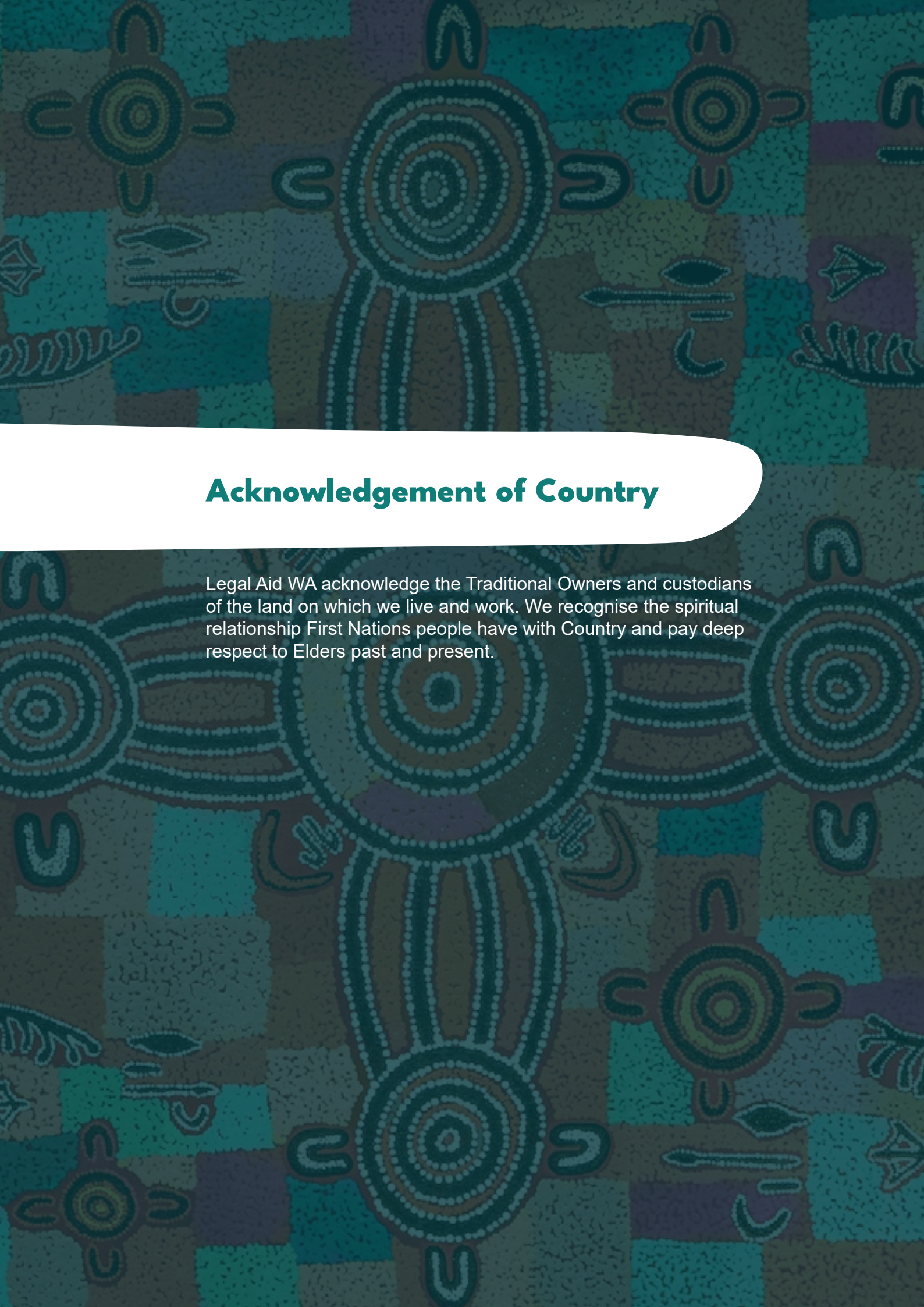




LEGAL AID

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Annual Report **2024 - 2025**



Acknowledgement of Country

Legal Aid WA acknowledge 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.

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Chair and CEO Message

We are pleased to present our Annual Report 2024-25.

The past year has demonstrated that the need for legal assistance continues to be as important as ever. We have provided lawyers to people on more than 134,000 occasions, assisting them with their legal and non-legal problems, and adapting and innovating to provide a holistic and client centred approach.

We delivered 8% more duty lawyer services around the State than we did the previous year, and we delivered 13,109 new grants of aid in 2024-25.

Clients are coming to us with more complex needs. In the past year, we have seen a 15% increase in the number of clients living with a disability or mental illness: 37% of our clients disclosed having a disability or mental illness.

Our client centred focus has continued as we offer coordinated and tailored services to better meet individual client needs through triage, referrals, legal service delivery, and social support services. We are committed to empowering clients to make their own decisions and choices about how to resolve their legal issues.

We have also been innovative in our approach. 36% of our clients live in a rural or remote location, and the resources in our regional offices have been strengthened in the past year with our Regional Relief Pilot. The model sees lawyers and administrative staff provide short term relief to regional offices and has delivered 2,306 services in the past year.

We restructured our Professional Standards and Integrity Unit (PSIU) led by a new position, our Chief Integrity Officer, who reports directly to the CEO. An accompanying Integrity Framework details the instruments, structures and cultural factors that guide how we practise, manage, and account for integrity.

Our vision has been front and centre of mind as our management team has worked to finalise our Strategic Plan for the next three years. It has been an invaluable exercise in taking a forensic look at what we have achieved over the life of the current plan and where our priorities lie in the future. It is also a reminder of the responsibility that we have to our clients to ensure that our work results in better legal and social outcomes for them.



Our values are what drive us, and as part of our Strategic Planning, we elevated integrity as one of our core values. That is a recognition of our ongoing commitment to ensuring everyone at Legal Aid WA understands and operates with the highest level of integrity and accountability. By doing so, we can continue to build and maintain the trust of the community.

We marked the 30-year anniversary of the Domestic Violence Legal Unit (DVLU). DVLU has been responding to the needs of victims of family and domestic violence from the day it began. The team has grown considerably over the years and now employs more than 30 staff, including legal staff, social support workers, administration officers, and paralegals.

We are proud of the work we have done this year to continue building cultural competence and diversity across Legal Aid WA, and our continued focus on staff safety and wellbeing. We have delivered training to key leaders across the organisation to build our understanding of psychosocial risk, rolled out onsite Employee Assistance Programs, delivered training in preventing and recognising vicarious trauma, and conducted training sessions for mental health first aid officers and wellbeing mentors.

Thank you to our amazing staff. In this Annual Report, we have featured some of the dedicated and talented team at Legal Aid WA who, with all their colleagues, work so tirelessly on the front line and behind the scenes to improve the lives of our clients.

The Legal Aid WA system in Western Australia also relies upon the hard work of our private lawyers. We are so grateful to our panel lawyers for their commitment and hard work over the past year. Thank you.

Thank you to the former Western Australian Attorney General, Hon John Quigley, for his support and commitment to the clients of Legal Aid WA. We wish him well in the future. We also thank the former Australian Attorney-General, Hon Mark Dreyfus KC, MP and the staff of both offices for their continued support.

We have welcomed new federal Attorney-General, Hon Michelle Rowland MP, and Western Australian Attorney General, Hon Dr Tony Buti MLA. We look forward to continuing to work closely with them and their staff.

We are grateful to Department of Justice (DoJ) Director General Kylie Maj and all staff at DoJ and Department of Treasury, along with many others from the Western Australian public service, for their enthusiasm for legal assistance services.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge and thank the Board of Legal Aid WA for their leadership over the past year. The year ahead is dedicated to recommitting ourselves to serving our clients and ensuring we continue to improve in all aspects of our service delivery.



About Us

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, 21 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, and targeted Community Legal Education (CLE).

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 more than 470 private lawyers 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.



Where We Operate

Perth

The Perth head office provides legal services from the Peel region in the south, to 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.

Great Southern

The Great Southern team in Albany provide legal services in person, by phone and video-link throughout the region. The team attend circuits in Katanning and Narrogin monthly. They provide duty lawyer services for the Magistrates Court and Children's Court, carry family law, child protection, civil and criminal files, and offer in-house legal advice sessions. The Great Southern office also provides CLE throughout the region.

South West

The South West office provides services in person or by phone to clients seeking assistance at one of the multiple courtrooms running throughout the week in the South West. The team attend at courts from Bunbury down to Manjimup, and inland to Collie and Harvey. They provide duty lawyer, advice and grant of aid services across a wide range of legal issues, including Dispute Resolution. The team also work closely with schools and local community groups to provide CLE in the region.

Goldfields-Esperance

The Goldfields-Esperance team in Kalgoorlie assist clients in all areas of law, providing access to legal services in person or via online services for very remote clients. The team provide duty lawyer and grant of aid services for FVRO matters, protection and care, and criminal law matters. They also attend the Ngaanyatjarra Lands circuit which encompasses several small First Nations communities in the desert, nearly 1,000 kilometres away from the two nearest towns of Kalgoorlie and Alice Springs, and travel to Warburton, Blackstone, and Laverton.

Mid West and Gascoyne

The Mid West team in Geraldton provide a range of client services for all areas of law, including duty lawyer services at court, grant of aid representation, and legal advice services. The Mid West team work with local high schools in Geraldton and Exmouth to provide CLE, including Legal Aid WA's RU Legal? program. They frequently attend circuits to represent clients across the area.

Carnarvon Satellite Office

The Carnarvon Satellite office is staffed by one lawyer and is supported by remote administration. Our Carnarvon lawyer provides services to the region including weekly duty lawyer lists at Carnarvon Magistrates Court, two circuits a month, and daily representation for arrests in custody. This office covers court as far east as Wiluna and as far north as Onslow.

Pilbara

The Pilbara team in South Hedland provide duty lawyer services in the South Hedland Magistrates Court. This work is complemented by regular prison visits with clients at Roebourne

Regional Prison, around 200 kilometres away. The team also provide grant of aid services and limited assistance advice services to clients in the region. They attend circuits in Nullagine, Newman and Jigalong, providing legal services to these remote communities. CLE and outreach are also an important part of the services provided in the area.

Karratha

The Karratha team provide regular duty lawyer services to the Karratha Magistrates Court and prison visits to Roebourne Regional Prison. They also represent clients on grants of aid. The Karratha office works closely with stakeholders in the region to service the legal needs of the community and provide additional non-legal services, such as CLE.

West Kimberley

The West Kimberley team provide duty lawyer services across family and criminal law, as well as grant of aid services for matters, including Removal of Life Disqualifications. They attend circuits two weeks a month to Derby, Looma, Dampier Peninsular, Bidyadanga, and Fitzroy Crossing. They provide a prison visiting service to the West Kimberley and Broome Regional Prisons. In addition to delivering CLE, the team in the West Kimberley offices also provide Community Liaison and Education Officer (CLEO) services to the region.

East Kimberley

The East Kimberley team represent people throughout their Magistrates and District Court matters, under both grants of legal aid and duty lawyer services. They also represent clients in the Family Court and in protection and care proceedings in the Children's Court. In addition to legal services, the team includes a CLEO who works closely with the local community and assists the office lawyers to provide advice and representation. The team has been involved in the Aboriginal Justice Open Days, travelling up to 620 kilometres to reach some of the State's most remote Aboriginal communities.

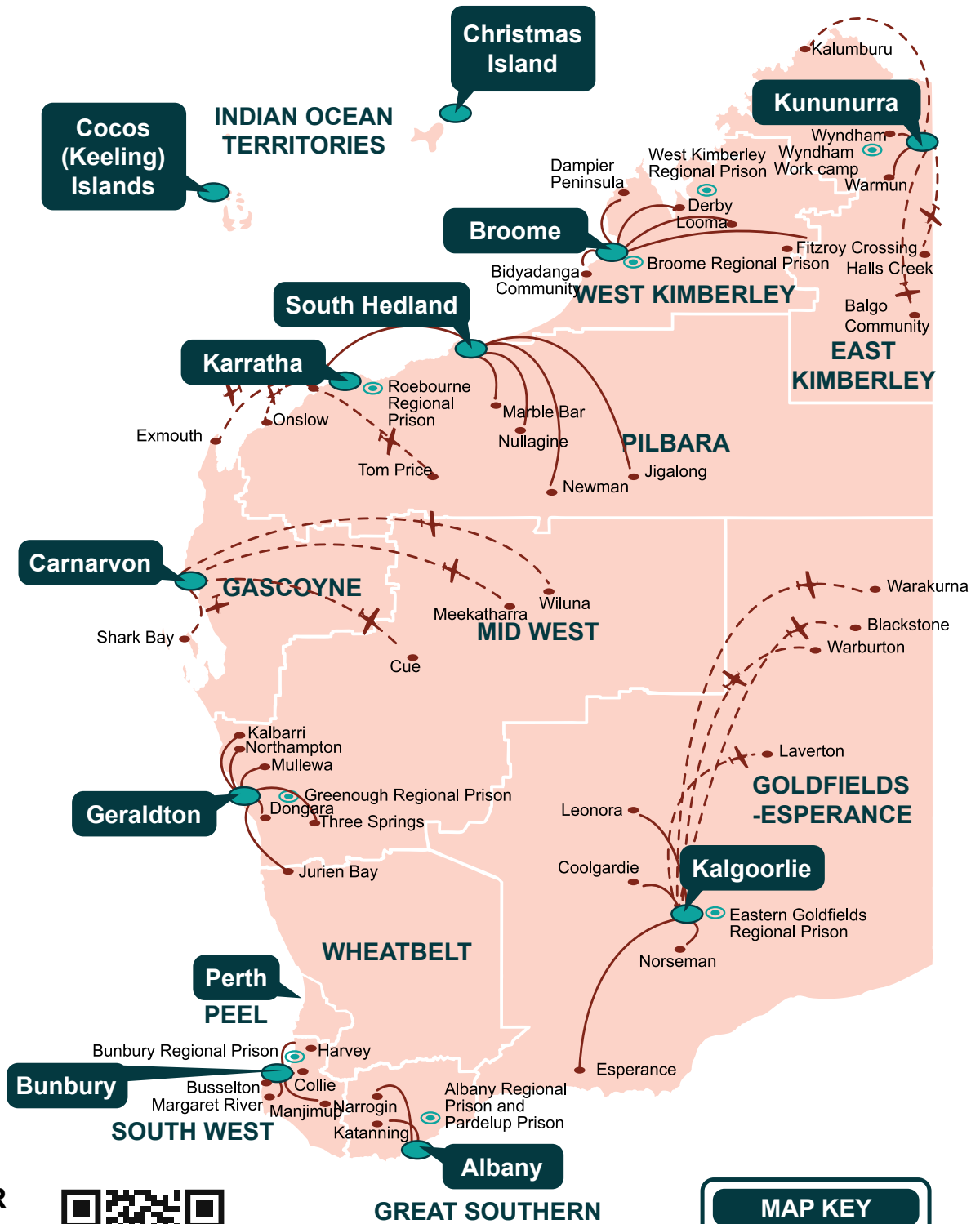
Indian Ocean Territories

We provide legal services to the Indian Ocean Territories (IOT), made up of Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands, about 2,650 kilometres northwest of Perth. Our office on Christmas Island is staffed by a local community member, with our lawyer visiting monthly, 11 months of the year. The IOT team provide CLE to the local schools, ensuring that the resources are appropriately tailored to the unique needs of the IOT communities.





Where we operate around WA



Scan QR code for interactive map



MAP KEY	
	Regional Office
	Circuit location
	Prison

Our Clients

4%

with grants whose main language spoken at home was not English *



37%

disclosed having a disability or mental illness



30%

identify as First Nations people



36%

live in a rural or remote location



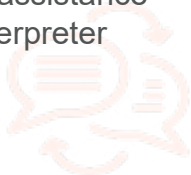
79%

family law clients who disclosed family violence



3%

needed assistance of an interpreter



23%

with grants who were in custody, detention or hospital



3% **23%**

over 65 years under 25 years

70,665

duty lawyer services

28,339

extensions of existing grants of aid

22,528

legal advice and minor assistance

13,109

new grants of aid

2,272

Elder Rights WA services

1,237

Bail Support Service services

2,306

Regional Relief Model services

1,194

Therapeutic Pilot Court in Children's Court services

1,069

NDIS Appeals services

338

Criminal Law Mentally Impaired Act (CLMI) Services

Our Services

* This was reported as 6.7% in 2023-24 using LAW Office when only Grants and Approved Extension data were used. That percentage was recalculated in CRM as 3.6% using extended data.

What drives us

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
Transparency

NDIS Early Advice Service

The NDIS Early Advice Service assists current Legal Aid WA clients to apply for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and to get the disability supports they need. Our clients are often dealing with multiple legal issues and are faced with many disadvantaging factors such as homelessness, in addition to living with an undiagnosed or unsupported disability.

Many of our clients have long-standing cognitive, intellectual or mental health impairments, often accompanied by neurodiverse conditions. Most of these clients would not have become involved in the justice system if their disability support needs were being met. Without access to NDIS supports, our clients face risks such as homelessness, further criminal charges, involvement with the Department of Communities, bail or parole refusal, or hospitalisation.

Our NDIS Early Advice Service collaborates with external stakeholders across Justice, Health, and Child Protection services to facilitate assessments and gather evidence to meet the NDIS legislative criteria for access and supports.

We work alongside in-house and private practitioners who are managing our clients' other legal matters; the Disability Legal WA (DLWA) team who provide case management and social support, and other Legal Aid WA services such as Disability Advocacy and Referral Diversion for Young People (DARDY) and the prison visiting service. Due to the complexity of our clients' legal, social and medical issues, it can take months of evidence gathering, advocating, and navigating NDIS procedures to get them access to the supports they need.



The goal of our service is to get our clients the disability supports they need to address the key underlying causes of their current legal issues, and to support them appropriately in the community to prevent future legal issues from arising. In doing so, the work we do achieves life-changing outcomes for our clients.

Many of our clients are given access for the first time to disability supports that not only enable them to live safely in the community, but also to build their capacity to work towards life goals related to areas such as employment, relationships, and education.

Our service is unique amongst the Legal Aid Commissions. In other Legal Aid Commissions, NDIS legal services are limited to clients who are at the stage of appealing a decision in the Administrative Review Tribunal.

We assist clients in the early (pre-Tribunal) stages to apply for NDIS access and supports, with the aim of achieving the outcomes they require and avoiding the need to commence Tribunal proceedings.

The NDIS Early Advice Service gives our clients access to the advice and expertise needed to navigate the evidence gathering and legislative processes involved in achieving life-changing outcomes.

In 2024-25, we assisted 81 clients, with a 95% success rate for NDIS access applications and 60% success rate of obtaining the full level of increased supports requested for clients who already have NDIS access



Harry's story

Harry is a 47-year-old man who was referred from custody after being represented under a grant of aid at sentencing.

Having spent most of his adult life in custody, he had an extensive criminal record. The reports obtained for sentencing identified that Harry had a suspected intellectual disability in addition to other long-standing diagnoses including Schizophrenia, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and Substance Use Disorder. He was released on parole to a residential drug rehabilitation facility and our team has been gathering historical medical evidence from a range of sources to demonstrate that he meets the NDIS access criteria.

We have organised and funded clinical assessments for the purposes of confirming his intellectual impairment diagnosis and assessing the impact of his impairments on his functional capacity.

With the support of the DLWA team, Harry has been assisted to access family law advice about establishing a relationship with his daughter he last saw 10 years ago. He has also been assisted to manage a parole breach matter and will receive advice in relation to Centrelink and housing.

Once our team has received all the medical evidence and assessment reports, we will draft submissions outlining how he meets each of the legislative criteria for NDIS access. As with many of our past clients, after navigating much of his adult life without any support, NDIS access for the first time will give him long term disability support in the community.

Mel's reflections

"I've had a long-standing interest in disability having worked as a speech pathologist prior to becoming a lawyer and then having a child with a disability.

When the NDIS rolled out in WA, I was fortunate enough to combine my skills and experience in managing Legal Aid WA's first dedicated NDIS Appeals Service. I carried this passion for assisting clients with disabilities and NDIS law and when DLWA was being created, the opportunity arose to provide an NDIS legal service focused on early advice and early resolution for our clients.

I love the team I work with and the work we do. Our clients are some of the most complex and vulnerable people I've ever come across in over 15 years of working at Legal Aid WA.

With the support of other services across Legal Aid WA and our relationships with external stakeholders, we're assisting clients who would have never otherwise had the opportunity to access NDIS supports due to the complexity and vulnerability of their situations.

It's immensely rewarding to achieve NDIS access and finally see them being supported in the community after working with them through months of evidence gathering, assessments, and NDIS processes.

It's a privilege to be a part of these pivotal moments in our clients' lives, seeing them set up with individualised funding to help them achieve life goals, and participate in the community in a positive and meaningful way."



#ourpeople

Melissa Evans
NDIS Early Advice Team Solicitor



“Being a duty lawyer is a difficult job, but it is easily the most rewarding role you can practise in.”

#ourpeople

Rachael Gemmell
Criminal Duty Lawyer

A day in the life of a **Criminal Duty Lawyer**

It's seven degrees on a chilly and sunny Wednesday morning and the waiting area outside the court rooms at Joondalup Magistrates Court is already full of clients, their supporters, and court staff. It's 8.30am.

Downstairs in the custody area is Darren who's been arrested overnight and faces a charge of burglary with intent. He waits to be led into a small interview room to meet our duty lawyer to discuss the charge and receive legal advice before he's called into court.

Our duty lawyer Rachael is upstairs in one of the small interview rooms, looking over the full court list preparing as much as she can for the variety of clients she will see during the day. It's a mixture of in person interviews, video-link interviews from Hakea prison, and in custody interviews. She's one of two Legal Aid WA duty lawyers at Joondalup Magistrates Court for the day.

Darren waits in custody for his turn as Rachael begins calling clients in for their interviews with her.

One after another, Rachael sits patiently and listens to each client's story. It's fast-paced work – first hearing the details of the charges, analysing the issues and working out how best to resolve them or refer them to someone else for more detailed assistance before a later court date. "It's like being a GP," Rachael quips.

By 10am, she's already advised clients on charges of assault occasioning bodily harm, breaches of FVROs, complex multiple charges of stealing, and a matter requiring a mental health assessment.

Now it's Darren's turn. Darren can't work out why he's been charged and becomes more and more animated as he wonders how he's ended up in custody. Rachael reads him the details of the charge and then realises she's previously acted for him in relation to a similar charge. They develop a plan to make a bail application and for the matter to be remanded to a later date while negotiations take place with police. Darren seems desperate yet hopeful that Rachael will help him avoid jail.

Back upstairs now, to phone interviews with clients in Hakea Prison. They're difficult conversations and, in some cases, end with clients who don't accept her advice and resort to verbal abuse. It's challenging but not uncommon.

It's then on to more in person interviews with clients seeking adjournments, for charges to be dropped, or for bail variations, and outside the waiting room is still full.

Rachael heads into court for appearances before the magistrate just before midday and waits for her cases to be called. It's an opportunity to go through her preparation, ensuring her clients will be afforded their best shot in court.

The lunch break is a chance to regroup, to leave the courthouse environment for a short while and recharge before the afternoon list. It's also an opportunity to compile notes for the afternoon court appearances and to liaise with her fellow duty lawyer.

At 2pm, it's back to the interview room, this time with Lisa, a client facing multiple breaches of FVROs and criminal damage charges. She has self-acknowledged mental health and drug challenges. She also has a baby in the care of the Department of Communities who she is trying to reconnect with. Rachael will attempt to get a community-based sentence for her, although she has explained that imprisonment is a likely outcome as Lisa is pleading guilty to all charges.

The rest of the afternoon is spent in court, waiting for clients to be called, some appearing via video-link from Hakea Prison, including those who've decided they'd prefer to self-represent. The magistrate takes the opportunity to remind them that the duty lawyers are there to help them and to help the court run efficiently and effectively.

By 3.30pm, it's Darren's turn to be brought up from the custody area into court. Rachael stands and begins her application for bail. It's a complex argument but she ultimately succeeds, and Darren is granted bail with strict conditions. He's avoided jail for now. As he's led from the court there's no eye contact with Rachael, but as she says later, "while it may seem like a thankless job, there's enormous satisfaction in knowing I've achieved a good outcome for my client."

Finally there's the last court appearance of the day, where Rachael successfully argues for Lisa's sentence to be a Community Based Order rather than imprisonment for her breaching of FVROs and criminal damage.

The order comes with strict conditions including requiring Lisa to undertake programs to address her drug use and mental health issues. If she's successful, she'll also hopefully be reunited with her baby.

It's now after 4pm, and Rachael has seen 14 individuals throughout the course of the day.

So, how does Rachael feel at the end of a busy duty lawyer shift?

"Nothing else compares to this. I love helping people and I love the problem solving.

"I leave work at the end of each day knowing that I am helping to give voice to the most disadvantaged in our community.

"It's extremely rewarding."

There was a 10% increase in criminal duty lawyer services provided in 2024-25

Q&A

What makes a good duty lawyer?

A good duty lawyer needs to be quick, efficient, have good problem solving and decision-making skills, and the confidence to argue effectively in court.

It's also important for a duty lawyer to be empathetic. Our job is to provide representation to some of the most vulnerable people in society.

How important is a duty lawyer service for the community?

The Duty Lawyer (DL) service is one of the most important services provided in the judicial system. Everyone deserves to understand the legal situation they may have found themselves in, but also to have someone help them put their arguments across to the Bench.

The DL service also assists the court, saving time and money. Duty lawyers can explain legal complexities to clients. They help the court to run quickly, matters to be finalised whether by pleas of guilty or by negotiations, and add an extra layer of protection to ensure there are no miscarriages of justice.

Why do you like your role?

I like the fast-paced nature of the role. I like being able to speak to a lot of different people each day, people that I might not otherwise ever interact with.

It's rewarding when you get a good outcome for a client, or when you can understand how the law works in a way that is favourable to your client. It's also satisfying when you can get something dismissed that is clearly not in the interests of justice.

I also like the team at Legal Aid WA; it's inspiring to work around so many people who enjoy helping others. This job also makes me extremely grateful for the things I have in life; it keeps me grounded and I try not to take my life for granted.

What are some of the biggest challenges in your job?

The volume of clients and matters we deal with make this job more difficult. There is very rarely an occasion now where a matter is a simple plea and move on. This makes it difficult in such a fast-paced environment and you need to be quick and think on your feet during those pleas.

You also have to be resilient; some of the cases we come across are harrowing, and it's also not uncommon for clients to be abusive to the duty lawyer.

Our team leaders prioritise our wellbeing, and it's important to debrief with colleagues. We make light of some dark situations, but we have to – if you didn't laugh, you would cry.

Celebrating 20 years of Family Court Services

Our Family Court Services celebrated 20 years of service in the past year. The service started in March 2005, providing specialised duty lawyer assistance for clients in the Family Court WA (FCWA).

From the beginning, the service has focused on helping people in situations of family breakdown to access the assistance they need. This ranges from people who might have just separated, thinking they might need to file something at the court, to those in urgent circumstances requiring advice, preparation of court documents, and representation in court for matters such as recovery orders and injunctions.

From two duty lawyers and a coordinator in 2005, the service has now expanded to include the Family Advocacy and Support Service (FASS) and comprises seven lawyers, three paralegals, two Anglicare social support workers, and in-house Child and Family Experts.

The integrated duty lawyer and social support service provides trauma-informed assistance and referrals to families affected by family violence or mental health issues when they have proceedings in the FCWA.

FASS lawyers also travel on FCWA regional circuits, providing services to clients throughout the State in partnership with local social support organisations in each region, and local legal services.



#ourpeople

Sarah Lawrence
Family Law Solicitor

Reflections of a duty lawyer in the **Family Court of Western Australia**

“I’ve worked as a duty lawyer within Legal Aid WA’s Family Court Services/Family Advocacy Support Services (FCS/FASS) team for three years. As duty lawyers, we generally assist families at the beginning of their family law dispute, whether that’s providing advice following a separation or representation at the start of a court dispute.

No two days are ever the same in the duty lawyer role and we’re always kept on our toes. Our service prioritises urgent matters, including where children are at an immediate risk. We specialise in bringing urgent applications to have children returned to their primary carers or to stop children being removed from Australia. This can involve providing advice, drafting applications and appearing in court, all in the space of an hour or two.

Our service is an integrated and collaborative duty lawyer and social worker service which combines a holistic and flexible wraparound service for those with a family law issue who are also impacted by family violence or mental distress.

Having our lawyers and support workers work collaboratively really makes the difference in creating a safe and less adversarial space for those seeking assistance.

Being able to work together and identify the barriers which may otherwise impact a person’s meaningful engagement with the family law system is at the heart of what FCS/FASS does. When we can help families to access supports to address their non-legal issues such as prioritising their safety, housing or counselling, it significantly helps with legal problems and provides better outcomes.

It’s a privilege to work in this space, and encouraging that families can turn to us, particularly in times of crisis. Often as a duty lawyer, you’re the first point of call for those who are trying to navigate what can feel like a very complicated system. It’s not easy walking into any court building. Those without representation can also feel more intimidated and worried about what might happen for themselves and their children.

Being able to settle some of that uncertainty at the outset can really change the trajectory of a dispute, whether it reduces the conflict or just sets a clearer path forward. We find that when we create these positive interactions from the beginning, it leads to more positive engagements and outcomes in the future; importantly, families feel they can keep showing up. To be able to set that tone with our clients is incredibly rewarding.”

**FASS provided 2,184
services and assisted 1,635
unique clients in 2024-25**

Working collaboratively - Virtual Office

Sally is a victim survivor of family violence living in the north of WA. She is on a pension as she has various health issues including complex PTSD, stemming from multiple traumatic experiences, including the domestic and family violence she endured during her marriage. Sally also has a physical disability that impacts significantly on her mobility.

After her ex-husband sold the family home without her knowledge, Sally called Legal Aid WA's Infoline for help and was referred to our Virtual Office service for advice. She was worried that he would spend all the money, and she would not receive her share of the proceeds from the sale of the home.

During her previous attempts to negotiate with her estranged husband, he had threatened to 'burn everything' and 'decimate' her if she attempted a property settlement, and Sally believed he might carry out those threats.

She applied for a grant of aid to help her obtain an injunction in the Family Court of WA to prevent him from disposing of the proceeds from the sale of the home. This application was initially refused due to the limited information provided.

At her Virtual Office appointment, our lawyer provided Sally with legal advice about the property matter and her next steps. This included seeking a reconsideration of the refusal of aid. Sally's Virtual Office lawyer provided our Lawyers Engagement Network (LEN) division with further detail from their appointment with Sally and advocated for an urgent reconsideration of the refusal decision.

The Virtual Office team also worked with staff in DLWA to further support her, especially in relation to her disabilities and its relevance to her application for aid. As a result of this wraparound service, Sally was granted legal aid on the same day as her Virtual Office appointment. The grant was assigned to a lawyer located in the same area as the client, which enabled her to personally engage with the lawyer.

Our Virtual Office team provided 1,709 services in 2024-25

“I believe that living with a disability and remotely should not be a bar or disadvantage to a client receiving legal assistance. I also believe in the importance of providing excellent legal advice and a wraparound service.

Through the collaboration between Virtual Office, our Lawyers Engagement Network and Disability Legal WA, we were able to provide legal advice and ongoing assistance for her matter in an appropriate and holistic manner.”

- Keith, Advice and Virtual Office Services





#ourpeople

Vinnie Ugle
Paralegal

Simplifying the complex

Disability Legal WA

Disability Legal WA was launched in 2023 following a steady increase in demand for services for people living with disability. In 2024-25, 37% of Legal Aid WA clients disclosed that they had a disability or mental health issue.

The service provides a single point of entry for any client with a disability wanting to access a range of Legal Aid WA services. DLWA helps streamline and expand the support that we provide with a dedicated case management team to oversee intake and case manage complex clients, making it easier for clients to access and navigate legal services.

In 2024-25, DLWA delivered 446 services specifically tailored to the diverse needs of people living with disability.

Vinnie's reflections

"I'm a Noongar man, and I've spent most of my life in Perth and the Wheatbelt region. I've been at Legal Aid WA since 2023, currently working as a paralegal.

A lot of the value of Disability Legal WA is having the time to spend with complex clients who have multiple legal and social issues. Most of our work involves triage, warm referrals, and ongoing social support to clients while we collaborate with other internal and external services for vulnerable clients.

I hope to be a patient and calming influence on clients while they're discussing their legal matters. Sometimes our clients have called multiple services prior to reaching DLWA. I like to make sure this is the last place a client has to call, and if we can't help, I like to connect clients with services I know are suitable.

I think being a person who lives with disability helps me to understand some of the barriers that clients with disabilities face when they're seeking assistance from services.

It's all about being patient, adaptable to the client's access needs, and understanding the client's capacity to engage in the process of resolving their legal matter."

Our Independent Children's Lawyer practice

An Independent Children's Lawyer (ICL) is generally appointed in Family Court cases that involve allegations of serious risks such as family violence, mental health, or drug and alcohol misuse or in cases that involve complex issues. An ICL does not act for either parent and is appointed to act in the best interests of the children. The ICL's role includes:

- gathering information to assist the court to make an informed decision about living arrangements for the children that are in their best interests,
- ensuring the children have an opportunity to express their views and wishes, and to ask any questions they may have about the court process or their care arrangements,
- acting as an intermediary between the parties to try to help them negotiate an agreement in relation to the care of their children, and
- forming an independent view, and informing the court of that view, as to the children's best interests based on the evidence before the court.

Legal Aid WA has 13 in-house Independent Children's Lawyers currently doing ICL work

141 ICL grants were assigned in-house in 2024-25



Case Study 1

An ICL was appointed on a matter where two children were adamant they did not want to spend time with one of their parents, after witnessing several horrific family violence incidents between their parents. The children were petrified of this parent and had difficulty when their name was used.

The parent who had committed the family violence was applying to spend time with the children. After affording the children the opportunity to express their views, and ensuring they were linked in with appropriate mental health supports, the matter was resolved in accordance with the children's views; namely that they have no contact with this parent.

Case Study 2

An ICL was appointed in a matter where one parent was seeking a change in residence for a child with complex needs. The matter was very high conflict, with both parents having filed several affidavits over a very short period.

The ICL worked with the parties to move away from the litigation process and organised for them to engage in a period of brief therapeutic work with our Child and Family Experts. This allowed the parents to focus on their communication and co-parenting skills outside of the court process.

The therapeutic work ultimately resulted in the change of residence application being withdrawn, and the parties engaging in constructive dialogue about how they could better support their child across their households.

They later agreed to attend a Family Dispute Resolution Conference to discuss long term arrangements for the child, rather than proceeding to a trial.

Case Study 3

The parents of two children had been embroiled in a very high conflict parenting matter where allegations of family violence, physical abuse of the children, and emotional abuse had been made.

Previously, the parents had agreed to final Court Orders which allowed for the children to spend substantial time with each of them.

Shortly after the matter finalised, there was an altercation at a handover of the child, and one parent applied to reopen proceedings. Given the allegations, the court appointed an ICL, and the ICL made the decision to meet with the children at a very early stage.

Both children spoke positively about their parents and expressed that they wanted to continue spending time with each of them as per the existing arrangements. After informing the parents of the children's views, the parenting applications were not pursued.

The children were able to focus on enjoying their relationship with both parents and their schooling, while also being linked in with appropriate counselling supports to help them navigate their feelings around their parents' separation and conflict.

A day in the life of an Independent Children's Lawyer

What does a day in the life of an ICL look like?

Each day is quite different. It might involve attending a hearing or conference at the court, or a Family Dispute Resolution Conference here at Legal Aid WA. It also could involve meeting with children.

Most of these meetings take place in the office in our child interview room, but we also travel to meet with children to try to reduce the impact on them, especially if it means missing less school.

We will also travel to regional areas so we can meet the children we are representing in person.

Generally, our day always involves some file work or inspecting documents at the court.

Every day is different, but you can almost guarantee our week will be a mix of the above.

Why did you want to be an ICL?

Dylan: I've always enjoyed engaging with children and giving them an opportunity to put forward their voice regarding matters that impact them.

I really enjoy meeting with the children as I think it gives you a real sense of what is impacting them, and helps you develop a plan for how you might help improve their lives.

Working as an Independent Children's Lawyer allows me to use my legal skills while also advocating for children's needs.

Caitlin: As a graduate solicitor I was lucky enough to work in our East Kimberley office where I assisted juvenile clients navigating the criminal justice system. Through this, I learned the importance of ensuring these children's circumstances and perspectives were truly understood by legal decision makers.

I saw firsthand how legal representation can shape outcomes and impact life trajectories, especially when care is taken to address safety concerns for children at home.

Being an ICL seemed like the perfect way I could expand on this experience, while pursuing my passion for family law.

Why is it important that Legal Aid WA has ICLs?

Dylan: In high-risk matters, the children's best interests can often become lost in the high conflict and allegation heavy litigation. An organised and well-informed ICL can be vital to ensuring a child's needs are the focus of the parents' (and court's) decision making.





Sometimes a little thing like sending parents a letter about meeting with their child, where their child has said they just want Mum and Dad to get along, can be powerful in bringing about a much more positive environment for the child.

Caitlin: An ICL can really help to change the trajectory of a parenting matter and shift the focus of the proceedings back to the children's best interests. Sadly, we're not seeing a decrease in high-risk matters, and issues such as family violence continue to impact children and families.

The provision of ICLs by Legal Aid WA ensures that these issues are addressed in a way that puts children's best interests at the forefront of decision making.

What are some of the challenges?

It's quite common for ICLs to be unpopular with one if not both parents. The role requires the ICL to adopt a position they consider in the child's best interests and advocate for that position to the court. This can often be at odds with the parents' express position (and sometimes with the child's express view).

Adopting a position, while maintaining neutrality and trying to facilitate an agreement between parties can be a difficult balancing act, as parties will often assume that you are on the other parent's side.

Given the high-risk matters that ICLs are appointed for, the allegations and content can also be confronting, particularly where it involves significant abuse and/or trauma to children.

What motivates you in your work?

Dylan: I think separation for anyone can be an extremely difficult time, and for children it can be particularly challenging to navigate. I'm motivated to ensure children are given an opportunity to have their voice heard by the people making decisions about them, while also ensuring the children themselves are aware of how such decisions are made.

Ensuring that the Family Court has a full picture of the risk issues surrounding children, can hopefully help ensure children are given the opportunity to develop in a safe and child-focused environment.

Domestic Violence Legal Unit

marks 30 year anniversary

Founded in 1995 with a team of two lawyers and a support worker, this unit - the first of its kind in WA - was established specifically to address the legal needs of women seeking a Restraining Order, while also providing support and referrals to suitable social support services. It was a real innovation of the time, especially considering that the *Restraining Orders Act* came into effect two years later in 1997.

View the 30 year anniversary video here



EXCERPT FROM THE 1995 MEDIA RELEASE

The Domestic Violence Legal Unit will assist women subject to domestic violence to have access to the justice system and to legal remedies designed to protect them from continued violence. It will aim to work closely with the police and women's refuges and other community services to assist in the development of an appropriate response by the justice system to violence against women.

Initially funded for a 12-month trial, the Domestic Violence Legal Unit (DVLU) provided essential assistance from the first day of service and has been responding to the needs of victims of family and domestic violence ever since. The team has grown considerably across the years and now comprises around 30 staff, including legal staff, social support workers, administration officers, and paralegals.

As State and Commonwealth laws around family and domestic violence have changed over the past 30 years, society has also evolved and our understanding of family and domestic violence continues to develop. The DVLU is responsive to the dynamic environment and has adapted over the past three decades. The Unit provides daily duty lawyer services for FVRO matters in the metropolitan area, shuttle conferencing in Perth, Joondalup, Armadale, Fremantle, and Bunbury, and a specialist team within the DVLU manages the Stronger Women program.

Stronger Women was established in 2020 to serve vulnerable women in regional Western Australia, 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. Our Stronger Women team provides legal services in the areas of family law, protection and care, and FVROs.

4.2 million Australians have experienced partner violence or abuse

The second component of the DVLU is where a client's non-legal needs are addressed. Through the provision of social support and referrals to partner agencies working in this space, clients are provided genuine holistic care, enabling them to address multiple issues at the same time and work towards resolutions, while being supported.

Australian Bureau of Statistics figures show that 4.2 million Australians, or about 21% of the population over the age of 15, have experienced partner violence or abuse.¹ For Legal Aid WA's Family Law Division, family and domestic violence is disclosed by 79% of clients, so the demand for our DVLU services remains strong. The Unit will continue to respond to the needs of clients, adapt, change, and grow. We will continue to innovate in the provision of legal and non-legal services in family and domestic violence matters, with plans already underway for improved collaborative information sharing with the network of service providers.



¹ ABS: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crime-and-justice/partner-violence/latest-release>

Child Protection Children's Services

Myra's story

Myra is a 25-year-old mother of one young child. She frequently travels between numerous regional towns spending time with family. English is not her first language.

Children's Court Protection Services (CCPS) initially met Myra on the day of her first child protection appearance in the Perth Children's Court. The Department of Communities (Communities) had taken her young daughter into care, seeking that she remain in care for two years.

Myra is a strong young woman with the support of her family. She had experienced family violence in her most recent relationship and had used alcohol to cope with the violence and having her child removed from her care. Communities decided to take her daughter into their care to protect her from the harm they believed she was exposed to because of the family and domestic violence being perpetrated against Myra.

Our duty lawyer provided legal advice to ensure Myra understood what was going on, and our dedicated Dandjoo Bidi-Ak social support worker also linked in with her straight away. Both staff members sat with her to help her understand why Communities had intervened, what Communities was asking the court to do and why, and the general court process.

Myra appeared before the magistrate in court and the court proceedings were adjourned, but our assistance didn't stop there. CCPS called her soon after and talked to her about FVROs. She was linked in with Legal Aid WA's Domestic Violence Legal Unit so that she had the support and assistance she needed to obtain an Interim Restraining Order.

Myra would often attend the Perth Children's Court to see the CCPS duty lawyer and social support worker, and yarn when she wanted to vent about the child protection difficulties or when she had concerns.

The CCPS social support worker supported her with child protection meetings outside of the court process, as well as at her court appearances where she was also represented by the duty lawyer.

Through the process, Myra's hope was to be able to return to her remote community, and to her matriarchal support who was a very respected Elder in their community. She didn't want to return home without her daughter.



The loss of another family member in another regional and remote town meant that she needed to travel away for several weeks for Sorry Business. After a lot of safety planning, Communities agreed her daughter could attend the family funeral and regional town where Sorry Business was occurring.

She had to keep her daughter and herself safe and remain engaged with the social support worker and duty lawyer throughout the time she was away. An opportunity later arose for an interstate trip for Myra and her daughter and after many phone calls, the interstate trip was approved. They travelled together and continued to strengthen their family situation.

Within a short time, Communities withdrew its protection and care application and removed themselves from the lives of Myra and her daughter.

79% of our family law clients disclosed experiencing family and domestic violence

Our role in Law Reform

Legal Aid WA has actively contributed to law reform in the past year, with the aim of improving the legal system and making it more accessible. We have:

- through National Legal Aid (NLA), been involved in submissions responding to amendments to the NDIS Act, the transitional rules, and the development of Practice Directions for the new Administrative Review Tribunal (ART),
- participated in consultations regarding several key ART Practice Directions, including those concerning common procedures, migration and character decisions, expert evidence, Freedom of Information (FOI), appeals panels, and the role of litigation guardians,
- provided written feedback to DoJ's Principal Family Violence Consultant on proposed reforms in the Children's Court relating to Restraining Orders, drawing on Legal Aid WA's 2023 submissions,
- made a submission in relation to draft proposals relating to the Australian Law Reform Commission's Justice Responses to Sexual Violence Inquiry,
- through our Disability Action Plan Committee, prepared a submission on the review of the *School Education Act 1999* with a focus on ensuring accessible education for children with disability,
- met with the Office of the Commissioner for Victims of Crime to support the statutory review of section 300 of the Criminal Code which addresses persistent family violence, and continued to engage with the Commissioner's office following the meeting to provide additional feedback,
- participated in a focus group led by the Law Reform Commission of Western Australia as part of its review of the *Guardianship and Administration Act 1990*. We then made a detailed written submission to the Commission with input from a range of staff including First Nations staff and staff with a disability,
- contributed to the review of restraining order legislation and participated in stakeholder and reference groups for the development of the Capability Framework and the establishment of the Workforce Entity,
- consulted on the proposed development of a coercive control offence and were part of discussions with the Department of Communities regarding Legal Practitioner Training. Legal Aid WA played a key role in securing our involvement in the development and implementation of the training by demonstrating our expertise,
- participated in the stakeholder group for the Family Violence Central Information Point, a data-sharing project under the broader Family Violence Systems Reform Plan,

- taken part in consultations on the development of an Aboriginal Risk Assessment Tool and engaged in a research project examining Aboriginal women's use of violence, contributing through practitioner workshops,
- been invited to a series of strategic meetings with the WA Police Commissioner and other service providers to provide input into the development of WA Police's family violence policy response,
- had an ongoing role in the stakeholder group overseeing the Dandjoo Bidi-Ak program and provided key input into its evaluation and future direction, and
- at a national level, contributed to the Commonwealth Parliament's Inquiry into Family Violence Orders and participated in the National Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Working Group, a subcommittee of the Standing Council of Attorneys-General.

Legal Aid WA actively contributed to law reform in the past year



Criminal Law Mental Impairment matters

Legal Aid WA has long specialised in providing representation for accused people where there are concerns about their fitness to stand trial or there is a potential defence of unsoundness of mind.

In 2024-25, Legal Aid WA assisted a total of 142 clients under the new Mentally Impaired Accused Program. Of these, 11 were from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) backgrounds, 13 were elderly, 25 were female, 13 were under the age of 25, eight resided in rural or remote areas, 45 identified as First Nations, six were experiencing homelessness, and 10 required interpreter services.

We also provide ongoing advocacy to these clients where they are made subject to a Custody Order. At the time of transition to the new *Criminal Law (Mental Impairment) Act 2023*, which came into effect on 1 September 2024, Legal Aid WA represented 70% of individuals on Custody Orders, equating to 40 clients. Under the new legislation, many of these clients have now seen their cases returned to court for a limiting term of detention to be applied to their Custody Order, designed to reflect the sentence they would have received if they had been convicted.

Where they have already been detained for longer than the limiting term set by the court, some clients have gone on to be released. The majority have been subject to extended order applications by the State and in the meantime remain detained under an Interim Custody Order. We are acting for these clients in the extended order proceedings in the Supreme Court, where a judge must determine whether they should be managed on an extended Custody Order or Community Supervision Order, or unconditional release is the most appropriate outcome.

We are also continuing to advocate for clients on Custody Orders and extended orders at their regular reviews by the Mental Impairment Review Tribunal, which replaces the previous Mentally Impaired Accused Review Board, to ensure they are accessing treatments and supports and progressing towards the goal of eventual release.

Legal Aid WA provided 338 Criminal Law and Mental Impairment (CLMI) services in 2024-25

Working in the Criminal Law Mental Impairment space

A perspective

“Legal Aid WA has always prioritised assisting people with mental impairment and mental illness. It is an essential part of our core business and funding criteria.

Grants of aid are available for accused people where there are concerns about their fitness to stand trial or there is a potential defence of unsoundness of mind under s27 of the Criminal Code. Serious consequences can apply where a person is found to be unfit or acquitted on a s27 defence, as the court may make an order for their ongoing detention called a Custody Order.

Prior to 1 September 2024, all mentally impaired accused subject to a Custody Order were detained indefinitely with no end date. They were slowly transitioned back to living in the community, but it was not uncommon for Custody Orders to remain in place far longer than any sentence that would have been given for the alleged offences.

A significant number of these clients have experienced trauma, have a First Nations or CaLD background, and have drug and alcohol issues on top of their mental illness and/or cognitive impairment.

At Legal Aid WA, we provide ongoing representation for people on Custody Orders before the Mentally Impaired Accused Board to assist them in making progress with leaves of absence and treatment plans with the goal of eventual release.

I became involved many years ago after I represented a long term Legal Aid WA client who had a cognitive impairment. He was unfit to stand trial, and as charges became more serious and he became an adult he was ultimately placed on a Custody Order.

I wanted to ensure the then Mentally Impaired Accused Review Board had all the information that had been gathered about the client's background, impairment, and community supports. At the time of imposing the Custody Order, the judge had noted that it was hoped he would be released as soon as lawfully and practicably possible.

What followed was a slow process of working through the practical Custody Order system and figuring out how best to assist clients in this space. It became clear that it is a lengthy, gradual progression with many obstacles.

As the years went on, we started to receive referrals from other government and non-government agencies, and ultimately the Board themselves, to assist more clients. Legal Aid WA now represents approximately 70% of people on Custody Orders.



A large part of our role is to work cooperatively with government and non-government organisations to ensure these clients have access to appropriate treatment and services to allow them to live safely and appropriately in the community.

This can take many years and includes working with the State and Community Forensic Mental Health, the National Disability Insurance Agency, and organisations and therapies funded under the scheme, Department of Communities, Corrective Services, Office of the Public Advocate, the Public Trustee, and the Mental Health Advocacy Service.

On 1 September 2024, the new *Criminal Law (Mental Impairment) Act 2023* commenced. It followed years of discussion and concern about the indefinite detention of vulnerable accused, criticism from the United Nations, and a 2016 Department of Attorney General Report following multi-agency consultation.

Introducing the Bill to Parliament, the Attorney General specifically mentioned the case of Marlon Noble, who was found unfit to stand trial on his charges and then spent 10 years in prison under a Custody Order only for the charges to later be dropped. He stated that the new legislation was aimed at “reforming the state’s unfair and outdated mental impairment framework”. It included the replacement of the Board with the Mental Impairment Review Tribunal.

#ourpeople

Kerry Gorski
Legal Aid WA Solicitor

Following the introduction of the legislation, all people on a Custody Order - now called supervised persons - were no longer to be held indefinitely. A time limit is now set for all new Custody Orders. For those already on orders, their matters have been returned to court and a time limit set.

Legal Aid WA has assisted more than 25 supervised persons to have a time limit set. The proceedings were stressful for clients and victims but were fortunately handled with care and sensitivity.

The legislation was introduced to ensure that accused people with a mental impairment in the justice system should not be subject to outcomes under the Act that restrict their freedom more severely than if they had been convicted of the offence. Despite that, it does include the ability to apply to extend Custody Orders or replace them with Community Supervision Orders even where the time limit has long since expired.

As at 31 August 2024, there were 54 people subject to a Custody Order. Many of the specialist and practical supports they require remain under pressure and that will be a significant factor in the lives of these vulnerable clients.

While my original client is now, after 15 years, happily a “free man”, many others are commencing a new round of court proceedings in the Supreme Court to determine whether they will be subject to an extended Custody or Supervision Order.”



Legal Aid WA now represents approximately 70% of people on Custody Orders

Tailored Community Legal Education for Cocos (Keeling) Islands

While many of us have grown up with the internet or have a distant memory of when it first launched, mobile internet has only become a reality within the past five years for people living on Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

Cocos (Keeling) Islands is a unique and isolated community, with only two inhabited islands – West Island and Home Island. It has a small population of approximately 590 residents, with Home Island making up 75% of the total population. Home Island in particular has a very close-knit cultural community. The residents are largely of Malay and Indonesian heritage, speak Cocos-Malay, and are Muslim.

In 2024-25, our Regions and Special Projects Division partnered with our Community Legal Education and Training team to develop a culturally appropriate and tailored CLE program in response to emerging community needs.

We identified child protection issues related to the rapid and increased access to the digital environment. The primary focus of the program was to build the community's knowledge and understanding of Australian laws, rights and responsibilities, unlawful conduct, online safety, and protective behaviours.

The current target audience for the program is the local students in Years 3 to 10. The program includes educational resources and tools such as interactive learning modules, two short animations, and a healthy relationships board game. The interactive learning modules have a consistent structure that use the 'rule of threes' to reinforce key messages which are introduced in the course content, revised in the key messages, and reinforced in the quiz.

There are three levels in development for the program to align with the developmental stages and ages of the students. The animations is a whole-of-community resource focused on key messages related to 'rules, rights and responsibilities' and 'staying safe online'.

The healthy relationships board game incorporates principles of play-based learning to create an adaptable and user-led educational tool. The game's design takes inspiration from Snakes and Ladders and Monopoly, and has been printed on a large canvas mat to allow children to physically engage with the resource, much like the game Twister.

The board game has tiles on critical talking points such as consent, unhealthy behaviours, coercive control, trusted adults, planning for safety and speaking up, that create opportunities for discussion when a player lands on the tile. The difficulty level of the question cards and speaking points align with the three different program levels.

Throughout the program we use egg illustrations. The eggs are an existing CLE resource co-developed for children and young people with cognitive impairments or who are neurodivergent, and have been used in other successful interactive learning modules such as the In-Roads Court. They are a simple and effective communication tool that are culturally safe and diverse, bringing a light-hearted sense of humour to otherwise serious topics.

Setting up for success

The success of the program in the Cocos (Keeling) Islands has relied on the involvement of key local stakeholders. To ensure the program and its corresponding educational tools are accessible and culturally appropriate, there has been a strong focus on co-development and including local students, teachers, and community leaders in the design of the program resources.

Consultations and focus testing were conducted with the local police, school staff and students, community resource centre, community health worker, and religious leader as well as other key stakeholders from Perth, including the Office of Multicultural Interests.

The resources have been well received by the local community as the program has maintained a very clear and local feel and are culturally appropriate and adaptable to a wide range of ages and audiences.



**“These are
important things for
the community to
know more about.”**

- Haji Ahdam
Imam, religious leader of the Cocos Malay
community



Health Justice Partnerships

The Health Justice Partnership (HJP) program is a collaboration between Legal Aid WA and East Metropolitan Health Service, North Metropolitan Health Service, South Metropolitan Health Service, and Child and Adolescent Health Service.

This collaboration has our lawyers based at Royal Perth Hospital, Bentley Health Service, Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, Fiona Stanley Hospital, Perth Children's Hospital, and Armadale Hospital, delivering legal services to vulnerable patients in each of these hospitals.

**583 services
were provided
to patients in
2024-25**

A day in the life of a Health Justice Partnership lawyer

A day in the life of an HJP solicitor is dynamic, collaborative, and purpose driven, balancing legal expertise with community engagement and social impact.

An HJP lawyer must be:

- trauma-informed, due to the vulnerability of our clients who have often found themselves in extreme situations,
- flexible, as we must fit in with our clients' medical treatment, which can change without notice,
- resilient, as we face our clients' trauma, physical injuries, and/or mental illness,
- willing to engage with hospital stakeholders, so that we work as a collaborative team, and
- passionate about social justice and public health, to address our clients' intersecting needs.

Our day starts with setting up in a dedicated HJP office in the partnered hospital. Each of our hospital-based offices were selected to provide us with a convenient space to conduct our work and hold our in person and/or phone appointments.

However, we also need to be prepared to go to our clients who often have special medical requirements and are unable to attend the HJP office. This means that we need to be familiar with the layout of the hospital and find where the various wards are located.

Referrals are received in advance from hospital social workers who identify vulnerable and disadvantaged patients who have intersecting health and legal problems. Appointments provide an opportunity to receive comprehensive instructions from our clients to identify their legal matters.

It is at this point where we provide legal advice if the matter is within our area of expertise, undertake legal tasks to assist the client, and facilitate referrals to other internal Legal Aid WA or external services to ensure the client receives the legal assistance they require.

Legal Aid WA's Health Justice Partnership program won the Institute of Public Administration Australia WA Silver Award (2024) for "Best Practice in Collaboration Across Government Agencies" for projects under \$10 million.

IPAA Award



Health Justice Partnerships

Emily's story

Emily was referred to the HJP team by a social worker at a partnered hospital for legal advice regarding her relationship breakdown. She was experiencing family and domestic violence perpetrated by her husband which included physical violence, coercive control, and financial abuse.

Her husband had moved out of the family home, however he continued to threaten Emily and their children's safety and wellbeing.

He was also the sole earner and was refusing to pay child support or contribute to mortgage repayments and household bills, which left Emily with default notices from her utility suppliers.

The HJP solicitor met with Emily at her bedside on the ward. During the appointment she was visibly distressed given her personal circumstances, health problems, and intersecting legal needs.

The solicitor confirmed Emily's instructions on each of the matters in the referral. She was referred to Legal Aid WA's DVLU which assisted her to make an application for an FVRO.

Emily's HJP lawyer also provided her information about how to contact the relevant government agency to get child support, and gave her legal advice about making a mortgage hardship application to her bank.

Emily was also referred to our Virtual Office team for additional legal advice about separation and child support, and put in contact with a free financial counselling service to assist her to communicate with her bank and other creditors.

The HJP advice appointment ensured Emily received the information she needed to make informed decisions about her next steps and helped her to identify what action needed to be taken to address her legal needs.



Guardianship and Administration Overview

Legal Aid WA provides legal advice and assistance to people who are the subject of applications for guardianship and administration orders, as well as to individuals seeking review of guardianship and administration orders.

We also provide legal advice and assistance for proceedings concerning enduring powers of attorney and enduring powers of guardianship. This includes advising on the nature of applications and review proceedings, as well as requesting and reviewing the evidence before the State Administrative Tribunal on behalf of clients.

In some cases, our lawyers will represent clients with a grant of aid in the State Administrative Tribunal. Our Elder Rights WA lawyers provide similar assistance to clients over the age of 65.

In 2024-25, we provided 407 guardianship and administration services. We were also involved in extensive consultation regarding proposed amendments to the *Guardianship and Administration Act 1990 (WA)*, including making formal submissions to the Law Reform Commission of Western Australia.



We provided 407 guardianship and administration services in 2024-25



Sandy's story

Sandy lives with disability and approached Legal Aid WA with his advocate seeking advice regarding an application to the State Administrative Tribunal for the appointment of a guardian and administrator for him.

The application had been filed with the Tribunal out of concern for Sandy's welfare as he was planning to relocate interstate, but Sandy was opposed to guardianship orders being made as they would restrict his freedom to relocate and his ability to choose where and with whom he lived.

Our lawyer explored Sandy's wishes with him and his advocate and helped them to prepare submissions for the Tribunal, explaining the measures that would be taken to ensure appropriate supports were in place to facilitate his move.

We provided advice and support to Sandy and his advocate to understand what the Tribunal would consider when determining if orders should be made, to better equip them to advocate for his wishes.

Ultimately, the Tribunal decided Sandy needed a guardian, and it appointed the Public Advocate as his guardian.

However, Sandy and his advocate had been able to satisfy the Public Advocate that his plans to relocate were appropriate, largely due to the planning they had undertaken following Legal Aid WA's advice.

This planning enabled the Public Advocate to support him to relocate interstate as he wished, and ensured Sandy was supported appropriately throughout the process.

Innovating in the Regions

Our Regional Relief Model

The Regional Relief Team is made up of lawyers and administration staff who provide short term relief to regional offices. The regional relief is delivered on site or remotely, providing continuity of service for clients in regional areas.

Our clients benefit from having the assistance of staff who are familiar with regional offices, courts, and the challenges of providing services in regional areas. Our regional offices benefit from having a centralised team they can call on for support and assistance.

The team provided 2,306 legal services to all of our regional offices in 2024-25, both in person and remotely. Additionally, the team's administration officers provided telephone support to regional offices to assist in managing client enquiries and directing clients' queries.



Regional Relief

Charlie's story

Henry is a restricted practitioner working in our Perth based Regional Relief Team. Since joining the team, Henry has provided relief in South Hedland, Karratha, Carnarvon, Geraldton, and Bunbury. When Henry is not working FIFO, you'll find him helping our duty lawyers in Perth.

In one of his stints as duty lawyer, he came across Charlie, an Aboriginal man charged with assaulting a public officer in prescribed circumstances, after biting a police officer who had detained him under the *Mental Health Act 2014 (WA)*. At the time of the offence, Charlie was highly intoxicated and bleeding after self-harming.

While the police were trying to provide medical assistance, Charlie repeatedly told them to 'let me bleed out', before biting one of them. Prescribed circumstances meant that if convicted, he would be subject to a mandatory minimum penalty of six months imprisonment which could not be suspended. Legal Aid WA had previously tried unsuccessfully to negotiate with prosecutions to remove the prescribed circumstances.

When Henry saw Charlie, he was ready to plead guilty that day, knowing that he was going to prison. He had apologised to the victim immediately after the incident and had expressed genuine remorse for the offence. He had a very limited criminal record, having never been to jail, and good family supports, with his partner and young daughter attending court with him.

After some discussions with the magistrate (including possible defence based on whether the police had sufficient grounds to apprehend the client under the *Mental Health Act*), Henry was able to adjourn the matter for further negotiations with police.

Henry's fresh negotiations, based on public interest considerations, the possibility of a defence, and the hope that the matter could be appropriately resolved by leaving sentencing at the discretion of the magistrate, resulted in the prosecution removing the prescribed circumstances from the offence. Charlie pleaded guilty to the amended charge and was sentenced to six months and 15 days imprisonment, which was suspended for the same period.



Henry's reflections

I'm a restricted practice solicitor in the Legal Aid WA Regional Relief Team.

Since joining the team, I've provided relief in the South Hedland, Kalgoorlie, Karratha, Carnarvon, Geraldton, and Bunbury Legal Aid WA offices, and appeared as duty lawyer in the Perth Magistrates and Children's Courts.

After graduating from the University of Western Australia in 2022 with a Juris Doctor degree, I worked as a paralegal at Youth Legal Service, a small community legal centre which provides representation and advice to young people aged 10 to 24 years old.

I was then admitted to practice in October 2023, and worked as a solicitor at Youth Legal Service, mainly appearing on criminal matters in the Perth Children's Court, before joining Legal Aid WA in July 2024.

Why do you like your role?

I get to work alongside my amazing colleagues in the Regional Relief Team and colleagues in the various regional offices who I can always rely on for help, advice, and encouragement.

The role has given me the opportunity to assist some incredibly vulnerable and marginalised people and help to facilitate better access to justice in regional and remote areas.

It's also given me the opportunity to travel across WA and go on some unforgettable adventures.

#ourpeople

Henry Taylor
Regional Relief Team Solicitor

Amongst other things, I've got to swim with turtles after court in Exmouth, see ancient rock art in Dampier, visit the Super Pit in Kalgoorlie, and go bushwalking in the Pilbara and the Wheatbelt.

What sets the Regional Relief Model apart?

The thing that sets the regional relief model apart is the opportunity to gain such a vast amount of experience across so many courts as a junior criminal lawyer.

Each regional court has different client demographics which has helped me become more adaptable as a duty lawyer.

The regional relief model has allowed me to meet and get to know a number of magistrates whilst travelling to various circuit courts, and given me the chance to get valuable feedback and encouragement from them.

The regional relief model has also given me a greater opportunity to provide discrete legal assistance to clients between their court appearances, such as legal advice appointments or sending negotiations, which has resulted in better outcomes for clients.

How would you describe what being a duty lawyer is like in one sentence?

One of the most stressful, chaotic and exhausting, yet rewarding things I've ever done.

36% of our clients live in rural or remote areas

Our regional relief model provided 2,306 services in 2024-25

Safeguarding integrity

Legal Aid WA is committed to operating with the highest level of integrity and accountability. By doing so, we can continue to build and maintain the trust of the community.

In 2024-25, we restructured our Professional Standards and Integrity Unit (PSIU) led by a new position, our Chief Integrity Officer, who reports directly to the CEO.

An accompanying Integrity Framework details the instruments, structures and cultural factors that guide how we practise, manage, and account for integrity.

The Chief Integrity Officer or delegate within PSIU manages all complaints across the agency. In October 2024, the Executive Assistant of PSIU took on the role of Complaints Coordinator.

PSIU manages all complaints with objectivity, fairness and confidentiality. Complaints are acknowledged and resolved in accordance with our Complaint Handling Policy and Procedures. All complaints received are recorded, and data is collated to report on trends, outcomes and areas of concern. Where the concerns are outside our scope for investigation, we refer complainants to the most appropriate service.

In the past year, PSIU has run staff training on areas including procedural fairness, spotting and responding to red flags, and misconduct prevention.

We also launched a new Supervisor Scheme for private practitioners to enable them to supervise junior lawyers on legal aid grants. The aim of the Scheme is to create more capacity for our senior panel lawyers to focus on complex work and ensure that junior lawyers get the opportunity to do court appearances under close supervision.



Kristen's reflections

"My current role as Chief Integrity Officer (CIO) involves managing the Professional Standards and Integrity Unit. This includes working closely with the CEO on internal integrity matters, and overseeing the private practitioner panels, audits, and investigations.

It isn't just about the financial oversight which is obviously important, but also ensuring clients receive quality services and representation, regardless of their socio-economic background.

We're accountable for our actions and what we do. Integrity isn't just a 'nice to have', it's the foundation that protects our clients, preserves limited public funding, and contributes to clients accessing justice.

After starting at Legal Aid WA 28 years ago, I've seen the agency mature and develop and I've also had many opportunities to forge my own path at Legal Aid WA.

From starting on a short term contract as a paralegal in the duty lawyer service, I took a position in the Perth office in the Assignments section, gaining valuable experience on the complexities of managing grants in criminal, family, and civil law.

From there, I became a team leader and in 2014 I was given an opportunity to work on the panels project. This is when I became closely involved in the panel and audit programs. The compliance lens was a balance, but one that received positive feedback from the judiciary and the profession. Since then, I've managed the panel and audit programs.

Ensuring clients have quality representation, whilst working with the profession, is such an important function at Legal Aid WA. Clients are now more likely to lodge any concerns they may have, and that feedback is important. It's important that they feel heard, and we can deal with any issues.

We have a list of dedicated private practitioners who represent Legal Aid WA clients. Their commitment and care contribute significantly to clients accessing justice.

Over the past 28 years, the fundamental reason for doing what we do hasn't changed. I remember my first manager who coordinated the duty lawyer and prison visiting service. She had a heart of gold and instilled in me a commitment to social justice that guides me every day."

#ourpeople

Kristen Ashton
Chief Integrity Officer

Attorney General's Community Service Law Awards

The Legal Aid Private Panel Member Award in the Attorney General's Community Service Law Awards is another way for Legal Aid WA to show our appreciation for the work performed by our panel and list members, on behalf of our clients.

In 2024, Jennifer Sollis was the recipient of the award. Jennifer is a barrister from Francis Burt Chambers and has represented many of our vulnerable criminal law clients, covering the most remote parts of Western Australia.

She began her career as a Legal Aid WA lawyer in the Pilbara before being called to the Bar, and has continued to take on Legal Aid WA clients in often complex matters across all jurisdictions and regions.

“I couldn't do this job without the ongoing support of friends and colleagues from within the Bar and wider legal profession, including those at Francis Burt Chambers, Legal Aid WA, and the ALS; and of course, my personal family and friends.

“But the sad truth is that it's not difficult to be motivated, and it's not difficult to be outraged, when confronted with the darker realities of our criminal justice system. The most vulnerable members of our community are suffering, and we cannot let this continue.”

- Jennifer Solliss

“We couldn’t represent the number of clients that we do without the panel and list members. Private lawyers contribute significantly. The skills and expertise that they provide is so important. The cases that panel practitioners represent clients on are often complex – not just legally, but socially.”

- Legal Aid WA Chief Integrity Officer, Kristen Ashton



Lawyers Engagement Network

Our Lawyers Engagement Network (LEN) Division administers grants of aid to private practitioners and our in-house practice. In 2024-25, we provided a total of 13,109 new grants of aid to support people experiencing disadvantage across Western Australia. This included 8,614 criminal law grants, 4,135 family law grants, and 360 civil law grants. That makes us the largest provider of legal representation services in Western Australia.

We call on the services of more than 470 private lawyers on our panels and lists, who together, delivered more than 80% of all grants of aid. In 2024-25, we transitioned to a new Client Relationship Management system for managing grants of aid, including a new Legal Aid WA Connect portal for private practitioners.

We also delivered a 2.5% increase to the standard hourly rate for private practitioners from \$167 to \$171 per hour and continue to advocate for additional funding to further lift the hourly rate and ensure that grants of aid are adequate to cover the amount of work required.

“Our assessing team knows that the service we provide is essential for our clients and for the proper functioning of our justice system. Our assessors make difficult decisions every day, grappling with budget constraints, urgency, and a limited supply of lawyers, but they are the engine room that keeps the wheels turning.”

Karen O’Sullivan, Lawyers Engagement Network Director





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, 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 550 staff employed by Legal Aid WA, who enable the delivery of legal assistance to Western Australians.

Our Board



Jane Crisford SC, Chair

(appointed July 2017)

Jane Crisford is the first female Chair of the Legal Aid Commission of Western Australia. The Governor of Western Australia appointed Jane as Chair in July 2017.

Under Jane's leadership, Legal Aid WA envisions a future where all Western Australians benefit from the protection of the law regardless of poverty or disadvantage. She has focused on increasing Legal Aid WA's core services of representation, advice and information, whilst also enabling the launch of innovative new services through advanced technologies. Jane has established a strategic direction for Legal Aid WA that centres on making Western Australia a fairer, safer, and more inclusive community. Jane has extensive experience in civil, criminal, and family law, and comes to the Commission as a highly respected practitioner and former member of the judiciary.

Jane studied law at UWA and was admitted to practice in 1978. She worked at the then Crown Law Department and later at Parker & Parker, before becoming an establishing partner at Key & Crisford, which was one of the first all-female legal partnerships in WA. In 1984 she joined the Aboriginal Legal Service of WA as the solicitor-in-charge of its West Kimberley Office and was later Solicitor In Charge (SIC) of the East Kimberley Office in Kununurra. She was counsel representing Aboriginal families in the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. In 1991 she joined Dwyer Durack where she became an accredited family law specialist and later a partner.

Jane joined the independent Bar in 1998 and was appointed senior counsel in 2002. She was appointed President of the Equal Opportunity Commission in 2003 and served as a Judge of District Court from 2004 until 2006 when she became a Judge of the Family Court of WA and Family Court of Australia until her retirement in 2016. She has previously held a number of voluntary positions, including as a member of the Chief Justice's Indigenous Committee, Woman Lawyers of WA, the Law Society of WA, Legal Practice Board, WA Bar Association, and the Australian Association of Women Judges.



Helen De Brito Member CEO of Legal Aid WA

(appointed May 2023)

Helen started her career at Legal Aid WA in 2005 and has practised predominantly in criminal law. In 2011 Helen was appointed Acting Solicitor in Charge of the Fremantle office, before going on to manage the Legal Practice Development Division and the Criminal Law Division. Helen was also responsible for establishing Legal Aid WA's Virtual Office service in 2019. Helen is strongly committed to improving service delivery and delivering positive outcomes for Legal Aid WA's clients. She is passionate about resilience and wellness in the legal profession, regional service delivery, and the development and mentoring of staff. Helen is a long-standing member of Legal Aid WA's Reconciliation Action Plan Committee, has managed the Graduate Program and the Country Lawyers' Program.

As the Director of the Criminal Law Division, Helen was instrumental in maintaining criminal law services during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, including establishing duty lawyer hubs. In 2022, the Institute of Public Administration Australia awarded the duty lawyer hubs as Best Practice in Innovation.

Helen has a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Laws from Murdoch University, achieving First Class Honours in Law.



Elsbeth Hensler, Member

(appointed May 2018 - nominated by
the Law Society of WA)

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

Elsbeth 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 Lawyer's 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.



Steve Toutountzis, Member

(appointed January 2018 - nominated by the State Attorney General)

Steve has been in the State Public Service for more than 30 years and a member of the Senior Executive Service for more than 12 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

(appointed February 2021 - nominated by the Law Society of WA)

Curtis (he/him) is a solicitor at Clairs Keeley Lawyers. He has worked predominantly in the area of 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 LGBTQIA+ 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

(appointed June 2023 - nominated by the Minister for Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation & Safety)

Kristin Berger 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

(appointed July 2023 - nominated by the State Attorney General)

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, Minister for Indigenous Health, and Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians. 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.

Note: Since April 2000, the Commonwealth Attorney-General has declined to nominate new members to the Commission.

Organisation Chart

Directorate	Business Services	Lawyers Engagement Network	Early Intervention Services
Professional Standards and Integrity Unit	Information Records Services Unit	Grant of Aid program	Infoline, Infochat and Chatbot
Private Practitioner and Panel Engagement	Finance	Family Violence Cross-Examination Scheme	Legal Yarn
Governance and Strategy	Human Resources	Family Law Property Mediation Pilot	Intake and Advice
Audit and Compliance	Information Management	Expensive Commonwealth Criminal Cases Fund	Virtual Office
Board Coordination	Reporting and Data	Commonwealth Community Safety Order Scheme	Family Law Advice
Ministerial Unit			NDIS Early Advice
Complaints			Community Legal Education and Training
Freedom of Information			Communications

Civil Law	Criminal Law	Family Law	Regions and Special Projects
Civil Justice Practice	Criminal Law Practice	Family Law Practice	Great Southern regional office
Mortgage Hardship Service	Duty Lawyer Service	ICL and Child Representatives	South West regional office
Elder Rights WA	Remand Advocacy Service	Family Court Services	Goldfields - Esperance regional office
Work and Development Permit Service	Bail Support Service	Family Advocacy and Support Services	Mid West and Gascoyne regional office
NDIS Appeals	Youth Law	Domestic Violence Legal Unit	Pilbara regional office
Workplace Respect Project	Appeals	Family Violence Shuttle Conferencing	West Kimberley regional office
Health Justice Partnerships	Disability Legal WA	Children's Court (Protection) Services	East Kimberley regional office
Youth Rights	DARDY	Dandjoo Bidi-Ak Duty Lawyer Service	Indian Ocean Territories regional office
Natural Disasters Legal Response	In-Roads	Dispute Resolution Conferences	Graduate Program
Federal Courts Self-Represented Litigants Service	Criminal Law Mentally Impaired Accused	Stronger Women	
	Duty Lawyer Mental Health Court		
	Child Sex Offender Practice		
	High Risk Sex Offenders		

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 2025, Legal Aid WA’s FTE was 484 and headcount was 564. 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	2024	2025
Full-time permanent	300	321
Full-time contract	130	149
Part-time measured on an FTE basis	80	87
On secondment	8	7
Total	518	564



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 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

We are dedicated to building stronger relationships, fostering respect, creating opportunities, and driving better outcomes for First Nations people. Legal Aid WA's 6th Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) ended at the end of 2024 and was an opportunity to reflect on some of the achievements as well as to identify opportunities for growth in the next RAP and reinforce our dedication to meaningful and lasting change.

We have:

- delivered CLE programs at Banksia Hill Detention Centre. Our team cover topics such as dealing with the police, common offences, bail, and getting a job. Attendance at these sessions can be used by those attending for the Supervised Release Review Board,
- launched Legal Aid WA's First Nations Cultural Learning Framework. The Framework is the foundation of our commitment to provide comprehensive training opportunities to all staff and service partners, fostering a deeper understanding of First Nations cultures and peoples,
- continued to use the 'nothing about us, without us' approach, by ensuring ongoing consultation with both our First Nations Staff Network and external First Nations stakeholders in all relevant decision-making processes to shape policies and services effectively,
- appointed a First Nations Commissioner to the Legal Aid WA Board in July 2023, the Hon Ken Wyatt AM, and
- had ongoing community engagement at Aboriginal Justice Open Days.

We provided more than 49,000 services to First Nations clients in 2024-25

Legal Yarn

Our dedicated First Nations legal information and referral call centre, Legal Yarn, celebrated its second year of operation in June 2025. Legal Yarn was created and led by our staff, 'by mob, for mob'. Their cultural knowledge, drive and dedication was the foundation of Legal Yarn and continues to carry the service forward today.

Legal Aid WA's vision is to provide equitable access to justice, by offering a service where First Nations clients can speak directly with First Nations staff. This culturally safe environment reduces barriers to accessing the legal and wraparound services that clients may need to address their concerns. In the past year, calls to Legal Yarn increased by 26%.



**There were 3,135 calls to
Legal Yarn in 2024-25, a
26% increase from
2023-24**



Scan to view our
Legal Yarn ad

Our Community Liaison and Education Officers

The Community Liaison and Education Officer (CLEO) is a multi-faceted position within Legal Aid WA providing targeted CLE to community members in regional areas with a particular focus on the Aboriginal community.

Our CLEOs provide CLE to a vast range of different community groups – schools, youth groups, men's and women's outreach services, their Elders, and share resources with other agencies and service providers.

An important part of the role is engaging with stakeholders, with the aim of increasing awareness of Legal Aid WA's services, collaborating with other agencies to identify service gaps and opportunities to provide CLE, while keeping a finger on the pulse of what is happening in the regions.

CLEOs frequently travel to remote locations to provide CLE, and to assist individuals seeking legal assistance. They are usually the first point of contact at community events for anyone enquiring about Legal Aid WA services.

An important aspect of the CLEO role is ensuring that our offices and services are culturally safe, which involves advising staff on protocols, acting as a support for First Nations clients, and being aware of what is happening in the community so that outreach or events are timed to be appropriate and suitable.

Dylan's reflections

"I'm a proud Gooniyandi, Gija and Bardi man and I've worked at Legal Aid WA for the past three years as a CLEO in our West Kimberley office. My role centred around providing legal education to community groups, liaising with community members and other services to identify any knowledge gaps, drafting lesson plans, and delivering workshops on specific topics, including our RU Legal? resources on cyberbullying, and your rights and the police.

I also delivered workshops on workplace rights, elder abuse, and licencing, in collaboration with other legal services including Circle Green, Kimberley Community Legal Services, and Aboriginal Family Legal Services.

I spent a lot of time representing Legal Aid WA in stakeholder meetings for grassroots community initiatives including being a part of the *16 Days in WA* campaign where we held events raising awareness and promoting change to stop domestic violence.

The other aspect of my role was regular outreach throughout the West Kimberley region either with a solicitor or with other services. I would often be a point of contact for anybody seeking any legal help in remote communities. I would provide information about our service and help clients access legal help.

There were many memorable moments during my time in the West Kimberley. Speaking about Legal Aid WA services in front of Elders who were part of the Stolen Generation at the annual Sorry Day event at the University of Notre Dame in Broome was significant. A lot of the Elders there knew my family or were family.

It was a privilege to both acknowledge their example of strength and resilience while representing Legal Aid WA at this event. We had other staff from the Broome office there too, so it was great to share that moment with them.

It was also memorable to be invited to the '*Change Em Ways Behavioural Change*' voluntary program. It was a privilege to speak at the workshops and see how far they've come. The staff at this service do amazing work supporting the participants to make positive changes for themselves and their families.

Finally, it was rewarding having informal group discussions with young people at a *Work Readiness Program* in Broome about your rights and the police, your rights at work, and any other legal topic that would come up.

I'm fortunate that I've been able to help people access legal services and see a lawyer. I've seen the value that people place in any education opportunities. Simply teaching community members about their rights and options under the law can be a powerful thing. Being able to contribute to discussions about how we can work together for better outcomes in forums in Broome was a great opportunity.

I'm now working in the Perth office, assisting and raising awareness at community events and services such as the Aboriginal Justice Open Days. I'm helping our CLE team to deliver talks in schools and at Banksia Hill, as well as following up with assisting any clients I've met during any outreach work.

At the end of every talk I always say that everyone has rights under the law, they have a right to feel safe and heard, they have a right to speak up if they're being treated unfairly and there's always an option, always someone to talk to when they need help. I hope that during my time as a CLEO people have felt empowered to seek legal help and reach out to services such as Legal Aid WA."



Disability Access and Inclusion

Legal Aid WA recognises that clients with disability may face barriers accessing justice solutions and may require extensive and intensive assistance to address their legal issues, which regularly intersect with often complex non-legal, socio-economic needs.

This is reflected in figures in the past financial year, which show that 37% of our clients identify as a person with disability. 47% of our services were delivered to people with disability, with many of these clients intersecting with other priority client groups such as First Nations people.

We remain committed to following our Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2022 – 2027 (DAIP), which outlines Legal Aid WA's priorities and key strategies to reduce barriers for clients with disability, in addition to supporting the ongoing recruitment and retention of staff with disability, including recognising the importance of lived experience perspectives.

Over the past 12 months, Legal Aid WA has continued to implement initiatives outlined under our DAIP.

We finalised our Workplace Adjustment Policy and Procedures (Policy and Procedures), which were developed in consultation with Legal Aid WA's Disability Action Plan Committee and the Australian Disability Network (ADN).

Legal Aid WA also purchased three online training modules from ADN to support our managers and supervisors with the ongoing implementation of the Policy and Procedures. The first module is called, 'Inclusive Recruitment', the second is 'Workplace Adjustments', and the third is 'Disability Confident Conversations'. This training is mandatory for senior leaders at Legal Aid WA, including managers and supervisors.

We also established the Dabakarn Room, a Noongar word meaning 'one step at a time', at our Perth office which provides a welcoming and accessible space for staff with disability to use for respite.

Legal Aid WA provided various training opportunities to staff working with people with disability to increase our capacity to support people with complex needs. This included tailored Disability Awareness Training which provided practical strategies to use in daily practice to support clients with disability.

To mark International Day of People with Disability, Legal Aid WA held a series of seminars open to staff, disability advocates, private practitioners, and community legal centres in December 2024. These seminars covered changes to guardianship and administration, and the new *Criminal Law (Mental Impairment) Act 2023 (WA)*.

Legal Aid WA's holistic services for people with disability, DARDY, DLWA, and NDIS Early Advice Service continue to experience high demand. We will continue to seek funding to further expand these services, which aim to reduce barriers for people

with disability engaging with Legal Aid WA and the legal system more broadly.

We also continued to improve the accessibility of our legal resources for the public, including our Information Sheets, Fact Sheets and Self-Help Kits, and are on track for all these resources to be in accessible forms.

Legal Aid WA remains committed to ensuring that our services are accessible to all Western Australians, and that we are promoting a diverse and inclusive workforce, including for staff with disability.

“It’s my role to drive change to reduce barriers to our services for clients with disability and support the recruitment and retention of staff with disability. With 37% of our clients identifying as a person with disability, equitable access to justice has never been more important.”

- Ursula Stevens, Disability Services Coordinator



Our Multicultural Commitment

Legal Aid WA recognises the cultural diversity of our staff and clients. More than 4% of our clients with grants of aid are from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) background, and 16% of our staff have disclosed they are from a CaLD background.

We provide 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.

We are developing a Multicultural Plan to formally commit to actions to further improve service delivery and employee engagement which seek to promote inclusivity.

In 2024-25, our DVLU presented at a two-day Western Australia Police Force Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) Family and Domestic Violence Conference. The aim of the conference was to better inform the WA CaLD community on family and domestic violence services available to them in WA, as well as what constitutes family and domestic violence.

Our team spoke about our services and referrals into Legal Aid WA, highlighting the work Legal Aid WA does and recognition of our services by WA Police, stakeholders, and the community.

In the past year, we have provided staff training opportunities with Oncall Language Services to provide an overview on the important services interpreters and translators provide, and how we can best work with interpreters and translators to secure positive outcomes for our clients.



**16% of Legal Aid WA
staff have disclosed
they are from a CaLD
background**

Providing professional development opportunities

To support professional development and organisational objectives, Legal Aid WA has continued to deliver specific programs of training in 2024-25.

Continuing Professional Development for Lawyers

We provided accredited continuing professional development for lawyers. Training was delivered online and in person via our learning management system, Train-N-Track. In 2024-25, more than 7,500 Continuing Professional Development (CPD) points were awarded to Western Australian Lawyers.

Summer Series

Our annual CPD conference was held in February 2025 across three days with each day covering various topics related to a specific area of law: family, criminal, and civil.

The family law sessions included key family law issues, recent legislative reforms to the *Family Law Act*, aimed to enhance the court's response to family violence, the new pathway through the Family Court of WA for children under the age of 18 wanting to change gender, and learning about cultural nuances that can empower Aboriginal clients.

The criminal law sessions included the Uniform Evidence Legislation and its practical impact on criminal law in Western Australia, family violence offences and sentencing, representing young clients in the justice system who may be affected by mental impairment, managing risk as a criminal lawyer, and ethical dilemmas.

The civil law sessions included the legislative and practical changes to the new Administrative Review Tribunal, Freedom of Information laws and recent developments to Privacy Laws at State and Federal level, youth justice and the nexus with human rights, Artificial Intelligence, and the future of legal practice and ethical issues.

More than 700 people from both metropolitan and regional areas attended across the three days, including lawyers from Legal Aid WA, the community legal sector and private practice, as well as paralegal and administrative staff.

Criminal Law Intensive

The Criminal Law Intensive is a week-long CPD series aimed at entry level and junior practitioners seeking an introduction to criminal law. In 2024-25, 69 practitioners, both internal and external, attended the Intensive which was delivered in person and online.

Sessions were delivered by Legal Aid WA lawyers on topics including criminal procedure theory, interviewing and advising skills, pleas in mitigation, bail applications, and therapeutic courts.

The Intensive also included practical activities and tips from the Bench.

Family Law Intensive

The Family Law Intensive is a week-long CPD series that is aimed at entry level and junior practitioners. In 2024-25, two separate Family Law Intensive series were delivered, the first in August 2024 and the second in May 2025. There was a combined total of 180 attendees comprised of both in-house and external practitioners, and paralegal and administrative staff.

Sessions were delivered by Legal Aid WA lawyers on topics, focused on advising and representing clients in family law, family violence, and protection and care matters.

Internal training opportunities

In addition to our flagship CPD programs, internal training opportunities were also provided to staff on various legal and administrative topics. Invitations were extended to community legal sector partners and panel practitioners dependent on the training topic.

In 2024-25, Legal Aid WA delivered in person civil law training, in person and online criminal law training, in person and online family law training, and in person and online general legal training.

In addition, we also provided the following internal training opportunities to staff:

- Duty Lawyer Training,
- Extraordinary Driver's Licence Paralegal Workshop,
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness and Cultural Competency training,
- Cultural Competency training for working with people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds developed by Diverse WA, and
- Gatekeeper Suicide Prevention training.

National Independent Children's Lawyer training

Legal Aid WA runs the national accreditation training program in WA for practitioners wanting to practise as an ICL and Child Representative. In 2024-25, 10 practitioners (five in-house, five private) completed the National ICL training.

Legal Aid WA also hosted the National ICL Conference in October 2024, which was attended by more than 140 ICLs from across the nation both in-house and private practitioners. The program included a range of prominent speakers and featured a panel session with judges from the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia and Family Court of WA.



In 2024-25, 7,653 CPD points were awarded to Western Australian lawyers



Staff Wellbeing

In 2024-25, Legal Aid WA continued to prioritise wellbeing through a range of initiatives. Stress Down Day, RU OK? Day, and Mental Health Week enabled staff to focus on strategies to support and promote their mental health, while providing Covid and 'flu vaccinations and in-house heart health checks helped support physical health.

Our Staff Health Safety and Wellbeing Recognition Cards and quarterly awards acknowledge and highlight the vital work staff do and their commitment to provide the highest service. The Check-In Guide continues to facilitate conversations with colleagues around their mental health and wellbeing while also enabling staff to check-in with themselves.

External and in-house training throughout the year further supported staff, giving our teams opportunities to learn and engage in topics including vicarious trauma, de-escalation techniques, Gatekeeper Suicide Prevention, resilience, self-care, safe professional boundaries, and financial wellbeing.

New Infoline staff, graduates, and paralegals have continued to undertake training as part of their induction to ensure they have a good understanding of mental health and resilience and are aware of some practical strategies to support their wellbeing. This training also covers supports that are available including the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), Wellness Mentors, and Mental Health First Aid Providers.

Our EAP continues with Legal Aid WA staff offered access to onsite, off-site and online support. The Manager Assistance Program complements our EAP, offering managers and supervisors additional supports to help facilitate their team's wellbeing.

Check-In Guide

Legal Aid WA's Check-In Guide was selected as a finalist for the Work Health and Safety Excellence Awards 2024, in the category of 'Best intervention to address a psychosocial hazard in the workplace'.

We published the Check-In Guide in late 2023 to support teams to build psychological safety, encourage people to bring their full selves to work, to have follow up conversations with staff, and to identify and support wellbeing needs.

The Guide was developed as a tool to improve staff wellbeing by increasing connection and support within the workplace and to reduce the psychological risks that can contribute to vicarious trauma and burn-out.

In a day, we may often be on autopilot moving between tasks and responsibilities. The check-in is an opportunity to connect to and understand our own feelings and needs. When safely sharing feelings with our peers through the question asked, we are also able to connect with others and create a shared understanding of the human experience.

A check-in at team meetings helps to create positive movement in workplace culture for understanding, promoting, and responding to mental health and wellbeing as an individual and a team. The check-ins encourage transparency and honesty, allowing peers to respond without assumption or misinterpretation of behaviours and attitudes.



**Scan here to learn more
about our Check-In Guide**

Measuring our performance

Achievements against the National Legal Assistance Partnership

The Australian Government’s funding of Legal Aid WA is governed by the *National Legal Assistance Partnership Agreement (NLAP) 2020-25*.

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

The objective of the NLAP 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 NLAP performance indicators and benchmarks

- The proportion of representation services to people experiencing financial disadvantage was 100% (exceeds the benchmark of 95%)
- The percentage of dispute resolution processes resulting in full or partial settlement was 79%
- The total number of duty lawyer services was up by 12%

Type of service	2024-25 Service counts ²⁾
Information and referrals ¹⁾	38,891
Legal advice	5,314
Representation	3,223
Duty lawyer services	2,260
Legal tasks	726
Community legal education activities	116

1) Includes 18,787 referral services

2) Excludes services performed by external service providers under the NLAP 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 93% of eligible applicants received a grant of legal aid
- More than 23% of people at court were provided with a duty lawyer service

Key performance indicators	2024-25 target	2024-25 actual
Percentage of eligible applicants who receive a grant of legal aid	86%	93%
Percentage of people who are provided with a duty lawyer service	22%	23%

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.

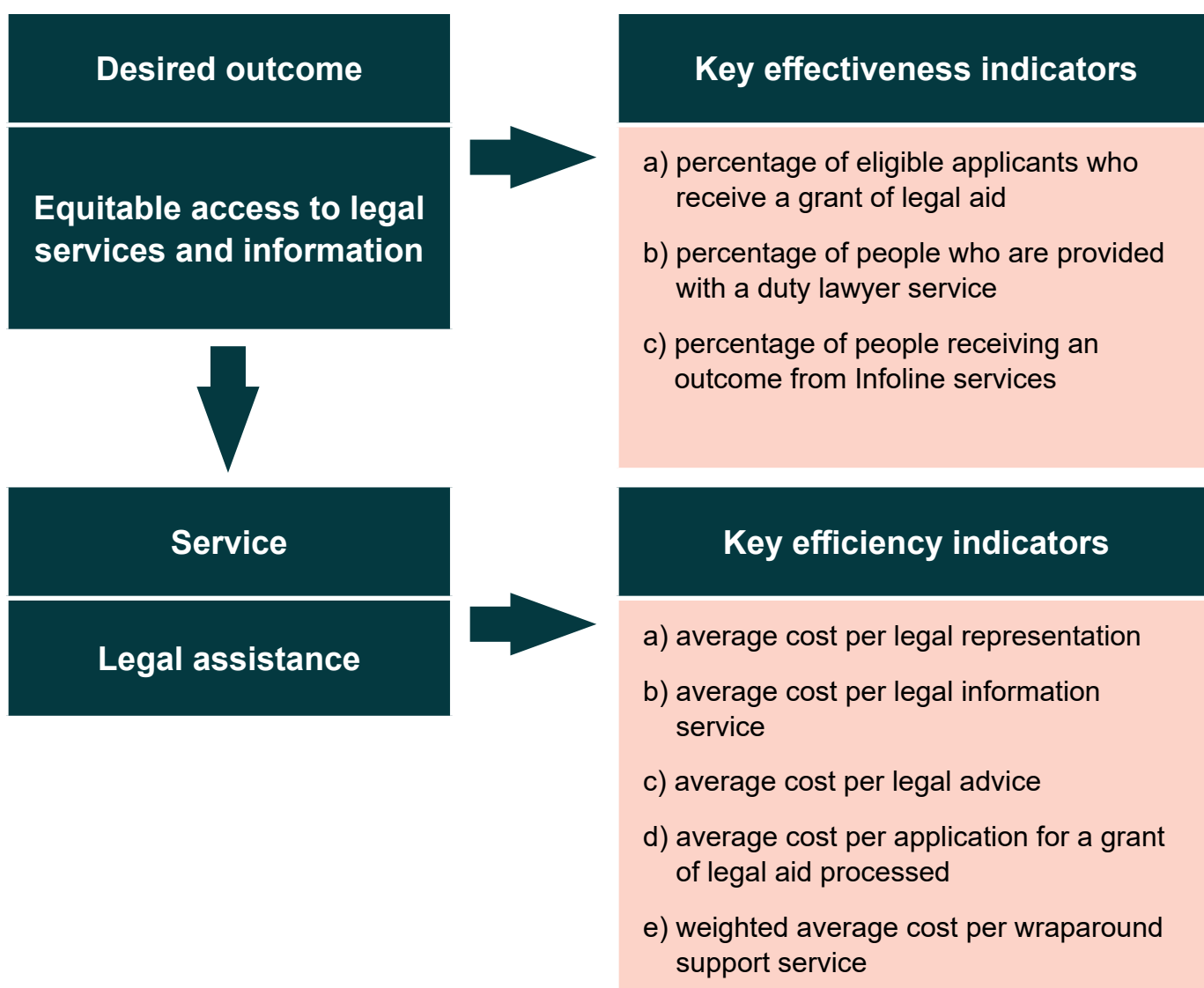
Government goal

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



Changes to outcome-based management framework

The Legal Aid Commission’s outcome-based management framework did not change during 2024-25.

Shared responsibilities with other agencies

The Legal Aid Commission did not share any responsibilities with other agencies in 2024-25.

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, deal with legal problems, and/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 people 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 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.

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 2024-25 financial year is outlined in the table below. Further details are provided in the Financial Statements in Section 3.

	2024-25 Estimates ⁽¹⁾ \$000	2024-25 Actual \$000	Variance \$000
Total cost of services (expense limit) (sourced from Statement of Comprehensive Income)	121,118	143,811	22,693 ^(a)
Net cost of services (sourced from Statement of Comprehensive Income)	81,150	92,010	10,860 ^(b)
Total equity (sourced from Statement of Financial Position)	4,072	18,892	14,820 ^(c)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held (sourced from Statement of Cash Flows)	(6,143)	15,236	21,379 ^(d)
Approved salary expense level	63,761	65,054	1,293

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

(a) The increase in total cost of services is largely due to higher-than-expected legal service expenses. Legal services expenses are higher than the estimates largely due to higher than estimated costs for State family, indictable criminal and civil matters (\$13.85 million).

State expensive case costs were also \$6.83 million higher than estimated.

- (b) The increased net cost of services is largely due to higher total cost of services as outlined above offset by higher-than-expected user charges and fees (\$3.83 million), income from the State Government (\$19.47 million), Other Revenue (\$3.15 million), Interest Revenue (\$2.84 million), and Commonwealth grants and contributions (\$2.00 million).

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

Income from the State Government is higher-than-expected mainly due to additional supplementary funding (\$17.34 million) and increased funding for State Wage Policy (\$1.71 million) and the Kimberley Flood (\$0.46 million).

Other revenue is higher due to a receipt from the Legal Contribution Trust (\$3.40 million).

Interest Revenue is higher due to interest rates continuing to remain higher than anticipated.

Commonwealth grants and contributions are higher than the estimates mainly due to additional funding from the Commonwealth for indexation and additional funding for Family Violence and Cross Examination of Parties Scheme (\$0.41 million).

- (c) Total equity is higher than the estimate mainly due to a higher accumulated surplus (\$14.71 million) which is the result of the difference in the beginning balance in the original estimate. In 2024-25, there was a decrease in the deficit from the estimated deficit of \$6.01 million to an actual surplus of \$2.65 million. The surplus of 2024-25 was mainly due to higher spending in legal services offset by higher State and Commonwealth funding that increased more than originally estimated.
- (d) The net increase in cash and cash equivalents is higher than estimated and is mainly due to higher-than-expected funding from both State (\$18.94 million) and Commonwealth (\$2.01 million) and higher user fees and charges (\$3.78 million) and interest received (\$3.23 million) and other receipts (\$2.57 million). These were offset by higher than estimated payments for legal services (\$11.74 million).

2.2 Summary of Key Performance Indicators

During the 2024-25 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

	2025 Target	2025 Actual	Variance	Result ⁽¹⁾	
Key effectiveness indicators					
Percentage of eligible applicants who receive a grant of legal aid	86%	93%	7%	✓	
Percentage of people who are provided with a duty lawyer service	22%	23%	1%	✓	(a)
Percentage of people receiving an outcome from Infoline services	75%	44%	-31%	x	(b)

Service: Legal Aid WA assistance

	2025 Target	2025 Actual	Variance	Result ⁽¹⁾	
Key efficiency indicators					
Average cost per legal representation	\$4,388	\$5,474	(\$1,086)	x	(c)
Average cost per legal information service	\$61	\$95	(\$34)	x	(d)
Average cost per legal advice	\$446	\$472	(\$25)	x	(e)
Average cost per application for a grant of legal aid processed	\$504	\$548	(\$44)	x	(f)
Weighted average cost per wraparound support service	\$1,420	\$1,500	(\$80)	x	(g)

(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 increased demand for duty lawyer services in the Family Court, Magistrates Court and Children's Court.
- (b) The variance is mainly due to a significant increase in the number of calls. The complexity of enquiries handled by information officers has also increased, as they are dealing with multifaceted legal, financial, and social issues across diverse vulnerable client groups, including First Nations clients. This has led to longer call durations and reduced the number of clients each officer can assist.
- (c) The variance is mainly due to:
 - The inclusion of expensive State and Commonwealth criminal cases, and higher than expected expenditure on State indictable criminal and family law matters, and
 - The rise in hourly rates, in-house lawyer salary increases, and the longer time spent by lawyers on each matter due to increasing complexity.

- (d) The variance is largely attributed to the growing complexity of client enquiries, which has placed additional demands on frontline staff. Information Officers are increasingly supporting clients with multifaceted legal, financial, and social issues, requiring more time and tailored responses per interaction. Additionally, the expansion of specialised services to better meet the needs of diverse and vulnerable client groups has contributed to longer call durations and a higher level of resourcing required for each matter.
- (e) The variance is mainly due to greater complexity in the matters dealt with through duty lawyer services, legal advice, and legal tasks services.
- (f) The variance is mainly due to the additional resource allocation from the specially funded programs started in 2021-22, together with a public sector pay increase.
- (g) The variance is due to several factors:
 - Community legal education becoming more expensive as social support and other non-legal staff are now being charged against this service type, and
 - The average cost of social support services has decreased compared to last year due to a higher proportion of discrete non-legal support services being recorded. This takes less time, compared to case management services which are more intensive and occur over a lengthy period.

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


Auditor General

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT
2025
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 2025, 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 2025 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.

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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 2025, and the controls were implemented as designed as at 30 June 2025.

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 2025 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 2025 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 2025.

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 entity'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 2025, 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 2025 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 entity to confirm the information contained in the website version.



Carly Meagher
Acting Senior Director Financial Audit
Delegate of the Auditor General for Western Australia
Perth, Western Australia
8 September 2025

3.1.2 Certification of Financial Statements

DISCLOSURES AND LEGAL COMPLIANCE

Financial Statements

Certification of Financial Statements

For the year ended 30 June 2025

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 2025 and the financial position as at 30 June 2025.

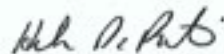
(b) There are reasonable grounds to believe that the Commission is able to pay all of its debts, as and when they become due and payable.

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*.



Craig Gibson
Chief Finance Officer
Date: 4th September 2025



Helen DeBrito
Director of Legal Aid
Member of the Commission
Date: 4th September 2025



Hon. Jane Crisford SC
Chair of the Commission
Date: 4th September 2025

3.1.3 Financial reports for the year ended 30 June 2025

Legal Aid WA has pleasure in presenting its audited general purpose financial statements for the financial reporting period ended 30 June 2025 which provides 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 2025

	Notes	2025 \$	2024 \$
COST OF SERVICES			
Expenses			
Employee benefits expenses	2.1 (a)	65,053,587	55,084,782
Supplies and services	2.3	13,536,063	14,148,111
Depreciation and amortisation	4.1.1, 4.2.1, 4.3	6,798,859	6,395,421
Finance costs	6.2	1,725,108	1,956,494
Accommodation expenses	2.3	2,413,503	2,035,551
Legal services expenses	2.2	52,161,116	41,888,296
Other expenses	2.3	2,122,371	2,546,443
Total cost of services		143,810,607	124,055,098
Income			
User charges and fees	3.2	6,606,416	5,527,135
Commonwealth grants and contributions	3.3	38,533,931	36,312,302
Interest income	3.4	3,194,351	3,217,825
Other income	3.5	3,465,859	2,368,846
Total income		51,800,558	47,426,108
Total income other than income from State Government		51,800,558	47,426,108
NET COST OF SERVICES		92,010,050	76,628,990
Income from State Government			
Income from other public sector entities	3.1	94,520,490	71,914,992
Resources received	3.1	44,684	15,481

	Notes	2025 \$	2024 \$
Royalties for Regions Fund	3.1	46,430	64,952
Total income from State Government		94,611,604	71,995,425
(DEFICIT) / SURPLUS FOR THE PERIOD		2,601,554	(4,633,565)
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME			
Items not reclassified subsequently to profit and loss			
Changes in asset revaluation surplus	4.1	48,696	57,449
Total other comprehensive income		48,696	57,449
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE (LOSS) / INCOME FOR THE PERIOD		2,650,250	(4,576,116)

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

Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2025

	Notes	2025 \$	2024 \$
ASSETS			
Current Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	6.3	23,050,830	23,261,970
Restricted cash and cash equivalents	6.3	6,259	-
Receivables	5.1	8,515,493	7,207,970
Other financial assets	6.3	50,000,000	35,000,000
Other current assets	5.2	2,887,212	3,183,679
Total Current Assets		84,459,794	68,653,619
Non-Current Assets			
Restricted cash and cash equivalents	6.3	2,106,502	1,665,331
Receivables	5.1	5,152,643	5,430,510
Property, plant and equipment	4.1	2,697,256	2,819,767
Intangible assets	4.2	707,709	647,776
Right of use assets	4.3	42,317,949	47,215,573
Total Non-Current Assets		52,982,059	57,778,957
TOTAL ASSETS		137,441,853	126,432,576
LIABILITIES			
Current Liabilities			
Payables and accruals	5.3	51,562,772	41,300,198

	Notes	2025 \$	2024 \$
Lease liabilities	6.1	5,460,358	4,824,925
Employee related provisions	2.1 (b)	9,122,254	8,229,198
Contract liabilities	5.4	976,948	1,138,315
Other current liabilities		6,259	-
Other provisions	5.5	-	-
Total Current Liabilities		67,128,591	55,492,636
Non-Current Liabilities			
Lease liabilities	6.1	46,231,063	50,946,027
Employee related provisions	2.1 (b)	3,466,380	2,500,241
Contract liabilities	5.4	1,677,211	1,252,111
Other provisions	5.5	46,799	
Total Non-Current Liabilities		51,421,453	54,698,379
TOTAL LIABILITIES		118,550,044	110,191,015
NET ASSETS		18,891,810	16,241,561
EQUITY			
Contributed equity		595,669	595,669
Reserves		774,537	725,841
Accumulated surplus		17,521,605	14,920,051
TOTAL EQUITY		18,891,811	16,241,561

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 2025

	Notes	Contributed equity \$	Reserves \$	Accumulated surplus \$	Total equity \$
Balance at 1 July 2023		595,669	668,392	19,553,616	20,817,677
Deficit		-	-	(4,633,565)	(4,633,565)
Other comprehensive Income		-	57,449	-	57,449
Total comprehensive income for the period		-	57,449	(4,633,565)	(4,576,116)
Balance at 30 June 2024		595,669	725,841	14,920,051	16,241,561
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

Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended 30 June 2025

	Note	2025 \$	2024 \$
CASH FLOWS FROM THE STATE GOVERNMENT			
Funds from other public sector entities		94,031,202	71,914,992
Royalties for Regions Fund		46,430	64,952
Net cash provided by the State Government		94,077,632	71,979,944
Utilised as follows:			
CASH FLOWS USED IN OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Payments			
Employee benefits		(62,780,120)	(54,530,963)
Supplies and services		(12,596,169)	(15,889,007)
Accommodation		(2,404,665)	(2,068,271)

	Note	2025 \$	2024 \$
Legal services		(43,893,604)	(36,573,113)
Finance costs		(1,734,592)	(1,827,905)
GST payments on purchases		(6,789,592)	(6,464,675)
Other payments		(1,846,671)	(2,464,127)
Receipts			
User charges and fees		6,705,955	5,902,946
Commonwealth grants and contributions		38,533,931	36,312,302
Interest received		3,586,996	2,869,696
GST receipts on sales		2,404,337	166,744
GST receipts from taxation authority		4,322,098	5,813,871
Other receipts		3,465,859	2,284,670
Net cash used in operating activities		(73,026,237)	(66,467,832)
CASH FLOWS USED IN INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Payments			
Purchase of non-current assets		(621,889)	(1,077,679)
Net cash used in investing activities		(621,889)	(1,077,679)
CASH FLOWS USED IN FINANCING ACTIVITIES			
Payments			
Principal elements of lease payments		(5,193,216)	(4,736,987)
Net cash used in financing activities		(5,193,216)	(4,736,987)
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents		15,236,290	(302,554)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of period		59,927,301	60,229,855
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT THE END OF THE PERIOD	6.3	75,163,591	59,927,301

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 4 September 2025.

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 *Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission 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 these judgments 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	2025 \$	2024 \$
Employee benefits expenses	2.1(a)	65,053,587	55,084,782
Employee related provisions	2.1(b)	12,588,634	10,729,439
Legal service expenses	2.2	52,161,116	41,888,296
Other expenditure	2.3	18,071,938	18,730,105

2.1 (a) Employee benefits expenses

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Employee benefits	58,775,676	49,881,184
Termination benefits	-	-
Superannuation – defined contribution plans	6,277,911	5,203,598
Total employee benefits expenses	65,053,587	55,084,782
Add: AASB 16 Non-monetary benefits (not included in employee benefits expense)	958,947	807,433
Less: Employee Contributions (per note 3.5 Other income)	(320,275)	(258,504)
Total employee benefits provided	65,692,259	55,633,711

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 (AASB16) (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

	2025 \$	2024 \$
Current		
Employee benefits provision		
Annual leave	4,161,185	3,595,498
Long service leave	4,774,095	4,501,912
Deferred leave	50,773	16,878
Deferred salary scheme	-	-
	8,986,053	8,114,288
Other provisions		
Employment on-costs	136,201	114,910
	136,201	114,910
Total current employee related provisions	9,122,254	8,229,198
Non-current		
Employee benefits provision		
Long service leave	3,413,704	2,465,985
	3,413,704	2,465,985
Other provisions		
Employment on-costs	52,676	34,256
	52,676	34,256
Total non-current employee related provisions	3,466,380	2,500,241
Total employee related provisions	12,588,634	10,729,439

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 least 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.

	2025 \$	2024 \$
Employment on-cost provision		
Carrying amount at start of period	149,166	90,217
Additional/(reversals of) provisions recognised	39,711	58,949
Payments/other sacrifices of economics benefits	-	-
Carrying amount at end of period	188,877	149,166

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

	2025 \$	2024 \$
Grant of aid expenses		
Casework	51,875,633	41,634,534
	51,875,633	41,634,534
Other service expenses		
Legal advice	223,601	198,183
Duty lawyer	61,882	55,579
	285,483	253,762
Total legal service expenses	52,161,116	41,888,296

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

2.3 Other expenditure

	2025 \$	2024 \$
Supplies and services		
Communications	613,787	593,253
Consumables	2,850,514	2,673,891
Consultants and contractors	3,389,287	4,129,262
Maintenance	2,805,081	1,541,336
Travel	958,398	955,161
Information technology	860,143	2,391,964
Practicing certificates and fees	388,543	299,773
Audit fees (external and internal audit) (a)	142,875	159,008
Insurance	371,664	328,416
Other supplies and services	1,155,772	1,076,047
Total supplies and services expenses	13,536,063	14,148,111
Accommodation expenses		
Office rental	2,181,441	1,803,358
Other accommodation expenses	232,062	232,193

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Total accommodation expenses	2,413,503	2,035,551
Other		
Bad debts written off	53,027	44,281
Expected credit losses expense	57,144	(23,683)
Employment on-costs	39,711	58,948
Staff training	288,733	251,569
Other staff related expenses	293,278	282,791
Plant and equipment	690,344	961,004
Other expenses	700,133	971,533
Total other expenses	2,122,371	2,546,443
Total other expenditure	18,071,938	18,730,105

(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 accommodation in the name of the Commission.

Repairs, maintenance and cleaning costs are recognised as expenses that are incurred.

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 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 are recognised for movement in allowance for impairment of trade receivables. Refer to Note 5.1 Receivables for more detail.

Software modification costs are recognised as expenses incurred.

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

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	2025 \$	2024 \$
Income from State Government	3.1	94,611,604	71,995,425
User charges and fees	3.2	6,606,416	5,527,135
Commonwealth grants and contributions	3.3	38,533,931	36,312,302
Interest income	3.4	3,194,351	3,217,825
Other income	3.5	3,465,859	2,368,846

3.1 Income from State Government

	2025 \$	2024 \$
Income received from other public sector entities during the period:		
Legal Aid Assistance Grant (a)	94,520,490	71,914,992
Total income from other public sector	94,520,490	71,914,992
Resources received from other public sector entities during the period		
Service received free of charge (b)	44,684	15,481
Total resources received	44,684	15,481
Royalties for Regions Fund		
Royalties for Regions funding (c)	46,430	64,952
Total Royalties for Regions Fund	46,430	64,952
Total income from State Government	94,611,604	71,995,425

- (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 the Department for 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

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Client contributions and fees on grants of aid ^(a)	926,971	1,273,277
Recovered costs on grants of aid ^(b)	5,549,600	4,109,653
Legal advice fees ^(c)	-	-
Duty lawyer fees ^(d)	-	25
Freedom of information ^(e)	60	30
Community legal education ^(f)	129,785	144,150
Total user charges and fees	6,606,416	5,527,135

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 as it does not give rise to a contract. The revenue of this category is recognised under AASB 1058. 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

	2025 \$	2024 \$
Recurrent Grants		
National Legal Assistance Partnership Agreement ^(a)	34,173,806	32,497,070
Christmas/Cocos Islands ^(b)	367,832	331,683
Other Commonwealth funding ^(c)	3,992,293	3,483,549
Total Commonwealth grants and contributions	38,533,931	36,312,302

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 Legal Assistance Partnership (NLAP) Agreement expired on 30 June 2025. The terms of the funding are generally intended to fund matters within the Commonwealth jurisdiction. The NLAP also seeks to promote investments in preventative law and early intervention initiatives. The NLAP will be replaced by the National Access to Justice Partnership (NAJP) Agreement in 2025-30.
- (b) The Christmas/Cocos Islands 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

	2025 \$	2024 \$
Interest earned on Legal Aid operational funds	3,194,351	3,217,825
Total interest income	3,194,351	3,217,825

3.5 Other income

	2025 \$	2024 \$
Employee contributions ^(a)	320,275	258,504
Other miscellaneous income	49,030	119,400
Legal Contribution Trust ^(b)	3,096,554	1,990,942
Total other income	3,465,859	2,368,846

- (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 entitled to 50% when relevant criteria are met.

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	2025 \$	2024 \$
Property, plant and equipment	4.1	2,697,256	2,819,767
Intangible assets	4.2	707,709	647,776
Right-of-use assets	4.3	42,317,949	47,215,573
Total key assets		45,722,914	50,683,116

4.1 Property, plant and equipment

Year ended 30 June 2025	Land	Buildings	Works of Art	Fixtures and Fittings	Leasehold Improvements	Office Equipment	Work in Progress	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
1 July 2024								
Gross carrying amount	295,000	380,000	6,000	244,105	3,744,498	2,452,752	520,277	7,642,632
Accumulated depreciation	-	-	-	(81,311)	(2,495,130)	(2,246,424)	-	(4,822,865)
Carrying amount at start of period	295,000	380,000	6,000	162,794	1,249,368	206,328	520,277	2,819,767
Additions	-	-	-	-	652,757	114,161	327,115	1,094,032
Transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	(612,257)	(612,257)
Reclassification	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	(6,972)	-	(6,972)

Year ended 30 June 2025	Land	Buildings	Works of Art	Fixtures and Fittings	Leasehold Improvements	Office Equipment	Work in Progress	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Reversal of accumulated depreciation for disposed assets	-	-	-	-	-	6,972	-	6,972
Revaluation increments	(5,000)	53,696	-	-	-	-	-	48,696
Depreciation	-	(23,696)	-	(26,013)	(472,600)	(130,673)	-	(652,982)
Carrying amount at end of period	290,000	410,000	6,000	136,781	1,429,524	189,817	235,135	2,697,256
30 June 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)

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 2024, with valuations performed during the year ended 30 June 2025 and recognised at 30 June 2025.

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: \$295,000 (2024: \$290,000) and buildings: \$410,000 (2024: \$380,000) by market value using (Level 2) inputs. As at 30 June 2025, there were no indications or 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	2025	2024
Depreciation		\$	\$
Buildings	4.1	23,696	22,449
Fixtures and fittings	4.1	26,013	26,013
Leasehold improvements	4.1	472,600	259,258
Office equipment	4.1	130,673	132,291
Total depreciation for the period		652,982	440,011

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 are 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 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 2025	Computer Software \$	Work in Progress \$	Total \$
1 July 2024			
Gross carrying amount	1,323,448	331,700	1,655,148
Accumulated amortisation	(1,007,372)	-	(1,007,372)
Carrying amount at start of period	316,076	331,700	647,776
Additions	516,321	184,621	700,942

Year ended 30 June 2025	Computer Software	Work in Progress	Total
	\$	\$	\$
Transfer	-	(516,321)	(516,321)
Reclassification	-	-	-
Disposal	-	-	-
Reversal of accumulated amortisation for disposed asset	-	-	-
Amortisation	(124,688)	-	(124,688)
30 June 2025			
Gross carrying amount	1,839,768	-	1,839,768
Accumulated amortisation	(1,132,060)	-	(1,132,060)
Carrying amount at end of period	707,709	0	707,709

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 as per 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 the following are demonstrated:

- the technical feasibility of completing the intangible asset so that it will be available for use or sale,
- an intention to complete the intangible asset, and use or sell it,
- the ability to use or sell the intangible asset,
- the intangible asset will generate probable future economic benefit,
- the availability of adequate technical, financial and other resources to complete the development and to use or sell the intangible asset, and
- 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

	2025	2024
Amortisation	\$	\$
Computer software	124,688	78,642
Total amortisation	124,688	78,642

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 (2024: \$331,700) 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 2025, there were no indications of impairment to intangible assets.

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

4.3 Right-of-use assets

For the year ended 30 June 2025	Buildings	Vehicles	Residential Housing	Equipment	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Carry Amount at beginning of period	46,055,454	282,691	729,638	147,790	47,215,573
Additions	129,431	209,367	745,133	39,634	1,123,565
Depreciation	(5,092,399)	(123,633)	(768,015)	(37,143)	(6,021,189)
Net carrying amount as at end of period	41,092,487	368,425	706,756	150,281	42,317,949

The Commission has leases for vehicles, offices, 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 Finance 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 incurred.

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 remeasurement 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	2025 \$	2024 \$
Receivables	5.1	13,668,136	12,638,480
Other assets	5.2	2,887,212	3,183,679
Payables	5.3	51,562,772	41,300,198
Contract liabilities	5.4	2,654,159	2,390,426

5.1 Receivables

	2025 \$	2024 \$
Current		
Debtors - unsecured	7,262,456	5,327,677
Allowance for impairment of receivables	(286,877)	(217,928)
GST receivable	600,564	768,468
Interest receivable	939,350	1,329,753
Total current	8,515,493	7,207,970
Non-current		
Debtors - secured ^(a)	6,172,142	6,461,814
Allowance for impairment of receivables	(80,480)	(92,285)
Allowance for discount ^(b)	(939,019)	(939,019)
Total non-current	5,152,643	5,430,510
Total receivables at end of period	13,668,136	12,638,480

(a) Legal assistance may be granted subject to a condition that legal costs be secured by a charge lodged against property registered in the name of the legally assisted person. Full payment of the debt secured is required on 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 3.8% (2024: 4.47%) using the five-year bond rate (source: Western Australian Treasury Corporation) at 30 June 2025.

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 3.80% (2024: 4.47%) using the five-year bond rate (source: Western Australian Treasury Corporation) at 30 June 2025. 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. Refer to Note 6.2 for the amount of ECLs expensed in this financial year.

5.2 Other assets

	2025 \$	2024 \$
Current		
Prepayments	2,887,212	3,183,679
Total current	2,887,212	3,183,679

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

	2025 \$	2024 \$
Current		
Grant of aid commitments	47,830,280	38,757,972
Accrued expenses	2,035,789	1,302,975
Accrued salaries	1,497,405	1,107,473
Accrued superannuation	195,436	128,931
Staff benefit fund	3,528	2,513
Unclaimed monies	334	334
Total current	51,562,772	41,300,198

Payables are recognised as 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 three months and two 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

	2025 \$	2024 \$
Reconciliation of changes in contract liabilities		
Opening balance at the beginning of the period	2,390,426	2,516,537
Additions	1,143,606	1,069,822
Income recognised in the reporting period	(879,873)	(1,195,933)
Closing balance at the end of period	2,654,159	2,390,426
Current	976,948	1,138,315
Non-current	1,677,211	1,252,111
	2,654,159	2,390,426

The Commission's contract liabilities relate 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

	2025 \$	2024 \$
<u>Current</u>		
Restoration provision	-	-
Total current	-	-
<u>Non-current</u>		
Restoration provision	46,799	-
Total non-current	46,799	-
Balance at end of period	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 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

	2025 \$	2024 \$
Movements in provisions during period		
Restoration provisions		
Carrying amount at start of period	-	-
Additional/(reversals of) provisions recognised	46,799	-
Carrying amount at end of period	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	2025 \$	2024 \$
Lease liabilities	6.1	51,691,421	55,770,952
Finance costs	6.2	1,725,108	1,956,494
Cash and cash equivalents	6.3	75,163,591	59,927,301

6.1 Lease liabilities

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Not later than one year	5,460,357	4,824,925
Later than one year and not later than five years	22,306,568	20,948,232
Later than five years	23,924,496	29,997,795
	51,691,421	55,770,952
Current	5,460,358	4,824,925
Non-current	46,231,063	50,946,027
Total lease liabilities	51,691,421	55,770,952

Initial measurement

At the commencement of the lease, the Commission measures lease liabilities at the present value of the lease payments 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 liability 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 liability is recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income over the lease term 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 is reassessed and adjusted against the right-of-use asset.

Variable lease payments, not included in the measurement of lease liability, 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 payments 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.

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Lease Expense recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income		
Lease interest expense	1,725,108	1,819,942
Short-term lease	423,833	400,899
Total lease expense	2,148,941	2,220,841

Short-term leases are recognised on a straight-line basis with a lease term of 12 months or less 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

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Interest expense		
Interest expense on lease liabilities	1,725,108	1,819,942
Implicit interest write back on debtors	-	136,552
Total interest costs expensed	1,725,108	1,956,494

Finance costs include 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

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Cash and cash equivalents	23,050,830	23,261,970
Restricted cash and cash equivalents	2,112,761	1,665,331
Financial assets held at amortised cost - Other term deposits	50,000,000	35,000,000
Balance at end of period	75,163,591	59,927,301
Current		
Restricted cash and cash equivalents ^(a)	6,259	-

	2025 \$	2024 \$
Non-current		
Restricted cash and cash equivalents ^(a)	2,106,502	1,665,331

(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 is classified 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

	2025 \$	2024 \$
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	219,945
Later than 1 year and not later than 5 years	-	-
Later than 5 years	-	-
	169,020	219,945

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:

	2025 \$	2024 \$
Financial Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents ^(a)	25,163,591	24,927,301
Financial assets at amortised cost ^{(b) (c)}	63,067,573	46,870,012
Total financial assets	88,231,164	71,797,313
Financial Liabilities		
Financial liabilities at amortised cost ^(d)	103,254,193	97,071,150
Total financial liabilities	103,254,193	97,071,150

(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 includes term deposits

(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.

	Notes
Events occurring after the end of the reporting period	8.1
Correction of period errors/changes in accounting policies	8.2
Key management personnel	8.3
Related party transactions	8.4
Related bodies	8.5
Affiliated bodies	8.6
Special purpose accounts	8.7
Remuneration of auditors	8.8
Supplementary financial information	8.9
Special category funding	8.10

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 the 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 the 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

	2025	2024
Compensation Band (\$)		
510,000-520,000	1	-
480,001 - 490,000	-	1
460,000 - 470,000	-	-
40,001 - 50,000	1	-
30,001 - 40,000	-	-
20,001 - 30,000	4	1
10,001 - 20,000	1	4
0 - 10,000	-	1
	7	7
	\$	\$
Total compensation of members of the Commission	669,690	579,299
Compensation of senior officers	2025	2024
Compensation Band (\$)		
350,000 - 400,000	-	-
300,000 - 350,000	3	-
250,001 - 300,000	4	7
200,001 - 250,000	4	4
150,001 - 200,000	2	2
100,001 - 150,000	-	-
50,001 - 100,000	-	-
0 - 50,000	2	-
	15	13
	\$	\$
Total compensation of senior officers	3,335,546	3,206,903

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Total compensation of key management personnel	4,005,236	3,786,202

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

No senior officers employed in the Commission at the end of the reporting period were 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.

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Balance at start of period	403,016	203,016
Receipts	839,345	202,233
Payments	(1,242,004)	(2,233)
Balance at end of period	357	403,016

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:

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Auditing the accounts, financial statements controls and key performance indicators.	87,200	80,000

The remuneration of the auditor is included at Note 2.4 'Supplies and services'. The remuneration to 30 June 2025 was not accrued as work as it was not substantially completed. This amount excludes GST.

8.9 Supplementary financial information

(a) Write-offs

During the financial year, \$53,027 (2024: \$44,281) was written off the Commission's books under the authority of:

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
The Commission members	53,027	44,281
Total	53,027	44,281

(b) Losses through theft, defaults and other causes

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Losses of public money and public and other property through theft or default	-	-
Amount recovered	-	-
	-	-

(c) Forgiveness of debts

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Forgiveness (or waiver) of debts by the Commission	17,103	33,297
	17,103	33,297

(d) Gifts of public property

There were nil (2024: 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.

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Balance at start of period	117,864	106,078
Receipt from Commonwealth	367,832	331,683
User charges and fees	-	-
Expenditure	(402,105)	(319,897)
Balance at end of period	83,591	117,864

(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 \$31,757 in comparison with \$31,014 in 2023-24.

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Balance at start of period	(122,192)	404,074
Funding	2,637,996	3,179,000
Client contributions	187,024	120,199
Assigned expenditure	(9,464,637)	(3,507,867)
Expenditure for IHP disbursements	(4,000)	(99,791)
In-house legal services expenditure	(37,798)	(217,807)
Balance at end of period	(6,803,607)	(122,192)

Note 9. Explanatory statements

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

9.1 Explanatory statement for controlled operations

All variances between annual estimates (original budget) and actual results for 2025, and between the actual results for 2025 and 2024 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 \$143,810,607), and
- total assets for the Statement of Financial Position (i.e. 1% of \$137,441,853).

9.1.1 Statement of Comprehensive Income variances

	Variance Note	2025 Estimate	2025 Actual	2024 Actual	Variance between Estimate and Actual	Variance between Actual for 2024 and 2025
		\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Expenses						
Employee benefit expense	a	63,761,000	65,053,587	55,084,782	1,292,587	9,968,805
Supplies and services		12,253,000	13,536,063	14,148,111	1,283,063	(612,048)

	Variance Note	2025 Estimate	2025 Actual	2024 Actual	Variance between Estimate and Actual	Variance between Actual for 2024 and 2025
		\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Depreciation and amortisation expense		6,436,000	6,798,859	6,395,421	362,859	403,438
Finance costs		1,689,000	1,725,108	1,956,494	36,108	(231,386)
Accommodation expenses		1,976,000	2,413,503	2,035,551	437,503	377,952
Legal services expenses	1, b	32,151,000	52,161,116	41,888,296	20,010,116	10,272,820
Other expenses		2,852,000	2,122,371	2,546,443	(729,629)	(424,072)
Total Cost of Services		121,118,000	143,810,607	124,055,098	22,692,607	19,755,509
Income						
User charges and fees	2	2,774,000	6,606,416	5,527,135	3,832,416	1,079,281
Commonwealth grants and contributions		36,522,000	38,533,931	36,312,302	2,011,931	2,221,629
Interest revenue	3	356,000	3,194,351	3,217,825	2,838,351	(23,474)
Other revenue	4	316,000	3,465,859	2,368,846	3,149,859	1,097,013
Total Revenue		39,968,000	51,800,558	47,426,108	11,832,557	4,374,449
Net Cost of Services		81,150,000	92,010,050	76,628,990	10,860,050	15,381,060
Income from State Government						
Income from other public sector entities	5, c	75,066,000	94,520,490	71,914,992	19,454,490	22,605,498
Services received free of charge		-	44,684	15,481	44,684	29,203
Royalties for Regions Fund		75,000	46,430	64,952	(28,570)	(18,522)
Total income from State Government		75,141,000	94,611,604	71,995,425	19,470,604	22,616,179
(Deficit) / Surplus for the period		(6,009,000)	2,601,554	(4,633,565)	8,610,554	7,235,119
Other Comprehensive Income						
Changes in asset revaluation surplus		-	48,696	57,449	(48,696)	(8,753)
Total other comprehensive income		-	48,696	57,449	(48,696)	(8,753)
Total comprehensive (loss) / income for the period		(6,009,000)	2,650,250	(4,576,116)	8,561,858	7,226,366

Major variance narratives

Variances between estimate and actual

1. Legal services expenses are higher than the estimates by \$20.00 million largely due to higher than estimated costs for State family, indictable criminal, and civil matters (\$13.85 million). State expensive case costs were also (\$6.83 million) higher than the estimate as was Commonwealth funding of (\$0.80 million).
2. User fees and charges are higher than estimates due to increased cost recoveries associated with grants of aid.
3. Interest revenue is higher than the estimates mainly due to adopting a conservative budget approach and interest rates continuing to remain high.
4. Other revenue is higher than the estimates mainly due to the surplus distribution from the Legal Contribution Trust (\$3.10 million).
5. Income from the other public sector entities is higher than the estimates largely due to the additional funding received from the State Government. This includes supplementary funding (\$17.34 million), public sector wages policy (\$1.71 million), and Family Violence and Cross Examination of Parties Scheme (\$0.41 million).

Variances between actual results for 2025 and 2024

- a. Employee benefits expenses are higher than the previous year largely due to the following:
 - i) Salaries expenses increased by \$7.44 million
 - ii) Superannuation increased by \$1.07 million
 - iii) Increases in leave provisions by \$1.27 million

These increases are due to an FTE increase by 56 in 2024-25.

- b. Legal services expenses are higher than the previous year largely due to the State casework costs (\$10.27 million) spread across all three law types: family, indictable criminal, and civil matters.
- c. Income from public sector entities is higher by (\$22.61 million) due to increased funding for State indictable matters and expensive cases mainly through the supplementary funding processes.

9.1.2 Statement of Financial Position variances

	Variance Note	2025 Estimate	2025 Actual	2024 Actual	Variance between Estimate and Actual	Variance between Actual for 2024 and 2025
		\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
ASSETS						
Current Assets						
Cash and cash equivalents	1, a	11,052,000	23,050,830	23,261,970	11,998,830	(211,140)
Restricted cash and cash equivalents		-	6,259	-	6,259	6,259
Receivables		7,386,000	8,515,493	7,207,970	1,129,493	1,307,523
Other financial assets	1, a	30,500,000	50,000,000	35,000,000	19,500,000	15,000,000
Other current assets		1,611,000	2,887,212	3,183,679	1,276,212	(296,467)
Total Current Assets		50,549,000	84,459,794	68,653,619	33,910,794	15,806,175
Non-Current Assets						
Restricted cash and cash equivalents	1, a	1,393,000	2,106,502	1,665,331	713,502	441,171
Receivables		5,532,000	5,152,643	5,430,510	(379,357)	(277,867)
Property plant & equipment		3,778,000	2,697,256	2,819,767	(1,080,744)	(122,511)
Intangible assets		1,802,000	707,709	647,776	(1,094,291)	59,933
Right-of-use asset	2	46,785,000	42,317,949	47,215,573	(4,467,051)	(4,897,624)
Total Non-Current Assets		59,290,000	52,982,059	57,778,957	(6,307,941)	(4,796,898)
TOTAL ASSETS		109,839,000	137,441,853	126,432,576	27,602,853	11,009,277
LIABILITIES						
Current Liabilities						
Payables	3, b	36,885,000	51,562,772	41,300,198	14,677,772	10,262,574
Lease liabilities		5,406,000	5,460,358	4,824,925	54,358	635,433
Employee related provisions	4, c	7,695,000	9,122,254	8,229,198	1,427,254	893,056
Contract liabilities		1,277,000	976,948	1,138,315	(300,052)	(161,367)
Total Current Liabilities		51,263,000	67,128,591	55,492,636	15,865,591	11,635,955
Non-Current Liabilities						
Lease liabilities		50,947,000	46,231,063	50,946,027	(4,715,937)	(4,714,964)
Employee related provisions	4, c	2,318,000	3,466,380	2,500,241	1,148,380	966,139
Contract liabilities		1,239,000	1,677,211	1,252,111	438,211	425,100
Total Non-Current Liabilities		54,504,000	51,374,654	54,698,379	(3,129,346)	(3,323,725)
TOTAL LIABILITIES		105,767,000	118,503,245	110,191,015	12,736,245	8,312,230

	Variance Note	2025 Estimate	2025 Actual	2024 Actual	Variance between Estimate and Actual	Variance between Actual for 2024 and 2025
		\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
NET ASSETS		4,072,000	18,938,608	16,241,561	14,866,608	2,697,047
EQUITY						
Contributed equity		596,000	595,669	595,669	(331)	-
Reserves		668,000	774,537	725,841	106,537	48,696
Accumulated surplus	5, d	2,808,000	17,521,605	14,920,051	14,713,605	2,601,554
TOTAL EQUITY		4,072,000	18,891,811	16,241,561	14,819,811	2,650,250

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) between actual and estimates is higher than expected by \$32.21 million mainly due to the beginning balance in the original estimate being \$10.84 million higher than the 2022-23 actual. The higher-than-expected funding received from both State (\$18.94 million) and Commonwealth (\$2.01 million), together with higher-than-expected user charges and fees (\$3.78 million), interest received (\$3.23 million) and other receipts (\$2.57 million) and savings from purchase of non-current physical assets (\$1.86 million) offset by higher payments in legal service (\$11.74 million). Refer to the variance explanation for Statement of Cash Flows for further details.
2. The Right-of-use asset is \$4.55 million lower than the estimates mainly due to the closing balance in 2023-24 being (\$0.43 million) higher than the 2024-25 estimated balance. The estimates didn't reflect the reduction due to the annual depreciation increase. There was a new lease asset for GROH properties of (\$0.086 million).
3. The payable is \$14.38 million higher than estimated due to the higher grant of aid commitment for case work recognised as liabilities to be paid than was estimated.
4. The combined employee related provisions were \$2.575 million higher than estimated due to both annual leave and long service leave increasing during the year.
5. The accumulated surplus is \$15.00 million higher than the estimate mainly due to the closing balance in 2022-23 actual is (\$12.11 million) higher than the 2024-25 estimate. The surplus in 2024-25 was higher-than-expected mainly due to higher fees and charges, higher interest and other revenue offset by higher expenditure than estimated.

Variances between actual results for 2025 and 2024

- 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 \$15.23 million. The higher figure is due to increased cash reserves mainly for commitment liabilities, employee entitlements, and carried over funding for programs and projects.

- b. Payables have increased by \$9.97 million mainly due to increased grant of aid commitments and higher accrued salaries.
- c. The combined employee related provisions increased by \$1.859 million mainly due to the increase in the annual leave provision of \$0.566 million and long service leave provision of \$1.22 million.
- d. The accumulated surplus is \$2.95 million higher than 2023-24 due to higher income and underspends in supplies and services.

9.1.3 Statement of Cash Flows variances

	Variance Note	2025 Estimate	2025 Actual	2024 Actual	Variance between Estimate and Actual	Variance between Actual for 2024 and 2025
CASH FLOWS FROM STATE GOVERNMENT						
Funds from other public sector entities	1, a	75,066,000	94,031,202	71,914,992	18,965,202	22,116,210
Royalties for Regions Fund		75,000	46,430	64,952	(28,570)	(18,522)
Net cash provided by State Government		75,141,000	94,077,632	71,979,944	18,936,632	22,097,688
Utilised as follows:						
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES						
Payments						
Employee benefits	b	(63,764,000)	(62,780,120)	(54,530,963)	983,880	(8,249,157)
Supplies and services	c	(12,090,000)	(12,596,169)	(15,889,007)	(506,169)	3,292,838
Accommodation		(1,975,000)	(2,404,665)	(2,068,271)	(429,665)	(336,394)
Legal services	2, d	(32,150,000)	(43,893,604)	(36,573,113)	(11,743,604)	(7,320,491)
Finance costs		(1,689,000)	(1,734,592)	(1,827,905)	(45,592)	93,313
GST payments on purchases	3	(3,092,000)	(6,789,592)	(6,464,675)	(3,697,592)	(324,917)
Other payments		(2,859,000)	(1,846,671)	(2,464,127)	1,012,329	617,456
Receipts						
User charges and fees	4	2,922,000	6,705,955	5,902,946	3,783,955	803,009
Commonwealth grants and contributions		36,522,000	38,533,931	36,312,302	2,011,931	2,221,629
Interest received	5	356,000	3,586,996	2,869,696	3,230,996	717,300
GST receipts on sales	6, e	34,000	2,404,337	166,744	2,370,337	2,237,593
GST receipts from taxation authority	f	3,058,000	4,322,098	5,813,871	1,264,098	(1,491,773)

	Variance Note	2025 Estimate	2025 Actual	2024 Actual	Variance between Estimate and Actual	Variance between Actual for 2024 and 2025
Other receipts	7	896,000	3,465,859	2,284,670	2,569,859	1,181,189
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities		(73,831,000)	(73,026,237)	(66,467,832)	804,763	(6,558,405)
Purchase of non-current physical assets	8	(2,480,000)	(621,889)	(1,077,679)	1,858,111	455,790
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		(2,480,000)	(621,889)	(1,077,679)	1,858,111	455,790
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES						
Payments						
Principal elements of lease payments		(4,973,000)	(5,193,216)	(4,736,987)	(220,216)	(456,229)
Net cash provided by/(used in) financing activities		(4,973,000)	(5,193,216)	(4,736,987)	(220,216)	(456,229)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	9, g	(6,143,000)	15,236,290	(302,554)	21,379,290	15,538,844
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of period		49,088,000	59,927,301	60,229,855	10,839,301	(302,554)
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT THE END OF PERIOD		42,945,000	75,163,591	59,927,301	32,218,591	15,236,290

Major variance narratives

Variances between estimate and actual

1. Income from the public sector entities is higher than the estimates largely due to the additional funding received from the State Government. This includes supplementary funding (\$17.34 million), public sector wages policy (\$1.71 million), and Family Violence and Cross Examination of Parties Scheme (\$0.41 million).
2. Legal services are \$11.74 million higher than estimated largely due to higher than budgeted payments for State indictable criminal matters, State expensive cases, and the Commonwealth Family Violence and Cross Examination of Parties Scheme.
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 the increased cost

recoveries and contributions received in cash associated with grants of aid.

5. Interest is higher than the estimates due to a conservative budget profile and higher interest rates continuing into 2024-25 along with increased cash reserves.
6. GST receipts from sales were (\$2.37 million) higher than estimates due to higher GST receipts on cost recoveries and Department of Justice including GST on their disbursement payments for a few months in 2024-25.
7. Other receipts are higher than the estimates mainly due to the higher surplus distribution from the Legal Contribution Trust.
8. Purchase of non-current physical assets is lower than estimates due to the fit-out costs for additional Perth office space being covered by the landlord's fit-out incentive.
9. The net increase in cash and cash equivalents is higher than estimated by \$21.38 million and is mainly due to higher-than-expected funding from both State (\$19.96 million) and Commonwealth (\$2.01 million) and higher user charges and fees (\$3.78 million), interest received (\$3.23 million) and other receipts (\$2.57 Million) including the reduced purchase of non-current physical assets of (\$1.86 million). These were offset by higher than estimated payments for legal services (\$11.74 million).

Variances between actual results for 2025 and 2024

- a. Funds from other public sector entities is higher in 2025 mainly due to increased supplementary funding for State indictable matters and expensive cases.
- b. The increase in payments for employee benefits of \$8.25 million is mainly due to higher salary payments for legal staff (\$3.33 million), administration staff (\$3.08 million) along with social workers and community liaison (\$0.62 million), and increased superannuation (\$1.03 million) resulting from additional funding for services received from both the State and Commonwealth Government. FTEs have increased by 56.
- c. Supplies and services are lower than the previous year by \$3.29 million largely due to reduced expenditure for infrastructure support services (\$2.10 million) along with lower licensing and subscriptions (\$1.06 million).
- d. Legal services are higher than the previous year by \$7.32 million mainly due to higher casework for Legal Aid WA (\$6.17 million) and an increase in disbursements (\$1.15 million).
- e. GST receipts on sales are \$2.23 million higher due to increased receipts from cost recoveries and Department of Justice including GST on their funding disbursement payments for a few months in 2024-25.
- f. GST receipts from the taxation authority is lower in FY2025 compared to FY2024 due to increased GST receipts for cost recoveries and DoJ disbursement payments GST, reducing the net amount received back from the Australian Tax Office.
- g. The net increase in cash and cash equivalents of \$15.38 million is mainly due to increased funding received from the State Government (\$22.12 million), Commonwealth Government (\$2.22 million), reduced supplies and services (\$3.29 million), and other revenue (\$3.45 million). This is offset by higher cash payments in employee benefits (\$8.25 million) and legal services (\$7.32 million).

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 2025.


Hon. Jane Crisford SC
Chair of the Commission
Date: 4th September 2025


Helen DeBrito
Director of Legal Aid
Member of the Commission
Date: 4th September 2025

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 tasks, social support services, and 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 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, and/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 people 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.

The 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 sittings 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 a grant of aid, booking of legal advice appointments, and referrals. By expanding from the traditional Infoline services to include Infochat services, accessibility to services is 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	2021-22 Actual %	2022-23 Actual %	2023-24 Actual %	2024-25 Target %	2024-25 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	89%	90%	87%	86%	93%	There is no significant variance.
Percentage of people who are provided with a duty lawyer service	21%	23%	23%	22%	23%	The 2024-25 actual is higher than the 2024-25 target and the 2021-22 actuals due to increased demand for duty lawyer services in the Family Court, Magistrates Court, and Children's Court.

Key effectiveness indicators	2021-22 Actual %	2022-23 Actual %	2023-24 Actual %	2024-25 Target %	2024-25 Actual %	Reasons for significant variance ⁽¹⁾ between current actual and target and prior year comparative
Percentage of people receiving an outcome from Infoline services	78%	71%	61%	75%	44%	The 2024-25 actual is lower than 2024-25 target and the prior years' actuals. This is primarily due to a significant increase in the number of calls. The complexity of enquiries handled by information officers has also increased, as they are dealing with multifaceted legal, financial and social issues across diverse vulnerable client groups, including First Nations clients. This has led to longer call durations and reduced the number of clients each officer can assist.

Service: Legal Aid Assistance

Key efficiency indicators	2021-22 Actual %	2022-23 Actual %	2023-24 Actual %	2024-25 Target %	2024-25 Actual %	Reasons for significant variance ⁽¹⁾ between current actuals and target and prior year comparative
Average cost per legal representation	\$4,420	\$4,183	\$4,617	\$4,388	\$5,474	The 2024-25 actual is higher than the 2024-25 target primarily due to the inclusion of expensive State and Commonwealth criminal cases, and higher than expected expenditure on State indictable criminal and family law matters. The 2024-25 actual is higher than prior years' actual due to the rise in hourly rates, the in-house lawyer salary increases, and the longer time spent by lawyers on each matter due to increasing complexity.

Key efficiency indicators	2021-22 Actual %	2022-23 Actual %	2023-24 Actual %	2024-25 Target %	2024-25 Actual %	Reasons for significant variance ⁽¹⁾ between current actuals and target and prior year comparative
Average cost per legal information service	51	60	66	61	95	The 2024-25 actual is higher than the 2024-25 target and the prior years' actuals. This variance is largely attributed to the growing complexity of client enquiries, which has placed additional demands on frontline staff. Information officers are increasingly supporting clients with multifaceted legal, financial and social issues, requiring more time and tailored responses per interaction. Additionally, the expansion of specialised services to better meet the needs of diverse and vulnerable client groups has contributed to longer call durations and a higher level of resourcing required for each matter.

Key efficiency indicators	2021-22 Actual %	2022-23 Actual %	2023-24 Actual %	2024-25 Target %	2024-25 Actual %	Reasons for significant variance ⁽¹⁾ between current actuals and target and prior year comparative
Average cost per legal service	404	402	411	446	472	The 2024-25 actual is higher than the 2024-25 target and the prior years' actual mainly due to greater complexity in the matters dealt with through duty lawyers services, legal advice and legal tasks services.
Average cost per application for a grant of legal aid processed	478	504	509	504	548	The 2024-25 actual cost of processing an application is higher than the 2021-22 actual due to the additional resource allocation from the specially funded programs started in 2021-22, together with a public sector pay increase.

Key efficiency indicators	2021-22 Actual %	2022-23 Actual %	2023-24 Actual %	2024-25 Target %	2024-25 Actual %	Reasons for significant variance ⁽¹⁾ between current actuals and target and prior year comparative
Weighted average cost per wraparound support service. ⁽²⁾	N/A	1,204	1,576	1,420	1,500	The 2024-25 actual is higher than the 2024-25 target and the 2022-23 actual mainly due to community education becoming more expensive as social support and other non-legal staff are now being charged against this service type. The average cost of social support services has decreased compared to last year due to a higher proportion of discrete non-legal support services being recorded. This takes less time, compared to case management services which are more intensive and occur over a lengthy period of time.

Notes:

1. Significant variances are considered to be those greater than 10%.
2. This is the new indicator approved by the Under Treasurer on 1 August 2022, with effect from the 2022-23 reporting year. Wraparound support services have distinct schemes of services. These are social support services to the targeted priority groups, community legal education activities to the community at large, and the dedicated First Nations community liaison and community education services.

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, the Legal Aid Commission of Western Australia 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 variances 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
Fit-out of the Karratha office The fit-out of the new Legal Aid WA office and maintaining ongoing investment is to ensure office accommodations are maintained to adequately support the delivery of services across Western Australia.	2025-26	\$164,867	\$400,000	N/A	N/A

Table 2: Capital projects completed

Project Name	Total cost of project	Variance from previous financial year	Explanation
Partial refit of Broome office The partial refit is part of Legal Aid WA's ongoing investment to ensure office accommodations are maintained to adequately support the delivery of services across Western Australia.	\$652,756	(\$44,244)	Scope of works was reduced and furniture and equipment under \$5,000 was expensed.
New Customer Relationship Management (CRM) connector to on-premises CMS Configuring the Salesforce to on-premises CMS connector is part of the Digital Transformation program to enable the Cloud based software be connected to the current on-premises record management system.	\$516,321	(\$15,329)	Slightly lower expenditure than anticipated.
Partial refit of Perth office The partial refit is part of Legal Aid WA's ongoing investment to ensure office accommodations are maintained to adequately support the delivery of services across Western Australia.	\$26,029	(\$74,167)	Project scope reduced with landlord taking on automatic disability doors reducing scope down to only the Level 2 white noise masking in DR area.

3.5 Governance Disclosures

3.5.1 Insurance premiums

An insurance premium of \$24,034.445 (including GST) was paid to Marsh Pty Ltd for Directors and Officers Liability Insurance in 2024-25.

3.6 Other legal requirements

3.6.1 Act of grace payments

At 30 June 2025, there were no act of grace payments recorded, as per the Treasurer’s 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, 19 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.

2024-2025

	Amount (\$)
Aggregate amount of personal use expenditure for 2024-25	\$ 1025.80
Aggregate amount of personal use expenditure settled by the due date (within five working days)	\$ 937.15
Aggregate amount of personal use expenditure settled after the period (after five working days)	\$ 88.65
Aggregate amount of personal use expenditure outstanding at balance date	\$ 0.00

3.6.3 Annual Estimates

(Treasurer's instructions 945 and 953)

The Attorney General, Hon Dr Tony Buti MLA, approved the following Annual Estimates for the 2025-2026 Financial year on 28 July 2025 under section 40 of the *Financial Management Act 2006*.

Statement of Comprehensive Income For the year ended 30 June 2026

	Note	2023-24 Actual \$000	2024-25 Estimated Actual \$000	2025-26 Section 40 Estimates \$000
Cost of services				
Expenses				
Employee benefits expenses	1	55,085	68,339	69,956
Supplies and services		14,148	14,186	13,915
Depreciation and amortisation expenses		6,395	6,764	6,787
Finance costs		1,956	1,732	1,588
Accommodation expenses		2,036	1,976	2,005
Legal services expenses	2	41,888	52,148	36,677
Other expenses		2,546	2,553	2,504
Total cost of services		124,055	147,698	133,432
Income				
User charges and fees	3	5,527	3,515	2,774
Commonwealth grants and contributions		36,312	37,652	38,673
Interest income	4	3,218	356	356
Other income	5	2,369	3,593	1,469
Total income		47,426	45,116	43,272
Net cost of services		76,629	102,582	90,160
Income from State Government				
Income from other public sector entities	6	71,915	93,846	79,602
Resources received		15	-	-
Royalties for Regions Fund		65	75	75
Total income from State Government		71,995	93,921	79,677
Surplus/(deficit) for the period		(4,634)	(8,661)	(10,483)

	Note	2023-24 Actual \$000	2024-25 Estimated Actual \$000	2025-26 Section 40 Estimates \$000
Other Comprehensive Income				
Changes in asset revaluation surplus		57	-	-
Total other comprehensive income		57	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the period		(4,576)	(8,661)	(10,483)

1. Employee benefits expenses increase in 2024-25 Estimated Actual and 2025-26 Estimates largely reflects deferral of program expenditure from 2023-24, 2024-25 to 2024-25 and 2025-26, extension of Justice Reform Initiatives and National Access to Justice Partnership Agreement indexation updates in 2025-26, and the new Public Sector Wages Policy representing 5% increase in 2024-25, 4% increase in 2025-26.
2. Legal services in 2025-26 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 2024-25 Estimated Actual and 2023-24 Actual. The unbudgeted cost pressure were funded through Supplementary funding process in 2023-24 and 2024-25.
3. The higher User charges and fees in 2022-23 are largely due to higher than expected client contributions and cost recoveries. The Estimated Actuals figure in 2024-25 have not yet fully reflected this increase. The S40 2025-26 Estimates continue to reflect the conservative profile.
4. The 2022-23 actuals reflect the unanticipated increased interest rates from the Reserve Bank of Australia, which have now increased. The 2024-25 Estimated Actuals have not yet been fully adjusted to reflected the full impact of the continued interest revenue increase. The S40 Estimates for 2025-26 still reflect the conservative budget profile of the out-years. We continue to adopt a conservative approach in the outer years including 2025-26.
5. The \$2.4m reduction in Other Income 2025-26 Estimates largely reflects the higher revenue received from the Legal Contribution Trust in 2024-25 Estimated Actual (\$3.1m), compared to 2025-26 Estimate forecast of \$1m which reflects our conservative approach for this uncertain revenue stream.
6. 2025-26 Estimates is lower than 2024-25 Estimated Actual largely reflects 2024-25 \$17m of 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. This however did not include the recovery of 2023-24 Casework costs of \$4.1m that were under recovered in the prior year.

Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2026

	Note	2023-24 Actual \$000	2024-25 Estimated Actual \$000	2025-26 Section 40 Estimates \$000
Assets				
Current Assets				
Cash and cash equivalents		23,262	14,272	5,534
Receivables		7,208	7,207	7,207
Other financial assets		35,000	35,000	35,000
Other current assets		3,184	3,184	3,184
Total Current Assets		68,654	59,663	50,925
Non-Current Assets				
Restricted cash and cash equivalents		1,665	1,665	1,665
Receivables		5,431	5,430	5,430
Property plant & equipment	1	2,820	3,625	2,666
Intangible assets		648	2,638	2,438
Right of use assets	2	47,215	42,743	37,424
Total Non-Current Assets		57,779	56,101	49,623
Total assets		126,433	115,764	100,548
Liabilities				
Current Liabilities				
Payables and accruals		41,300	43,074	43,241
Lease liabilities		4,825	5,442	5,598
Employee related provisions		8,229	8,229	8,229
Contract liabilities		1,139	1,138	1,138
Total Current Liabilities		55,493	57,883	58,206
Non-Current Liabilities				
Lease liabilities	3	50,946	46,547	41,490
Employee related provisions		2,500	2,500	2,500
Contract liabilities		1,252	1,252	1,252
Total Non-Current Liabilities		54,698	50,299	45,242
Total liabilities		110,191	108,182	103,448
Net assets		16,242	7,582	(2,900)
Equity				

	Note	2023-24 Actual \$000	2024-25 Estimated Actual \$000	2025-26 Section 40 Estimates \$000
Contributed equity		596	596	596
Reserves		726	727	728
Accumulated surplus/(deficit)	4	14,920	6,259	(4,224)
Total equity		16,242	7,582	(2,900)

1. The reduction in 2025-26 Estimates reflects the completion of Client Relationship Management (CRM) project in 2024-25 Estimated Actual. The 2025-26 Estimates also includes ongoing Computer Hardware and Software Replacement Program, the Office Refurbishment and Fitouts program as outlined in the Strategic Asset Plan.
2. The reduction in 2025-26 Estimates reflects the expected depreciation of these assets in 2025-26.
3. The decrease in lease liabilities from 2025-26 Estimates to 2023-24 Estimated Actual is reflective of the repayments expected to occur in 2025-26 for these liabilities.
4. In the 2024-25 Estimated Actuals the increased interest revenue and Fees and Charges revenue has not been fully reflected. In the S40 Estimates for 2025-26 Legal Aid has continued to adopt a conservative approach around Interest revenue, Fees and Charges and Other Revenue. This has resulted in a year to date deficit in 2025-26 and the out-years. This is expected to be rectified in 2025-26 when Interest Revenue, Fees and Charges and Other Revenue materialises. Coupled with this in 2024-25 there was an underrecovery of 2023-24 Casework Commitments which reduced cash reserves by \$4.093m. As part of the MYR process, this will be analysed further once we have finalised the 2024-25 Actuals, with any necessary adjustments being progressed at that time.

Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended 30 June 2026

	Note	2023-24 Actual \$000	2024-25 Estimated Actual \$000	2025-26 Section 40 Estimates \$000
Cash flows from the State Government				
Funds from other public sector entities	1	71,915	93,846	79,602
Royalties for Regions Fund		65	75	75
Net cash provided by the State Government		71,980	93,921	79,677
Utilised as follows:				
Cash flows from operating activities				
Payments				

	Note	2023-24	2024-25 Estimated	2025-26 Section 40
		Actual \$000	Actual \$000	Estimates \$000
Employee benefits	2	(54,531)	(68,342)	(69,959)
Supplies and services	3	(15,889)	(14,355)	(14,078)
Accommodation		(2,068)	(1,976)	(2,005)
Legal services	4	(36,573)	(52,148)	(36,677)
Finance costs		(1,828)	(1,732)	(1,588)
GST payments on purchases		(6,465)	(3,092)	(3,092)
Other payments	5	(2,464)	(2,226)	(2,183)
Receipts				
User charges and fees	6	5,903	3,663	2,922
Commonwealth grants and contributions		36,312	37,652	38,673
Interest received	7	2,869	356	356
GST receipts on sales		167	34	34
GST receipts from taxation authority		5,814	3,058	3,058
Other receipts	8	2,285	4,173	2,049
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities		(66,468)	(94,935)	(82,490)
Cash flows from investing activities				
Payments				
Purchase of non-current physical assets	9	(1,078)	(2,732)	(255)
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		(1,078)	(2,732)	(255)
Cash flows from financing activities				
Principal elements of lease payments		(4,737)	(5,244)	(5,670)
Net cash provided by/(used in) financing activities		(4,737)	(5,244)	(5,670)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		(303)	(8,990)	(8,738)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period		60,230	59,927	50,937
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period		59,927	50,937	42,199

1. 2025-26 Estimates is lower than 2024-25 Estimated Actual 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.
2. Employee benefits expenses increase in 2024-25 Estimated Actual and 2025-26 Estimates largely reflects deferral of program expenditure from 2023-24, 2024-25 to 2024-25 and 2025-26, extension of Justice Reform Initiatives and National Access to Justice Partnership Agreement indexation updates in 2025-26, and the new Public Sector Wages Policy representing 5% increase in 2024-25, 4% increase in 2025-26.
3. Supplies and services decrease from 2023-24 Actual to 2024-25 Estimated Actual and 2025-26 Estimates primarily due to expenditures related to digital transformation program, upgrade information technology infrastructure and managed services along with licenses and subscription increases as we continue to transition to cloud based service models in 2023-24 and 2024-25.
4. Legal services in 2025-26 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 2024-25 Estimated Actual and 2023-24 Actual.
5. The decrease in Other payments from 2023-24 actual to 2024-25 Estimated actual and 2025-26 Estimates primarily due to expenditures related to digital transformation program, which was completed in 2023-24.
6. The higher user charges and fees in 2022-23 are largely due to higher than expected client contributions and cost recoveries. The 2024-25 Estimated Actuals still reflect the original budget value and have not yet been adjusted to capture the increased revenue. The 2025-26 Estimates are still reflecting the conservative budgeting approach for client contributions and recoveries.
7. The 2022-23 actuals reflect the unanticipated increased interest rates from the Reserve Bank of Australia, which have now increased. Both the 2024-25 estimated actuals and the 2025-26 Section 40 Estimates have not reflected this increase which has continued. We continue to adopt a conservative approach in the out-years including 2025-26.
8. Reduction in Other receipts 2025-26 Estimates largely reflects the higher revenue received from the Legal Contribution Trust in 2024-25 Estimated Actual (\$3.1m), compared to 2025-26 conservative Estimate forecast (\$1m).
9. The reduction for Purchase of non-current assets in 2025-26 Estimates reflects the completion of Client Relationship Management (CRM) project in 2024-25 Estimated Actual.

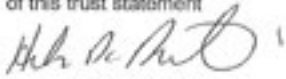
3.6.4 Legal Aid Trust Statement

Legal Aid Commission of Western Australia

Trust Statement

Legal Aid Commission of Western Australia - Client Trust Fund

Name	An account titled the Legal Aid Commission of Western Australia - Client Trust Fund (the Account) shall be established and maintained as a special purpose account pursuant to section 16(1)(c) of the <i>Financial Management Act 2006</i> by the Legal Aid Commission of Western Australia (the Commission).
Purpose	To hold funds in trust for persons who are or have been assisted persons in accordance with section 17 of <i>Legal Aid Commission Act 1976</i> .
Receipts	There shall be credited to the Account funds for the persons who are or have been assisted (e.g., cost recoveries for criminal injury compensation) and interest income.
Payments	• Moneys standing to the credit of the Account may be used for contribution imposed as a condition of a grant of legal aid in accordance with section 39 of <i>Legal Aid Commission Act 1976</i>. • Interest income is to be dealt with in accordance with Part 8, Division 2 of the <i>Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2022 (WA)</i>. • Any unused funds shall be returned to the person entitled to them.
Accountability and Governance	The Account shall be administered, accounted for and reported on by the Commission in accordance with the <i>Financial Management Act 2006</i> , <i>Financial Management Regulation 2007</i> , <i>Legal Aid Commission Act 1976</i> , <i>Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2022 (WA)</i> and Treasurer's instructions.
Review	A detailed review of the Account is to be undertaken on an annual basis. This is to include an assessment of the payments and receipts to ensure compliance with the purpose outlined above.
Disposal of funds on cessation	Upon closure of the Account, any balance standing to the credit of the Account shall be returned to the person entitled to them in accordance with section 17(2) and 17(4) of the <i>Legal Aid Commission Act 1976</i> or the <i>Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2022 (WA)</i> .

I have examined and agree to the provision of this trust statement  Helen DeBrito Director Legal Aid Commission of WA Date: 23/07/2024.	Approved (under delegated authority)  Pauline Burton Director, Financial Policy & Operations Department of Treasury Date: 31/07/2024.
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3.6.5 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 2024-25 was \$71,280.00 (GST inc)

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	ReGen Strategic	\$71,280

3.6.6 Disability Access and Inclusion Plan outcomes

Legal Aid WA continues to implement our Disability Action and Inclusion Plan 2022 – 2027 (DAIP), with some examples of this work outlined below.

This financial year, we finalised our Workplace Adjustment Policy and Procedures, which aims to ensure our staff's accessibility needs are met through reasonable adjustments. This supports **DAIP Pillar 1, Outcome 3**.

We also continued to provide tailored training to our staff to improve their capacity to support clients with disability, particularly around communication with clients with complex needs, in furtherance of **DAIP Pillar 4, Outcome 1**.

Legal Aid WA also continued to develop and entrench internal and external referral processes for people with disability, including providing regular training about different services and client criteria requirements to staff across the organisation, which falls under **DAIP Pillar 3, Outcome 1**.

This financial year, Legal Aid WA established an Evaluation Community of Practice Group, which includes staff members from across the organisation, and offers support and training in relation to evaluation processes, including co-design and consultation with people with lived experience of disability. This supports **DAIP Pillar 1, Outcomes 1 and 2, Pillar 2, Outcome 1, and Pillar 3, Outcome 2**.

In support of **DAIP Pillar 1, Outcome 1**, Disability Advocacy and Referral Division for Young People (DARDY), a holistic legal service with legal staff working alongside social support workers developed an innovative image-based outcome-based evaluation system that is accessible for DARDY clients with accessibility and communication barriers.

We also continued to upgrade the accessibility of our Perth office, to ensure that our facilities can be accessed by all community members, in continuance of our commitment under **DAIP Pillar 2, Outcome 2**.

Alongside this, Legal Aid WA continued its work converting our online resources into accessible formats, to ensure that people with disability can access these resources. This supports **DAIP Pillar 3, Outcome 3**.

Legal Aid WA was also involved in extensive consultation regarding proposed amendments to the *Guardianship & Administration Act 1990 (WA)*, including making formal submissions to the Law Reform Commission of Western Australia. This supports **DAIP Pillar 4, Outcome 2**.

3.6.7 Workforce inclusiveness

Legal Aid WA is committed to a diverse and inclusive workplace. Research shows agencies that value diversity and inclusion achieve greater staff satisfaction, better client service outcomes, and improved decision making and performance. The workforce is more connected, motivated, and productive.

Legal Aid WA is committed to providing a culturally safe workplace and continue our efforts to improve workforce diversity. In the past year, we have implemented a number of initiatives in our DAIP and in our RAP, that are detailed throughout this Report.

3.6.8 Multicultural commitment

Legal Aid WA recognises the cultural diversity of our staff and clients. More than 4% of our clients are from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) background, and 16% of our staff disclosed they are from a CaLD background.

We are guided by the principles and desired outcomes established in the State Government's Western Australian Multicultural Policy Framework.

We are developing a Multicultural Plan to formally commit to actions to further improve service delivery and employee engagement which seek to promote inclusivity.

3.6.9 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.

No breach claims against the Public Sector Standards were received in 2024-25.

3.6.10 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 organisation's 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. The Recordkeeping Awareness Training and Recordkeeping System Training is incorporated into the induction package provided to all new staff.

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 2024-25, 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.

We have concentrated on continuously improving our safety management system and enhancing leadership capabilities to proactively address workplace safety.

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 2024-25, 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 WHS issues and engaging our workers in meaningful dialogue, has allowed us to harness their frontline expertise to assist in identifying and mitigating risk. To further support this, we have introduced project groups focused on key priorities, involving representatives from relevant divisions 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 amended to assist managers to follow up and offer debrief at various points after an incident occurs and to offer supports as required. This improves our ability to identify and address potential risks, offer support, and strengthens our collective commitment to creating a safe and healthy work environment.

We conducted incident reviews to enhance knowledge to support more effective incident reporting and the identification of corrective actions to reduce the risk of incident or injury.

Each division has a nominated officer to champion consultation about WHS topics of relevance to the workforce, supporting our line managers in the conduct of health, safety and wellbeing team meetings, and actively encouraging WHS and wellbeing dialogue.

WHS and wellbeing engagement

Increasing workforce engagement in WHS and wellbeing matters and fostering a culture of genuine care has been an area of focus.

The EMT endorsed an initiative to acknowledge positive safety and wellbeing behaviours, by changing the working group structure.

We launched the Health, Safety, and Wellbeing Recognition and Reward Program to cultivate a proactive safety culture and instil accountability for health, safety, and wellbeing agency wide.

This program recognises and rewards specific behaviours and attitudes that align with Legal Aid WA's desired workplace practices.

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:

- a review of external workplaces to ensure that risk assessments and safety instructions are up to date, provide clear direction, and resources are available to meet the WHS needs of our workforce,
- 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, emergency evacuation exercises, and incident statistics,
- the ongoing monitoring of WHS objectives and targets by the EMT,
- reviewing and delivering updated WHS training to the EMT and assessing and updating relevant modules within the Train-N-Track system,
- 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 2024-25, one new claim was recorded and two claims received were deferred pending assessment of liability.

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 audit of the safety management system is scheduled for December 2025.

Legal Aid WA continues to implement and review the safety management plan to drive continuous improvement.

Reporting

Measure	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Results against target	Comments
Number of fatalities	0	0	0	Zero	Remains zero

Measure	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Results against target	Comments
Lost time injury and/or disease incidence rate	0.00	0.66	0	Zero or 10% improvement on the previous three years	Target met
Lost time injury and/or disease severity rate	0.00	33.33	0	Zero or 10% improvement on the previous three years	Target met
Percentage of injured workers returned to work:					
1) within 13 weeks	100	100	100	Greater than or equal to 80%	Target met
2) within 26 weeks	100	100	100		
Percentage of managers trained in OSH management responsibilities	80	80	82	Greater than or equal to 80%	Target met

Data definitions

Fatalities	The number of 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.
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 2024 - 30 June 2025	\$37,353.00
Member of Commission	Steve Toutountzis	Annual	1 July 2024 - 30 June 2025	\$20,544.00
Member of Internal Audit Committee	Steve Toutountzis	Per Meeting	1 July 2024 - 30 June 2025	\$900.00
Member of Commission	Elspeth Hensler	Annual	1 July 2024 - 30 June 2025	\$20,544.00
Member of Internal Audit Committee	Elspeth Hensler	Per Meeting	1 July 2024 - 30 June 2025	\$300.00

Position	Name	Type of remuneration	Period of membership	Gross/actual remuneration for the financial year
Member of Commission	Kristin Berger	Annual	1 July 2024 - 11 December 2024	\$0.00
Member of Commission	Kristin Berger	Annual	12 December 2024 - 30 June 2025	\$11,400.79
Member of Commission	Curtis Ward	Annual	1 July 2024 - 30 June 2025	\$20,544.00
Member of Internal Audit Committee	Curtis Ward	Per Meeting	1 July 2024 - 30 June 2025	\$600.00
Member of Commission	Hon Ken Wyatt AM	Annual	1 July 2024 - 30 June 2025	\$20,544.00
Member of Commission	Helen De Brito	Annual	1 July 2024 - 30 June 2025	\$0.00
Member of Audit Committee	Helen De Brito	Per Meeting	1 July 2024 - 30 June 2025	\$0.00

Statement of Compliance

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

For the year ended 30 June 2025

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 financial year ended 30 June 2025.

The Annual Report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the *Financial Management Act 2006*, 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 Australian Account Standards Board.



Hon. Jane Crisford SC
Chair of the Commission
Date: 4th September 2025



Helen DeBrito
Director of Legal Aid
Member of the Commission
Date: 4th September 2025

