



The Australian Advocacy Institute and Victoria Legal Aid

FAMILY LAW ADVOCACY SKILLS WORKSHOP -

WORKSHOP INFORMATION, TIMETABLE AND TASK ALLOCATIONS

Wednesday 5 November 2025 - 5.00pm* to 6.30pm – ONLINE

Thursday 6 November 2025 - 5.00pm* to 6.00pm – ONLINE

* Zoom meeting will open for connection from 4.30pm

Saturday 8 November 2025 - 8.45am to 3.45pm – IN-PERSON

VENUE: Commonwealth Law Courts, Melbourne

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Family Law - Advocacy Skills Workshop

5, 6, & 8 November 2025



Please read the information below immediately and thoroughly as it is important to your preparation and contribution to learning at the workshop.

Dear Workshop Advocate,

The AAI and Victoria Legal Aid are pleased to be able to provide this advocacy workshop for you and we are sure that you will find this course helpful in improving your advocacy skills. The purpose of this workshop is to help you structure your advocacy, how to prepare, how to ask purposive relevant questions, how to argue, and how to be persuasive in court.

Workshop Program:

Part 1: Introductory Session 1. ONLINE – Wednesday 5 November, 2025 - Time: 5.00pm to 6.30pm

Part 2: Introductory Session 2. ONLINE – Thursday 6 November, 2025 - Time: 5.00pm to 6.30pm

Part 3: Advocacy Performance Skills Workshop IN-PERSON – Saturday 8 November, 2025
Time: 8.45am to 3.45pm. Venue: Commonwealth Law Courts, William Street, Melbourne

Workshop format:

The following “**Timetable and Task Allocation**” details the format for this workshop. At the start of the following Timetable you will find a table that allocates a GROUP and an ADVOCATE TASK NUMBER for each advocate.

Sessions 1 & 2 of this workshop will be conducted ONLINE using a dedicated ZOOM platform (See further details below).

On Saturday, Group Performance Sessions and General Sessions have been scheduled through the day. In the Group Sessions, you will break into smaller groups to individually **present your allocated advocacy tasks** before a Judge/Trainer in the same manner that you would present in court. You will find your allocated advocacy tasks set out within each session of the timetable below.

Once you have finished each performance you will be given a review by the AAI instructor. This review is designed to be positive, not critical. You will be given advice on ways that your individual performance can be improved using various advocacy skills, including a demonstration and explanation of the particular skills relevant to your performance.

A note on the nature of the AAI Trainer Reviews:

The AAI philosophy behind the AAI skills training method is on identifying ways in which each advocate can improve their advocacy, based on his/her performance of each task during the workshop. The AAI trainer will suggest, then demonstrate a skill that will allow each individual advocate to improve. You will not necessarily be complimented on what you may have done well, but that does not mean you have not shown good skills in other areas. It is just a better use of the limited workshop time to encourage improvement over praise.

The Workshop Case Studies:

We acknowledge that the case studies used, while relevant to Family Law, may not be the type you generally deal with. We use these case studies deliberately as we believe them to be very good for the teaching of advocacy, demonstrating skills that can be applied in any jurisdiction. The advocacy skills you will learn are of universal application – the same skills apply regardless of the type of case, the jurisdiction you appear in or the side you appear on. This has been proven over three decades of advocacy instruction by the AAI.

Please don't get bogged down in your preparation with any legal technicalities within the case studies. Don't research or bring statutes or precedents. Do not be distracted with “the law”. Evidence is restricted to **only** that contained within each case study so don't look outside the immediate information provided. We are not concerned with jurisdictional procedure.

A note on the case study “Wilson v Wilson”:

For the purposes of this workshop, the evidence-in-chief of the witnesses is not on affidavit and their evidence will be adduced orally. (You can assume no procedural or judicial impediment to this). Advocates may assume that the witnesses will give evidence in accordance with the instructions contained in the brief.

You will be asked to act as a witness for other advocates.

When a task requires a witness in Evidence in Chief or Cross Examination, the Timetable nominates an advocate from your group to act the witness role. **THIS MAY BE YOU**, so a thorough knowledge and understanding of the facts of each case study will help both you and your colleagues get the most out of the workshop. Know the witness statements to the same degree you would expect of the witness when it is your turn to present. Evidence is restricted to **only** that contained within each case study, so please do not embellish, add or make up evidence.

Preparation before the workshop:

This is a performance-based workshop. You are required to prepare each of your set tasks between now and the commencement of the workshop. Please **allow yourself time to prepare properly** – it is anticipated that you should allocate 6 hours+ for this preparation. Please prepare in advance – do not wait until after the Wed/Thurs. introductory sessions.

If you are not totally familiar with the requirements of any particular advocacy task, you may find it helpful to refer to the “Specific Advocacy Tasks” summary at the end of the Course Materials document. I also recommend you consult the “AAI Advocacy Manual” PDF document provided as part of the workshop materials. The Manual has detailed chapters on all the aspects of advocacy you will be using at this workshop. Copyright restrictions require this version to be ‘read only’ and thus cannot be printed.

Task Performance:

The Timetable task allocations have a time limit for each task performance. Please prepare as if you were to present the whole of the task. The time allocation means you may not be able to present all of that task and you are not expected to be able to finish your performance. Do not rush and try and fit it all into the allocated time. Your review will be on that part of the task you present, not the parts you may not have reached.

Online format and log-on instructions for Wednesday/Thursday ONLINE sessions:

The workshop will be conducted using the ZOOM platform, with advocates required to log-on from their own computer. A log-on link is in the timetable overpage and can also on the AAI Workshop Webpage under each workshop day heading. The same log-on details will be used each day.

On Saturday, dress is casual. Morning tea and a light lunch will be provided. Please let the AAI Coordinator know of any dietary requirements.

Please contact the AAI Coordinator by email [aai@advocacy.com.au] should you have any questions regarding the format, your preparation or tasks required at the workshop.

Regards



Scott Wallace

General Manager, Australian Advocacy Institute.

Email: aai@advocacy.com.au

WORKSHOP TIMETABLE

Wednesday 5 November 2025 - ONLINE

4.30 to 5.00pm

Advocates log-on to Zoom Workshop.

Click on this link for automatic log-on:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2716263497?pwd=cjZmOXRROUp0dUVpaTdaWEM2TEwyQT09>

(ID = 2716263497 Password = Advocacy)

SESSION 1 5.00 to 6.30pm (90 mins)

General Session	Introduction to Advocacy. Case Theory and Argument.
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Thursday 6 November 2025 - ONLINE

4.30 to 5.00pm

Advocates log-on to Zoom Workshop.

Click on this link for automatic log-on:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2716263497?pwd=cjZmOXRROUp0dUVpaTdaWEM2TEwyQT09>

(ID = 2716263497 Password = Advocacy)

SESSION 2 5.00 to 6.00pm (60 mins)

General Session	Techniques in Cross Examination. Communication in court.
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ADVOCATE TASK NUMBER

This is your ADVOCATE NUMBER and is used to determine which **TASKS** you will be performing in the timetable that follows.

No	RED GROUP	BLUE GROUP
1.	Bec Helberg	Caroline Smith
2.	Eric Myles	Natasha Griffiths
3.	Nadine Di Blasi	Amanda Rajah
4.	Taylor Bono	Stephanie Walsh
5.	Tom Schneider	Nickie King
6.	Veronica Snip	Jelena Sarenac

Saturday 8 November 2025 – IN-PERSON
VENUE: Commonwealth Law Courts, William Street, Melbourne

SESSION 3		8.45 – 19.00 (15 mins)
General Session	Introduction to the AAI trainers. Introduction to the workshop.	
SESSION 4		9.00 – 10.00 (60 mins)
Group Performance Session	<u>APPLICATIONS</u> <u>Case Study 1: Wood v. Simpson</u> TASK: ADVOCATE: 1 Present application for injunction on behalf of Ms SIMPSON TASK: ADVOCATE: 2 Present application for injunction on behalf of Ms SIMPSON TASK: ADVOCATE: 3 Present application for injunction on behalf of Ms SIMPSON	
Task Performances in Group: 4 minutes per task		
Trainer Review: 4 minutes per advocate	<u>Case Study 2: Davies v. Riverside Grammar</u> TASK: ADVOCATE: 4 Present application on behalf of DAVIES TASK: ADVOCATE: 5 Oppose application on behalf of RIVERSIDE GRAMMAR TASK: ADVOCATE: 6 Present application on behalf of DAVIES	
Morning Tea Break 10.00 to 10.15 (15 mins.) - provided		
SESSION 5		10.15 – 11.25 (70 mins)
Group Performance Session	<u>EVIDENCE-IN-CHIEF and CROSS EXAMINATION</u> <u>Case Study 3: Wilson v Wilson</u> TASK: ADVOCATE: 3 (Witness role: ADVOCATE: 1) For Applicant, lead Evidence in Chief of Margaret Wilson TASK: ADVOCATE: 4 (Witness role: ADVOCATE: 1) For Respondent, Cross Examine Margaret Wilson (Applicant) TASK: ADVOCATE: 6 (Witness role: ADVOCATE: 2) For Respondent, lead Evidence in Chief of Julie Wilson TASK: ADVOCATE: 5 (Witness role: ADVOCATE: 2) For Applicant, Cross Examine Julie Wilson (Respondent) TASK: ADVOCATE: 1 (Witness role: ADVOCATE: 6) For the Applicant, Cross Examine Dr Foster TASK: ADVOCATE: 2 (Witness role: ADVOCATE: 5) For the Respondent, Cross Examine Dr Gloucester	
Task Performances in Group: 5 minutes per task		
Trainer Review: 5 minutes per advocate		

SESSION 6		11.25– 12.15 (40 mins)	
General Session		Applying the CASE THEORY	
SESSION 7		12.15 – 12.45 (30 mins)	
Group Session		<u>REVISION:</u> Advocates revise their notes for performance in Sessions 8 & 9 in light of feedback received in earlier performance reviews.	
LUNCH BREAK 12.45 to 1.15 (30 mins.) – light lunch provided			
SESSION 8		1.15– 2.20 (65 mins)	
Group Performance Session		<u>CROSS EXAMINATION</u> <u>Case Study 3: Wilson v Wilson</u> TASK: ADVOCATE: 2 (Witness role: ADVOCATE: 3) For the Respondent, Cross Examine Margaret Wilson TASK: ADVOCATE: 1 (Witness role: ADVOCATE: 4) For the Applicant, Cross Examine Julie Wilson TASK: ADVOCATE: 6 (Witness role: ADVOCATE: 5) For the Respondent, Cross Examine Dr Gloucester TASK: ADVOCATE: 3 (Witness role: ADVOCATE: 6) For the Applicant, Cross Examine Dr Foster TASK: ADVOCATE: 4 (Witness role: ADVOCATE: 1) For the Respondent, Cross Examine Dr Gloucester TASK: ADVOCATE: 5 (Witness role: ADVOCATE: 2) For the Applicant, Cross Examine Dr Foster	
Task Performances in Group: 5 minutes per task			
Trainer Review: 5 minutes per advocate			
Short break 2.20 to 2.25 (5 mins)			
SESSION 9		2.25– 3.30 (65 mins)	
Task Performances in Group: 5 minutes per task		<u>THE CLOSING ARGUMENT</u> <u>Case Study 3: Wilson v Wilson</u> TASK: ADVOCATE: 1 Present Closing Address for Applicant TASK: ADVOCATE: 2 Present Closing Address for Respondent TASK: ADVOCATE: 3 Present Closing Address for Applicant TASK: ADVOCATE: 4 Present Closing Address for Respondent TASK: ADVOCATE: 5 Present Closing Address for Applicant TASK: ADVOCATE: 6 Present Closing Address for Respondent	
Trainer Review: 5 minutes per advocate			
SESSION 10		3.30– 3.45 (15 mins)	
General Session		Debrief and Discussion	

