **Women continue to experience significant legal and social disadvantage.**

Across the world, women continue to be disadvantaged as a consequence of gender - patriarchal systems impact our everyday lives, including accessing equal justice. Gender equality is a human right that everyone can, and will, benefit from.

Women and non-binary persons experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV) experience x10 the number of legal issues than someone not experiencing DFSV. And in the Northern Territory, DFSV continues to be a gendered issue, with women experiencing the highest levels of violence. We're working to change this.

Our model of legal and social support aims to provide prevention, response, and healing services to women through integrated **legal** and **client support** initiatives across family, civil and migration law. We're with our clients from beginning to end.

[tewls.org.au](http://tewls.org.au)

# HOW WE DO IT

**Creating a Top End Region where women and non-binary people have equitable access to justice, are empowered and able to live their lives free from violence.**



## SOCIO-LEGAL SUPPORT

Supporting women to gain equitable access to integrated, holistic, trauma-informed, and culturally secure free legal and support services in the Top End. This is our core focus



## EDUCATION

Empowering women to make informed legal choices and assisting women to achieve fair outcomes, including by educating women to know their legal rights.



## ADVOCACY

Advocating for laws and policies that respect and promote women's rights, drawing on our experience on-the-ground providing legal and social support in our community.



## COMMUNITY UPSKILLING

Building the capacity of our community to identify and respond to the legal needs of women and non-binary people,



## LISTENING & RESPONSE

Continuing to reflect on, listen and respond to the needs of our community, including improvements to existing and creation of new initiatives.

# 2024 - 2027 STRATEGY

## Vision

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A community in which women enjoy and are entitled to legal and social justice.

## Mission

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Be the go-to legal service provider for vulnerable women and non-binary people in the Top End who cannot access private legal assistance for civil, family, and migration law matters, enabling them to make informed legal choices and achieve justice.

## Strategic Pillars

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### Maintain & deepen our wraparound legal supports within our current geographic reach

- Reduce our turn-away rate
- Continue to build our in-house Family Law expertise for highly complex matters
- Advocate to expand to any other relevant areas of law



### Support & broaden our integrated socio-legal offering

- Expand our capacity to provide increased client supports for our legal clients
- Broaden the kinds of in-house client support we provide for legal clients



### Continue & enhance our focus on community and policy advocacy

- Where possible, free up service capacity to deepen engagement in legal and social policy advocacy



### Review our geographic reach across the Top End

- Identify priority locations for future clinics based on need
- Foster relationships with communities and service providers
- Seek funding partnerships to extend services to new locations

## Enablers

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Being a first-choice feminist employer



Sustainable & strong funding relationships to scale our impact



Measuring our impact to understand unmet need



Structures to support multi-disciplinary staff



Collaboration with other providers, peak bodies & communities





## Maintain & deepen our wraparound legal supports within our current geographic reach.

We'll maintain and deepen our legal and client supports for our clients to ensure they are receiving trauma-informed, culturally secure, and best practice services.

We'll increase our capacity in the Top End Region to reduce the number of women and non-binary persons turned away from our critical services.

### Key initiatives

#### INCREASED ADVOCACY TO GOVERNMENT AND PHILANTHROPIC FUNDERS

Continue and increase our advocacy and engagement with both the Northern Territory and Commonwealth Governments, as well as philanthropic funders, to attract increased funding for core business.

Engage with funding and legal assistance sector stakeholders to increase focus on and capacity in Child Protection litigation matters, with every party in a proceeding receiving specialist legal advice and representation.

#### SPECIALIST LEGAL & ADVOCACY TRAINING

We'll invest in additional specialist legal (Family Law) and advocacy training for our Legal Practise to continue to meet and increase our representation capacity of our most vulnerable clients, particularly in Family Law matters.

By 2027



**Less than 20% of clients turned away** each year (representing at least an 18% reduction in turn-aways).



**Funded expansion** into relevant areas of law, such as Child Protection litigation.



**More than 20% of Court Representation matters** will be in Family Law matters, including urgent recovery order and complex parenting matters.

### Support & broaden our integrated socio-legal offering.

To embody the vision of Women's Legal Services, we'll support and broaden our integrated socio-legal services for our clients, including culturally secure client supports, and related social support professions.

We'll continue to provide wraparound client support to our clients and will work to increase the availability of these supports to all ongoing TEWLS clients.

#### Key initiatives

##### INCREASED ADVOCACY TO GOVERNMENT AND PHILANTHROPIC FUNDERS

Continue and increase our advocacy and engagement with both the Northern Territory and Commonwealth Governments, as well as philanthropic funders, to attract increased funding for core business.

##### SPECIALIST UPSKILLING & RECRUITMENT

We'll invest in specialist upskilling and recruitment into our socio-legal team as funding becomes available, including social workers and financial counsellors.

In the interim, we'll maintain our current stakeholder relationships and engagement with the specialist support sector in the Top End Region, and grow our connectivity with new providers to ensure best practise service provision.

By 2027



**50% of ongoing clients** will engage with and receive support from TEWLS' socio-legal team.



**Increased socio-legal professions employed at TEWLS**, including social workers and financial counsellors.



**Funded expansion** of socio-legal TEWLS employees.



### Continue & enhance our focus on community and policy advocacy.

We'll drive the creation of a Top End Region that is safe and equitable for women and non-binary persons, particularly in our community's access to justice.

We'll grow the ways we platform the voices of women and non-binary persons in our community, while sharing our knowledge and expertise to contribute to community understandings of legal issues, such as domestic, family and sexual violence.

#### Key initiatives

##### INCREASED ADVOCACY TO GOVERNMENT AND PHILANTHROPIC FUNDERS

Continue and increase our advocacy and engagement with both the Northern Territory and Commonwealth Governments, as well as philanthropic funders, to attract increased funding for core business.

##### SPECIALIST UPSKILLING & RECRUITMENT

We'll invest in specialist upskilling and recruitment into our Legal Practise team, and if possible, expand into dedicated policy roles to increase service capacity and focus on community education, engagement, and advocacy.

By 2027



**Increased proactive legal and social policy submissions**, including identification of and advocacy to all levels of Government about issues impacting TEWLS' clients.



**Increased participation in media, community education and stakeholder activities**, including at a national level with Women's Legal Services Australia.



**Funded expansion** to increase service capacity.



### Review our geographic reach across the Top End.

We'll review our role, service profile and geographic reach across the Top End Region to ensure that all women and non-binary persons are able to seek equal and equitable access to justice.

We'll maintain and grow our relationships with communities and service providers and engage in meaningful engagement to respond to growing levels of demand for our gender-specialist socio-legal services.

#### Key initiatives

##### INCREASED ADVOCACY TO GOVERNMENT AND PHILANTHROPIC FUNDERS

Continue and increase our advocacy and engagement with both the Northern Territory and Commonwealth Governments, as well as philanthropic funders, to attract increased funding for core business.

##### DEFINE OUR ROLE IN THE TOP END REGION

We'll identify, build and consult with communities and service providers to define and amplify our role in the Top End Region, including investment in data collection and analysis.

By 2027



**Identified priority locations for expansion** across the Top End Region published.



**Funded expansion** to increase service capacity and geographic reach.



**50% of all community and service provider participants** will be from remote areas (i.e. outside of the Greater Darwin Region).

# ENABLERS



## We'll focus on five (5) enablers to drive this growth -



### Being a first-choice feminist employer

Focus on evaluating and expanding TEWLS employee provisions, allowances and opportunities, with focus on providing best practice and leading employment standards.



### Collaboration with other providers, peak bodies & communities

Create an engagement and collaboration framework that defines how TEWLS responds to collaboration requests and proactively collaborates with our community.



### Sustainable & strong funding relationships to scale our impact

Refine and deepen the way we engage with all levels of Government, as well as philanthropic and commercial partners:

- Develop a scale-up Action Plan, focusing on expanding our services within current parameters.
- We'll explore the development of further, targeted engagement plans.



### Structures to support multi-disciplinary staff

Continue to grow strong management and support structures for TEWLS' multi-disciplinary staff, including requisite supervision, upskilling, and reflective practice.

- Strengthen existing and develop new policies and internal guidelines to support staff recruitment, retention and upskilling.
- Maintain and expand current supervision and reflective practice frameworks.



### Measuring our impact to understand unmet need

Focus on data governance practices and develop data analysis capabilities within TEWLS, as well as part of the legal assistance sector.

- Capture and embed our existing data practices.
- Develop an enhanced data governance structure, growing our analytics capabilities.

