



# Become an Aboriginal Guardian ad Litem

We're looking for people from all walks of life to join our Guardian ad Litem Panel.

## What is a Guardian ad Litem?

A Guardian ad Litem (GAL) is someone who must make decisions relating to the conduct of legal proceedings for a person who is:

- incapable of representing themselves
- incapable of giving proper instructions to their legal representative
- under legal incapacity (due to age, mental illness or incapacity, disability, or other special circumstances in relation to the conduct of the proceedings).

The role of a GAL is to make decisions that protect and promote the interests of the person they are appointed to (the client). They are an **independent advocate** and provide a link between the client and the client's legal representative. It is important to note that a GAL does not act as a lawyer. A GAL is authorised to make decisions in the best interests of the client.

## About the role

GALs are mostly appointed in the Children's Court when it is the court's opinion that a child or parent is incapable of giving proper instructions to their legal representative. They can also be appointed in the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal, Supreme Court and District Court.

GALs are **paid volunteers**. They can choose their working hours and perform the role alongside other paid employment. They can also claim court preparation and travel expenses.

## What we're looking for

We're looking for people who are compassionate and committed to making a difference.

To be considered for this role, you must have:

- qualifications in social, health or behavioural sciences or related disciplines, or equivalent experience
- mediation, advocacy and decision-making skills
- the ability to communicate effectively with various professionals and family members
- basic knowledge of legal proceedings and the legal process
- knowledge of issues affecting children and young people, and people with illness, disability or disorder, which may affect their decision-making capacity.

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## Apply now

The Department of Communities and Justice is responsible for organising a GAL following an order by a participating court or tribunal. The department maintains a GAL Panel with members who are eligible for appointment as a GAL in court or tribunal proceedings.

You can express your interest to join the panel and find out more about the role at [dcj.nsw.gov.au/guardians-ad-litem](http://dcj.nsw.gov.au/guardians-ad-litem).

After submitting your application, the department may contact you to arrange an interview. Successful applicants are required to pass probity checks including Working with Children.

If you are successful in being appointed to the GAL Panel, the department will offer training to support you in the role.



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*“The role of a GAL is to advocate for your client, to ensure that their legal rights are protected and that their voices are heard in the court.”*  
– Bobbi Murray, Barkindji, Ngiyampaa and Malyangapa woman and GAL

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Artwork by Charmaine Mumbulla, Mumbulla Creative. In this artwork, two large circles represent the GAL and the client. The circles connect on a pathway that symbolises the relationship of trust between the GAL and the client. Together they embark on a journey through the justice system.