



Support persons and protecting your legal rights

We want to make sure your legal rights stay safe.

To do this, we need to meet with you alone. WLSQ does not generally allow support people in legal appointments because this can remove an important legal protection called **legal professional privilege**.

A support person can include:

- a friend
- a family member
- a professional paid support worker

As a legal service, we must follow Australian law to protect this privilege.

If your support person is a family member or friend, they may also be a witness in your case. There is a rule that states lawyers cannot talk to you and a witness in your case at the same time.

What does confidentiality mean?

Confidentiality means what you tell your lawyer is private.

We do not share your information unless:

- you give us permission, or
- the law says we must.

What is legal professional privilege?

Legal professional privilege protects your private communications between you and your lawyer when you seek legal advice or assistance.

This includes:

- What you tell your lawyer
- What your lawyer tells you
- Any documents, files or representation

This means what you tell us, and any documents we prepare on your behalf, cannot be used against you in court or shared without your consent.

Why is privilege important?

Privilege lets you speak honestly with your lawyer. It allows your lawyer to fully understand your situation and provide the best advice.

If privilege is lost, your conversation could be shared in court.

For example, if a support person is in the room, and they are required to attend court as a 'witness' in your matter, they could be asked what was discussed between you and your lawyer in court. This weakens your legal protection

What can I do if I need support?

We understand that legal appointments can feel overwhelming.

If you feel you need someone for support, tell us before your appointment and we will discuss your options.

How can a support person help me?

Support persons can help you outside of the legal advice appointment.

This may include helping you to do practical things like preparing a written summary of your situation, preparing some questions to ask during the appointment, writing a to do list, finding services to help you and getting your paperwork ready for the appointment.

What if I need an interpreter in my appointment?

If you need an interpreter for language or disability access, they can attend your appointment. Their job is only to help you and your lawyer communicate.

This does not remove your legal protection. The law treats it as if you and your lawyer spoke the same language.

Can my support call WLSQ for me?

No. When you need legal advice, it is important that we speak to you directly because there are rules lawyers must follow about keeping your information private and getting information from you.

If a support person wants to help you to book a legal advice appointment, they can use the warm referral process on the WLSQ website, or they can assist you to call our Helpline.

This factsheet includes general information only and is not a substitute for legal advice.