

A day in the life

Domestic Violence Duty Lawyer



🕒 8.30am

Today I am one of the two female duty lawyers at the Townsville Magistrates Court for domestic violence matters.

As people check into court, we are notified which women would like to speak with a duty lawyer. Our first job is to complete conflict checks on all prospective clients and the other party in their matter, and if the conflict check is clear we request documents from the Court.

🕒 9.00am

The first section of the court list is for matters that have been before the court previously.

I have three matters in this section. One matter is able to be finalized because the Respondent consents without admissions to a final domestic violence order against him. The order will last for five years and requires the Respondent to be of good behavior to my client, not commit domestic violence against my client, and not contact my client except with her written consent.

The other two matters need directions from the Magistrate for the parties to file evidence in the form of affidavits which the Magistrate makes in the standard time, giving the Applicants 5 weeks to file their material and the Respondents 4 weeks to file their response.



my
women's
legal service

🕒 10.00am

This section of the list is for new police applications.

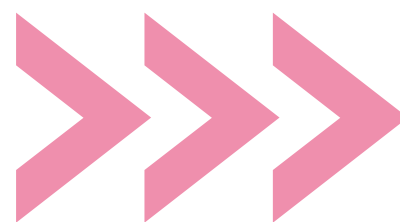
I have one client and she is the Respondent in a police application against her. My client instructs me that her ex (the Aggrieved) arrived at her home uninvited and smelling of alcohol, and took their 2 year old daughter without agreement. My client tried to take her daughter back from him, leaving scratch marks on his arms which he showed to the police. We seek an adjournment so that my client can provide her version of events to the police in the form of written submissions so that they can assess whether the aggrieved really needs protection from her.



🕒 11.00am

This list is for urgent applications seeking Temporary Protection Orders prior to the Respondent being served.

My client's application details a long history of physical, verbal and sexual abuse by the Respondent with photos of physical injuries sustained by my client and screenshots of intimidating and derogatory text messages. The Respondent has just located my client again despite her having no contact with him for three months and moving to Townsville without telling him. The Magistrate issues a Temporary Protection Order ex parte which the police will serve later today.



🕒 after court

Lunch time!



🕒 2.00pm

I spend the afternoon writing up my notes from my cases this morning, and sending letters of advice to my clients about what happened in court.

I also complete my invoice for Legal Aid Queensland so that our service can be paid for the time I was a duty lawyer this morning under the Duty Lawyer funding.

