

First Nations Witness Assistance Service (WAS) Officer

Directorate: Justice and Community Safety

Business Unit: Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ACT)

Branch: Witness Assistance Service

Position Number: TBA

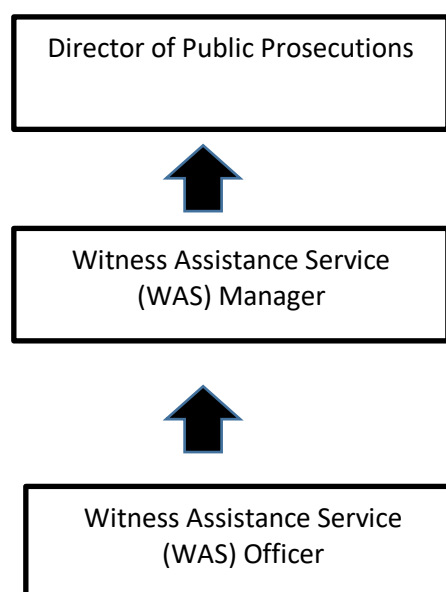
Position Title : First Nations Witness Assistance Service (WAS) Officer

Classification: ASO Grade 5

Location: 20-22 London Circuit, Canberra City, Ngunnawal Country

Last Reviewed: July 2026

Reporting Relationships



The Australian Capital Territory Public Service (ACTPS) is a values-based organisation where all employees are expected to embody the prescribed core values of respect, integrity, collaboration and innovation, as well as demonstrate the related signature behaviours.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS OVERVIEW

The ACT Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions was established by the *Director of Public Prosecutions Act 1990* (the Act) to institute, conduct and supervise prosecutions and related proceedings. It comprises the Director of Public Prosecutions (the Director), an independent statutory officer appointed by the ACT's Executive branch of Government, and staff employed under the *Public Sector Management Act 1994*, to assist the Director. The principal role of the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions is to:

- institute and conduct prosecution for criminal offences, both summary and indictable.
- institute and respond to appeals.

The Office maintains a strong adherence to the values of the ACT Public Service Code of Conduct.

WAS TEAM AND POSITION OVERVIEW

The Witness Assistance Service (WAS) is an integral part of the ACT Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP). The team comprises professional and para-professional staff who act as a link between prosecutors and victims, witnesses, and their families in matters before the court. The WAS team recognises that criminal proceedings can be traumatic and isolating for victims of crime, and re-traumatising for victims of crime. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims and witnesses, it is acknowledged that these experiences may be compounded by historical and contemporary interactions with government and justice systems, inter-generational trauma, and barriers to accessing culturally safe support. The WAS team is committed to providing trauma-informed, culturally responsive support throughout the criminal justice process.

The role of the Witness Assistance Service (WAS) officer is to advocate on behalf of victims and witnesses, from within the DPP structure, to ensure best practice and a trauma informed approach by the DPP. The role provides procedural support and information to witnesses and victims to ensure they can understand the Court proceedings and supports them to fully participate. The role liaises with other agencies to refer vulnerable victims and witnesses for further professional support and services.

This position has been established to strengthen the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions' ability to provide culturally safe and responsive support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims and witnesses engaging with the ACT criminal justice system. The role contributes Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander perspectives, cultural knowledge and lived experience to improve access to justice, engagement and service delivery for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The position sits within an established team of dedicated Witness Assistance Service (WAS) Officers. The role reports to the Witness Assistance Service Manager, who supports the development of the WAS team, manages workflow and allocations, and assists with complex matters requiring advocacy. WAS Officers are further supported through ongoing guidance, mentorship and professional development provided by Senior WAS Officers.

CULTURAL CAPABILITY AND SAFETY

The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) and ACT Public Service (ACTPS) is committed to centring the voices of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people and being guided by their unique and valuable lived experiences. The ODPP recognises the strength, resilience, cultural authority and diverse experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and is committed to working in ways that respect and values these strengths. The ODPP further recognises that cultural safety is a shared responsibility, and all staff are expected to contribute to creating and maintaining a culturally safe, respectful and inclusive workplace and service environment.

This position has a strong focus on improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims and witnesses engaging with the ACT criminal justice system. It requires a demonstrated understanding of historical and contemporary issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including the impacts of intergenerational trauma, interactions with justice systems and barriers to accessing support services. The successful applicant will demonstrate cultural capability when engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims, witnesses, families, communities, Elders and Traditional Custodians.

We acknowledge that this role may result in increased cultural load and are committed to providing a culturally and psychologically safe workplace. Supports available include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff networks, culturally appropriate Employee Assistance Program services, cultural debriefing opportunities, access to regular, external supervision and ongoing discussions with managers regarding cultural safety and wellbeing.

This is an identified position in accordance with Section 27(4) of the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* and is only open to an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander lived experience and cultural capability are considered essential, and confirmation of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage may be requested.

WHAT YOU WILL DO

The successful applicant/s will have exceptional interpersonal skills to enable them to regularly liaise with vulnerable victims and witnesses as well as external agencies.

The successful applicant will:

1. Provide culturally safe, trauma-informed support to victims and witnesses, ensuring information, advice and court proceedings are understood and accessible throughout their engagement in the ACT criminal justice system.
2. Advocate for vulnerable witnesses by ensuring they understand and can meaningfully exercise their rights, responsibilities, and entitlements.
3. Provide cultural advice and practical guidance to ODPP prosecutors and other agencies to promote a shared approach to providing access to justice services to vulnerable witnesses.
4. Contribute to continuous improvement of organisational cultural capability by sharing cultural knowledge, lived experience perspectives and advice.
5. Identify, advocate for and contribute opportunities to improve service delivery, cultural safety and access to justice outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims and witnesses.
6. Build and maintain respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, families, and communities to strengthen trust, engagement and access to justice outcomes.

WHAT YOU REQUIRE

The following capabilities form the criteria that are required to perform the duties and responsibilities of the position.

Core Capabilities:

1. Excellent oral and written communication skills, with the ability to present information clearly and effectively, including strong case note writing skills.
2. Demonstrated Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultural capability, including a strong understanding of the historical and contemporary experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, inter-generational trauma and how these may affect engagement with the criminal justice system.
3. Ability to apply Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander lived experience, cultural knowledge and community perspectives to build trust, strengthen engagement and inform culturally responsive service delivery.
4. Excellent organisational skills, including the ability to effectively manage, prioritise and coordinate a complex and time sensitive workload, and to meet deadlines in a fast-paced environment.

Professional Capabilities:

5. Ability to work in an ethical and professional manner within a multi-disciplinary team, set priorities and work without direct supervision whilst engaging with legal practitioners, police officers, support services and court staff.
6. Well-developed analytical skills with the ability to implement improvements in the workplace while considering relevant legal procedures affecting vulnerable witnesses.
7. Demonstrated ability to contribute to culturally safe environments and advocate for culturally responsive practices within a multidisciplinary workplace.
8. Demonstrated ability to exercise sound judgement, maintain confidentiality and navigate sensitive matters with professionalism, cultural integrity and respect.
9. Relevant qualifications in social work, counselling, psychology, community services or related disciplines are highly desirable. However, the ODPP and ACTPS recognises that capabilities may also be developed through professional experience, community leadership, cultural knowledge, lived experience and informal learning. Candidates who can demonstrate the required capabilities through these pathways are encouraged to apply.

Other Capabilities

10. Resilience in the context of dealing with confronting material.
11. Uphold the values and principles of the ACT Public Service, with demonstrated commitment to promoting a culturally safe and inclusive workplace as well as the ACT Public Service Respect, Equity and Diversity framework, ACT Public Service Performance framework and Workplace Health and Safety framework.

Compliance Requirements / Qualifications

1. This position requires a Working with Vulnerable People Check and a National Police Check.
2. This position is an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander identified position. Applicants must identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Confirmation of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage may be requested during the recruitment process in accordance with ACTPS identified recruitment requirements.

Eligibility Requirements

The ACTPS accepts the below working criteria in accordance with the Section 27(4) *Public Sector Management Act 1994* as a basis to confirm cultural identity:

- Is a descendant of an Aboriginal person or a Torres Strait Islander person; and
- Identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person; and
- Is accepted as an Aboriginal person or a Torres Strait Islander person by an Aboriginal community or Torres Strait Islander community.

It is important to note that the ACT Government does not accept Statutory Declarations to confirm Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity for the purpose of identified positions.

APPLICATION

To apply for this position, please provide:

- a completed Application Coversheet.
- contact details for two referees.
- a resume/curriculum vitae that outlines your skills and experience.
- a response addressing the identified capabilities of no more than two (2) pages, describing how your knowledge, experience and qualifications meet the skills and capabilities required for this role.
- As part of the recruitment process applicants may be requested to provide evidence of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander identity and/or cultural connection, or participate in assessment of cultural capability consistent with ACTPS identified recruitment requirements.

**Note:*

- *Selection may be based on application and referee reports only.*
- *This process may form a merit pool to be utilised in the filling of future vacancies.*

WORK ENVIRONMENT DESCRIPTION

The following work environment description outlines the inherent requirements of the role of *Witness Assistance Service Officer* and indicates how frequently each of these requirements would be performed. Please note that ACTPS is committed to providing reasonable adjustment and ensuring all individuals have equal opportunities in the workplace.

ADMINISTRATIVE	FREQUENCY
Telephone use	Frequently
General computer use	Frequently
Extensive keying/data entry	Frequently
Graphical/analytical based	Frequently

Sitting at a desk	Frequently
Standing for long periods	Occasionally
Designated workstation	Frequently

STANDARD HOURS	FREQUENCY
Flexible working hours (access to flex time)	Occasionally
Fixed or specified start/finish times	Occasionally
Expected to work extensive hours over a significant period due to the nature of the duties	Occasionally
Access to Accrued Days Off (ADO's)	Never
Peaks and troughs	Occasionally
Frequent overtime	Never
Rostered shift work	Never

SOCIAL DEMANDS	FREQUENCY
Work with others towards shared goals in a team environment	Occasionally
Work in isolation from other staff (remote supervision)	Occasionally
Working in a call centre environment	Never
Working directly with the public	Frequently

PHYSICAL DEMANDS	FREQUENCY
Distance walking (large buildings or inter-building transit)	Occasionally
Working outdoors	Never

TRAVEL	FREQUENCY
Frequent travel – multiple work sites	Occasionally
Frequent travel – driving	Never
Frequent travel – interstate	Never

SPECIFIC HAZARDS	FREQUENCY
Working at heights	Never
Exposure to extreme temperatures	Never
Operation of heavy machinery e.g. forklift	Never
Confined spaces	Never
Excessive noise	Never
Low lighting	Never
Handling of dangerous goods/equipment	Never
Working with asbestos	Never
Potential to encounter agitated customers	Occasionally
Exposure to potentially distressing case material	Frequently

OTHER	FREQUENCY
Uniform required	Never
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) required	Never

