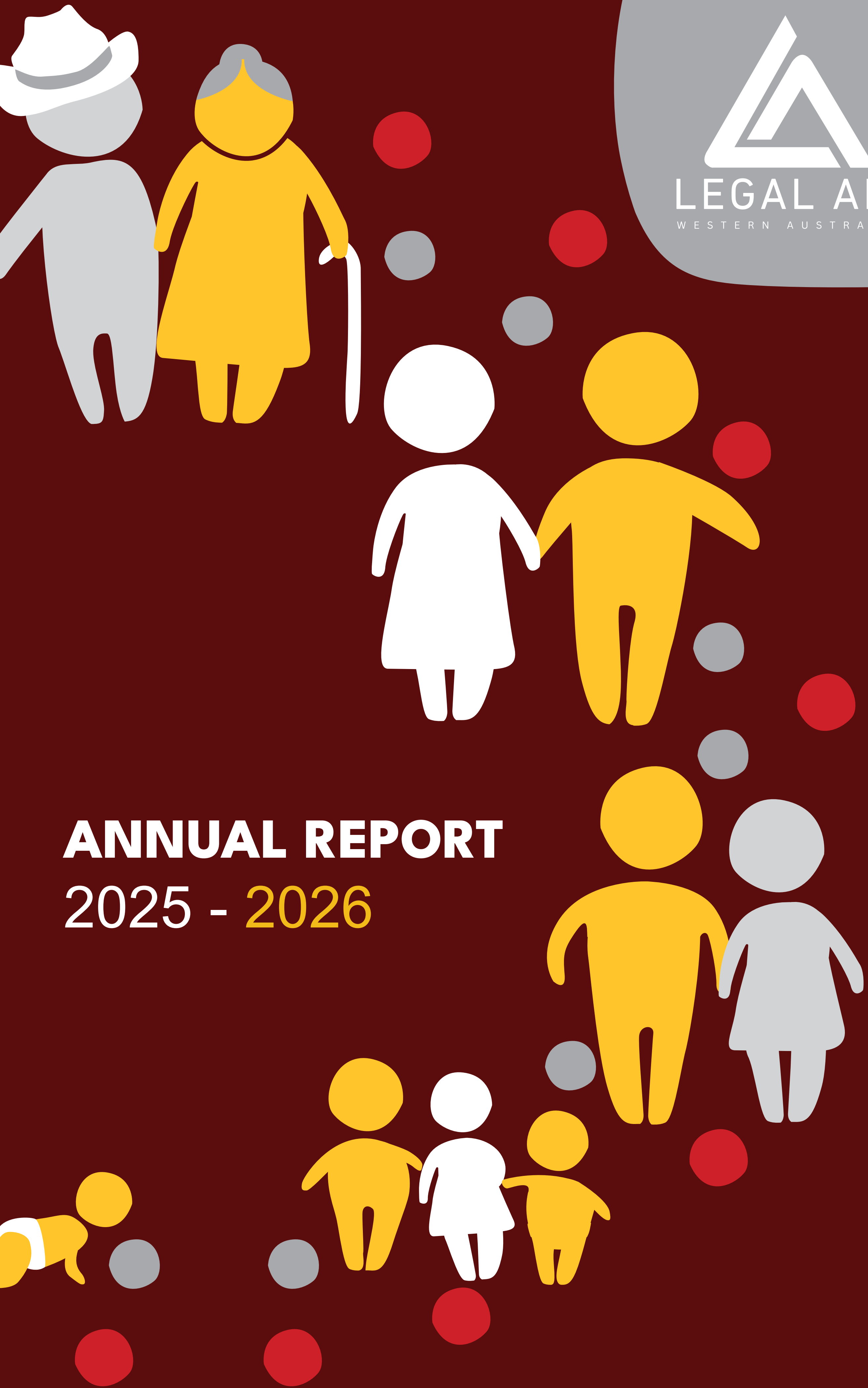
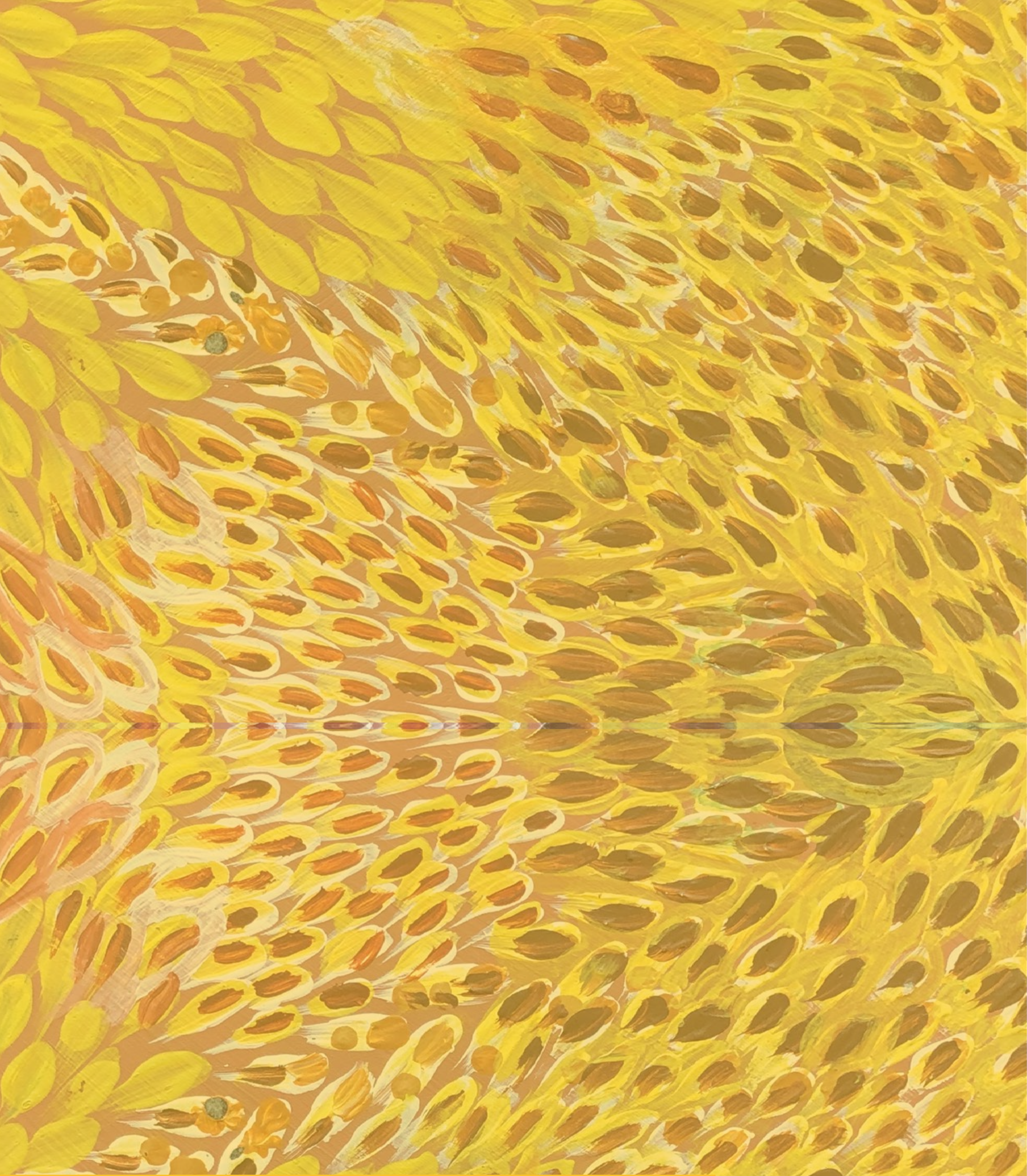
LEGAL AID
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

ANNUAL REPORT
2025 - 2026





Cover: Legal Aid WA's Blurred Borders imagery. These images are used throughout the Annual Report and are part of our most well known public facing community legal education resources that use art and storytelling to help explain key legal concepts in a culturally accessible way to First Nations clients.

Acknowledgement of Country

Legal Aid WA acknowledges the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land on which we live and work. We recognise the spiritual relationship First Nations people have with Country and pay deep respect to Elders past and present.

Contents

Statement of Compliance

For the year ended 30 June 2026

HON DR TONY BUTI MLA
ATTORNEY GENERAL

In accordance with section 63 of the Financial Management Act 2006, we hereby submit for your information and presentation to Parliament, the Annual Report of the Legal Aid Commission of Western Australia for the dinancial year ended 30 June 2026.

The Annual Report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Financial Management Act 2026, the Legal Aid Commission Act 1976 and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012.

The financial statements comply with Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures issued by the Australia Account Standards Board.

Hon. Jane Crisford SC
Chair of the Commission
Date: 3 September 2026

Helen De Brito
Director of Legal Aid
Member of the Commission
Date: 3 September 2026

Who we are

Legal Aid WA's purpose is to see that the law protects all Western Australians regardless of poverty or disadvantage.

We are a statutory body set up under the *Legal Aid Commission Act 1976 (WA)*. We are funded by the State Government and the Federal Government. Legal Aid WA is governed by a Board of Commissioners and is accountable to the Western Australian Attorney General.

We deliver a range of high quality, life-changing legal assistance services in criminal, family, and civil law through one Perth office, seven regional offices, three satellite offices, 20 Virtual Offices, and 104 outreach locations.

Our in-house practices in criminal, family, and civil law, and early intervention provide extensive services across Western Australia. We assist our clients by representing them under grants of aid, as duty lawyers in the Criminal, Family, and Children's Courts including Protection and Care and Family Violence Restraining Orders (FVROs), through legal advice and discrete assistance, targeted community legal education (CLE), and the provision of social support.

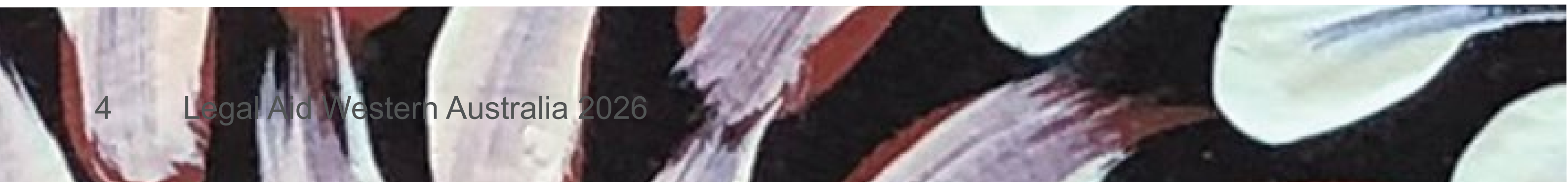
Our in-house Independent Children's Lawyers (ICLs) and Child Representatives represent the best interests of some of the most at-risk children in our community. We also have a specialised Domestic Violence Legal Unit (DVLU) which has been providing wraparound services for women experiencing family violence for more than 30 years.

In addition to our in-house services, we have the support of 481 private panel practitioners across the state on our panels.

We deliver holistic services that treat the client and not just the legal issue. We aim to provide services that are appropriate, joined up, culturally safe, targeted, and timely.

Legal Aid WA understands that many legal problems arise from underlying social and personal issues, and as a client centred organisation, our legal services are complemented by social support services that help our clients with targeted wraparound assistance and referrals to meet their needs.

We are committed to expanding our preventative and early intervention services to keep people out of the justice system where possible and to navigate their way through where it is not. We continue to work collaboratively with our partners in government and the not-for-profit sector to make this possible.



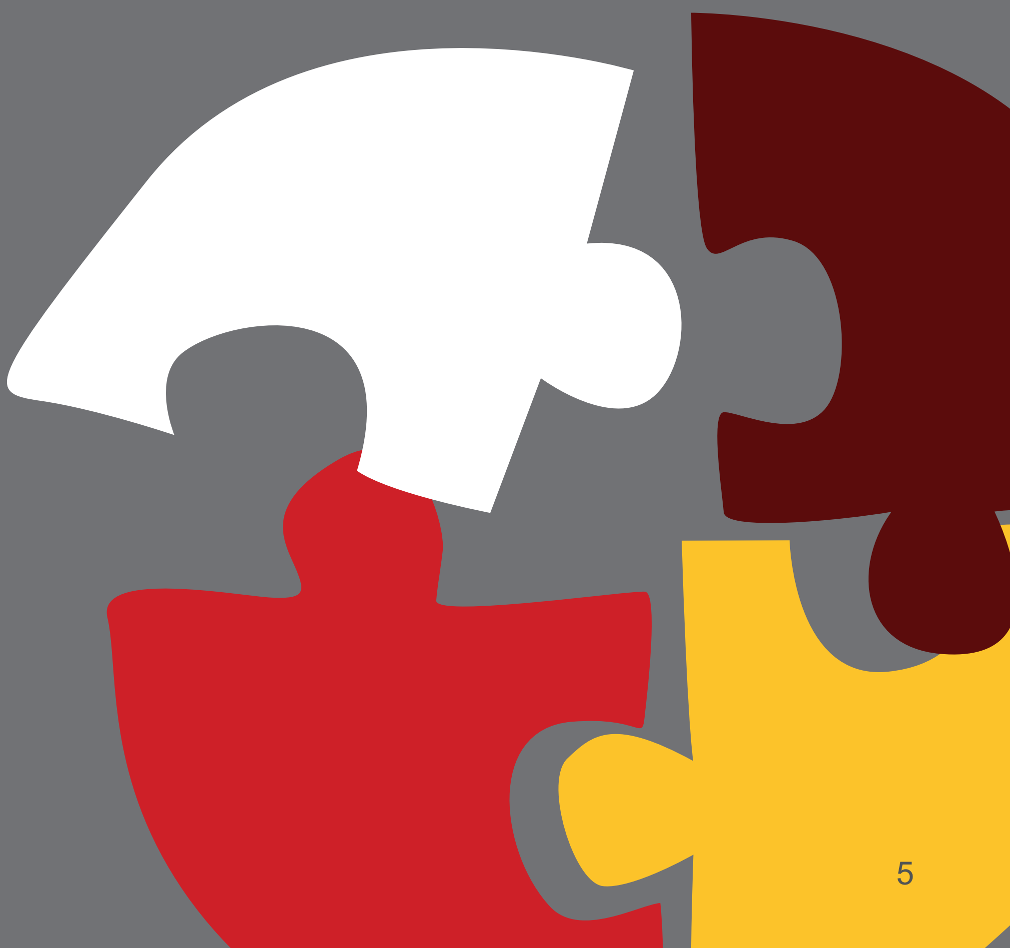
Vision, mission and values

We are driven by our vision:

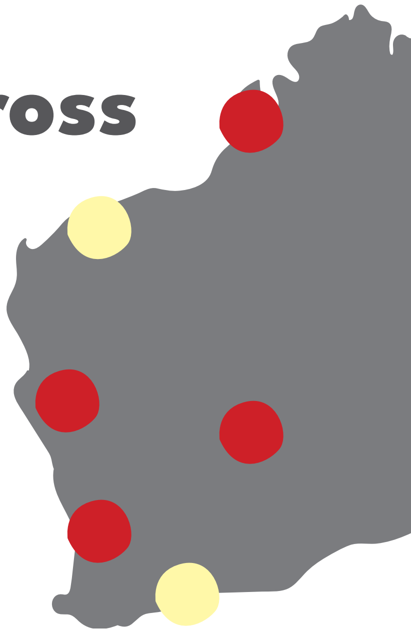
To provide equitable access to justice to support a fair and safe community

Our values guide us every day to work to assist Western Australians experiencing disadvantage:

Making a difference
Client centred
Respect
Innovation
Integrity



Where we operate across Western Australia



Perth

The Perth head office provides legal services for the community from the Peel region in the south, Northam in the east, and Gingin in the north. Our Business Services Division is based in the Perth office as well as our Criminal Law, Family Law, Civil Law, and Early Intervention Services Divisions. Our grants of aid and private practitioner panels are managed from our Perth office.

Regional WA

Legal Aid WA's regional offices provide legal services across the largest and most geographically dispersed service areas in Australia.

Operating from Albany, Bunbury, Kalgoorlie, Geraldton, Carnarvon, South Hedland, Karratha, Broome, Kununurra, and Indian Ocean Territories - Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands - regional teams deliver services to communities stretching across the state and into the Indian Ocean.

Through regular circuit visits, outreach and remote service delivery, staff travel thousands of kilometres each year to reach regional towns, remote Aboriginal communities, and isolated locations across Western Australia.

This extensive regional footprint enables Legal Aid WA to provide legal assistance closer to where people live.

Regional offices support clients through duty lawyer services, legal advice, grants of aid, and representation across a broad range of legal matters, while also delivering prison visits, CLE, and outreach activities.

In the Kimberley, Community Liaison and Education Officers (CLEOs) provide targeted and culturally safe services to First Nations clients, supporting access to justice.

Circuit visits are a critical part of regional services. Lawyers and CLEOs travel regularly to regional towns and remote Aboriginal communities, often spending days away from their home office to provide face-to-face legal assistance.

These circuits require planning and coordination, including travel, accommodation, managing court lists, and stakeholder engagement.

In some regions, staff travel hundreds of kilometres between communities in a single circuit, while others involve flights to isolated locations that can only be accessed intermittently.

From the agricultural communities of the South West and Great Southern, to the remote deserts of the Ngaanyatjarra Lands, the communities of the Mid West and Gascoyne, Kimberley and Pilbara, and the unique islands of Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, regional teams work to ensure that people can access justice regardless of distance or location.


Christmas Island
Cocos (Keeling) Islands
INDIAN OCEAN TERRITORIES
Kalumburu
Kununurra
Wyndham
Wyndham Work camp
Warmun
West Kimberley Regional Prison
Dampier Peninsula
Derby
Looma
Broome
Fitzroy Crossing
Broome Regional Prison
Bidyadanga Community
WEST KIMBERLEY
Halls Creek
Balgo Community
EAST KIMBERLEY
South Hedland
Karratha
Roebourne Regional Prison
Onslow
Exmouth
Marble Bar
Nullagine
Tom Price
Newman
Jigalong
PILBARA
Carnarvon
GASCOYNE
Wiluna
Meekatharra
Shark Bay
Cue
MID WEST
Warakurna
Blackstone
Warburton
Kalbarri
Northampton
Mullewa
Geraldton
Greenough Regional Prison
Dongara
Three Springs
Laverton
GOLDFIELDS -ESPERANCE
Leonora
Jurien Bay
Kalgoorlie
Coolgardie
Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison
Norseman
Perth
PEEL
WHEATBELT
Esperance
Bunbury Regional Prison
Harvey
Bunbury
Busselton
Collie
Margaret River
Manjimup
Narrogin
Katanning
Albany Regional Prison and Pardelup Prison
Albany
SOUTH WEST
GREAT SOUTHERN
MAP KEY
Regional Office
Circuit location
Prison

Our people

Legal Aid WA is a statutory authority established under the *Legal Aid Commission Act 1976 (WA)*. The responsible Minister for Legal Aid WA is the Attorney General, the Hon Dr Tony Buti MLA. Legal Aid WA administers the *Legal Aid Commission Act 1976 (WA)*.

Legal Aid WA's function is to provide legal assistance in accordance with the *Legal Aid Commission Act 1976 (WA)* and to control and administer the Legal Aid Fund of Western Australia. Legal Aid WA ensures legal assistance is provided in the most effective, efficient, and economical manner throughout Western Australia.

Members of the Legal Aid Commission of Western Australia are appointed under the *Legal Aid Commission Act 1976 (WA)*. The Commission is chaired by the Hon Jane Crisford SC, and its members include Steve Toutountzis, Elspeth Hensler OAM, Curtis Ward, Kristin Berger, Hon Ken Wyatt AM, and the Director/CEO of Legal Aid WA, Helen De Brito.

The Director of Legal Aid WA administers the scheme of legal assistance established by the *Legal Aid Commission Act 1976 (WA)*. The Director is supported by the Executive Management Team and the 602 staff employed by Legal Aid WA, who enable the delivery of legal assistance to Western Australians.

Our Board

Jane Crisford SC

Chair

Jane Crisford SC became the first female Chair of Legal Aid WA in July 2017. Under her leadership, Legal Aid WA has focused on expanding access to legal representation, advice and information, while embracing innovative technology to improve services. Her vision is a fairer, safer and more inclusive Western Australia, where everyone can benefit from the protection of the law regardless of disadvantage.

Admitted to practise law in 1978, she worked in private practice and at the Aboriginal Legal Service of WA, including representing Aboriginal families in the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. She later became a partner at Dwyer Durack, joined the independent Bar in 1998, and was appointed Senior Counsel in 2002.

Her distinguished judicial career included serving as President of the Equal Opportunity Commission, a District Court Judge, and later a Judge of the Family Court of WA and Family Court of Australia until her retirement in 2016.

Helen De Brito

Member, CEO of Legal Aid WA

Helen De Brito was appointed Chief Executive Officer of Legal Aid WA in January 2024, after serving as Interim Chief Executive Officer from May 2023. She has built an extensive career with the agency since joining in 2005. An accomplished criminal lawyer, she has held a range of senior leadership positions, including Acting Solicitor in Charge of the Fremantle office, Manager of the Legal Practice Development Division, and Director of the Criminal Law Division.

Throughout her career, Helen has demonstrated a strong commitment to enhancing access to justice and improving service delivery for Legal Aid WA clients.

Helen is a passionate advocate for staff wellbeing, professional development, and regional service delivery. She has been a longstanding member of Legal Aid WA's Reconciliation Action Plan Committee and has overseen both the Graduate Program and Country Lawyers' Program, helping to develop and support the next generation of legal professionals.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Laws with First Class Honours from Murdoch University.

Our Board cont.

Elspeth Hensler OAM

Member

Elspeth is a barrister at Francis Burt Chambers, practising in commercial matters including banking, corporate, insolvency, revenue, mining, construction, and succession matters.

Elspeth is a former Chair of the WA Legal Assistance Forum and former President of Australia Women Lawyers and Women Lawyers of WA. She was a member of the steering committee that produced the 20th Anniversary Review of the Chief Justice's 1994 Gender Bias Taskforce Report. She also authored the private residential tenancy and social housing residential tenancy sections of the Lawyers Practice Manual WA.

In 2014, Elspeth was presented with the Attorney General's Community Service Law Award and was jointly presented with the WA Bar Association Distinguished Service Award. In 2015, she received Women Lawyers of WA's award for Women Lawyer of the Year. She is a Board member at Law Access. In 2026, Elspeth was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for service to the law in the 2026 King's Birthday Honours list.

Steve Toutountzis

Member

Steve has been in the State Public Service for more than 30 years and a member of the Senior Executive Service for more than 13 years. His most recent senior position was that of Director of Performance and Evaluation – Group 1, with the Strategic Policy and Evaluation Business Unit of the Department of Treasury. His responsibilities included analysis and strategic advice to government on budgetary and financial management issues impacting Health, Social Services, and Transport portfolios.

His other senior public service positions have included Chief Financial Officer of the former Department of Treasury and Finance and Director of Business Analysis Department of Health. Steve holds a Bachelor of Business from Edith Cowan University and is a Certified Practising Accountant. He is currently also a member of the North Metropolitan Health Service Board and chairs the Finance Committee.

Curtis Ward

Member

Curtis (he/him) is a solicitor at Clairs Keeley Lawyers. He has worked predominantly in family law, with a particular focus on matters involving issues of family violence. Curtis has also practised in both criminal and commercial matters, including small business disputes and consumer protection. He has experience in a variety of different workplaces including private practice, the community legal sector, and at Legal Aid WA.

Curtis also sits as an elected member of City of Perth's LGBTQIA+ Advisory Group and was the former President of the Gender Reassignment Board.

Curtis was previously on the board of Pride Western Australia Inc, a peak LGBTIQA+ community organisation that provides supports to people of diverse gender and sexuality from 2017 to 2023, holding the position of Secretary and President. He also previously sat on the Young Lawyers Committee of the Law Society of Western Australia, as the Social Justice and Human Rights Chair.

Kristin Berger

Member

Kristin was a Deputy Director General at the Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety, with responsibility for the Consumer Protection, Building and Energy and Service Delivery Group.

Prior to this, Kristin was the Executive Director of Labour Relations and Industry Development in the former Department of Commerce. Kristin joined the public sector in 2002 and worked in government labour relations roles which included responsibility for public sector bargaining.

Before joining the public sector, she was employed in the union movement and was a university lecturer in labour relations and human resource management. Kristin has a Bachelor of Science Hons, Anthropology from the University of Western Australia and a Master of Science, Industrial Relations from the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Hon Ken Wyatt AM

Member

Ken served as the Member for Hasluck in the Federal Parliament from 2010 to 2022. He was the first Aboriginal Australian elected to the House of Representatives and the first Aboriginal Australian appointed to the Federal Executive Council.

Ken served as Australia's first Minister for Indigenous Australians, as well as Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians, and Minister for Indigenous Health. Ken has worked across the public, private and political sectors in health and education. Ken has a Bachelor of Education in Advanced Education and is a life member of the Order of Australia.

Ken is currently also a member of the Western Australian Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Council, Energy Resources Australia Board, Beyond Blue Board, Rock Art Australia Board, EPIC Board, University of Western Australia Public Policy Institute, Worldwide Data Exchange Board, and the Swan Districts Football Club Board.

Organisation chart

Directorate

- Professional Standards and Integrity Unit
- Private Practitioner and Panel Engagement
- Governance and Strategy
- Audit and Compliance
- Board Coordination
- Ministerial Unit
- Complaints
- Freedom of Information

Business Services

- Information Records Services Unit
- Finance
- Human Resources
- Information Management
- Reporting and Data

Lawyers Engagement Network

- Grant of Aid Program
- Family Violence Cross-Examination Scheme
- Family Law Property Mediation Pilot
- Expensive Commonwealth Criminal Cases Fund
- Commonwealth Community Safety Order Scheme

Early Intervention Services

- Infoline, Infochat and Chatbot
- Legal Yarn
- Intake and Advice
- Advice and Virtual Office Services
- NDIS Early Intervention
- Community Legal Education and Training
- Communications

Civil Law

- Civil Justice Practice
- Mortgage Hardship Service
- Elder Rights WA
- Work and Development Permit Service
- NDIS Appeals
- Workplace Respect Project
- Health Justice Partnerships
- Youth Rights
- Natural Disasters Legal Response
- Federal Courts Self-Represented Litigants Service

Criminal Law

- Criminal Law Practice
- Duty Lawyer Service
- Remand Advocacy Service
- Bail Support Service
- Youth Law
- Appeals
- Disability Legal WA
- DARDY
- In-Roads
- Criminal Law Mentally Impaired Accused
- Duty Lawyer Mental Health Court
- Child Sex Offender Practice
- High Risk Sex Offenders

Family Law

- Family Law Practice
- ICL and Child Representatives
- Family Court Services
- Family Advocacy and Support Services
- Domestic Violence Legal Unit
- Family Violence Shuttle Conferencing
- Children's Court (Protection) Services
- Dandjoo Bidi-Ak Duty Lawyer Service
- Dispute Resolution Conferences
- Stronger Women

Regions and Special Projects

- Great Southern regional office
- South West regional office
- Goldfields regional office
- Mid West and Gascoyne regional office
- Pilbara regional office
- Karratha regional office
- West Kimberley regional office
- East Kimberley regional office
- Indian Ocean Territories regional office
- Graduate Program

Chair and CEO message

We are pleased to present Legal Aid WA's Annual Report 2025-26.

Legal Aid WA plays a vital role in Western Australia's justice system, helping ensure that people experiencing disadvantage can access justice when they need it most. As demand for legal assistance grows, we will continue to adapt our services to meet the evolving needs of the community.

During 2025-26, we finalised our Strategic Plan for the next three years. Guided by our values of being client centred, acting with integrity, showing respect, embracing innovation, and making a difference, we are focused on delivering meaningful outcomes for our clients, staff and stakeholders.

This Annual Report highlights our achievements against the Strategic Plan's four priorities and demonstrates our commitment to delivering measurable outcomes.

Over the past year, we provided legal representation and assistance on more than 148,000 occasions, supporting people with both legal and related non-legal challenges. We delivered 7 per cent more duty lawyer services across the state than in the previous year and approved 14,684 new grants of aid, an increase of 12 per cent.

The longer-term trend reflects the growing demand for our services. Over the past three years, duty lawyer services have increased by 29 per cent, while new grants of aid have risen by 18 per cent. This growth has been evident across criminal, family and civil law matters and reflects the increasingly complex needs of our clients and the broader social pressures facing many Western Australians. Thirty-nine per cent of our clients have disclosed living with disability or mental illness. We are committed to reducing barriers for both clients and staff living with disability and ensuring our services remain accessible and inclusive.

Twenty-nine per cent of our clients identify as First Nations people – in regional WA that percentage is 48% - and we have continued to strengthen our services to better meet the needs of First Nations communities while working to build a workforce that reflects the diversity of our client base.

General cost of living pressures, increased housing costs in the regions, and the tight labour market have challenged us to find innovative ways of attracting and retaining staff in regional WA. Our Graduate Program is a successful example of providing Perth-based training for talented young lawyers who then relocate to a regional town and start their legal career in a supportive environment.

We were proud to have had our Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) approved by Reconciliation Australia in 2026. Achieving Stretch RAP status recognises the strong and sustained approach we have taken to advancing reconciliation at Legal Aid WA. It reflects our deep and ongoing commitment to meaningful, long-term partnerships with First Nations people and challenges us to take the next step by embedding reconciliation initiatives into our everyday business practices and decision-making.

Collaboration remains central to our work. We continue to work closely with government agencies and the legal assistance sector to improve coordination, strengthen partnerships, and enhance outcomes for clients.

A key part of our client centred approach is the integration of social support workers into our service model. These staff provide wraparound support that addresses the broader needs of vulnerable clients, helping them overcome barriers and access assistance beyond their immediate legal issues.

During the year, we launched the Youth Bail Support Service (YBSS) in Geraldton and Armadale. The YBSS is a practical example of innovative and client centred service delivery.

The service supports vulnerable young people by providing practical assistance such as transport, accommodation and educational support to help them comply with bail conditions and achieve more positive outcomes.

We extend our thanks to our dedicated staff. The achievements outlined in this report reflect their professionalism, expertise and commitment, working tirelessly on the front line and behind the scenes to improve the lives of Western Australians.

We have worked to foster a workplace where our staff feel valued, supported and empowered. Our 2025 Employee Engagement Survey found that 96 per cent of respondents rated Legal Aid WA positively as a place to work. While this result is encouraging, we remain focused on incorporating staff feedback to drive continuous improvement.

We also thank our panel lawyers for their significant contribution throughout the year. Legal Aid WA's service delivery model relies on the expertise and dedication of private practitioners across the state, and we are grateful for their ongoing support of Legal Aid WA clients.

We acknowledge and thank the State Attorney General, Hon Dr Tony Buti MLA, and his staff for their ongoing support, as well as the Federal Attorney-General, Hon Michelle Rowland MP. We value our strong working relationships and look forward to continuing our collaboration.

We are also grateful to Department of Justice Director General Kylie Maj, the staff of the Department of Justice and Department of Treasury, and our many partners across the Western Australian public sector for their continued support of legal assistance services.

Finally, we acknowledge and thank the Board of Legal Aid WA for its leadership and guidance throughout the year. Together, we remain focused on our vision of equitable access to justice and to supporting a fairer, safer and more inclusive community for all Western Australians.

Year in review

We provided lawyers to people on **144,000** occasions

12% increase in new grants of aid

We launched our Youth Bail Support Service in Geraldton and Armadale

We appointed a First Nations Community Engagement Coordinator

We were invited by Reconciliation Australia to develop our Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan

7% increase in duty lawyer services **

We launched the Supervisor Status Scheme

14% services to clients in Criminal Law

24% increase in Family Advocacy Support Services

We helped 45,000 unique clients*

8% increase in approved extensions of existing grants of aid

12% increase in Virtual Office services

5% increase in legal advice and legal task services **

We initiated a whole of agency Service Review

We finalised our new Strategic Plan

52% increase in the number of clients in custody, detention or hospital when they applied for a grant of aid

* Unique clients are individuals who accessed one or more of Legal Aid WA's services. This includes people receiving legal services from lawyers, paralegals and triage, and social workers. It does not include Conference Clients, people who received telephone, website or in-person information at all other direct client contact points or participated in community legal education. Legal Aid WA does not create an individual client record for these people.

** Above service statistics do not include Conference, Session, Infoline, and Referrals data.

Our clients

39%
disclosed having a disability or mental illness

36%
live in a rural or remote location

5%
with grants of aid whose main language spoken at home was not English

31%
with grants of aid who were in custody, detention or hospital

3%
needed assistance of an interpreter

29%
identify as First Nations people

77%
family law clients who disclosed family violence

6%
over 65 years

23%
under 25 years

1) During 2025-26, we helped 44,943 unique clients (not including Conference Clients). Unique clients are individuals who accessed one or more of Legal Aid WA's services. This includes people receiving legal services from lawyers, paralegals and triage, and social workers. It does not include people who received telephone, website or in-person information at all other direct client contact points or participated in community legal education. Legal Aid WA does not create an individual client record for these people.

2) Above percentages do not include Conference, Session, Infoline and Referrals data.

Our services

75,591
duty lawyer services

30,629
extensions of existing grants of aid

23,690
legal advice and minor assistance

14,684
new grants of aid

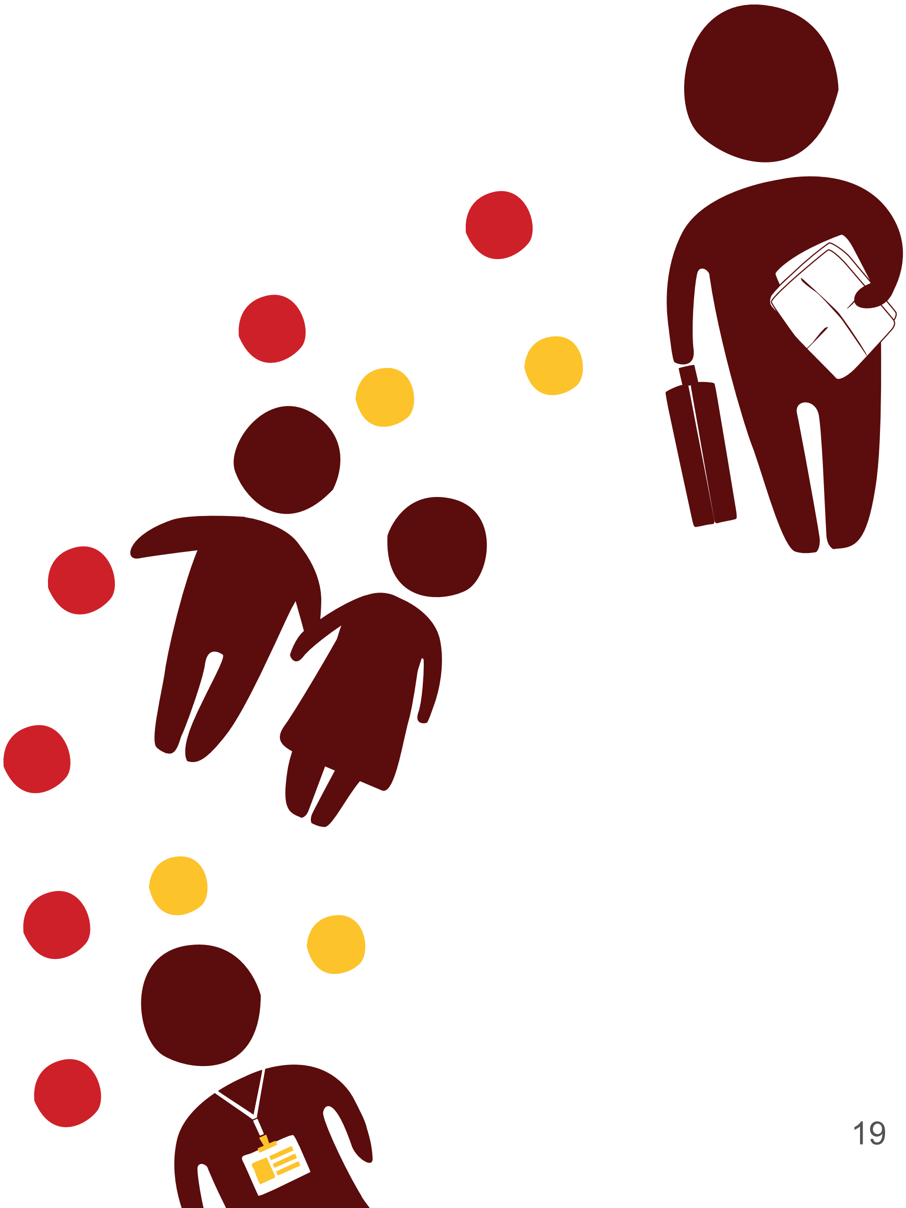
1,671
Elder Rights WA services

3,136
Regional Relief Model services

819
Therapeutic Pilot Court in Children's Court services

1,002
NDIS Appeals services

1,407
Bail Support Service services



Our Strategic Plan

Legal Aid WA's Strategic Plan 2025-2028 is underpinned by our four strategic priorities: our client centred approach to achieving outcomes for our clients, working collaboratively with partners and stakeholders, our focus on our staff, and our ability to make an impact across the legal sector.

1. Client Outcomes

- Deliver high quality services that are client centred, culturally safe and trauma informed.
- Increase access to services for vulnerable and disadvantaged clients.
- Maximise the reach of services to rural, regional and remote communities.
- Provide community legal education, early resolution and diversionary programs.
- Develop and strengthen evidence-based service delivery models that meet client and community need.

2. Stakeholders and Partners

- Enhance support and resourcing for private practitioners undertaking legal aid work as part of our mixed model of service delivery.
- Explore opportunities for partnerships beyond the legal assistance sector.
- Actively consult with clients and stakeholders to inform the future direction of our services.
- Communicate and promote our services and the value of our work.

3. People and Culture

- Prioritise staff safety and wellbeing.
- Invest in a 'grow your own' workforce strategy to ensure we have the right people, with the right skills in the right roles.
- Develop and support a high performing, skilled and responsive workforce.
- Strengthen integrity and accountability.

4. Legal System Impact

- Continue to provide duty lawyers, Independent Children's Lawyers and other services essential to the operation of the courts and justice system.
- Collaborate with Aboriginal staff and stakeholders to implement innovative solutions to action Closing the Gap priorities.
- Champion law reform and system changes that ensure legislation, policies and practices support the rights and interests of our clients and stakeholders.
- Provide expert advice and implementation support to advance government priorities and initiatives.
- Work in partnership with government and the legal assistance sector to improve service coordination, collaboration and client outcomes.

Our Mission

To provide quality, timely and holistic help to those who need our legal assistance.

Our Vision

Equitable access to justice to support a fair and safe community.

Strategic Enablers

Effective leadership
Intelligent decisions
Organisational knowledge
Contemporary technology
Financial sustainability

Our Values

Client centred
Integrity
Making a difference
Innovation
Respect

Strategic priority 1:

Client outcomes

We will deliver high quality services that are client centred, culturally safe, and trauma informed. We will provide community legal education, early resolution and support diversionary programs.

We have succeeded when we increase access to services for vulnerable and disadvantaged clients, and maximise the reach of services to rural, regional and remote communities.

Youth Bail Support Service

Legal Aid WA launched the Youth Bail Support Service (YBSS) in Geraldton in August 2025, followed by Armadale in March 2026 as an innovative approach to support young people to meet their bail conditions.

The YBSS supports vulnerable young people who come into contact with the criminal justice system by offering supports including transport, accommodation, and education to help young people comply with their bail conditions.

It also provides referrals to health, welfare and justice-related programs and ongoing case management to reduce the risk of further contact with the criminal justice system, and promote long-term positive outcomes for young people and their families.

Staff act as a contact point to help young people troubleshoot any issues that arise, work closely with the lawyers representing them, and engage with their families to ensure they have access to supports.

Our Geraldton Youth Bail Support Service team are Geraldton locals who have a deep understanding of local culture, and are passionate about making their community a safer, better place.

To support their young clients, they draw on their existing relationships with local schools, sporting teams and community groups, while growing this network and linking in additional organisations to provide activities for young people to make positive connections and contributions in the Geraldton community.

YBSS was expanded to Armadale in March, helping children aged 10 to 17 with complex needs who are facing criminal charges in the Armadale Children's Court.

Youth bail support workers are providing intensive case management for those who are suitable for bail, to help them meet their bail conditions and avoid reoffending.

"By supporting young people to meet their bail conditions, we are helping to break cycles of disadvantage and build safer, stronger communities.

"Providing a stronger link between the Courts, lawyers, and community programs will help make the programs more accessible for young people accused of a crime. Legal Aid WA is well placed to provide that link."

- Attorney General, Hon Dr Tony Buti MLA

Youth Bail Support Services in Geraldton and Armadale provided 93 services in 2025-26.

"Children as young as 12 have been referred to our team. Often these kids come from unstable home environments and have already had multiple interactions with police and the justice system.

"We've been able to encourage them to go to school, get them involved with our boxing program, and make sure they attend at all their court appearances. We also sometimes help with clothing and food.

"It's really encouraging to see positive results with the kids complying with bail conditions, going to school, and importantly not reoffending."

- Georgina, Geraldton Youth Bail Support Service

Blurred Borders

The most well-known public facing Legal Aid WA community legal education resource is Blurred Borders.

Blurred Borders is a visual communication tool for legal and community service providers that uses art and storytelling to help explain key legal concepts in a culturally accessible way to First Nations clients.

The initiative started as a three-year Commonwealth Government funded project in July 2016 in response to cross-border jurisdictional issues in communities near the Northern Territory and Western Australia border.

Blurred Borders has proved to be a valuable resource in helping many disadvantaged clients understand the justice system and tell their story.

The success of the resource is reflected in its uptake across Western Australia, the Northern Territory and in other states.

Over the years, requests for collaboration have come from various organisations, including Developmental Disability WA which resulted in the development of a short deck of story cards to assist with decision making, and Anglicare in partnership with Emama Nguda who developed story cards for use with users of family violence in Derby including as a case management tool.

Other Legal Aid Commissions, such as Legal Aid Queensland, have also adapted the resource for their communities, on family violence and bail and criminal process.

Almost 10 years later, Blurred Borders is still used by lawyers, paralegals, social workers, and community service providers to facilitate client service delivery. There is also continued interest by community-based organisations and government agencies to develop further Blurred Borders kits or extend existing kits to include additional legal topics.

In the past financial year, Blurred Borders has been championed and extended in several ways.

Legal Aid WA assisted Legal Aid NT to develop their own Blurred Border Family Violence Legal Resource Kit (the initial collaboration produced a joint WA/NT kit).

In March 2026, the Blurred Borders Traffic WA Kit including Extraordinary Driver's Licences, which was developed in collaboration with the Road Safety Commission, was officially launched.

Aboriginal Family Led Decision Making (AFLDM) Story Cards, developed in collaboration with staff from the Department of Communities, Child Protection, and Wungening Aboriginal Corporation working in the AFLDM pilots at Mirrabooka, launched in June 2026.

These cards aim to assist with explaining AFLDM in the existing pilot areas (Mirrabooka and the Mid West-Gascoyne) and have been added to the Blurred Borders Keep Em Safe Diverse Parent Groups Kit.

Coercive Control story cards are currently in development extending the existing Family Violence resources. Additional Story Cards and resources mirrored on the Blurred Borders model are also in development, tailored for culturally and linguistically diverse clients and recently arrived people. This is part of a broader project with the Department of Communities.

Various training in the use of Blurred Borders was also delivered during the 2025-26 financial year.

This has included to the Department of Communities, Child Protection at several offices and locations across Western Australia, Department of Housing and Works, Women's Legal Service WA, social workers from Graylands Hospital, Headspace, Roebourne Regional Prison, Legal Aid WA staff, service partners, and private practitioners. Blurred Borders was also incorporated into the training of Aboriginal Family Legal Services court advocates.

Blurred Borders kits are sold across Western Australia but also requested from other states.

In the past financial year, Blurred Borders kits were distributed to the Department of Justice, Department of Communities, Department of Housing and Works, Communities WA, Department for Correctional Services South Australia, ACT Human Rights Commission, Legal Aid NSW, psychologists in Dubbo, and to various family support organisations and community-based organisation such as Centacare Family Services, and Anglicare. Although the kits are based on Western Australian law, the broad distribution indicates the value seen by others in the resource's ability to explain legal concepts.

Closing the Gap

Legal Aid WA is committed to keep working to tailor our services to the needs of our Aboriginal clients, improving cultural safety and accessibility, and to increasing First Nations staffing levels across Legal Aid WA to better reflect the diversity of our clients.

Program description	Outcomes
Legal Yarn is a culturally safe telephone information service for First Nations people.	10, 13, 17
Community Liaison and Education Officers (CLEOs) provide education sessions for the First Nations community. They also communicate and share information with stakeholder agencies in relation to delivering services to the First Nations community.	10, 11, 17
The Kimberley Flood Response project supports those in legal need who were impacted by Ex-Tropical Cyclone Ellie which crossed into WA on 28 December 2022.	8, 10, 11, 13, 17
Legal Aid WA's First Nations Staff Network developed a First Nations Strategic Plan, Jalba, to improve justice outcomes for First Nations people in WA.	1, 4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 17
The DARDY Program provides legal and social support to vulnerable young people with, or suspected of having, disability who are involved in the criminal justice system. Duty lawyers provide assistance with criminal matters proceeding in the therapeutic In-Roads and Drug Courts.	1, 7, 11, 17
Children's Court Protection Services reduce the rate of overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out of home care.	4, 12, 13
A First Nations Community Engagement Coordinator role assists with the professional training and mentoring of CLEOs and other staff to drive opportunities for First Nations staff retention and career development. The role has a focus on capacity building for regional staff to deliver CLE and engage with the community. They also cultivate and maintain stakeholder relationships within metropolitan and regional areas of WA, providing CLE and targeted training to external agencies and organisations in partnership with our Community Legal Education and Training team.	7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 17
Duty lawyers and social support workers in the Dandjoo Bidi-Ak therapeutic court provide holistic and culturally informed services to First Nations people involved in protection and care proceedings, with the goal of reunification between parents and their children.	4, 12, 13

Program description	Outcomes
The Stronger Women Program serves vulnerable women in regional WA to combat the high demand for legal services in regional areas alongside a high rate of conflict due to the limited services available in regional hubs. The team provide legal services in the areas of family law, protection and care, and FVROs.	4, 12, 13
The Work and Development Permit (WDP) Scheme is a collaborative initiative between the Department of Justice's Fines Enforcement Registry, Legal Aid WA, and Aboriginal Legal Service of WA (ALSWA), that supports people whose capacity to pay court-imposed fines is affected by hardship. Eligible clients can participate in therapeutic and skill-building activities such as counselling, alcohol or drug treatment, and job readiness courses as an alternative to paying the amount owed. These activities are supervised by agencies known as sponsors.	8, 10, 11
A Youth Rights lawyer role was created to represent, assist and advocate for young people from across WA. It includes ensuring people in custody have adequate healthcare, advocating for young people who are in the care of the Department of Communities, or have recently left care, about a range of issues which impact their wellbeing, investigating and assisting with complaints against the police, and providing criminal law advice.	4, 7, 11, 12, 13

Outcome Key

1 - Everyone enjoys long and healthy lives.

4 - Children thrive in their early years (developmentally on track).

7 - Young people are engaged in employment, education or training.

8 - Strong economic participation and development through increased employment.

10 - Adults are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system.

11 - Young people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system.

12 - Children are not overrepresented in the child protection system (out-of-home care).

13 - Families and households are safe (reduce family violence).

17 - People have access to information and services enabling participation in informed decision-making regarding their own lives.

Michelle Sims

Senior Solicitor, Youth Rights

What inspired you to want to work at Legal Aid WA?

I've worked at Legal Aid WA for almost a decade, and I've always wanted to work here. I can remember telling my grandmother when I was seven that I wanted to be a Legal Aid lawyer and her telling me I needed to keep working hard at school. At that age I'm not sure why I felt that way, but the desire was always there.

What has been your career path at Legal Aid WA?

I started at Legal Aid WA under the old cadetship program which was a RAP initiative. I was lucky enough to work in every division of Legal Aid WA during that time and experienced everything from Infoline and Reception to our Family Violence services. I have worked as an administration officer, a paralegal, a lawyer, the inaugural First Nations Services Coordinator, and now as a senior lawyer. I've had so many incredible opportunities to improve my legal skills and also participate in events like our Summer Series and the Family Pathways Conference where I've helped to train colleagues. I was also privileged to co-author our First Nations Strategic Plan in collaboration with our First Nations Staff Network and participate in and then Chair our RAP committee for a number of years. Legal Aid WA has always encouraged me to improve my skills by supporting my participation in a number of leadership courses and also to be involved in the things that matter to me and my community including various boards and committees as well as community events.

What does your current role involve?

I work with young people under 25 who have experienced difficulties, discrimination, and poor treatment. It's a really varied role where I represent people from all over the state and advocate for them or assist them with complaints. I also collaborate with my colleagues in different Legal Aid WA areas. My work includes ensuring people in custody have adequate healthcare, advocating for young people who are in the Department of Communities care, or have recently left care, about a range of issues which impact their wellbeing, investigating and assisting with complaints against the police, and providing criminal law advice. I also consult with colleagues on a range of law reform and government inquiry matters, provide advice and representation in the State Administrative Tribunal for guardianship and administration hearings, in the Magistrates Court on Restraining Order matters, as well as assist with criminal injuries compensation applications and CLE to teach young people about their rights and responsibilities within the law.

What do you hope to achieve in your role?

I want the young people I work with to feel adequately supported and their experiences to be properly understood, validated and advocated for, to help them achieve stronger futures for themselves. Too often young people experience multiple factors of disadvantage which can make their transition into adulthood challenging. By centring the person and their stories as individuals, while putting the right supports in place I hope they can have agency over their own lives and the systems they interact with.

What's the most rewarding part of your work?

The people I work with, both the clients and colleagues, but also when I close a young person's file because we have achieved the outcome they were looking for and they don't need my help anymore.

What are some of the challenges?

Building rapport with clients. Some of them have been let down by a lot of people so it takes time to build trust with them and to really understand I am in their corner. This can be a new experience for a lot of them, especially as they begin to understand I am there for them and take instructions only from them.

Is there a highlight that stands out for you?

In my time at Legal Aid WA there have been many highlights. Two recent ones would be helping a young girl living with disability and her family navigate a tricky situation of harassment by a neighbour and achieving the outcome a client wanted in their guardianship and administration matter. In my time at Legal Aid WA, the launch of our First Nations Strategic Plan and then reaching a lot of the goals within it has been really exciting.

The DARDY Project Evaluation

In November 2025, Legal Aid WA published The DARDY Project Evaluation Report, three years on from the Project's beginnings in 2022 as a pilot.

The DARDY Project provides combined legal and social support to young people, aged 10 to 25, with a developmental disability, who have had interactions with the criminal justice system.

From beginning with one lawyer, the Project has expanded to a team of four lawyers and four social support workers. These staff deliver holistic support to young people with suspected developmental disabilities and their families through the court process. Many of the clients are First Nations people.

Two of the lawyers primarily undertake case work under a grant of legal aid and represent young people aged up to 25, including participants in the Intellectual Disability Diversion Program, in the Perth Magistrates Court. The other two lawyers are focused on representing young people in the Perth Children's Court who have been referred to participate in the In-Roads therapeutic court. These lawyers primarily provide duty lawyer services.

The DARDY Project was evaluated internally by a Legal Aid WA evaluation consultant using a client centred, utilisation-focused evaluation approach and mixed methods. The evaluation focused on quantitative data for the 2024-25 financial year and on qualitative data collected between November 2024 and September 2025.

1.

Evidence the role of DARDY in:

a. Addressing the needs of young people with developmental disabilities and their families to understand and engage with legal processes and justice services, and access disability and other support services,

b. Increasing collaboration between youth justice and disability, community, education, and other sectors, and

c. Contributing to better legal outcomes and reduced offending of young people with developmental disabilities.

2.

Investigate DARDY Project processes, including the guiding principles and identify:

a. Project strengths, challenges and improvements, and

b. Critical aspects of the model for informing future projects in Western Australia and other states and territories.

The evaluation showed evidence of the DARDY Project's outcomes for clients and the Project's contribution to the legal and other systems addressing the needs of young people in the criminal justice system.

The evaluation showed the development of a trusting relationship is a critical outcome for young people. It helps to improve their capability to understand their legal situation, stabilise their immediate environment, sustain their engagement with disability, housing, education, health and other support services, leading to better wellbeing and legal outcomes and reduced offending.

In addition to supporting client outcomes, the DARDY Project contributes to a smoother-running court and eases the pressure on other services supporting the young people, such as education and health.

"After finally getting a diagnosis of intellectual disability, [the client] is understanding himself so much better and getting supports put in place."

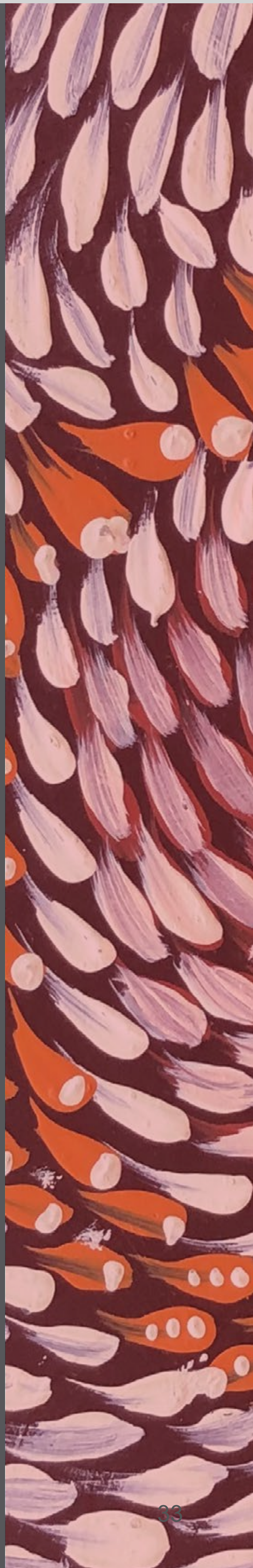
- DARDY lawyer

In 2025-26, there were 311 DARDY Project services delivered.

"DARDY have been fantastic at building that relationship with the young people, so it feels safe to go places with them, attend appointments, and attend school."

- Stakeholder

DARDY Project team

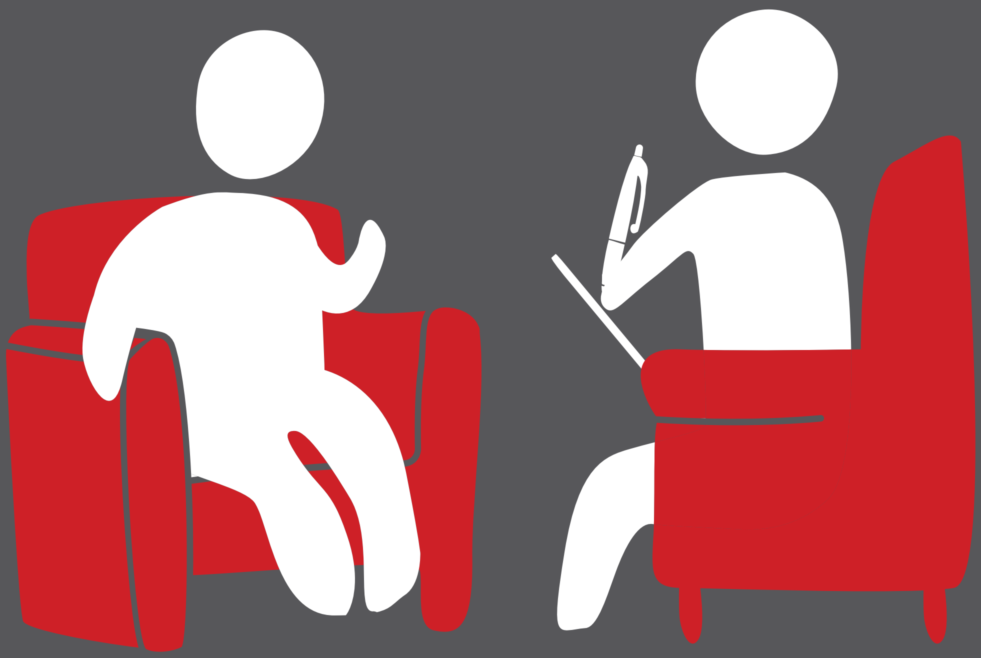


Strategic priority 2:

Stakeholders + Partners

We will enhance support and resourcing for private practitioners undertaking legal aid work as part of our mixed model of service delivery. We will communicate and promote our services and the value of our work.

We have succeeded when we explore opportunities beyond the legal assistance sector and actively consult with clients and stakeholders to inform the future direction of our services.



Private Practitioners
Supervisor Status Scheme

In 2025, Legal Aid WA launched the Supervisor Status Scheme, aimed at assisting approved panel members in creating capacity, whilst affording professional development opportunities to junior members of the legal sector.

The Scheme operates with approved panel and list members supervising junior practitioners to undertake certain tasks and provides the junior members professional development opportunities through attending court for a wider range of grant of aid matters.

Over the past year, the Scheme has grown steadily, with increasing numbers of Approved Supervisors (approved panel practitioners with more than five years Post Admission Experience) as well as junior practitioners gaining important first-hand court experiences.

The legal services that the Approved Supervisors and their supervised practitioners provide is critical in providing access to justice for people across Western Australia who are experiencing disadvantage.

Legal Aid WA has received positive feedback from its Approved Supervisors, highlighting a number of benefits stemming from this initiative:

“This Scheme has allowed [junior practitioner] to gain a wealth of experience in the jurisdiction of the Magistrates Court.

“This has also allowed our office to take on a greater number of Legal Aid Grants and provide legal services to those who are often most vulnerable and most in need.

“The Scheme has also developed the working relationship between myself and [junior practitioner] over the course of close to a year’s worth of supervision.

“Crucially, the Scheme develops young and junior criminal lawyers to eventually take their place as Panel Members in their own right.

“It does so in a structured, safe and well supervised manner.

“I commend Legal Aid on their implementation of the Supervision Scheme and reiterate the benefits it brings to clients and practitioners alike.”

- Mark Gunning, Gunning Young Barristers & Solicitors

“I have been enrolled on the Supervision Scheme since May 2025, under the supervision of Mark Gunning.

“The Scheme has provided me with the opportunity to undertake Magistrates Court pleas and bail applications as well as work on files, all under the supervision of an experienced Panel Practitioner. Under the structure of the Scheme, I have also appeared at my first District Court sentencing.

“It has allowed me to develop skills as a practitioner and advocate on a range of files that I otherwise would not have had the same exposure to while maintaining appropriate guidance and oversight.”

- Junior Practitioner

Private Practitioners
Introducing Kate Fry

Geraldton-based lawyer Kate Fry was awarded the Legal Aid Private Panel Practitioner Award at the 2025 Attorney General's Community Service Law Awards.

The Community Service Law Awards acknowledge the legal fraternity's pro bono and community work across the whole of WA.

Ms Fry, of Kate Fry Legal, won the award for her extensive work representing clients across the Mid West, Pilbara, and Kimberley regions. She has been an active member of Legal Aid WA's panels and lists since 2016.

Starting as a junior panel member, she reflected on the legal assistance that she has provided across this time.

"I would encourage lawyers to go on the panels, you can get some interesting and complex work. It's allowed me to do some very serious cases, some complex trials with multi accused where I've got to work with lots of different, very experienced lawyers."

Ms Fry said it is essential for people to be represented for the justice system to work, and for the wheels of justice to keep turning.

"I think that some of the most serious cases that we see coming through our courts are probably represented by legal aid lawyers."

Valuing partnership
Naala Djookan

Legal Aid WA is part of a consortium of service providers at the Mirrabooka family and domestic violence hub called Naala Djookan Healing Centre ("Naala Djookan"). The hub was created as part of the *Path to Safety: Western Australia's Strategy to Reduce Family and Domestic Violence 2020-2030* and is funded by the Department of Communities and operates in the City of Stirling.

When Naala Djookan launched in 2020 it was the first family and domestic violence hub in the state, and Legal Aid WA is proud to have been a consortium partner since the commencement of the program.

Naala Djookan, whose name is rooted in the Noongar meaning "Our Sisters", stands as a unique and powerful model of community-led healing and safety in Western Australia, offering culturally safe, trauma informed, and an inclusive space for women, children, and their families.

In 2025-26, Naala Djookan continued to deliver holistic support and services as a one-stop shop for women and children impacted by family and domestic violence, and its model prioritises ease of access for women and children.

In the past financial year, Legal Aid WA provided 155 services to clients at the hub, an increase of 65% on the previous year.

With more than 30 years of legal experience assisting women and children impacted by family violence through our Domestic Violence Legal Unit (DVLU), we have applied our experience at the hub. We work closely with workers from other specialist non-legal family violence services including Multicultural Services Centre of WA, Ebenezer Aboriginal Corporation, and Ishar Multicultural Women's Health Services Inc.

The consortium partner model has been beneficial to all participating partners. From clients' perspectives, we can collaborate and work together with a goal of achieving real holistic outcomes for the clients. From an agency perspective, working closely with partners builds on professional relationships and facilitates mutual upskilling of participating staff.

Naala Djookan's impact has been recognised by the sector. In late June 2025, Naala Djookan won an award at the 2025 National Award for Local Government in the Addressing of Violence Against Women and Children category.

Legal Aid WA values the importance of the hub and remains committed to providing specialist legal services at Naala Djookan. We continue to build our relationships with partner members and learn from them, leveraging their extensive specialist non-legal experience.

Naala Djookan
HEALING CENTRE

"A client from a CaLD background attended Naala Djookan Health Centre in a rare opportunity to seek help. A Naala Djookan advocate identified significant risks including coercive control, financial abuse, visa-related threats, and social isolation, and provided an intensive same-day response.

"Through Naala Djookan's co-located Legal Aid WA service, the client received immediate legal advice about her rights and parenting concerns without needing to retell her story or wait for an appointment.

"This timely support helped reduce fear, challenge misinformation, and empower the client to make informed decisions about her future."

- Tarn Deere, Acting Senior Coordinator, Naala Djookan Healing Centre

Work and Development Permit Service

The Work and Development Permit (WDP) Service continued to be successfully rolled out in 2025-26.

The WDP Service at Legal Aid WA works in partnership with the Department of Justice's Fines Enforcement Registry (FER) and the Aboriginal Legal Service of WA (ALSWA) to deliver the WDP Scheme which supports people whose capacity to pay court-imposed fines is affected by hardship.

Under a WDP, eligible individuals can participate in therapeutic and skill-building activities such as counselling, alcohol or drug treatment, and job readiness courses as an alternative to paying the amount owed. These activities are supervised by agencies known as sponsors.

In addition to providing fines advice directly to clients, the WDP team supports agencies in their role as sponsors and works with stakeholders to expand the reach of the Service. Building on its established court presence and stakeholder relationships, our team expanded its community engagement activities during the past 12 months to promote greater awareness of, and access to the WDP Service.

Our legal team has maintained a regular presence at the Magistrates Court, sharing information about WDPs directly with individuals awaiting sentencing. In October 2025, we co-presented with FER and ALSWA at a CPD session for panel practitioners, focusing on how they may identify and support clients who are eligible for a WDP. Alongside this, the development of a new QR code referral card has streamlined the way in which lawyers, court staff, and clients make referrals to the WDP Service. Together, these strategies have led to greater uptake of legal advice appointments and access to timely fines advice.

We have continued to strengthen our presence within the community through participation in various outreach initiatives. These have ranged from a three-day roadshow in Geraldton, connecting with more than 25 stakeholders operating in the Mid West region; campaigns in Northam, Mandurah, and Newman; and attendance at community hubs, expos, and events, including Aboriginal Justice Partnership Days in the Pilbara region.

As of 30 June 2026, there were 271 sponsors registered with the WDP Service, operating across about 639 sites. These sponsors have supported individuals to clear more than $13.5 million in expiated court fine debt, representing countless hours of engagement in treatments, support services, and prosocial activities.

Our team works closely with existing and prospective sponsors, and in the past year has delivered tailored information and training to a variety of agencies, from mental health services, drug and alcohol providers, hospitals, and crisis services to training organisations, educational institutions, financial counsellors, and more.

In the past financial year, we also established a quarterly WDP newsletter reaching sponsors, peak bodies, and advocates. The Fine Print newsletter features success stories alongside news, updates, and events from the WDP Service. It has been a valuable channel to celebrate the work of our sponsors, whose contributions play a vital role in promoting rehabilitation, reintegration, and community engagement.

"When someone is motivated to make a meaningful change like this, and when their experience with the WDP Service is positive, there is potential for those changes to develop into life-long habits."

- Ursula, Dreambuilders Care

Sponsor Spotlight: dreambuilders care

For more than 12 years, DreambuildersCare has provided a host of services to individuals and families in the Midland community, with the primary mission of serving those experiencing food insecurity.

Relying on the support of volunteers, they have offered voluntary unpaid work through the WDP Service since registering as sponsors in 2021. As of 30 June 2026, DreambuildersCare have managed 58 WDPs, enabling people in hardship to clear more than $72,000 in outstanding court fine debt.

One participant who shared their story with us during our visit started their WDP with jobs like stacking shelves, sorting clothes, and pricing items in the op shop. Though they found volunteering challenging at first, this participant was able to build strong social connections and ultimately credits the experience with allowing them to find their purpose.

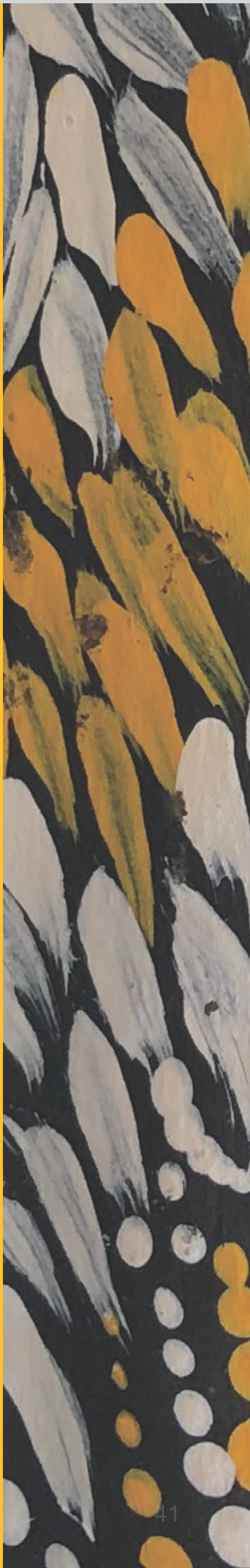
"My court fines were the reason for coming to DreambuildersCare, but in doing so I found my purpose, which is to help others and serve my local community."

Strategic priority 3:

People + Culture

We will prioritise staff safety and wellbeing. We will invest in a 'grow your own' workforce strategy to ensure we have the right people, with the right skills in the right roles.

We have succeeded when we develop and support a high performing, skilled and responsive workforce, and strengthen integrity and accountability.



Social Support Workers

The inclusion of social support workers at Legal Aid WA has created a more holistic client centred service. It enables us to provide wraparound help to those who need legal assistance, supporting the person beyond their legal issues and assisting vulnerable clients to overcome barriers to support. It also improves our staff professional wellbeing and mental health.

Our social support network comprises social workers and social support workers, embedded in teams across our Early Intervention Services, Family Law, Criminal Law, and Civil Law Divisions.

In 2025-26, Legal Aid WA provided 4,240 non-legal social support services to 2,187 clients across the state.

Professional growth and support

To support the growing number of social support staff across Legal Aid WA and to provide them an appropriate level of professional supervisory support, we appointed a Professional Practice Supervisor (Social Work) in 2026.

The Professional Practice Supervisor provides expert professional supervision to mentor staff with ethical and compliant decision making, reflect on and improve their practice, and for them to support staff within their teams to provide holistic client centred care.

The role leads our internal social work community of practice, advises leadership on social support issues and risks, and coordinates relevant training.

It reflects the importance of the work of our social support staff in the delivery of Legal Aid WA legal services and the benefits that work brings to our clients and our staff.

Graduate Program

Our Graduate Program has continued to go from strength to strength in 2025–26, playing an important role in attracting and retaining talented young lawyers at Legal Aid WA.

In the past year we took on four graduates and in 2027 we expect to employ at least six.

The program now has built-in flexibility, allowing us to bring graduates on board in innovative ways that maximise its value. In 2025, we introduced a blended graduate program in partnership with the Criminal Law Duty Lawyer team. Under this model, graduates spent one week out of every four in the Hedland office providing regional relief and the remaining three weeks in Perth on the duty lawyer roster. Two graduates participated in this program, and both have since secured permanent positions in regional offices in Hedland and Kununurra.

Last year, we also trialled a regional family law graduate position. The successful graduate relocated to Bunbury and continues to live and work there.

In 2026, our graduates completed their Perth-based training, gained admission, and have now relocated to Hedland, Geraldton and Kalgoorlie. Throughout their training, they have been actively involved in frontline client work, including prison visits, client advice appointments through the Advice Before Court service, negotiations with police, court appearances as graduate lawyers with leave, and assisting with regional circuits in Moora, Northam, Kalgoorlie, Hedland, Geraldton, Newman, and Jigalong.

The graduates are already demonstrating strong capability and confidence in practice. One graduate completed her first District Court appearance under supervision while on circuit in Kalgoorlie. Two others are managing ongoing client files and are preparing to list their first Magistrates Court trials before the end of the year.

The training program now includes three intensive weeks covering induction, criminal law and family law, complemented by weekly group-based theory and practical training throughout the six-month Perth placement. Training is enriched by guest speakers, including Magistrates, lawyers from the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions, staff from the Aboriginal Interpreting Service, and the Sexual Assault Resource Centre. We also collaborate with the Department of Justice, with our graduates participating in the Courts and Tribunals induction program.

We continue to see staff coming to Legal Aid WA as volunteers or Infoline staff, progressing into administrative or paralegal roles before successfully applying for the Graduate Program. In 2027, we will welcome a law student from Geraldton into the program through a new remote participation model, enabling her to remain living and working in her regional community while benefiting from the learning, development and peer support provided by the graduate cohort.

This pathway demonstrates the Graduate Program's growing flexibility and its ongoing contribution to building a sustainable regional workforce for Legal Aid WA.

Clair Halliday

Managing Solicitor, Graduate Program and Regional Relief Team

How long have you been at Legal Aid WA and how did you come into the agency?

I started at Legal Aid WA in 2009 as an Articled Clerk in the Country Lawyers' Program. Initially I was in the Perth office, rotating through crime, civil, and family. Over the years, I have worked as a criminal lawyer in the Geraldton and Hedland offices, before returning to Perth and working as a criminal duty lawyer, in our Community Legal Education and Training team presenting our R U Legal? Program to schools around the metropolitan region and then training junior lawyers within the agency which led to my involvement in the Graduate Program.

What role have you had with the Graduate Program over the years?

When I started working with the Graduate Program, we first needed to work out the structure it would take. The concept of the program assisting with staffing shortages in regional offices led to seven permanent graduate roles - one graduate for each office, with graduates rotating in and out of the program every two years.

The program now includes six months training in Perth and then relocation to a regional office once trained and admitted, which give the incoming graduates certainty about the timeframes and a plan for them once they are admitted. We also include paid Professional Legal Training (PLT) as part of the program to be completed in the six-month Perth portion of the program.

Part of the success of the program has been the intensive advertising campaign, our law student clerkship and volunteering opportunities, attending careers fairs to promote the work Legal Aid WA does, and hosting an annual Law Student sundowner event.

We now see record numbers of applications to the program and have built a reputation for providing a well-structured, comprehensive, and competitive graduate program.

My role is to manage the program, from involvement in the advertising, promotion, recruitment, induction, training and supervision of all graduates coming through, making decisions about relocation based on graduates' preferences as well as operational needs, assisting graduates and offices with relocation, and then ongoing supervision and mentoring of graduates after relocation.

My role has expanded to encompass the management of the Regional Relief team of lawyers that provide FIFO relief to our regional offices. This sits well with the Graduate Program in terms of Perth-based support to the regional offices, working with junior criminal lawyers and training and support to those lawyers.

How does the Graduate Program exemplify the broader Legal Aid WA vision and strategic priorities?

The Graduate Program at Legal Aid WA in its current form is an important way to bring talented and enthusiastic graduates into the agency, give them the opportunity to be trained in Perth with senior and talented criminal lawyers, develop networks and relationships throughout the agency, and then relocate to a regional town and commence their legal career in a small but supportive regional office with all the opportunities that provides.

Most of the graduates that have come through the program have remained at Legal Aid WA, securing permanencies in regional offices after their graduate program contract ends.

The Graduate Program is an example of Legal Aid WA prioritising people and culture, by investing in a 'grow your own' workforce and building and supporting a high performing and skilled team. The program is also centred on client outcomes, particularly by maximising the reach of services to regional, remote and rural communities.

What do you think has been the most satisfying aspect of the program for you?

I see eager and passionate law students come on board, immerse themselves in all the training, shadowing, hands on practical opportunities, learn and develop very quickly, and ultimately feel confident to provide quality services to our clients.

Graduates provide advice appointments even before admission, have written successful negotiations for clients, have appeared in court with leave, and provide prison visiting services to many of the prisons around WA.

Our 2026 graduates have already spent time in the regions, visiting Moora, Northam, Hedland, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie, Jigalong, and Newman. All our 2025 graduates have had Magistrates Court trial files that they have prepped, and some have run their first trial in court. These are opportunities that would be hard to come by in Perth after such a short time in practice, and still with solid supervision and mentoring throughout.

Ntuthuko Mcingolwane

Making a difference in the regions

Ntuthuko Mcingolwane is Legal Aid WA's Solicitor in Charge in the Pilbara, and in 2025 he was nominated a finalist for the WA Regional Practitioner of the Year Award in the annual Law Society Awards.

Ntuthoko is a highly skilled lawyer who is committed to social justice. He works tirelessly in the courtroom and beyond, collaborating with community groups, supporting vulnerable First Nations clients, contributing to CLE initiatives, and driving cultural empowerment in the Pilbara region.

Why did you want to work at Legal Aid WA?

I've worked at Legal Aid WA since 2017. I started the same year my oldest daughter was born so it was a year of significant milestones for me. Before that, I was in private practice for about four years where I also sometimes did duty lawyer work for Legal Aid WA at places like Bunbury and around the South West. It was particularly in assisting Legal Aid WA while in private practice that drew me to the work itself, to helping people who are vulnerable, and being able to make a real difference without everything being about billing or targets.

How did you get into law initially and where did you work?

In high school, I loved English literature and history. A careers advisor suggested law, and a family friend who was a lawyer made it feel achievable. I studied law in Namibia, where I had some exposure to customary law and how it sits within a constitutional framework. Namibia had a mixed legal system. I had the benefit of living with Khoisan people in the Kalahari for a few weeks and learning about their customary law and how it intersected with the statutory legal system. It was very exciting. Namibia has the Bill of Rights enshrined in their constitution, so the ability to argue a law's validity based on constitutionality was intriguing. My first job was with Jan Greyling and Associates in a northern Namibian town in Namibia called Oshakati. It was a hot town in the North of Namibia and I draw many parallels with where I am now in Hedland. After that, I moved to Australia and studied at University of Notre Dame, then worked at a private firm in Bunbury before joining Legal Aid WA.

What's the most rewarding part about working in regional WA with Legal Aid WA?

It's the people. The clients, the community Elders, and the team. Even when matters are tough, the relationships carry you through, and you see the impact up close. You form closer bonds and feel like you're making a real difference.

What's the most challenging part?

The challenging part is the isolation. The Pilbara is mainly a mining region with a lot of FIFO workers. The weather over the summer months can be harsh with temperatures reaching upward of 40 degrees. We have worked very hard to meet the challenge of attracting and retaining staff in recent times. Our South Hedland office has a fantastic team and maintained some stability.

What about the collegiality of working in the regions?

The collegiality is great. We have each other's back. The team has been together for a while now and it's amazing, from my perspective, the strong bonds that exist between most of us. I feel that they have developed in their roles and support each other quite admirably and my dream would be to keep us together forever.

Is there a highlight that stands out for you?

Not one single highlight, but more like steady moments over time, building trust with clients and working with a genuinely supportive team.

What's the overriding sentiment when you think of the work you do in the Pilbara?

Just gratitude. For the colleagues, stakeholders, and communities I've worked with and for the chance to keep showing up. I hope to keep on developing in the role and developing the people in our team, with the hope that they can cherish the memories they have in the Pilbara.

Our Finance team

When a client contacts Legal Aid WA for assistance, it often happens during one of the most challenging moments of their lives. Whether it is escaping family violence, resolving a parenting dispute, protecting their rights as they age, or accessing justice for the first time, clients rely on Legal Aid WA to provide timely, high-quality legal assistance.

The visible face of Legal Aid WA is undoubtedly our frontline staff – lawyers, paralegal staff and information officers, and social support workers. But there is another team working behind the scenes to make our services possible for these clients in their moment of need. Legal Aid WA's Finance team plays a critical role in ensuring service delivery is sustainable, well-managed and accessible, and that our range of services remain responsive to the needs of clients across Western Australia.

The work of the Finance team extends beyond financial management: they manage procurement and contracts, budgets and management accounting, financial accounting, business intelligence and performance, as well as property, facilities, and fleet management.

They play a critical enabling role in delivering Legal Aid WA's strategic priorities by ensuring funding is allocated sustainably, strategically, and accountably, while proactively securing additional funding to support emerging needs and high-priority initiatives.

They are also responsible for maintaining the stable foundations of fit-for-purpose and accessible buildings and client meeting facilities, reliable transport for staff to reach clients in prisons, courts, regional and remote locations, and accurate program reporting and funding accountability. Despite this wide-ranging portfolio, they remain one integrated team, with a high-performance culture based on pillars of unity, respect, transparency, and excellence.

An important function of the team is to use data and robust reporting to demonstrate the impact of Legal Aid WA's services across the state. Evaluating and reporting on our services provides the evidence critical to enabling informed decision-making, supporting continuous improvement of our systems and services, and maintaining legal assistance services for the communities and clients that need it most.

While the legal issues that Western Australians may face change over time, Legal Aid WA's Finance team remains committed to operating systems that are transparent, accountable and informed by evidence.

Every action taken by the team, whether it is creating clear signage for a Legal Aid WA service location, compiling a service report, upskilling a team member, or finalising a funding agreement, supports Legal Aid WA's mission of providing quality legal services to the people who need them most.

Vic Harste

Financial Operations Coordinator

Vic Harste is a firm believer in embracing life and all its opportunities.

32 years ago, Vic Harste walked into Legal Aid WA on a seven-week contract. She had left school, been to TAFE, and said she was a little older than your typical school leavers.

“I started in Records (IRSU) on a seven-week contract so I would deliver mail in the morning, I would deliver mail after lunch, and then about 3pm I would go and pick the mail up that went out, so I got to know everyone.”

Over the years, that seven-week contract turned into a series of work opportunities that came her way.

“After a year in IRSU, I moved to Finance. My contract kept getting rolled over and there was a vacancy in Finance, and I haven’t left Finance since. I went from accounts payable, then to accounts receivable, and I did payroll for a while, so there were so many professional development opportunities.

“I then moved into a role that encompassed a lot of business administration including motor vehicles and maintenance, credit cards, Fringe Benefits Taxation, building maintenance requests, and accounts receivable supervision. That’s evolved into my position where I supervise both the accounts payable and accounts receivable.”

Over the decades, Vic has seen a lot of change at Legal Aid WA as it has matured and grown as an agency.

She credits her various managers for giving her the opportunity to develop her skills, enabling her to now be the Financial Operations Coordinator.

She said it’s the one team approach she loves and what has kept her at Legal Aid WA and enjoying coming to work.

“We’re all interrelated, and I love the fact that you can see us come together like that now and we are really one team – the budget team, the project team, the accounts payable and receivable team.

“I love our culture, we have amazing staff, and we all work together cohesively and say, here’s our ultimate goal and this is what we need to achieve.”

Her aim now is to empower members of her team.

“I’m focused now on making sure that there’s cross-training, that my team is across different aspects of work and to learn my role, which is a bit of succession training.

“My team is grateful for it, because they all want the opportunities to learn too and they’re now seeing that jigsaw puzzle that I used to say, ‘how does that work’ so that’s been a particular focus for me.”

Strategic priority 4:

Legal system impact

We will continue to provide duty lawyers, Independent Children's Lawyers and other services essential to the operation of the courts and justice system. We will collaborate with Aboriginal staff and stakeholders to implement innovative solutions to action Closing the Gap priorities, and we will champion law reform and system changes that ensure legislation, policies and practices support the rights and interests of our clients and stakeholders.

We will succeed when we work in partnership with government and the legal assistance sector to improve service coordination, collaboration and client outcomes, and provide expert advice and implementation support to advance government priorities and initiatives.

Services in focus

As part of our commitment to make our services work better and deliver the best possible outcomes for the people who rely on them, Legal Aid WA has undertaken a 12-month service review to see where we can improve.

A Strategic Impact Project Manager was engaged to independently review how our services are currently delivered and help identify ways we can improve. The aim is to make sure we are using our staff and technical resources in the best possible way to meet the needs of clients across Western Australia and improve our employees' work experience.

The review comes at a time when there have been changes in the legal assistance sector. They include the Legal Aid Strategic Plan 2025-2028, a new Commonwealth *National Access to Justice Partnership 2025 - 2030 (NAJP)* which changes expectations around how services are prioritised and how data is collected and reported to the Government, and the WA Legal Assistance Strategy and Commissioning Strategy which set out the key legal assistance priorities and service principles for the State Government.

These changes create an opportunity to make sure we are well positioned for the future.

The review is considering all areas of Legal Aid WA, including how clients enter our services, how we allocate resources and manage demand, how our legal and non-legal supports work together, the way we collect and use data, and how our services align with Commonwealth and State strategies.

Law reform and policy development

During 2025–26, Legal Aid WA continued to contribute to law reform and policy development.

This work was informed by our day-to-day experience helping disadvantaged clients and our role in the justice system.

We contributed to the Law Reform Commission of Western Australia's review of access to justice by people with disability. Our submission highlighted common barriers including recognising disability, legal capacity, communication, digital and physical access, and the need for reasonable adjustments.

We made submissions to parliamentary inquiries relating to youth justice and incarceration; public order; guardianship and administration; and racism, vilification and hatred towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We contributed to the statutory review of the *Family Violence Legislation Reform Act 2020*, the Ombudsman WA's review of the Protected Entertainment Precincts Scheme, and the development of national principles and reforms relating to the treatment of mentally impaired accused persons in the justice system.

We also provided input to government on a range of legislative and policy initiatives including relating to family violence, young people, criminal procedure, court processes, and community safety.

This work ensured that the experiences of legally assisted clients were considered in law reform at state and national levels. Our focus was on making sure laws and procedures are fair, proportionate and do not unfairly affect vulnerable or overrepresented groups.

We also participated in many working groups and discussions with key stakeholders including courts, government, police, and other legal assistance providers with the shared goal of making the justice system fairer, more effective, and easier to access.

Resources and training for the legal sector

Collaboration across the legal assistance sector remains central to improving access to justice for Western Australians. Legal Aid WA works closely with government, courts, community legal centres (CLCs), ALSWA and private practitioners to strengthen service delivery, build capability across the sector, and improve outcomes for clients.

A key contribution to this work is the development and sharing of legal resources that support lawyers to deliver high-quality and consistent legal assistance. These resources focus on areas of greatest need, including high-volume services such as duty lawyer, parenting and child protection matters, and help for practitioners to provide advice and representation more efficiently and effectively.

During the year, Legal Aid WA continued to maintain and enhance a wide range of practice resources, including the Duty Lawyer Briefcase, Protection and Care Handbook, and Family Law Parenting Cases Handbook. Lawyers also have access to practical resources covering topics such as police powers, restraining orders, driving and driver's licences, family violence, tenancy, and child support. Regular legal alerts ensure practitioners remain informed about legislative and policy changes while resources are updated.

The reach of these resources extends well beyond Legal Aid WA. They are shared with CLCs, ALSWA, and private practitioners undertaking legally aided and pro bono work. This broad access supports hundreds of lawyers across Western Australia and helps promote greater consistency and quality in legal assistance services.

Legal Aid WA also develops a range of public legal information resources, including webpages, information sheets, and self-help kits. These resources assist people to better understand and address their legal problems and are widely used by community organisations and other service providers. By making these resources freely available, Legal Aid WA extends the benefits of its expertise to a much larger group of people than those who receive direct legal assistance.

Building capability across the sector also remains an important focus. Throughout the year, Legal Aid WA provided opportunities for external practitioners and stakeholders to access professional development through training events and online learning modules. The annual Summer Series conference attracted lawyers from Legal Aid WA, private practice, CLCs, and other organisations involved in the justice system.

These training opportunities support the sharing of knowledge, strengthen professional networks, and encourage collaboration across the sector. By bringing together legal and non-legal stakeholders, they contribute to a more connected and informed service system that is better equipped to respond to the needs of vulnerable clients and improve access to justice.

The Duty Lawyers' Briefcase

The Duty Lawyers' Briefcase is one of our resources for lawyers. It is a comprehensive manual designed to assist duty lawyers who advise and represent people facing criminal charges in the Magistrates Court. It includes information on offences, penalties, bail, sentencing, court diversion options, and much more.

It is relied on heavily by Legal Aid WA and ALSWA duty lawyers but is also used as a general criminal law resource by those who have access to it.

It is well recognised and lawyers without access often ask how they can get a copy. The Briefcase was first created in 2004 by a criminal lawyer who was tasked with adapting an existing handbook into a more comprehensive manual with consistent standards of legal information and presentation, to enhance its reliability and accessibility.

Over the past 22 years, the Briefcase has evolved into a significantly longer and more detailed resource, available in electronic format with built-in navigation tools designed to locate information as efficiently as possible. This is vital given the limited time for duty lawyers to interview and advise clients before representing them in court.

The number of people asking for help from duty lawyers has increased markedly over the years and reinforces the need for these lawyers to have a reliable source of relevant information at their fingertips.

The Briefcase now also reflects the increasingly serious and complex law that applies in the Magistrates Court. It addresses many areas of risk to clients by providing detailed guidance on bail and sentencing, and by highlighting serious consequence of conviction such as mandatory imprisonment and driver's licence disqualification.

With help from the Briefcase, duty lawyers can provide more specific and timely advice. This helps to avoid unnecessary adjournments and enables courts to operate more efficiently.

Keeping the Briefcase up to date is a significant challenge, as criminal laws change frequently.

The last update was in December 2025, and captured numerous changes to the law, including electronic monitoring for family violence offences in bail and sentencing. New Bills in 2026 will again impact the Briefcase content, requiring another update. In the meantime, legal alerts keep lawyers up to date.

Our staff

We have a diverse workforce. Our people have a broad range and depth of experience. We are very proud of our diversity because it strengthens our capability, better reflects the vibrant WA community, and makes Legal Aid WA a more dynamic and inclusive place to work. The diversity of our staff helps us work with our diverse range of clients.

In accordance with Treasurer's Instruction 903(13)(iii) Legal Aid WA provides a summary of the number of its employees by category, in comparison with the immediately preceding period, along with information on staffing policies, industrial relations, and workers' compensation claims.

At 30 June 2026, Legal Aid WA's FTE was 520 and headcount was 602. Legal Aid WA's employees are engaged under the *Legal Aid Commission Act 1976 (WA)*. Remuneration and working conditions are subject to the Government Officers' Salaries Allowance and Conditions Award 1989, the Legal Aid WA Agency Specific Agreement 2005, and the Public Sector CSA Agreement 2024. The Director of Legal Aid WA is appointed under the *Legal Aid Commission Act 1976 (WA)* with the remuneration and terms and conditions set by the Commission.

Employee Profile

Employment Type	2025	2026
Full-time permanent	321	370
Full-time contract	149	139
Part-time measured on an FTE basis	87	91
On secondment	7	2
Total	**564**	**602**

Providing an inclusive workplace

Legal Aid WA is committed to providing a culturally safe workplace, and in 2025-26 we continued our efforts to improve workforce diversity.

In October 2025, we undertook an Employee Engagement Survey. More than 72% of staff participated in the anonymous survey. Ninety six per cent of staff who completed the survey rated Legal Aid WA positively as a place to work. Overall, we received a workplace score of 82/100 which was an increase of four points since our previous survey conducted in 2021.

Our staff found Legal Aid WA:

- is an organisation focused on assisting clients,
- provides the opportunity to do interesting, engaging and meaningful work that holds a sense of justice,
- is committed to supporting staff wellbeing,
- allows access to flexibility to create a positive work-life balance, and
- ensures friendly and inclusive office environments.

The survey highlighted key priority areas including:

- improving opportunities for career progression,
- greater collaboration between divisions,
- improved access to structured training and development,
- a bigger focus on leadership, and
- improving job security and conversion to permanency.

The survey and subsequent focus groups are now being used to inform our next Employee Engagement Strategy which will be launched in late 2026.

Staff views

"My journey at Legal Aid WA has been one of feeling included, encouraged, and trusted.

"I've had the opportunity to grow from a paralegal to a solicitor, and throughout that journey I've always felt supported and accepted for who I am and the diverse experiences I bring."

- Ashani

"I really appreciate that our CEO takes the time to have genuine chats with me, both work-related and personal. The way she listens, shares her own experiences, and creates space for open conversation shows real workplace inclusiveness.

"It makes me feel comfortable working in State Government, knowing that even the most senior leader is approachable, accessible, and willing to connect on a human level. That kind of leadership makes the organisation feel safe, supportive, and genuinely inclusive."

- Victoria

"My favourite more recent moment of inclusivity in the workplace was acknowledging Eid, Passover, and Easter collectively with the whole team this year. We shared food and stories about our cultural celebrations; a simple but effective way to learn about the diverse communities that make up our team and modern Australian society broadly."

- Rebecca

"As a leader, I've seen how Legal Aid WA values diversity, supports individual strengths and promotes a culture of respect and belonging. It's an organisation where people are encouraged to grow and feel included."

- Molly

Staff wellbeing

In 2025-26, Legal Aid WA introduced a range of health and wellbeing initiatives as we continued to prioritise the wellbeing of our staff.

We developed a Wellness Guide, a compilation of trusted resources to support wellbeing, both at work and outside of work. From exercise to mindfulness, sleep, resilience and perfectionism, the guide offers information, tools and hints to help staff look after their physical, emotional and mental health.

We provided a series of wellbeing events throughout the year including healthy heart checks, fully subsidised influenza and COVID vaccinations, yoga, Pilates, and guided meditation.

These events were complemented by discussions about wellbeing and psychosocial risks through the Professional Wellbeing Committee, Work Health Safety and Wellbeing Team meetings, and all staff forums.

Our psychosocial risk register was reviewed, we encouraged participation in the Employee Engagement Survey and focus groups, and promoted wellbeing tips through intranet articles and work health safety and wellbeing team meetings.

We also celebrated Stress Down Week, RUOK?, Mental Health Week, and National Safe Work Month.

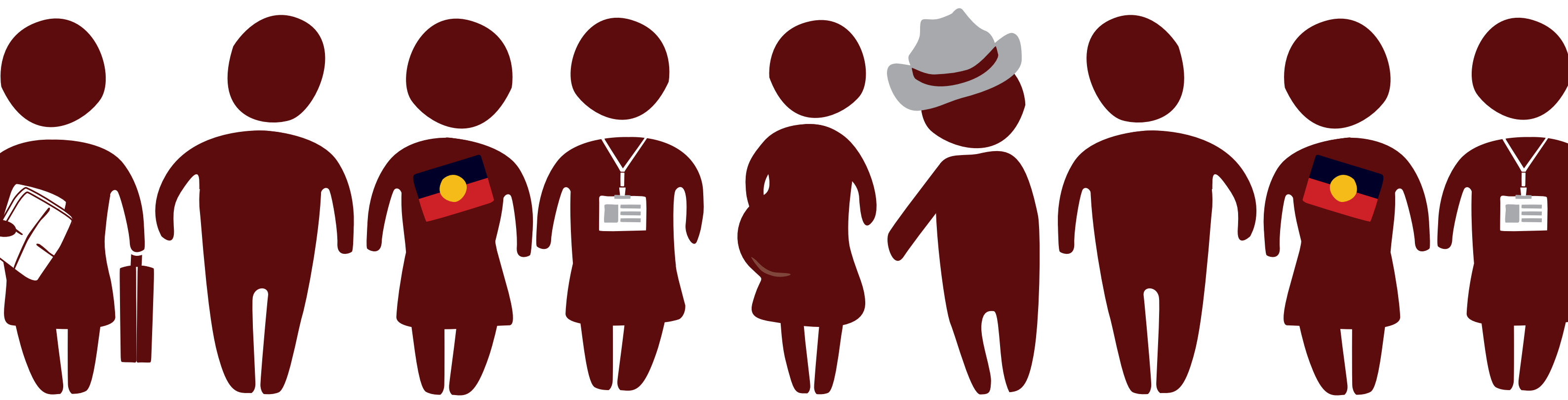
We offered staff and their families access to a Fitness Passport to encourage them to reach their health and fitness goals through a flexible membership.

External and in-house training throughout the year supported staff and provided opportunities to learn and engage in topics including vicarious trauma and self-care, gatekeeper training, suicide prevention, managing disrespectful, aggressive and abusive clients, wellness mentor training, and mental health first aid training.

Additionally, training was offered on topics including wellness strategies, debriefing, dealing with distressing material, managing anxiety, and effective communications.

Online and face-to-face training was provided on awareness around bullying, harassment, and discrimination. These sessions provided greater awareness of what options are available when resolving workplace issues, and the support structures that are in place to assist staff.

Our Employee Assistance Program continued in 2025-26 with staff offered access to onsite, offsite, in person, and online support. A separate Manager Assistance Program provided managers and supervisors with guidance on supporting team wellbeing.



First Nations commitment

At Legal Aid WA, we are committed to just and equitable treatment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities, with our First Nations Strategic Plan, Jalba – Coming Together, embedded in Legal Aid WA's strategic planning processes and operational systems. We aim to provide accessible and appropriate services to First Nations people across every service and location. Our First Nations Services Coordinator plays an integral role in overseeing the services provided to First Nations clients to ensure they are culturally safe and accessible, as well as supporting First Nations staff to thrive in the workplace.

Reconciliation Action Plan

In 2026, Reconciliation Australia accepted our next Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). This is a significant milestone in our journey toward reconciliation with First Nations people and represents a deepening of our organisational commitment to long-term, meaningful action.

A Stretch RAP is a commitment undertaken by organisations that are leaders in the reconciliation space, a title we are proud to hold.

Our ongoing commitment to reconciliation can be seen through the progress of our RAPs since 2009, with the Stretch RAP, our seventh RAP, building on the achievements of those before.

RAP Learning Circle

As part of Legal Aid WA's participation in Reconciliation WA's Perth RAP Learning Circle, our Yamaji Wajarri Youth Rights Lawyer Michelle Sims was invited to present on cultural safety and what it means to Legal Aid WA.

Michelle explained that at Legal Aid WA we are working toward cultural safety for our staff as well as our clients and stakeholders. Having been involved in the creation and delivery of Jalba in 2021 and being an active participant in Legal Aid WA's RAP working group, Michelle spoke of how proud she is of all the work Legal Aid WA has done in this space.

Participating in and presenting at a Learning Circle is important as it allows Legal Aid WA to connect meaningfully with stakeholders to assist in meeting client needs, and mentor organisations who are starting their RAP journeys.

Solid Futures at Legal Aid WA

Legal Aid WA is proud to be a part of the Solid Futures Aboriginal Traineeship Program which provides First Nations people formal training, paid employment and support by First Nations mentors to complete a Certificate III in Government.

In the past year, we hosted a trainee who spent most of her time working with the IRSU team at our Perth office.

Across the year, she developed her ability to work as part of a team in a busy work environment, whilst also learning how to submit applications, helping with administration tasks, liaising with stakeholders, and building her confidence using Legal Aid WA's digital systems.

In the community

We have staff representatives on the Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee and Kinship Connections Aboriginal Corporation which assists us in connecting to the First Nations community.

First Nations Staff Network

Our First Nations Staff Network (FNSN) come from many Countries and language groups including Badimaya, Ballardong, Bardi, Bibbulum, Gija, Goemulgal, Gooniyandi, Kariyarra, Larrakia, Mabuiag Island, Mineng, Naaguja, Nhanda, Noongar, Wadjuk, Wagadagum, Wajarri, Walmajarri, Wardandi, Yamaji, and Yued.

This diverse composition ensures that a broad range of perspectives, expertise, and lived experience informs Legal Aid WA's approach to First Nations services.

The FNSN meet regularly and provide guidance while holding us accountable as an agency. They are complemented by our CLEOs who build a strong level of trust within the regional communities in which we operate.

First Nations Community Engagement Coordinator

Legal Aid WA created a new role of First Nations Community Engagement Coordinator in 2025-26. Gooniyandi, Gija and Bardi man Dylan McCarthy stepped into this newly created role which was informed by previous consultation with our First Nations Services and forms part of our commitment to strengthening First Nations focused strategies including staff recruitment and retention.

The position works alongside our First Nations Services Coordinator to embed cultural knowledge and understanding into organisational practices, strengthen cultural safety in the workplace, and strengthen Legal Aid WA's delivery of culturally appropriate and quality legal services to Aboriginal people and communities.

Reconciliation Week

Legal Aid WA assembled a large, passionate and vocal choir in the spirit of Reconciliation, joining 120 choirs across the country to sing Beds are Burning by Midnight Oil, contributing to Voices for Reconciliation 2026. The song stands as a powerful call to action to know our history and be 'All In' to create a more just, equitable and reconciled future for us all.

We hosted an internal event to mark the start of National Reconciliation Week, with more than 80 people attending in-person and online. Driving connection and participation, the morning started with a drop-in session where staff were encouraged to stay for as long as they were able, to watch the National Reconciliation Breakfast broadcast with colleagues in Perth and online with our regional colleagues.

This was followed by a presentation from our RAP Working Group that looked back at Legal Aid WA's RAP journey so far, including key milestones such as the creation of Legal Yarn and the important role that our CLEOs play in regional areas.

NAIDOC Week

Our teams around the state celebrated NAIDOC Week with a wide range of activities, participating in community marches, events, workshops, and networking activities.

Our Great Southern regional office in Albany hosted a celebratory NAIDOC lunch event, with Legal Aid WA, ALSWA and Great Southern Community Legal Service joining the event.

The South West regional team hosted a stall at the Southern Aboriginal Corporation's NAIDOC 2025 Youth Fun Day in Bunbury.

In Geraldton, our Mid West team attended the community NAIDOC event, while our East Kimberley team attended a NAIDOC march and community event at White Gum Park, followed by a community movie night in Kununurra.

In Perth, our staff attended the Mookaroo Festival in Merriwa and hosted an informative stall at the Wungening Aboriginal Corporation NAIDOC event. A celebratory afternoon tea for Perth-based staff rounded out the activities for NAIDOC Week 2025.

Our multicultural commitment

Legal Aid WA provides a welcoming and inclusive workplace culture, culturally appropriate services that meet our clients' needs, and engagement with culturally diverse communities. We are guided by the principles and desired outcomes established in the State Government's Western Australian Multicultural Policy Framework.

With more than 5% of our clients from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) background, and 17% of our staff who have disclosed they are from a CaLD background, our aim is to support the Government's vision of an inclusive and harmonious society where everyone has a strong sense of belonging, can participate and contribute fully in all aspects of life, and achieve their goals.

In 2025-26, we finalised our Cultural Learning Framework and Cultural Capability Toolkit. Our staff completed in-person Cultural Awareness Training and an Acknowledge This! training session to build understanding and confidence to deliver a respectful and authentic Acknowledgement of Country.

Legal Aid WA made a submission to the parliamentary inquiry into racism, hate and violence directed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We were invited to appear and subsequently attended and spoke at the public hearing that was held in Perth.

We focused on preventing and responding to racism and workplace racial harassment and discrimination by conducting workplace behaviours workshops, establishing anonymous feedback channels, and recruiting and training wellness mentors.

We celebrated the many cultures that make up Australia and Legal Aid WA with a whole of agency staff lunch during Harmony Week, and afternoon tea where staff were invited to bring a plate of food to share representing all parts of the world.

For our clients, we partnered with Umbrella Multicultural Community Care Services to establish the CaLD Elder Rights Pilot Project. The Project consulted with CaLD communities about the abuse and mistreatment of older people, identified barriers that CaLD communities may face in reporting abuse, and delivered 11 community elder rights education workshops.

As part of the ongoing development of a tailored CLE program for the Indian Ocean Territories' student community, our CLE lawyers engaged with school staff and high school students on Cocos (Keeling) Islands (CKI) and Christmas Island (CI), as well as the religious leader on CKI to develop the legal education content. Additionally, our CLE lawyers engaged with the Senior Cocos Malay community and religious leader on CKI which led to short, targeted CLE sessions on wills and online safety for seniors.

In 2025-26, Legal Aid WA established a legal service to support the Royal Commission into Antisemitism and Social Cohesion, and partnered with a number of multicultural agencies as sponsors in our Work and Development Permit Service.

We also continued to arrange interpreters where needed to support clients to understand information and translated documents into clients' preferred language.

In our regional offices, we continued to provide legal assistance through a combination of office-based, outreach, telephone, and court-based services. This flexible approach assisted clients who may otherwise experience barriers including language needs.

Disability Access and Inclusion

Legal Aid WA remains committed to reducing barriers for clients and staff with disability, with the guidance of lived experience expertise.

Our data for the past financial year supports that people with disability often require extensive and intensive assistance to holistically address their legal issues, with:

- 39% of our clients identifying as a person with disability; and
- 47% of our services for clients with disability.

Many of these clients also have complex non-legal, socio-economic needs that affect their legal issues and often intersect with other priority client groups for Legal Aid WA. This requires additional lenses of understanding and tailored support approaches to ensure equitable access to justice.

In the past year, the demand for assistance from Legal Aid WA's specialised services for people with disability has increased significantly, including for our holistic services like DARDY, and our NDIS specialist services - our NDIS Early Advice Service and NDIS Appeals Service.

52% of our clients with disability are also experiencing family violence

32% of Legal Aid WA's clients with disability also identify as First Nations

16% of our clients with disability are also under the age of 25

4% of Legal Aid WA's clients with disability are also older people (65 or over)

Across the past year, Legal Aid WA has also seen an increase in the number of clients requiring representation under the *Criminal Law (Mental Impairment) Act 2023 (CLMI Act)*. We have continued to build our in-house capacity to assist in these matters and support private practitioners on our panels to undertake this work, alongside engaging with stakeholders to improve outcomes for these clients.

In 2025-26, we continued to provide staff with a variety of ongoing training opportunities to strengthen their capacity to assist people with disability, including people with complex needs and diverse communication preferences.

Legal Aid WA held several events to mark International Day of People with Disability (IDPWD) on 3 December, which focused on improving disability awareness and understanding, and covered a range of disability-related matters across civil, criminal, and family law.

On IDPWD, we held a lived experience panel about how to be a good disability ally, with speakers from Kin Disability Advocacy and People with Disabilities WA, and disability advocates from Legal Aid WA, who spoke about barriers for people with disability and what needs to change.

Legal Aid WA has continued to inform, educate and support our staff about our Workplace Adjustment Policy and Procedures and other entitlements or benefits staff with disability have in the workplace, as part of our strategy to grow and retain staff with disability within the agency.

We have also continued to make improvements to the accessibility of our office facilities, including installing further accessible doorways and addressing sensory-related barriers.

Specific Disability Access and Inclusion Plan Outcomes

In the past year, Legal Aid WA continued to implement the actions and priorities under our Disability Action and Inclusion Plan 2022 – 2027 (DAIP), with some examples of this work outlined below.

We continued to inform, educate and support staff with disability and their managers around navigating our Workplace Adjustment Policy and Procedures, which aim to ensure our staff's accessibility needs are met through reasonable adjustments. This supports DAIP Pillar 1, Outcome 3.

In the past year, 122 Legal Aid WA staff members completed tailored Disability Awareness Training workshops, to improve their capacity to support clients with disability, particularly around communication with clients with complex needs. This supports DAIP Pillar 1, Outcome 1 and Pillar 4, Outcome 1.

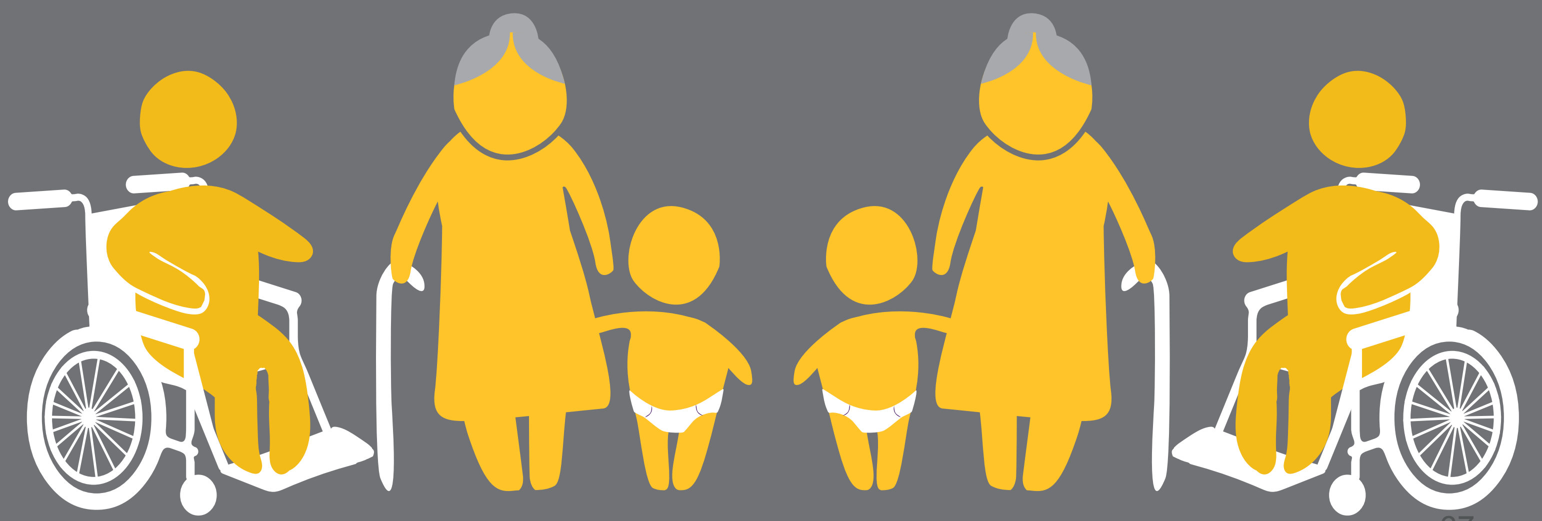
Legal Aid WA made further upgrades to the accessibility of our offices, including addressing sensory-related barriers, to ensure that our facilities can be accessed by all community members, including staff, continuing our commitment under DAIP Pillar 2, Outcome 2.

Legal Aid WA also continued to develop and maintain relationships with other organisations that represent and support people with disability, including providing training about different Legal Aid WA services and their criteria requirements, supporting DAIP Pillar 3, Outcome 1.

We continued to progress the ongoing conversion of our online resources into accessible forms, to ensure that people with disability can access these resources. This supports DAIP Pillar 3, Outcome 3.

Legal Aid WA expanded and grew our specialised services for people with disability to address ongoing significant demand for assistance, including our NDIS Early Advice Service and in-house capacity to represent clients under the *Criminal Law (Mental Impairment) Act 2023 (WA) (CLMI Act)* in support of DAIP Pillar 4, Outcome 1.

Legal Aid WA was also involved in extensive consultation regarding policy about Hospital Orders and the *CLMI Act* and made a submission to the Law Reform Commission of Western Australia's Review of Access to Justice for People with Disability. This supports DAIP Pillar 4, Outcome 2.



Pride in our workplace

In 2025-26, our Pride Inclusion Network continued its aim of increasing visibility and engagement with members and allies of the LGBTIQA+SB community both within Legal Aid WA and in the broader community.

We hosted a stall at the PrideFEST Fairday in November 2025, and then a number of our Perth-based staff represented Legal Aid WA the following weekend at the PrideFEST Parade.

Our attendance at PrideFEST activities and events was both to celebrate the LGBTIQA+SB community, and to show our commitment to inclusion, community connection, and allyship.

We have continued to work to ensure the LGBTIQA+SB community is supported with relevant legal information, including our updated fact sheets created in collaboration with Youth Pride Network. These resources were created to help LGBTIQA+SB people to navigate the intersection of their lives, their rights, and the law.

In 2025-26, we actively sought comment from the community to help shape series five of our collaborative legal podcast Law Talk WA. The series, which launched in March 2026, focused on issues affecting the LGBTQIA+SB community with episodes on discrimination, changing gender, rights and protections, and accessing supports.

In June 2026, Legal Aid WA was proud to announce that the Director of our Family Law Division, Colleen Brown, was appointed to the Board of Pride WA.

Colleen is passionate about access to the law, respect and dignity – fundamental pillars of our society. She believes these values are especially important for minority communities who do not always experience the level of inclusion and equitable treatment they deserve.

In addition, Colleen was invited to be a part of the All of Government LGBTIQA+SB Inclusion Strategy Steering Group.

PRIDE INCLUSION NETWORK LEGAL AID WA

"I look forward to contributing to the Board's work in promoting fairness, inclusion and meaningful access to relevant services for all members of our community."

- Colleen Brown

Significant issues
impacting Legal Aid WA

Growing demand with limited funding	Legal Aid WA is experiencing significant service delivery pressures. In the past three years, (2022-23 to 2025-26) there has been increasing demand for legal services across criminal, family, and civil legal matters, with a 29% increase in duty lawyer services delivered and an 18% increase in new grants of aid in WA. The high demand for duty lawyer assistance in criminal matters is resulting in lawyers having less time to spend per client and reduced capacity to provide other legal services required to progress matters. Duty lawyers assisting with family law and protection and care matters are spending more time assisting clients in the initial stages of proceedings due to the reduced availability of practitioners to take on files.
Clients with complex needs and legal matters	More Legal Aid WA clients are presenting with complex needs. More accused persons are presenting with complex needs relating to family violence, substance abuse and mental impairment, which impact the time taken to resolve their matters. There has also been an increase in the seriousness and complexity of criminal matters in the Magistrates Court being dealt with by the duty lawyer service, requiring more time and often more discrete services to resolve them.
Workforce attraction in regional WA	The ability to attract and retain staff in regional WA remains an ongoing issue for Legal Aid WA. This is exacerbated by general cost of living pressures, increased housing costs in the regions, and the tight labour market.

Staff safety – psychosocial and physical	Complex clients with often distressing cases can lead to vicarious trauma for our staff. We operate across the state with 11 offices and 104 outreach locations, and our external workplaces are challenging with issues to be considered around court security, limited internet connectivity, older infrastructure, and the logistics of travelling vast distances.
Private practitioner availability	Legal Aid WA has maintained a consistent number of private practitioners on our Panels, however with high demand for legal services in the community they have limited capacity to take on new grants of aid. Juniorisation across the legal profession has also led to a reduced number of private practitioners with the experience required to take on serious indictable matters, including sex offences and homicides. We are also experiencing shortages of available practitioners in the areas of family law and protection and care, not only as representatives for parties but also as Separate Representatives and Independent Children's Lawyers. In addition, a significant lack of available lawyers for the Commonwealth Family Violence and Cross Examination Scheme (administered by Legal Aid WA) has been noted.

Compliments

"I want to take this opportunity to sincerely thank you all for your time, support, and kindness.

"Your willingness to listen and provide a compassionate space during such a difficult period in my life has meant more to me than I can fully express."

"I would like to thank you and your staff again for the respect and compassion shown to Glenda* whilst in your offices.

"She truly appreciated the use of your hearing aid, something that she has not experienced in other services before.

"I can honestly say, the look on her face - one of pride at being seen as an individual worthy of your time - has meant so much to her."

"I would like to highlight the effort she put into understanding my story, and then the one-on-one time spent preparing me for trial.

"I thank her for building the confidence in me that I needed to tell my story. I really appreciated that."

"From the moment she took my call, she went above and beyond to ensure I was properly heard, supported, and connected to every service relevant to my needs.

"Her attitude was warm, respectful, and human. For the first time in a very long time, I didn't feel like a number; I felt seen."

*Client's name has been changed to protect their identity.

Complaints

Legal Aid WA is committed to managing concerns and complaints in a way that is fair, timely and transparent. Our Complaint Handling Guidelines, available on our website, provide a clear process for receiving, assessing and resolving concerns.

All concerns are initially assessed through a triage process to determine whether they can be resolved quickly through a rapid resolution process or otherwise require formal investigation. This approach allows straightforward matters to be managed promptly.

Matters which are escalated to complaints are managed impartially, with appropriate safeguards to ensure confidentiality, procedural fairness, and the opportunity for all parties to response.

During the 2025-26 financial year, Legal Aid WA received 366 concerns and complaints. Of these, 234 (63.93%) were resolved as concerns under rapid resolution.

Description	Total number	Resolved via rapid resolution	Escalated to formal complaints after triage and assessment
Concerns about a private practitioner	191 (52%)	106 (55%)	85 (45%)
Concerns about a Legal Aid WA officer	34 (9%)	13 (38%)	21 (62%)
Concerns about a Legal Aid WA service	80 (23%)	57 (71%)	23 (29%)
Concerns involving a third party	41 (11%)	41 (100%)	0
Concerns about aid being refused	12 (3%)	12 (100%)	0
Other	8 (2%)	5 (63%)	3 (37%)
Total number of concerns received	**366**	**234 (63.93%)**	**132 (36.07%)**

Complaints data is regularly monitored to identify emerging issues, improve service delivery, and strengthen accountability across the agency. Feedback received through our complaints process continues to play an important role in improving the quality, accessibility and responsiveness of our service delivery.

Measuring our performance

Achievements against the National Access to Justice Partnership (previously the National Legal Assistance Partnership)

The Australian Government's funding of Legal Aid WA is governed by the *National Access to Justice Partnership 2025-30* (NAJP).

The NAJP sets out objectives and outcomes that Legal Aid Commissions will achieve by delivering outputs listed in the Agreement. The NAJP also includes performance indicators that measure a Legal Aid Commission's progress toward the objectives and outcomes.

The objective of the NAJP is a national legal assistance sector that is integrated, efficient and effective, and focused on improving access to justice for disadvantaged people. Another objective is to maximise service delivery within the available resources.

Selected NAJP performance indicators and benchmarks:

- Proportion of representation services to people experiencing financial disadvantage – 100% (exceeds benchmark of 95%)
- The percentage of dispute resolution processes resulting in full or partial settlement – 73%
- Total number of legal tasks services – up by 71%

Type of service	2025-26 Service counts 2)
Information and referrals 1)	41,164
Legal advice	5,454
Representation	3,184
Duty lawyer services	2,125
Legal tasks	1,242
Community legal education activities	92

1) Includes 17,211 referral services

2) Excludes services performed by external service providers under the NAJP agreement

Achievements against the State Government's Performance Management Framework set out in the Budget Statement

Legal Aid WA achieved the below key effectiveness indicators in the budget papers:

- More than 23% of people at court were provided with a duty lawyer service
- Reduced the average cost per legal representation below the target
- Reduced the average cost per legal information service below the target
- Reduced the average cost per application for a grant of legal aid processed below the target

Key performance indicators	2025-26 target	2025-26 actual
Percentage of people who are provided with a duty lawyer service	22%	23%
Average cost per legal representation	$4,593	$4,491
Average cost per legal information service	$90	$86
Average cost per application for a grant of legal aid processed	$548	$540

Performance Management Framework

Legal Aid WA supports the State Government goal of "Safe, Strong and Fair Communities: Supporting our local and regional communities to thrive" through a targeted outcome of equitable access to legal service and information, that is delivered through the Legal Aid WA assistance service. The corresponding key effectiveness indicators measure how the service contributes to achieving the outcome. The key efficiency indicators measure the resources required to deliver the service.

Government goal

Safe, Strong and Fair Communities: Supporting our local and regional communities to thrive.

Agency level Government desired outcome

Equitable access to legal services and information.

Outcome-based Management Framework

Desired outcome

Equitable access to legal services and information

Key effectiveness indicators

a) percentage of eligible applicants who receive a grant of legal aid

b) percentage of people who are provided with a duty lawyer service

c) percentage of people receiving an outcome from Infoline services

Service

Legal Assistance

Key efficiency indicators

a) average cost per legal representation

b) average cost per legal information service

c) average cost per legal advice

d) average cost per application for a grant of legal aid processed

e) weighted average cost per wraparound support service

Changes to outcome-based management framework

The Legal Aid Commission's outcome-based management framework did not change during 2025-26.

Shared responsibilities with other agencies

The Legal Aid Commission did not share any responsibilities with other agencies in 2025-26.

For the community		
Information and advice	**Duty lawyer service**	**Community legal education**
To assist members of the public to identify legal problems, understand the alternatives for resolution and the resources available to them in pursuing a legal solution. Includes referral to other agencies and is delivered through public counters in all offices and by 1300 INFOLINE.	To ensure that members of the public brought before the courts have access to legal advice so that they understand the options available for responding to legal proceedings in which they are involved. Available at all Magistrate Court sittings throughout WA, the Family Court of WA, and the Children's Court.	To provide education sessions for legal professionals, stakeholders and the general community to enhance awareness and understanding about the law and how to identify, prevent and deal with legal problems, or about the help available from legal and support services.

For target groups	
Legal advice and legal task	To assist people facing legal issues with advice and practical help, including advocacy, drafting of negotiating letters and the preparation of court documentation. Delivered by lawyers and at all office locations, and by paralegal staff under supervision of solicitors.
Legal representation	To ensure persons from priority groups are legally represented to the extent that is necessary and commensurate with their particular individual need. Includes assessment and case management for persons who are refused assistance. Includes all services provided pursuant to a grant of aid, including Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR).
Social support service	To provide safety planning, case management, coordination and advocacy, that address non-legal issues such as family violence, substance abuse, mental health, disability (cognitive and physical), and homelessness that are linked to legal issues.
Community liaison service	To communicate and share information with stakeholder agencies in relation to the delivery of services for the First Nations community by a dedicated liaison officer. This may relate to organising a visit to a remote community, making arrangements for an upcoming CLE activity, managing relationships, or making sure cultural protocols are followed.
Community education service	To provide education sessions for the First Nations community to address non-legal problems that impact on the ability of individuals to access or participate in the justice system or aim to prevent legal problems arising or escalating. For example, sessions about safety planning, managing finances, or cyber safety.

Agency performance

2.1 Financial targets

Actual results versus budget targets

The Legal aid Commission of Western Australia's performance against financial targets set for the 2025-26 financial year is outlined in the table below. Further details are provided in the Financial Statements in Section 3.

	2025-26 Estimates[1] $000	2025-26 Actual $000	Variance $000
Total cost of services (expense limit) (sourced from Statement of Comprehensive Income)	133,432	141,458	8,026 [a]
Net cost of services (sourced from Statement of Comprehensive Income)	90,160	72,194	(17,966) [b]
Total equity (sourced from Statement of Financial Position)	(2,900)	32,984	35,884 [c]
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held (sourced from Statement of Cash Flows)	(8,738)	312	9,050 [d]
Approved salary expense level	69,956	71,961	2,005

1. Further explanations are also contained in Note 9.1 'Explanatory statement for controlled operations' to the financial statements.

(a) The increase in total cost of services is largely due to higher-than-expected legal services expenses ($6.38 million).

Legal service expenses for State baseline funded casework costs are higher than expected by $11.09 million, primarily due to higher-than-expected State criminal law casework costs. These additional costs are largely covered by additional State funding received in June 2026. This overspend is partially offset by an underspend of $1.76 million in Commonwealth baseline funded casework and $2.91 million in special funding program casework costs, largely due to limited availability of private practitioners.

(b) The decreased net cost of services is largely due to higher-than-expected income, including user charges and fees ($4.44 million), Other Revenue ($15.15 million), and Interest Revenue ($3.39 million).

User charges and fees are higher than expected largely due to the increased cost recoveries associated with grants of aids.

Other income is higher than the estimates mainly due to the surplus distribution from the Legal Contribution Trust ($6.64 million) in 2025-26. During FY2026, all office accommodation leases were derecognised as right-of-use assets resulting in non-cash gain ($9.43 million) being recognised.

Interest income is higher than the estimates, mainly due to the adoption of a conservative budgeting approach and higher interest rates during the year.

(c) Total equity is higher than the estimate mainly due to higher accumulated surplus ($35.73 million) which is the result of the difference in the beginning balance in the original estimate. In 2025-26, there was a decrease in the deficit from the estimated deficit of $4.22 million to actual surplus of $31.51 million. The surplus of 2025-26 was mainly due to higher spending in legal services offset by higher State and Commonwealth funding that increased than originally estimated.

(d) The net increase in cash and cash equivalents is higher than estimated mainly due to higher-than-expected funding from both State ($6.41 million) and Commonwealth ($3.01 million) and higher user fees and charges ($5.34 million) and interest received ($2.94 million) and other receipts ($5.13 million). These were offset by higher than estimated payments for legal services ($12.47 million).

2.2 Summary of Key Performance Indicators

During the 2025-26 financial year, the Legal Aid Commission of Western Australia reported on three effectiveness and five efficiency indicators. The table below shows to what extent the performance targets were met, exceeded or not met.

Outcome: Equitable access to legal services and information

	2026 Target	2026 Actual	Variance	Result [1]
Key effectiveness indicators:				
Percentage of eligible applicants who receive a grant of legal aid	89%	86%	-3%	x
Percentage of people who are provided with a duty lawyer service	22%	23%	1%	✓
Percentage of people receiving an outcome from Infoline services	45%	44%	-1%	x

Service: Legal Aid WA Assistance

	2026 Target	2026 Actual	Variance	Result [1]	
Key efficiency indicators:					
Average cost per legal representation	$4,593	$4,491	$102	✓	
Average cost per legal information service	$90	$86	$4	✓	
Average cost per legal advice	$450	$451	($1)	x	
Average cost per application for a grant of legal aid processed	$548	$540	$8	✓	
Weighted average cost per wraparound support service	$1,365	$1,590	($225)	x	(a)

(1) The following symbols indicate the outcome of the key performance indicators:

- ✓ Performance target achieved or exceeded
- × Performance target not achieved

Explanations for the variances between target and actual results are:

(a) The variance is mainly due to:

- There has been an increased demand for non-legal support, particularly within Extended Non-Legal Support, which operates for substantially longer hours than Discrete Non-Legal Support.
- The 2025-26 actual exceeds the target mainly due to the new project Youth Bail Support Service, where social support workers provide intensive, long term case management. This results in fewer outputs but significantly higher time per client, driving the higher actual cost.

Additional information is provided at the detailed information in support of key performance indicators.

Disclosures and legal compliance

3.1 Financial statements

3.1.1 Independent Auditor's Report

OFFICIAL

Auditor General

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

2026

Legal Aid Commission of Western Australia

To the Parliament of Western Australia

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion

I have audited the financial statements of the Legal Aid Commission of Western Australia (Commission) which comprise:

- the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2026, the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended
- notes comprising a summary of material accounting policies and other explanatory information.

In my opinion, the financial statements are:

- based on proper accounts and present fairly, in all material respects, the operating results and cash flows of the Commission for the year ended 30 June 2026 and the financial position as at the end of that period
- in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards (applicable to Tier 2 Entities), the *Financial Management Act 2006* and the Treasurer's Instructions, Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission Act 2021* (ACNC Act), and Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013.

Basis for opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my report.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Responsibilities of the Commission for the financial statements

The Commission is responsible for:

- keeping proper accounts
- preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards (applicable to Tier 2 Entities), the *Financial Management Act 2006* and the Treasurer's Instructions and the *ACNC Act*.
- such internal control as it determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Page 1 of 5

7th Floor Albert Facey House 469 Wellington Street Perth MAIL TO: Perth BC PO Box 8489 Perth WA 6849 TEL: 08 6557 7500

In preparing the financial statements, the Commission is responsible for:

- assessing the entity's ability to continue as a going concern
- disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern
- using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Western Australian Government has made policy or funding decisions affecting the continued existence of the Commission.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

As required by the *Auditor General Act 2006*, my responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial statements. The objectives of my audit are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists.

Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial statements. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations or the override of internal control.

A further description of my responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website. This description forms part of my auditor's report and can be found at https://www.auasb.gov.au/auditors_responsibilities/ar4.pdf.

Report on the audit of controls

Opinion

I have undertaken a reasonable assurance engagement on the design and implementation of controls exercised by the Commission. The controls exercised by the Commission are those policies and procedures established to ensure that the receipt, expenditure and investment of money, the acquisition and disposal of property, and the incurring of liabilities have been in accordance with the State's financial reporting framework (the overall control objectives).

In my opinion, in all material respects, the controls exercised by the Commission are sufficiently adequate to provide reasonable assurance that the controls within the system were suitably designed to achieve the overall control objectives identified as at 30 June 2026, and the controls were implemented as designed as at 30 June 2026.

The Commission's responsibilities

The Commission is responsible for designing, implementing and maintaining controls to ensure that the receipt, expenditure and investment of money, the acquisition and disposal of property and the incurring of liabilities are in accordance with the *Financial Management Act 2006*, the Treasurer's Instructions and other relevant written law.

Auditor General's responsibilities

As required by the *Auditor General Act 2006,* my responsibility as an assurance practitioner is to express an opinion on the suitability of the design of the controls to achieve the overall control objectives and the implementation of the controls as designed. I conducted my engagement in accordance with Standard on Assurance Engagements *ASAE 3150 Assurance Engagements on Controls* issued by the Australian Auditing and Assurance Standards Board. That standard requires that I comply with relevant ethical requirements and plan and perform my procedures to obtain reasonable assurance about whether, in all material respects, the controls are suitably designed to achieve the overall control objectives and were implemented as designed.

An assurance engagement involves performing procedures to obtain evidence about the suitability of the controls design to achieve the overall control objectives and the implementation of those controls. The procedures selected depend on my judgement, including an assessment of the risks that controls are not suitably designed or implemented as designed. My procedures included testing the implementation of those controls that I consider necessary to achieve the overall control objectives.

I believe that the evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Limitations of controls

Because of the inherent limitations of any internal control structure, it is possible that, even if the controls are suitably designed and implemented as designed, once in operation, the overall control objectives may not be achieved so that fraud, error or non-compliance with laws and regulations may occur and not be detected. Any projection of the outcome of the evaluation of the suitability of the design of controls to future periods is subject to the risk that the controls may become unsuitable because of changes in conditions.

Report on the audit of the key performance indicators

Opinion

I have undertaken a reasonable assurance engagement on the key performance indicators of the Commission for the year ended 30 June 2026 reported in accordance with the *Financial Management Act 2006* and the Treasurer's Instructions (legislative requirements). The key performance indicators are the Under Treasurer-approved key effectiveness indicators and key efficiency indicators that provide performance information about achieving outcomes and delivering services.

In my opinion, in all material respects, the key performance indicators report of the Commission for the year ended 30 June 2026 is in accordance with the legislative requirements, and the key performance indicators are relevant and appropriate to assist users to assess the Commission's performance and fairly represent indicated performance for the year ended 30 June 2026.

The Commission's responsibilities for the key performance indicators

The Commission is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the key performance indicators in accordance with the *Financial Management Act 2006* and the Treasurer's Instructions and for such internal controls as the Commission determines necessary to enable the preparation of key performance indicators that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the key performance indicators, the Commission is responsible for identifying key performance indicators that are relevant and appropriate, having regard to their purpose in accordance with Treasurer's Instruction 3 Financial Sustainability – Requirement 5 Key Performance Indicators.

Auditor General's responsibilities

As required by the *Auditor General Act 2006,* my responsibility as an assurance practitioner is to express an opinion on the key performance indicators. The objectives of my engagement are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the key performance indicators are relevant and appropriate to assist users to assess the Commission's performance and whether the key performance indicators are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. I conducted my engagement in accordance with Standard on Assurance Engagements *ASAE 3000 Assurance Engagements Other than Audits or Reviews of Historical Financial Information* issued by the Australian Auditing and Assurance Standards Board. That standard requires that I comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to assurance engagements.

An assurance engagement involves performing procedures to obtain evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the key performance indicators. It also involves evaluating the relevance and appropriateness of the key performance indicators against the criteria and guidance in Treasurer's Instruction 3 - Requirement 5 for measuring the extent of outcome achievement and the efficiency of service delivery. The procedures selected depend on my judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the key performance indicators. In making these risk assessments, I obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the engagement in order to design procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances.

I believe that the evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

My independence and quality management relating to the report on financial statements, controls and key performance indicators

I have complied with the independence requirements of the *Auditor General Act 2006* and the relevant ethical requirements relating to assurance engagements. In accordance with ASQM 1 *Quality Management for Firms that Perform Audits or Reviews of Financial Reports and Other Financial Information, or Other Assurance or Related Services Engagements,* the Office of the Auditor General maintains a comprehensive system of quality management including documented policies and procedures regarding compliance with ethical requirements, professional standards and applicable legal and regulatory requirements.

Other information

The Commission is responsible for the other information. The other information is the information in the entity's annual report for the year ended 30 June 2026, but not the financial statements, key performance indicators and my auditor's report.

My opinions on the financial statements, controls and key performance indicators do not cover the other information and accordingly I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with my audit of the financial statements, controls and key performance indicators my responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements and key performance indicators or my knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact. I did not receive the other information prior to the date of this auditor's report. When I do receive it, I will read it and if I conclude that there is a material misstatement in this information, I am required to communicate the matter to those charged with governance and request them to correct the misstated information. If the misstated information is not corrected, I may need to retract this auditor's report and re-issue an amended report.

Matters relating to the electronic publication of the audited financial statements and key performance indicators

This auditor's report relates to the financial statements and key performance indicators of the Legal Aid Commission of Western Australia for the year ended 30 June 2026 included in the annual report on the Commission's website. The Commission's management is responsible for the integrity of the Commission's website. This audit does not provide assurance on the integrity of the Commission's website. The auditor's report refers only to the financial statements, controls and key performance indicators described above. It does not provide an opinion on any other information which may have been hyperlinked to/from the annual report. If users of the financial statements and key performance indicators are concerned with the inherent risks arising from publication on a website, they are advised to contact the Commission to confirm the information contained in the website version.

Carly Meagher
Senior Director Financial Audit
Delegate of the Auditor General for Western Australia
Perth, Western Australia
1 September 2026

3.1.2 Certification of Financial Statements

DISCLOSURES AND LEGAL COMPLIANCE

Financial Statements

Certification of Financial Statements

For the year ended 30 June 2026

In the opinion of the Commissioners of the Legal Aid Commission of Western Australia (the Commission):

(a) The accompanying financial statements and notes have been prepared in compliance with the provisions of the *Financial Management Act 2006* and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* from proper accounts and records to present fairly the financial transactions for the financial year ended 30 June 2026 and the financial position as at 30 June 2026.

(b) There are reasonable grounds to believe that the Commission is able to pay all of its debts, as and when they become due and payable.

At the date of signing we are not aware of any circumstances which would render the particulars included within the financial statements misleading or inaccurate.

Signed in accordance with subsection 60.15(2) of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission Regulation 2013*.

Yu Zhi Zhou
Chief Finance Officer
Date: 26th August 2026

Helen De Brito
Director of Legal Aid
Member of the Commission
Date: 26th August 2026

Hon. Jane Crisford SC
Chair of the Commission
Date: 26th August 2026

3.1.3 Financial reports for the year ended 30 June 2026

Legal Aid WA has pleasure in presenting its audited general purpose financial statements for the financial reporting period ended 30 June 2026 which provide users with the information about the agency's stewardship of resources entrusted to it. The financial information is presented in the following structure:

Statement of Comprehensive Income
For the year ended 30 June 2026

	Notes	2026 $	2025 $
COST OF SERVICES			
Expenses			
Employee benefits expenses	2.1 (a)	71,960,588	65,053,587
Supplies and services	2.3	13,443,456	13,536,063
Depreciation and amortisation	4.1.1, 4.2.1, 4.3	2,520,763	6,798,859
Finance costs	6.2	488,749	1,725,108
Accommodation expenses	2.3	7,954,515	2,413,503
Legal services expenses	2.2	43,057,989	52,161,116
Other expenses	2.3	2,031,679	2,122,371
Total cost of services		**141,457,740**	**143,810,607**
Income			
User charges and fees	3.2	7,215,672	6,606,416
Commonwealth grants and contributions	3.3	41,679,974	38,533,931
Interest income	3.4	3,749,998	3,194,351
Other income	3.5	16,617,732	3,465,859
Total income		**69,263,375**	**51,800,558**
Total income other than income from State Government		**69,263,375**	**51,800,558**
NET COST OF SERVICES		**72,194,364**	**92,010,050**
Income from State Government			
Income from other public sector entities	3.1	86,007,186	94,520,490
Resources received	3.1	125,850	44,684
Royalties for Regions Fund	3.1	45,963	46,430
Total income from State Government		**86,178,999**	**94,611,604**

	Notes	2026	2025
		$	$
SURPLUS FOR THE PERIOD		**13,984,635**	**2,601,554**
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME			
Items not reclassified subsequently to profit and loss			
Changes in asset revaluation surplus	4.1	107,171	48,696
Total other comprehensive income		**107,171**	**48,696**
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE (LOSS) / INCOME FOR THE PERIOD		**14,091,805**	**2,650,250**

The Statement of Comprehensive Income should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Statement of Financial Position
As at 30 June 2026

	Notes	2026	2025
		$	$
ASSETS			
Current Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	6.3	12,109,815	23,050,830
Restricted cash and cash equivalents	6.3	21,026	6,259
Receivables	5.1	9,322,965	8,515,493
Other financial assets	6.3	61,000,000	50,000,000
Other current assets	5.2	2,218,025	2,887,212
Total Current Assets		**84,671,831**	**84,459,794**
Non-Current Assets			
Restricted cash and cash equivalents	6.3	2,344,619	2,106,502
Receivables	5.1	5,066,109	5,152,643
Property, plant and equipment	4.1	2,257,502	2,697,256
Intangible assets	4.2	554,933	707,709
Right of use assets	4.3	1,511,748	42,317,949
Total Non-Current Assets		**11,734,911**	**52,982,059**
TOTAL ASSETS		**96,406,742**	**137,441,853**
LIABILITIES			
Current Liabilities			

	Notes	2026	2025
		$	$
Payables and accruals	5.3	43,646,806	51,562,772
Lease liabilities	6.1	672,451	5,460,358
Employee related provisions	2.1 (b)	9,914,856	9,122,254
Contract liabilities	5.4	1,413,022	976,948
Other current liabilities		21,026	6,259
Other provisions	5.5	-	-
Total Current Liabilities		**55,668,160**	**67,128,591**
Non-Current Liabilities			
Lease liabilities	6.1	875,624	46,231,063
Employee related provisions	2.1 (b)	4,406,690	3,466,380
Contract liabilities	5.4	2,425,856	1,677,211
Other provisions	5.5	46,799	46,799
Total Non-Current Liabilities		**7,754,969**	**51,421,453**
TOTAL LIABILITIES		**63,423,130**	**118,550,044**
NET ASSETS		**32,983,613**	**18,891,810**
EQUITY			
Contributed equity		595,669	595,669
Reserves		881,708	774,537
Accumulated surplus		31,506,236	17,521,605
TOTAL EQUITY		**32,983,612**	**18,891,811**

The Statement of Financial Position should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Statement of Changes in Equity
For the year ended 30 June 2026

	Notes	Contributed equity $	Reserves $	Accumulated surplus $	Total equity $
Balance at 1 July 2024		595,669	725,841	14,920,051	16,241,561
Surplus		-	-	2,601,554	2,601,554
Other comprehensive Income		-	48,696	-	48,696
Total comprehensive income for the period		-	48,696	2,601,554	2,650,250
Balance at 30 June 2025		**595,669**	**774,537**	**17,521,605**	**18,891,811**
Balance at 1 July 2025		**595,669**	**774,537**	**17,521,605**	**18,891,811**
Surplus		-	-	13,984,634	13,984,634
Other comprehensive Income		-	107,171	-	107,171
Total comprehensive income for the period		-	107,171	13,984,634	14,091,804
Balance at 30 June 2026		**595,669**	**881,707**	**31,506,238**	**32,983,613**

Statement of Cash Flows
For the year ended 30 June 2026

	Note	2026 $	2025 $
CASH FLOWS FROM THE STATE GOVERNMENT			
Funds from other public sector entities		86,013,474	94,031,202
Royalties for Regions Fund		45,963	46,430
Net cash provided by the State Government		**86,059,437**	**94,077,632**
Utilised as follows:			
CASH FLOWS USED IN OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Payments			
Employee benefits		(70,155,271)	(62,780,120)
Supplies and services		(13,817,468)	(12,596,169)
Accommodation		(7,959,352)	(2,404,665)

	Note	2026 $	2025 $
Legal services		(49,145,812)	(43,893,604)
Finance costs		(269,608)	(1,734,592)
GST payments on purchases		(7,439,048)	(6,789,592)
Other payments		(2,340,560)	(1,846,671)
Receipts			
User charges and fees		8,262,191	6,705,955
Commonwealth grants and contributions		41,679,974	38,533,931
Interest received		3,291,004	3,586,996
GST receipts on sales		235,363	2,404,337
GST receipts from taxation authority		6,465,530	4,322,098
Other receipts		7,174,150	3,465,859
Net cash used in operating activities		**(84,018,907)**	**(73,026,237)**
CASH FLOWS USED IN INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Payments			
Purchase of non-current assets		(61,870)	(621,889)
Net cash used in investing activities		**(61,870)**	**(621,889)**
CASH FLOWS USED IN FINANCING ACTIVITIES			
Payments			
Principal elements of lease payments		(1,666,790)	(5,193,216)
Net cash used in financing activities		**(1,666,790)**	**(5,193,216)**
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents		311,870	15,236,290
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of period		75,163,591	59,927,301
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT THE END OF THE PERIOD	6.3	**75,475,461**	**75,163,591**

The Statement of Cash Flows should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Note 1. Basis of preparation

Legal Aid Commission of Western Australia (the Commission) is a WA Government entity and is controlled by the state of Western Australia, which is the ultimate parent. The Commission is a not-for-profit entity (as profit is not its principal objective).

A description of the nature of its operations and its principal activities have been included in the Overview which does not form part of these financial statements.

These annual financial statements were authorised for issue by the Commission on 26 August 2026.

Statement of compliance

The financial statements are general purpose financial statements which have been prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures, the Conceptual Framework and other authoritative pronouncements issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB) as modified by Treasurer's Instructions. Some of these pronouncements are modified to vary their application and disclosure.

The *Financial Management Act 2006* and Treasurer's Instructions, which are legislative provisions governing the preparation of financial statements for agencies, take precedence over AASB pronouncements. Where an AASB pronouncement is modified and has had a significant financial effect on the reported results, details of the modification and the resulting financial effect are disclosed in the notes to the financial statements.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the *Australian Charitites and Not-for-Profits Commisssion Act 2012 (ACNC Act)* and where appropriate, those AAS paragraphs applicable for not for profit entities have been applied.

Basis of preparation

These financial statements are presented in Australian dollars applying the accrual basis of accounting and using the historical cost convention. Certain balances will apply a different measurement basis (such as the fair value basis). Where this is the case the different measurement basis is disclosed in the associated note. All values are rounded to the nearest dollar.

Accounting for Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Income, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST), except that the:

(a) amount of GST incurred by the Commission as a purchaser that is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) is recognised as part of an asset's cost of acquisition or as part of an item of expense; and

(b) receivables and payables are stated with the amount of GST included.

Cash flows are included in the Statement of Cash Flows on a gross basis. However, the GST components of cash flows arising from investing and financing activities which are recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO are classified as operating cash flows.

Contributed equity

Interpretation 1038 *Contributions by Owners Made to Wholly-Owned Public Sector Entities* requires transfers in the nature of equity contributions, other than as a result of a restructure of administrative arrangements, as designated as contributions by owners (at the time of, or prior to, transfer) be recognised as equity contributions. Capital appropriations have been designated as contributions by owners by TI 8 - Requirement 8.1 (i) and have been credited directly to Contributed Equity.

Comparative information

Except when an AAS permits or requires otherwise, comparative information is presented in respect of the previous period for all amounts reported in the financial statements. AASB 1060 provides relief from presenting comparatives for:

- Property, plant and equipment reconciliations;
- Intangible Asset reconciliations; and
- Right-of-Use Asset reconciliations.

Judgements and estimates

Judgements, estimates and assumptions are required to be made about financial information being presented. The significant judgements and estimates made in the preparation of these financial statements are disclosed in the notes where amounts affected by those judgements and/or estimates are disclosed. Estimates and associated assumptions are based on professional judgements derived from historical experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

Note 2. Use of our funding

Expenses incurred in the delivery of services

This section provides additional information about how the Commission's funding is applied and the accounting policies that are relevant for an understanding of the items recognised in the financial statements. The primary expenses incurred by the Commission in achieving its objectives and the relevant notes are

	Notes	2026	2025
		$	$
Employee benefits expenses	2.1(a)	71,960,588	65,053,587
Employee related provisions	2.1(b)	14,321,545	12,588,634
Legal service expenses	2.2	43,057,989	52,161,116
Other expenditure	2.3	23,429,650	18,071,938

2.1 (a) Employee benefits expenses

	2026	2025
	$	$
Employee benefits	64,163,211	58,775,676
Termination benefits	616,710	-
Superannuation – defined contribution plans	7,180,667	6,277,911
Total employee benefits expenses	**71,960,588**	**65,053,587**
Add: AASB 16 Non-monetary benefits (not included in employee benefits expense)	1,086,844	958,947
Less: Employee Contributions (per note 3.5 Other income)	(376,543)	(320,275)
Total employee benefits provided	**72,670,890**	**65,692,259**

Employee Benefits include wages, salaries and social contributions, accrued and paid leave entitlements and paid sick leave, and non-monetary benefits recognised under accounting standards other than AASB 16 Leases (AASB 16) (such as medical care, housing, cars and free or subsidised goods or services) for employees.

Termination benefits are payable when employment is terminated before normal retirement date, or when an employee accepts an offer of benefits in exchange for the termination of employment. Termination benefits are recognised when the Commission is demonstrably committed to terminating the employment of current employees according to a detailed formal plan without possibility of withdrawal or providing termination benefits as a result of an offer made to encourage voluntary redundancy. Benefits falling due more than 12 months after the end of the reporting period are discounted to present value.

Superannuation is the amount recognised in profit or loss of the Statement of Comprehensive Income and comprises employer contributions paid to the GSS (concurrent contributions), the WSS, other GESB schemes, or other superannuation funds.

AASB 16 non-monetary benefits are non-monetary employee benefits, predominantly relating to the provision of vehicle and housing benefits that are recognised under AASB 16 and are excluded from the employee benefits expense.

Employee contributions are contributions made to the Commission by employees towards employee benefits that have been provided by the Commission. This includes both AASB 16 and non-AASB 16 employee contributions.

2.1 (b) Employee related provisions

	2026 $	2025 $
Current		
Employee benefits provision		
Annual leave	4,715,026	4,161,185
Long service leave	4,879,393	4,774,095
Deferred leave	74,256	50,773
Deferred salary scheme	100,004	-
	9,768,679	**8,986,053**
Other provisions		
Employment on-costs	146,177	136,201
	146,177	136,201
Total current employee related provisions	**9,914,856**	**9,122,254**
Non-current		
Employee benefits provision		
Long service leave	4,340,100	3,413,704
	4,340,100	3,413,704
Other provisions		
Employment on-costs	66,590	52,676
	66,590	52,676
Total non-current employee related provisions	**4,406,690**	**3,466,380**
Total employee related provisions	**14,321,545**	**12,588,634**

Provision is made for benefits accruing to employees in respect of annual leave and long service leave for services rendered up to the reporting date and recorded as an expense during the period the services are delivered.

Annual leave liabilities are classified as current as there is no right at the end of the reporting period to defer settlement for at least 12 months after the end of the reporting period.

The provision for annual leave is calculated at the present value of expected payments to be made in relation to services provided by employees up to the reporting date.

Long service leave liabilities are unconditional long service leave provisions and are classified as current liabilities as the Commission does not have the right at the end of the reporting period to defer settlement of the liability for at least 12 months after the end of the reporting period.

Pre-conditional and conditional long service leave provisions are classified as non-current liabilities because the Commission has the right to defer the settlement of the liability until the employee has completed the requisite years of service.

The provision for long service leave is calculated at present value as the Commission does not expect to wholly settle the amounts within 12 months. The present value is measured taking into account the present value of expected future payments to be made in relation to services provided by employees up to the reporting date. These payments are estimated using the remuneration rate expected to apply at the time of settlement, and discounted using market yields at the end of the reporting period on national government bonds with terms to maturity that match, as closely as possible, the estimated future cash outflows.

Deferred salary scheme liabilities are classified as current where there is no right at the end of the reporting period to defer settlement for at lease 12 months after the end of the reporting period.

Employment on-costs involve settlements of annual and long service leave liabilities which give rise to the payment of employment on-costs including workers' compensation insurance. The provision is the present value of expected future payments.

Employment on-costs, including workers' compensation insurance premiums, are not employee benefits and are recognised separately as liabilities and expenses when the employment to which they relate has occurred. Employment on-costs are included as part of 'Other expenditure, Note 2.3 (apart from the unwinding of the discount (finance cost))' and are not included as part of the Commission's 'employee benefits expense'. The related liability is included in employment on-costs provision.

	2026 $	2025 $
Employment on-cost provision		
Carrying amount at start of period	188,877	149,116
Additional/(reversals of) provisions recognised	23,890	39,711
Payments/other sacrifices of economics benefits	-	-
Carrying amount at end of period	**212,767**	**188,877**

Key sources of estimation uncertainty – long service leave

Key estimates and assumptions concerning the future are based on historical experience and various other factors that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amount of assets and liabilities within the next reporting period.

Several estimates and assumptions are used in calculating the Commission's long service leave provision. These include:

- expected future salary rates,
- discount rates,

- employee retention rates, and
- expected future payments.

Changes in these estimations and assumptions may impact on the carrying amount of the long service leave provision. Any gain or loss following revaluation of the present value of long service leave liabilities is recognised as employee benefits expense.

2.2 Legal service expenses

	2026 $	2025 $
Grant of aid expenses		
Casework	42,941,597	51,875,633
	42,941,597	**51,875,633**
Other service expenses		
Legal advice	70,598	223,601
Duty lawyer	45,794	61,882
	116,392	**285,483**
Total legal service expenses	**43,057,989**	**52,161,116**

Legal service expenses generally represent the cost of legal aid granted.

2.3 Other expenditure

	2026 $	2025 $
Supplies and services		
Communications	677,611	613,787
Consumables	3,285,947	2,850,514
Consultants and contractors	3,128,981	3,389,287
Maintenance	2,616,197	2,805,081
Travel	1,023,166	958,398
Information technology	651,910	860,143
Practicing certificates and fees	411,915	388,543
Audit fees (external and internal audit) (a)	212,122	142,875
Insurance	291,396	371,664
Other supplies and services	1,144,211	1,155,772
Total supplies and services expenses	**13,443,456**	**13,536,063**
Accommodation expenses		
Office rental	7,717,645	2,181,441
Other accommodation expenses	236,870	232,062

	2026	2025
	$	$
Total accommodation expenses	**7,954,515**	**2,413,503**
Other		
Bad debts written off	42,870	53,027
Expected credit losses expense	(166,974)	57,144
Employment on-costs	23,890	39,711
Staff training	310,833	288,733
Other staff related expenses	330,846	293,278
Plant and equipment	731,031	690,344
Other expenses	759,183	700,133
Total other expenses	**2,031,679**	**2,122,371**
Total other expenditure	**23,429,650**	**18,071,938**

(a) Includes audit cost, see note 8.8 ‘Remuneration of auditor’.

Supplies and services expenses are recognised as an expense in the reporting period in which they are incurred. The carrying amounts of any materials held for distribution are expended when the materials are distributed.

Office rental is an expense incurred by the Commission for leasing office accomodation in the name of the Commission.

Other operating expenses generally represent the day-to-day running costs incurred in normal operations.

Building and infrastructure maintenance and equipment repairs and maintenance costs are recognised as expenses as incurred, except where they relate to the replacement of a significant component of an asset. In that case, the costs are capitalised and depreciated.

Expected credit losses is recognised for movement in allowance for impairment of trade receivables. Please refer to note 5.1 Receivables for more details.

Software modification costs are recognised as expenses as incurred.

Restoration expenses are recognised as the movement in the provision for restoration costs of leased premises. Please refer to note 5.5 for more details.

Employee on-cost includes workers’ compensation insurance and other employment on-costs. The on-costs liability associated with the recognition of annual and long service leave liabilities is included at Note 2.1(b) Employee related provisions. Superannuation contributions accrued as part of the provision for leave are employee benefits and are not included in employment on-costs.

Note 3. Our funding sources

How we obtain our funding

This section provides additional information about how the Commission obtains its funding and the relevant accounting policy notes that govern the recognition and measurement of this funding. The primary income received by the Commission and the relevant notes are:

	Notes	2026 $	2025 $
Income from State Government	3.1	86,178,999	94,611,604
User charges and fees	3.2	7,215,672	6,606,416
Commonwealth grants and contributions	3.3	41,679,974	38,533,931
Interest income	3.4	3,749,998	3,194,351
Other income	3.5	16,617,732	3,465,859

3.1 Income from State Government

	2026 $	2025 $
Income received from other public sector entities during the period:		
Legal Aid Assistance Grant (a)	86,007,186	94,520,490
Total income from other public sector	**86,007,186**	**94,520,490**
Resources received from other public sector entities during the period		
Service received free of charge (b)	125,850	44,684
Total resources received	**125,850**	**44,684**
Royalties for Regions Fund		
Royalties for Regions funding (c)	45,963	46,430
Total Royalties for Regions Fund	**45,963**	**46,430**
Total income from State Government	**86,178,999**	**94,611,604**

(a) The Legal Aid Commission is an output of the Department of Justice (the Department) for the purposes of the State Budget, and receives State Government funding through the Department. This includes $1 million from Department of Communities. The Legal Assistance Grant is recognised as income at the fair value of consideration when the Commission receives the fund.

(b) Resources received from other public sector entities is recognised as income equivalent to the fair value of the assets, or the fair value of those services that can be reliably determined and which would have been purchased if not donated.

(c) The Regional Workers Incentives Allowance Payments are sub-funded within the over-arching 'Royalties for Regions Fund'. The recurrent funds are committed to projects and programs in WA regional areas and are recognised as income when the Commission receives the funding.

3.2 User charges and fees

	2026 $	2025 $
Client contributions and fees on grants of aid [(a)]	371,776	926,971
Recovered costs on grants of aid [(b)]	6,674,988	5,549,600
Legal advice fees [(c)]	-	-
Duty lawyer fees [(d)]	-	-
Freedom of information [(e)]	-	60
Community legal education [(f)]	168,908	129,785
Total user charges and fees	**7,215,672**	**6,606,416**

Revenue is recognised at the transaction price when the Commission transfers control of the services to customers. Revenue is recognised for the major activities as follows:

(a) Revenue is recognised at a point-in-time for client contributions and fees on grants of aid. The performance obligations for these client contributions and fees are satisfied when the related cases are finalised.

(b) Recovered costs on grants of aid relates to the cost reimbursements the Commission seeks from the Department when the cost is awarded in the court for eligible criminal cases. It is out of scope of AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers as it does not give rise to a contract. The revenue of this category is recognised under AASB 1058 Income of Not-for-Profit Entities. The revenue for recovered costs on grants of aid is recognised when received or when the right to receive has been established.

(c) Revenue is recognised at a point-in-time for legal advice fees. The performance obligations for legal advice fees are satisfied when the legal advice is provided to the clients.

(d) Revenue is recognised at a point-in-time for duty lawyer fees. The performance obligations for duty lawyer fees are satisfied when the duty lawyer service is provided to the clients.

(e) Revenue is recognised at a point-in-time for freedom of information fees. The performance obligations for freedom of information fees are satisfied when the information is provided to the clients.

(f) Revenue is recognised at a point-in-time for community legal education. The performance obligations for community legal education are satisfied when the Summer Series seminar or the online training module is provided to the clients.

3.3 Commonwealth grants and contributions

	2026 $	2025 $
Recurrent Grants		
National Access to Justice Agreement [(a)]	35,786,000	34,173,806
Christmas/Cocos Islands [(b)]	576,114	367,832
Other Commonwealth funding [(c)]	5,317,860	3,992,293
Total Commonwealth grants and contributions	**41,679,974**	**38,533,931**

Recurrent grants are recognised as income when the grants are receivable, and capital grants are recognised as income when the Commission achieves milestones specified in the grant agreement.

(a) The five-year National Access to Justice (NAJP) Agreement 2025-30 expires 30 June 2030. The terms of the funding are generally intended to fund matters within the Commonwealth jurisdiction. The NAJP also seeks to promote investments in preventative law and early intervention initiatives.

(b) The Christmas/Cocos Island grant is related to Indian Ocean Territories funding received on an ongoing basis.

(c) Other Commonwealth funding is related to funding provided under other Commonwealth agreements.

3.4 Interest income

	2026 $	2025 $
Interest earned on Legal Aid operational funds	3,749,998	3,194,351
Total interest income	**3,749,998**	**3,194,351**

3.5 Other income

	2026 $	2025 $
Employee contributions [(a)]	376,543	320,275
Other miscellaneous income	172,791	49,030
Legal Contribution Trust [(b)]	6,638,848	3,096,554
Gain on disposal of Non-Current assets [(c)]	9,429,550	-
Total other income	**16,617,732**	**3,465,859**

(a) Income received by the Commission from subleasing of right-of-use assets relates to lease payments received from operating leases. The Commission has leased a number of right-of-use assets from the Government Regional Officer Housing (GROH) and State Fleet, which it subleases out to employees at a subsidised rate. Information on the Commission's leasing arrangements with GROH and State Fleet can be found in note 2.1(a).

(b) The Legal Contribution Trust's surplus is available for distribution. The Commission is entilted to 50% when relevant criteria are met.

(c) During FY2026, all office accommodation leases were derecognised as right-of-use assets resulting in non-cash gain on derecognition being recognised.

Note 4. Key assets

This section includes information regarding the key assets the Commission utilises to gain economic benefits or provide service potential. The section sets out both the key accounting policies and financial information about the performance of these assets:

	Notes	2026 $	2025 $
Property, plant and equipment	4.1	2,257,502	2,697,256
Intangible assets	4.2	554,933	707,709
Right-of-use assets	4.3	1,511,748	42,317,949
Total key assets		**4,324,183**	**45,722,914**

4.1 Property, plant and equipment

Year ended 30 June 2026	Land $	Buildings $	Works of Art $	Fixtures and Fittings $	Leasehold Improvements $	Office Equipment $	Work in Progress $	Total $
1 July 2025								
Gross carrying amount	290,000	410,000	6,000	244,105	4,397,255	2,559,940	235,135	8,142,435
Accumulated depreciation	-	-	-	(107,324)	(2,967,730)	(2,370,125)	-	(5,445,179)
Carrying amount at start of period	**290,000**	**410,000**	**6,000**	**136,781**	**1,429,524**	**189,816**	**235,135**	**2,697,256**
Additions	-	-		-	297,003	-	61,869	358,872
Transfer	-	-		-	-	-	(297,003)	(297,003)
Reclassification	-	-		-	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-		-	-	(16,502)	-	(16,502)

Year ended 30 June 2026	Land	Buildings	Works of Art	Fixtures and Fittings	Leasehold Improvements	Office Equipment	Work in Progress	Total
	$	$	$	$	$	$	$	$
Reversal of accumulated depreciation for disposed assets	-	-	-	-	-	16,502	-	16,502
Revaluation increments	29,000	78,171	-	-	-	-	-	107,171
Depreciation	-	(37,171)	-	(26,013)	(468,461)	(77,147.54)	-	(608,792)
Carrying amount at end of period	**319,000**	**451,000**	**6,000**	**110,769**	**1,258,066**	**112,668**	-	**2,257,502**
30 June 2026								
Gross carrying amount	319,000	451,000	6,000	244,105	4,694,258	2,543,439	-	8,257,801
Accumulated depreciation	-	-	-	(133,337)	(3,436,191)	(2,430,771)	-	(6,000,299)

Initial recognition

Items of property, plant and equipment costing $5,000 or more are measured initially at cost. Where an asset is acquired for no or nominal cost, the cost is valued at its fair value at the date of acquisition. Items of property, plant and equipment costing less than $5,000 are immediately expensed direct to the Statement of Comprehensive Income (other than where they form part of a group of similar items which are significant in total).

The cost of a leasehold improvement is capitalised and depreciated over the shorter of the remaining term of the lease or the estimated useful life of the leasehold improvement.

Subsequent measurement

Subsequent to initial recognition as an asset, the revaluation model is used for the measurement of land and buildings.

Land is carried at fair value.

Buildings are carried at fair value less accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses.

Property, plant and equipment are stated at historical cost less accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses.

Land and buildings are independently valued annually by the Western Australian Land Information Authority (Landgate). The effective date was at 1 July 2025, with valuations performed during the year ended 30 June 2026 and recognised at 30 June 2026.

In addition, for buildings under the current replacement cost basis, estimated professional and project management fees are included in the valuation of current use assets as required by AASB 2022-10 Amendment to Australian Accounting Standards – *Fair Value Measurement of Non-Financial Assets of Not-For-Profit Public Sector Entities*.

These valuations are undertaken annually to ensure that the carrying amount of the assets does not differ materially from their fair value at the end of the reporting period.

Level 2 assets

Fair values of non-current assets held for sale, and market type land and buildings (office accommodation) are derived using the market approach. Market evidence of sales prices of comparable assets in close proximity is used to determine price per square metre.

In undertaking the revaluation, fair value was determined by reference to market values for land: $319,000 (2025: $295,000) and buildings: $451,000 (2025: $410,000) by market value using (Level 2) inputs. As at 30 June 2026, there were no indications of impairment to property, plant and equipment.

Observable (Level 2) inputs fair values of non-current assets held for sale, land and buildings (office accommodation) are derived using the market approach. Market evidence of sales prices of comparable land and buildings (office accommodation) in close proximity is used to determine price per square metre.

4.1.1 Depreciation and impairment charge for the period

	Notes	2026	2025
Depreciation		$	$
Buildings	4.1	37,171	23,696
Fixtures and fittings	4.1	26,013	26,013
Leasehold improvements	4.1	468,461	472,600
Office equipment	4.1	77,148	130,673
Total depreciation for the period		**608,792**	**652,982**

Useful lives

All property, plant and equipment having a limited useful life are systematically depreciated over their estimated useful lives in a manner that reflects the consumption of their future economic benefits. The exceptions to this rule include assets held for sale, land and investment properties.

Depreciation is generally calculated on a straight-line basis, at rates that allocate the asset's value, less any estimated residual value, over its estimated useful life. Typical estimated useful lives for the different asset classes for current and prior years are included in the table below:

ASSET	Useful life
Buildings	12 years
Furniture and fittings	10 years
Leasehold	5 to 12 years
Office equipment	4 to 20 years

The estimated useful lives, residual values and depreciation method are reviewed at the end of each annual reporting period, and adjustment should be made where appropriate.

Leasehold improvements are depreciated over the shorter of the lease term and their useful lives.

Land and works of art, which is considered to have an indefinite life, are not depreciated. Depreciation is not recognised in respect of these assets because their service potential has not, in any material sense, been consumed during the reporting period.

Impairment

Non-financial assets, including items of plant and equipment, are tested for impairment whenever there is an indication that the asset may be impaired. Where there is an indication of impairment, the recoverable amount is estimated. Where the recoverable amount is less than the carrying amount, the asset is considered impaired and is written down to the recoverable amount and an impairment loss is recognised.

Where an asset measured at cost and is written down to its recoverable amount, an impairment loss is recognised through profit or loss.

Where a previously revalued asset is written down to its recoverable amount, the loss is recognised as a revaluation decrement through other comprehensive income to the extent that the impairment loss does not exceed the amount in the revaluation surplus for the class of asset.

As the Commission is a not-for-profit agency, the recoverable amount of regularly revalued specialised assets is anticipated to be materially the same as fair value.

If there is an indication that there has been a reversal in impairment, the carrying amount shall be increased to its recoverable amount. However, this reversal should not increase the asset's carrying amount above what would have been determined, net of depreciation or amortisation, if no impairment loss had been recognised in prior years.

4.2 Intangible assets

Year ended 30 June 2026	Computer Software $	Total $
1 July 2025		
Gross carrying amount	1,839,769	1,839,769
Accumulated amortisation	(1,132,060)	(1,132,060)
Carrying amount at start of period	**707,709**	**707,709**
Additions	-	-

Year ended 30 June 2026	**Computer Software**	**Total**
	$	**$**
Transfer	-	-
Reclassification	-	-
Disposal	-	-
Reversal of accumulated amortisation for disposed asset	-	-
Amortisation	(152,775)	(152,775)
30 June 2026		
Gross carrying amount	1,839,768	1,839,768
Accumulated amortisation	(1,284,835)	(1,284,835)
Carrying amount at end of period	**554,933**	**554,933**

Initial recognition

Intangible assets are initially recognised at cost. For assets acquired at no cost or for nominal cost, the cost is their fair value at the date of acquisition.

Acquired and internally generated intangible assets costing $5,000 or more that comply with the recognition criteria of AASB 138 Intangible Assets (as noted above) are capitalised.

An internally generated intangible asset arising from development (or from the development phase of an internal project) is recognised if, and only if, all of the following are demonstrated:

(a) the technical feasibility of completing the intangible asset so that it will be available for use or sale,

(b) an intention to complete the intangible asset, and use or sell it,

(c) the ability to use or sell the intangible asset,

(d) the intangible asset will generate probable future economic benefit,

(e) the availability of adequate technical, financial and other resources to complete the development and to use or sell the intangible asset, and

(f) the ability to measure reliably the expenditure attributable to the intangible asset during its development.

Costs incurred below these thresholds are immediately expensed directly to the Statement of Comprehensive Income.

Subsequent measurement

The cost model is applied for subsequent measurement of intangible assets, requiring the asset to be carried at cost less any accumulated amortisation and accumulated impairment losses.

4.2.1 Amortisation and impairment charges of the period

	2026	2025
Amortisation	**$**	**$**
Computer software	152,775	124,688
Total amortisation	**152,775**	**124,688**

The Commission held no goodwill or intangible assets with an indefinite useful life during the reporting period. At the end of the reporting period there were $nil (2025: $nil) of intangible assets not yet available for use.

Amortisation of finite life intangible assets is calculated on a straight-line basis at rates that allocate the asset's value over its estimated useful life. All intangible assets controlled by the Commission have a finite useful life and zero residual value. Estimated useful lives are reviewed annually.

The estimated useful lives for each class of intangible asset are:

ASSET	Useful life
Software [(a)]	3 to 10 years

(a) Software that is not integral to the operation of any related hardware.

Impairment of intangible assets

Intangible assets with indefinite useful lives are tested for impairment annually or when an indication of impairment is identified.

As at 30 June 2026, there were no indications of impairment to intangible assets.

The policy in connection with testing for impairment is outlined in Note 4.1.1.

4.3 Right-of-use assets

For the year ended 30 June 2026	Buildings	Vehicles	Residential Housing	Equipment	Total
	$	$	$	$	$
Carry Amount at beginning of period	**41,092,487**	**368,426**	**706,755**	**150,281**	**42,317,949**
Additions / (Disposal)	(40,361,387)	136,573	1,177,808	-	(39,047,006)
Depreciation	(695,169)	(142,382)	(877,903)	(43,741)	(1,759,195)
Net carrying amount as at end of period	**35,931**	**362,617**	**1,006,659**	**106,540**	**1,511,748**

The Commission has leases for vehicles, office and residential housing. The lease contracts are typically made for fixed periods of 1-15 years with options to renew the lease after that date. Lease payments for buildings not leased through the Department of Finance are renegotiated at the time of the lease to reflect market rentals.

The Commission subleases residential housing to employees at a subsidised rate. The Commission recognises lease payments from operating leases as income on a straight-line basis over the term of the lease.

The Commission has also entered into a Memorandum of Understanding Agreement with the Department of Housing and Works for the leasing of office accommodation. These are not recognised under AASB 16 because of substitution rights held by the Department of Finance and are accounted for as an expense as incurred. During FY2026, all office accommodation leases were derecognised as right-of-use assets resulting in $40,361,387 removed from the balance sheet. The resulting non-cash gain on derecognition has been recognised separately in the Statement of Comprehensive Income.

Initial recognition

At the commencement date of the lease, the Commission recognises right-of-use assets and a corresponding lease liability for most leases. The right-of-use assets are measured at cost including the following:

- the amount of the initial measurement of lease liability,
- any lease payments made at or before the commencement date less any lease incentives received,
- any initial direct costs, and
- restoration costs, including dismantling and removing the underlying asset.

The corresponding lease liabilities in relation to these right-of-use assets have been disclosed in Note 6.1.

The Commission has elected not to recognise right-of-use assets and lease liabilities for short-term leases (with a lease term of 12 months or less) and low value leases (with an underlying value of $5,000 or less). Lease payments associated with these leases are expensed over a straight-line basis over the lease term.

Subsequent measurement

The cost model is applied for subsequent measurement of right-of-use assets, requiring the asset to be carried at cost less any accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses and adjusted for any re-measurement of lease liability.

Depreciation and impairment of right-of-use assets

Right-of-use assets are depreciated on a straight-line basis over the shorter of the lease term and the estimated useful lives of the underlying assets.

If ownership of the leased asset transfers to the Commission at the end of the lease term or the cost reflects the exercise of a purchase option, depreciation is calculated using the estimated useful life of the asset.

Right-of-use assets are tested for impairment when an indication of impairment is identified. The policy in connection with testing for impairment is outlined in Note 4.1.1.

Note 5. Other assets and liabilities

This section sets out those assets and liabilities that arose from the Commission's controlled operations and includes other assets utilised for economic benefits and liabilities incurred during normal operations:

	Notes	2026 $	2025 $
Receivables	5.1	14,389,074	13,668,136
Other assets	5.2	2,218,025	2,887,212
Payables	5.3	43,646,806	51,562,772
Contract liabilities	5.4	3,838,878	2,654,159

5.1 Receivables

	2026 $	2025 $
Current		
Debtors - unsecured	7,806,338	7,262,456
Allowance for impairment of receivables	(131,875)	(286,877)
GST receivable	709,152	600,564
Interest receivable	939,350	939,350
Total current	**9,322,965**	**8,515,493**
Non-current		
Debtors - secured [(a)]	6,292,777	6,172,142
Allowance for impairment of receivables	(68,508)	(80,480)
Allowance for discount [(b)]	(1,158,160)	(939,019)
Total non-current	**5,066,109**	**5,152,643**
Total receivables at end of period	**14,389,074**	**13,668,136**

(a) Legal assistance may be granted subject to a condition that legal costs be secured by a charge being lodged against property registered in the name of the legally assisted person. Full payment of the debt secured is required upon sale or other alienation of the property.

(b) An implicit interest adjustment is made to take account of long term repayment aspect on secured debt. Debtors - secured, were discounted at 4.49% (2025: 3.80%) using the 5 year bond rate (source: Western Australian Treasury Corporation) at 30 June 2026.

Trade receivables are initially recognised at their transaction price or, for those receivables that contain a significant financing component, at fair value. The Commission holds the receivables with the objective to collect the contractual cash flows and therefore subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less an allowance for impairment.

The Commission recognises a loss allowance for expected credit losses (ECLs) on secured debt not held at fair value through profit or loss. The ECLs based on the difference between the contractual cash flows and the cash flows that the entity expects to receive, discounted at 4.49% (2025: 3.80%) using the five-year bond rate (source: Western Australian Treasury Corporation) at 30 June 2026. Individual receivables are written off when the Agency has no reasonable expectations of recovering the contractual cash flows.

For trade receivables, the Commission recognises an allowance for ECLs measured at the lifetime expected credit losses at each reporting date. The Commission has established a provision matrix that is based on its historical credit loss experience, adjusted for forward-looking factors specific to the debtors and the economic environment. The carrying amount of net trade receivables is equivalent to fair value as it is due for settlement within 30 days. Please refer to Note 2.3 for the amount of ECLs expensed in this financial year.

5.2 Other assets

	2026 $	2025 $
Current		
Prepayments	2,218,025	2,887,212
Total current	**2,218,025**	**2,887,212**

Other non-financial assets include prepayments which represent payments in advance of receipt of goods or services or that part of expenditure made in one accounting period covering a term extending beyond that period.

5.3 Payables

	2026 $	2025 $
Current		
Grant of aid commitments	41,127,843	47,830,280
Accrued expenses	417,581	2,035,789
Accrued salaries	1,865,856	1,497,405
Accrued superannuation	232,877	195,436
Staff benefit fund	2,314	3,528
Unclaimed monies	334	334
Total current	**43,646,806**	**51,562,772**

Payables are recognised at the amounts payable when the Commission becomes obliged to make future payments as a result of a purchase of assets or services. The carrying amount is equivalent to fair value, as settlement is generally within 20 days.

Grant of aid commitments are settled as the case progresses and matters can be outstanding for between 3 months and 2 years. The Commission considers the carrying amount of grant of aid commitments to be equivalent to the net fair value as the effect of discounting would be immaterial.

Accrued salaries and superannuation represent the amount due to staff but unpaid at the end of the reporting period. Accrued salaries are settled within a fortnight after the reporting period. The Commission considers the carrying amount of accrued salaries to be equivalent to its fair value.

5.4 Contract liabilities

	2026 $	2025 $
Reconciliation of changes in contract liabilities		
Opening balance at the beginning of the period	2,654,159	2,390,426
Additions	1,509,589	1,143,606
Income recognised in the reporting period	(324,869)	(879,873)
Closing balance at the end of period	**3,838,878**	**2,654,159**
Current	1,413,022	976,948
Non-current	2,425,856	1,677,211
	3,838,878	**2,654,159**

The Commission’s contract liabilities relates to client contributions on the unfinalised legal cases. Typically, a client contribution is levied prior to the legal service being fully performed on the related case.

5.5 Other provisions

	2026 $	2025 $
<u>Current</u>		
Restoration provision	-	-
Total current	-	-
<u>Non-current</u>		
Restoration provision		
Total non-current	46,799	46,799
Balance at end of period	**46,799**	**46,799**

5.5.1 Restoration (make good) provision

Some leased premises are required to be restored to their original condition at the end of their respective lease terms. A provision is recognised for the present value of the estimated expenditure required to remove any leasehold improvements. These costs are capitalised as part of the cost of leasehold improvements and are amortised over the shorter of the lease term and the useful life of the assets.

Under the lease agreement, the Commission has a legal or constructive obligation to dismantle the Broome office fit-out and restore the site.

The estimated future obligations include the costs of removing facilities and restoring the affected areas.

The provision for future restoration costs is the best estimate of the present value of the expenditure required to settle the restoration obligation at the reporting date. Future restoration costs are reviewed annually and any changes in the estimate are reflected in the present value of the restoration provision at each reporting date.

5.5.2 Movement in provisions

	2026 $	2025 $
Movements in provisions during period		
Restoration provisions		
Carrying amount at start of period	46,799	-
Additional/(reversals of) provisions recognised	-	46,799
Carrying amount at end of period	**46,799**	**46,799**

Note 6. Financing

This section sets out the material balances and disclosures associated with the financing and cash flows of the Commission.

	Notes	2026 $	2025 $
Lease liabilities	6.1	1,548,075	51,691,421
Finance costs	6.2	488,749	1,725,108
Cash and cash equivalents	6.3	75,475,461	75,163,591

6.1 Lease liabilities

	2026	2025
	$	$
Not later than one year	672,451	5,460,357
Later than one year and not later than five years	873,536	22,306,568
Later than five years	2,088	23,924,496
	1,548,075	**51,691,421**
Current	672,451	5,460,357
Non-current	875,624	46,231,064
Total lease liabilities	**1,548,075**	**51,691,421**

The Commission has also entered into a Memorandum of Understanding Agreement with the Department of Housing and Works for the leasing of office accommodation. These are not recognised under AASB 16 because of substitution rights held by the Department of Housing and Works and are accounted for as an expense as incurred. During FY2026, all office accommodation leases were derecognised as right-of-use assets resulting in $49,789,801 moved from the balance sheet. The resulting non-cash gain on derecognition has been recognised separately in the Statement of Comprehensive Income.

Initial measurement

At the commencement of the lease, the Commission lease liabilities are measured at at the present value of the lease payments that are to be paid over the lease term. The lease payments are discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease. If that rate cannot be readily determined, the Commission uses the incremental borrowing rate provided by the Western Australian Treasury Corporation.

Lease payments included by the Commission as part of the present value calculation of lease liabilities include:

- fixed payments (including in-substance fixed payments), less any lease incentives receivable,
- variable lease payments that depend on an index or a rate initially measured using the index or rate as at the commencement date, and
- periods covered by extension or termination options are only included in the lease term by the Commission if the lease is reasonably certain to be extended (or not terminated).

The interest on the lease liabilities are recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income over the lease term so as to produce a constant periodic rate of interest on the remaining balance of the liability for each period. Lease liabilities do not include any future changes in variable lease payments (that depend on an index or rate) until they take effect, in which case the lease liability are reassessed and adjusted against the right-of-use asset.

Variable lease payments, not included in the measurement of lease liabilities, that are dependent on sales, an index or a rate are recognised by the Commission in the Statement of Comprehensive Income in the period in which the condition that triggers those payment occurs.

Subsequent Measurement

Lease liabilities are measured by increasing the carrying amount to reflect interest on the lease liabilities; reducing the carrying amount to reflect the lease payments made; and remeasuring the carrying amount at amortised cost, subject to adjustments to reflect any reassessment or lease modifications.

This section should be read in conjunction with Note 4.3.

	2026	2025
	$	**$**
Lease Expense recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive income		
Lease interest expense	269,608	1,725,108
Short-term lease	615,258	423,833
Total lease expense	**884,866**	**2,148,941**

Short-term leases with a lease term of 12 months or less are recognised on a straight-line basis unless the lessor is an agency within the Western Australian public sector.

Low-value leases with an underlying value of $5,000 or less are recognised on a straight-line basis.

Variable lease payments that are not included in the measurement of the lease liability are recognised in the period in which the event or condition that triggers those payments occurs.

6.2 Finance costs

	2026	2025
Interest expense	**$**	**$**
Interest expense on lease liabilities	269,608	1,725,108
Implicit interest write back on debtors	219,141	-
Total interest costs expensed	**488,749**	**1,725,108**

Finance cost includes the interest component of lease liability repayments and unwinding of discounts on debtors and non-employee provisions to reflect the passage of time.

6.3 Cash and cash equivalents

	2026	2025
	$	**$**
Cash and cash equivalents	12,109,815	23,050,830
Restricted cash and cash equivalents	2,365,645	2,112,761
Financial assets held at amortised cost - Other term deposits	61,000,000	50,000,000
Balance at end of period	**75,475,460**	**75,163,591**

	2026 $	2025 $
Current		
Restricted cash and cash equivalents [(a)]	21,026	6,259
Non-current		
Restricted cash and cash equivalents [(a)]	2,344,619	2,106,502

(a) Non-current restricted cash and cash equivalents include funds held for the purpose of meeting the 27th pay in a reporting period that occurs every 11th year. This account isclassified as non current for 10 out of 11 years.

For the purpose of the statement of cash flows, cash and cash equivalent (and restricted cash and cash equivalent) assets comprise cash on hand and short-term deposits with original maturities of three months or less that are readily convertible to a known amount of cash and which are subject to insignificant risk of changes in value.

Other term deposits are classified as financial assets held at amortised cost.

6.4 Capital commitments

	2026 $	2025 $
Capital expenditure commitments, being contracted capital expenditure additional to the amounts reported in the financial statements, are payable as follows:		
Within 1 year	-	169,020
Later than 1 year and not later than 5 years	-	-
Later than 5 years	-	-
	-	**169,020**

Note 7. Financial instruments and contingencies

This note sets out the key risk management policies and measurement techniques of the Commission.

	Notes
Financial instruments	7.1
Contingent assets and liabilities	7.2

7.1 Financial instruments

The carrying amounts of each of the following categories of financial assets and financial liabilities at the end of the reporting period are:

	2026 $	2025 $
Financial Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents [a]	14,475,461	25,163,591
Financial assets at amortised cost [b] [c]	74,679,922	63,067,573
Total financial assets	**89,155,383**	**88,231,164**
Financial Liabilities		
Financial liabilities at amortised cost [d]	45,194,880	103,254,193
Total financial liabilities	**45,194,880**	**103,254,193**

(a) Cash and cash equivalents balance includes petty cash balance

(b) The amount of receivables/financial assets at amortised cost excludes GST recoverable from the ATO (statutory receivable)

(c) The amount of financial assets at amortised cost include term deposit

(d) The amount of financial liabilities at amortised cost excludes GST payable to the ATO (statutory payable)

Measurement

All financial assets and liabilities are carried without subsequent remeasurement.

7.2 Contingent assets and liabilities

Contingent assets and contingent liabilities are not recognised in the statement of financial position but are disclosed and, if quantifiable, are measured at the best estimate.

Contingent assets and liabilities are presented inclusive of GST receivable or payable respectively.

The Commission has no contingent assets or liabilities in addition to the assets and liabilities included in the financial statements.

Note 8. Other disclosures

This section includes additional material disclosures required by accounting standards or other pronouncements, for the understanding of this financial report.

8.1 Events occurring after the end of the reporting period

There were no matters or occurrences to come to the Commission's attention which would materially affect the financial statements or disclosures therein or which are likely to materially affect the future results or operations of the Commission.

8.2 Correction of period errors/changes in accounting policies

There was no correction of prior period errors or changes in accounting policy from initial application of accounting standards.

8.3 Key management personnel

The Commission has determined that key management personnel include State Attorney General, members of the Commission, and Senior Officers of the Commission. However, the Commission is not obligated to compensate the Attorney General and therefore the disclosures in relation to State Attorney General's compensation may be found in the Annual Report on State Finances.

The total fees, salaries, superannuation, non-monetary benefits, and other benefits for key management personnel comprising members and senior officers of the Commission for the reporting period are presented within the following bands.

Compensation of members of the Commission

	2026	2025
Compensation Band ($)		
660,000 - 670,000	1	-
510,000 - 520,000	-	1
40,001 - 50,000	1	1
20,001 - 30,000	5	4
10,001 - 20,000	-	1
	7	**7**
	$	$
Total compensation of members of the Commission	**820,603**	**669,690**

Compensation of senior officers	**2026**	**2025**
Compensation Band ($)		
500,001 - 550,000*	2	-
450,001 - 500,000		
400,001 - 450,000		
350,001 - 400,000	-	-
300,001 - 350,000	5	3
250,001 - 300,000	4	4
200,001 - 250,000	2	4
150,001 - 200,000	1	2
100,001 - 150,000	-	-
50,001 - 100,000	-	-
0 - 50,000	-	2
	14	15
	$	$
Total compensation of senior officers	**4,386,546**	**3,335,546**

	2026	2025
	$	$
Total compensation of key management personnel	**5,207,149**	**4,005,236**

Total compensation includes total fees, salaries, superannuation, non-monetary benefits and other benefits incurred by the Commission in respect of key management personnel.

* During FY2026, two seniors officers received termination benefits totaling $616,710 which are included in the total compensation disclosed above.

None of the senior officers employed in the Commission at the end of the reporting period, who are members of the Pension Scheme.

8.4 Related party transactions

The Commission is a wholly owned and controlled entity of the state of Western Australia.

Related parties of the Commission include:

- all cabinet ministers and their close family members, and their controlled or jointly controlled entities,
- all senior officers, commissioners and their close family members, and their controlled or jointly controlled entities,
- other agencies and statutory authorities, including related bodies included in the whole of government consolidated financial statements,
- associates and joint ventures of a wholly-owned public sector entity, and
- the Government Employees Superannuation Board (GESB).

Material transactions with other related parties

Outside of normal citizen type transactions with the Commission, there were no related party transactions that involved key management personnel and/or their close family members and/or their controlled (or jointly controlled) entities.

8.5 Related bodies

The Commission had no related bodies during the financial year.

8.6 Affiliated bodies

The Commission had no affiliated bodies during the financial year.

8.7 Special purpose accounts

Client Trust Fund

The purpose of the Trust Account is to hold funds in trust for persons who are or have been assisted persons.

	2026 $	2025 $
Balance at start of period	357	403,016
Receipts	1,127,740	839,345
Payments	(785,267)	(1,242,004)
Balance at end of period	**342,830**	**357**

The above Trust Account in the name of Legal Aid Commission is used for clients administered by the Commission on their behalf. These accounts are used for any amounts of money that are held by the Commission in trust for persons who are or have been assisted persons.

Established under section 16(1)(c) of the FMA.

8.8 Remuneration of auditors

Remuneration to the Auditor General in respect of the audit for the current financial year is as follows:

	2026 $	2025 $
Auditing the accounts, financial statements controls and key performance indicators.	90,300	87,200

The remuneration of the auditor is included at Note 2.3 ‘Supplies and services’.
The remuneration to 30 June 2026 was not accrued as the work was not substantially completed. This amount excludes GST.

8.9 Supplementary financial information

(a) Write-offs

During the financial year, $42,870 (2025: $53,027) was written off the Commission’s books under the authority of:

	2026 $	2025 $
The Commission members	42,870	53,027
Total	**42,870**	**53,027**

(b) Losses through theft, defaults and other causes

	2026	2025
	$	$
Losses of public money and public and other property through theft or default	-	-
Amount recovered	-	-
	-	**-**

(c) Forgiveness of debts

	2026	2025
	$	$
Forgiveness (or waiver) of debts by the Commission	28,883	17,103
	28,883	**17,103**

(d) Gifts of public property

There were nil (2025:nil) gifts of public property during the period.

8.10 Special category funding

During the course of the year, the Commission realised expenditure related to legal representation costs in support of two special categories.

(i) Indian Ocean Territories

The Commission provides a full range of legal services to the residents of Christmas and Cocos Islands. The service is provided pursuant to the service delivery agreement with the Commonwealth Government.

	2026	2025
	$	$
Balance at start of period	83,591	117,864
Receipt from Commonwealth	576,114	367,832
User charges and fees	-	-
Expenditure	(528,657)	(402,105)
Balance at end of period	**131,048**	**83,591**

(ii) State Expensive Cases

Arrangements exist with the State Government for additional funding to be provided to ensure expensive criminal trials involving serious charges are not delayed through lack of legal representation. Expensive cases are categorised as matters where the cost of legal representation is expected to exceed $32,500 in comparison with $31,757 in 2024-25.

	2026 $	2025 $
Balance at start of period	(6,803,607)	(122,192)
Funding	8,448,000	2,637,996
Client contributions	134,316	187,024
Assigned expenditure	(3,349,243)	(9,464,637)
Expenditure for IHP disbursements	(588,388)	(4,000)
In-House legal services expenditure	(206,999)	(37,798)
Balance at end of period	**(2,365,921)**	**(6,803,607)**

Note 9. Explanatory statements

This section explains variances in the financial performance of the Commission.

9.1 Explanatory statement for controlled operations

This explanatory section explains variances in the financial performance of the Commission.

All variances between annual estimates (original budget) and actual results for 2026, and between the actual results for 2026 and 2025 are shown below. Narratives are provided for key major variances which vary more than 10% from their comparative and that the variance is more than 1% of the dollar aggregate of:

- total Cost of Services for the Statements of comprehensive income and Statement of cash flows (i.e. 1% of $141,257,732), and
- total Assets for the Statement of financial position (i.e. 1% of $96,406,742).

9.1.1 Statement of Comprehensive Income variances

	Variance Note	2026 Estimate $	2026 Actual $	2025 Actual $	Variance between Estimate and Actual $	Variance between Actual for 2025 and 2026 $
Expenses						
Employee benefit expense	b	69,956,000	71,960,588	65,053,587	2,004,588	6,907,001
Supplies and services		13,915,000	13,443,456	13,536,063	(471,544)	(92,607)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	2	6,787,000	2,520,763	6,798,859	(4,266,237)	(4,278,096)
Finance costs	2	1,588,000	488,749	1,725,108	(1,099,251)	(1,236,359)
Accommodation expenses	2	2,005,000	7,954,515	2,413,503	5,949,515	5,541,012

	Variance Note	2026 Estimate $	2026 Actual $	2025 Actual $	Variance between Estimate and Actual $	Variance between Actual for 2025 and 2026 $
Legal services expenses	1, a	36,677,000	43,057,989	52,161,116	6,380,989	(9,103,127)
Other expenses		2,504,000	2,031,679	2,122,371	(472,321)	(90,692)
Total Cost of Services		**133,432,000**	**141,457,740**	**143,801,607**	**8,025,739**	**(2,352,868)**
Income						
User charges and fees	4	2,774,000	7,215,672	6,606,416	4,441,672	609,256
Commonwealth grants and contributions		38,673,000	41,679,974	38,533,931	3,006,974	3,146,043
Interest income	5	356,000	3,749,998	3 194,351	3,393,998	555,647
Other income	3, c	1,469,000	16,617,732	3,465,859	15,148,732	13,151,873
Total Income		**43,272,000**	**69,263,375**	**51,800,557**	**25,991,376**	**17,462,819**
Net Cost of Services		**90,160,000**	**72,194,364**	**92,010,050**	**(17,965,637)**	**(19,815,687)**
Income from State Government						
Income from other public sector entities		79,602,000	86,007,186	94,520,490	6,405,186	(8,513,304)
Services received free of charge		-	125,850	44,684	125,850	81,166
Royalties for Regions Fund		75,000	45,963	46,430	(29,037)	(467)
Total income from State Government		**79,677,000**	**86,178,999**	**94,611,604**	**6,501,999**	**(8,432,605)**
(Deficit) / Surplus for the period		**(10,483,000)**	**13,984,635**	**2,601,554**	**24,467,636**	**11,383,082**
Other Comprehensive Income						
Changes in asset revaluation surplus		-	107,171	48,696	(107,171)	58,475
Total other comprehensive income		-	107,171	48,696	(107,171)	58,475
Total comprehensive (loss) / income for the period		**(10,483,000)**	**14,091,805**	**2,650,250**	**24,360,465**	**11,441,557**

Major variance narratives

Variances between estimate and actual

1. Legal service expenses for State baseline funded casework costs are higher than expected by $11.091 million, primarily due to higher-than-expected State criminal law casework costs. These additional costs are largely covered by additional State funding received in June 2026. This overspend is partially offset by an underspend of $1.757 million in Commonwealth baseline-funded casework and $2.906 million in special funding program casework costs, largely due to limited availability of private practitioners.
2. Accommodation expenses and gain on disposal of non-current assets are higher than estimated, while depreciation and finance costs are lower than estimated, due to the decommissioning of office accommodation leases. This resulted in a change in accounting treatment, with accommodation costs being recognised as an expense as incurred (refer to Notes 4.3 and 6.1).
3. Other income is higher than the estimates mainly due to the surplus distribution from the Legal Contribution Trust ($6.64 million) in 2025-26. During FY2026, all office accommodation leases were derecognised as right-of-use assets resulting in non-cash gain ($9.32 million) being recognised.
4. User charges and fees are higher than estimates due to higher contributions and cost recoveries related to grants of aid.
5. Interest revenue is higher than the estimates, mainly due to the adoption of a conservative budgeting approach and higher interest rates during the year.

Variances between actual results for 2026 and 2025

a. The one-off increase in legal services expenses in the prior year was primarily due to strategic decisions to clear workflow items before the Client Relationship Management System go-live date of 1 December 2024, resulting in a temporary spike in costs during that period.

b. Employee benefits expenses increase largely reflects deferral of program expenditure from 2024-25 to 2025-26 and 2026-27 and the new Public Sector Wages Policy representing 4% increase in 2025-26. FTEs have increased by 23 staff.

c. Other income is higher mainly due to the surplus distribution from the Legal Contribution Trust ($6.64 million) in 2025-26 as compared with the distribution in 2024-25 ($3.097 million). During FY2026, all office accommodation leases were derecognised as right-of-use assets resulting in non-cash gain ($9.43 million) being recognised.

9.1.2 Statement of financial position variances

	Variance Note	2026 Estimate $	2026 Actual $	2025 Actual $	Variance between Estimate and Actual $	Variance between Actual for 2025 and 2026 $
ASSETS						
Current Assets						
Cash and cash equivalents	1, a	5,534,000	12,109,815	23,050,830	6,575,815	(10,941,015)
Restricted cash and cash equivalents		-	21,026	6,259	21,026	14,767
Receivables	3	7,207,000	9,322,965	8,515,493	2,115,965	807,472
Other financial assets	1, a	35,000,000	61,000,000	50,000,000	26,000,000	11,000,000
Other current assets		3,184,000	2,218,025	2,887,212	(965,975)	(669,187)
Total Current Assets		**50,925,000**	**84,671,831**	**84,459,794**	**33,746,831**	**212,037**
Non-Current Assets						
Restricted cash and cash equivalents	1, a	1,665,000	2,344,619	2,106,502	679,619	238,117
Receivables		5,430,000	5,066,109	5,152,643	(363,891)	(86,534)
Property plant & equipment		2,666,000	2,257,502	2,412,113	(408,498)	(154,611)
Intangible assets		2,438,000	554,933	992,851	(1,883,067)	(437,918)
Right-of-use asset	2, b	37,424,000	1,511,748	42,317,949	(35,912,252)	(40,806,202)
Total Non-Current Assets		**49,623,000**	**11,734,911**	**52,982,058**	**(37,888,089)**	**(41,247,148)**
TOTAL ASSETS		**100,548,000**	**96,406,742**	**137,441,852**	**(4,141,258)**	**(41,035,111)**
LIABILITIES						
Current Liabilities						
Payables	c	43,241,000	43,646,806	51,562,772	405,806	(7,915,966)
Lease liabilities	2, b	5,598,000	672,451	5,460,358	(4,925,549)	(4,787,907)
Employee related provisions	4, d	8,229,000	9,914,856	9,122,254	1,685,856	792,602
Contract liabilities		1,138,000	1,413,022	976,948	275,022	436,074
Other current liabilities		-	21,026	6,259	21,026	14,767
Total Current Liabilities		**58,206,000**	**55,668,160**	**67,128,591**	**(2,537,839)**	**(11,460,431)**
Non-Current Liabilities						
Lease liabilities	2, b	41,490,000	875,624	46,231,063	(40,614,376)	(45,355,439)
Employee related provisions	4, d	2,500,000	4,406,690	3,466,380	1,906,690	940,310
Contract liabilities	5, f	1,252,000	2,425,856	1,677,211	1,173,856	748,646
Other Non-current liabilities		-	46,799	-	46,799	46,799
Total Non-Current Liabilities		**45,242,000**	**7,754,969**	**51,374,654**	**(37,487,031)**	**(43,619,684)**

	Variance Note	2026 Estimate $	2026 Actual $	2025 Actual $	Variance between Estimate and Actual $	Variance between Actual for 2025 and 2026 $
TOTAL LIABILITIES		**103,448,000**	**63,423,130**	**118,503,245**	**(40,024,870)**	**(55,080,115)**
NET ASSETS		**(2,900,000)**	**32,983,613**	**18,938,607**	**35,883,612**	**14,045,006**
EQUITY						
Contributed equity		596,000	595,669	595,669	(331)	-
Reserves		728,000	881,708	774,537	153,708	107,171
Accumulated surplus	e	(4,224,000)	31,506,236	17,521,605	35,730,236	13,984,631
TOTAL EQUITY		**(2,900,000)**	**32,983,612**	**18,891,811**	**35,883,613**	**14,091,802**

Major variance narratives

Variances between estimate and actual

1. The combined variance for cash and cash equivalents, restricted cash and cash equivalents, and other financial assets (term deposits held at period end) is $32.3 million higher than estimated. This is primarily due to the opening balance in the original estimates being $24.2 million higher than the 2023-24 actual balance. The higher than estimated surplus distribution from the Legal Contribution Trust, together with higher interest revenue and user fees and charges, have also contributed to the higher than stronger than expected cash position. Refer to the variance explanation for Statement of Comprehensive Income and Statement of Cash Flows for further details.
2. Right-of-use assets and lease liabilities were lower than estimated while gain on disposal of Non-Current assets was higher than estimated due to the decommissioning of office accommodation leases. This resulted in a change in accounting treatment, with accommodation costs being recognised as an expense as incurred (refer to Notes 4.3 and 6.1).
3. Current Receivables is higher than expected due to increased contributions and cost recoveries associated with grants of aid.
4. The combined employee related provisions are higher than estimated due to both annual leave and long service leave increasing during the year.
5. Contract liabilities are higher than estimated due to increased contributions and cost recoveries of $1.185 million on the active cases during the year.

Variances between actual results for 2026 and 2025

a. The combined variance for cash and cash equivalents, restricted cash and cash equivalents and other financial assets (term deposits held at period end) collectively is $0.311 million, the variance between cash and cash equivalents and other financial assets is mainly due to lower balance in the bank surplus account and higher investment in term deposits.

b. Right-of-use assets and lease liabilities were lower than estimated while gain on disposal of Non-Current assets was higher than estimated due to the decommissioning of office accommodation leases. This resulted in a change in accounting treatment, with accommodation costs being recognised as an expense as incurred (refer to Notes 4.3 and 6.1).

c. Payables is lower than the prior year due to the lower grant of aid commitment for casework recognised as liabilities in 2025-26 compared with 2024-25.

d. The combined employee related provisions are higher than estimated due to both annual leave and long service leave increasing during the year.

e. The accumulated surplus is higher due to higher income and lower cost of services.

f. Contract liabilities are higher due to increased contributions and cost recoveries of $1.185 million on active cases. This comprises $749,000 in non-current and $436,000 in current liabilities.

9.1.3 Statement of cash flows variances

	Variance Note	2026 Estimate	2026 Actual	2025 Actual	Variance between Estimate and Actual	Variance between Actual for 2025 and 2026
CASH FLOWS FROM STATE GOVERNMENT						
Funds from other public sector entities		79,602,000	86,013,474	94,031,202	6,411,474	(8,017,728)
Royalties for Regions Fund		75,000	45,963	46,430	(29,037)	(467)
Net cash provided by State Government		**79,677,000**	**86,059,437**	**94,077,632**	**6,382,437**	**(8,018,195)**
Utilised as follows:						
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES						
Payments						
Employee benefits	a	(69,959,000)	(70,155,271)	(62,780,120)	(196,271)	(7,375,151)
Supplies and services		(14,078,000)	(13,817,468)	(12,596,169)	260,532	(1,221,299)
Accommodation	1, b	(2,005,000)	(7,959,352)	(2,404,665)	(5,954,352)	(5,554,687)
Legal services	2, c	(36,677,000)	(49,145,812)	(43,893,604)	(12,468,812)	(5,252,208)
Finance costs	1, b	(1,588,000)	(269,608)	(1,734,592)	1,318,392	1,464,984
GST payments on purchases	3	(3,092,000)	(7,439,048)	(6,789,592)	(4,347,048)	(649,456)
Other payments		(2,183,000)	(2,340,560)	(1,846,671)	(157,560)	(493,889)
Receipts						
User charges and fees	4, f	2,922,000	8,262,191	6,705,955	5,340,191	1,556,236
Commonwealth grants and contributions		38,673,000	41,679,974	38,533,931	3,006,974	3,146,043

	Variance Note	2026 Estimate	2026 Actual	2025 Actual	Variance between Estimate and Actual	Variance between Actual for 2025 and 2026
Interest received	6	356,000	3,291,004	3,586,996	2,935,004	(295,992)
GST receipts on sales	d	34,000	235,363	2,404,337	201,363	(2,168,974)
GST receipts from taxation authority	7, e	3,058,000	6,465,530	4,322,098	3,407,530	2,143,432
Other receipts	5, g	2,049,000	7,174,150	3,465,859	5,125,150	3,708,291
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities		**(82,490,000)**	**(84,018,907)**	**(73,026,237)**	**(1,528,907)**	**(10,992,670)**
Purchase of non-current physical assets		(255,000)	(61,870)	(621,889)	193,130	560,019
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		**(255,000)**	**(61,870)**	**(621,889)**	**193,130**	**560,019**
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES						
Payments						
Principal elements of lease payments	1, b	(5,670,000)	(1,666,790)	(5,193,216)	4,003,210	3,526,426
Net cash provided by/(used in) financing activities		**(5,670,000)**	**(1,666,790)**	**(5,193,216)**	**4,003,210**	**3,526,426**
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	8, h	(8,738,000)	311,870	15,236,290	9,049,870	(14,924,420)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of period		50,937,000	75,163,591	59,927,301	24,226,591	15,236,290
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT THE END OF PERIOD		**42,199,000**	**75,475,461**	**75,163,591**	**33,276,461**	**311,870**

Major variance narratives

Variances between estimate and actual

1. Principal elements of lease payments and finance costs are lower than estimated while accommodation payments are higher than estimated due to the decommissioning of office accommodation leases. This resulted in a change in accounting treatment, with accommodation costs being recognised as an expense as incurred (refer to Notes 4.3 and 6.1).

2. Legal service expenses for State baseline funded casework costs are higher than expected by $11.091 million, primarily due to higher-than-expected State criminal law casework costs. These additional costs are largely covered by additional State funding received in June 2026. This overspend is partially offset by an underspend of $1.757 million in Commonwealth

baseline-funded casework and $2.906 million in special funding program casework costs, largely due to limited availability of private practitioners. There are also timing differences between legal services expenses that are committed under a grant of aid and when the related cash payments are made.

3. GST payments on purchases are higher than estimates due to the higher payments for legal services than estimated.
4. User fees and charges are higher than the estimates largely due to higher than expected client contributions and cost recoveries.
5. Other receipts are higher than the estimates mainly due to the higher surplus distribution from the Legal Contribution Trust.
6. Interest is higher than the estimates due to conservative budget profile and higher interest rates continuing into 2025-26.
7. GST receipts from the taxation authority is higher due to increased GST payments on purchase of legal services offset by higher GST receipt from client contribution.
8. The net increase in cash and cash equivalents is higher than estimated due to higher than estimated user charges and fees, interest revenue, other receipts and Commonwealth grants including the reduced payment for employee benefits. These were offset by higher than estimated payments for legal services.

Variances between actual results for 2026 and 2025

a. Employee benefits expenses increase largely reflects deferral of program expenditure from 2024-25 to 2025-26 and 2026-27 and the new Public Sector Wages Policy representing 4% increase in 2025-26. FTEs have increased by 23 staff.

b. Principal elements of lease payments and Finance costs are lower than estimated while accommodation payments are higher than estimated due to the decommissioning of office accommodation leases. This resulted in a change in accounting treatment, with accommodation costs being recognised as an expense as incurred (refer to Notes 4.3 and 6.1).

c. The one-off increase in legal services expenses in the prior year was primarily due to strategic decisions to clear workflow items before the Client Relationship Management System go-live date of 1 December 2024, resulting in a temporary spike in costs during that period. There are also timing differences between legal services expenses are comitted under a grant of aid and when the related cash payments are made.

d. GST receipts on sales were lower due to lower GST-bearing receipts from the Department of Justice and offset with higher cost recovery. In FY2025, GST receipts included $1.8 million GST on Department of Justice disbursement payments received for several months, which did not recur to the same extent in FY2026.

e. GST receipts from the taxation authority is higher due to increase GST payments on purchase of legal services offset by higher GST receipt from client contribution.

f. User fees and charges are higher than the estimates largely due to higher client contributions and cost recoveries.

g. Other receipts are higher mainly due to the surplus distribution from the Legal Contribution Trust ($6.64 million) in 2025-26 as compared with the distribution in 2024-25 ($3.097 million).

h. The net decrease in cash and cash equivalents is largely due to lower funds from other public sector entities offset by higher receipts from user charges and fees, Legal Contribution Trust and Commonwealth grants contributions, as well as higher expenses in employee benefits and supplies and services.

3.2 Additional Key Performance Indicator information

3.2.1 Certification of Key Performance Indicators

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Certification of Key Performance Indicators

We hereby certify that the key performance indicators are based on proper records, are relevant and appropriate for assisting users to assess the Legal Aid Commission of Western Australia's performance, and fairly represent the performance of the Legal Aid Commission of Western Australia for the financial year ended 30 June 2026.

Hon. Jane Crisford SC
Chair of the Commission
Date: 26th August 2026

Helen De Brito
Director of Legal Aid
Member of the Commission
Date: 26th August 2026

3.2.2 Detailed information in support of Key Performance Indicators

Agency funds are limited and determining the extent and type of assistance provided to clients is central to Legal Aid WA operations. This involves allocating resources to services that are available to the general community and to services, including legal representation that is restricted and managed according to the extent of disadvantage a person is experiencing.

Government goal

Safe, Strong and Fair Communities: Supporting our local and regional communities to thrive.

Agency Level Government Desired Outcome

Equitable access to legal services and information.

Agency services delivered

The community and target groups require access to and the provision of quality legal services. This is achieved through the provision of eligibility and merit tests to enable legal representation to be provided to legally aided clients by grants of aid and assignment of cases to in-house or private practitioners. Legal advice and legal task, social support services and the dedicated First Nations community liaison and community education services are delivered to target groups in the community. Information and advice, duty lawyer services and community legal education activities are provided to assist the wider community to access fair solutions to legal problems at the earliest opportunity.

Our services

Legal assistance services are delivered in accordance with Part V of the *Legal Aid Commission Act 1976 (WA)*.

For the community		
Information and advice	**Duty lawyer service**	**Community legal education**
To assist members of the public to identify legal problems, understand the alternatives for resolution and the resources available to them in pursuing a legal solution. Includes referral to other agencies and is delivered through public counters in all offices and by 1300 INFOLINE.	To ensure that members of the public brought before the courts have access to legal advice so that they understand the options available for responding to legal proceedings in which they are involved. Available at all Magistrate Court sitings throughout WA, the Family Court of WA, and the Children's Court.	To provide education sessions for legal professionals, stakeholders and the general community to enhance awareness and understanding about the law and how to identify, prevent and deal with legal problems, or about the help available from legal and support services.

For target groups	
Legal advice and legal task	To assist people facing legal issues with advice and practical help, including advocacy, drafting of negotiating letters and the preparation of court documentation. Delivered by lawyers and at all office locations, and by paralegal staff under supervision of solicitors.
Legal representation	To ensure people from priority groups are legally represented to the extent that is necessary and commensurate with their particular individual need. Includes assessment and case management for persons who are refused assistance. Includes all services provided pursuant to a grant of aid, including Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR).
Social support service	To provide safety planning, case management, coordination and advocacy, that address non-legal issues such as family violence, substance abuse, mental health, disability (cognitive and physical), and homelessness that are linked to legal issues.

For target groups	
Community liaison service	To communicate and share information with stakeholder agencies in relation to the delivery of services for the First Nations community by a dedicated liaison officer. This may relate to organising a visit to a remote community, making arrangements for an upcoming community legal education activity, managing relationships, or making sure cultural protocols are followed.
Community education service	To provide education sessions for the First Nations community to address non-legal problems that impact on the ability of individuals to access or participate in the justice system, or aim to prevent legal problems arising or escalating. For example, sessions about safety planning, managing finances, or cyber safety.

Effectiveness indicators

The outcome sought by Legal Aid WA as a result of the services provided is equitable access to legal services and information.

Effectiveness indicator percentage of eligible applicants who received a grant of aid measures the proportion of eligible applicants who receive a grant of aid. An eligible applicant for a grant of aid is an applicant who satisfies Legal Aid WA's means and merits tests for legal representation. The indicator represents how equity of access is achieved by measuring the extent to which legal representation can be provided, to those eligible applicants who seek it.

The effectiveness indicator percentage of people who are provided with a duty lawyer service represents the extent to which duty lawyer services are available to ensure that all members of the public brought before the courts have access to legal advice, so that they understand the options available for responding to legal proceedings in which they are involved. Duty lawyer services are available at the Magistrate Court criminal sitings throughout Western Australia, the Family Court of Western Australia, and the Children's Court of Western Australia.

The effectiveness indicator percentage of people receiving an outcome from Infoline services represents the extent to which members of the public receive an outcome to their legal enquiry via Legal Aid WA's Infoline and/or Infochat services. An outcome includes legal information, immediate legal advice, assessment for grant of aid, booking of legal advice appointments, and referrals. By expanding from the traditional Infoline services to include an Infochat services, the accessibility to the services are improved as people can access the service online.

Desired outcomes and key effectiveness/efficiency indicators

Agency level Government desired outcome: equitable access to legal services and information.

Key effectiveness indicators	2022-23 Actual %	2023-24 Actual %	2024-25 Actual %	2025-26 Target %	2025-26 Actual %	Reasons For significant variance [1] between current actual and target and prior year comparative
Percentage of eligible applicants who receive a grant of legal aid	90%	87%	93%	89%	86%	There is no significant variance.
Percentage of people who are provided with a duty lawyer service	23%	23%	23%	22%	23%	There is no significant variance.

Key effectiveness indicators	2022-23 Actual %	2023-24 Actual %	2024-25 Actual %	2025-26 Target %	2025-26 Actual %	Reasons For significant variance [1] between current actual and target and prior year comparative
Percentage of people receiving an outcome from Infoline services	71%	61%	44%	45%	44%	There is no significant variance between the 2025-26 actual result and the 2025-26 target. The reduction in the percentage of people receiving an outcome from Infoline services from 2023-24 to 2024-25 reflects sustained growth in service demand, leading to an increased volume of calls offered to Infoline. At the same time, Information Officers are managing increasingly complex enquiries involving legal, financial and social issues across a diverse range of vulnerable client groups, including First Nations clients, which has increased the average time required to resolve each enquiry.

Service: Legal Aid Assistance

Key efficiency indicators	2022-23 Actual $	2023-24 Actual $	2024-25 Actual $	2025-26 Target $	2025-26 Actual $	Reasons For significant variance (1) between current actuals and target and prior year comparative
Average cost per legal representation	4,183	4,617	5,474	4,593	4,491	The one-off increase in legal services expenses in 2024-25 was primarily due to strategic decisions to clear workflow items before the Client Relationship Management System go-live date of 1 December 2024, resulting in a temporary spike in costs during that period.

Key efficiency indicators	2022-23 Actual $	2023-24 Actual $	2024-25 Actual $	2025-26 Target $	2025-26 Actual $	Reasons For significant variance (1) between current actuals and target and prior year comparative
Average cost per legal information service	60	66	95	90	86	There is no significant variance between the 2025-26 actual result and the 2025-26 target. The increase in the average cost per legal information service from 2023-24 to 2024-25 reflects the increasing complexity of enquiries managed by Information Officers. As enquiries increasingly involve multifaceted legal, financial and social issues across diverse vulnerable client groups, including First Nations clients, the average time required to resolve each enquiry has increased, resulting in a higher average cost per service.

Key efficiency indicators	2022-23 Actual $	2023-24 Actual $	2024-25 Actual $	2025-26 Target $	2025-26 Actual $	Reasons For significant variance [1] between current actuals and target and prior year comparative
Average cost per legal advice	402	411	472	450	451	The 2025-26 actual is higher than the 2022-23 and 2023-24 actuals, mainly due to the increased complexity of matters handled through duty lawyer services, legal advice, and legal tasks. However, it shows a slight decrease compared to the 2024-25 actual.
Average cost per application for a grant of legal aid processed	504	509	548	548	540	There is no significant variance.

Key efficiency indicators	2022-23 Actual $	2023-24 Actual $	2024-25 Actual $	2025-26 Target $	2025-26 Actual $	Reasons For significant variance [1] between current actuals and target and prior year comparative
Weighted average cost per wraparound support service	1,204	1,576	1,500	1,365	1,590	There has been an increased demand for non-legal support, particularly within Extended non-legal Support, which operates for substantially longer hours than Discrete non-legal Support. The total time recorded for these services has doubled in the 2025-26 actual compared with the 2022-23 actual. This increase in service duration has contributed to a higher average cost per service. The 2025-26 actual exceeds the target mainly due to the new project Youth Bail Support Service, where social support workers provide intensive, long-term case management. This results in fewer outputs but significantly higher time per client, driving the higher actual cost.

Notes:

1. Significant variances are considered to be those greater than 10%.

3.3 Ministerial Directions

3.4 Other Financial Disclosures

3.4.1 Pricing policies of services provided

The Legal Aid Commission of Western Australia charges for goods and services rendered on a full or partial cost recovery basis. These fees and charges are determined in accordance with *Costing and Pricing Government Services* guidelines published by Treasury.

3.4.2 Capital Works

In accordance with Treasurer's Guidance Handbook Chapter 1.7 Disclosures and Legal Compliance, Legal Aid Commission of WA identifies capital works projects that remain ongoing at the end of the financial year (Table 1) and the projects completed during the year (Table 2). Explanations have been provided for variations in actual expenditure that differ from the estimated total cost.

Table 1: Capital projects incomplete

Project Name	Expected year of completion	Estimated cost to complete	Estimated total cost of project	Variance from previous financial year	Explanation
NIL					

Table 2: Capital projects completed

Project name	Total cost of project	Variance from previous financial year	Explanation
Fit out of the Karratha Office The fit out of part of new Legal Aid WA's office and maintaining ongoing investment to ensure office accommodations are maintained to adequately support the delivery of services across Western Australia	$283,251.26	Nil	Fit out was completed for the Karratha office on 23 June 2026 and was completed under budget

3.5 Governance Disclosures

3.5.1 Insurance premiums

An insurance premium of $24,034.45 was paid to Marsh Pty Ltd for Directors & Officers Liability Insurance for 2025-26.

3.6 Other legal requirements

3.6.1 Act of grace payments

As at 30 June 2026, there were no act of grace payments recorded, as per the Treasurers Instruction 319.

3.6.2 Credit cards

Unauthorised Use of Credit Cards

Officers of Legal Aid WA hold corporate credit cards where their functions warrant usage of this facility. Despite each cardholder being aware of their obligations under Legal Aid WA's credit card policy, 30 employees inadvertently utilised the corporate credit card for take-away meals, groceries, parking, and travel expenses. The matters were not referred for disciplinary action as the Chief Finance Officer noted prompt advice and settlement of the personal use amount and, the nature of the expenditure was immaterial and characteristic of an honest mistake.

2025-2026

	Amount ($)
Aggregate amount of personal use expenditure for 2025-26	$ 2,820.39
Aggregate amount of personal use expenditure settled by the due date (within 5 working days)	$ 2,211.17
Aggregate amount of personal use expenditure settled after the period (after 5 working days)	$ 609.22
Aggregate amount of personal use expenditure outstanding at balance date	$ 0.00

3.6.3 Annual Estimates

(Treasurer's Instruction 9 - Requirement 3)

The Attorney General, Hon Dr Tony Buti MLA, approved the following Annual Estimates for the 2026-27 financial year on 8 June 2026 under section 40 of the *Financial Management Act 2006*.

Statement of Comprehensive Income
For the year ended 30 June 2027

	Note	2024-25 Actual $000	2025-26 Estimated Actual $000	2026-27 Section 40 Estimates $000
Cost of services				
Expenses				
Employee benefits expenses	1	65,054	73,598	71,447
Supplies and services	2	13,536	14,506	12,975
Depreciation and amortisation expenses		6,799	6,797	6,789
Finance costs		1,725	1,592	1,462
Accommodation expenses		2,414	2,005	2,077
Legal services expenses	3	52,161	44,630	35,386
Other expenses	4	2,122	2,305	2,061
Total cost of services		**143,811**	**145,433**	**132,197**
Income				
User charges and fees	5	6,606	2,774	2,774
Commonwealth grants and contributions		38,534	39,757	37,630
Interest income	6	3,194	356	356
Other income	7	3,466	1,667	1,658
Total income		**51,801**	**44,554**	**42,418**
Net cost of services		**92,010**	**100,879**	**89,779**

	Note	2024-25 Actual $000	2025-26 Estimated Actual $000	2026-27 Section 40 Estimates $000
Income from State Government				
Income from other public sector entities	8	94,520	85,921	84,611
Resources received		45	-	-
Royalties for Regions Fund		46	46	46
Total income from State Government		**94,612**	**85,967**	**84,657**
Surplus/(deficit) for the period		**2,602**	**(14,912)**	**(5,122)**
Other Comprehensive Income				
Changes in asset revaluation surplus		49	**-**	**-**
Total other comprehensive income		**49**	**-**	**-**
Total comprehensive income for the period		**2,650**	**(14,912)**	**(5,122)**

1. Employee benefits expenses increase in 2025-26 Estimated Actual and 2026-27 Estimates largely reflects deferral of program expenditure from 2024-25 to 2025-26 and 2026-27, extension of Justice Reform Initiatives and National Access to Justice Partnership indexation updates in 2026-27, and the new Public Sector Wages Policy representing 4% increase in 2025-26, 3.5% increase in 2026-27.
2. Supplies and services in 2025-26 Estimated Actual is higher than 2024-25 Actual and 2026-27 Estimate primarily due to deferral of program expenditure from 2024-25 to 2025-26 Estimated Actual.
3. Legal services in 2026-27 Estimates is lower than previous years primarily driven by unbudgeted cost pressure associated with State indictable cases, State expensive cases, and State family matters in 2025-26 Estimated Actual and 2024-25 Actual.
4. Other Expenses in 2025-26 Estimated Actual is higher than 2024-25 Actual and 2026-27 Estimate primarily due to deferral of program expenditure from 2024-25 to 2025-26.
5. The higher user charges and fees in 2024-25 are largely due to higher than expected client contributions and cost recoveries.
6. Interest revenue is higher than the estimates mainly due to unexpected interest rates increased by Reserve Bank Australia in 2024-25 Actual.
7. Other Income in 2024-25 Actual is higher than 2025-26 Estimated Actual and 2026-27 Estimates largely reflects the higher revenue received from the Legal Contribution Trust in 2024-25.
8. 2024-25 Actual is higher than 2025-26 Estimated Actual and 2026-27 Estimates largely reflects 2024-25 supplementary funding approved by the Government to meet unavoidable costs incurred in 2024-25 associated with State indictable criminal matters, expensive criminal cases, and family law matters.

Statement of Financial Position
As at 30 June 2027

	Note	2024-25 Actual $000	2025-26 Estimated Actual $000	2026-27 Section 40 Estimates $000
Assets				
Current Assets				
Cash and cash equivalents		23,051	9,484	5,417
Restricted cash and cash equivalents		6	6	6
Receivables		8,515	8,516	8,516
Other financial assets		50,000	50,000	50,000
Other current assets		2,887	2,887	2,887
Total Current Assets		**84,460**	**70,893**	**66,826**
Non-Current Assets				
Restricted cash and cash equivalents		2,107	2,107	2,107
Receivables		5,153	5,153	5,153
Property plant & equipment	1	2,697	1,847	1,802
Intangible assets		708	800	900
Right of use assets	2	42,318	37,118	33,130
Total Non-Current Assets		**52,982**	**47,025**	**43,092**
Total assets		**137,442**	**117,918**	**109,918**
Liabilities				
Current Liabilities				
Payables and accruals		51,563	51,727	52,791
Lease liabilities		5,460	5,635	6,179
Employee related provisions		9,122	9,123	9,123
Contract liabilities		977	977	977
Other current liabilities		6	6	6
Total Current Liabilities		**67,129**	**67,468**	**69,076**
Non-Current Liabilities				
Lease liabilities	3	46,231	41,276	36,792
Employee related provisions		3,466	3,466	3,466
Contract liabilities		1,677	1,677	1,677
Other provisions		47	47	47
Total Non-Current Liabilities		**51,421**	**46,466**	**41,982**
Total liabilities		**118,550**	**113,934**	**111,058**

	Note	2024-25 Actual $000	2025-26 Estimated Actual $000	2026-27 Section 40 Estimates $000
Net assets		**18,892**	**3,984**	**(1,140)**
Equity				
Contributed equity		596	596	596
Reserves		775	778	776
Accumulated surplus/(deficit)		17,522	2,610	(2,512)
Total equity		**18,892**	**3,984**	**(1,140)**

1. The reduction in 2026-27 Estimates reflects the completion of Client Relationship Management (CRM) project in 2024-25 Actual. The 2026-27 Estimates also includes ongoing Computer Hardware and Software Replacement Program, the Office Refurbishment and Fit outs program as outlined in the Strategic Asset Plan.
2. The reduction in 2026-27 Estimates reflects the expected depreciation of these assets in 2026-27.
3. The decrease in lease liabilities from 2026-27 Estimates to 2025-26 Estimated Actual is reflective of the repayments expected to occur in 2026-27 for these liabilities.

Statement of Cash Flows
For the year ended 30 June 2027

	Note	2024-25 Actual $000	2025-26 Estimated Actual $000	2026-27 Section 40 Estimates $000
Cash flows from the State Government				
Funds from other public sector entities	1	94,031	85,921	84,611
Royalties for Regions Fund		46	46	46
Net cash provided by the State Government		**94,078**	**85,967**	**84,657**
Utilised as follows:				
Cash flows from operating activities				
Payments				
Employee benefits	2	(62,780)	(73,601)	(71,450)
Supplies and services	3	(12,596)	(14,523)	(12,975)
Accommodation		(2,405)	(2,005)	(2,077)
Legal services	4	(43,894)	(44,630)	(35,386)
Finance costs		(1,735)	(1,592)	(1,462)

	Note	2024-25 Actual $000	2025-26 Estimated Actual $000	2026-27 Section 40 Estimates $000
GST payments on purchases		(6,790)	(3,092)	(3,092)
Other payments	5	(1,847)	(2,130)	(1,903)
Receipts				
User charges and fees	6	6,706	2,922	2,922
Commonwealth grants and contributions		38,534	39,757	37,630
Interest received	7	3,587	356	356
GST receipts on sales		2,404	34	34
GST receipts from taxation authority		4,322	3,058	3,058
Other receipts	8	3,466	2,247	2,238
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities		**(73,026)**	**(93,199)**	**(82,107)**
Cash flows from investing activities				
Payments				
Purchase of non-current physical assets		(622)	(656)	(574)
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		**(622)**	**(656)**	**(574)**
Cash flows from financing activities				
Principal elements of lease payments		(5,193)	(5,679)	(6,043)
Net cash provided by/(used in) financing activities		**(5,193)**	**(5,679)**	**(6,043)**
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		15,236	(13,567)	(4,067)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period		59,927	75,164	61,597
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period		**75,164**	**61,597**	**57,530**

1. The reduction in 2026-27 Estimates largely reflects supplementary funding approved by the Government to meet unavoidable costs incurred in 2024-25 and 2025-26 associated with State indictable criminal matters, expensive criminal cases, and family law matters.

2. Employee benefits expenses increase in 2025-26 Estimated Actual and 2026-27 Estimates largely reflects deferral of program expenditure from 2024-25 to 2025-26 and 2026-27, extension of Justice Reform Initiatives and National Access to Justice Partnership indexation updates in 2026-27, and the new Public Sector Wages Policy representing 4% increase in 2025-26, 3.5% increase in 2026-27.

3. Supplies and services in 2025-26 Estimated Actual is higher than 2024-25 Actual and

2026-27 Estimate primarily due to deferral of program expenditure from 2024-25 to 2025-26 Estimated Actual.

4. Legal services in 2026-27 Estimates is lower than previous years primarily driven by unbudgeted cost pressure associated with State indictable cases, State expensive cases, and State family matters in 2025-26 Estimated Actual and 2024-25 Actual.
5. Other Payment in 2025-26 Estimated Actual is higher than 2024-25 Actual and 2026-27 Esitmate primarily due to deferral of program expenditure from 2024-25 to 2025-26.
6. The higher user charges and fees in 2024-25 are largely due to higher than expected client contributions and cost recoveries.
7. Interest received is higher than the estimates mainly due to unexpected interest rates increased by Reserve Bank Australia in 2024-25 Actual.
8. Other Receipts in 2024-25 Actual is higher than 2025-26 Estimated Actual and 2026-27 Estimates largely reflects the higher revenue received from the Legal Contribution Trust in 2024-25.

3.6.4 Expenditure on advertising, market research, polling and direct mail

In accordance with section 175ZE of the *Electoral Act 1907*, Legal Aid WA incurred the following expenditure in advertising, market research, polling, direct mail and media advertising:

Total expenditure for 2025-26 was Nil

Expenditure was incurred in the following areas:

Expenditure	Supplier	Amount
Advertising Agencies	Nil	Nil
Polling organisations	Nil	Nil
Direct Mail organisations	Nil	Nil
Media advertising organisations	Nil	Nil

3.6.5 Compliance with Public Sector Standards and Ethical Codes

Legal Aid WA complies with the Public Sector Standards in Human Resource Management and the Public Sector Code of Ethics.

Legal Aid WA publishes policies and procedures on the intranet to inform employees of the requirements. Guidance support is available through the Human Resources team. Employees are required to acknowledge their understanding of and commitment to the requirements of the Code of Conduct and Public Sector Code of Ethics annually and through the onboarding process. Lawyers and other professional groups also follow the relevant professional standards and ethical requirements.

To ensure compliance with recruitment and selection activities, Legal Aid WA provides training to selection committee members, and all processes are reviewed by an independent person. Information about the Standards is made available to prospective applicants and applicants. One breach claim against the Public Sector Standards was received in 2025-26.

3.6.6 Recordkeeping Plan

Legal Aid WA has an approved Recordkeeping Plan and manages its records in accordance with the State Records Commission's Standard 2: Recordkeeping Plans, and Principle 6: Compliance. The following information outlines Legal Aid WA's compliance with these requirements.

Efficiency and effectiveness of the organisations recordkeeping systems

Legal Aid WA is committed to implementing and maintaining recordkeeping systems and practices that are efficient, effective, and responsive to business and operational needs, while ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements and meeting the expectations of stakeholders and clients.

Legal Aid WA's enterprise content management system helps ensure all corporate and operational records are managed in accordance with Legal Aid WA's Recordkeeping Plan. The efficiency and effectiveness of recordkeeping systems is reviewed as part of Legal Aid WA's internal audit process.

The nature and extent of the recordkeeping training program

Legal Aid WA conducts online training programs for recordkeeping. Recordkeeping Awareness Training and Content Management System Training are included in the induction program for all new staff, with refresher training conducted every two years.

3.7 Government policy requirements

3.7.1 Occupational Safety, Health, and Injury Management

Our commitment

The Health, Safety and Wellbeing of our staff is of paramount importance. We recognise that Work Health Safety (WHS) risk is inherent in our work and that the effective management of risk is essential to delivering our strategic objectives and our ongoing success.

Our goal is to be a workplace that is without risk to health and safety, as far as reasonably practicable. We also recognise the importance of safety leadership in identifying and managing risk and aim to create an environment where all staff promote and contribute to a safe work culture.

The Executive Management Team (EMT) sets and reviews WHS performance indicators as part of the annual WHS Action Plan. These are endorsed and monitored on a quarterly basis.

Work Health and Safety Action Plan

Throughout 2025-26, our commitment to maintaining a safe work environment has remained a priority. We acknowledge the inherent risks in our operations and recognise that effectively managing these risks is crucial for achieving our strategic objectives and sustaining our ongoing success.

Our Work Health and Safety Action Plan is developed in consultation with worker representatives and endorsed by the EMT. This plan is designed to support Legal Aid WA in complying with the *Work Health and Safety Act 2020*, and ensure the ongoing effective implementation, monitoring, and review of our Safety Management System to meet our evolving needs.

The Work Health and Safety Action Plan provides a clear pathway to achieving our safety objectives.

A snapshot of key areas is outlined below.

Consultation

In 2025-26, a key focus has been enhancing our consultation processes and building capability that empowers our leaders and workers to engage in collaborative discussions in relation to WHS matters.

Active consultation with our workers on reviewing our WHS Risk Register and developing a Psychosocial Risk Register. To further support this, we have introduced project groups focused on key priorities, involving representatives from relevant work areas to ensure accurate and inclusive input.

This collaborative approach not only ensures compliance with regulatory obligations but also develops a culture that supports the integration of safety into daily operations. Teams meet on a quarterly basis to discuss work, health safety and wellbeing matters. Resources are provided aimed at facilitating meaningful, relevant, and constructive discussions.

The Incident Report Form was converted to a fully digital form. This helps to notify relevant people in real time and improves our ability to respond quickly to risks and offer support.

We commenced a review of the risk assessments and safety instructions for the external workplaces we visit. This was done in consultation with the WHS Working Group. Each division nominated officers to participate in this working group to assist with the review and to develop and communicate the instructions for each workplace. The working group assists with key projects as well as supporting campaigns such as Safe Work Month.

WHS and wellbeing engagement

WHS and wellbeing matters and fostering a culture of genuine care continue to be an area of focus. A review of the Wellbeing Strategy and Framework is underway. To read more about our wellbeing initiatives refer to the Wellness section.

Safety management system enhancement

Our commitment to ongoing improvement includes reviewing and refining the processes, policies, and procedures that underpin our safety management system to align with legislative requirements and our internal WHS objectives.

As part of this commitment, we are undertaking internal audits of the WHS Management System in line with the WorkSafe Plan to monitor effectiveness and drive continuous improvement.

This includes:

- the ongoing development and review of policy and procedures to support the management of work health and safety risk across the agency,
- the review and endorsement of WHS objectives and performance measures and the establishment of KPIs in relation to WHS activities such as Health, Safety and Wellbeing team meetings, WHS Project Group meetings, internal and external workplace inspections and instructions, emergency evacuation exercises, and incident statistics,
- monitoring WHS objectives and targets by the EMT,
- reviewing WHS training to be delivered to the EMT and through the induction program,
- reviewing risk management training, including modules on emergency response, lockdown procedures, and working safely with clients, to ensure relevance and alignment with current operational needs and WHS requirements, and
- reviewing and developing the WHS Risk Register and Psychosocial Risk Register, incorporating consultation with representatives from each Legal Aid WA division.

Workers' compensation and injury management

Legal Aid WA follows the injury management compliance requirements of the *Workers Compensation and Injury Management Act 2023 (WA)* (the Act) and provides support to managers and employees who are managing workplace injuries. Injury Management Plans are implemented to support employees to return to work in accordance with the Act.

In 2025-26, one new claim was recorded.

Assessment of the safety and health management system

Legal Aid WA continues to implement the safety management system implemented in 2020-21.

Legal Aid WA developed the safety management system in accordance with the framework of the WorkSafe Plan. A formal assessment of the system by an external accredited auditor was conducted in October 2022. An internal audit of the WHS Management System is scheduled for October 2026.

Legal Aid WA continues to implement and review the safety management plan to drive continuous improvement.

Reporting

Measure	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Target	Comments
Number of fatalities	0	0	0	Zero	Remains zero
Incidence of work-related injury or illness	6.6%	2%	1.8%	Reduce by 2% per year and 15% by 2033 compared with 2023	
Incidence rate of serious claims with one or more weeks' lost time	0	0	1.8%	Reduce by 2.5% per year and 20% by 2033 compared with 2023	
Incidence rate of claims resulting in permanent impairment	0	0	0	Reduce by 2% per year and 15% by 2033 compared with 2023	Target met

Measure	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Target	Comments
Incidence rate of work-related respiratory disease	0	0	0	Reduce by 2.5% per year and 20% by 2033 compared with 2023	Target met
Lost time injury and/or disease incidence rate	0.66	0	0.19	Zero or 10% improvement on the previous three years	
Lost time injury and/or disease severity rate	33.33	0	0	Zero or 10% improvement on the previous three years	
Percentage of workers returned to work on full duties and hours within: 1) 13 weeks 2) 26 weeks	100 100	100 100	0 0	No target for 13 weeks Greater than or equal to 0% returned to work with 26 weeks	
Managers and supervisors trained in: a. Work health and safety as relevant to the PCBU's risk profile. b. Injury management	a. 80	a.82	a. 0 b. 33%	a. Greater than or equal to 80% of cohort trained within last (2) years b. Greater than or equal to 80% of cohort trained within last (5) years	Training in WHS and Injury Management due to be delivered Q4 of 2026.

Measure	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Target	Comments
Agency has a WHS Management Plan that has been independently assessed in the last 5 years	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	WorkSafe Plan October 2022
Consultative systems: a. Number of Health and safety representatives 1. in total; 2. who have attended HSR training; 3.shown as a percentage of workers; 4.shown as a ratio to the number of workplaces occupied by the Agency; and b. Name/s of health and safety committees and Subcommittees	1. 19 2. Zero (0) 3. 4.2% 4. 19/8 b. WHS Working Group	1. 11 2. Zero (0) 3. 2.1% 4. 11/9 b. WHS Working Group	1. 10 2. Zero (0) 3. 1.9% 4. 10/9 b. WHS Working Group	No target	

Data definitions

Fatalities	Number of compensated work-related fatalities.
Lost time injury or disease	The number of lost time injury/disease claims where one day/shift or more was estimated to be lost on claims lodged in the financial year. Claims that are lodged in the period but pended are included.
Severe claims	The number of severe claims (estimated 60 days or more lost from work). An injury resulting in death is considered to have accounted for 60 days or more lost.
Severity rate	The number of severe claims divided by the number of lost time injury/disease claims multiplied by 100.
Invalid claims	Cancelled and declined claims are excluded, however claims with actual lost time are recorded even though a substantial approval may have been declined.

3.7.2 Board and Committee Remuneration

Position	Name	Type of remuneration	Period of membership	Gross/ actual remuneration for the financial year
Chair of Commission	Hon Jane Crisford SC	Annual	1 July 2025 - 30 June 2026	$37,353.00
Member of Commission	Steve Toutountzis	Annual	1 July 2025 - 30 June 2026	$20,544.00
Member of Internal Audit Committee	Steve Toutountzis	Per Meeting	1 July 2025 - 30 June 2026	$1,500.00
Member of Commission	Elspeth Hensler OAM	Annual	1 July 2025 - 30 June 2026	$20,544.00
Member of Internal Audit Committee	Elspeth Hensler OAM	Per Meeting	1 July 2025 - 30 June 2026	$1,200.00
Member of Commission	Kristin Berger	Annual	1 July 2025 - 11 June 2026	$19,645.90
Member of Commission	Curtis Ward	Annual	1 July 2025 - 30 June 2026	$20,544.00

Position	Name	Type of remuneration	Period of membership	Gross/ actual remuneration for the financial year
Member of Internal Audit Committee	Curtis Ward	Per Meeting	1 July 2025 - 30 June 2026	$900.00
Member of Commission	Hon Ken Wyatt AM	Annual	1 July 2025 - 30 June 2026	$20,544.00
Member of Commission	Helen De Brito	Annual	1 July 2025 - 30 June 2026	$0.00
Member of Audit Committee	Helen De Brito	Per Meeting	1 July 2025 - 30 June 2026	$0.00

Feedback

We value your feedback to help improve future Annual Reports.

Contact us by emailing communications@legalaid.wa.gov.au or writing to PO Box L916 Perth WA 6842.

Copies of this document may be available in alternative formats upon request.