



Legal Aid Western Australia

# Online Quarterly Report

1 October 2021 - 31 December 2021



LEGAL AID  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

# Performance this Quarter

## 2 QTR 2021-2022

LAWA WEBSITE  
UNIQUE PAGE VIEWS

**570,339**



**↑21%**  
on the same period  
in 2020-2021

TELEPHONE CALLS TO  
LAWA'S INFOLINE WITH  
AN OUTCOME OF SERVICE

**15,709**



**↑13%**  
on the same period  
in 2020-2021

EXTERNAL REFERRALS  
FROM INFOLINE

**4,231**



ADVICE, ADVOCACY  
& DOCUMENT  
PREPARATION

**5,617**



### GRANTS DECISIONS

REVIEWED

**6**

OVERTURNED

**1**



**2,796** NEW  
GRANTS  
OF AID

**↑8%**  
on the same period  
in 2020-2021

**6,770** EXTENSIONS  
OF EXISTING  
GRANTS OF AID

**80%** % OF NEW GRANTS ASSIGNED TO  
THE PRIVATE PROFESSION

**12,138** DUTY LAWYER SERVICES

FAMILY DISPUTE RESOLUTION MEDIATIONS **202**

RECIPIENTS OF COMMUNITY LEGAL EDUCATION **7,893**

SERVICES TO PEOPLE EXPERIENCING FAMILY VIOLENCE **11,049**

ONLINE  
LEGAL CHAT

**2,743**

**↑4%**  
on the same period  
in 2020-2021

# Priority Project Updates

## 100% Vaccinated

Since 31 December, all staff and contractors in Legal Aid WA workplaces have been double vaccinated. Vaccines are the most effective tool in reducing the spread of COVID-19. We're playing our part in protecting our vulnerable clients and disadvantaged communities from infection.

## Strong Financial Controls

In November, the Auditor General tabled a report in Parliament recognising Legal Aid WA as a 'best practice entity' for timeliness, quality of financial reporting, and controls. This honour acknowledges the performance of Legal Aid WA in maintaining good financial management and controls. It also recognises our quality key performance indicator reporting. It is taxpayers' money that we use and we're committed to strong financial controls and audit transparency.

## In Amongst the Awards

In December, Legal Aid Western Australia was involved in four achievement awards from the Institute of Public Administration Australia. IPAA named Kaia Gooding (who leads our criminal duty lawyers in Perth) as 'young leader of the year'. We also won the award for 'Best Practice in LGBTI Inclusion' for a suite of new resources. Our Virtual Office network was the silver winner for 'Best Practice in Innovation.' The Mirrabooka Family Violence Hub, where we provide legal services, was IPAA's bronze winner for 'Best Practice in Collaboration.'



*Kaia Gooding at the IPAA Awards*

# Priority Project Updates

## Satisfied Clients

In December, we released the results of a random survey of 406 criminal law clients. The survey found an overall satisfaction rating of 90%. The research company conducting the survey reported that ‘overall, this year’s survey results show that Legal Aid WA continues to perform well, with their criminal law clients showing very high levels of satisfaction.’

## And one more thing.....

On 6 December, Colleen Brown published an opinion piece in Perth’s daily newspaper. The article focussed on removing barriers for women escaping family violence. This piece was part of our efforts to promote the 16 Days in WA campaign against gender-based violence. Colleen heads Legal Aid WA’s family law division.

### State’s housing crisis can cost vulnerable women their lives

COLLEEN BROWN

Picture this: it’s late at night and you are forced to flee a violent and abusive partner with young children in tow and nowhere to go.

This is the current reality facing thousands of West Australian women each year.

Since May 2020, Legal Aid WA has assisted more than 12,000 women.

Almost 50 per cent of those disclosed they had experienced or were at risk of family and domestic violence.

The shocking truth is that one in six Australian women experience physical, sexual or economic abuse by a current or former intimate partner.

As workers on the frontline, we witness the heartbreaking

impact domestic violence has on women and, subsequently, their children.

They don’t just face horrific violence: the layers of abuse are immense and span from coercive control to financial and emotional.

Right now in WA, we are witnessing many issues which are making it harder for women to escape domestic violence.

The biggest is our State’s housing rental crisis, which makes it incredibly difficult to leave an abusive relationship.

Over the past few years, Legal Aid WA has recognised a need to not just tackle the legal aspect of violence against women but also address the underlying financial, housing and health problems that come with it.

LAWA has brought on board social workers to work alongside lawyers, in an integrated and collaborative approach with other agencies to support our clients holistically.

This way we make a real difference, by assisting women as a team at the point of crisis.

We create a plan, walk them through the process and link them up with other agencies to ensure the client and her children are taken to a refuge or offered housing, financial and mental health assistance.

In many cases this is the first time they’ve had that support because sadly they’re so used to being disregarded and disempowered.

Unfortunately, we can only

do so much. The rental crisis is causing a bottleneck situation in refuges with women not being able to leave to go to more long-term housing due to affordability and competition.

This results in women returning to violent relationships and, in some cases, it can cost them their lives.

We welcome the WA Government’s affordable housing announcement in September, which reflects the single largest investment in social housing in the State’s history.

The \$875 million included in the State Budget will deliver more social housing throughout the state which will help support many vulnerable

people. We now know that the collaborative approach works and moving forward the WA Government, legal and social support agencies need to prioritise funding to respond to domestic violence against women in a holistic and collaborative way to achieve safety for them and their families.

As we move through 16 Days in WA, a campaign to stop violence against women, we all need to do our part and continue to innovate the way we respond to domestic violence to ensure there is a way out for women.

Colleen Brown is the director of the Family Law Division Legal Aid WA

courtesy West Australian

# Financial Performance

Legal Aid is expected to have a forecast deficit of \$3,636,763 at the end of the 2021-22 financial year, this is lower than the budget deficit of \$5,571,070 set for the Commission and is a decrease of \$1,934,307 against the budget target.

<b>Financial Performance</b>	<b>Year-to-date Dec 2021</b>	<b>Forecast<sup>^</sup> June 2022</b>
Commonwealth Funding	\$30,961,119	\$37,756,276
State Funding	\$30,302,000	\$55,103,232
Other Income	\$2,273,636	\$3,734,425
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$63,536,755</b>	<b>\$96,593,933</b>
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>\$47,860,328</b>	<b>\$100,230,696</b>
<b>Surplus/Deficit*</b>	<b>\$15,676,427</b>	<b>-\$3,636,763</b>

*\*The forecast operating deficit of \$3,636,763 as at 30 June 2022 is due to delays in project expenditure carried over from the prior year. The revised budget deficit for the Commission of \$5,571,070 million included accounting treatment timing adjustments of \$1.598 million.*

*<sup>^</sup>Forecast Actuals to the end of June are Legal Aid WA's best estimate of where we believe the Commissions finances are currently expected to be at year end.*

*These are management figures and have not been audited.*



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