

### Choosing the Best Lawyer for Me

There are many factors that weigh into how we choose a lawyer when we need one.

Our legal team at OSheaDyer Solicitors includes 14 people, aged 22 years through to 65 years. All of us have retained a lawyer in the past to assist with a problem we needed help solving. Ten of us have needed a conveyance done. All of us have had Wills and Enduring Power of Attorney's done. Five of us have retained a Family Lawyer to assist us when we separated. One of us has had a Workcover compensation claim, and another a Public Liability compensation claim.

Recently, we asked everyone on our team what is important to them when choosing a lawyer.

The answers are insightful and very honest. If you take the time to read through, bear in mind, the answers are from people who have engaged a lawyer in their past. They are also people working in a busy law practice.

If you are trying to choose a lawyer, I hope this article finds you and gives you guidance.

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### From the Family Law Team...

"I want a lawyer who knows their stuff, is approachable and who isn't over the top with their fees."

**Jodi Dingwall**, Senior Family lawyer at OSheaDyer Solicitors Townville.

"I want a lawyer who is authentic, reasonable with fees, able to think outside the box and willing to listen. I want my lawyer to be empathetic."

**Susan Kennedy**, Legal Secretary at OSheaDyer Solicitors Townville.

"I want a lawyer who I can relate to, who is also a straight shooter. I want someone who is smart but down to earth. I want them to be comfortable enough to give me 'real' advice – even if it's not what I want to hear. And I want to be able to afford them!"

**Emma Donald**, Senior Family Lawyer at OSheaDyer Solicitors Townville.

"I want a lawyer who is reasonably priced. I don't necessarily want the cheapest or the lawyer with the lowest hourly rate. I want good value for my money. I don't want them recording lots of time on my file and running up a massive bill – but hardly getting anything meaningful done.

I want them to be experienced and knowledgeable.

I want someone who is good at opening lines of communication and engaging in negotiations. I want them to be able to work well with other people/lawyers to reach an agreement cost effectively (if possible). I don't want a lawyer who is aggressive straight off the bat who is constantly threatening court proceedings."

**Bridget Barrie**, Senior Family Law Paralegal at OSheaDyer Solicitors Townville.

### From the Wills + Estates and Conveyancing Team...

"I want a good website which is clear, modern and helpful. From the website, I want to be able to see 'my lawyer' and know their level of experience. I also want an impression they are approachable."

**Cathy Fon**, Lawyer at OSheaDyer Solicitors Townsville.

"I want a lawyer who is local to my area, who has lots of experience and has been in business for a long time."

**Robyn Mullins**, Conveyancer and Senior Legal Secretary at OSheaDyer Solicitors Townsville.

"I think the first impression is really important. If I am made to feel at ease when I when I meet them, I will go with them. Also, the 'price has to be right'."

**Rochelle Glasheen**, Receptionist and Accounts Manager at OSheaDyer Solicitors Townsville.

"I want an experienced lawyer who cares about my situation, and me. I would like a lawyer to charge reasonable fees. But I would be happy to pay a bit more to have someone who I feel really comfortable with, who has experience, gives great service and gets a good outcome for me."

**Sam Stewart**, Law Graduate at OSheaDyer Solicitors Townsville.

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### From the Litigation/Personal Injuries Team

"I want my lawyer to be experienced, honest with me and charge me reasonable fees."

**Shelleigh Naessens**, Senior paralegal in the Personal Injuries Department at OSheaDyer Solicitors Townsville.

"I would do my own research to find a lawyer. I would check out the websites of quite a few law firms and have a good look at them. I would look for a website that is authentic. I wouldn't like the look of something that is garish or tacky and a highly commercial or snooty looking website would not appeal to me either.

**I'm looking for friendly and something that makes me feel like I am going to have a genuine 'human interaction' with this lawyer and the firm they work at.**

Reading Google Reviews that are the real deal (and you can spot them a mile off if they aren't) would also be something I would do.

If I have a personal injury claim or compensation claim matter, I want an experienced lawyer who knows what they are doing. I want to hear from them regularly. I want them to be organised and I want to trust them implicitly.

I also want to meet for the first time without committing to them being 'my lawyer'. If I have an injury that has really rocked my life, I want to make sure they are personable and friendly, and I will feel relaxed with them. I know I will have to tell them lots of personal information so I would never want to feel uncomfortable with them.

I wouldn't look for the cheapest lawyer. But I would want my lawyer to be honest and upfront with me about costs. I want to be informed in advance about fees. I want things like costs agreements – that can be very confusing – explained in detail so that I understand.”

**Tyla Leo**, Lawyer in the Personal Injuries Team at OSheaDyer Solicitors Townsville.

“I want a lawyer who is confident and experienced. I want them to be reasonably priced but I would be willing to pay more for an experienced lawyer who looks after my interests and gets me a really good outcome.”

**Eleanor Potter**, Legal Secretary in the Personal Injuries Team at OSheaDyer Solicitors Townsville.

“I want a fair bit in a lawyer.

If I have a large matter like a compensation claim, I want to meet with a couple of lawyers so I can make a good decision about the right lawyer for me. In a matter like this, which is a substantial amount of work, I want to be able to meet at their office and discuss things with them, get an impression of them, get some general advice from them about my claim and the fees involved, AND I don't want to be charged any fees for this. I also don't want to feel any pressure to retain them as my lawyer.

I want a lawyer who knows the laws that are relevant to my situation inside and out. I want them to be professional, have loads of experience so they have lots of strategies and tactics under their belt that might help me. I want a lawyer who is familiar with how insurers or claims managers operate.

I want them to be experienced, smart, humble, friendly and sincere. Someone who genuinely wants to assist me and provide solutions to my problems. Someone who understands my situation who I feel comfortable with. I want to trust them implicitly and be treated with respect and as an equal. I also want them to tell me 'best and worst case scenarios' and not just 'what I want to hear'.

I want them to give me good legal advice on what to do, and I would take their advice.

I want to know who is on my lawyers' team. I know that in a big matter, there will be para-legals and secretaries and even junior lawyers working with my lawyer. I want to know who else is working on my team to get things done and who else I can contact about questions if my lawyer is caught up in a conference or at Court.

I want to know what is happening – even if we are just waiting for things to progress.

I want to know what the fees are and be informed about that every step of the way. I want to feel like I can always ask questions about fees or anything for that matter.”

**Ivan Baxter**, Director and Senior Litigation Lawyer at OSheaDyer Solicitors Townsville.

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### From our Marketing Team...

"I want my lawyer to be experienced and smart.

Working for a law firm - I understand that (unless it's a fixed fee arrangement) I will be charged for the time (hours) spent on my 'file'. Because of this, I will want to know my lawyer's hourly rate and match it to their experience.

A lawyer's hourly rate **should** be indicative of their experience, and therefore their capability and efficiency. A higher hourly rate, **if you're at the right firm**, should mean that your lawyer might take 2 hours to do a job that a lawyer with less experience might complete in 4 hours. An hourly rate is relative - but the expertise that comes with experience is not.

If I had a potential injury or compensation claim, I would most likely meet with a few lawyers before deciding on 'the one for me'. This decision is vital – because I want to know that my lawyer will see me through to the end of my claim. I want this lawyer to be experienced; someone who has obtained great results for people in the past.

I also want to like my lawyer - and to know that they are genuine in achieving the best outcome possible for **me**.

**Alex Baxter**, Marketing Assistant at OSheaDyer Solicitors Townsville.

"If I have a problem and need a lawyer, I want someone who is available to see me straight away. I also want a lawyer who is experienced and makes me feel at ease. Knowing how much it will cost would also be important to me, but I understand that some things can only be estimated as no one knows if they will settle or if they will have to go to Court.

I don't want a lawyer who is a puppet, that I 'tell what to do'. I want a lawyer who listens, gives me good advice and options and makes it easy for me to make the best decisions. If that means they 'tell me what to do', then even better. That's what I'm paying for.

If I had a complex matter, like a motor vehicle accident claim or a workplace compensation claim – or any personal injury claim for that matter, I would always choose the lawyer with the most experience. It would be like choosing a doctor to perform surgery on my neck. I would never choose the guy with 2, 5 or even 10 years' experience. If there's a Dr available who's been doing 'my type of surgery' for 15 years or more, they are the one I want. I'll meet him/her and find out what type of results they have been getting and if all the boxes are ticked, I'll choose them, even if they have an average bedside manner."

**Jo Roebuck**, Office Manager @ OSheaDyer Solicitors Townsville.

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There are many things that are important to people when choosing a lawyer. The common factors that nearly everyone mentions:

- Experience, especially when your matter is complex, trumps everything as this is most likely to get you the best outcomes.

And of equal importance:

- Having a good relationship with your lawyer that is based on trust,
- Value for money.

### What if I get it wrong?

If you have an ongoing legal matter, and you aren't happy with your lawyer's fees, service or results, don't feel stuck.

Everyone is free to book an appointment with a lawyer at another firm for a second opinion.

This appointment may be 'no charge' or you may be charged a fee. Getting a second opinion, from a good lawyer is a very helpful thing to do. Sometimes, that feeling in your gut that you just aren't getting what you need, is confirmed and you can engage a new lawyer who will sort out the transition for you. And sometimes, you may receive reassurance that staying is what is best for your situation.

Whenever we have met with people because they are unhappy with their current lawyer, they have been glad they did. Some have retained us as their lawyer ; some have been referred to a lawyer who we know does a great job in that area of law; and a few have been advised to stay where they are, as the 'legal process' was actually the frustration and not their lawyer. The important thing is to trust your gut and get a second opinion.

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**Jo Roebuck** is the Office Manager at OSheaDyer Solicitors Townsville. She was a lecturer in the Law School at James Cook University between 1994 – 2006 and has been the manager at OSheaDyer since 2013.

## **Wills or Estate Matter, Family Law issue, or a Compensation Claim - Choosing a good lawyer is critical.**

OSheaDyer Solicitors Townsville recommend seeing an experienced lawyer who gives value for money, good service and excellent outcomes.

We offer first appointments for low fixed fees.

We advertise fees on our website for straightforward matters.

If your matter is time consuming and ongoing, we give no obligation, written quotes and estimates (that are as accurate as possible) once we have spoken with you about your situation.

## **First time Family Law Appointments**

Are a low fixed fee of \$220 (inc gst).

You get a one-hour appointment and advice from an experienced lawyer who practices exclusively in family law. We explain options for your next steps and provide a written quote to help you decide if you want to retain us as your lawyer.

## **Family Law Consent Orders**

Prices for preparing Consent Orders start at \$2,000.

See our Family Law fees and prices page.

[Fees + Prices | O'Shea & Dyer Solicitors \(osheadyer.com.au\)](https://osheadyer.com.au)

### Wills

Straightforward Wills for a single person start at \$440 (inc gst) and \$770 (inc gst) for a couple and we include an Enduring Power of Attorney for no charge.

Your Will and EPA is prepared by an experienced Wills and Estates lawyer who advises and guides you. See our Wills fees and prices page.

[Cost of Wills and other Estate Planning Documents | O'Shea & Dyer Solicitors \(osheadyer.com.au\)](#)

### Estates

First appointments about what to do when a loved one passes are \$220 (inc gst).

We often assist executors to administer the estate themselves. In this one-hour appointment, you get advice from an experienced Wills and Estates lawyer about what to do next.

We offer fixed fees for Probate/Letters of Administration.  
See our Estates, fees, and prices page.

[Estates | O'Shea & Dyer Solicitors \(osheadyer.com.au\)](#)

### Motor Vehicle Claims, WorkCover Claims, Public Liability Claims

Are NO WIN NO FEE.  
First appointments are free.

You get a 1-2 hour appointment and advice from an experienced personal injuries lawyer.

There is no obligation to retain us as your lawyer.

If you choose us, there are no fees until the end of your claim when you receive your settlement money or court ordered payment.  
Our fees are very reasonable.