

Legal Aid

NEW SOUTH WALES

Expanding our reach to Aboriginal communities



About us

Who we are

Legal Aid NSW is an independent statutory body, established under the *Legal Aid Commission Act 1979*, reporting to the New South Wales Attorney General, the Hon Gabrielle Upton MP.

We are the largest legal aid agency in Australia, playing a central role in the delivery and coordination of legal aid services.

A Board with 10 members determines our policies and priorities. Board members are appointed by the New South Wales Attorney General for a period of up to three years.

What we do

We provide legal services across New South Wales, through a state-wide network of 22 offices and 210 regular outreach locations, with a particular focus on assisting socially and economically disadvantaged people.

We assist disadvantaged people to deal with legal problems through a comprehensive network of services across criminal, family and civil law.

Our services range from high volume legal information, education, advice, minor assistance, dispute resolution and duty services, through to an extensive litigation practice.

What we seek to achieve

Legal Aid NSW aims to contribute to a fair justice system.

We deliver a high volume of community legal education and advice services that are not means tested.

More intensive assistance, such as casework and legal representation, is means tested.

We work in partnership with private lawyers who are members of the Law Society of NSW and the NSW Bar Association. They receive funding from Legal Aid NSW to represent legally aided clients.

We also work in close partnership with LawAccess NSW, Community Legal Centres, the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) Limited and pro bono legal services.

Our values

We are committed to the legislated New South Wales public service values:

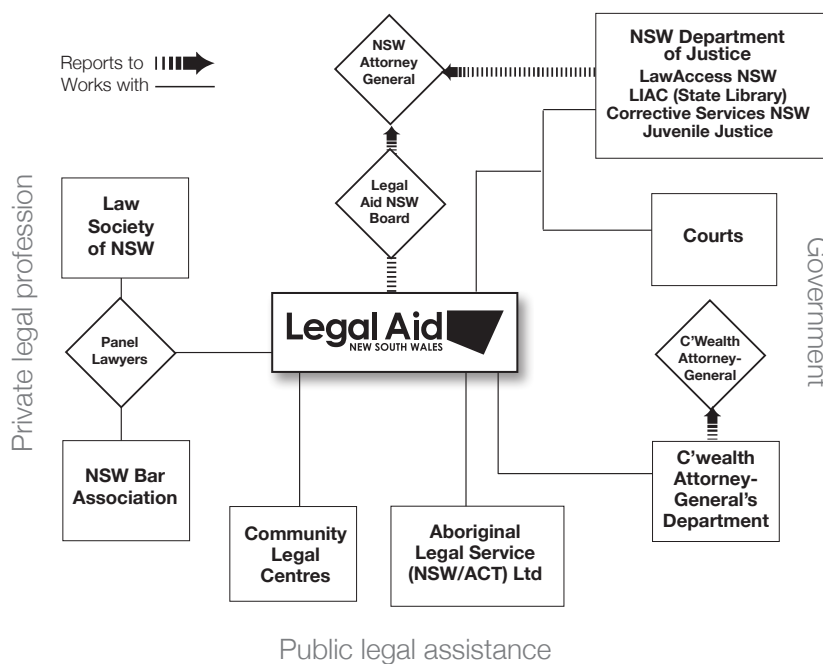
- integrity
- trust
- service
- accountability

These values are reflected in our Code of Conduct and govern the way we do business.

Our objectives

Our main objective is to improve access to justice for the most disadvantaged people in our society, responding to their legal and non-legal needs. In our growing role as early intervention problem solving lawyers, we draw on the skills and dedication of our highly experienced employees and work alongside a growing network of stakeholder partners to jointly deliver services.

Legal Aid NSW in the Justice Sector



Note: See page 8 for a more detailed explanation of our place in the Justice Sector.

The Hon Gabrielle Upton MP
Attorney General
Governor Macquarie Tower
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Attorney

Legal Aid NSW has pleasure in presenting to you the report of its activities for the year ended 30 June 2015. This report is submitted in accordance with section 13(1) of the *Legal Aid Commission Act 1979* and section 10 (1) of the *Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act 1984*.

Yours sincerely

Bill Grant
Chief Executive Officer
October 2015

About this report

This annual report reviews and reports our activities and performance, including what we set out to do in our Legal Aid NSW Plan for 2014-2015. It is structured around the four key objectives of the plan:

- To promote access to justice through early intervention and better targeting of legal assistance to disadvantaged people;
- To pursue excellence, innovation and efficiency in legal service delivery;
- To support and develop our people; and improve our systems to meet organisational goals; and
- To build strong, effective service partnerships to respond to the legal and non-legal needs of our clients.

Achievements in this report are aligned with focus areas from the plan such as service expansion in regional and remote areas, early intervention strategies, better information and referral services, and strong partnerships so we can respond better to clients' changing legal needs.

This report incorporates all operational activities of our organisation, including joint initiatives. It reflects our commitment to effective corporate governance through openness and accountability, and provides an account of our revenue and how we have used public funds.

As well as the year past, the report looks to the year ahead and comments on the challenges facing Legal Aid NSW in a difficult economic climate.

In this report we refer to ourselves as Legal Aid NSW.

Last year's annual report received a Gold Award from the Australasian Reporting Awards – our eighth Gold Award.

This is our thirty-sixth annual report. This, and some earlier annual reports, are available on the Legal Aid NSW website in pdf format and easy-to-navigate html format. They can be found in the Publications section of www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au

In accordance with Public Service Commission directions, Legal Aid NSW no longer produces printed copies of its annual report.

Cover photo Members of the Civil Law Service for Aboriginal Communities visited many parts of New South Wales to assist Aboriginal people with everyday legal issues like fines, housing, social security and consumer problems.

Their achievements contributed to an increase in the number of Aboriginal people we were able to assist. Details appear on page 18. Other initiatives that helped to expand our reach to Aboriginal communities appear on pages 18–19 and 45.

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Chair's report

On behalf of the Board I am pleased to introduce the 2014-2015 Annual Report.

This is my second full year as Chair of the Board of Legal Aid NSW, and I continue to be impressed by the leadership shown by Legal Aid NSW in innovative and responsive services to meet the legal needs of socially and economically disadvantaged people in New South Wales.

As this report demonstrates, 2014-2015 has been a rewarding and interesting year which saw Legal Aid NSW continuing to deliver on the goals and objectives in the Legal Aid NSW Plan.

Working with vulnerable people

Legal Aid NSW is increasingly working with other agencies to meet the needs of the most vulnerable members of our community.

The Board was briefed on a number of important initiatives in this area, including a service for young people with complex needs and a service for Aboriginal women leaving custody. Legal Aid NSW is playing an important role in rolling out *It Stops Here: Safer Pathway*, a ground breaking initiative where agencies work together to improve the safety of women and children experiencing domestic violence.

The Board was pleased to approve policy changes to support the work of Legal Aid NSW in providing care and protection services, in partnership with Community Legal Centres and Aboriginal Legal Services.



The Board also approved amendments to the means test, to raise the income threshold and allowable assets, making legal aid more accessible.

Aboriginal people are one of the most vulnerable groups in our society. The Board was pleased to approve a new Reconciliation Action Plan for 2015-2018. This plan builds on the excellent work that Legal Aid NSW is already doing to increase services to Aboriginal communities through initiatives such as Aboriginal Field Officers, a civil law service for Aboriginal people, and increasing the number of Aboriginal staff.

Effective and efficient delivery of services

Ensuring that we deliver our services effectively, efficiently and in an economical manner is a high priority for the Board.

Legal Aid NSW has carried out a number of reviews of our services, including the Legal Aid NSW partnership with Settlement Services International and the provision of legal services in South West, Far West, North West and Northern New South Wales. These reviews have provided us with valuable information to inform how we deliver our services.

“This year saw a further round of efficiency and other savings targets from the New South Wales government which were successfully met.”

The Board has monitored the pilot of activity based costing at Legal Aid NSW. Activity based costing is an important tool for Legal Aid NSW to improve service planning and to demonstrate value for money. As a result of this evaluation, activity based costing will be implemented across Legal Aid NSW in 2015-2016.

Responding to funding pressures

Following a reduction in Commonwealth funding for expensive Commonwealth criminal law cases, the Board made the difficult decision to restrict legal aid funding for expensive Commonwealth indictable matters and for some Commonwealth civil law and family law matters. I am pleased to advise that this decision was reversed following the provision of additional funding by the Commonwealth in February 2015. The Board continues to closely monitor expenses in this area.

This year saw a further round of efficiency and other savings targets from the New South Wales Government which were successfully met.

Initial and final contributions form an increasingly important source of revenue for Legal Aid NSW. This reduces the pressure to cut our services or reduce eligibility for

legal aid for those who need it most. The Board approved changes to the contributions policy to improve the collection of contributions from our clients. The Board will review this policy in 12 months.

A three-year audit strategy

An important function of the Board is to oversee audit and risk for Legal Aid NSW.

As part of the audit and risk strategy, the Board approved a three-year internal audit plan in 2013-2014. A number of internal audits were completed this financial year including Accounts Payable and Payments, Delegations of Authority and Internal Security Annual Audit. The Board will oversee the implementation of recommendations arising from these audits.

Legal Aid NSW processes for dealing with complaints continue to improve. Data collection has been improved and there is now regular reporting to the executive and to the Board on complaints, highlighting trends and strategic issues.

The year ahead

A new Legal Aid NSW Plan will guide our work in 2015-2016.

Improving coordination of our services to ensure an integrated response to clients is the cornerstone of the plan. It includes the development of a client service strategy, providing a coordinated response to people experiencing domestic violence, and improving services to rural and remote communities.

Implementing the new National Partnership Agreement with the Commonwealth will be an important focus for next year. We will work closely with our justice sector partners to implement jurisdictional planning to meet identified legal needs in the community.

In April this year I attended an executive strategic planning retreat which informed the development of the 2015-2016 Legal Aid NSW Plan. I was impressed with the commitment and knowledge of the Executive team, and their willingness to work together to develop client-centred solutions. I was particularly pleased to note the attention given to addressing the needs of clients experiencing domestic violence.

Legal Aid NSW has a strong Board, which I am proud to lead as Chair. Together, the members of the Board bring an invaluable mix of skills and experience to the organisation.

I thank the Legal Aid NSW Executive team and staff for their dedication and commitment to delivering legal services to the people of New South Wales. I also acknowledge the work of the private profession and the commitment of the Public Defenders in the provision of legal aid services.



Craig Smith
Chair, Legal Aid NSW



I am pleased to present the Legal Aid NSW 2014-2015 Annual Report.

The report reflects the dynamic and varied way that we go about delivering on our charter to provide legal services to socially and economically disadvantaged people in New South Wales. The case studies throughout the report bring our work to life. We continually adjust the way we deliver services to meet the needs of our clients and the changing service delivery environment.

This was the last year of our five year National Partnership Agreement with the Commonwealth. I am pleased to report that we exceeded the performance benchmarks, increasing our early intervention services by 98 per cent and our total number of services by 47 per cent. These are outstanding results and they reflect a lot of hard work by our staff.

Following extensive negotiations with the Commonwealth, a new five-year National Partnership Agreement was signed in June 2015. While there is a reduction in Commonwealth funding for Legal Aid NSW, the new agreement gives us some certainty about our Commonwealth funding for the next five years. This allows us to plan our services and provide some employment certainty for staff.

Catching problems early

We continued to develop innovative ways to assist people to identify and address legal issues as early as possible.

Community legal education is central to this. In 2014-2015 our program focused on educating young people, families, Aboriginal people, newly arrived people and community workers.

Over 7,000 young people and 600 teachers and workers attended workshops on sexting and cyberbullying.

We provided community workers with the skills to identify their clients' legal issues through *Law Check-Up*, an easy to use checklist of common legal problems.

Smart use of technology allowed us to reach a larger group of people in need of legal help. Our new Legal Aid App for iPhone and Android provides a handy gateway to our services. People can search for the Legal Aid NSW service closest to them, watch videos about the law, book into one of our workshops and access our factsheets and resources. We introduced webinars on everyday legal issues ranging from mortgage stress and fines to divorce and child support.

Our family dispute resolution programs play an important role in resolving issues as early as possible. Our 80 per cent success rate for mediations this year meant that many clients avoided the stress and expense of going to court. We established new early intervention and alternative dispute resolution services in response to the child protection reforms.

Providing services in rural and remote communities

We expanded our services to rural and remote communities, who are often isolated and have difficulty accessing legal services.

Our regional offices are the backbone of our services to these communities. A highlight of the year was the opening of a new Legal Aid NSW office in Port Macquarie in December 2014. This is an area with limited legal services and high legal need. The new office works closely with local lawyers to deliver services in Port Macquarie and surrounding areas such as Taree, Kempsey and Forster. Our lawyers have provided over 1,500 legal advice and assistance sessions and represented 1,600 people in court, either as duty lawyers or under a family or criminal law grant of aid in the six and a half months since the office was opened.

Legal Aid NSW lawyers have become increasingly mobile, reaching into the heart of some very isolated regional and rural communities. The number of outreach locations where Legal Aid NSW provides services has increased by 43 per cent since 2010-2011, with 154 of these being in rural and regional areas.

The Civil Law Service for Aboriginal Communities has visited a number of disadvantaged Aboriginal communities to provide assistance with fines, debt, consumer law, housing and social security problems. In 2014-2015 the service provided 2,262 advice and minor assistance services.

Assisting clients with complex needs

Many of our clients suffer deep and persistent disadvantage, and we are continually looking for new ways to assist these clients.

One group who is particularly vulnerable are young people with complex needs who may have an intellectual disability, mental health issues or profound trauma from childhood experiences. These young people often come into contact with Legal Aid NSW through our Children's Legal Service.

We have developed a wrap-around service that looks at the civil, family and criminal law needs of these clients, with the aim of breaking the cycle of disadvantage. To assist with this we have entered into partnerships with the Koori Youth Court and the Children's Court at Parramatta, and have been working closely with the NSW Ombudsman, NSW Police and Family and Community Services. We will evaluate this service in 2015-2016.

Working with our partners

Legal Aid NSW cannot do its work effectively in isolation. Our partners are integral to how we do our business, and range from private lawyers to community legal centres, courts and government departments. This report provides numerous examples of strong partnerships.

In a year of considerable government reform, we played a central coordination role in two key areas of government reform: domestic violence and the care and protection of children.

We successfully implemented *It Stops Here: Safer Pathway* at Waverley and Orange to increase the safety of women experiencing domestic violence.

"We have exceeded our Commonwealth performance benchmarks, reflecting a lot of hard work by our staff."

We worked collaboratively to develop and implement new models for the delivery of legal services in child protection law targeting casework assistance to disadvantaged families.

Private lawyers are central to how we deliver our services under the mixed model of service delivery. In 2014-2015, private lawyers provided 42 per cent of our case and duty services. We carried out the record reappointment of 1,110 current panel members whose five year appointments were due to expire.

The evaluation of our partnership with Settlement Services International to provide legal services to disadvantaged members of multilingual communities found that the partnership had resulted in increased levels of assistance to these communities. We were able to reach clients in a part of Sydney that we previously did not serve well and provide them with much needed services.

Supporting our staff

Having motivated, well-supported and well-trained staff underpins everything we do.

The *Government Sector Employment Act 2013* represents a significant change to how New South Wales government agencies recruit and manage staff. I am pleased to report that we successfully implemented the major requirements of the act ahead of the required time frames.

In anticipation of a new Code of Conduct, a Workplace Behaviour and Ethics Working Group has developed a plan to improve staff awareness of ethical behaviour and promote a positive organisational culture.

We also used the introduction of the act as an opportunity to improve our executive capability.

We continue to take the wellbeing, health and safety of our staff very seriously. We implemented a well check program aimed at administrative and legal staff, particularly those dealing with confronting issues. Many of our staff need to travel long distances to provide services at courts and outreach locations. We have introduced new safe driving guidelines and safe driving training to support these staff.

Meeting savings targets with minimal impact on services

Given that we experienced a reduction in Commonwealth funding, our financial result for 2014-2015 was outstanding. Legal Aid NSW met its savings targets with minimal impact on legal aid services, no frontline staff cuts and no impact on services in State crime, which represents the largest area of legal aid expenditure.

I would like to thank the Board of Legal Aid NSW for their strategic leadership over the last year under Chair Craig Smith. I want to thank the Executive team for their support, commitment, vision and hard work over the last year. Most of all, I would like to thank the staff of Legal Aid NSW and our partners in the private profession and public legal assistance sector, who work tirelessly to assist disadvantaged people in New South Wales to resolve their legal problems.



William Grant
Chief Executive Officer,
Legal Aid NSW

What we did over the past year

The issues our clients deal with vary only slightly over time – debt, domestic violence, homelessness, family disputes or lack of access to government benefits. What is changing is our approach to how we provide legal assistance.

Our new direction as problem solving lawyers, who are very much part of joint service delivery, recognises that clients often have complex and interrelated legal and non-legal issues and face significant barriers in accessing legal assistance.

By changing the way we work and introducing flexible programs, we are now able to assist severely disadvantaged people to solve multiple problems at a much earlier stage.

An emphasis on client-centred and integrated services saw more lawyers working from outreach locations, including tribunals and partner agencies such as health and immigration centres. The number of outreach locations grew to 210 this year, taking lawyers into the heart of some very isolated regional and rural communities.

As a result, clients' multiple issues were better addressed, and early intervention and detection helped prevent problems from escalating.

Several external evaluations this year clearly demonstrated that this strategy is working. We are seeing more clients who would otherwise take no action to see a lawyer or try to resolve their issues outside the formal justice system.

We were guided by our Legal Aid NSW Plan 2014-2015, which although broad in scope, emphasised better access to justice for Aboriginal people and young people. The plan's objectives were achieved with most actions completed. We also developed a new plan for 2015-2016.

In a year of considerable government reform, we played a central coordination role in two areas: domestic violence, and the care and protection of children. Our leadership role was consultative and collaborative in order to achieve the best results for the community.

Many of our achievements were aligned with priorities set out in the State Plan NSW 2021. We participated extensively in the Productivity Commission Inquiry on Legal Assistance Services and were positively referenced in the final report.

All this was achieved within a difficult financial climate. We successfully met required budget savings, without compromising principles of equity in our pursuit of access to justice.

We closed the year by negotiating a new five-year National Partnership Agreement with the Commonwealth Government.

Financial management

Our net financial result was a deficit of \$4.4 million.

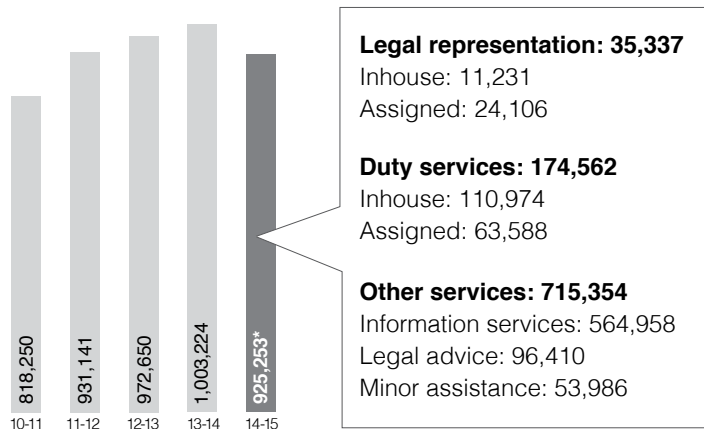
Financial summary

	2013-2014 (\$M)	2014-2015 (\$M)	Change (%)
Operating Revenue	247.7	253.4	2.3
Operating Expenses	243.9	257.4	5.5
Total Assets	106.3	105.7	(0.6)
Total Liabilities	74.3	82.0	10.2
Surplus/ (Deficit)	3.5	(4.4)	(225.7)
Net Equity	32.0	23.8	(25.6)

Legal Aid NSW client services: snapshot

Client services: five year trend

**Total services 2014-2015:
925,253**



*The introduction of new protocols to streamline the volume of telephone calls from prisoners has contributed to the decrease in the volume of calls and consequently, to information services (page 56).

Achievements against the 2014-2015 Legal Aid NSW Plan

Each action in the Legal Aid NSW Plan has a specified measure of success or target*. In 2014-2015, targets against completed actions were met or exceeded except for three, which were not met due to external factors.

Access to justice	Excellence in legal services	Supporting our people	Strong partnerships
<p>Objective: To promote access to justice through early intervention and better targeting of legal assistance to disadvantaged people</p>	<p>Objective: To pursue excellence, innovation and efficiency in legal service delivery</p>	<p>Objective: To support and develop our people and improve our systems to meet organisational goals</p>	<p>Objective: To build strong, effective service partnerships to respond to the legal and non legal needs of our clients</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed the Legal Aid NSW Aboriginal Reconciliation Action Plan 2015-2018 (p 18) Implemented a civil law service for children (p 20) Delivered 174 community legal education sessions about the risks of cyber bullying and sexting in schools, exceeding target of 100 sessions (p 33) Expanded the <i>Best for Kids</i> website which will provide information on criminal law, care and protection, family law, family violence and civil law (p 33) Developed and implemented two new models for delivery of legal services in child protection law targeting casework assistance to disadvantaged families (p 18) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluated the civil law duty services model in use at the Social Security Appeals Tribunal and the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (p 25) Implemented the accepted recommendations from the <i>Review of the Panel Lawyer Audit Strategy</i> (p 41) Negotiated and finalised the new National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services 2015-2020 with the Commonwealth (pp 11, 73) Analysed the outcomes of the Productivity Commission's <i>Access to Justice Arrangements Inquiry</i> (p 11) Implemented the Diversity Action Plan 2014-2015 (p 26 and Appendix 9) Implemented new policy, processes and systems for complaints handling in Legal Aid NSW (p 71) <p>NOTE: The impact on Legal Aid NSW of the Government's accepted recommendations of the NSW Law Reform Commission's <i>Inquiry Into Encouraging Appropriate Early Guilty Pleas</i> could not be assessed as the recommendations were not publicly available.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed a new Aboriginal Employment and Career Development Strategy 2015-2017 (p 54) Revised policies and procedures for managing the safety of staff working in isolation and travelling long distances (p 57) Implemented requirements of the <i>Government Sector Employment Act 2013</i> and Public Service Commission Guidelines (p 52) Implemented and evaluated a pilot for a new time recording and reporting system (p 56) Developed a data governance framework (p 56) <p>NOTE: The accepted recommendations of the University of NSW study into health and wellbeing in Legal Aid NSW could not be implemented as the study's final recommendations were not received before the end of the financial year. This action will be implemented in 2015-2016.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched a new Statement of Commitment with the Aboriginal Legal Service to support the delivery of legal services to Aboriginal clients (p 50) Reviewed the provision of legal services in the South-West, Far-West and Northern NSW and identified gaps in legal services (p 24) Provided professional development on best practice for outreach mobile lawyers across the legal assistance sector (p 55) Supported Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Services in Waverley and Orange in the establishment of domestic violence local coordination points and safety action meetings (pp 19 and 43) Supported and delivered 53 collaborative projects including legal clinics through the Cooperative Legal Service Delivery Program, exceeding target of 10 projects (p45) Identified gaps in support systems for Aboriginal women leaving custody (p 21) <p>NOTE: Formal relationships with the network of Aboriginal community justice groups (CJGs) could not be established due to a rationalisation of CJGs within the Department of Justice.</p>
Year ahead			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the new Reconciliation Action Plan Expand inhouse capacity to conduct more committal matters across New South Wales Provide targeted services to Aboriginal communities by expanding civil and family law services to regional and remote communities Develop a new Domestic Violence Strategy across all areas of legal service delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement Activity Based Costing across all legal practices Develop a strategy for the better use of technology to improve engagement and accessibility for clients, partners and stakeholders Develop a client service strategy to ensure quality and consistency of services to clients Implement the new National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services 2015-2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop options to improve staff health and wellbeing based on the findings from the UNSW Health and Wellbeing study and the Workplace Behaviour and Ethics Project Develop and launch a Workforce Development Plan to improve staff development and performance Develop a business case for a new case management system for Legal Aid NSW Develop a strategy to capture data and information that demonstrates the value and quality of Legal Aid NSW services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop new initiatives to improve access to legal services in correctional facilities through the use of technology, in partnership with Corrective Services NSW Collaborate with the legal assistance sector and the Department of Justice to implement the requirements of the new National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services 2015-2020 Develop a framework to establish regional service delivery plans for Legal Aid NSW offices

*Measures of success/targets are used for internal purposes only.

Past and present

Our history

New South Wales has a long history of providing legal aid for criminal, family and civil law problems.

In less than 100 years, legal aid has developed from a charity to a very important part of the justice system.

1918 – *Poor Persons Legal Remedies Act 1918* – first formal legal aid scheme

1941 – The Public Defender’s Office represents disadvantaged people in serious criminal cases.

1943 – The *Legal Assistance Act 1943* set up the Public Solicitor’s Office – the first time in the western world that lawyers were employed to give legal aid to low income earners.

1974 – “Shopfront lawyers” in the new Australian Legal Aid Office provide services under federal law.

1979 – The New South Wales Government establishes the Legal Services Commission (now known as Legal Aid NSW).

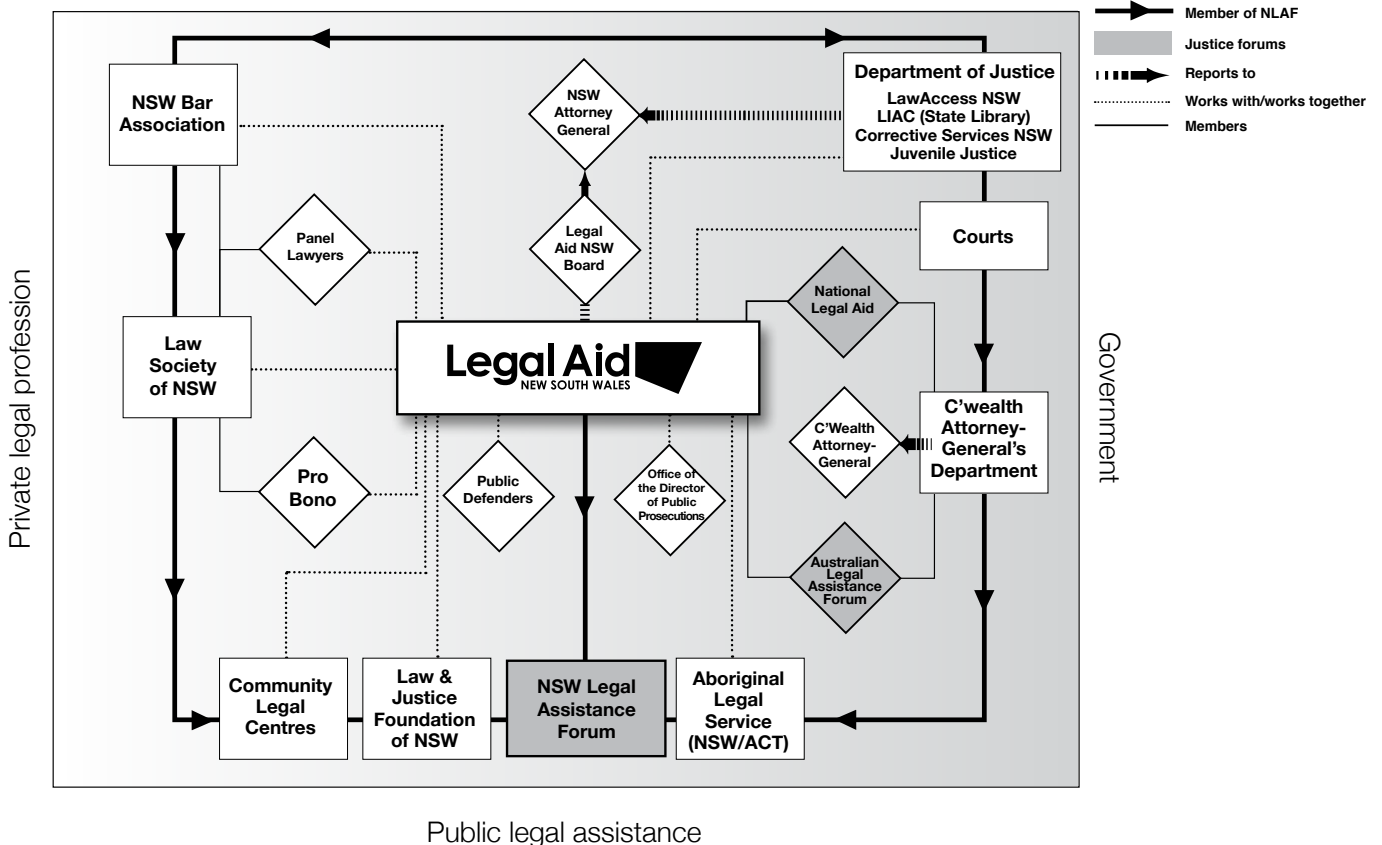
1987 – State and federal legal aid offices merge to form the Legal Aid Commission of NSW.

1990s – Expansion includes alternate dispute resolution and specialist services for children, women experiencing domestic violence, prisoners, and people with mental health problems.

2006 – The Legal Aid Commission changes its name to Legal Aid NSW.

2015 – New directions – we provide more flexible services such as taking advice clinics into communities to reach isolated residents and Aboriginal communities; joint service delivery reaching people earlier, and creative strategies for assisting our most vulnerable clients. We become key players in government reforms.

Legal Aid NSW in the Justice Sector



Finance

Our total income was \$253.4 million and we spent \$257.4 million.

Of our total expenditure, 47.4 per cent was spent on criminal law services, 27.3 per cent on family law services, 13.1 per cent on civil law services and 12.2 per cent on community partnership programs. See the financial summary on page 73 for details about where our funds come from and how we spend them. Details about our community partnership program funding can be found in Appendices 4 and 5.

Our people are highly trained

We employed 1,046 staff (945.85 full-time equivalent), 479 in regional offices and 567 in the Central Sydney office. Of that total, 533 are lawyers and 513 are employed in administrative and corporate services roles.

Sixty-three lawyers have specialist accreditation – NSW Law Society qualifications for expertise in their field.

We recorded a 44 per cent increase in employee attendances at learning activities. The increase reflects training related to legislative and policy reforms. See page 54 and Appendix 3 for details.

Management is headed by an Executive team of eight

An independent Board oversees our long-term strategic direction, whilst the day-to-day management is overseen by the CEO, assisted by a Deputy CEO and eight Directors.

See pages 61 to 65 for their achievements and profiles.

Private lawyers – key partners

In 2014-2015, 41.8 per cent of our case and duty services were provided by private lawyers. See Assigned Grants and Duty Services in Appendix 6.

Structure includes three legal practices

Our organisation is made up of these areas – Criminal Law, Family Law, Civil Law, Grants, Strategic Policy and Planning, Finance, People and Organisational Development, IT Services and Records and Operations Support.

Three of these divisions are legal practices – criminal law, family law and civil law (pages 27-32). Each legal practice has a number of specialist services (page 15). We also have an Aboriginal Services Unit.

Our organisational structure appears on page 66.

Key legislation governing our work

Our organisation is established under the *Legal Aid Commission Act 1979* (the Act), which establishes Legal Aid NSW as an independent statutory body with a mandate to provide effective, efficient and economical services that are available and accessible to disadvantaged people in New South Wales.

Section 68 of the Act enables Legal Aid NSW to establish special consultative committees to advise the Board in exercising its functions under the Act.

The *Government Sector Employment Act 2013* provides a framework for employment and workforce management. We have complied with all aspects of the GSE Act reforms and implemented compliant recruitment practices well ahead of the Public Service Commission deadline (page 52).

The health and safety of people in our workplace is conducted in accordance with s18 of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*.

Our financial statements are prepared in accordance with the provisions of the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*.

Significant efforts to reach disadvantaged clients

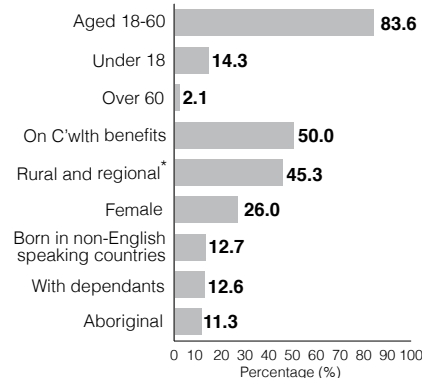
Legal Aid NSW provides services to socially and economically disadvantaged members of the community. Clients who seek and receive assistance from Legal Aid NSW present with a wide range of complex legal, social, psychological and physical problems. Clients' issues may be compounded due to their lack of English proficiency, low levels of education and literacy, and disability.

Legal Aid NSW has made significant efforts in improving access to services by Aboriginal people through expanded and enhanced services to Aboriginal communities. The increase in case grant and duty services to Aboriginal clients from 10.2 per cent in 2013-2014 to 11.3 per cent in 2014-2015 is a pleasing result.

Similar efforts have been made in reaching people outside Legal Aid NSW offices through a comprehensive outreach program. The increase in case grant and duty services to people in regional and rural New South Wales from 42.5 per cent in 2013-2014 to 45.3 per cent in 2014-2015 is a welcome result.

Legal Aid NSW client profile: (%)

Based on total case grants and inhouse duty services



* Includes Newcastle and Wollongong

Measuring performance

Indicators and targets help improve services to clients

Legal Aid NSW uses a range of methods to measure performance and continues to strengthen its focus on performance measurement.

High levels of performance against the National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services (NPA) were achieved again in 2014-2015 which is the final year of the current NPA (page 11).

The biennial client satisfaction survey was conducted in 2015, achieving a high 87 per cent satisfaction rating for advice and minor assistance services.

Accessibility for grants of aid has improved this year after the Board of Legal Aid NSW approved an increase to the means test threshold in August 2014, with the means test income limit as a percentage of the national minimum wage now at 60.1 per cent.

A business intelligence tool has played a significant role in providing accurate and timely data to staff through accessible dashboards, facilitating improved service measurement, planning and decision making.

Key performance indicators	2012–2013	2013–2014	2014–2015
Community awareness of legal rights and responsibilities			
Client satisfaction rating	91.5%	N/A (surveys conducted every 2 years)	87.0%
Average waiting time for advice appointments	0.96 weeks	0.77	0.87
Number of information services provided	633,743	654,958	564,958
Rate per 100,000 of NSW population accessing information services	8,608	8,740	7,441
Number of advice and minor assistance services provided	128,719	140,729	150,396
Rate per 100,000 of NSW population accessing advice and minor assistance services	1,748	1,878	1,981
Number of publications distributed	731,526	712,395	707,409
Rate per 100,000 of people accessing publications	9,936	9,507	9,317
Accessibility of legal aid			
Means test income limit as a % of national minimum weekly wage	52.4%	51.1%	60.1%
Percentage of Local Court sittings serviced by duty solicitor schemes	100%	100%	100%
Representation service standards			
Percentage of satisfactory comprehensive inhouse file reviews	98.3%	96.8%	97.1%*
Number of Legal Aid NSW lawyers with specialist accreditation	67	76	63
Number of Legal Aid NSW lawyer attendances at training sessions	2,242	3,306	3,118
Number of private lawyer attendances at Legal Aid NSW training sessions	527	1,313	882

*This is a combined family and civil law percentage. Inhouse file review figures for criminal law are not included this year because of a change in process during 2014-2015.

Service delivery targets	2013–2014 performance	2014–2015 target	2014–2015 performance	2015–2016 target
Legal advice services	98,939	99,000	96,410	96,500
Information services*	654,958	655,000	564,958	565,000
Inhouse and assigned duty services	171,765	173,000	174,562	175,000
Conferences–family dispute resolution	2,726	2,750	2,676	2,700
Community legal education sessions	3,160	3,200	2,975	3,000
Outreach legal advice services	15,558	15,800	14,769	14,800
Locations with regular outreach	194	200	210	210
Locations with regular outreach for Aboriginal communities	31	31	34	35

NOTE: The level of one-off Commonwealth funding decreased in 2014-2015 with a consequent reduction in planned services. Targets for 2015-2016 reflect the new funding environment, including the commencement of the new National Partnership Agreement for Legal Assistance Services 2015-2020.

*The introduction of new protocols to streamline the volume of telephone calls from prisoners has contributed to the decrease in the volume of calls and consequently, to information services (page 56).

Reporting against the National Partnership Agreement

Commonwealth funding to Legal Aid NSW is governed by the National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services (NPA).

The NPA 2010-2014 was extended for a further year to enable the Commonwealth, States and Territories to negotiate new legal assistance funding arrangements. The new National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services 2015-2020 will come into effect on 1 July 2015.

The NPA requires agencies to report against prescribed performance indicators and benchmarks. Reporting against some indicators is restricted to Commonwealth services, e.g. duty services, dispute resolution services, and grants of aid. Other reporting includes both Commonwealth and State services, e.g. early intervention services, the number of successful legal aid service outcomes delivered and total services.

Not all performance indicators are able to be reported against benchmarks due to the data recording practices prior to the benchmark year. For example, Commonwealth dispute resolution and post resolution services. Preventative services, which include publications and website page views, are included under total services.

OBJECTIVE: EXCELLENCE IN LEGAL SERVICES

Strong performance against benchmarks and high client satisfaction rate

Legal Aid NSW has performed well under the NPA in 2014-2015 against a range of benchmarks, particularly in early intervention services. Early intervention services (excluding State criminal law), for example, recorded an increase of 97.7 per cent, well in excess of the Commonwealth benchmark.

The benchmark requiring a 25 per cent increase in the total number of services has also been exceeded, with total services increasing by as much as 47.3 per cent in the year under review.

If website page views and State criminal law are included, the increase in total services was 109 per cent.

Client satisfaction feedback is also a performance benchmark under the NPA. The 2015 Legal Aid NSW biennial client satisfaction survey found a high level of satisfaction with Legal Aid NSW advice and minor assistance services with an overall client satisfaction rate of 87 per cent (page 17).

There was a 98 per cent increase in early intervention services—well above the Commonwealth benchmark.

Reporting against Commonwealth benchmarks

Performance indicator	Performance benchmark	Service count 2009-2010	Service count 2014-2015	Percentage increase between 2009-2010 and 2014-2015
Number of early intervention services delivered	30% increase in the number of early intervention services	59,927	118,481	97.7%
Total number of services delivered	25% increase in the total number of services delivered	3,182,398	6,649,717	109%
Total number of services delivered excluding website page views and State criminal law*	25% increase in the total number of services delivered	1,167,735	1,720,057	47.3%

*State criminal law services have been excluded from these counts because they are not early intervention in character.

Measuring performance

Report highlights the extent of unmet legal need and recommends more funding

The Productivity Commission *Report of Inquiry into Access to Justice Arrangements*, September 2014, highlighted the quality of Legal Aid NSW services, stating “Legal Aid NSW exemplifies leading practice with its civil law division and services”.

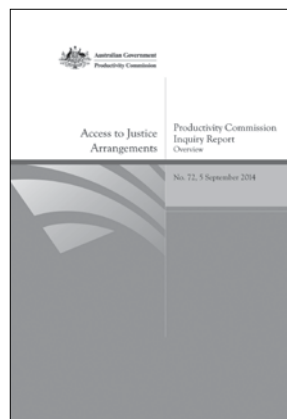
The Productivity Commission recognised that a well-functioning civil justice system underpins social cohesion and economic activity and that government-funded legal assistance is “an integral part of ensuring that the justice system is accessible to all”. The Report makes extensive references to Legal Aid NSW funded services, including the Family Law Early Intervention Unit, legal advice outreach services, duty services and LawAccess NSW.

A key finding of the Report is the extent of unmet legal need within the community. Recognising that a failure to address unmet legal need leads to adverse consequences for individuals and the wellbeing of the community, the Productivity Commission recommended an immediate injection of \$200 million per annum nationally from the Commonwealth and State and Territory governments to provide more family and civil law legal services to disadvantaged people. This funding would “address the most pressing needs” by relaxing the legal aid means test, maintaining existing frontline services that have a demonstrated benefit to the community, and expanding the availability of civil law assistance.

In addition to the extra \$200 million in annual funding, the Productivity Commission made a number of recommendations to improve legal assistance over the longer term. These recommendations include assessing the level of funding needed if legal assistance services are to meet government priorities.

Legal Aid NSW participated extensively in the Productivity Commission Inquiry and welcomed the focus the Inquiry gave to ensuring that disadvantaged people receive the legal assistance they need.

The Report can be viewed in the completed inquiries section of the Productivity Commission’s website www.pc.gov.au



➤ The year ahead

Implement the first year of the new NPA 2015-2020 in collaboration with the legal assistance sector and the Department of Justice.

Five-year performance

Chart 1: Total client services

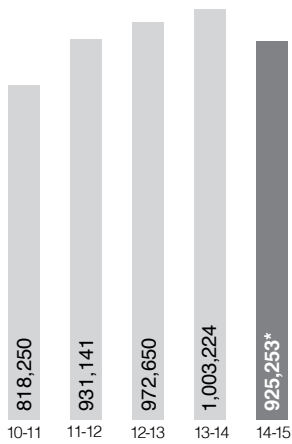


Chart 2: Duty services (representation appearances at courts and tribunals)

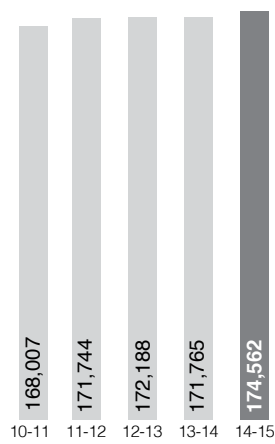


Chart 3: Outreach legal advice services provided by mobile lawyers

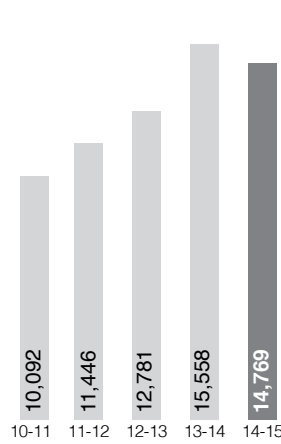
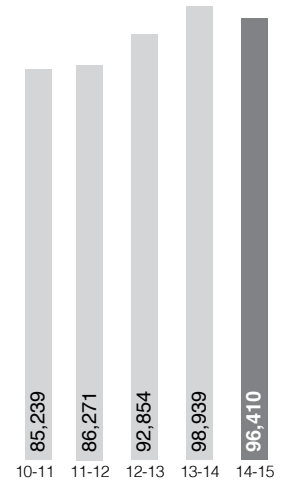


Chart 4: Legal advice services



*The introduction of new protocols to streamline the volume of telephone calls from prisoners has contributed to the decrease in the volume of calls and consequently, to information services (page 56).

Significant increases across services since 2010-2011 %

Total client services	13.1
Duty (representation appearances at courts and tribunals)	3.9
Outreach legal advice	46.3
Legal advice	13.1
Minor assistance	347.1
Community legal education sessions	38.5
Family mediation conferences	5.5

Chart 5: Minor assistance services

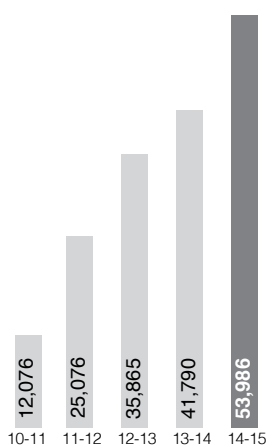


Chart 6: Community legal education sessions

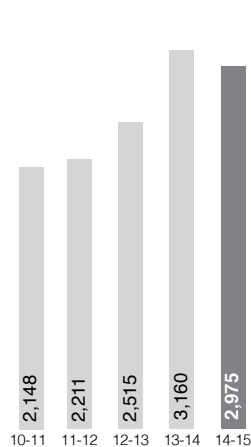


Chart 7: Aboriginal clients: percentage of total case and inhouse duty services

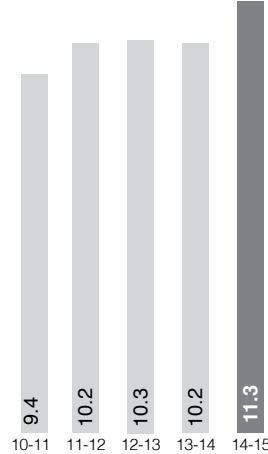
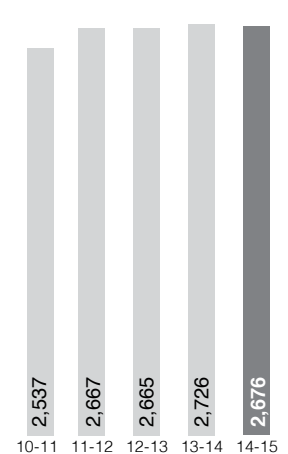


Chart 8: Family law mediation conferences



The increase from 9.4% to 11.3% over five years indicates significant efforts to make Legal Aid NSW services more accessible to Aboriginal clients.

We provide a wide range of services to our clients.

The following two pages capture a snapshot of our client services for 2014-2015. Three-year comparison tables can be viewed in Appendix 6.

Details about our achievements in client service delivery are summarised in the Legal Aid NSW Plan (page 7) and expanded upon in Section 1 of this report.

Information about the law and legal services

Provided 564,958 information services, a 13.7 per cent decrease on last year.

Our information services are free and can be accessed by the general community. Our staff can help with initial inquiries about a legal problem and legal processes, and provide printed information to help clients understand their situation and the availability of legal aid. Our staff help clients work out what to do next, and the best place to go if they need more help.

Information over the phone is available through LawAccess NSW, a free legal information, referral and limited advice service administered by the NSW Department of Justice, and partly funded by Legal Aid NSW.

The introduction of new protocols to streamline the volume of telephone calls from prisoners has contributed to the decrease in the volume of calls and consequently, to information services (page 56).

Publications and community legal education

Distributed 707,409 publications, and provided 2,975 community legal education sessions, a decrease of 5.9 per cent on last year (page 33).

We provide free publications and legal education kits to help people in New South Wales understand their legal rights and responsibilities.

Our resources are available on our website under *Factsheets and Resources* and can be ordered online at *Publications/Order a publication*.

We conduct legal education sessions at venues across the State. These can be tailored to suit the needs of particular groups.

Legal advice and minor assistance

Provided 150,396 advice and minor assistance services, an increase of 6.9 per cent on last year.

Legal advice and minor assistance is available at no cost and is not means tested.

These services are available to every New South Wales resident in 210 outreach locations around the state, as well as at our 22 offices.

During a short consultation, our lawyers will help clients to identify their problem, inform them of their legal rights and obligations and help them to understand what course of action can be taken.

Lawyers may also draft letters or other documents for clients and make telephone calls on their behalf to help resolve their problem. We refer to this as minor assistance.

Often this is all that is required to help people resolve their legal issues, but clients who are due to appear in court may apply for a grant of aid for legal representation.

Duty lawyer services

Provided a total of 174,562 duty services (110,974 of these were provided inhouse and 63,588 were provided by private lawyers).

Legal Aid NSW provides lawyers in various courts and tribunals throughout New South Wales. We refer to these as duty lawyers.

Duty lawyers provide advice and/or representation to disadvantaged people appearing before the Local and Children's Courts on criminal charges. Some matters are able to be finalised on the first appearance. Otherwise the duty lawyer can seek

an adjournment for further advice, to arrange a grant of aid or to allow time for further preparation.

A duty lawyer is provided to all persons in custody for a first appearance bail application.

The duty lawyer service is free of charge.

Duty lawyer services are available for children and adults involved in care and protection matters at every specialist Children's Court in New South Wales, and at many regional courts when they sit as Children's Courts.

The duty lawyer acts for either the children or the parents (or other eligible adults) on the first day that the case is heard by the Magistrate and, where possible, applies for a grant of legal aid to continue to act as the lawyer for that client in the ongoing matter.

Legal Aid NSW also provides duty lawyer services for people with a mental illness under the *Mental Health Act 2007*. Our Mental Health Advocacy Service and regional civil lawyers provide duty services at the Mental Health Review Tribunal and at hospitals.

Duty lawyer services are available at the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal in Liverpool and Sydney, where our lawyers assist people to understand their claims and how the Tribunal can help them. We offer telephone advice to people in rural and regional areas who are unable to attend either the Tribunal or one of our offices.

Legal Aid NSW also provides duty lawyer services for disadvantaged people involved in proceedings under the *Family Law Act 1975* (Cth) and child support legislation. These services are provided across the state in the Family and Federal Circuit Courts.

Legal representation

Provided representation in 35,337 matters (11,231 provided inhouse and 24,106 assigned to private lawyers).

Legal Aid NSW provides legal representation in criminal law, family law and civil law matters to people who meet eligibility tests. Our policies appear in the *For lawyers* section of our website www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au

Clients can apply for a grant of legal aid through a Legal Aid office or a private lawyer or by completing a paper application form. We operate a means test for grants of legal representation so that these services are targeted towards those who need them most. Most people granted legal aid are required to pay a contribution towards the costs of their legal representation.

For more information visit *Get legal help > Apply for legal aid* on our website.

Hotline for young people

Received 15,449 calls, providing 5,707 legal advice services to young people, 3,537 minor assistance services and legal information to 4,127 callers.

Our telephone hotline for young people provides legal advice, minor assistance and information to young people under 18, and operates from 9am to midnight weekdays, with a 24-hour service from Friday 9am to Sunday midnight and also on public holidays. Many of these calls facilitate the operation of the *Young Offenders Act 1997* where, after legal advice, young people make admissions to police and are then given cautions or referred to youth justice conferences by police, rather than being charged with offences and brought before a court.

Family dispute resolution

Held 2,676 conferences, reaching full or partial settlement in 79.9 per cent (full table in Appendix 6).

We provide family dispute resolution (FDR) conferences in family law matters to facilitate the resolution of disputes at an early stage. Parties are given the opportunity to negotiate a settlement without the need to go to court. If a settlement is reached, consent orders may be drafted and filed in the Family Court or Federal Circuit Court.

FDR is also available for matters in late litigation. Before legal aid is granted for parties to be represented at a final hearing, if appropriate, the Court or Legal Aid NSW may refer parties to FDR.

At least one of the parties must have a grant of legal aid before a conference is organised.

Specialist services

We established a new civil law service to assist Aboriginal people with housing, Centrelink and debt issues. The service travelled to Aboriginal communities to reach Aboriginal people who do not seek help from the formal justice system.

Our specialist services are staffed by experts in their field.

These include:

- Adult Drug Court Service
- Child Support Service
- Children's Civil Law Service
- Children's Legal Service (criminal matters)
- Client Assessment and Referral Unit
- Civil Law Service for Aboriginal Communities
- Commonwealth Crime Unit
- Coronial Inquest Unit
- Early Intervention Unit (family law)
- Employment Law Service
- Homeless Legal Outreach Program
- Mental Health Advocacy Service
- Older Persons' Legal and Education Service
- Prisoners Legal Service
- Sexual Assault Communications Privilege Service
- Veterans' Advocacy Service
- Work and Development Order Service

There is more information about these services on our website at www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au > *What we do*.

Legal Aid NSW responded to clients' changing needs, taking into account the implications for disadvantaged people in New South Wales of new legislation and policies.

Below In April 2015, the Hunter and Central Coast regions were devastated by severe storms and flooding. In Dungog, Legal Aid NSW, the Australian Red Cross and Suncorp Group hit the ground running to assist people with storm damage issues (page 31).



In this section

- 17 Policies for our clients
- 18 Meeting the needs of vulnerable clients
- 20 Addressing clients' complex needs
- 21 Reaching communities with limited access to legal services
- 22 Improving pathways to catch legal problems early
- 24 Targeting our work
- 26 Meeting the needs of diverse clients
- 27 Highlights from our practice areas
- 33 Community legal education
- 34 Contributing to law reform

Key measures

- Higher means test thresholds allow more people to qualify for legal aid (page 17)
- New *Safe Home for Life* reforms help families in crisis (page 18)
- New service launched for Aboriginal people in regional areas (page 18)
- Prisoner sentence review finished (page 19)
- *Safer Pathway* domestic violence response launched at Orange and Waverley Courts (page 19)
- Children at risk of becoming repeat offenders are given an alternative to re-appearing in criminal courts (page 20)
- Homes secured for Aboriginal women leaving custody (page 21)
- New office addresses disadvantage in lower Mid North Coast (page 21)
- Outreach advice clinic locations increase to 210 (page 22)
- Technology delivers legal information into people's homes (page 22)
- Evaluations show our strategies are working (page 24)
- Cyber bullying education in schools reaches over 7,000 students (page 33)

Key challenge

We have identified the need for a more consistent and integrated approach to client services across the organisation.

We need to make greater use of advancing technology to target our clients more effectively.

➤ The year ahead

Develop a client service strategy to ensure quality and consistency of services to clients.

Develop a strategy for the better use of technology to improve engagement and accessibility for clients, partners and stakeholders.

Policies for our clients

We ensure our policies target those most in need of legal assistance while meeting ongoing funding challenges.

In 2014-2015, Legal Aid NSW amended a number of policies to be able to target our services to those most in need of legal assistance.

OBJECTIVE: ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Means test thresholds were raised allowing more people to qualify for aid

In June 2015, we made changes to the means test. The new amendments make more appropriate allowance for living expenses, especially for applicants from struggling working families.

Raising the income threshold and allowable assets under the means test narrows the 'justice gap' as more people become eligible for legal aid. We continue to review the means test to spread legal aid as widely as possible.

We published case scenarios on our website to assist lawyers and members of the public to understand how the means test works in practice.

Legal Aid NSW undertook a review of the high-risk offenders policy and the means test changes. As a result of the policy review, legal aid continues to be available for these matters.

Hard decisions made around availability of legal aid

In December 2014, we had to respond to significant cuts to the Expensive Commonwealth Cases Fund for Commonwealth criminal indictable trials such as people smuggling, drug importation, terrorism, child pornography and sex slavery matters. Legal aid was not available for expensive Commonwealth criminal law trials from 12 December 2014 through to 25 February 2015, when the Commonwealth restored funding for expensive cases.

Amendments to the *Migration Act 1957* (Cth) in November 2014 raised the need to clarify our policy regarding matters where a person is challenging the cancellation of their permanent visa under s.501 of the Act.

The amendments to the Act resulted in an increase in the number of people seeking legal aid in relation to visa cancellations. The amendment to the policy clarifies that legal aid is only available for representation at the Administrative Appeals Tribunal and the Federal Court in relation to s.501 visa cancellation matters.

New eligibility test and changes to the means test and contributions policy and guidelines

We have made changes that will increase our capacity to deliver legal services to a larger number of disadvantaged people across New South Wales.

Under a new eligibility policy, a person may be refused legal aid if they owe a debt to Legal Aid NSW as a result of their failure to pay a required contribution towards the cost of their legal representation. We have also revised the contributions policy and guidelines and introduced new methods of payment to make it easier for clients to pay their contributions, including instalment plans. Staff have discretion to reduce or waive a contribution for clients who have no funds or are unable to access funds.

The most significant change we made is that we now require a person who owns real property to give us a charge over the property to secure the costs of providing the legal service.

Aid became available in more care and protection matters

We introduced new policies in care and protection making legal aid available for contact disputes and guardianship orders. Also, following a successful pilot, legal aid is now available for external care and protection mediation.

➤ The year ahead

Target policies to meet the legal needs of the most disadvantaged people across New South Wales, including victims of domestic violence, in a challenging funding environment.

OBJECTIVE: EXCELLENCE IN LEGAL SERVICES

Measuring client satisfaction

This year Legal Aid NSW conducted our biennial client satisfaction survey. Over 600 clients who received advice and/or minor assistance at one of our 22 offices were interviewed by an independent company between February and April 2015.

The profile of clients surveyed included eight per cent who were Aboriginal, 15 per cent of people with disability, and 27 per cent whose language background was other than English.

The survey found that satisfaction with our services continues to be high at 87 per cent, with equal levels of satisfaction for clerical and lawyers' services.

The main cause for dissatisfaction by a small percentage of clients appears to be the limitation on the services that Legal Aid NSW can provide, and appointments scheduled too late to meet clients' timeframes. This was the same finding as in the 2013 survey.

The report recognised the resources and commitment of Legal Aid NSW in maintaining "the high level of staff commitment, concern for client needs and respectful treatment of clients, revealed in the survey" and recommended that these resources should be maintained.

Meeting the needs of vulnerable clients

Legal Aid NSW clients are among the most disadvantaged members of the community, experiencing deep and persistent disadvantage.

Legal Aid NSW assists highly disadvantaged clients through early intervention programs, alternative dispute resolution and collaborative partnerships with other agencies. Where relevant, these actions are aligned to government reforms.

OBJECTIVE: ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Safe Home for Life reforms — early assistance for families in crisis

New projects were launched to provide early assistance to families in contact with the care and protection system – an outcome of the *Safe Home for Life* reforms to the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* that commenced in October 2014. Legal Aid NSW received New South Wales State Government funding over four years to assist with the permanent placement of children and to implement early intervention and alternative dispute resolution initiatives in line with the new legislation.

Legal Aid NSW has partnered with Community Legal Centres and the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) to provide a network of services across New South Wales for families needing urgent or early intervention care and protection advice.

Our response has included:

- introducing a new lawyer-assisted alternative dispute resolution service;
- extending grants of aid for legal representation for children – and to adults in cases of significant disadvantage – for contact disputes; and
- advising and representing parents and children on parent capacity orders, parent responsibility contracts and permanent placement principles.

See case study next column.

Case study

Parenting contract helps family stay together

A sole parent in regional New South Wales has a number of young children in her care. She and the children had experienced family violence. The Department of Family and Community Services requested that she enter into a Parent Responsibility Contract (PRC). We led negotiations with the Department and the mother then entered into a PRC which addressed their child protection issues. With our assistance the mother was able to articulate her strengths as a parent and was provided with appropriate support from the Department to parent more effectively. The family remained together.

Aboriginal people, multiple disadvantage and response to legal problems

The NSW Law and Justice Foundation's Legal Australia-Wide Survey (LAW Survey) demonstrated that Aboriginal people were more likely to have multiple legal problems such as government, health and rights problems.

The research also shows that many Aboriginal people tend to be uncomfortable approaching legal services and are more receptive to assistance in familiar surroundings. For that reason, we adopted a number of strategies to build stronger relationships with Aboriginal communities.

Regular outreach advice clinics for Aboriginal communities rose from 31 to 34 locations. Nineteen per cent of the 53 Cooperative Legal Service Delivery Program projects were delivered in Aboriginal communities.

Almost 14 per cent of advice services in Work and Development Orders and fines matters were delivered to Aboriginal people, compared with 8.6 per cent last year.

A new service helping Aboriginal people with everyday legal problems (see next column) is quickly expanding its reach across the state and is expected to have a big impact in the next year.

It is likely these initiatives contributed to an increase in the number of Aboriginal clients receiving case grants and duty services from 10.2 per cent last year to 11.3 per cent this year.

Our Legal Aid NSW Plan and Reconciliation Action Plan contain a number of actions to help bridge the gap between Aboriginal communities and our services. Legal Aid NSW developed its second Reconciliation Action Plan for 2015-2018. The plan includes cultural awareness targets for both inhouse staff and private lawyers, recruitment and retention targets and procurement targets. Approved by Reconciliation Australia, this plan has longer-term strategies and well-defined achievable targets.

New service assists Aboriginal people with everyday legal problems

The very successful *Money Counts* Program, where lawyers worked in targeted Aboriginal communities to assist clients with high levels of fines, was expanded to provide assistance with consumer law, housing and social security problems. Our Civil Law Service for Aboriginal Communities provided services in Lake Cargelligo, Condobolin, Dareton, Taree and Mt Druitt, and is consulting with Aboriginal communities in Bourke, Brewarrina, Tweed Heads, Moree and communities between Grafton and Ballina with a view to expanding into these locations. In 2014-2015, the service provided 2,262 minor assistance and advice services to almost 400 clients.

Unsuitable consumer contracts, especially household rental contracts and funeral insurance products are commonplace in disadvantaged Aboriginal communities. Legal Aid NSW assisted 150 clients in disputes concerning household rental contracts, working effectively with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission to identify and take action against unconscionable conduct, and recovering close to \$150,000 for our clients.

Teaming up with the Energy and Water Ombudsman, we were able to identify unscrupulous energy providers and to negotiate appropriate payment plans for families with large electricity bills.

Aboriginal Field Officers—bringing legal services within reach of Aboriginal communities

Aboriginal Field Officers are funded by Legal Aid NSW to provide practical services on the ground, deliver training and community legal education, and liaise with Aboriginal communities.

There are three Aboriginal Field Officers – two are located at Aboriginal Legal Service offices in Walgett and Coffs Harbour and one at the Nowra Legal Aid NSW office.

An external review carried out in 2013-2014 found this service to be a resounding success in helping to expand services to Aboriginal communities in civil and family law, strengthening links with Aboriginal communities, and reducing barriers between Legal Aid NSW services and Aboriginal communities.

In 2014-2015, the Aboriginal Field Officers provided 130 community legal education sessions, 162 civil and family law minor assistance services and 114 referrals to other agencies—35 per cent of these referrals were to Legal Aid NSW.

OBJECTIVE: EXCELLENCE IN LEGAL SERVICES

Reviewing prisoner sentences after High Court finds judicial error

This year brought to a close an intensive four-year review of some 1,000 cases to identify those prisoners sentenced after 2003 who might have been able to apply for a sentence reduction following the 2011 High Court decision in *Muldrock v The Queen* [2011] HCA 39, which found an error in sentencing.

Legal Aid NSW was tasked with undertaking this review in 2012 in conjunction with the Public Defenders and members of the private bar.

During March and April 2015, 12 Project Muldrock appeals were heard in the Court of Criminal Appeal.

Judgment has been published in 11 of these. Eight were granted an extension of time and the sentence reduced. The Crown ultimately conceded *Muldrock* error in each of these matters.

In her decision in *Davis v R* [2015] NSWCCA 90, Her Honour Justice Simpson observed the processes undertaken by Legal Aid NSW following delivery of the judgment in *Muldrock* and remarked:

“The aim of Legal Aid was to resolve the issues as efficiently, economically, and expeditiously as possible....it (is) patently clear that Legal Aid has assiduously attempted to deal with the logistical issues posed as a result of the decision in Muldrock.” (at [70]-[72]).

OBJECTIVE: STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

Improving safety for victims of domestic violence

Legal Aid NSW is taking a lead role in implementing *It Stops Here: Safer Pathway*, part of New South Wales Government domestic violence reforms. The reforms are a catalyst for a new coordinated approach to supporting women and children experiencing domestic violence.

Women’s Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services host Local Coordination Points under *Safer Pathway*. Local Coordination Points provide victims with threat assessment and case coordination. People who are identified as being at serious threat are referred to safety action meetings which aim to lessen or prevent serious threats to a victim’s life, health or safety through targeted information-sharing between key government and non-government agencies and the development of safety action plans. See case study next column.

Since opening in September 2014, Orange Local Coordination Point has received 1,180 referrals and Waverley Local Coordination Point has received 2,056 referrals. Safety action plans for women deemed to be at serious threat were developed for 329 and 334 women respectively at Orange and Waverley safety action meetings. Women assessed as not under serious threat were provided with information

and case coordination, including warm referrals to a range of service providers for their ongoing needs.

The New South Wales Government has announced the further roll out of *Safer Pathway* to Bankstown, Parramatta, Broken Hill and Tweed Heads in 2015-2016.

Read more about our domestic violence services and new collaborative partnerships on pages 43-44.

Case study

New strategy reduces threat to safety

Annie was assessed as being at serious threat by police because her partner had assaulted her with weapons, choked or strangled her and threatened to kill her.

The Local Coordination Point quickly made several referrals. Housing NSW changed Annie’s locks within four hours of referral and then offered her a new home some distance from the defendant. Victims Services helped with moving and other costs whilst the Women’s Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services supported her at court and obtained an apprehended domestic violence order for her protection.

Annie’s case was discussed at the next safety action meeting. Because an order was in place and she was safely relocated and connected to appropriate services, the meeting agreed that the serious threat had been reduced and Annie’s case was removed from the agenda.

➤ The year ahead

Implement the Reconciliation Action Plan 2015-2018.

Provide targeted services to Aboriginal communities by expanding civil and family law services to more regional and remote communities.

Receive all referrals of domestic violence incidents involving female victims from the NSW Police Force.

Roll out *Safer Pathway* to Bankstown, Broken Hill, Parramatta and Tweed Heads.

Addressing clients' complex needs

In New South Wales, 23 per cent of people who took part in the NSW Law and Justice Foundation's Legal Australia-Wide Survey, experienced three or more legal problems within a 12-month period.

In addition, some individuals were particularly likely to experience multiple legal problems. In fact, the majority of legal problems were concentrated among a minority of respondents. In New South Wales, nearly 10 per cent of people surveyed accounted for 66 per cent of the legal problems reported.

The research shows that these clients often have multiple social, psychological and physical needs and complex legal problems. They therefore have the greatest need for assistance and are the most challenging to access and engage.

In response to these findings, Legal Aid NSW has adopted an intensive client-centred approach and introduced strategies to reach these clients and break the cycle of disadvantage which can involve health problems, unemployment, loss of income, non-payment of rent, eviction and homelessness.

OBJECTIVE: ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Addressing legal needs of young people with complex needs

Often young people caught up in the criminal justice system have multiple legal problems that keep them entrenched in disadvantage.

Legal Aid NSW provides a highly targeted, wrap-around legal service – the Children's Civil Law Service – to young people identified as likely to be high users of Legal Aid NSW services. All of these young clients have been identified as having multiple or complex needs, which may include debt, exclusion from school, unpaid fines, no identification documents, no income support or homelessness. A high proportion live in out-of-home care. See case study next column.

This year, 146 young people were assisted through this service and a total of 1,218 legal services were provided.

This has led to reduced interactions with police, preservation of housing and elimination of debts.

The Service also worked to address systemic issues that are contributing to young people being brought before the criminal justice system (page 48).

Case study

Wrap-around service helps young woman rebuild her life

Jay, who is 17, had been placed in the care of the Minister as a result of a childhood history of chronic neglect and isolation, exposure to drug and alcohol abuse, and domestic violence. She had been homeless since the age of 13 and suffered from depression and anxiety.

When Jay called the Legal Aid NSW youth hotline about her criminal law issues, it became obvious that many other legal issues were affecting her, including outstanding fines, victims' compensation and the lack of a care plan. Without the most common of community supports, she was highly vulnerable and at further risk of criminal offending.

Our wrap-around service included advocacy, court support, seeking write-off applications from State Debt Recovery for outstanding fines, legal assistance with her victims' compensation matters, accessing a Centrelink Disability Support Pension, and referrals to other useful services.

Given Jay's vulnerability and isolation, a Legal Aid NSW social worker was assigned to provide ongoing casework and develop a care plan that allows Jay to access entitlements and benefits when she turns 18.

Integrated services fully address our clients' complex needs

The Legal Aid NSW Client Assessment and Referral Service (CARS) is an example of multi-faceted service integration within a single service provider. CARS works collaboratively with lawyers to ensure the best possible

outcomes for clients with complex needs. CARS identifies how clients' psychological difficulties impact on their legal problems, provides a psychosocial assessment for court and refers clients to other services for assistance. The assessments disclose the client's history and behavioural issues, and provide options for lawyers and the courts (see case study below). In 2014-2015, CARS assisted 388 clients and completed 199 psychosocial reports for court. The Service undertook short-term case management for 47 clients with complex needs. The top six psycho-social issues addressed by CARS were mental health, drugs and/or alcohol, financial management orders, cognitive disability, domestic and family violence, and accommodation.

Case study

Client moves on from the effects of domestic violence following full assessment

A couple with two teenage children had been married for 14 years. The wife experienced daily verbal and emotional abuse, social and financial control and physical violence. Her husband had previously been imprisoned following a serious assault upon her in 2007.

She began to use alcohol as a way to manage her anxiety and the effects of being in a violent and abusive relationship. After an argument about arrangements for the children escalated, she retaliated against her ex-husband and was later charged with common assault at which point she became our client.

CARS prepared a treatment plan which included counselling and medication for her anxiety and a referral to a domestic violence support group. The court report outlined the context of domestic violence and its impact on her mental health. The matter was dealt with under section 32 of the *Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Act 2007* so that no conviction was recorded. Our client received the treatment and support she needed in order to move on from the effects of domestic violence.

OBJECTIVE: STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

Secure housing gives Aboriginal women a better chance of rehabilitation

The Aboriginal Women Leaving Custody Project delivered legal assistance to Aboriginal women in custody, an especially vulnerable client group. The service is available to every Aboriginal woman in Silverwater Correctional Centre through weekly clinics. In 2014-2015, we assisted 167 women with 276 legal problems. We provided ongoing case work assistance to help these women with housing and other civil law issues while in custody, such as getting them back on the social housing list where their applications had been incorrectly closed; or assisting them to appeal their Housing NSW classification.

In May 2015, we produced a report into the barriers to housing for Aboriginal women on release from custody and will work with Housing NSW to progress some of the recommendations next year.

Case study

Priority housing for pregnant mother

Dee has been either homeless or imprisoned since 2005. She suffers from depression, anxiety and hepatitis C.

Due to her violent relationship, Dee began using drugs. Her tenancy was terminated for rental arrears. She fled the property with her child and mother, later ending up in prison.

Legal Aid NSW appealed a Housing NSW decision to enforce a debt and to give Dee a negative classification. The negative classification had to be overturned before she could be assessed for secure priority housing.

The appeal was successful and she was eligible to be placed on the list. With the assistance of the support worker, Dee could be approved for priority housing. Dee was offered a property 14 weeks before giving birth.

Reaching communities with limited access to legal services

People living in regional, rural and remote areas can have difficulty accessing legal services.

These communities generally have, in the experience of Legal Aid NSW, higher needs and fewer services than their urban counterparts. Additionally, distance, poverty and cultural barriers may exacerbate difficulties accessing the services that do exist in these areas. Delivering effective legal services is difficult where Legal Aid NSW lacks a presence on the ground and where services are sparse.

OBJECTIVE: ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Port Macquarie – a new regional hub for legal aid services

Legal Aid NSW opened a new regional office in Port Macquarie in December 2014 to improve access to justice for disadvantaged people across the lower Mid North Coast region from Taree and Forster to Kempsey. This is an area with limited legal services and high legal need. The office is the only Legal Aid NSW office between Newcastle and Coffs Harbour.

The local community has benefited greatly. Lawyers in the new office provided 1,500 advice and minor assistance services in the first six months of operation. The main legal issues included debt, non-consumer loans, family law issues, including who children should live with and spend time with, and property settlements.

The office has a wide reach. Criminal lawyers provided services at Port Macquarie, Taree and Kempsey Local Courts and Port Macquarie District Court, servicing a large catchment area in partnership with the local private profession. Family and civil law advice clinics take place regularly in Port Macquarie, Taree, Kempsey and Forster.

There is a focus on outreach to disadvantaged communities such as Aboriginal people and young people as well as helping people with family law issues to identify their problems earlier.

➤ The year ahead

Work with Housing NSW to find solutions for the issues faced by Aboriginal women leaving custody.

Find new ways of helping clients to break the cycle of disadvantage involving health problems, unemployment, loss of income, non-payment of rent, eviction and homelessness.

Identify and address the multiple issues faced by young people who are high users of legal aid services or at high risk of becoming so.

Client services

The office is working closely with the private profession, courts, the Mid North Coast Community Legal Centre, the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) and other stakeholders.

State-wide outreach advice clinics took us right into communities

Legal Aid NSW continues to strengthen and expand the use of outreach legal advice services to access disadvantaged communities. Over the last five years, regular outreach locations increased by 44 per cent. In 2010-2011, Legal Aid NSW provided regular outreach services in 146 locations. Legal Aid NSW now has a comprehensive network of mobile lawyers and legal outreach services in 210 locations across New South Wales, the majority (154) in rural, regional and remote locations. Locations with regular outreach services for Aboriginal communities have increased from 12 in 2010-2011 to 34 in 2014-2015.

Legal Aid NSW has partnerships with non-legal community and government organisations so that outreach services are provided in places accessible to clients. These include homeless services, Aboriginal Medical Services and community organisations, migrant resource centres, neighbourhood centres, Centrelink, courts and correctional facilities. A number of outreach advice clinics are conducted remotely using web-based video conferencing facilities.

Case study

Advice clinics at Auburn

Legal Aid NSW, in partnership with Auburn City Council, launched a weekly outreach advice clinic at Auburn Centre for Community in May 2015.

The Centre's Coordinator says, "Around 30 local community organisations engage with the Centre to run programs on a regular basis. On average up to 10,000 people may be accessing the Centre per month and many of them can benefit from the free legal advice being offered."

A snapshot of outreach locations

Locations with regular legal outreach services	210
Outreach services for Aboriginal communities	34
Locations with regular legal outreach services in regional and remote areas	154
Locations based in Centrelink offices	7
Locations where clients can access civil law advice*	140
Locations where clients can access family law advice*	111
Locations where clients can access criminal law advice**	40

*Some locations offer advice in more than one area of law

** Includes outreach to correctional centres as well as seven dedicated criminal law advice outreach services.

OBJECTIVE: STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

Collaborative projects are breaking down regional isolation

In 2014-2015, 53 joint service projects were undertaken under the auspices of the Cooperative Legal Service Delivery (CLSD) Program across regional, rural and remote New South Wales.

Projects target very disadvantaged areas with high levels of need and rely on local knowledge and networks to make sure they are relevant and useful.

Projects this year included:

- supporting traffic clinics in Taree and Broken Hill where eligible people receive advice and legal representation with their traffic matters before the Local Courts; and
- Law Week advice clinics in Bourke and Brewarrina – providing advice about issues such as outstanding fines.

For more examples see page 45.

➤ The year ahead

Provide additional lawyers in Broken Hill and surrounding areas to meet an identified need for better access to legal assistance, particularly in criminal law and care and protection.

Improving pathways to catch legal problems early

Legal Aid NSW adopted an integrated approach to service delivery, intervening early before legal problems escalate.

OBJECTIVE: ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Encouraging timely legal problem-spotting

Law Check-Up is a practical tool to help community and health workers diagnose client legal needs. It is a one-page 'tick and flick' checklist that is quick and easy to use at intake, assessment and case management meetings and can be easily applied by non-lawyers. It focuses on civil law problems in areas such as financial hardship, consumer, social security and housing which can often go undetected.

Accompanied by training and referral information, *Law Check-Up* supports earlier pathways to legal assistance for vulnerable clients, particularly those experiencing multiple legal problems. It was developed in response to the Legal Australia-Wide Survey (Law Survey 2012) finding that non-legal workers are often the only point of contact for many people with legal problems.

The *Law Check-Up* package was launched in November 2014, with over 600 participants attending 30 workshops during 2015.

Easy access to free 'just in time' legal information

This year, Legal Aid NSW introduced webinars (online seminars) for the general public and for community workers – information about the law without leaving home. This is especially useful for people in rural and regional New South Wales, or those who cannot leave home (page 33).

Webinars are a useful source of 'just in time' information for people when they are experiencing a legal problem. They can identify their problem and where to go for help.

Webinar topics include sexting and cyber bullying, unfair dismissal, drink driving, divorce, child support,

mortgage stress, apprehended violence order conditions, car accidents, drink driving and fines.

Legal Aid NSW first started offering webinars in October 2014. In the first nine months there have been over 600 participants.

Mobile devices provide a handy gateway to legal information

Finding legal information quickly using smartphones and tablet devices is much easier now using Legal Aid NSW apps for Android and Apple mobile devices. With people spending less time on desktops and more time on mobile devices, it was important to provide a handy gateway to useful information. Among other things, people can search for a Legal Aid NSW service close to them, watch videos about the law, book into a law workshop or webinar and access our factsheets and resources.

Many people are not aware of the different ways that Legal Aid NSW can assist them but the apps provide a very clear picture. They are particularly useful to people in regional areas, who may not have easy access to legal services.

There were 6,595 user visits to the Apple mobile app and 1,091 downloads. The Android app that was not launched until December 2014 recorded 2,538 sessions and 363 downloads.

OBJECTIVE: STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

Capturing clients least likely to access legal services

The Legal Australia-Wide Survey found that people in New South Wales only saw a lawyer for their legal problem in one third of matters. Instead, they sought legal help from non-legal advisers, including financial advisers, health or welfare professionals.

The survey revealed that there is a correlation between long-term illness/disability and legal problems. People with a long term illness or disability were more than twice as likely to report one or more legal problems. The number of legal problems reported

increased with the level of disability or illness. Those with complex physical problems and a mental illness were 10 times more likely to experience legal problems.

Legal Aid NSW is working with other government and non-government agencies to establish health justice partnerships that integrate health and legal services in one location to better meet the needs of disadvantaged people with disabilities and health problems. Lawyers provide services on site in health settings and also train health workers to identify legal problems and refer people for early assistance. Health justice partnerships offer a targeted and integrated approach for those clients with complex needs who are least likely to access legal services. See case study next column.

Legal Aid NSW is an active partner in a number of health justice partnership projects across Sydney and the state:

- In South Western Sydney, Legal Aid NSW civil lawyers, together with lawyers from South West Sydney Legal Centre, provide weekly outreach services at the Hub, a community health centre targeting Aboriginal people. Legal Aid NSW is piloting the use of the *Law Check-Up* tool with the Hub. Under the pilot program, health and support workers use the checklist to identify clients with civil law problems and refer them to the Hub to access mental health and legal services.
- Legal Aid NSW partnered with NSW Health and the Population Health Leadership Group (comprising senior leaders from NSW Health) to expand the Work and Development Order Scheme (page 32) in South West Sydney so that vulnerable people, such as people with mental health and serious addiction issues can reduce unpaid fines through participation in suitable treatment programs.
- Legal Aid NSW funded the Legal Health = Mental Health project, a partnership between Central Coast Community Legal Centre and Legal

Aid NSW to educate mental health caseworkers about the legal system so that they can appropriately refer clients.

Case study

Legal issues picked up in health setting

Jane was referred to Legal Aid NSW by Bidyari Aboriginal Health Centre. Jane has schizophrenia and is also in a methadone program. She was imprisoned five years ago and has been homeless since her release.

We advised Jane about her entitlements. We also discussed Jane's Centrelink issues and assisted with her housing matter.

Resources for older people in regional areas

Free or reduced cost legal services are available to older people in a growing number of regional areas through the Legal Pathways for Older People project – a partnership between Legal Aid NSW, Council on the Ageing NSW, The Aged Rights Service (TARS) and the Law Society of NSW. The project assists people to protect their assets and to plan for the future.

Calls to TARS for legal assistance from older people needing help with wills and power of attorney, increased by 83 per cent last year.

Since last year, there has been an increase of 141 per cent in the number of callers who received a referral to another legal service provider for legal assistance for their legal problem. There was a 55 per cent increase in the number of documents drawn up for callers who were given an appointment with a private lawyer to have a will, enduring power of attorney or enduring guardianship document drafted.

The project has been extended to older people in some regional areas, as private lawyers working in Temora, Wagga Wagga, Narrandera, Toukley and the Lake Macquarie, Newcastle and Lower Hunter areas have agreed to provide these services to clients in their areas.

The 2015 *Legal Topics for Older People Diary* – our most successful diary yet – was widely circulated to older people around the state. Over 100,000 copies were distributed. The diary meets an identified need by older people and those who assist them.

This year, the diary was mentioned in 37 newspaper articles and on radio. Feedback shows that older people found the diary very useful, especially the “wealth of legal information” that lets people know where to go to solve their legal problem.

➤ The year ahead

Provide training on *Law Check-Up* for Women’s Domestic Violence Court Assistance Service workers, increasing early detection of other legal issues for women who are experiencing domestic violence.

Make better use of technology to improve accessibility for clients, partners and stakeholders.

Provide early intervention services to women in antenatal wards in hospitals who are experiencing domestic violence, and whose children are at risk of neglect and abuse – part of health justice partnerships.

Targeting our work

Legal Aid NSW services are built upon years of experience in assisting clients with complex needs, as well as the findings of research about legal needs and lessons distilled through a culture of evaluative practice.

This year a number of evaluations confirmed that our targeted strategies have been effective in helping more disadvantaged clients to access legal help.

Almost 90 per cent of assistance provided at migrant resource centres was to clients born in non-English speaking countries, compared to 24 per cent of assistance provided at Legal Aid NSW offices.

Compelling evidence shows we are making a difference

In March 2013, Legal Aid NSW formalised a partnership with Settlement Services International (SSI), to provide legal outreach services at migrant resource centres across metropolitan Sydney, Wollongong and the Central Coast.

The Law and Justice Foundation evaluated the first year of the partnership’s operation, reporting increased levels of assistance to culturally diverse people with legal issues. The report found:

- a number of benefits arose from the partnership. Migrant resource centre staff identified that the service had reduced the burden on government services such as health, child protection services, family services and immigration. They also identified broader benefits such as improved access and equity for a disadvantaged group, enhanced knowledge of the legal system, and increased client ability to contribute productively to the community. The cost effectiveness and efficiency of the arrangements were also noted.

- the partnership provided an effective pathway to successfully reach culturally diverse clients. Almost 90 per cent of assistance was provided to clients born in non-English speaking countries, compared to 24 per cent of assistance to this group provided at Legal Aid NSW offices. The legal clinics also provided a gateway for clients to access other Legal Aid NSW services and other public and private legal services.
- The report concluded there was “compelling evidence of the SSI partnership as an effective pathway to clients from culturally diverse backgrounds”. As a result, Legal Aid NSW and SSI formally recognised the continuation of the partnership by signing a statement of commitment in December 2014.

This year, the partnership provided improved access to the family law system for culturally diverse clients through eight family law clinics in metropolitan and regional migrant resource centres. Civil law services, including immigration advice services, were offered in six locations. Overall 1,572 civil and 952 family law advice and minor assistance services were provided at migrant resource centres across the state, representing an increase of 47 per cent from 2013-2014.

OBJECTIVE: STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

Close examination shows we have increased our reach but gaps remain

Identifying disadvantage to ensure we appropriately target legal services is an important part of our work. Under the Legal Aid NSW Plan 2014-2015, Legal Aid NSW committed to “review provision of legal services in South West, Far West and Northern NSW and identify gaps in legal services experienced by disadvantaged communities in those areas”.

Legal Aid NSW conducted an extensive review, consulting with staff and external stakeholders, and considered the research literature and data from the Law and Justice Foundation of NSW, Australian Bureau of Statistics and NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research.

The review found that Legal Aid NSW responses and initiatives have gone some way to increasing reach in disadvantaged remote communities, however gaps remain. The review put forward a range of options to provide legal services in remote New South Wales.

The review was timely given the NSW Government recently announced the development of a new whole of government model of service delivery and governance for Far West NSW. As part of this Far West Initiative, Legal Aid NSW participated in a Government Agency Forum in Dubbo on 19 February 2015.

Easing the stress for people navigating complex tribunal systems

In 2014, Legal Aid NSW established a pilot duty advice service at the Liverpool registry of the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT). The legal service assisted people with matters in the NCAT Consumer and Commercial Division concerning disputes about tenancy, social housing, residential property and supply of goods and services.

The aim of the service was to assist clients at the early stages of their dispute to clarify their legal issues and help reach an early resolution where possible. Legal Aid NSW lawyers provided advice and minor assistance by drafting statements, identifying relevant documents and advising on procedural matters and the merits of applications.

Legal Aid NSW commissioned an evaluation of the pilot duty service, together with an evaluation of duty outreach services operating in the Social Security Appeals Tribunal (SSAT) and the Administrative and Equal Opportunity Division of the NCAT.

A key finding across the tribunals was that our services enhanced access to the legal system by providing legal advice to disadvantaged people who would not normally access this assistance.

The demographic profile of clients surveyed indicated a high representation of people from groups that are far less likely to report or seek legal assistance. These include people who have disabilities, receive government benefits, are not in the workforce, have lower education levels, are culturally and linguistically diverse, and are from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background.

The client surveys that formed part of the evaluations demonstrated that a significant majority of clients felt that they had received good legal advice.

SSAT outreach service – Tribunal staff said the service added significant value to clients' understanding of the process; and that delivering the outreach service in the tribunal was an efficient use of resources. As a result, tribunal staff were able to service other people in need while clients were able get the support they needed to navigate the system.

NCAT Administrative and Equal Opportunity Division – Tribunal staff were of the view that the presence of the outreach advice increased the efficiency of the tribunal because lawyers were able to provide clients with a realistic assessment of the merits of their case, which reduced vexatious and unmeritorious cases.

NCAT Consumer and Commercial Division – the evaluation found that:

- eighty per cent of clients surveyed felt the advice provided by our lawyers helped them with the process;
- ninety per cent said that, apart from the assistance provided by Legal Aid NSW, they had not received any other legal advice; and
- over 66 per cent said that the duty advice service assisted them to present their case to the best of their ability.

In light of these positive findings, Legal Aid NSW and NCAT are now working together to establish advice services at registries across New South Wales including Penrith, Tamworth and Wollongong.

➤ The year ahead

Develop a proposal for improved service delivery to provide legal services in remote New South Wales.

Engage with the Department of Premier and Cabinet on the Far West Initiative to ensure a coordinated approach to service delivery in remote New South Wales.

Provide education programs to clients experiencing domestic violence as part of the SSI partnership.

Roll out additional duty advice services at NCAT registries in Newcastle, Penrith, Tamworth and Wollongong.

Establish a duty advice service at the Anti-Discrimination Board in Sydney.

Meeting the needs of diverse clients

Legal Aid NSW continues to work towards being an inclusive organisation, and providing responsive services to diverse people and communities in New South Wales.

The Diversity Action Plan 2014-2015 included a wide range of actions in relation to our diversity target groups. These include people from multicultural backgrounds, people with disability, younger people, older people, women, gender and sexuality diverse people, and people living in rural and regional areas.

➤ Fact file

Case grants and inhouse duty services to clients born in non-English speaking countries	12.7%
Amount spent on interpreters and translators	\$1,031,872

Diversity Action Plan

A summary of key performance highlights from the Diversity Action Plan appears in Appendix 9.

Major achievements

OBJECTIVE: ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Clients received services tailored to their needs

We made wide use of interpreters and translators, both face-to-face and over the telephone, for client interviews and community legal education sessions. We spent \$1,031,872 on these services. We also contributed \$51,742 to the cost of interpreters in Community Legal Centres.

We provided 443 face-to-face community legal education workshops for young people, 69 for older people, and 734 for people in rural and regional areas of New South Wales.

We continued providing immigration law clinics in accordance with the agreement with Settlement Services International at Liverpool Migrant Resource Centre, SydWest Blacktown, Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre, Auburn Diversity Services and Bankstown Legal Aid NSW office.

In 2014-2015, the following services were provided at these clinics:

Legal advice services	1,080
Minor assistance services	477

Publications in other languages

We published new information about our immigration services in Arabic, Dari/Farsi and Burmese. Resources about Centrelink, visa cancellation, and Disability Support Pension and overseas travel were translated into Arabic, Chinese, Croatian, Serbian and Vietnamese. New resources about changes to bail, new drink-driving laws, and driving while disqualified were translated into Arabic, Chinese and Vietnamese.

Accessible information for the Deaf community

A new video on the Legal Aid NSW website in Auslan sign language explains what people can do if they are going through separation and divorce. It is the fifth in a series of videos in Auslan providing information about Legal Aid NSW services as well as common legal issues.

This resource is also available on the Legal Aid NSW YouTube channel.

OBJECTIVE: EXCELLENCE IN LEGAL SERVICES

Highlights included:

- delivering 25 webinar sessions on 12 topics about Legal Aid NSW services to community workers in rural and remote areas;
- translating the Code of Behaviour Security Card into 10 languages, explaining that safety is our priority and requesting communities to work with us to maintain safety;
- investigating and identifying an alternative online option for people with restricted access to inhouse and private lawyers, to apply for a grant of aid; and
- providing specialised training to staff to assist them to provide appropriate services to clients with disability (page 54).

Case study

Severely disabled client has a say in tribunal decision

A young man became a quadriplegic as a result of severe injuries sustained in an industrial accident. He received compensation and the Public Trustee and Guardian was appointed to make decisions about his care, together with his separated parents.

As living arrangements with his father had broken down, the Guardian placed him in residential care, against his parents' wishes. His mother proposed that he move to the United States to live with her and her new husband. The father disagreed.

The dispute escalated to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. Legal Aid NSW funded a separate representative to represent the interests of the young man, ensuring that he had a meaningful voice in the proceedings.

The Tribunal determined that the young man should remain in Australia and be housed in the community with both parents having a significant role in his care.

OBJECTIVE: STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

We provided staff and resources to support the Deaf Jurors project conducted by the University of New South Wales. The project investigated the participation in the administration of justice by deaf citizens as jurors and the impact of having a sign language interpreter in the jury room.

We delivered 12 community legal education sessions to health practitioners to expand the number of Work and Development Order sponsors for clients with mental health issues.

➤ The year ahead

Develop an online legal aid application form to improve accessibility to legal aid.

Implement the Diversity Action Plan 2015-2016.

Highlights from our practice areas

Criminal law

Our criminal law practice provides legal information, advice and minor assistance, duty services and representation in criminal courts at each jurisdictional level across the state.

These services operate from the Central Sydney office and 20 regional offices, and 40 outreach locations.

FACT FILE

Total staff:	270
Total expenditure:	\$122.0M
State:	\$110.6M
Commonwealth:	\$11.4M
Proportion of overall budget spent on criminal law services	47.4%

Specialist advice, information, minor assistance, duty services and representation are provided through the Children's Legal Service, Prisoners Legal Service and Drug Court.

The practice offers community legal education throughout New South Wales and contributes to law reform initiatives.

OBJECTIVE: ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Resolution in lower court avoids lengthy trials

Lawyers in the Committals Unit resolved serious indictable matters through careful analysis of the evidence and appropriate negotiations with lawyers from the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. A high number of matters were resolved in the Local Court. Complex matters that may have gone to trial were settled and appropriate outcomes achieved.

Changing laws were explained to the community

New information brochures this year explained the new mandatory interlock orders, penalties for driving without a valid licence and guidance with indictable appeals.

Reviewing prisoner sentences

We concluded our review of sentences containing a possible judicial error as a consequence of the *Muldrock* judgment and were successful in a number of cases. See page 19 for details.

Representing clients facing federal indictable charges

The Commonwealth Crime Unit represented clients facing Commonwealth indictable charges, such as drug importation, money laundering and fraud. In 2014-2015, the unit represented a number of clients targeted by internet scammers to become unsuspecting drug mules. Clients spent years believing they were part of a legitimate business proposal and often sent money overseas to cover expenses. When they agreed to bring documents, gifts or other items to Australia, drugs were hidden in their luggage. Of the seven matters finalised in the last year, four have resulted in acquittals, two matters did not proceed and one client was convicted.

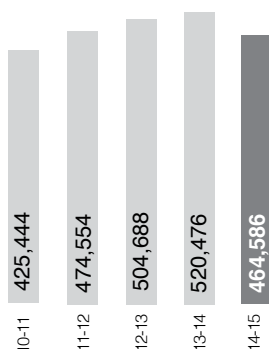
Other criminal law initiatives

Details of other projects from the criminal law practice appear in this chapter under the section headings:

- Meeting the needs of vulnerable clients, page 19
- Community legal education, page 33
- Contributing to law reform, page 34

Criminal law client services: snapshot

Five year trend in services



Total services: 464,586

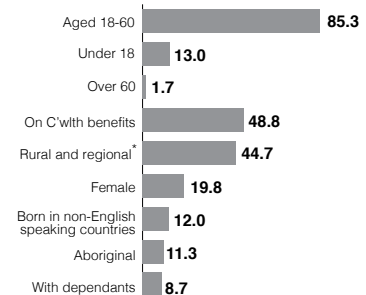
Legal representation: 20,749
Inhouse: 7,730
Assigned: 13,019

Duty services: 150,125
Inhouse: 102,001
Assigned: 48,124

Other services: 293,712
Information services: 262,063
Legal advice: 27,080
Minor assistance: 4,569

Client profile: (%)

Based on total case grants and inhouse duty services



*Includes Newcastle and Wollongong

Case study

Precedent for attributing intellectual disability to the reasonable person

R v Thomas [2015] NSWSC 537

Our client was a man with intellectual disability charged with an unlawful and dangerous act after he punched his frail and terminally ill mother in the head resulting in her death.

He was found unfit and came before the Supreme Court for a special hearing. There was no doubt that the punch was deliberate, that it significantly contributed to the death of the deceased, and that it was unlawful. The substantial issue was whether the punch was dangerous. The test is whether a reasonable person, that is, an ordinary member of the community in the position of the accused would have realised that the act was dangerous. This is an objective test and there had been no precedent for attributing an intellectual disability to the 'reasonable person'.

The Court's view was that in assessing whether the act was dangerous, it was unacceptable to judge the actions of a person with intellectual disability by the standards of the vast majority of citizens.

The Court assessed dangerousness *"upon a consideration whether a reasonable person possessed of a moderate intellectual disability rendering that person with extremely poor information processing speed and impaired conceptual reasoning abilities with knowledge that the deceased was weak and frail as a result of a debilitating illness would have realised that striking her to the left side of the face at least once would expose her to a risk of serious injury."*

Our client was acquitted of manslaughter and found on the limited evidence to have recklessly inflicted grievous bodily harm.

The case establishes that the objective reasonable person test, when applied to a person with intellectual disability, should be a reasonable person with an intellectual disability.

Responding to changing laws and amendments

The *Criminal Procedure Amendment (Domestic Violence Complainants) Act 2014* presented significant change to evidence in domestic violence offences. The Act allows Police to take the statement of an alleged domestic violence victim by video or audio recording, and use this recording as all or part of their 'evidence in chief', or main evidence. These recorded statements must not be provided to clients. The legislation determines the receipt, storage and disposal of these statements and has required changes to our processes.

➤ The year ahead

Expand our inhouse capacity to conduct more committal matters across New South Wales.

Develop new initiatives to improve access to legal services in correctional facilities through the use of technology, in partnership with Corrective Services NSW.

Introduce a range of initiatives to address the serious District Court backlog, including a state-wide Memorandum of Understanding between Legal Aid NSW and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, for the earliest possible resolution of committal matters.

Family law

Our family law practice provides legal advice, information, minor assistance, duty services, dispute resolution and case representation in family law matters, including child support and care and protection matters at 21 offices and 111 outreach locations across the state.

FACT FILE

Total staff:	225
Total expenditure:	\$70.3M
State:	\$19.7M
Commonwealth:	\$50.6M
Proportion of overall budget spent on family law services	27.3%

OBJECTIVE: ACCESS TO JUSTICE

More people in regional areas were able to access services

The practice increased the scope of its services, including:

- expanding services to regional areas by introducing new family law outreach services in Auburn, Woongarah, Taree, Forster, Forbes, Parkes and Broken Hill; and new duty lawyer services to Wauchope Federal Circuit Court, and the care list in Parkes, Forbes, Orange and Mudgee Courts;
- increasing inhouse casework services by 23 per cent in Commonwealth matters and 16 per cent in State matters, taking on an additional 593 new files inhouse compared to 2013-2014;

- increasing minor assistance services to rural and regional clients by 18 per cent; and
- developing a new alternative dispute resolution model for care and protection matters – in response to *Safe Home for Life* reforms (page 18).

More information for the community

We provided:

- family law resources for the community, including five new child support fact sheets, 30 minute webinars on issues including child support, divorce and domestic and family violence, and divorce classes in community languages; and
- family law and child protection information for children and young people, including an upgrade of the *Best for Kids* website to be launched next financial year (page 33).

High number of cases settled through mediation

Our family law dispute resolution service undertook 2,676 mediations compared with 2,726 last year. The success rate was 79.9 per cent compared to 79.7 per cent last year. For many clients, this meant avoiding the stress and expense of going to court.

Services for multicultural clients

We improved access to the legal system for culturally diverse clients through our partnership with

Settlement Services International (page 24) and the engagement of a specialist caseworker who conducted complex litigation, including on matters involving forced marriages (page 48).

More Aboriginal people represented

Family law inhouse advice services provided to Aboriginal clients increased by 19 per cent.

We increased our inhouse grants to Aboriginal clients by 18 per cent as a result of targeted early intervention initiatives and improvements to the accessibility of dispute resolution services to Aboriginal clients.

Other family law initiatives

Details of other projects from the family law practice appear in this chapter under the section headings:

- Meeting the needs of vulnerable clients, page 18
- Targeting our work, page 24
- Community legal education, page 33
- Contributing to law reform, page 34

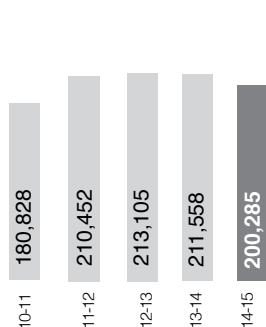
Responding to changing laws and amendments

We established new legal services in response to reforms introduced under the *Child Protection Legislation Amendment Act 2014*, including early intervention and alternative dispute resolution services.

We conducted 2,676 mediations with a success rate of 80 per cent.

Family law client services: snapshot

Five year trend in services



Total services 2014-2015: 200,285

Legal representation: 13,267

Inhouse: 2,798
Assigned: 10,469

Duty services: 9,424

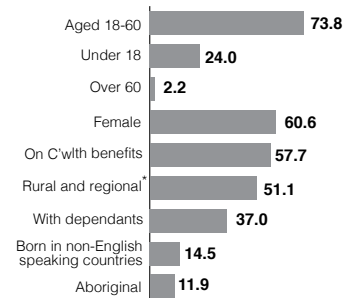
Inhouse: 6,652
Assigned: 2,772

Other services: 177,594

Information services: 128,360
Legal advice: 28,253
Minor assistance: 20,981

Client profile: (%)

Based on total case grants and inhouse duty services



*Includes Newcastle and Wollongong

CASE STUDIES

The following case studies illustrate the complex nature of casework within the family law practice.

Case 1

Securing child support for a mother and her son

A mother, recently arrived in Australia with her eight-year-old son, was worried about receiving financial support from her ex-husband who remained overseas. Within weeks, her husband was receiving a compensation settlement from his Australian insurer.

We filed proceedings during the Christmas period and negotiated a settlement, ultimately securing a payment of over \$120,000 by way of property settlement and future child support for the mother.

Case 2

Breast feeding injunction overturned on appeal

Jackson & Macek: [2015] FamCAFC 114

A mother sought our assistance after her former boyfriend, who was subject to a current apprehended violence order and on a 12-month bond, took their infant son and refused to return him. We drafted an application for recovery of the son.

Our client's recovery application was successful. However, the judge issued an injunction preventing our client from breast-feeding the child at all. Our client's appeal to the Full Court of the Family Court was successful and the breast-feeding injunction was overturned.

Case 3

Young woman moved into safe living

We represented a 15-year-old girl in care proceedings. She had been sexually abused by her brother and was placed in a residential care placement where another young person threatened her multiple times and was violent towards her. Some of these incidents involved significant damage to property and our client was taken to hospital by police for psychiatric admission.

She told us that she was frightened and no longer wished to live in the same placement as the other young woman. Family and Community Services (FaCS) opposed this.

The Children's Court held that FaCS had not addressed our client's permanency planning needs and found that the current arrangements were in breach of Articles 19 and 39 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in that her living arrangements were exposing her to violence.

FaCS provided a new care plan that our client live with her paternal aunt until the age of 16, and later be placed in semi-independent living arrangements. Our client consented to the final orders.

➤ The year ahead

Establish a dedicated Domestic Violence Unit to better meet the legal and social needs of women and children affected by domestic and family violence.

Establish new family law early intervention outreach services in a health setting.

Provide duty services and case representation to support the new Hunter Children's Court Service commencing in July 2015.

Expand our inhouse capacity to conduct more appeals and complex matters by establishing a specialist unit to focus on complex litigation in higher courts.

Develop and deliver a new community legal education program on domestic violence for new and emerging communities.

Launch and promote the new *Best for Kids* website.

Civil law

Our civil law practice provides legal advice, minor assistance, duty and casework services to people through the Central Sydney office and 16 regional offices and 140 outreach locations.

FACT FILE

Total staff:	140
Total expenditure:	\$33.7M
State:	\$20.4M
Commonwealth:	\$13.3M
Proportion of overall budget spent on civil law services:	13.1%

Civil law problems, if left unsolved, can have a far-reaching negative impact on people's lives. That impact can range from health problems to family breakdown and contact with the criminal justice system. The civil law practice focuses on legal issues that impact most on disadvantaged communities, including tenancy and housing, debt, employment, social security and access to essential social services.

The practice directs its services to the people who are most disadvantaged in accessing legal services. They include people living in rural and remote areas, homeless people, the elderly, people with a mental illness or other serious health issues, Aboriginal people, and people experiencing severe financial hardship.

This year the Productivity Commission highlighted the effectiveness of our work in assisting people with everyday legal problems, noting that Legal Aid NSW was "providing leading practice with its civil law divisions and services" (*Report of Inquiry into Access to Justice Arrangements*, September 2014).

OBJECTIVE: ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Expanded employment law services expose systemic issues

Across New South Wales, 3,811 employment law advice and 1,574 minor assistance services were provided, a substantial increase of 29 per cent and 27 per cent respectively on last year.

There are now five employment lawyers who provide specialist services across the State, and also support and train other civil lawyers to undertake employment law work. Eighteen employment law clinics currently operate in various metropolitan and regional offices, delivering services in a way that meets the needs of the various local communities.

The employment law service has also undertaken major litigation matters in the Fair Work Commission and Federal Circuit Court of Australia. Not only have these matters successfully asserted the rights of the workers involved, the litigation has also highlighted in the public sphere the systemic employment law problems that confront many vulnerable workers – such as exploitation, discrimination and victimisation for exercising workplace rights.

Quick response to emergency flooding

Following storms and flooding in the Hunter and Central Coast regions in April 2015, Legal Aid NSW provided face-to-face legal services at four disaster recovery centres, as well as telephone advice through the LawAccess NSW Disaster Response Hotline. This included 347 advice and 170 minor assistance services to storm affected residents, mainly in the areas of insurance and tenancy laws. Lawyers identified broader issues and negotiated with industry on our clients' behalf to achieve early resolution and prevent further harm. See case study below.

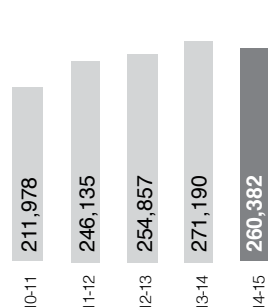
Case study

Insurer agrees to ex gratia payment for severely disadvantaged family

One client was a full time carer to her three adult children, all with disabilities. Their home was severely damaged in the Hunter storm in April 2015, and was unliveable. The home and contents policy was in her ex-husband's name, and had lapsed three months before due to non-payment of premium. Her ex-husband suffers from severe mental and physical illnesses, and had been in and out of hospital for six months. With the ex-husband's permission, we made submissions to the insurer for an ex gratia payment on the basis of long-term loyalty and extenuating circumstances. The insurer agreed.

Civil law client services: snapshot

Five year trend in services



Total services 2014-2015: 260,382

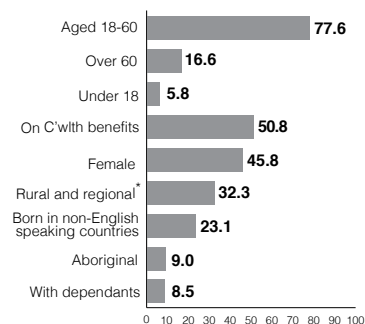
Legal representation: 1,321
Inhouse: 703
Assigned: 618

Duty services: 15,013
Inhouse: 2,321
Assigned: 12,692

Other services: 244,048
Information services: 174,535
Legal advice: 41,077
Minor assistance: 28,436

Client profile: (%)

Based on total case grants and inhouse duty services



*Includes Newcastle and Wollongong

The practice increased its legal advice services to Aboriginal clients by 29 per cent, and its case grants and duty services to Aboriginal clients from seven per cent last year to nine per cent this year.

Legal services for homeless people

Legal Aid NSW operated more than 20 clinics across the State that deliver legal outreach services to people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless – often in conjunction with health and housing services. Issues included cut off social security benefits and disputes with Housing NSW.

We have received funding for another year from the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness to continue these legal services.

Debt was reduced through plans, waivers and volunteer work

The Work and Development Order Scheme (WDO) is a partnership between Legal Aid NSW, the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT), the NSW Department of Justice and State Debt Recovery. In 2014-2015 it assisted people in New South Wales to work off more than \$17.5 million in fines debt, with over \$40 million being worked off since the start of the project. An events-based approach such as Bring your Bills Days attracted large numbers of people seeking assistance.

Legal Aid NSW provided 2,799 advice services and 4,866 minor assistance services to clients in WDO and fines matters in 2014-2015. Almost 14 per cent of these advice services were delivered to Aboriginal people, compared with 8.6 per cent in 2013-2014.

The service worked with State Debt Recovery this year to look at finding better ways of reaching young people.

In another project—the Bulk Debt Project—it was more efficient to negotiate unrecoverable debt cases in bulk with debt collectors rather than assisting people with no capacity to pay one by one. To date, we have resolved nearly \$18 million of unrecoverable debt over the course of the project.

Case study

Greater protection for social housing tenants

New South Wales Land and Housing Corporation v Diab [2015] NSWCA 133 was an important win for social housing tenants in New South Wales. The Court of Appeal found that debt arising from retrospective rental subsidy cancellation was not rental arrears and so not could be grounds for eviction for non-payment of rent.

In 2011, Mr Diab's rental subsidy was cancelled back to 1993 creating a debt in excess of \$100,000. Housing NSW alleged that Mr Diab's two adult sons had been living with him and that he had failed to disclose this to Housing NSW. Housing NSW applied to the NSW Consumer and Administrative Tribunal for termination of the tenancy based on rental arrears. These arrears were solely the result of the backdated subsidy cancellation as Mr Diab had always paid the rent on time. The Tribunal has historically found that they were unable to look behind the cancellation of rebate because it is not within the scope of the *Residential Tenancies Act 2010*, and had terminated the rental subsidy based on the large amount of rental arrears.

We successfully argued that the landlord's grant of the rental rebates, and our client's payment of the reduced rent had varied the tenancy agreement. The effect of this variation meant that the amounts of the unpaid rebates were not properly characterised as 'rent arrears' and that Mr Diab had therefore not failed to pay rent in accordance with his obligations. This argument was accepted and this case now protects social housing tenants from eviction on these grounds.

Our networks reached more Aboriginal clients

The practice increased its services to Aboriginal communities through a number of strategies, including expanding the scope of the new Civil Law Service for Aboriginal communities (page 18) and working closely with the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) in the area of fines and debt (page 32).

Civil lawyers participated in regional initiatives (page 45) such as wills clinics for Aboriginal people and visits to Bourke and Brewarrina during Law Week. Aboriginal Field Officers in civil and family law helped to reduce barriers between Legal Aid NSW services and Aboriginal communities (page 19). These efforts have contributed to an increase of 29 per cent in civil law legal advice.

Other civil law initiatives

Details of other projects from the civil law practice appear in this chapter under the section headings:

- Meeting the needs of vulnerable clients, page 18
- Addressing clients' complex needs, page 20
- Reaching communities with limited access to legal services, page 21
- Improving pathways to catch legal problems early, page 22
- Targeting our work, page 24
- Community legal education, page 33
- Contributing to law reform, page 34

Responding to changing laws and amendments

The practice responds to inquiries and proposed law reform across diverse areas of law. This year these areas included the inquiry into reparations for victims of Stolen Generations, the review of the Australian Consumer Law, and a review into consumer protection for particular credit products.

➤ The year ahead

Provide more services to Aboriginal communities in regional and remote areas.

Improve our ability to collect data on outcomes to make sure we are reaching those who need our services most.

Forge partnerships with health and community support services so we can reach clients at an earlier stage.

Provide specialist expertise in National Disability Insurance Scheme matters.

Community legal education

The Community Legal Education (CLE) program educates priority client groups. In 2014-2015, our program focused on educating young people, families, Aboriginal people, newly arrived people and community workers.

OBJECTIVE: ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Highlights included:

- developing new video and multimedia content for our *Best for Kids* website for young people and families. The new content includes six videos for children and young people, interactive multimedia brochures, and an expansion of the legal topics to include relevant civil and criminal law issues;
- rolling out an interactive multimedia resource for young people about cyber bullying and sexting. The resource is an interactive 'choose-your-own-adventure' style animation exploring the criminal law consequences of sexting and cyber bullying. Over 7,000 young people and over 600 teachers and workers attended 175 workshops in 44 schools;
- rolling out the *Law Check-Up* package, aimed at enabling community workers to obtain an earlier pathway to legal assistance for their clients. Twenty-nine sessions were delivered in 21 locations (page 22); and
- establishing a law webinar project, involving two separate calendars of webinars that target the public and non-legal service providers. The webinars for the public are run frequently to provide a 'just in time' service. The webinars for non-legal service providers include practical information on common legal issues and updates on new laws and services. We delivered 42 webinars to 631 participants.



Above Lawyers Danilo Rajkovic and Damian Beauflis at Homeless Connect Western Sydney in October 2014.

OBJECTIVE: EXCELLENCE IN LEGAL SERVICES

We pursue excellence in CLE services through planning, business reporting and evaluation. This ensures our CLE is targeted and effective in reaching its audience.

Highlights included:

- commissioning a CLE review by the Law and Justice Foundation of NSW. The first stage, carried out this year, involved conducting an audit of our CLE (including publications) over a 12-month period in order to gain a better understanding of CLE activities;
- collecting and analysing feedback from more than 200 webinar participants and follow up surveys four weeks after the webinar. Over 50 per cent of our webinar participants were from regional and rural New South Wales; and
- promoting access to the CLE program via the new Legal Aid NSW mobile app so people have quick access to our webinars, videos, factsheets and directions to our events.

Over 7,000 young people learned about the consequences of sexting and cyber bullying through our workshops.

OBJECTIVE: SUPPORTING OUR PEOPLE

In 2014-2015, we focused on professional development and the use of appropriate technology to deliver the CLE program. We trained 22 staff to use webcasting technology to facilitate webinars and 16 staff attended voice coaching for virtual media professional development courses.

OBJECTIVE: STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

We developed and delivered many CLE projects through strategic partnerships with other legal and non-legal service providers.

Highlights included:

- our CLE program *Let's Talk: Australian law for recent arrivals* which was developed in conjunction with migrant resource centres. Publications have been written in community languages;
- a comprehensive CLE program to inform Aboriginal communities about the ways in which Legal Aid NSW can assist them with financial problems, housing and Centrelink issues; and

- *Borrowers Beware*, a partnership between The Aged Rights Service and the civil law practice of Legal Aid NSW, involving radio broadcasts to speakers of South East European and Middle Eastern language groups on the dangers of borrowing money against their home for the benefit of their children (page 42).

➤ The year ahead

Implement the approved recommendations of the first stage of the CLE review and undertake the next stages – developing a strategic framework for CLE and evaluating a CLE project.

Offer law webinar master classes for community workers that better target participants, providing more specialised information.

Contributing to law reform

Legal Aid NSW is in a unique position to contribute to law reform at state and national levels given our experience and expertise in representing socially and economically disadvantaged people who have come in contact with the justice system.

In 2014-2015, Legal Aid NSW made three family law, eight criminal law, seven civil law, and seven general law reform submissions. Further details appear in Appendix 7.

OBJECTIVE: STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

Criminal law – capturing frontline experience to inform law reform

Legal Aid NSW actively participates on a number of interagency committees and forums concerning bail, prisoners' issues and domestic violence. The criminal law practice had representatives on the *Bail Act* Monitoring Group at the Department of Justice over the last year. We contributed to the implementation of the *Bail Act 2013* and the significant changes that commenced on 28 January 2015.

We were involved in consultations about potential issues with the new bail legislation, for example regarding bail conditions for accused persons who wish to participate in residential drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs as conditions of bail. Consultations took place with His Honour Judge Hatzistergos in relation to the review of the *Bail Act 2013*. The practice provided significant training in the area of bail. This training and information program was delivered state-wide and included resources on the Legal Aid NSW website which is updated regularly with recent cases and developments.

Two Children's Legal Service lawyers are members of the Law Society of NSW Juvenile Justice Committee. This Committee considers and reviews law and policy affecting children in the criminal justice system, and works closely with the Criminal Law Committee. Four of our senior lawyers and practice directors are members of the Law Society of NSW Criminal Law Committee.

In late 2013, Legal Aid NSW established the Criminal Law Consultation Group, comprising Legal Aid NSW frontline criminal lawyers from a cross-section of practice areas, grades and regions. Now in its second year, this group plays a key role in capturing 'frontline' experience of Legal Aid NSW lawyers and informing contributions to law reform processes.

In 2014-2015, we made submissions to the NSW Law Reform Commission, NSW Parliamentary inquiries and the NSW Sentencing Council. In addition to the submissions listed in this report, Legal Aid NSW provided feedback and comments to the Department of Justice concerning a number of legislative reviews relevant to our expert knowledge and frontline experience.

Family law – issues affecting children and domestic violence prevailed this year

The family law practice contributed to a number of law reform submissions, including submissions which cut across the criminal, family and civil practice areas. Staff participated in a number of interagency law reform committees.

Family lawyers were actively involved in a number of committees concerning domestic violence legal issues, and provided comments to the Department of Justice concerning the NSW Government Domestic Violence Strategy and the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme.

The practice contributed to the National Legal Aid submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the Child Support Program and gave evidence at the associated Public Hearing in August 2014. The practice was a member of the Department of Human Services Child Support State Stakeholder Engagement Group.

Our family lawyers made a contribution to law and policy issues affecting children, in particular the development of principles for the representation of children published by the Law Society of NSW. They were part of the Children's Court Advisory Committee and Children's Court of NSW Stakeholder Working Group.

We also monitored the development and implementation of the Working with Children Check legislation.

Civil law – a state-wide protocol to reduce the criminalisation of young people

The civil law practice contributed to a number of law reform submissions, initiatives and working groups. The Children's Civil Law Service worked in partnership with the NSW Ombudsman's Office towards developing a state-wide protocol (the Protocol to Reduce the Criminalisation of Young People in Residential Out of Home Care). This proposed protocol grew from work done by a working party facilitated by Legal Aid NSW and the Western Sydney Residential Providers Forum (made up of representatives of the NSW Police Force and non-government organisations). Next financial year, we will seek to reach agreement and multi-agency sign off so that the protocol can be embedded in practice across New South Wales.

The Human Rights Group assisted with submissions to NSW Parliament concerning the Review of Police Oversight Powers.

The practice was involved in the Hand-Up Project Advisory Group which is an innovative pilot project of Bridge Housing for the management of rent arrears. Legal Aid NSW also participates in the New South Wales Legal Assistance Forum Fines and Traffic Working Group.

We have representatives on the Work and Development Order Scheme Governance Group, which includes representatives from the Department of Justice, State Debt Recovery and the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT).

➤ The year ahead

Contribute to law reform processes on issues that affect the involvement in the justice system of socially and economically disadvantaged people, including any law reform initiatives in response to domestic violence.

Partnerships and working collaboratively are an essential element in providing client-centred services and ensuring the most efficient use of resources.

Below A new partnership delivered early intervention casework assistance and alternative dispute resolution services in child protection law. Legal Aid NSW provided training for its successful implementation (page 42).



In this section

- 37 Key partners at a glance
- 38 Emerging justice partnerships contribute to an efficient justice system
- 40 Private lawyers
- 42 Community programs
- 44 Regional partnerships
- 47 Training and networking achieve better community outcomes
- 49 Justice forums
- 50 Aboriginal community partnerships

Key measures

- Signed an agreement with the Children’s Court to support children at high risk of becoming repeat offenders (page 38)
- Almost 5,000 appointments were made to private lawyer panels (page 40)
- Twenty-two Community Legal Centres signed up for a key role in *Safe Home for Life* reforms (page 42)
- *Safer Pathway* in Orange and Waverley received 3,236 referrals from local police (page 43)
- Fifty-three regional projects were undertaken—19 per cent in Aboriginal communities (page 44)
- We trained our partners in the successful implementation of care and domestic violence reforms (page 47)

Key challenge

To work more effectively with our partners by jointly planning services.

➤ The year ahead

Develop a framework to establish regional service delivery plans for Legal Aid NSW offices.

Key partners at a glance

We work closely with legal and non-legal service providers to improve access to legal services for disadvantaged communities.

Private lawyers

Private lawyers provided 41.8 per cent of all Legal Aid NSW case and duty services.

We work in partnership with private lawyers who receive funding from Legal Aid NSW to represent legally aided clients (page 40).

LawAccess NSW

LawAccess NSW made 60,300 referrals to Legal Aid NSW offices, down from 75,912 last year – due to fewer calls from prisoners* after we streamlined the referral service, and to reduced funding to LawAccess NSW from the Public Purpose Fund.

LawAccess NSW is a free service that assists customers over the phone to manage their legal problems. It provides them with legal information, managed referrals and, in some instances, legal advice. LawAccess NSW is available to everyone in New South Wales. It is administered by the Department of Justice, and partly funded by Legal Aid NSW.

A person can contact LawAccess NSW, receive legal information over the phone and may be referred to Legal Aid NSW for further advice or to access a duty service or outreach service. Depending on the person's level of disadvantage and legal need, they may then be assisted to obtain a grant of legal aid for a dispute resolution conference or representation in court.

The main areas people sought help with in 2014–2015 were debt, family law parenting arrangements, neighbours, wills, apprehended domestic violence orders, property settlement, and car accidents.

*See pages 49 and 56 for more details about prisoner phone calls.

National Legal Aid (NLA)

NLA developed a national website to enhance the quality of practice, and understanding of the role of Independent Children's Lawyers.

This forum of the eight independent legal aid commissions in each of the Australian states and territories engages nationally with governments, stakeholders and the community about best practice for the delivery of legal aid (page 49).

NSW Legal Assistance Forum (NLAF)

Forum members worked together to improve access to legal services for parents and children involved in Compulsory Schooling Order Proceedings in the Children's Court and Education Act prosecutions in the Local Court.

This forum brings together the agencies responsible for legal aid services to collaborate in working groups on improving legal services for disadvantaged people in New South Wales (page 49).

Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) Ltd

Legal Aid NSW funded positions at Aboriginal Legal Services in regional areas.

Legal Aid NSW and the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) Ltd share a statement of commitment ensuring that both agencies work together to address the legal needs of Aboriginal people in New South Wales. The Aboriginal Legal Service is also a member of the Legal Aid NSW Aboriginal Justice Committee (page 50).

Cooperative Legal Service Delivery (CLSD) Program

CLSD Program partners took part in 53 joint service projects across regional, rural and remote New South Wales.

The CLSD Program is a regionally-based approach to legal service delivery. It develops partnerships between regional legal, community and government agencies that increase collaboration between legal assistance and related services (page 44).

Community Legal Centres (CLCs)

Twenty-two legal centres received funding to provide early intervention and alternative dispute resolution in partnership with Legal Aid NSW as part of Safe Home for Life reforms.

Legal Aid NSW administers funding to 36 generalist and specialist Community Legal Centres in New South Wales (page 42).

Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program (WDVCAP)

Inaugural Local Coordination Points were established at WDVCSs in Orange and Waverley, receiving referrals from local police.

The WDVCS Program works with the NSW Police Force, Local Courts and legal, health, welfare and accommodation services in the community to provide an integrated response to domestic violence (page 43).

Collaborating with our partners

Emerging justice partnerships contribute to an efficient justice system

Agreements with courts and partner agencies will improve outcomes for our shared clients and, in some cases, offer alternatives to court.

Inter-agency work examined court efficiency and how we can partner to deliver cost effective, high quality services to mutual clients.

OBJECTIVE: EXCELLENCE IN LEGAL SERVICES

Partner agreement aims to make best use of limited resources

The Public Defenders are the primary source of counsel's services to Legal Aid NSW in criminal indictable matters. The Department of Justice is the funding body for the Public Defenders.

This year, Legal Aid NSW and the Public Defenders signed a new service level agreement that outlines mutual obligations in the common commitment to provide high quality advocacy and advice for people charged before the criminal courts.

Demand for the services of Public Defenders exceeds available resources. The purpose of the agreement is to make the best possible use of these limited resources. The agreement covered priorities of work and schedules for allocations, including providing representation in matters on short notice, and early involvement of Public Defenders in complex committal matters.

OBJECTIVE: STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

Diverting high users of legal aid services away from court

Legal Aid NSW has partnered with the Children's Court of NSW to trial a new diversionary process for young people at Parramatta Children's Court. It is part of the broader High Service Users Project for young people with complex needs.

Under the trial, young people who are likely to become recurring offenders and who are identified as being potential high users of Legal

Aid NSW services are diverted from court and referred to the Western Sydney Integrated Case Management Panel managed by Family and Community Services.

The panel includes representatives from Juvenile Justice, the NSW Police Force, Corrective Services NSW, Family and Community Services, Mental Health, Education, Housing NSW and other government agencies.

The trial is driven by a commitment to diversion and rehabilitation and a multi-agency approach to helping young people avoid frequent contact with the criminal justice system. If this trial is successful, we will consider whether it should become a permanent initiative.

The results to date suggest a reduction in matters presenting at Parramatta Children's Court for children living in residential care facilities, quicker finalisation of court matters for identified 'complex needs' children, and an increase in appropriate and timely referrals to our Children's Civil Law Service. We are also seeing improved collaboration between Legal Aid NSW and service providers. A Law and Justice Foundation evaluation will assess its success and propose improvements.

Koori Court for young Aboriginal people with complex needs

The first Youth Koori Court in New South Wales opened on Friday 6 February 2015. It is a 12-month pilot which has been set up in Parramatta Children's Court with a focus on diversion and reducing criminal offending by providing a culturally appropriate way of dealing with young offenders. A key feature of the Youth Koori Court involves setting up strong supports to address identified risk factors for the young person.

The Legal Aid NSW Children's Civil Law Service (the CCLS) has formed a partnership with the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) and the Youth Koori Court so that all young people who have been assessed as suitable for participating in the court are referred to the CCLS. This is a targeted referral partnership given that

the young people who are eligible for participation in the Youth Koori Court have been identified as having multiple and complex needs.

CCLS involvement allows for early intervention around other legal issues that may be affecting the young person and includes assistance with civil law problems such as fines, advocacy with leaving care entitlements, complaints against authorities, and alternative dispute resolution with residential out of home care providers.

Since May 2015, a Legal Aid NSW lawyer has attended Youth Koori Court every Friday and conducts a legal health check assessment of other legal issues that are impacting on the young person. Ongoing collaboration with the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) ensures that there is a wrap-around legal service for the young person, providing links to other support throughout the Youth Koori Court process. This has resulted in some positive outcomes for our clients, as demonstrated by the following case study:

Simon's story

Simon, now 18, had been removed from his parents and placed in foster care from the age of three. When he was 16, his placement with his foster carer broke down and Simon began couch surfing with friends and other family members. When Simon was accepted into the Youth Koori Court Program, the Children's Civil Law Service was able to assist by:

- successfully making a submission to FaCS for funding for intensive case management support to Simon after he turns 18;
- assisting Simon to draft a leaving care plan suitable to his needs (this plan sets out the entitlements available to Simon after leaving care); and
- successfully negotiating for a waiver of \$4,500 in fines debt.

Cost effective measures for first court appearances

Audio-visual link (AVL) continues to be a growing tool in ensuring access to justice and providing cost-effective legal representation. AVL is primarily used in providing advice and taking instructions from persons in custody charged with criminal offences.

We participated in a number of cross-agency foundation projects, including first court appearances by AVL for persons in custody from Corrective Service Centres and police stations. The foundation projects are part of the wider Justice AVL Consolidation Audio-Visual Links project that promotes the effective use of resources, facilities and technology to improve service and justice outcomes.

The rising prison population, limited AVL suites, the constant movement of prisoners and the cancellation of bookings have provided challenges this year. These have been eased by new initiatives including testing mobile devices for AVL conferences, connection to the Dawn de Loas Correctional Centre, an increase in our AVL unit's capacity, improved technology, and introducing telephone legal appointment bookings with clients in custody.

Piloting a new approach in the District Court

Two defence and two prosecution teams are working exclusively on legally aided matters before one permanently assigned judge.

The pilot court is named the "Rolling List Court" as the court is able to deal with matters flexibly and efficiently thanks to the structure put in place by these two teams and a permanent judge. Both teams have a Public Defender and a Legal Aid NSW lawyer who always work with the same Crown Prosecutor and Public Prosecutions lawyer. The teams are allocated matters immediately after committal for trial and are able to begin immediate discussions about either further negotiations or trial issues. Each team remains with the matter until completion.

A new flexible and efficient Rolling List Court allows for early case management.

This structure has allowed for early case management by both parties. Early identification of issues by the teams has helped with identification of matters that do not proceed, charge negotiations and ways to reduce the length of trials. Having the same legal teams has also allowed a large degree of flexibility for when matters can be set down for trial, legal argument or sentence.

The pilot is proceeding well with 28 matters before the Rolling List Court in the first three months of operation. The catchment area of the program has also been extended to include Parramatta, Penrith and Campbelltown matters.

The pilot program started in April 2015 and is being evaluated by the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research.

Better communication with clients at the Family Law Courts

To improve collaboration and understanding between Legal Aid NSW and Family Law Courts, Legal Aid NSW commenced a stakeholder's forum. A group consisting of judicial officers, court administrators and inhouse Legal Aid NSW representatives meet to facilitate regular communication about a range of service delivery issues in order to assist both organisations to best meet the needs of those in the family law system. The main aim of the group is to improve the outcomes for those in the family law system.

More duty advice services at tribunal registries

Following an evaluation of the civil law duty service at the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT), an MOU is being developed with NCAT to provide duty advice services at NCAT registries in Penrith, Wollongong, Tamworth and Newcastle (page 25).

A new duty advice service is being established at the Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW in Sydney.

➤ The year ahead

Develop local partnerships with the Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS) and Community Legal Centres for implementing care and protection reforms, aiming for a 10 per cent increase in referrals from FaCS.

Introduce initiatives to address the serious District Court trial backlog, including a state wide MOU between Legal Aid NSW and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions for the earliest possible resolution of committal matters.

Roll out a new duty service at the Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW.

Sign an agreement with the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal to provide duty services at various NCAT registries.

Collaborating with our partners

Private lawyers

Legal Aid NSW works in partnership with private lawyers, who receive funding from us to represent legally aided clients in assigned matters.

FACT FILE

Total Grants staff:	67
Total applications for legal aid:	44,205
in criminal law	24,782
in family law	17,295
in civil law	2,128
Appointments on 12 panels	4,980
Percentage of legally aided case and duty services provided by private lawyers	41.8

Private lawyers are appointed to Legal Aid NSW panels under sections 49 to 52B of the *Legal Aid Commission Act 1979*.

In 2014–2015, private lawyers provided 41.8 per cent of Legal Aid NSW case and duty services. More details appear in Appendix 6.

The Grants Division of Legal Aid NSW (Grants) receives, determines and manages legal aid applications from private lawyers and the Legal Aid NSW inhouse practice. Applications are submitted and managed electronically. Grants has regular telephone contact with lawyers and clients.

OBJECTIVE: ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Record number of five-year reappointments increase efficiency

Panels operate in all areas of law, including general panels in criminal, family and civil law. There are specialist panels for care and protection, independent children’s lawyers, serious criminal law, children’s criminal law, mental health advocacy, veterans’ law and domestic violence matters and for barristers briefed in complex criminal matters and criminal appellate matters.

In 2014–2015, there were 407 new applicants appointed to our panels, bringing the total number of appointments on all panels to 4,980. This is nine per cent more than the previous year.

In addition, Legal Aid NSW undertook the record reappointment of 1,110 current panel members whose five year appointments to various panels were due to expire throughout 2014–2015. This increase saw the number of panel reappointments to new five-year terms rise by 250 per cent from the previous year. The efficient processing of reappointment applications ensures that panel lawyers continue to be available to represent legally aided clients.

The Specialist Barrister Panel for Appellate Criminal Law Matters was reopened for applications in 2015. An additional 35 barristers were appointed to that panel, 14 of whom were women, aligned with the New South Wales Government Equitable Briefing Policy.

OBJECTIVE: EXCELLENCE IN LEGAL SERVICES

Reviews aim to streamline panel processes

The selection criteria and processes for a number of panels were reviewed to identify ways to improve efficiency in the panel application and reappointment process.

Reviews of the General Criminal Law Panel and Mental Health Advocacy Panel were completed and the panels were reopened to new applicants

and current panel members seeking reappointment in 2014. Both of these panels made use of a streamlined process for reappointment applications.

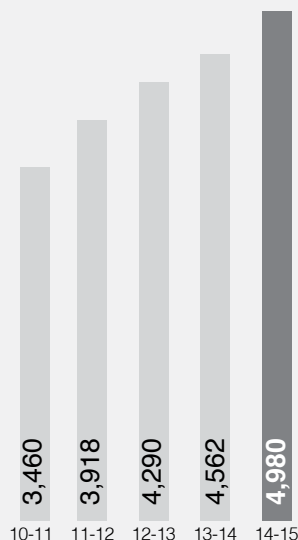
A review of the Independent Children’s Lawyer (ICL) Panel was also completed and the panel reopened to new applicants and current panel members seeking reappointment in 2014. Changes to the selection criteria and selection process for the ICL Panel were informed by the outcomes from the 2013 Australian Institute of Family Studies report on the role of ICLs. The report highlighted the need for mechanisms for the selection, training and monitoring of ICLs to be strengthened.

The practice standards for the three reviewed panels were revised and updated to support better compliance from panel lawyers. Up-to-date versions of the practice standards are available in the *Panels Audit and Practice Standards* section of the Legal Aid NSW website.

Adjusted fees for expert reports ensure the best evidence is before the court

We simplified and updated our fee scale for Commonwealth family law matters to better reflect current court events and practice. We also increased the fees payable for single expert

Private lawyer appointments on panels: five year trend



2014–2015 panel appointments*

Domestic Violence	77
Veterans’ Law	20
Mental Health Advocacy	190
General Civil Law	339
Specialist Barrister Panel (Complex Criminal Law)	87
Specialist Barrister Panel (Criminal Appellate Matters)	103
Children’s Criminal Law	216
Serious Criminal Law	251
General Criminal Law	1,759
Independent Children’s Lawyer	180
Care & Protection	459
General Family Law	1,299
All panels	4,980

*Includes total number of appointments processed. Includes lawyers appointed to more than one panel and lawyers who may or may not be active panel members.

reports in Independent Children's Lawyer matters to ensure that the best possible evidence is before the court.

We simplified the fee scale for civil law work, removing distinctions between court types, standardising the calculation of advocacy rates and removing the historic rule that lawyers were only paid at 80 per cent of the published fees. This has made the costing of civil law matters much simpler for both private lawyers and Legal Aid NSW staff.

We implemented most of the efficiency recommendations from an auditor's review.

Resources were dedicated to improving our audit processes

Based on recommendations from an external review, we improved efficiency through:

- a new panel lawyer audit strategy, effective from 1 July 2014, with an emphasis on spot check audits that target claims and means verification and file audits for complaints and other matters;
- a three-year audit plan that will be reviewed each year;
- a new analytical tool to better analyse data and identify audit targets; and
- a new audit module in our grants management system to manage audits and better record audit outcomes.

These initiatives and a high panel workload put a limit on the Professional Practices Branch (the Branch) audit resources this year; however there will be ongoing efficiencies from improved audit processes.

Online agreements are more efficient for private lawyers and staff

Private lawyers responded well to quicker, easier online service agreements. Since this facility was introduced in late 2014, private lawyers completed 1,370 service agreements online.

Spot check audits point to the need for training

A focus on spot check audits enabled the Branch to maintain a strong audit focus. This year, means test verification was the focus of spot check audits.

In total, 560 matters were audited. The two main issues that were identified related to proof of Centrelink entitlements and bank statements. As a result, the Branch recommended that training be provided for panel lawyers and identified policies requiring further clarification.

A spot check audit of 100 panel lawyers for variable unit claims was commenced in April 2015 and will conclude early in the next financial year.

File audits and follow up file audits

In addition to the spot check audits, 42 files were audited for five panel lawyers, resulting in refund requests of \$11,713.

The major area of concern was unsatisfactory file management, which included: lack of adequate file notes of court attendances, no evidence on file to support additional preparation and no supporting evidence on file for claims made on disbursements.

Monitoring breaches of agreements

The Branch investigates apparent breaches by panel lawyers of panel service agreements and refers matters to the Monitoring Committee. The committee, which comprises nominees from the Law Society of NSW, the New South Wales Bar Association and Legal Aid NSW, then makes recommendations to Legal Aid NSW about lawyers who have breached panel service agreements.

During 2014–2015, the Branch investigated 57 serious complaints about panel lawyers and made eight referrals to the Monitoring Committee.

In all, the Monitoring Committee has considered 45 lawyers for apparent breaches of panel service agreements since 2010 with 26 of these matters considered in the last two years. More than 50 per cent of referrals to the Committee relate to the General Criminal Law Panel – the largest of the panels.

➤ The year ahead

Reopen the Children's Criminal Law Panel for applications following a recent review of the panel requirements.

Commence reviews of the Specialist Domestic Violence Practitioner Panel and the Specialist Barrister Panel (Complex Criminal Law).

Improve the Grants Online IT system to enable lawyers to accept offers of work via mobile devices and to improve information security.

Fully implement the grants management audit module.

Increase the number of panel lawyer audits.

Collaborating with our partners

Community programs

Community Legal Centres

Legal Aid NSW administers the State, Commonwealth and Public Purpose Fund funding for 36 Community Legal Centres (CLCs) in New South Wales, including Community Legal Centres NSW (CLCNSW), the peak representative body.

FACT FILE

36 centres assisted 58,428 people

Provided 74,754 advices to clients

Opened 10,628 new cases and completed 10,254 cases

Of the completed cases, 1,593 were major cases (complex/lengthy matters)

Delivered 1,512 community legal education programs

Made 4,883 referrals to Legal Aid NSW

Received 2,820 referrals from Legal Aid NSW

CLCs provide free legal services to disadvantaged people. They are independent, non-profit organisations that are generally incorporated bodies managed by a board or management committee.

Legal Aid NSW also administers funding for Children's Court Assistance Schemes that operate at seven Children's Courts under the auspice of four CLCs.

FUNDING IN 2014–2015

A total of \$17,245,512 was paid to CLCs through the program comprising:

- \$9,002,244 in Commonwealth funding (52%)
- \$6,250,290 in State funding (36%)
- \$1,992,978 in Public Purpose Fund (PPF) funding (12%)

Note: The PPF also provides funding directly to some CLCs.

In January 2015, Legal Aid NSW provided funding of \$883,500 to 22 CLCs to provide early intervention and alternative dispute resolution in partnership with Legal Aid NSW under the *Safe Home for Life* reforms.

Twenty-two community legal centres signed up to provide legal services in partnership with Legal Aid NSW as part of *Safe Home for Life* reforms.

Legal Aid NSW provided further funding of \$24,876 for a series of training sessions held in relation to care and protection law and developing an online training resource.

More details about funding can be found in Appendix 5.

OBJECTIVE: ACCESS TO JUSTICE

The *Safe Home for Life* reforms commenced on 29 October 2014, increasing the emphasis on permanent placement of children other than in the long-term parental responsibility of the Minister.

The reforms provide early intervention to support parents, build parental capacity and accountability, and provide permanency in care arrangements (page 18).

Partnership projects target vulnerable clients

Central Coast CLC and the Legal Aid NSW Gosford office teamed up on a project that provided eight education workshops to over 80 mental health caseworkers about the legal system and the nature of civil law issues so that they can make better referrals.

Legal Health = Mental Health: Tackling the Unmet Civil Law Needs of People with Mental Illnesses, established co-located advice clinics at various mental health service providers across the Central Coast region, resulting in 17 legal advice sessions and eight referrals. The project was completed in June 2015.

Legal Aid NSW funded a new project between The Aged Rights Service and Legal Aid NSW in 2014-2015. *Borrowers Beware* uses community radio to educate Arabic, Croatian, Macedonian and Serbian-speaking elderly people across New South Wales on the dangers of risky borrowing. Radio broadcasts and webinars were delivered to community workers working within target communities.

OBJECTIVE: EXCELLENCE IN LEGAL SERVICES

With funding from Legal Aid NSW, we worked with CLCNSW on a better process for CLC accreditation and service standard audits. The aim is to ensure that the most disadvantaged clients continue to receive high quality services that are accessible, responsive and appropriate to their needs. Over the past two years, the



Above Diana Bernard (left) from The Aged Rights Service and Dana Beigliari from Legal Aid NSW get the word out to multicultural communities about the dangers of risky borrowing.

Regional Accreditation Coordinator visited each of the 32 CLCs that are required to meet accreditation and audit standards, with all receiving tier 1 or 2 accreditation. Legal Aid NSW has completed audits of all of these CLCs in the past two years and all but one CLC has passed audit, with further documentation required from that centre.

A new service standard on Aboriginal cultural safety will be introduced in the CLC Service Agreements for 2015-2016. The standard sets out procedures and policies to ensure cultural safety within CLCs for Aboriginal clients, staff and volunteers.

In 2014-2015, targets were introduced in CLC plans to increase service delivery to identified priority client groups in their catchment. The targets were set to ensure that the percentage of CLC clients from a range of priority groups were equal or higher to those demographics in the general population for the catchment. All CLCs are on track to meet their targets.

➤ The year ahead

Implement the first year of the new National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services 2015-2020 for the CLC sector in New South Wales.

Develop and implement new service agreements and guidelines for the provision of community legal services in 2015-2016 in consultation with the CLC sector.

Introduce a new service standard on Aboriginal cultural safety.

Work with CLCs to ensure that service delivery planning is linked to legal needs analysis and responds to the needs of priority groups in the community.

Develop a plan for sustainable service delivery strategies for the Community Legal Centres sector anticipating that Commonwealth funding levels will decrease significantly in 2017-2018.

Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program (WDVCAP)

Legal Aid NSW administers New South Wales Government funding for 28 Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services (WDVCASs) and their peak representative body, the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service NSW Inc.

➤ FACT FILE

Provided services at 114 Local Courts

Provided 102,127 services to 22,557 clients – a 3.5% increase on last year

Assisted clients to obtain 11,355 final Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders, a 2.8% increase on last year

Accepted referrals of 1,180 and 2,056 women respectively at Orange and Waverley Local Coordination Points

12.7% of WDVCAS and 8.2% Local Coordination Point clients identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

19.3% of WDVCAS and 5.8% Local Coordination Point clients were from culturally diverse backgrounds

8.5% of WDVCAS clients identified as having a disability

WDVCASs provide information, advocacy and referrals to women seeking legal protection from domestic violence through an Apprehended Domestic Violence Order at 114 Local Courts across the State.

WDVCASs also host a key component of the New South Wales Government *It Stops Here: Safer Pathway* domestic violence reforms – Local Coordination Points. Commencing in September 2014 in Orange and Waverley, Local Coordination Points are being established across New South Wales. Their task is to provide women experiencing domestic violence with threat assessment, safety planning, case coordination and referral to a safety action meeting if necessary. local coordination points also provide secretariat support for safety action meetings at which agencies discuss individual cases of women and children deemed at serious threat.

FUNDING IN 2014-2015

In 2014-2015, \$9,784,371 was paid in grants through the program to incorporated, not for profit, non-government service providers under a triennial service agreement.

This included \$866,900 from the Department of Family and Community Services for Local Coordination Point implementation as part of the NSW Government *It Stops Here: Safer Pathway* domestic and family violence reforms.

Details of grant allocations are in Appendix 4.

OBJECTIVE: ACCESS TO JUSTICE

The positive outcomes achieved at the two *Safer Pathway* launch sites in Orange and Waverley demonstrated the value of an integrated approach to supporting women and children escaping domestic violence. Many more women from disadvantaged groups have accessed the support provided by the two Local Coordination Points and their host WDVCASs (page 19).

The Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research conducted a process evaluation of the *Safer Pathway* launch sites, Orange and Waverley in early 2015. While the final evaluation report has not yet been released, preliminary feedback is very positive. Stakeholders expressed strong support for *Safer Pathway* and its roll-out across New South Wales.

OBJECTIVE: EXCELLENCE IN LEGAL SERVICES

In July 2014, the WDVCAP held its first biannual forum for the year. It was opened by the Hon Pru Goward MP, Minister for Women. The forum theme, *Working together within the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Reforms*, focused on the need for positive collaboration between agencies and service sectors to ensure the success of the Government's reforms. A panel of speakers from the NSW Police Force, Legal Aid NSW, Women NSW, TAFE NSW and the then Department of Police and Justice outlined how this collaboration would translate into effective client service delivery.

Collaborating with our partners

The sessions were attended by nearly 300 representatives from government, legal, academic and community organisations, including WDVCS staff.

The second WDVCS forum for the year took place in March 2015 and focused on cultural awareness training for WDVCS staff, highlighting the experience of Aboriginal families dealing with inter-generational disadvantage.

OBJECTIVE: STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

In 2014-2015, existing partnerships with the NSW Police Force and Local Courts were strengthened. Our already strong relationship with Victims Services NSW continued as we worked together on training WDVCS workers on using a new electronic referral system as part of the domestic and family violence reforms.

The commencement of the Local Coordination Point launch sites at Orange and Waverley provided the catalyst for new collaborative relationships with NSW Health, Family and Community Services, Education, and Corrective Services. Working collaboratively with the NSW Police Force, Local Coordination Point staff and non-government representatives at safety action meetings, the various agencies demonstrated the effectiveness of a coordinated approach to supporting women and children experiencing domestic violence.

We also strengthened our working relationships with other units within Legal Aid NSW, as the agency as a whole focused its attention on how best to support domestic violence victims.

➤ The year ahead

Monitor the responsibilities allocated by the Government to the 28 WDVCSs funded under the Program.

Accept all referrals of domestic violence incidents from the NSW Police Force from 1 July 2015 under the State's Domestic Violence Justice Strategy.

Provide support to four new *Safer Pathway* Local Coordination Points hosted by WDVCSs at Bankstown, Broken Hill, Parramatta and Tweed Heads, also commencing 1 July.

Ensure that WDVCS staff are adequately trained and supported to implement their new responsibilities under the Domestic and Family Violence Reforms.

Regional partnerships

People living in regional, rural and remote areas can have difficulty accessing legal services.

Legal Aid NSW has played a leadership role in developing regional coalitions and outreach programs that find new ways to improve service delivery to people disadvantaged by distance.

➤ FACT FILE

Two new weekly joint-service clinics

53 CLSD Program projects commenced or completed

19% of projects delivered in Aboriginal communities

60 education sessions in 28 locations

Cooperative Legal Service Delivery Program

Legal Aid NSW has been managing the Cooperative Legal Service Delivery Program (CLSD) since it was piloted in two locations in 2005. Our CLSD Program Unit now manages 11 partnerships across regional and remote New South Wales, as shown in the map on the next page.

The program is a regionally-based approach to legal service delivery that aims to improve access to legal services in regional areas. It does this by building local partnerships between legal and related non-legal agencies. Participants include representatives from Legal Aid NSW regional offices, Community Legal Centres, the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT), Local Courts, tenancy, domestic violence, youth, disability and financial counselling services, and local community and neighbourhood services. We also partner with pro bono legal services, government departments, health services, LawAccess NSW and regional Legal Information Access Centres through local libraries.

OBJECTIVE: ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Collective enterprise and local service know-how meet client needs

The CLSD Program projects draw upon the collective resources and know-how of local services, both legal and non-legal, to address locally identified needs, and promote access to legal assistance and information about legal rights and services. We work closely with the New South Wales Legal Assistance Forum (NLAF) to identify and find solutions to systemic issues in regional and remote New South Wales.

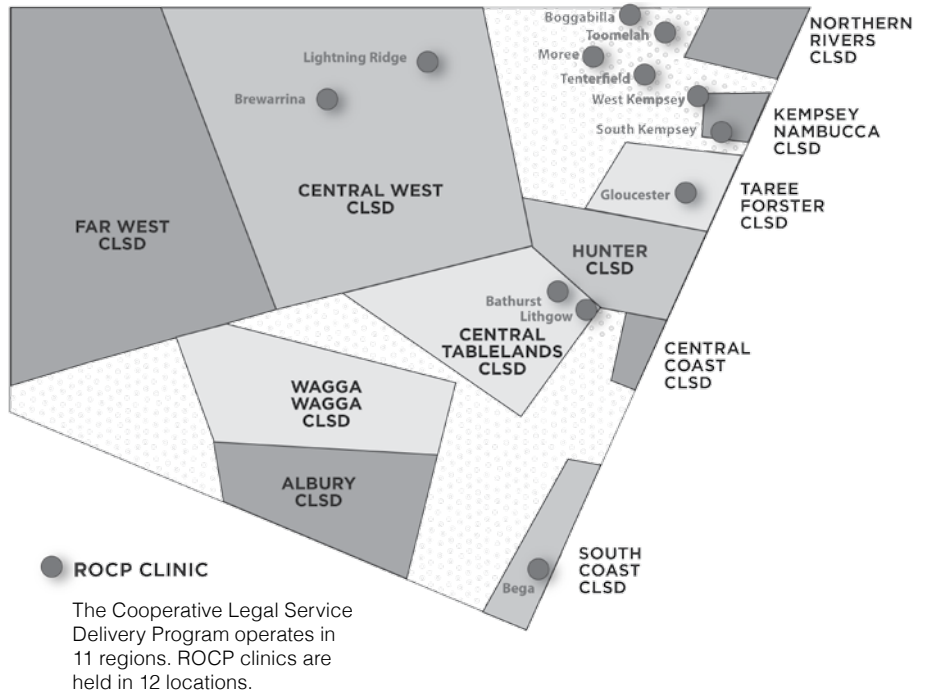
In 2014–2015, CLSD Program partners engaged in 53 projects in regional, rural and remote New South Wales. The criteria for projects are that they are targeted, collaborative, directly respond to an identified unmet legal need and directly provide or enable access to legal assistance in regional communities.

Projects included:

- traffic advice and representation clinics in Taree and Broken Hill;
- wills clinics for Aboriginal people in Coffs Harbour, Kempsey; Taree, Dubbo, Bourke and Brewarrina with our pro bono law firm partners Ashurst and Gilbert + Tobin; and
- two new joint-service legal and advocacy clinics in Cowra and Finley.

CLSD Program partners in western New South Wales again joined forces to offer joint-service outreach to the communities of Bourke and Brewarrina during Law Week in May 2015. Working closely with the Brewarrina and Bourke Aboriginal Community Working Parties, participating agencies included Legal Aid NSW, Western NSW Community Legal Centre, Bourke Aboriginal Legal Service, Thiyama-li Family Violence Legal Service, Gilbert + Tobin Lawyers, Western Women’s Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service, State Debt Recovery, Office of Fair Trading, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and Transport for New South Wales.

CLSD Program and Regional Outreach Clinic Program locations at 30 June 2015



Dispelling myths about the law and pointing people in the right direction

Mid North Coast CLSD partners collaborated to produce a “myth busters” publication for Law Week in which CLSD Program partners addressed common myths about the law and legal services. This resource joins a growing body of publications generated by the CLSD Program. The grassroots partnership links mean that the CLSD Program is ideally placed to identify critical information gaps and address them through a collaborative approach.

OBJECTIVE: STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

CLSD Program partners continued to work together to respond to the legal and non-legal needs of clients in regional and remote New South Wales.

Highlights this year included:

- Working with non-legal partners by using the *Law Check-Up* tool to assist our partners to identify the legal needs of their clients and refer them to the appropriate legal service.
- Establishing the Financial Hardship Working Group with the Law and Justice Foundation of NSW to extend the reach and effectiveness of State and Commonwealth legal and related non-legal services to disadvantaged communities in financial hardship in regional and remote New South Wales.

Collaborating with our partners

➤ The year ahead

Roll out a new CLSD Program partnership in the Moree region after consulting with key agencies in Moree and the border communities of Toomelah and Boggabilla.

Collaborate on more partnership projects, including:

- Mid North Coast Aboriginal cultural competency training for our justice sector partners;
- Aboriginal Access project on the Central Coast to engage more local Aboriginal community members and referrals to legal services;
- a program at the new specialist Kariong Correctional Centre with our Central Coast CLSD Program partners to provide legal education programs, advice on issues like fines, child support and family matters; and
- a project to tackle exploitative employment practices in the Riverina, with multicultural workers and community members.
- Work with the New South Wales Legal Assistance Forum on systemic justice issues, including compulsory schooling orders and prosecutions of parents and their children for truancy under the *Education Act 2013* in regional New South Wales.
- Implement best practice in the delivery of outreach services in regional, rural and remote New South Wales, and implement the findings of the review of the provision of legal services in remote areas of New South Wales.

Regional Outreach Clinic Program (ROCP)

Under this program, Legal Aid NSW funds external lawyers and partners with them to deliver legal advice clinics in regional, rural and remote areas of high socio-economic disadvantage and where the provision of regular inhouse advice is not feasible.

Regional Outreach Clinic Program advice services are generally provided in community and neighbourhood centres, local courts or libraries. They complement inhouse Legal Aid NSW services, forming part of a flexible suite of Legal Aid NSW services in regional areas identified as high need.

The 2013-2014 review of the ROCP determined that the location and constituency of the ROCP clinics be realigned, as required, to complement our inhouse services. Accordingly there were some changes to the ROCP locations to take into account our increased outreach activity in regional New South Wales and the new Port Macquarie office.

OBJECTIVE: ACCESS TO JUSTICE

At the end of June 2015, ROCP clinics operated in 12 locations – Bathurst, Bega, Boggabilla, Brewarrina, Gloucester, South Kempsey, West Kempsey, Lightning Ridge, Lithgow, Moree, Tenterfield and Toomelah. Gloucester is a new location, replacing Taree which is now serviced by the new Legal Aid NSW office in Port Macquarie (pages 21 and 57). The clinic previously held in Glenroi, Orange, is now also serviced inhouse by Legal Aid NSW. Clinics in Boggabilla and Toomelah changed from fortnightly to monthly.

In 2014-2015, 772 ROCP advice and minor assistance services were provided at ROCP clinics. Almost 20 per cent of these services were to Aboriginal people.

OBJECTIVE: EXCELLENCE IN LEGAL SERVICES

Legal Aid NSW ran a two-day professional development workshop for all ROCP lawyers in Sydney in February 2015, covering areas of law in which rural and remote clients are likely to need assistance. These included social security, amendments to the *Bail Act*, reforms in the care and protection jurisdiction, child support, employment law, and housing and consumer law issues in Aboriginal communities. A number of lawyers also attended an additional day of specialist care and protection training provided by the Legal Aid NSW family law practice.

➤ The year ahead

Assist in an equitable spread of legal services in regional New South Wales, continuing to adjust and align the ROCP services and locations.

Ensure that regional and remote communities served by the partnership between inhouse and ROCP lawyers have access to sustainable services that appropriately meet their needs.

Training and networking achieve better community outcomes

We support our partners to stay well-informed about our policies and to have a sound working knowledge of legislation. Their expertise is a key element in providing high quality services to our clients.

This year, we offered a number of training opportunities and developed online resources.

OBJECTIVE: EXCELLENCE IN LEGAL SERVICES

Making sure our partners understand their role in government reforms

With major Government reforms changing the way we do business, it is imperative to train partners and staff in new models of service delivery.

Staff from the 22 Community Legal Centres who signed up as “care partners” to provide early intervention and alternative dispute resolution in partnership with Legal Aid NSW, attended a series of training days. Online training modules and webinars were also scheduled. Pages 18 and 42 have more information about this initiative.

With the launch of the first two Local Coordination Points at Orange and Waverley, and a further four Local Coordination Points to become active from 1 July 2015 as part of *Safer Pathway* reforms, the Women’s Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program:

- supported Victims Services in delivering seven Central Referral Point training sessions to 72 WDVCS workers;
- delivered eight training sessions to new workers and safety action meeting members in six locations across New South Wales;
- delivered *Safer Pathway* information sessions in six sites across New South Wales to government and non-government stakeholders; and

- delivered five Local Coordination Point training sessions to 139 WDVCS workers.

Pages 19 and 43 have more information about this initiative.

Training delivered through the Cooperative Legal Service Delivery (CLSD) Program included:

- sixty education workshops for lawyers, the public and community workers in 28 locations;
- a two-day training and networking workshop for CLSD Coordinators; and
- four planning days in Kempsey, Taree, Wagga Wagga and Albury to ensure that the legal services and activities delivered through the CLSD Program framework are evidence-based and target areas of high unmet legal need.

Health justice partnerships: an emerging model of collaboration

In order to harness the growing interest in health justice partnerships, Legal Aid NSW, the Department of Premier and Cabinet and Clayton Utz held a forum in September 2014. The aim was to draw out the lessons learned from health justice projects in Victoria around issues of engagement, ethical challenges, models of collaboration and evaluation.

As a result, Legal Aid NSW established a Community of Practice to develop expertise and build health justice partnerships in New South Wales. Legal Aid NSW provides project management and secretariat support to the Community of Practice. In February 2015, the Community of Practice hosted a seminar to develop the capacity of the sector to evaluate the impact of health justice projects on client outcomes. The Community of Practice has also developed a website with useful resources and a mapping facility to identify health justice partnership projects in New South Wales. Visit www.healthjusticecop.wordpress.com

Leading a national project for independent children’s lawyers

The family law practice led a National Legal Aid project to develop a national website for use by Independent Children’s Lawyers. The website, to be launched next year, will:

- provide information, news and resources to the public about the role of the ICL in the family law system;
- provide exclusive ICL member only access to national and state/territory resources, forums, news, events, training and a mentoring program for all Legal Aid NSW ICL panel lawyers across Australia via secure login; and
- ensure the availability of the most current and reliable social science research as a result of a partnership with the Child Family Community Australia information exchange from the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

As a result of our collaboration with the Centre for Children and Young People at Southern Cross University, a literature review was undertaken to help inform the development of ‘good practice’ guidelines for child representatives.

Making sure private lawyers have a good grounding in our policies

We conducted training sessions on legal aid policies, use of Grants Online and grants processes for private lawyers in six locations, including four in regional areas. The Sydney session was webcast enabling lawyers from a wide geographic area to participate. One lawyer from western New South Wales wrote:

“Thank you so much for noting my concerns regarding travel and making this happen. I’m looking forward to future courses offered via webinar.”

We launched a set of resources aimed at Independent Children’s Lawyers, which includes precedent court documents and letters as well as brochures and forms. Panel lawyers

Collaborating with our partners

can access the resources online. The resources will be expanded over time to cover other jurisdictions.

OBJECTIVE: EXCELLENCE IN LEGAL SERVICES

Strategic research alliance with the Law and Justice Foundation

Legal Aid NSW and the Law and Justice Foundation of NSW entered into a two-year strategic research alliance from July 2014 until July 2016.

Under the alliance, the Foundation published an evaluation of the partnership between Legal Aid NSW and Settlement Services International to deliver legal outreach in migrant resource centres. The report was launched in December 2014.

The current focus of the research work under the alliance is to evaluate community legal education (CLE) at Legal Aid NSW (page 33). The evaluation is in three stages. The first stage is an audit of CLE, including publications and resources. The next two stages will look at developing and testing an agency-wide strategic framework for CLE.

The first stage has been completed.

In addition, the Foundation participated in the Health Justice Partnerships Community of Practice – a cross sector working group that aims to explore opportunities for collaboration to improve the health, wellbeing and legal outcomes of disadvantaged communities.

Multi-agency networks reach right into communities

Legal Aid NSW took part in a number of multi-agency initiatives to improve access to justice.

OBJECTIVE: ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Supporting a unified response to forced marriage

Legal Aid NSW linked with other services to improve our response to forced marriage including:

- working with NGO and government partners to establish the New South Wales Forced Marriage Network which developed a referral guide for clients exposed to forced marriage;
- joining the Immigrant Women's Speak Out Steering Committee to oversee the development of two audio CDs in community languages concerning forced marriage;
- establishing a new outreach at Guildford, in partnership with Immigrant Women's Health Service, to provide services for people at risk of forced marriage; and
- developing three presentations on forced marriage for Family and Community Services case workers, in partnership with the Salvation Army Trafficking and Slavery Safe House.

Improving the child support system

The family law practice convened the Child Support Liaison Group with membership from Women's Legal Services NSW, Community Legal Centres, the Commonwealth Ombudsman, the Law Society of NSW, and the Department of Human Services. Its purpose is to increase specialised child support knowledge within the sector, strengthen relationships and identify systemic issues and experiences in the child support system.

OBJECTIVE: EXCELLENCE IN LEGAL SERVICES

Joint protocol to reduce criminalisation of young people

A key issue identified by Legal Aid NSW has been the use of police by residential care providers as a behaviour management tool. This has led to unnecessary and frequent interaction with the criminal justice system for a group of vulnerable young people.

To address this issue, Legal Aid NSW has been working in partnership with the Western Sydney Residential Providers Forum (the interagency in Western Sydney for residential care service providers, made up of police representatives as well as NGO representatives) to develop a set of guidelines around the use of police for young people living in residential care services. This was identified as a needed resource given the lack of consistent practice across residential care services and NSW Police.

The growing awareness of this issue led to a collaboration with the NSW Ombudsman's Office, who supported the development of a state-wide protocol around the decriminalisation of young people in residential out of home care. The NSW Ombudsman's Office took the lead role in developing the Protocol, with the content of the Protocol being informed by the Working Party's work (page 35).

➤ The year ahead

Expand and strengthen partnerships with non-legal services.

Establish a framework for regional service delivery plans for Legal Aid NSW offices to jointly plan services with our partners.

Take part in the NSW Ombudsman's Roundtable to finalise the protocol to reduce the criminalisation of young people in residential out of home care within the criminal justice system.

Justice forums

Legal Aid NSW is a member of several state and national forums that work collectively to find better ways of dealing with key legal issues affecting people's legal rights.

OBJECTIVE: STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

National Legal Aid – advising the Commonwealth Government

National Legal Aid provides a forum for legal aid commissions to engage at a national level with governments, stakeholders and the community about best practice in legal aid and related issues.

National Legal Aid (NLA) comprises the directors of the legal aid commissions in each of the states and territories in Australia. NLA is supported by working groups and networks formed by representatives from each of the legal aid commissions.

NLA met in July and October 2014 and March and June 2015. CEOs of the legal aid commissions discussed issues of national strategic significance and advised the Commonwealth Government on the impact of its law and policies.

Key issues discussed during 2014-2015 included:

- Commonwealth legal assistance reforms – NLA provided a forum for input and negotiation with the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department about key elements of the Commonwealth legal assistance reforms;
- Commonwealth funding and future arrangements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services;
- Commonwealth funding for the Expensive Commonwealth Criminal Cases Fund;
- developing a National Domestic Violence Order Scheme; and
- reviewing family dispute resolution qualifications.

NLA provided submissions to the:

- Parliamentary Inquiry into the Child Support Program; and

- Family Law Council inquiry regarding families with complex needs and the intersection of the family law and child protection systems.

NLA developed a suite of resources, including a national website to enhance the quality of practice, and understanding of the role of Independent Children's Lawyers (page 47).

Projects focus on better access to legal services for vulnerable clients

The NSW Legal Assistance Forum (NLAF) brings together key legal service providers across government, non-government and private sectors. It aims to improve service delivery to socially and economically disadvantaged people through better planning, program design and service delivery by providers of legal assistance services.

NLAF members include the peak representative bodies delivering legal assistance, as well as organisations that deal with a range of legal issues that impact on disadvantaged people.

NLAF is chaired by Bill Grant, CEO of Legal Aid NSW. Legal Aid NSW staff participate in or convene all NLAF working groups.

OBJECTIVE: ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Highlights included:

- a new working group to improve access to legal services for parents and children involved in proceedings before the courts involving compulsory schooling orders and prosecutions under the *Education Act 2013*;
- a discussion paper to address transport issues for indigenous clients released from custody;
- liaison with State Debt Recovery, providing feedback on their youth policy; and
- working with Corrective Services NSW to streamline communication protocols between prisoners and legal representatives.

New arrangements for prisoner calls

The NSW Legal Assistance Forum (NLAF) Prisoners Forum works very closely with senior staff from Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW), Law Access NSW, Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) Limited, Community Legal Centres NSW and the Prisoners Legal Service of Legal Aid NSW. Achievements include information exchange across the agencies, promotion of the Corrective Services NSW legal information portal, and new arrangements for prisoner phone calls.

With the introduction of new arrangements, Legal Aid NSW recorded a 19 per cent decrease in phone calls over the corresponding period from last year and a 26 per cent decrease since new the protocol commenced in November 2014. LawAccess NSW reported a 40 per cent decrease in call volumes during the period July 2014-June 2015 over the corresponding period last year. During the period 1 January to 31 July 2015, 22 per cent of all calls to LawAccess NSW were from prisoners, representing an 8 per cent decrease over the previous year. For more information, see page 56.

The NLAF meeting also serves as a jurisdictional forum in accordance with the National Partnership Agreement. Representatives of the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department attended the December 2014 and June 2015 meetings to discuss cross-jurisdictional issues.

Further information on NLAF achievements is available at www.nlaf.org.au

➤ The year ahead

Monitor the implementation of the new National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services.

Identify and address issues arising from the *Education Act 2013*.

Collaborating with our partners

Aboriginal community partnerships

The Aboriginal Legal Service (ALS) (NSW/ACT) is our key partner in delivering legal services to Aboriginal people in New South Wales.

The ALS is a member of the Aboriginal Justice Committee chaired by the Director, Aboriginal Services at Legal Aid NSW.

The Aboriginal Services Unit of Legal Aid NSW is responsible for managing the relationship between Legal Aid NSW and the ALS.

OBJECTIVE: ACCESS TO JUSTICE

The Aboriginal Field Officer project, established in collaboration with the ALS, engaged with Aboriginal communities by providing minor assistance, community legal education, and referral services to a range of organisations.

As a result of the work of Aboriginal Field Officers, there has been a change in the way Legal Aid NSW operates, providing more flexible services to Aboriginal clients and making practical improvements in the way it responds to client need and getting services to individual clients. The number of Aboriginal clients receiving civil and family law services has increased, and new and regular outreach services have been established with a drop-in approach for Aboriginal clients (pages 9 and 19).

OBJECTIVE: EXCELLENCE IN LEGAL SERVICES

Improving lawyers' skills in working with Aboriginal clients

For the first time, an Aboriginal kinship and communication workshop was offered in conjunction with the Legal Aid NSW criminal law conference. Private and inhouse lawyers were introduced to particular skills and knowledge to better represent Aboriginal clients in the criminal justice system.

The workshop, conducted by Lynette Riley from the National Centre for Cultural Competence, provided participants with an in-depth understanding of Aboriginal kinship structures. A panel of experts, chaired by Legal Aid NSW Board member John McKenzie, gave advice on communicating with Aboriginal clients in a criminal law context. Sociolinguist Dr Diana Eades presented a paper on potential communication difficulties faced by Aboriginal people being questioned by police or in a court. Over 100 people attended the day and feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

OBJECTIVE: STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

Working towards culturally sensitive services

We completed the second year of a joint statement of commitment, maintaining our strong working relationship with the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT). It outlines our roles and responsibilities in ensuring the highest quality legal representation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities around the state through coordinated and culturally sensitive legal representation.

Under the agreement Legal Aid NSW funds:

- three Aboriginal Field Officer positions located at the Walgett and Coffs Harbour ALS offices and at our Campbelltown office;
- two care and protection lawyers at Aboriginal Legal Service offices and added support for a care and protection field officer; and
- Work and Development Order field officers at Aboriginal Legal Service offices.

Joining forces to improve access to justice for Aboriginal communities

The Aboriginal Justice Committee maintains our strong partnerships with key agencies delivering legal and justice system services to Aboriginal people and communities. The committee met twice this year to

address new and emerging issues within the sector. Members include the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT), Community Legal Centres, Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Service, Department of Justice Aboriginal Services Division, and Reconciliation NSW.

In partnership with the Cooperative Legal Service Delivery Program and private law firms, we took instructions for wills, power of attorney and guardianship at the Women's Reconciliation Camp at Saltwater in March 2015. We also worked with the Office of Fair Trading, providing Aboriginal people and communities with information about funerals, insurance and consumer issues.

Good Services Forums at Walgett, Lightning Ridge, Collarenebri, Penrith and Mt Druitt gave us the opportunity to communicate widely with Aboriginal communities alongside a broad range of government services.

Staff of the Aboriginal Services Unit were members of external committees focused on the legal needs of Aboriginal people, including the Women's Advisory Council for Corrective Services NSW, Aboriginal Advisory Forum with Anti-Discrimination Board, the Law Society of NSW Indigenous Issues Committee and the Tenants Union Aboriginal Advisory Committee.

Staff attended major community events, including the Yabun Festival, Ella 7s Rugby Tournament in Coffs Harbour and NAIDOC Week stalls in Sydney and regional locations.

➤ The year ahead

Offer Aboriginal kinship and communication workshops across all Legal Aid NSW legal practices.

Sign a new Statement of Commitment with the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT).

Managing our organisation

Meeting the needs of the most disadvantaged people in our community, who have multiple and complex legal and non-legal needs, requires a skilled workforce and adequate resourcing.

Below Khaila-Rose Prior and Katrina Ellevsen were jointly awarded the 2015 Aboriginal Employees' Chairperson's Scholarship by the Chair of the Legal Aid NSW Board, Craig Smith (page 54).



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Our people

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Organisational capability

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Key measures

- Achieved full compliance with all aspects of public sector management reform (page 52)
- Recorded 15 safety incidents and 14 new workers compensation claims—part of a decrease since 2010 (page 53)
- Over four per cent of staff are Aboriginal, well above the Government benchmark of 2.6 per cent (page 53)
- Our workforce is highly skilled, showing a 44 per cent increase in learning attendances (page 54)
- New safety measures helped keep our staff safe (page 58)

Key challenge

More evidence-based information is required to improve our efficiency and planning, and to ensure value for taxpayer dollar.

➤ The year ahead

Develop a strategy to capture data and information that demonstrates the value and quality of Legal Aid NSW services.

Managing our organisation

Our people

We value our people and understand that, to support them, we need to promote their health and wellbeing and offer professional development and career opportunities.

FACT FILE

1,046 staff, 479 in regional offices and 567 in our Central Sydney office

533 lawyers and 513 administrative and corporate services staff

48 Aboriginal staff

277 men and 769 women

63 lawyers with specialist accreditation

A robust workforce management strategy

OBJECTIVE: SUPPORTING OUR PEOPLE

Adherence to public sector management reform creates a more stable workforce

Public sector management reforms have been implemented through the *Government Sector Employment Act 2013* (GSE Act) which provides a new framework for NSW Government employment and workforce management.

The GSE Act is part of a State Government strategy to modernise the New South Wales public sector.

Legal Aid NSW has complied with all aspects of the public sector management reforms in the areas of staff recruitment, executive recruitment, individual planning, and developing a code of conduct.

Recognising the unique opportunity the GSE Act offered, Legal Aid NSW commissioned an internal labour market analysis. The analysis showed high levels of workforce mobility, combined with short tenure in roles, high turnover in entry-level roles and a heavy reliance on temporary staff. The impact to Legal Aid NSW was the direct and indirect cost of backfilling roles (ie recruitment, induction, training) – leading to significant productivity losses.

Based on this analysis, Legal Aid NSW developed Workforce Management Business Rules to provide clear workforce mobility guidance. This resulted in stabilising our workforce and reducing our reliance on temporary employees.

We implemented GSE compliant recruitment on 4 July 2014, well ahead of the 28 February 2015 Public Service Commission deadline.

Key steps in implementing this included:

- new role descriptions for all positions which include the new capability framework;
- training and information for staff on the new recruitment processes; and
- additional resources on our intranet Managers Portal including *Capabilities at a Click* which links to the new capability framework.

Thirty-six temporary positions were made ongoing, resulting in a much more stable workforce. We reduced our reliance on temporary staff with fewer staff working outside their substantive roles, from 131 last year to 45 this year.

The GSE Act requires agency heads to develop and implement a performance management system for their employees. Individual Planning, the system developed by Legal Aid NSW, will be rolled out in August 2015. This new Individual Planning framework was developed in consultation with staff.

The Code of Conduct was updated in November 2013 with the inclusion of a clause on the use of alcohol and other drugs. The Code of Conduct is currently being reviewed in line with the Public Service Commissioner's directions and will be introduced at Legal Aid NSW in September 2015.

Staff health and wellbeing

OBJECTIVE: SUPPORTING OUR PEOPLE

Taking steps to improve staff health and wellbeing

A new Workplace Behaviour and Ethics Working Group prepared a plan to improve staff awareness of ethical behaviour and promote a positive organisational culture. The plan draws upon staff responses to the *People Matter 2014 Survey* and includes relevant strategies from the Public Service Commission's *Behaving Ethically* guidelines. The plan contributes to supporting health and wellbeing, endorsing a 'speak-up culture', promoting dignity and respect, and developing options to improve staff wellbeing.

Staff numbers: five year trend

Year	FTE* figures** Financial year end	Actual staff no. Financial year end
2014–2015	945.85	1,046
2013–2014	903.91	994
2012–2013	871.25	959
2011–2012	882.72	965
2010–2011	880.28	972

*FTE: full-time equivalent

** See Appendix 1 for more details

Staff movements: five year trend

Staff movements	2010–2011	2011–2012	2012–2013	2013–2014	2014–2015
New ongoing staff	15	12	18	15	54
Staff departures	52	44	52	57	66
Promotions	26	21	21	32	11

Note: Under the *Government Sector Employment Act 2013*, permanent staff are referred to as 'ongoing'.

We implemented a wellcheck/debriefing program aimed at all administrative and legal staff, particularly those who deal with difficult and confronting issues.

There were 31 hours of wellcheck/debriefing sessions throughout the year.

Ninety five staff and family accessed our Employee Assistance Program, an increase in usage from 7.7 per cent in 2013-2014 to 9.8 per cent in 2014-2015. Almost 20 per cent were referred by Legal Aid NSW managers. There was also an increase in managers accessing the Manager Hotline. These are positive signs that staff and managers are using this important resource for work and personal reasons.

Workers compensation claims were low compared with the previous five years

Fourteen workers compensation claims were lodged in 2014-2015. Ten of these were accepted, one was withdrawn, two were declined and one remained under investigation as at 30 June 2015.

The cost incurred to 30 June 2015 of new claims reported was \$88,860 compared to \$53,593 last year, an increase of \$35,267 or 65.8 per cent.

The number of accepted claims (includes claims accepted under provisional liability) increased from nine in 2013-2014 to 10 in this reporting period.

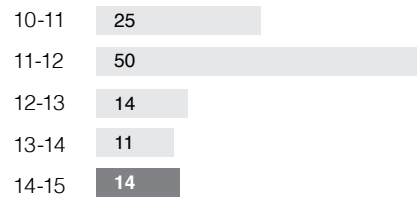
Of the accepted claims in this reporting period, there were four fall/slip and three body stress (e.g. Repetitive Strain Injury) claims amounting to \$52,966 or 59.6 per cent of the total cost of claims.

Five claims for psychological injury (e.g. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Anxiety Disorders and Depression) were lodged, up from two last year. Of these five, one was accepted, one withdrawn, two declined and one remained under investigation as at 30 June 2015. Costs incurred by these psychological claims amounted to \$32,857 or 37 per cent of the total cost of claims for the year.

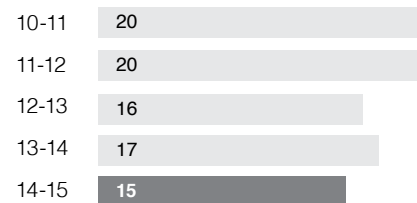
The number of full time equivalent (FTE) (on average) staff for this financial year is 945.85, an increase of 41.94 FTE from 903.91 in 2013-2014. This equates to an average claim cost of \$93.95 per staff member compared to \$59.29 in 2013-2014, \$153.41 in 2012-2013 and \$404.54 in 2011-2012.

The total number of reported 'Incident Only' notifications of injury decreased to 15 from 17 in the previous reporting period. Although journey claims are no longer compensable, we continue to collect these statistics.

Workers compensation claims: five year trend



Work-related incidents: five year trend



Note: The significant decrease in workers compensation claims since 2010 may be attributed to a number of factors. These include: changes to workers compensation legislation in June 2012, our organisation's focus on health and wellbeing initiatives (including Wellchecks), and supporting managers to develop their people management skills.

Workforce diversity and equity

Of 1,046 staff, 165 people disclosed they are from a multicultural background and 36 people disclosed disability.

OBJECTIVE: SUPPORTING OUR PEOPLE

Once again, Legal Aid NSW outperformed the NSW Government benchmark of 2.6 per cent for employing Aboriginal staff. We employ 48 Aboriginal staff, which is 4.6 per cent of our total staff, with 20 practising Aboriginal lawyers across all practice areas.

The Aboriginal Employment Strategy for the past three years closed with the majority of actions completed. A new strategy was developed for 2015-2018.

Twice as many staff participated in a survey of staff disabilities compared with the previous survey in 2013.

Following this, we established a staff network on disability. Results from the survey have been used to inform the Diversity Action Plan 2015-2016.

We conducted five training sessions for staff on how to work effectively with the National Relay Service, a phone service helping people with a speech or hearing impairment.

Record of workers compensation claims

Type of claim	No. of claims 2013-2014	No. of claims 2014-2015
Workplace	6	9
On duty (eg court)	1	3
Journey	-	1
Recesses (authorised breaks)	4	1
Total claims lodged	11	14
Total claims accepted	9	10
Claims under investigation	1	1
Claims declined	1	2
Claims withdrawn	1	1

Record of work related incidents

Type of injury/incident	No. of reports 2013-2014	No. of reports 2014-2015
Workplace	9	3
On duty (eg court))	1	7
Journey	2	2
Recesses	5	3
Total injuries/incidents	17	15

Managing our organisation

OBJECTIVE: EXCELLENCE IN LEGAL SERVICES

Forty per cent of new appointments to the Specialist Barrister Panel (Criminal Appellate matters) were women this year. Increasing the number of female counsel follows the New South Wales Government Equitable Briefing Policy. Adopting equitable briefing practices can play an important role in the progression of women in the law, the judiciary and the wider community.

OBJECTIVE: STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

A new e-learning module on disability awareness was rolled out to staff of Legal Aid NSW, Community Legal Centres, the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT), Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services, and private lawyers. Forty-one staff completed this module.

More detailed EEO information appears in Appendix 2 while Appendix 9 has a summary of performance highlights from the Diversity Action Plan.

Learning and development

FACT FILE

3,710 people attended Legal Aid NSW conferences and seminars – a 4% increase

2,060 attendances at Legal Aid NSW courses and workshops – a 44% increase

711 online learning modules completed – a 4% increase

OBJECTIVE: SUPPORTING OUR PEOPLE

More staff increased their knowledge and skills

Learning and development grew significantly over the last year. The 44 per cent increase in employees accessing online and classroom based learning was largely due to changes to the contributions policy and introducing work practices aligned with the *Government Sector Employment Act 2013*. This level of activity is likely to continue into 2015-2016.

Work began on an online learning site and tailored workshops to help employees get the most from Individual Planning, our performance management framework.

More details about learning and development opportunities appear in Appendix 3.

Learning attendances increased by 44 per cent, contributing to a well-informed workforce.

Learning tools equip staff in a changing environment

In 2014-2015, there was emphasis on providing staff with learning opportunities to make sure they understand how the GSE Act affects their work practices. These included online learning and face-to-face learning, in line with our move towards a blended learning model. Over 350 staff attended *Apply for a Role and Prepare for Assessment* – focused on recruitment, behavioural-based interview skills, selection, and employee merit, with workshops continuing into next year.

New online tools included *Capabilities at a Click*, to help employees define the capabilities outlined in their role descriptions, and *Managers' Admin Zone*, where managers can find helpful information about procedures and resources.

In March 2015, a revised Legal Aid NSW Learning Management System was launched. After six years of successful operation and several refinements, the new system was given a more user-friendly interface and a greater range of functions.

We finalised a new program for building leadership and management capabilities using the 70:20:10 learning model. Those who complete the program will build knowledge, practical skills and have the opportunity to apply them on the job.

OBJECTIVE: EXCELLENCE IN LEGAL SERVICES

Professional development for mobile lawyers

The Legal Aid NSW Plan 2014- 2015 highlights professional development of outreach lawyers as a priority.

Legal Aid NSW held a Mobile Lawyers Forum in August 2014 with the aim of developing and improving the capacity of mobile lawyers to undertake outreach.

Close to 70 Legal Aid NSW staff – lawyers, legal support officers and office managers – from regional and metropolitan offices and from across the legal practices participated. It was the first time that such a group had come together to discuss the unique skills, experience and knowledge required to undertake effective outreach.

Lifting the capabilities of our executive team

As part of the ongoing development of the Legal Aid NSW Executive, an Executive program was implemented during 2014-2015. The Executive participated in a 360 degree feedback process, hearing about their management style from the CEO and their peers. After feedback, each member of the Executive undertook coaching sessions to discuss areas of development to lift the overall executive capability.

Professional development for Aboriginal staff

National Reconciliation Week in May 2015 was an ideal time for the Chair of the Legal Aid Board, Craig Smith, to award Khaila-Rose Prior and Katrina Ellefsen, two Legal Aid NSW employees, with the 2015 Aboriginal Employees' Chairperson's Scholarship. The scholarship provides financial support for further studies to enhance employment opportunities.

Under the Aboriginal Employment and Career Development Strategy, two newly admitted Aboriginal lawyers were

employed on a two-year program that will give them hands-on experience in two legal practice areas.

Under the Judge Bob Bellea Pathways to Legal Careers Program, a number of cadets successfully completed their cadetship and practical legal training placements. More than 50 participants have now been part of the program since its inception.

Members of the Aboriginal staff network met twice this year to provide peer support, training and professional development for Aboriginal staff at Legal Aid NSW.

Professional development for lawyers

There are currently 63 lawyers working for Legal Aid NSW who are accredited specialists: one in civil law, 22 in family law and 40 in criminal law.

Criminal law practice

The Law Society of NSW once again offered criminal law specialist accreditation – a rigorous testing process – in 2015. Legal Aid NSW increased our numbers from nine applicants (all successful) in 2013 up to 20 applicants in 2015. The results for these 20 applicants will be known next year.

The Advocacy Institute of Australia in association with Legal Aid NSW delivered a two-day course for 32

criminal lawyers with a focus on the practice of criminal law in our courtrooms.

The Legal Aid NSW criminal law conference 2014 attracted 440 participants.

For the first time, an Aboriginal kinship and communication workshop was offered in conjunction with the criminal law conference. See page 50 for details.

Civil law practice

Twelve lawyers were trained in advocacy skills, including case theory, ethics, conciliation skills, and rules for presenting evidence. Another sixteen attended training in examination and cross-examination of witnesses in complex matters. All participants were made members of an inhouse advocacy community of practice. These communities exist in a range of areas, including employment law, housing, and community legal education.

A civil law conference was attended by 351 private and inhouse lawyers as well as colleagues from other not-for-profit agencies.

Family law practice

Legal Aid NSW hosted the inaugural national conference for independent children's lawyers. This conference and the annual family law and care and protection conferences attracted a total of 1,179 participants.

Professional and personal achievements

OBJECTIVE: EXCELLENCE IN LEGAL SERVICES

Staff made an impact in the wider legal arena

Legal Aid NSW lawyer Steven Doumit was Highly Commended at the Law Society of NSW Government Solicitors Excellence Awards for 2014 – acknowledgement of his outstanding contribution to government legal service and service to the community. Steven has been working at Legal Aid NSW since 1992. He is currently the senior criminal lawyer in the Grants Division and is an accredited specialist in criminal law.

Director of Family Law, Kylie Beckhouse, completed a Churchill Fellowship to investigate legal representation schemes for children in the US, Canada and the UK.

Family lawyer, Andrew Marriott won the 2015 NSW Young Lawyers Golden Gavel competition with his speech *Married at first sight – the honeymoon of briefing new counsel*.

Family lawyer, Natalee Spinks represented Legal Aid NSW at the Young Lawyers Mid-Year Assembly.



Above At the criminal law conference: Conference organiser, Heather Anderson; keynote speaker Justice Rothman; Director of Criminal Law, Richard Funston; plenary speaker Dr Sarah Edelman; and CEO of Legal Aid NSW, Bill Grant.



Above Justice Rothman addresses the criminal law conference – “Equal justice is the starting point of all other liberties.”

➤ The year ahead

- Introduce Individual Planning – the new performance management system – launching a range of online and face-to-face workshops to support managers and staff.
- Improve staff health and wellbeing based on the findings from the health and wellbeing surveys and the Workplace Behaviour and Ethics Project.
- Introduce the new Code of Conduct.
- Increase training for staff about mental health issues to assist them in their work with clients experiencing mental health difficulties.
- Increase our Aboriginal workforce to six per cent of the total workforce and raise the number of Aboriginal staff in ongoing roles and senior roles.
- Implement a new model of Aboriginal cultural competency training across all legal practice areas.
- Develop a workforce strategy for the recruitment, employment and retention of people with disability.

Our organisational capability

We found better ways to use our resources and achieve greater efficiencies, and introduced initiatives that support our staff to work safely.

Efficiency measures

OBJECTIVE: EXCELLENCE IN LEGAL SERVICES

Recording our work to show it has real value

In 2013, the Attorney General recommended that Legal Aid NSW introduce a system to enable it to record the time spent by its lawyers and the cost of their activities. In September 2014, Legal Aid NSW commenced a pilot of an activity based time recording and reporting system known as Activity Based Costing.

An external consultant evaluated the pilot and submitted her report to the CEO of Legal Aid NSW in January 2015. In accordance with the report's recommendations, the CEO announced in March 2015 that activity based costing would be rolled out to the remainder of the inhouse practice at Legal Aid NSW.

The roll-out will commence in July 2015 and will be staggered across sites, with staff at each site starting to record their time as soon as they complete training. The rollout is scheduled for completion in March 2016 and will be followed by an internal review before activity based time recording commences formally in July 2016.

During the rollout period a reporting capability and costing methodology will be developed.

Streamlining access to legal services for prisoners

The steady increase in the volume of telephone calls from prisoners to Legal Aid NSW and LawAccess NSW was a catalyst for a collaborative initiative with Corrective Services NSW to streamline prisoner access to legal assistance.

When in custody, prisoners can make free calls using the Common Auto Dial List (CADL) system. Telephone numbers on this system are preset and include a range of legal and non-legal services. In 2013-2014, Corrective Services NSW recorded that prisoners made over 100,000 calls to Legal Aid NSW and over 85,000 calls to LawAccess on the CADL system.

A continued increase in call volume was not sustainable and limited our capacity to respond in a timely and appropriate way to calls from other clients. We worked together with Corrective Services NSW to implement new protocols that enable prisoners to contact their lawyers directly and maximise the time during the call when they can speak to their lawyer.

The benefits to prisoners are that the new system enables them to connect faster to their lawyer and maximise the limited amount of time they have on legal phone calls communicating directly with their lawyer.

The new arrangements commenced on 1 November 2014. Since then, both LawAccess NSW and Legal Aid NSW have noted a decrease in the volume of prisoner calls. For more details see page 49.

New data governance framework has realistic goals

Legal Aid NSW developed a Data Governance Framework to address the issues of data quality, recording and monitoring. The framework was finalised in June 2015 and will be implemented over a two-year period.

Costs recovered successfully in criminal law matters

The Grants Division identified 84 matters where lawyers had succeeded with costs applications in legally-aided criminal law proceedings. At 30 June 2015, claims valued at \$913,940 had been submitted and \$496,647 had been received.

OBJECTIVE: SUPPORTING OUR PEOPLE

Better resourcing improved efficiency and coordination

An expanded relief unit increased our capacity to deliver family law relief and advocacy services, especially in rural and remote areas. The new team supports staff members based in regional offices going on leave by picking up their casework and advocacy work.

We appointed a domestic violence specialist lawyer to foster a more coordinated response to the legal

needs of victims of domestic violence. The lawyer worked closely with a Family Violence Specialist Network with representatives from across the organisation. Training for staff and panel lawyers focused on improved referral pathways.

A new Image Library provides a central portal for staff to browse for photos and graphics required for their work producing Legal Aid NSW publications. The efficient classification system allows staff to find their images quickly.

Regional offices increased their capacity to provide more services

Refurbishments to offices in the north and north west of New South Wales will support staff to better service our clients and local partners. A new office was opened in Port Macquarie in response to community need (see page 21). Staff had the office ready for opening in record time. Tamworth and Orange Legal Aid NSW offices were expanded to increase their service capacity.

Supporting staff to deal with difficult situations

We support and train our staff so they know what to do in situations where they are dealing with behaviour that might be difficult or dangerous. New guidelines help to identify risk and keep staff safe. Included in the guidelines are a new incident report form and a security strategy for managing medium or high-risk behaviour and incidents. Our client records indicate when a client has a record of previous difficult behaviour.



Above At the launch of our new Port Macquarie office: Craig Smith, Chair of the Legal Aid NSW Board; Leslie Williams MP, State Member for Port Macquarie; Bill Grant, CEO of Legal Aid NSW; and Rob Hoyles, Acting Solicitor in Charge of the new office.

Managing our organisation

Staff travelling long distances need to be safe

The safety of our employees travelling long distances and working in isolation is a priority under the Legal Aid NSW Plan. We introduced new safe driving guidelines and upgraded safety kits for all vehicles to include first aid kits, reflective vests, fire extinguishers, safety triangles, gloves, and a torch.

Twenty-nine staff participated in safe driving programs. The success of the driving program resulted in further funding for 2015-2016.

Below Lawyer Anisa Malhas sets up her safety kit as she travels through the Hunter region, providing advice at different outreach locations.



Information technology

Information technology played a key role in assisting the organisation to better deliver legal services.

OBJECTIVE: EXCELLENCE IN LEGAL SERVICES

Mobile technology supports legal service delivery

We reviewed the mobile technology needs of our staff, including a survey of all staff which achieved a high response rate. The review highlighted the benefits of mobile technology and made a range of recommendations including the provision of mobile devices to all inhouse lawyers who need them. As a result, staff were provided with a range of devices appropriate to their role, including smartphones, laptops and tablets.

As part of our program of work supporting mobile devices, we also implemented WiFi at most of our regional offices during 2014-2015.

Taking steps towards a new case management system

Our current Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy outlines a key change for Legal Aid NSW should be to implement a new case management system in the short to medium term. During the year, we developed business requirements and a model as the first step in a business case to source funding for this system. Our vision for this system includes better support for mobile lawyers, streamlined mechanisms for communicating and interacting with clients and seamless integration with information from other Justice sector related systems.

Infrastructure

We undertook a significant project establishing a new data centre presence in the new NSW Government Data Centre at Silverwater, as part of the transition away from agency based data centres in line with NSW Government requirements. Now that our production data centre

➤ The year ahead

Improve access to legal services in correctional centres through better use of technology.

Develop a business case for a new case management system.

Develop a strategy to capture data and information that demonstrates the value and quality of Legal Aid NSW services.

Implement Activity Based Costing across all legal practices.

Implement the new Data Governance Framework and monitor its key performance indicators.

Train staff in managing unreasonable behaviour and security incidents.

Meet the accommodation needs of our expanding services across the state, in particular:

- Newcastle with new premises that are closer to the new Justice Precinct
- Sutherland to accommodate service expansion
- Central Sydney to accommodate the increase in special project staff
- Fairfield to accommodate service expansion and improve client service areas
- Parramatta Justice Precinct Offices to accommodate expansion in Children's Legal Services.

facilities are hosted in the NSW Government Data Centre at Silverwater, next year's focus will be to implement new arrangements for our existing secondary data centre performing IT disaster recovery functions.

Data governance

Legal Aid NSW developed a Data Governance Framework during 2014-2015 to ensure the organisation can appropriately manage data quality, data recording and monitoring. The project has laid the groundwork for each of our business areas to be responsible for their own data governance into the future. The continuing implementation of our data governance frameworks is a key initiative under the Legal Aid NSW Plan 2015-2016.

Information security

We continued to maintain our information security certification against the ISO/IEC 27001:2013 Information Technology – Security Techniques – Information Security Management Systems Requirements standard through 2014-2015 (page 69). We made a range of improvements to our Information Security Management System.

➤ The year ahead

Develop and implement a new online legal aid application form to make grants of legal aid more accessible to clients.

Finalise a business case for funding a future case management system as the core business system for our inhouse legal practices and related business areas.

Implement new arrangements for IT disaster recovery as part of the New South Wales Government requirement to move data centres from agency premises into the NSW Government data centres or to cloud service providers.

Develop a strategy for the better use of technology to improve engagement and accessibility for clients, partners and stakeholders.

Develop our future strategy for our desktop personal computer operating environment due for refresh in 2016-2017.

Introduce additional technology solutions for managing information security.

Implement a new Library Management System.

Environmental responsibility

Legal Aid NSW is committed to taking steps towards reducing paper usage and increasing green targets through a number of sustainability initiatives. As shown in the following table, we exceeded, often substantially, the environmental targets set by the New South Wales Government, including those for use of green paper, green electricity and green fleet.

➤ The year ahead

Purchase two hybrid vehicles to surpass the new Government target.

Reducing our environmental footprint – summary table 2014–2015

GOAL	TARGET	ACHIEVEMENT
Reduce Electricity Consumption	Reduce standalone printer numbers by 75%	98% of standalone printers reduced or replaced with multifunction devices
	Reduce lighting timing hours to 7am-8pm	Negotiated new lighting that is sensor activated superseding the need for timers. This was provided by our Landlord at no cost to Legal Aid NSW
	Install light switches to offices in new fit outs	New fit outs built 2014-2015 have all included separate light switches for offices.
Increase use of green paper purchasing	NSW Govt Target: Minimum 85% of copy paper to contain recycled content by 2014	We continued to purchase 100% recycled content or carbon neutral paper in 2014-2015
Increase use of green paper purchasing for our publications	At least one recycled content option to be included as part of each publication quotation	Our Publications team have recorded a 5% use of recycled content in our publications. This is due to cost savings requirements
Reduce Paper Purchasing	A 10% reduction in paper purchasing	We purchased 10% less paper in 2014-15 than we did in 2013-2014 at our Central Sydney Location. In 2013-2014 our paper purchasing decreased by 10% on the previous year
Green Electricity Purchasing	NSW Govt Target: 6% Green Electricity	We continue to purchase 20% Green Electricity
E10 Fuel	NSW Govt Target: increased from 20% E10 to now mandatory requirement	Our usage for 2014-2015: 100% E10
Green Fleet	NSW Govt Target: 13.5/20 and new requirement to have one hybrid/electric car per 100 vehicles by Dec 2015	Our score for 2014-2015: 14.1/20
Reduce Landfill	100% recycling of our IT equipment	Disposed IT equipment is recycled
Carbon Neutrality	Carbon Neutral operations by 2020 (NSW Govt Target)	All of the above in process

Setting strategic direction, monitoring progress, and ensuring compliance are key elements of our governance procedures.

In this section

- 61 Key activities of the Board
- 62 Board members
- 64 Executive directors
- 66 Organisational structure
- 67 Governance framework
- 70 Legislative compliance
- 70 Privacy
- 71 Public accountability

Key measures

- The Board approved establishing a new Legal Aid NSW office in Port Macquarie, which opened in December 2014 (page 61)
- Received 15 applications for access to information (page 70)
- Introduced a three-year audit plan (page 68)
- Completed five performance audits (page 68)
- Improved complaints data and reporting (page 71)

Key challenge

Ensuring that the new Code of Conduct is understood and complied with by all staff.

➤ The year ahead

We have included the Code of Conduct in our Individual Planning form to ensure employees read and understood the Code. Regular updates throughout the year will be provided with fact sheets and scenarios that provide clear examples of appropriate conduct.

Legal Aid NSW Board

A Board with 10 members determines our broad policies and strategic priorities.

The Board of Legal Aid NSW consists of nine part-time members including the Chair, and one full-time member, who is the Chief Executive Officer of Legal Aid NSW.

Part-time Board members are appointed by the New South Wales Attorney General for a period of up to three years, other than the Chair who can be appointed for a period up to five years. All are eligible for re-appointment.

Key activities of the Board this year

In accordance with its statutory functions to establish the broad policies and strategic plans of Legal Aid NSW, the Board approved the Legal Aid NSW Plan 2015-2016. The Board also approved the Legal Aid NSW Diversity Action Plan for 2015-2016 and the Reconciliation Action Plan for 2015-2018. The Board was regularly updated on the progress of the 2014-2015 Legal Aid NSW Plan.

The Crime and Grants Sub-Committee of the Board, established under section 68 of the *Legal Aid Commission Act 1979*, covers matters dealing with grants of aid, training and development of private lawyers and crime-related funding and policy issues. The Committee met twice and considered a range of issues including the review of the *Bail Act*, protected disclosures for children, trial delay reduction, and the rolling list court.

The Community Partnerships Sub-Committee of the Board covers civil and family law policies and services, the Community Legal Centre (CLC) Program and other Legal Aid NSW partnerships such as the Cooperative Legal Service Delivery Program and the Aboriginal Legal Services NSW/ACT. The Committee advises the Board on funding issues affecting legal assistance services, gaps in services, and legal assistance services to Aboriginal clients and clients in rural, regional and remote New South Wales. The Committee met three times and discussed a range of issues including

funding, the new National Partnership Agreement and jurisdictional planning.

The Board approved the establishment of a new Legal Aid NSW office at Port Macquarie, which was opened in December 2014.

As part of the audit and risk strategy, the Board approved a three year audit targeting plan. A number of internal audits were completed including Accounts Payable and Payments, Delegations of Authority, ISO27001 Annual Audit, and Community Partnerships which includes the Community Legal Centre Program, the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program, the Regional Outreach Clinic Program and the Cooperative Legal Service Delivery Program.

The Board was kept informed about the progress of the new funding agreement with the Commonwealth Government, and a new five year National Partnership Agreement between the Commonwealth and State was signed in June 2015. The Board also endorsed Legal Aid NSW to continue to undertake the role of Funding Body and State Program Manager for the CLC Program, with an expanded role to act as the Funding Body on behalf of the Commonwealth under the NPA.

In response to a reduction of money in the Expensive Commonwealth Criminal Cases Fund, the Board reluctantly approved changes to the availability of legal aid for some types of Commonwealth criminal, family and civil law cases in December 2014. Following re-instatement of funding by the Commonwealth in February 2015, the Board was pleased to approve a reversal of these changes. The Board continues to closely monitor the availability of funds for those cases.

The delivery of high quality services is a priority for the Board, and members were briefed on a number of evaluations, including reviews of the partnership with Settlement Services International and a review of legal service provision in South West, Far West, North West and Northern New South Wales. The Board will oversee the implementation of recommendations arising from these evaluations.

The Board approved a number of policy and fee scale changes, including a revised contributions policy, a simplified civil law fee scale, changes in fee scales and policies for some care and protection matters, and extension of the current client eligibility policy relating to the *Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Act 2006*.

There were no emergency decisions required during the year.

Meetings of the Board

Seven meetings were held in 2014-2015. Forty per cent of the Board's time was spent on governance matters such as audit and risk, strategic reviews and organisational planning; finance and other budget matters took up approximately 30 per cent of the Board's time; strategic operations, policies and law reform issues took up the remaining 30 per cent of the Board's time.

Board members' fees

Part-time Board members are entitled to be paid fees for attending meetings, reading background papers, sitting on committees and representing Legal Aid NSW at meetings with other organisations. No fees are paid to members who are salaried Government employees or who elect to forego payment.

Active on committees

The Board is advised on specific matters by a number of committees. These include the Crime and Grants Sub-Committee, Community Partnerships Sub-Committee and Audit and Risk Committee which advises on budgetary and internal audit matters.

➤ The year ahead

Oversee the implementation of the first year of the five year National Partnership Agreement with the Commonwealth.

Carry out the 2015-2016 internal audit program, including audits of Activity Based Costing, records management and contributions policy changes.

Key challenge

Ensuring that there are sufficient funds to pay for expensive Commonwealth criminal cases in an environment of reduced Commonwealth funding.

Corporate governance



Board members

1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015



1 Craig Smith (Chair)

Dip Law (BAB) Dip Crim (SYD)

Appointed by the NSW Attorney General in February 2013 as Chair for the period commencing 18 February 2013 to 17 February 2016.

A solicitor and former Judicial Registrar, District Court of New South Wales, Craig has 41 years experience in the administration of justice. He has worked in various government legal and policy positions, including senior positions with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. He was Director Court Services and then Director Judicial Support prior to his appointment as Judicial Registrar in 2010.

(Attended 7 meetings)

2 Bill Grant (CEO)

OAM LLB

Bill recommenced as CEO of Legal Aid NSW in December 2011. Bill was appointed by the then Attorney General after a four-year absence from the organisation. He previously served as CEO of Legal Aid NSW from 2001 to 2007.

Bill was Secretary-General of the Law Council of Australia from 2008 to 2011 and previously held the position of Deputy Director-General of the NSW Attorney General's Department from 1992 to 2001.

(Attended 7 meetings)

3 Andrea Durbach*

BA LLB, DipLaw

Appointed in 2007 and reappointed for a further term commencing 18 February 2013 to 17 February 2016.

Andrea is Associate Professor at the Faculty of Law, University of New South Wales and Director of the Australian Human Rights Centre. Before that, she was Director of the Public Interest Advocacy Centre and Coordinator of the Public Interest Law Clearing House. She is a member of the Advisory Council of Jurists of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions.

(Attended 5 meetings)

4 Philip Bickerstaff*

MCom

Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee.

Appointed in 2005 and reappointed for a further term commencing 18 February 2013 to 17 February 2016.

Philip retired from the New South Wales Public Sector in 2005 after 37 years, 29 of those with NSW Treasury. He is also a member of the Ryde Family Support Service and Fairfield Community Resource Centre.

(Attended 6 meetings)

5 Mary Macken

(Representative of the Law Society of NSW)

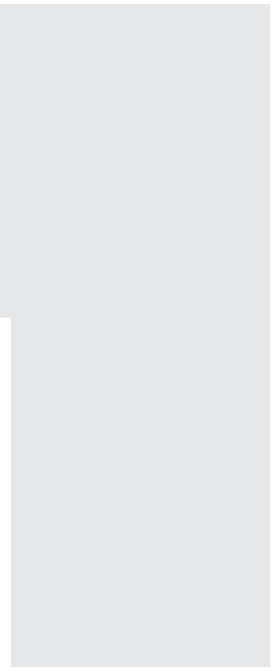
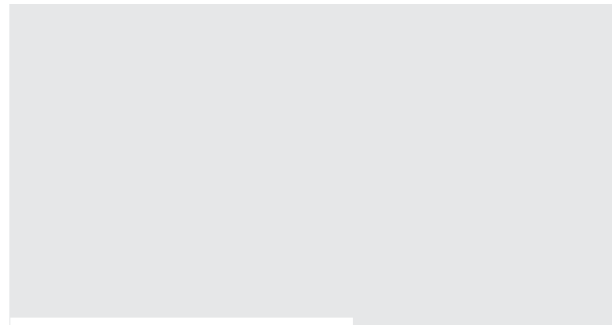
MA LLM FAICD

Appointed in 2009 and reappointed for a further term commencing 18 February 2013 to 17 February 2016.

Nominated by the Law Society of NSW, Mary is a past President of the Law Society of NSW and a practising lawyer in New South Wales, England and Wales. Mary initially specialised in the commercial property field. Since then, her roles have included Manager of Legal Services, Landcom and Corporate Counsel, State Transit Authority (Sydney Buses). Mary is a member of the Women Lawyers Association of NSW, the Australian Lawyers Alliance and the City of Sydney Law Society.

(Attended 3 meetings)

*Representative, who in the opinion of the NSW Attorney General, possesses skills and experience that would benefit Legal Aid NSW.



6 Dr Peggy Dwyer

(Representative of the NSW Bar Association)

BA LLB (ANU) Ph D (University of Edinburgh)

Appointed in 2013, commencing 30 September 2013 to 17 February 2016.

As a barrister, Peggy appears in a wide range of criminal matters, including jury trials, contested hearings, appeals, Children’s Court matters and State Parole Authority hearings. She has a busy practice in coronial proceedings, appearing as Counsel Assisting the Coroner (in the Northern Territory and NSW) and counsel for interested parties. She also appears in disciplinary tribunals including the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal and Medical Council, for both prosecution and defence.

(Attended 3 meetings)

7 John Bordon

(Representative of Unions NSW)

BA LLB (UniSyd) LLM (UNSW)

Appointed in 2009 and reappointed for a further term commencing 18 February 2013 to 17 February 2016.

John is nominated by Unions NSW. In the past he has held a number of positions on the staff of Legal Aid NSW. Currently he is a senior member of the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. He has also served on a number of other bodies including the Serious Offenders Review Council and the Immigration Review Tribunal.

(Attended 6 meetings)

8 Annette Bain*

MA Dip Ed BLegS GAICD

Appointed in February 2013 for the period commencing 18 February 2013 to 17 February 2016.

Annette is an international pro bono advisor, and has over 20 years experience working in the private and not-for-profit sectors on strategies for increasing access to justice and social change. Previously, Annette was Head of Pro Bono and Community at Herbert Smith Freehills. Before that, she worked as a barrister in Sydney, and was one of the first lawyers to establish a national law firm pro bono practice in Australia. Before that Annette was a lawyer and educator at the Domestic Violence Advocacy Service and Women’s Legal Services in Sydney. She is a member of the Association of Pro Bono Counsel (USA) and a co-founder of the Asia Pro Bono Conference.

(Attended 4 meetings)

9 Ainslie van Onselen

(Representative of consumer and community welfare interests)

LLB (UWA), MAppFin, GDipAppFin, GAICD

Appointed in February 2013 for the period commencing 18 February 2013 to 17 February 2016.

Ainslie has practised as a commercial litigator for over 17 years and is admitted to practise law in several jurisdictions across Australia. She is the Deputy Chairperson of the Insurance Commission of Western Australia and former National President and current independent director of the Migration Institute of Australia. She is an executive at Westpac Banking Corporation.

(Attended 4 meetings)

10 John McKenzie

(Representative of bodies providing community legal services)

B Comm LLB, Accredited Criminal Law Specialist

Appointed in May 2013 for the period commencing 13 May 2013 to 17 February 2016.

John McKenzie B Comm LLB, Accredited Criminal Law Specialist – Representative of bodies providing community legal services. Appointed in May 2013 for the period commencing 13 May 2013 to 17 February 2016.

John was appointed Legal Services Commissioner on 4 March 2015 for a four-year term. Before that John was the Chief Legal Officer for the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) for 8 years. Prior to that he was Principal Solicitor of the Many Rivers Aboriginal Legal Service in Newcastle (2001-2006) and Solicitor in Charge of Gosford Legal Aid office (1994-2000).

John was Principal Solicitor on the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody from late 1987 to its conclusion in 1991. In 2011 he was awarded the Justice Medal at the Law and Justice Foundation NSW annual Justice Awards.

(Attended 6 meetings)

*Representative, who in the opinion of the NSW Attorney General, possesses skills and experience that would benefit Legal Aid NSW.

Corporate governance

Our senior management team is diverse and highly experienced; each director contributes to the strength of our organisation and helps to achieve our goals.



BILL GRANT
OAM LLB
Chief Executive Officer
(SES Level 6)

Budget total:	\$266.7M
Total staff (FTE):	945.85
Total actual:	1,046

Bill recommenced as CEO of Legal Aid NSW in December 2011. Bill was appointed by the then Attorney General after a four-year absence from the organisation. He previously served as CEO of Legal Aid NSW from 2001 to 2007.

Bill was Secretary-General of the Law Council of Australia from 2008 to 2011 and previously held the position of Deputy Director-General of the NSW Attorney General's Department from 1992 to 2001.

This year, Bill ensured that Legal Aid NSW delivered a range of new programs, some of which are part of broader government reforms as well as objectives within the Legal Aid NSW Plan.

These included services for particularly vulnerable clients such as regional Aboriginal communities, disadvantaged families in the child protection jurisdiction, and women and children experiencing domestic violence.

Bill also successfully negotiated a new five-year National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services that will come into effect on 1 July 2015.



STEVE O'CONNOR
Dip Law (BAB) Dip Crim
Deputy Chief Executive Officer
(Band 2)

Budget total:	\$164.9M
Total staff (FTE):	822.9
Total actual:	910

Steve returned to Legal Aid NSW in September 2012.

In addition to his role as Deputy CEO, Steve undertakes the role of Chief Audit Executive.

A major achievement this year has seen Steve actively overseeing and supporting the conduct of a pilot of Activity Based Costing at a number of regional and Central Sydney pilot sites. A positive review of the pilot recommended planning for implementation from July 2015 across Legal Aid NSW.



RICHARD FUNSTON
BCom LLB EMPA
Accredited Criminal Law Specialist
Director Criminal Law
(Band 1)

Budget total:	\$85.2M
Total staff (EFT):	249.05
Total actual:	280

During his 18 years with Legal Aid NSW, Richard has held leadership roles across the organisation including Solicitor in Charge of the Children's Legal Service, Director Grants and Director Strategic Planning and Policy.

Richard's previous experience includes eight years with Victoria Legal Aid and four years as Principal Solicitor of the Inner City Legal Centre in New South Wales.

Richard's key achievements include providing more job security for staff within his practice and offering staff more opportunities for professional development.

In his role as Chair of the Health and Safety Committee, Richard promoted good psychological health for all staff.

During the year, Richard also chaired the Legal Aid NSW Reconciliation Action Plan Implementation Working Group, and the NSW Legal Assistance Forum Prisoners Group.



KYLIE BECKHOUSE
BA LLB
Accredited Family Law Specialist
Executive Director Legal Services Family Law
(Senior Officer Grade 2)

Budget total:	\$49.7M
Total staff (FTE):	220.21
Total actual:	250

Kylie has practised as a family lawyer, first in private practice and then at Legal Aid NSW, for the last 22 years. She was appointed Executive Director of the Family Law Division in May 2009 and in this role has been responsible for many innovations in the delivery of family law services. She is an accredited specialist in family law and an independent children's lawyer.

Kylie is appointed to the Family Law Council of Australia and the NSW Children's Court Advisory Committee. She is a member of the Law Society of NSW Family Law Issues Committee and the National Legal Aid Family Law Working Group. She currently serves on the Family Court's Children's and Self Represented Litigants committees.

In 2014 she was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to investigate the administration of child legal representation schemes in overseas jurisdictions and has published a paper on her findings.

Achievements this year include leading national improvements in the representation of children through training and the development of resources and guidelines.



MONIQUE HITTER
BSW Dip Law
Executive Director
Legal Services Civil Law
(Senior Officer Grade 2)

Budget total: \$19.0M
Total staff (FTE): 136.8
Total actual: 145

Monique has worked as a lawyer since 1997 in the community, government and private sectors.

Monique developed the model for the Cooperative Legal Services Delivery Program and managed its pilot in 2004. It is now implemented in many regions across New South Wales.

Monique has been the Director of the Civil Law Division since July 2007. She is also a member of the Women's Advisory Council for Corrective Services NSW.

This year, Monique has established important new areas of services within her practice, including the Civil Law Service for Aboriginal Communities, the Civil Law Children's Service, and specialist employment law services.



WAYNE GALE
BA (Computing)
MCom (Accounting)
Director Information
Technology Services
and Records
(Band 1)

Budget total: \$3.0M
Total staff (FTE): 34.87
Total actual: 37

Wayne was appointed to his position in January 2007. Wayne's career in information technology spans 29 years including senior roles both in the private sector providing information technology services and solutions to Government, as well as working in the government sector.

This year, Wayne and his team established our data centre presence in the NSW Government Data Centres, providing Legal Aid NSW with a lower risk environment for operating its core information technology infrastructure.

Wayne oversaw a program of work taking the first steps towards acquiring and implementing a future case management system for Legal Aid NSW.

Wayne and his team progressed a range of governance improvements throughout the year, including a business-led data governance framework for Legal Aid NSW, and enhancements to our information security management system.



ANNMARIE LUMSDEN
BA LLB EMPA
Accredited Criminal Law Specialist
Director Strategic Policy,
Planning and Community
Partnerships
(Band 1)

Budget total: \$32.0M
Total staff (FTE): 29.81
Total actual: 32

Annmarie has been a member of the Executive team since June 2006. Her previous positions include Director Grants, Executive Officer to the CEO and Solicitor Advocate in the Criminal Law Division.

Before Annmarie came to Legal Aid NSW in 1998, she had previous experience at Legal Aid ACT, in government and in private practice.

Annmarie was elected as a Councillor of the Law Society of NSW in November 2014. This year she is on the Law Society's Professional Conduct and Family Issues Committees. She has been a member of the Criminal Law Committee since 2001.

Achievements this year include supporting Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services in the rollout of the government's *Safer Pathway* reforms and developing a data governance framework.



VICKI LEAVER
BA Dip Ed
Director People
and Organisational
Development (Human
Resources)
(Band 1)

Budget total: \$1.8M
Total staff (FTE): 17.5
Total actual: 18

Vicki was appointed as the Director, People and Organisational Development in July 2011.

Before joining Legal Aid NSW, Vicki held senior roles at RailCorp and the Department of Health.

Vicki's achievements this year include the comprehensive roll out of the *Government Sector Employment Act 2013* and related workforce management activities. These included reviewing and updating all role descriptions and introducing a capability framework, new workforce management business rules, and new recruitment practices.

Vicki introduced a leadership program to support the Executive team as part of the Senior Executive reform process.



CLARE HAMILTON
B Bus (Accounting)
FCPA
Executive Director
Finance
(Senior Officer Grade 2)

Budget total: \$266.7M
Total staff (FTE): 17
Total actual: 17

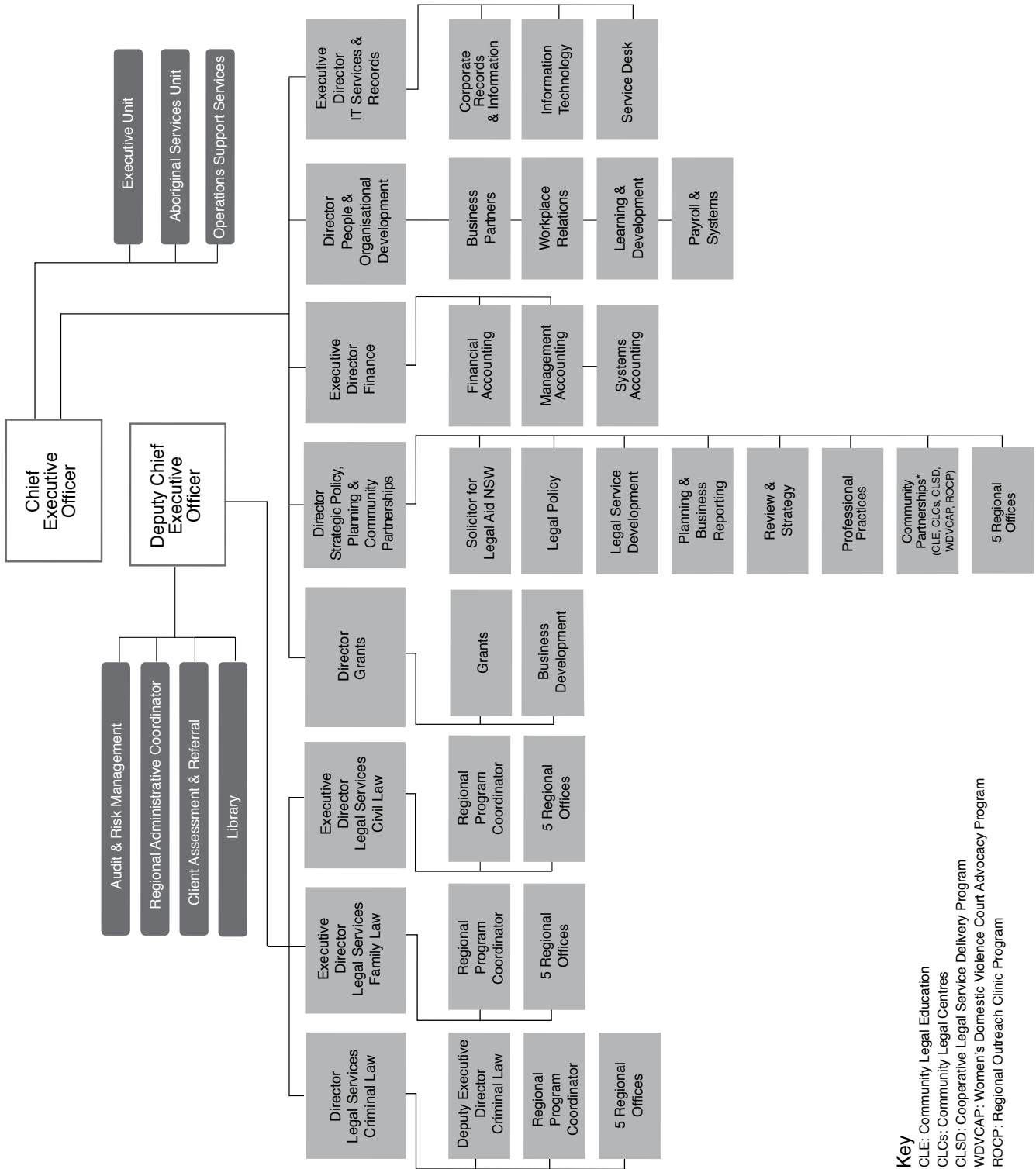
Clare was appointed to this position in 2008.

Clare's experience over 30 years includes senior finance and corporate services roles in a diverse range of NSW public sector agencies.

Clare has consistently met financial targets in difficult funding climates, and has a record of successfully implementing change in Finance and other corporate services areas.

This year, Clare led her team through a restructure process to better align Finance functions. She also introduced Finance partnering so the team could provide more support to other areas of Legal Aid NSW, and implemented a number of improvements, streamlining work practices and increasing service delivery efficiency by the Finance team.

Organisational structure



***Key**

- CLE: Community Legal Education
- CLCs: Community Legal Centres
- CLSD: Cooperative Legal Service Delivery Program
- WDVCA: Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program
- ROCP: Regional Outreach Clinic Program

Governance framework

The Legal Aid Commission of New South Wales is established under the *Legal Aid Commission Act 1979* to improve access to justice for socially and economically disadvantaged members of our community. It is a statutory body representing the Crown.

The Legal Aid Commission of New South Wales is precluded from employing staff by s.47A of the *Constitution Act 1902*. The Legal Aid Commission Staff Agency, a separate Public Service agency with the Chief Executive Officer as its head, employs staff to enable the Legal Aid Commission of New South Wales to exercise its functions. Persons employed in this way may be referred to as officers or employees or members of staff of the Legal Aid Commission of New South Wales.

Collectively, the Legal Aid Commission of NSW and the Legal Aid Commission Staff Agency are referred to as Legal Aid NSW.

Our governance structure ensures that the business objectives of Legal Aid NSW are met in an ethical and effective manner. See chart 1.

Board and management roles and responsibilities

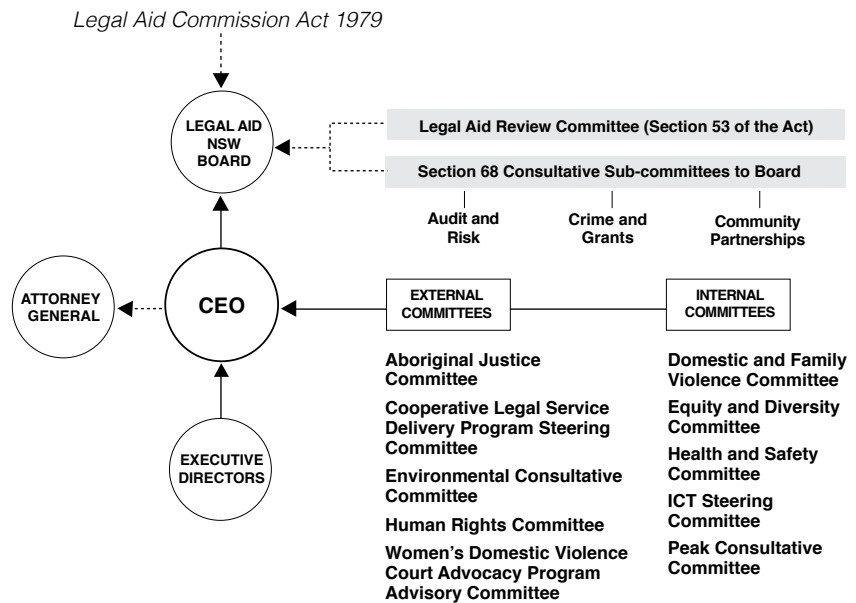
Legal Aid NSW has a Board that is responsible for establishing broad policies and strategic plans for Legal Aid NSW. The Chief Executive Officer is a member of the Board. Board members appear on pages 62 and 63.

The daily management of Legal Aid NSW is overseen by the Chief Executive Officer, with assistance from the Deputy CEO and eight Executive Directors.

The CEO has a performance agreement with the Attorney General. The Deputy CEO and Directors have performance agreements with the CEO.

Our work is supported by a range of plans and policies to establish procedural requirements, standards and priorities. These include the Legal Aid NSW Plan, Code of Conduct,

Chart 1: Corporate Governance framework



legal aid guidelines and means tests, Corruption and Fraud Prevention Plan and Business Continuity Plan.

Corporate planning involves staff and Board members

The new Legal Aid NSW Plan 2015-2016 was developed with input from staff, the Executive and the Legal Aid NSW Board. The Plan follows the same format as in previous years and retains the same corporate intent and objectives. Actions in the plan flow into business plans for all divisions creating meaningful links with high-level actions and providing staff with an opportunity to participate in the Plan's deliverables. The Executive monitors the progress against the Plan each quarter. The Legal Aid NSW Board reviews progress six-monthly.

The Legal Aid NSW Plan 2015-2016 is available in the *About us* section of the Legal Aid NSW website.

The Diversity Action Plan uses the same objectives as the Legal Aid NSW Plan.

Ethics code reviewed in preparation for release to all staff

The Code of Conduct has been reviewed in line with the Public Service Commissioner's directions and will be introduced at Legal Aid NSW in September 2015.

Legal Aid NSW is committed to acting ethically at all times. The Legal Aid NSW Code of Conduct provides an ethical framework for the decisions, actions and behaviour of all our staff and identifies the principles underlying appropriate conduct and the minimum standards of behaviour expected of staff. All new starters must read and sign the Code of Conduct before commencing work at Legal Aid NSW and it is an integral component of our induction training program.

The Code of Conduct will be updated in 2015-2016 in line with the Public Service Commission's requirement.

In addition, all our lawyers are bound by professional practice standards and comply with mandatory continuing professional development requirements.

Financial performance

Legal Aid NSW has a strong financial focus, robust budgets and clear, concise reporting to internal and external stakeholders. Detailed monthly financial reports are prepared for the Audit and Risk Committee and the Board. A commentary including detailed analysis is also provided. The Executive Director, Finance provides expert advice at Audit and Risk Committee and Board meetings.

Corporate governance

Identifying and managing risk

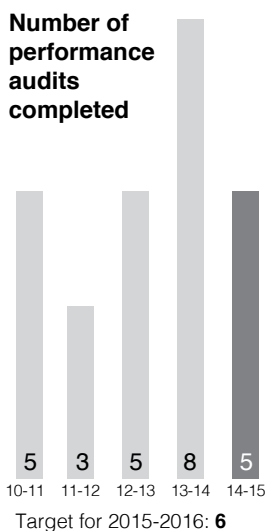
Legal Aid NSW regularly conducts a risk assessment of its activities covering both strategic and operational risks. The risk assessment is used to prepare the Internal Audit Plan.

The Internal Audit Plan includes provision for additional audits should circumstances change during the course of the year. The preparation of the risk assessment is based upon a methodology recognising inherent risk and control effectiveness.

Each audit has a stated objective and scope of activity. All audit recommendations to improve controls require a management response detailing the action that will be taken to implement the recommendations, the designated responsible officer and an identified completion date for implementation.

Presentation of the Audit Plan and regular reports on the progress of audits and the implementation of audit recommendations are included on the agenda of the Audit and Risk Committee. The Audit Plan is based on a three-year risk assessment covering the period 2013-2016.

Up to six audits are scheduled for each of the three years. During 2014-2015, five internal audits were conducted. See chart below.



Report from the Audit and Risk Committee 2014-2015

The primary objective of the Audit and Risk Committee is to advise the Board, including the Chief Executive Officer, concerning financial reporting practices, business ethics, policies and practices, accounting policies and internal controls.

Accordingly, the Committee oversees a range of activities, including the financial performance of Legal Aid NSW and the internal audit function.

During the year, the Committee comprised three members. Two members (Phil Bickerstaff and Peter Whitehead) were independent members and one member (Kylie Beckhouse) was a non-independent executive member. The Chief Executive Officer, Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Chief Audit Executive, and the Director Finance also attend each meeting. Representatives from the Audit Office attended some meetings.

The Committee met on 6 occasions in 2014-2015 and reviewed a range of matters including:

- Monthly financial results;
- Internal Audit Plan for 2014-2015;
- End of Year Financial Statements;
- Updates on Internal Audits and the implementation of recommendations;
- Board papers with financial implications and
- Updated Risk Assessment and three year Internal Audit Plan.

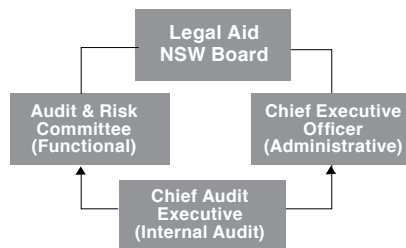
The following internal audits were completed during the year:

- Accounts Payable and Payments
- Community Partnerships Community Legal Centre Program
- Delegations of Authority
- Information Security
- Professional Practices Branch

Philip Bickerstaff M Comm
Independent Chair

Risk management process

Whilst risk management and internal controls are overseen by the Audit and Risk Committee, primary responsibility for managing risk and internal controls rests with line managers, who are required to ensure that an effective control environment operates within their area of responsibility.



Legal Aid NSW may undertake additional audits to meet contemporary issues and developments that are unforeseen by a settled three year plan. This provides the Audit and Risk Committee with appropriate flexibility and responsiveness.

Internal Audit and Risk Management Statement for Legal Aid NSW 2014-2015

I, William Grant, am of the opinion that Legal Aid NSW has internal audit and risk management processes in place that are, in all material respects, compliant with the core requirements set out in Treasury Circular NSW TC 09/08 Internal Audit and Risk Management Policy.

I, William Grant, am of the opinion that the Audit and Risk Committee for Legal Aid NSW is constituted and operates in accordance with the independence and governance requirements of Treasury Circular NSW TC 09/08.

The Chair and Members of the Audit and Risk Committee are:

- Phil Bickerstaff, Independent Chair (3 year appointment)
- Peter Whitehead, Independent Member (3 year appointment).
- Kylie Beckhouse, Non-Independent Member (3 year appointment)

I, William Grant declare that this Internal Audit and Risk Management Statement is made on behalf of the following controlled entity: Office of the Legal Aid Commission of NSW.

Legal Aid NSW has outsourced internal audit services for reasons of economy, given the relatively small size of Legal Aid NSW, access to specialist expertise and because it subjects our systems to best practice review standards. These processes provide a level of assurance that enables the senior management of Legal Aid NSW to understand, manage and satisfactorily control risk exposures.



William Grant
Chief Executive Officer

Digital Information Security Annual Attestation Statement for the 2014-2015 Financial Year for Legal Aid NSW

I, William Grant, am of the opinion that Legal Aid NSW had an Information Security Management System in place during the 2014-2015 financial year that is consistent with the Core Requirements set out in the NSW Government Digital Information Security Policy.

The controls in place to mitigate identified risks to the digital information and digital information systems of Legal Aid NSW are adequate.

There is no agency under the control of Legal Aid NSW which is required to develop an independent ISMS in accordance with the NSW Government Digital Information Security Policy.

Legal Aid NSW has maintained certified compliance with ISO 27001 Information technology - Security techniques - Information security management systems - Requirements by an Accredited Third Party during the 2014-2015 financial year.



William Grant
Chief Executive Officer

Business continuity

We have a Business Continuity Management Plan that is activated when a risk event renders Legal Aid NSW unable to continue to provide services from a regional office or a metropolitan office – including Central Sydney.

Legal Aid NSW completed a review of this Plan in 2014-2015.

The Plan addresses a range of actions that are required to manage the situation, including a recovery management team to oversee the recovery process.

Our Information Technology disaster recovery site provides an alternative site to host business systems and is tested on a regular basis.

Fraud and corruption processes

Legal Aid NSW is committed to conducting business with honesty and transparency. Our Corruption and Fraud Prevention Plan outlines the approach adopted to prevent fraud and other corrupt behaviour.

The Plan addresses a number of controls, including responsibility structure, risk assessment, reporting systems, investigation standards and conduct and disciplinary standards.

The Plan complements other related documents such as the Code of Conduct and Protected Disclosure Policy.

➤ The year ahead

Implement the new Code of Conduct.

Conduct six internal audits as well as a three-year risk assessment to plan for our risk management and governance, including identifying new internal audits.

Implement the Legal Aid NSW Plan 2015-2016.

Legislative compliance

Significant cases

R v Pratten (No 14) [2015] NSWSC 457 and *R v Pratten (No 15)* [2015] NSWSC 573 concerned an application for a stay of proceedings, relying on Dietrich principles and s.57 of the *Legal Aid Commission Act 1979* (NSW).

Rothman J confirmed that it is not the role of the Court to arbitrate the fees set by Legal Aid NSW, but noted that the legal aid package offered may be so inadequate or subject to such restrictive terms that the accused should be taken to be a person who is unrepresented.

Rothman J also suggested that s.56(1) (b) of the Act would allow an applicant to appeal against a refusal to vary a grant of legal aid as much as it would allow an appeal against a variation.

In *Kazas-Rogaris v Council of the Law Society of New South Wales* [2014] NSWCATAD 115, the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal reviewed a decision by the Council of the Law Society of NSW to reprimand a lawyer for, inter alia, a breach of s.41 of the *Legal Aid Commission Act 1979*.

Section 41 provides that a private lawyer is not entitled to charge a legally aided person for costs or disbursements in connection with work assigned to them by Legal Aid NSW, without Legal Aid NSW approval. The Tribunal discussed the interpretation of s.41, and commented that Legal Aid NSW is best placed to interpret the provision. The case confirmed that a breach of s.41 could contribute to a finding of unsatisfactory professional conduct under s.540 of the *Legal Profession Act 2004*.

Legislative amendments

Consequential amendments were made to the *Legal Aid Commission Act 1979* following the adoption in New South Wales of the Legal Profession Uniform Law.

Full compliance with public interest disclosures

Legal Aid NSW has complied with our six-monthly reporting obligations under the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994*. There were two public interest disclosures made during 2014-2015.

Public interest disclosures (PIDs) 2014-2015	No.
Public officials who have made a PID	2
PIDs received by Legal Aid NSW	
Corrupt conduct	2
Maladministration	0
Serious and substantial waste of public money	0
Government information contraventions	0
PIDs finalised by Legal Aid NSW	2
Types of PIDs	
PIDs made by public officials in performing their day-to-day functions as public officials	2
PIDs made under a statutory or other legal obligation	0
All other PIDs	0

Privacy

Legal Aid NSW continues to manage personal information in accordance with its Privacy Management Plan.

The Plan explains how we manage personal information under the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* and *Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002*. We also attended the New South Wales Right to Information and Privacy Practitioners Network Forum to discuss updates and information on recent case law and changes to the legislation.

We did not receive any applications for an internal review during 2014-2015.

Right to Information

The *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (the GIPA Act) provides for a regime of open government, encouraging the release of information. We continue to have information about legal aid and other services, including policy documents, available on our website.

We also dealt with formal and informal applications for access to information. In 2014-2015, we received 15 formal applications. There were also a small number of applications for internal or external review of decisions we made about access applications. The details of the applications we dealt with under the GIPA Act are provided in Appendix 8.

Most of the requests we received continue to be from clients seeking access to their own information. We also dealt with a number of applications that raised more complex legal issues, including legal professional privilege.

Public accountability

We are accountable to the public through an appeals system that guarantees procedural fairness and an open and efficient complaints process.

Appealing decisions

Six independent Legal Aid Review Committees (LARC) determine appeals relating to legal aid grants and applications for legal aid that have been refused. They are established under the *Legal Aid Commission Act 1979* to ensure our clients have fair and equitable access to legal aid services. Committee members are appointed for a period of up to two years, and are eligible for reappointment.

This year the review committees held 59 meetings and seven teleconferences. The committees allowed 49 of 1,149 appeals submitted, compared to 122 appeals allowed out of 1,467 last year. There was a decrease in the number of appeals lodged across all three program areas. However, the decrease in the number of appeals allowed was mainly due to a significant fall in the percentage of successful appeals, from 8.1 per cent to 4.3 per cent. The percentage of successful appeals fell in all three program areas: 8.3 per cent to 3.6 per cent in family law; 11.1 per cent to 7.4 per cent in criminal law; and 3.3 per cent to 1.9 per cent in civil law. The fall in the success rate of family law appeals had the greatest impact on the total number of appeals allowed, as the majority of appeals submitted were for family law proceedings: 66 per cent last year and 70 per cent this year. See Chart 1 for details.

Appeal trends over five years

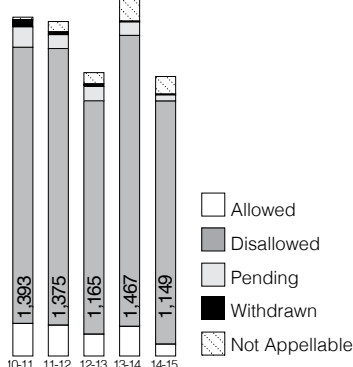
The average number of appeals submitted to LARC each year over the past five years has been 1,297. See Chart 2 for details.

Chart 1 Total appeals and outcomes by law type 2014-2015

Law Type	Allowed	Disallowed	Pending	Not Appellable	Withdrawn	Total Appeals	Appeals Allowed %
Family	29	750	20	2	3	804	3.6%
Criminal	18	153	1	70	1	243	7.4%
Civil	2	96	4	0	0	102	1.9%
TOTAL	49	999	25	72	4	1,149	4.3%

Apart from the high number of appeals in 2013-2014, there has been a steady decrease since 2010-2011.

Chart 2 Appeals and outcomes five year trend



Complaints handling

Key measures in this area were to improve complaints data and reporting and introduce a new complaints policy. This included ensuring staff understand and are complying with the complaints policy, and improving channels for feedback to improve service provision.

Complaints data

We received 360 complaints in 2014-2015 and 184 inquiries from third parties querying another person's eligibility for a grant of aid. Grant eligibility issues are reported as inquiries as they are not complaints about a Legal Aid NSW service.

The complaints recording process introduced in 2013 means it is now possible to compare complaints data.

The new complaint handling policy was implemented in August 2014 and provides the foundation for ongoing work to establish a consistent and responsive complaints culture across Legal Aid NSW. The new options for online feedback resulted in 27 compliments and 10 suggestions for the 2014-2015 period.

Number of complaints

Issue	2013-2014	2014-2015
Grants – eligibility inquiries	246	184
Grants – refusals	50	31 ¹
Inhouse customer service	37	44
Inhouse lawyer	61	67
Staff (other than inhouse lawyer)	7	3
Policy and/or administrative process	29	56 ²
Private lawyer – conduct	57	43
Private lawyer – fees	13	16
Independent Children's Lawyer	19	20
Mediator – conduct	6	14
Funding allocations	10	51 ³
Other	37	15
TOTAL	326	360
Outcome		
Upheld	16	18
Partially upheld	9	22
Not upheld	148	170
Referred to other body	16	16
Response to Minister's Office or Community Relations Unit	62	91 ³
Referred to Legal Aid NSW	3	1
Professional Practices Branch		
Outcome not recorded	72	25
To be determined	0	17
TOTAL	326	360

Notes:

1: Better filtering of online complaints resulted in reduced numbers of complaints about grant refusals as queries were directed to the appropriate appeals process.

2 and 3: A change in policy in relation to transferring prisoners' calls to lawyers and responses to the Minister's Office about funding issues resulted in an increase in complaints for 2014-2015.

➤ The year ahead

Provide staff training to improve skills and knowledge about complaint handling to ensure a more consistent approach across the organisation.

Use feedback options to acknowledge service excellence.

Raise staff awareness of our obligations under the GIPA Act and continue to provide ongoing advice and support to our staff in relation to those obligations.

Launch Sharepoint and an e-diary for LARC committee members so they can upload the reading material onto their own device at their convenience.

The continuing operation of Legal Aid NSW depends upon strong financial management. This year, we introduced Finance partnering to improve support provided to other areas of Legal Aid NSW. We also implemented a number of process improvements.

In this section	Key results		Key challenge for the year ahead
73 Financial overview	Total revenue	\$253.4 M	Continuing to operate within budget and maintain high quality services to clients.
74 Financial performance	Total expenses	\$257.4 M	
75 Financial statements	Net equity	\$23.8 M	
	Deficit	\$4.4 M	

Financial overview

Funding

Legal Aid NSW receives its income as a grant from the Department of Justice. The grant comprises income mainly from NSW Government and Commonwealth Government. In addition income is received from the Public Purpose Fund, interest and client contributions.

Total income for 2014-2015 was \$253.4 million and expenditure was \$257.4 million.

Funding from the New South Wales Government was \$131.3 million.

Funding from the Commonwealth Government under the National Partnership Agreement was \$64.6 million. This represents a 1.4 per cent increase on 2013-2014.

Key developments

Legal Aid NSW's financial result was a deficit of \$4.4 million which is \$0.9 million more than the budgeted deficit of \$3.5 million.

We ended the year with net equity of \$23.8 million.

Payments of \$97.6 million were made to private lawyers, who provide legal aid services to our clients in partnership with Legal Aid NSW. These payments include disbursements for other professional services.

PRIORITY: EXCELLENCE IN LEGAL SERVICES

Improving the way we work

The continuing operation of Legal Aid NSW depends upon strong financial management. This year, we implemented a new purchasing card system to increase efficiency and to reduce risk. We continued to look at automating our paper processes.

Payment of accounts

We paid all accounts on time and were not required to pay penalty interest on any account.

Year ahead

Continue automating our paper processes and streamline our financial reporting.

Key challenge

Ensuring that we apply our funding to ensure the best possible services to our clients.

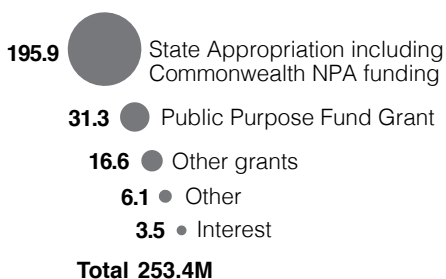
The continuing operation of Legal Aid NSW depends upon strong financial management.

Credit card certification

In accordance with Treasurer's Direction 205.01, it is certified that credit card usage by Legal Aid NSW officers has been in accordance with the appropriate government policies, Premier's Memoranda and Treasurer's Directions, and meets best practice guidelines issued by Treasury.

Total expenditure was \$257.4 million.

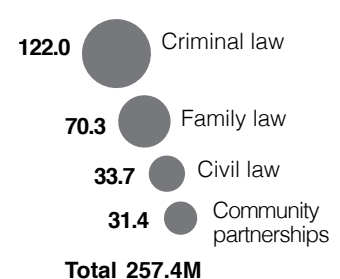
Where our money came from (\$M)



How we spent our money (\$M)



How we spent our money by program (\$M)



Financial summary

Financial performance

Legal Aid NSW's financial result was a deficit of \$4.4 million which is \$0.9 million more than the budgeted deficit of \$3.5 million.

Income

Total income for 2014-2015 was \$253.4 million and expenditure was \$257.4 million.

Funding from the New South Wales Government was \$131.3 million.

Funding from the Commonwealth Government under the National Partnership Agreement was \$64.6 million.

Funding from other sources includes \$31.3 million from the Public Purpose Fund, \$16.6 million from Other Grants Received, \$3.5 million from Interest, and \$6.1 million from other sources.

Budget outline 2015–2016

Operating Statement	(\$M)
Revenue (including government contributions)	266.8
Expenditure	268.0
Other Gains/Losses	(0.2)
Net Result	(1.4)
Balance Sheet	(\$M)
Current Assets	87.5
Non Current Assets	15.0
Total Assets	102.5
Current Liabilities	66.6
Non Current Liabilities	5.2
Total Liabilities	71.8
Net Assets	30.7
Equity	30.7

Financial words we use

Public purpose fund

The Public Purpose Fund was established under the *Legal Profession Act 2004*, (the Act). The fund is administered by the Law Society of NSW under the direction of its four trustees, three of whom are appointed by the Attorney General, and the fourth being the Director General of the Attorney General's Department. Payments from this fund may be made in respect of costs and expenses incurred by the Law Society, a Council (the Law Society Council or the Bar Council) and the Legal Services Commissioner in connection with the exercise of their functions under the Act.

Payments may also be made from the Fund for certain purposes, including the supplementation of the Legal Aid Fund, the Fidelity Fund and the Law Foundation Fund. Payments may also be made for legal education programs, law reform and improving access to legal information for the people of New South Wales.

Client contributions

Legal Aid NSW requires an initial contribution based on income and assets from a person granted legal aid. Certain cases are exempt.

At the conclusion of the case or the legal aid grant, Legal Aid NSW may recover the total costs of a matter where the applicant has recovered a sum of money or other asset or there is a substantial improvement in their financial circumstances.

We recover the full costs from clients who own real estate, where the matter costs over \$2,000, even where no money is recovered. For example, this applies in an indictable trial or a family law dispute about children. The costs are recovered by way of a charge over the client's real estate.

Community programs

Legal Aid NSW provides funding for the Community Legal Centres Funding Program and the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program (pages 42 to 44 and Appendices 4 and 5).

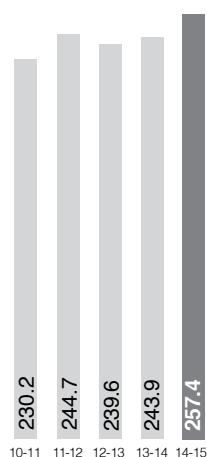
Expenses

Total expenses for Legal Aid NSW are estimated at \$268.0 million in 2015-2016, a decrease of 1.1% on the 2014-2015 budget.

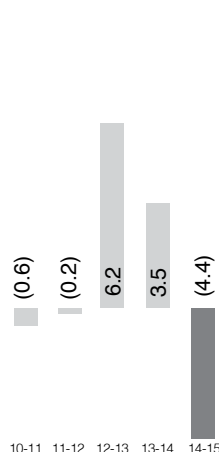
Our major expenses were:

- employee related expenses of \$103.2 million (\$97.1 million in 2013-2014); and
- payments to private lawyers of \$97.6 million (\$93.0 million in 2013-2014).

Total expenses (\$M)
five year trend



Total surplus (\$M)
five year trend



Legal Aid Commission of NSW

The Legal Aid Commission of NSW (Legal Aid NSW) economic entity consists of two separate reporting entities; being the Legal Aid Commission (a statutory body) and the Legal Aid Commission Staff Agency (a Government Department). The Legal Aid Commission Staff Agency provides personnel services to the Legal Aid Commission.

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Statement by Members of the Board

LEGAL AID COMMISSION OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Statement by Members of the Board

Pursuant to Section 41C(1B) of the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*, and in accordance with a resolution of the Board of the Legal Aid Commission of NSW, we declare on behalf of the Legal Aid Commission of NSW that in our opinion:

1. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*, *Public Finance and Audit Regulations 2015*, *Financial Reporting Code for NSW General Government Sector Entities* issued by the Treasurer, and applicable Australian Accounting Standards (which include Australian Accounting Interpretations).
2. The accompanying financial statements exhibit a true and fair view of the financial position of the Legal Aid Commission of NSW as at 30 June 2015 and transactions for the year then ended.
3. There are no circumstances that render any particulars included in the financial statements to be misleading or inaccurate.



Craig Smith
Chair



Bill Grant
Chief Executive Officer

Independent Auditor's Report



INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

Legal Aid Commission of New South Wales

To Members of the New South Wales Parliament

I have audited the accompanying financial statements of the Legal Aid Commission of New South Wales (the Commission), which comprise the statements of financial position as at 30 June 2015, the statements of comprehensive income, the statements of changes in equity, the statements of cash flows and service group statements for the year then ended, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information of the Commission and the consolidated entity. The consolidated entity comprises the Commission and the entities it controlled at the year's end or from time to time during the financial year.

Opinion

In my opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Commission and the consolidated entity as at 30 June 2015, and of their financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards
- are in accordance with section 41B of *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983* (PF&A Act) and the *Public Finance and Audit Regulation 2015*.

My opinion should be read in conjunction with the rest of this report.

The Board's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

The members of the Board are responsible for preparing financial statements that give a true and fair view in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and the PF&A Act, and for such internal control as the members of the Board determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that give a true and fair view and are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

My responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial statements based on my audit. I conducted my audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Those standards require that I comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including an assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation of the financial statements that give a true and fair view in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

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

My opinion does *not* provide assurance:

- about the future viability of the Commission or consolidated entity
- that they have carried out their activities effectively, efficiently and economically
- about the effectiveness of the internal control
- about the assumptions used in formulating the budget figures disclosed in the financial statements
- about the security and controls over the electronic publication of the audited financial statements on any website where they may be presented
- about any other information, that may have been hyperlinked to/from the financial statements.

Independence

In conducting my audit, I have complied with the independence requirements of the Australian Auditing Standards and other relevant ethical pronouncements. The PF&A Act further promotes independence by:

- providing that only Parliament, and not the executive government, can remove an Auditor-General
- mandating the Auditor-General as auditor of public sector agencies but precluding the provision of non-audit services, thus ensuring the Auditor-General and the Audit Office of New South Wales are not compromised in their role by the possibility of losing clients or income.



David Daniels
Director, Financial Audit Services

22 September 2015
SYDNEY

START OF AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Statement of comprehensive income for the year ended 30 June 2015

	Notes	Consolidated			Parent	
		Actual 2015 \$'000	Budget 2015 \$'000	Actual 2014 \$'000	Actual 2015 \$'000	Actual 2014 \$'000
Expenses excluding losses						
Operating expenses:						
Employee related	2(a)	103,244	102,926	97,131	490	407
Personnel Services	2(a)	0	0	0	106,519	94,092
Other operating expenses	2(b)	22,204	21,572	21,379	22,204	21,379
Depreciation and amortisation	2(c)	5,418	4,500	5,090	5,418	5,090
Grants and subsidies	2(d)	28,881	28,441	27,229	28,881	27,229
Finance costs	2(e)	77	0	67	77	67
Other Expenses	2(f)	97,583	113,647	92,988	97,583	92,988
Total Expenses excluding losses		257,407	271,086	243,884	261,172	241,252
Revenue						
Sale of goods and services	3(a)	5,519	4,160	5,251	5,519	5,251
Investment revenue	3(b)	3,532	3,400	3,469	3,532	3,469
Grants and contributions	3(c)	243,729	259,837	238,485	243,729	238,485
Other revenue	3(d)	580	324	469	580	469
Total Revenue		253,360	267,721	247,674	253,360	247,674
Gain/(loss) on disposal	4	(171)	35	(11)	(171)	(11)
Other Gains/(losses)	5	(227)	(200)	(275)	(227)	(275)
Net result	18	(4,445)	(3,530)	3,504	(8,210)	6,136
Other comprehensive income						
Items that will not be reclassified to net result						
Superannuation actuarial gains/(losses)		(3,765)	0	2,632	0	0
Total other comprehensive income for the year		(3,765)	0	2,632	0	0
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME		(8,210)	(3,530)	6,136	(8,210)	6,136

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements

Financial statements

Statement of financial position for the year ended 30 June 2015

	Notes	Consolidated			Parent	
		Actual 2015 \$'000	Budget 2015 \$'000	Actual 2014 \$'000	Actual 2015 \$'000	Actual 2014 \$'000
ASSETS						
Current Assets						
Cash and cash equivalents	7	84,816	81,795	86,082	84,816	86,082
Receivables	8	4,943	3,824	3,677	4,943	3,677
Total Current Assets		89,759	85,619	89,759	89,759	89,759
Non-Current Assets						
Receivables	8	2,501	1,867	2,290	2,501	2,290
Plant and equipment	9	11,014	9,320	11,393	11,014	11,393
Intangible assets	10	2,470	3,247	2,884	2,470	2,884
Total Non-Current Assets		15,985	14,434	16,567	15,985	16,567
Total Assets		105,744	100,053	106,326	105,744	106,326
LIABILITIES						
Current Liabilities						
Payables	11	14,986	14,244	13,981	14,986	13,981
Provisions	12	61,350	52,777	55,132	61,350	55,132
Total Current Liabilities		76,336	67,021	69,113	76,336	69,113
Non-Current Liabilities						
Provisions	12	5,438	3,555	4,947	5,438	4,947
Other	13	182	274	268	182	268
Total Non-Current Liabilities		5,620	3,829	5,215	5,620	5,215
Total Liabilities		81,956	70,850	74,328	81,956	74,328
Net Assets		23,788	29,203	31,998	23,788	31,998
EQUITY						
Accumulated Funds		23,788	29,203	31,998	23,788	31,998
Total Equity		23,788	29,203	31,998	23,788	31,998

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements

Statement of changes in equity for the year ended 30 June 2015

	Notes	Consolidated		Parent	
		Accumulated Funds \$'000	Total \$'000	Accumulated Funds \$'000	Total \$'000
Balance at 1 July 2014		31,998	31,998	31,998	31,998
Net result for the Year		(4,445)	(4,445)	(8,210)	(8,210)
Other Comprehensive income:					
Superannuation actuarial gains/(losses)	14	(3,765)	(3,765)	0	0
Total other comprehensive income		(3,765)	(3,765)	0	0
Total comprehensive income for the year		(8,210)	(8,210)	(8,210)	(8,210)
Balance at 30 June 2015		23,788	23,788	23,788	23,788
Balance at 1 July 2013		25,862	25,862	25,862	25,862
Net result for the Year		3,504	3,504	6,136	6,136
Other Comprehensive income:					
Superannuation actuarial gains/(losses)		2,632	2,632	0	0
Total other comprehensive income		2,632	2,632	0	0
Total comprehensive income for the year		6,136	6,136	6,136	6,136
Balance at 30 June 2014		31,998	31,998	31,998	31,998

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements

Financial statements

Statement of cash flows for the year ended 30 June 2015

	Notes	Consolidated		Parent		
		Actual 2015 \$'000	Budget 2015 \$'000	Actual 2014 \$'000	Actual 2015 \$'000	Actual 2014 \$'000
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES						
Payments						
Employee related		(100,761)	(103,101)	(96,999)	(490)	(407)
Grants and subsidies		(31,769)	(28,441)	(29,952)	(31,769)	(29,952)
Personnel services		0	0	0	(100,271)	(96,592)
Other		(135,173)	(149,995)	(135,196)	(135,173)	(135,196)
Total Payments		(267,703)	(281,537)	(262,147)	(267,703)	(262,147)
Receipts						
Sale of goods and services		5,344	3,960	5,539	5,344	5,539
Grants and contributions		247,141	228,566	245,401	247,141	245,401
Interest received		2,782	3,400	3,469	2,782	3,469
Other		15,505	46,371	15,576	15,505	15,576
Total Receipts		270,772	282,297	269,985	270,772	269,985
NET CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	18	3,069	760	7,838	3,069	7,838
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES						
Proceeds from sale of plant and equipment		0	35	10	0	10
Purchases of plant and equipment		(4,335)	(4,350)	(4,340)	(4,335)	(4,340)
NET CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES		(4,335)	(4,315)	(4,330)	(4,335)	(4,330)
NET INCREASE/ (DECREASE) IN CASH		(1,266)	(3,555)	3,508	(1,266)	3,508
Opening cash and cash equivalents		86,082	85,350	82,574	86,082	82,574
CLOSING CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	7	84,816	81,795	86,082	84,816	86,082

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements

Supplementary Financial Statements

Service group statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

AGENCY EXPENSES AND REVENUES	Service Group 1* Criminal Law Services		Service Group 2* Civil Law Services		Service Group 3* Family Law Services		Service Group 4* Community Partnerships		Not Attributable**		Total		
	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000	
Expenses excluding losses													
Operating expenses:													
- Employee related/ Personnel services	49,130	46,156	21,938	21,269	29,997	27,521	2,179	2,185	0	0	103,244	97,131	
- Other Operating expenses	10,259	9,511	4,880	4,657	6,255	6,373	810	838	0	0	22,204	21,379	
Depreciation and amortisation	2,648	2,413	1,146	1,098	1,496	1,431	128	148	0	0	5,418	5,090	
Grants and subsidies	63	101	476	539	177	234	28,165	26,355	0	0	28,881	27,229	
Finance costs	38	34	16	16	21	17	2	0	0	0	77	67	
Other expenses	59,919	57,833	5,207	5,327	32,311	29,675	146	153	0	0	97,583	92,988	
Total Expenses excluding losses	122,057	116,048	33,663	32,906	70,257	65,251	31,430	29,679	0	0	257,407	243,884	
Revenue													
Sale of goods and services	1,995	1,565	2,060	2,369	1,464	1,317	0	0	0	0	5,519	5,251	
Investment income	2,410	2,353	447	444	675	672	0	0	0	0	3,532	3,469	
Grants and contributions	4,684	3,548	924	2,564	121	2,950	10,836	10,509	227,164	218,914	243,729	238,485	
Other revenue	82	167	430	232	62	66	6	4	0	0	580	469	
Total Retained Revenue	9,171	7,633	3,861	5,609	2,322	5,005	10,842	10,513	227,164	218,914	253,360	247,674	
Gain / (Loss) on disposal of non current assets	(76)	(6)	(44)	(3)	(51)	(2)	0	0	0	0	(171)	(11)	
Other gains / (losses)	(151)	(251)	(101)	(36)	25	12	0	0	0	0	(227)	(275)	
Net result	(113,113)	(108,672)	(29,947)	(27,336)	(67,961)	(60,236)	(20,588)	(19,166)	227,164	218,914	(4,445)	3,504	
Other Comprehensive Income													
Other - actuarial gains/(losses)	(1,840)	1,248	(797)	568	(1,039)	739	(89)	77	0	0	(3,765)	2,632	
Total other comprehensive income	(1,840)	1,248	(797)	568	(1,039)	739	(89)	77	0	0	(3,765)	2,632	
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME	(114,953)	(107,424)	(30,744)	(26,768)	(69,000)	(59,497)	(20,677)	(19,089)	227,164	218,914	(8,210)	6,136	

*The name and purpose of each Service Group is summarised in Note 6.

**Cluster grant funding are made on an agency basis and not to individual service groups. Consequently, cluster grant funding is included in the 'Not Attributable' column.

Service group statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

Supplementary Financial Statements

AGENCY ASSETS AND LIABILITIES	Service Group 1* Criminal Law Services		Service Group 2* Civil Law Services		Service Group 3* Family Law Services		Service Group 4* Community Partnerships		Not Attributable**		Total	
	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
Current Assets												
Cash and cash equivalents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	84,816	86,082
Receivables	2,303	1,635	1,507	1,218	1,130	822	3	2	84,816	86,082	4,943	3,677
Total Current Assets	2,303	1,635	1,507	1,218	1,130	822	3	2	84,816	86,082	89,759	89,759
Non Current Assets												
Receivables	1,164	1,018	763	759	572	512	2	1	0	0	2,501	2,290
Plant and equipment	5,242	5,414	2,340	2,495	3,200	3,228	232	256	0	0	11,014	11,393
Intangible assets	1,175	1,370	525	632	718	817	52	65	0	0	2,470	2,884
Total Non-Current Assets	7,581	7,802	3,628	3,886	4,490	4,557	286	322	0	0	15,985	16,567
Total Assets	9,884	9,437	5,135	5,104	5,620	5,379	289	324	84,816	86,082	105,744	106,326
Current Liabilities												
Payables	8,017	7,503	2,152	2,066	4,607	4,202	210	210	0	0	14,986	13,981
Provisions	29,194	26,198	13,036	12,072	17,825	15,621	1,295	1,240	0	0	61,350	55,132
Total Current Liabilities	37,211	33,701	15,188	14,138	22,432	19,823	1,505	1,450	0	0	76,336	69,113
Non Current Liabilities												
Provisions	2,588	2,351	1,156	1,083	1,580	1,402	114	111			5,438	4,947
Other	87	127	39	59	52	76	4	6			182	268
Total Non Current Liabilities	2,675	2,478	1,195	1,142	1,632	1,478	118	117	0	0	5,620	5,215
Total Liabilities	39,886	36,179	16,383	15,280	24,064	21,301	1,623	1,567	0	0	81,956	74,328
Net Assets	(30,002)	(26,742)	(11,248)	(10,176)	(18,444)	(15,922)	(1,334)	(1,243)	84,816	86,082	23,788	31,998

*The name and purpose of each Service Group is summarised in Note 6.

**Cluster grant funding are made on an agency basis and not to individual service groups. Consequently, cluster grant funding is included in the 'Not Attributable' column.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

1 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES**(a) Reporting Entity**

The Legal Aid Commission of NSW is a NSW statutory authority. The Legal Aid Commission of NSW is a not-for-profit entity (as profit is not its principal objective) and it has no cash generating units. The reporting entity is consolidated as part of the NSW Total State Sector Accounts.

The Legal Aid Commission of NSW, as a reporting entity, comprises all entities under its control, namely, the Commission and the Legal Aid Commission Staff Agency. Transactions relating to the Legal Aid Commission Trust Account are not included in the financial statements of the Legal Aid Commission of NSW, as the Legal Aid Commission of NSW does not control or use these funds for the achievement of its objectives.

In the process of preparing the consolidated financial statements for the economic entity consisting of the controlling and controlled entities, all inter-entity transactions and balances have been eliminated and like transactions and other events are accounted for using uniform accounting policies.

The consolidated financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2015 were authorised for issue by the Chair of the Board and the Chief Executive Officer on 18 September 2015.

(b) Basis of Preparation

The Legal Aid Commission of NSW's financial statements are general purpose financial statements which have been prepared in accordance with:

- applicable Australian Accounting Standards (which include Australian Accounting Interpretations).
- the requirements of the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983* and *Public Finance and Audit Regulation 2015*; and
- the Financial Reporting Directions published in the Financial Reporting Code for NSW General Government Sector Entities or issued by the Treasurer.

Plant and equipment and intangible assets are measured at fair value. Other financial statement items are prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention except where specified otherwise.

Judgements, key assumptions and estimations management has made are disclosed in the relevant notes to the financial statements.

All amounts are rounded to the nearest one thousand dollars and are expressed in Australian currency.

(c) Statement of Compliance

The consolidated and parent entity financial statements and notes comply with Australian Accounting Standards, which include Australian Accounting Interpretations.

(d) Administered Activities

The Legal Aid Commission of NSW does not administer any activities on behalf of the Crown Entity.

(e) Insurance

The Legal Aid Commission of NSW's insurance activities are conducted through the NSW Treasury Managed Fund Scheme of self insurance for Government entities. The expense (premium) is determined by the Fund Manager based on past experience.

(f) Accounting for the Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Income, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where:

- the amount of GST incurred by the Legal Aid Commission of NSW as a purchaser that is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of an asset or as part of an item of expense, and
- 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 Australian Taxation Office are classified as operating cash flows.

(g) Income Recognition

Income is measured at the fair value of the consideration or contribution received or receivable. Additional comments regarding the accounting policies for the recognition of income are discussed below.

(i) Contributions

Contributions from other bodies (including grants and donations) are generally recognised as revenue when the entity obtains control over the assets comprising the contributions. Control over contributions is normally obtained upon the receipt of cash.

(ii) Rendering of Services

Revenue is recognised when the service is provided or by reference to the stage of completion (based on labour hours incurred to date).

(iii) Investment Revenue

Interest revenue is recognised using the effective interest method as set out in AASB 139 Financial Instruments: *Recognition and Measurement*.

Financial statements

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

(h) Assets

(i) Acquisition of Assets

The cost method of accounting is used for the initial recording of all acquisitions of assets controlled by the Legal Aid Commission of NSW. Cost is the amount of cash or cash equivalents paid or the fair value of the other consideration given to acquire the asset at the time of its acquisition or construction or, where applicable, the amount attributed to that asset when initially recognised in accordance with the requirements of other Australian Accounting Standards.

Fair value is the amount for which an asset could be exchanged between knowledgeable, willing parties in an arm's length transaction.

Where payment for an asset is deferred beyond normal credit terms, its cost is the cash price equivalent i.e. deferred payment amount is effectively discounted over the period of credit.

(ii) Capitalisation Thresholds

Plant and equipment and intangible assets costing \$5,000 and above individually (or forming part of a network or group costing more than \$5,000) are capitalised.

(iii) Revaluation of Plant and Equipment

Physical non-current assets are valued in accordance with the 'Valuation of Physical Non-Current Assets at Fair Value' Policy and Guidelines Paper (TPP 14-01). This policy adopts fair value in accordance with AASB 13 Fair Value Measurement, and AASB 116 Property, Plant and Equipment.

The Legal Aid Commission of NSW's plant and equipment are non-specialised assets with short useful lives and are measured at depreciated historical cost, as an approximation of fair value. The entity has assessed that any difference between fair value and depreciated historical cost is unlikely to be material.

(iv) Impairment of Plant and Equipment

As a not-for-profit entity with no cash generating units, impairment under AASB 136 Impairment of Assets is unlikely to arise. As property, plant and equipment is carried at fair value, or an amount that approximates fair value, impairment can only arise in the rare circumstances such as where the costs of disposal are material. Specifically, impairment is unlikely for not-for-profit entities given that AASB 136 modifies the recoverable amount test for non-cash generating assets of not-for-profit entities to the higher of fair value less costs of disposal and depreciated replacement cost, where depreciated replacement cost is also fair value.

(v) Depreciation of Plant and Equipment

Depreciation is provided for on a straight line basis for all depreciable assets so as to write off the depreciable amount of each asset as it is consumed over its useful life to the Legal Aid Commission of NSW. Leasehold improvements are amortised over the unexpired period of the lease or estimated useful life whichever is the shorter. Refer Notes 2(c) and 9.

Applicable depreciation rates for each class of depreciable assets are listed below:

	%
Computer Equipment	20–25
Office Equipment	15–25
Leasehold Improvements (includes Furniture and Fittings)	10 or the term of lease, whichever is the shorter

(vi) Restoration Costs

The estimated cost of dismantling and removing an asset and restoring the site is included in the cost of an asset, to the extent it is recognised as a liability.

(vii) Maintenance

Day-to-day servicing costs or maintenance are charged as expenses as incurred, except where they relate to the replacement of a part or component of an asset, in which case the costs are capitalised and depreciated.

(viii) Leased Assets

The Legal Aid Commission of NSW does not have any finance leases for its leased assets. Operating lease payments are recognised as an expense on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

(ix) Intangible Assets

The Legal Aid Commission of NSW recognises intangible assets only if it is probable that future economic benefits will flow to the Legal Aid Commission of NSW and the cost of the asset can be measured reliably. Intangible assets are measured initially at cost.

All research costs are expensed. Development costs are only capitalised when certain criteria are met.

The useful lives of intangible assets are assessed to be finite. As there is no active market for the Legal Aid Commission of NSW's intangible assets, the assets are carried at cost less any accumulated amortisation. The Legal Aid Commission of NSW's intangible assets are generally amortised using the straight line method over a period of 4 years or a rate determined by management. Refer Note 2(c) and 10.

Intangible assets are tested for impairment where an indicator of impairment exists. If the recoverable amount is less than its carrying amount the carrying amount is reduced to recoverable amount and the reduction is recognised as an impairment loss.

(x) Receivables

Receivables are non-derivative financial assets with fixed or determinable payments that are not quoted in an active market. These financial assets are recognised initially at fair value, usually based on the transaction cost or face value. Subsequent

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

measurement is at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less an allowance for any impairment of receivables. Any changes are recognised in the net result for the year when impaired, derecognised or through the amortisation process. Short-term receivables with no stated interest rate are measured at the original invoice amount where the effect of discounting is immaterial.

(xi) Impairment of Financial Assets

An allowance for impairment is established for the Legal Aid Commission of NSW's receivables where there is objective evidence that the Legal Aid Commission of NSW will not be able to collect all amounts due.

The amount of any impairment loss is recognised in the net result for the year. Any reversals of impairment losses are reversed through the net result for the year where there is objective evidence.

The actuarial firm *Finity Consulting Pty Limited* was engaged to undertake the calculation of the impairment of the "Sales of Goods and Services" component of Receivables for 2014-15.

(xii) Trust Funds

The Legal Aid Commission of NSW receives monies in a trustee capacity for trusts as set out in Note 19. As the Legal Aid Commission of NSW performs a custodial role in respect of these monies, and because the monies cannot be used for the achievement of the Legal Aid Commission of NSW's own objectives, they are not brought to account in the financial statements.

(xiii) Other Assets

Other Assets are recognised on a cost basis.

(xiv) Derecognition of financial assets and financial liabilities

A financial asset is derecognised when the contractual rights to the cash flows from the financial assets expire; or if the entity transfers the financial asset:

- where substantially all the risks and rewards have been transferred, or
- where the entity has not transferred substantially all the risks and rewards, if the entity has not retained control.

Where the entity has neither transferred nor retained substantially all the risks and rewards or transferred control, the asset is recognised to the extent of the entity's continuing involvement in the asset.

A financial liability is derecognised when the obligation specified in the contract is discharged or cancelled or expires.

(i) Liabilities**(i) Payables**

These amounts represent liabilities for goods and services provided to the entity and other amounts. Payables are recognised initially at fair value, usually based on the transaction cost or face value. Subsequent measurement is at amortised cost using the effective interest method. Short-term payables with no stated interest rate are measured at the original invoice amount where the effect of discounting is immaterial.

(ii) Accrual of Estimated Legal Expenses

The Legal Aid Commission of NSW accrues the estimated net cost of work in progress by external legal practitioners who have not submitted claims to the Legal Aid Commission of NSW at balance date. The estimation is based on all files finalised in the past which are analysed to determine an average cost of the matter type, average period for finalisation and payment profile. By comparing the payments expected to have been made on each file at balance date with the average for that matter type, a value of the work in progress for which claims have not been submitted is estimated and accrued.

The actuarial firm *Finity Consulting Pty Limited* has been engaged to undertake the calculation of the accrual of estimated legal expenses for the Legal Aid Commission of NSW.

(iii) Personnel Services

To enable the Legal Aid Commission of NSW to carry out its functions, all personnel service requirements are provided by Legal Aid Commission Staff Agency which is a special purpose service entity that is a Division of the Government of New South Wales. The personnel service is charged at cost.

(a) Employee Benefits and other Provisions

Salaries and wages (including non-monetary benefits) and paid sick leave that are expected to be settled wholly within 12 months after the end of the period in which the employees render the service are recognised and measured at the undiscounted amounts of the benefits.

Annual leave is not expected to be settled wholly before twelve months after the end of the annual reporting period in which the employees render the related service. As such, it is required to be measured at present value in accordance with AASB 119 Employee Benefits (although short-cut methods are permitted). Actuarial advice obtained by Treasury has confirmed that the use of a nominal approach plus the annual leave on annual leave liability (using 7.9% of the nominal value of annual leave) can be used to approximate the present value of the annual leave liability. The entity has assessed the actuarial advice based on the entity's circumstances and has determined that the effect of discounting is immaterial to annual leave.

Unused non-vesting sick leave does not give rise to a liability as it is not considered probable that sick leave taken in the future will be greater than the entitlements accrued in the future.

The outstanding amounts of payroll tax, fringe benefits tax and workers' compensation insurance premiums which are consequential to employment are recognised as liabilities and expenses where the employee benefits to which they relate have been recognised.

Financial statements

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

(b) Long Service Leave and Superannuation

Long service leave is measured at present value in accordance with AASB 119 Employee Benefits using a shorthand measurement technique based on valuation factors provided by Mercer (Australia) Pty Ltd.

The Agency's superannuation position is calculated based on economic assumptions determined by the independent actuary, Pillar Administration, as advised by the SAS Trustee Corporation (STC). All Fund assets are invested by STC at arm's length through independent fund managers. Any variation between the Agency's gross superannuation liability and employer reserve account balance is recognised in the Statement of Financial Position as an unfunded liability or prepaid contribution. Refer Notes 2(a), and 14.

Actuarial gains and losses are recognised immediately in other comprehensive income in the year in which they occur.

(iv) Other Provisions

Other provisions exist when: the entity has a present legal or constructive obligation as a result of a past event; it is probable that an outflow of resources will be required to settle the obligation; and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation.

If the effect of the time value of money is material, provisions are discounted at 1.7%, which reflects the current market assessments of the time value of money and the risks specific to the liability.

(j) Equity and Reserves

(i) Asset Revaluation Surplus

The asset revaluation surplus is used to record increments and decrements on the revaluation of non-current assets. This accords with the entity's policy on the revaluation of plant and equipment as discussed in note 1(h)(iii).

(ii) Accumulated Funds

The category accumulated funds includes all current and prior period retained funds.

(iii) Reserve Accounts

Separate reserve accounts are recognised in the financial statements only if such accounts are required by specific legislation or Australian Accounting Standards (e.g. asset revaluation reserve and foreign currency translation reserve).

(k) Budgeted Amounts

The budgeted amounts are drawn from the original budgeted financial statements presented to Parliament in respect of the reporting period. Subsequent amendments made to the original budget (e.g. adjustment for transfers of functions between entities as a result of Administrative Arrangement Orders) are not reflected in the budgeted amounts. Major variances between the original budgeted amounts and the actual amounts disclosed on the primary financial statements are explained in Note 17.

(l) Comparative Information—general

Except when an Australian Accounting Standard permits or requires otherwise, comparative information is disclosed in respect of the previous period for all amounts reported in the financial statements.

(m) Changes in accounting policy, including new or revised Australian Accounting Standards

Effective for the first time in 2014-2015

The accounting policies applied in 2014-2015 are consistent with those of the previous financial year except as a result of the following new or revised Australian Accounting Standards that have been applied for the first time in 2014-2015.

- AASB 1055 Budgetary Reporting applies from 01 July 2014.
- AASB 10 Consolidated *Financial Statements* applies to the annual reporting periods of not-for-profit entities on or after 01 January 2014

It is considered that these Standard will have no direct impact on Legal Aid Commission of NSW.

Issued but not yet effective

Certain new accounting standards and interpretations have been published that are not mandatory for 30 June 2015 reporting periods. The following new Accounting Standards and Interpretations have not yet been adopted and are not yet effective:

AASB 9 *Financial Instruments*

AASB 2010-7

AASB 2013-9 (Part C)

AASB 2014-1 (Part E)

AASB 2014-7 and AASB 2014-8 regarding financial instruments

AASB 15 and AASB 2014-5 regarding Revenue from Contracts with Customers

AASB 1056 Superannuation Entities

AASB 2014-4 regarding acceptable methods of depreciation and amortisation

AASB 2014-9 regarding equity method in separate financial statements

AASB 2015-1 regarding annual improvements to Australian Accounting Standards 2012-2014 cycle

AASB 2015-2 regarding amendments to AASB 101 disclosure initiatives

AASB 2015-3 regarding materiality

It is considered that the impact of these new Standards and Interpretations in future periods will have no material impact on the financial statements of the Legal Aid Commission of NSW.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

2 EXPENSES	Consolidated		Parent	
	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
(a) Employee related expenses and personnel services				
Salaries and wages (including recreation leave)	84,511	81,086	-	-
Superannuation - defined benefit plans *	2,706	2,790	-	-
Superannuation - defined contribution plans	7,107	6,338	-	-
Long service leave	2,256	1,018	-	-
Workers' compensation insurance	1,013	795	-	-
Payroll tax and fringe benefits tax	5,161	4,697	-	-
Agency staff costs	490	407	490	407
Total	103,244	97,131	490	407
<p>The Legal Aid Commission of NSW does not employ staff that are directly involved in day-to-day servicing or maintenance. Employee related expenses capitalised to fixed assets in 2014-2015 was \$0.37m (2013-2014: \$0.23m).</p> <p>*Refer Note 14. Superannuation actuarial loss of \$3.764m (2013-2014: actuarial gain of \$2.632m) are recognised in the Statement of Changes in Equity.</p> <p>*In 2014-2015 Superannuation Defined Benefit Plans returned an expense of \$2.706m (2013-2014: \$2.790)</p> <p>Total superannuation loss, including actuarial loss recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income is \$6.47m (2013-2014:\$0.16m loss).</p>				
Personnel services				
Personnel services provided by the Legal Aid Commission Staff Agency	-	-	106,519	94,092
Total	-	-	106,519	94,092
(b) Other operating expenses				
Other operating expenses include the following:				
Operating lease rental expense - minimum lease payments	8,627	8,382	8,627	8,382
Telephone	344	357	344	357
Library resources	863	833	863	833
Consultants	215	89	215	89
Contractors	51	1,216	51	1,216
Stationery, stores and provisions	527	450	527	450
Computer running costs	3,124	2,711	3,124	2,711
Printing	977	572	977	572
Records management	608	603	608	603
Travel	1,314	1,153	1,314	1,153
Interpreters' fees	67	64	67	64
Postage	647	451	647	451
Cleaning	375	405	375	405
Practicing certificates	392	364	392	364
Electricity and gas	458	515	458	515
Insurance	153	123	153	123
Auditor's remuneration - audit of financial statements	136	136	136	136
Auditor's remuneration - Audit of IAAAS	4	2	4	2
Internal audit and audit of Trust Account	141	200	141	200
Courier and freight	94	91	94	91
Maintenance	372	364	372	364
Other	2,715	2,298	2,715	2,298
Total	22,204	21,379	22,204	21,379

Financial statements

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

	Consolidated		Parent	
	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
(c) Depreciation and amortisation expenses				
Depreciation				
Leasehold Improvements	2,704	2,260	2,704	2,260
Plant and Equipment	1,505	1,534	1,505	1,534
Total	4,209	3,794	4,209	3,794
Amortisation				
Software	1,209	1,296	1,209	1,296
Total	1,209	1,296	1,209	1,296
Total	5,418	5,090	5,418	5,090

Refer Notes 1(h)(v), 1(h)(ix), 9 & 10.

(d) Grants and subsidies				
Domestic Violence Court Assistance Program	9,715	8,173	9,715	8,173
Community Legal Centres	18,129	17,878	18,129	17,878
Cooperative Legal Service Delivery Program	321	304	321	304
Work Development Order	270	270	270	270
ALS Field Officer Training	231	265	231	265
Aboriginal Program Expenditure Initiative	141	-	141	-
Tenants Union	-	35	-	35
Council on the Aging - Legal Pathways	60	-	60	-
Law and Justice Foundation	-	293	-	293
Other	14	11	14	11
Total	28,881	27,229	28,881	27,229

Grants to Community Legal Centres are funded by way of specific Commonwealth and discretionary State funds.

(e) Finance costs				
Unwinding of discount rate	77	67	77	67
Total	77	67	77	67

(f) Other expenses				
Solicitor services provided by private practitioners	62,575	60,302	62,575	60,302
Barrister services provided by private practitioners	22,560	20,453	22,560	20,453
Disbursements	12,448	12,233	12,448	12,233
Total	97,583	92,988	97,583	92,988

Includes an estimate of the net cost of work in progress by external legal practitioners who have provided services but not submitted an invoice to Legal Aid Commission of NSW at the end of the reporting period.

3 REVENUE

(a) Sale of goods and services

Rendering of services

Criminal Law	1,995	1,565	1,995	1,565
Family Law	1,464	1,317	1,464	1,317
Civil Law	2,060	2,369	2,060	2,369
Total	5,519	5,251	5,519	5,251

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

	Consolidated		Parent	
	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
(b) Investment revenue				
Interest on outstanding accounts	106	91	106	91
Interest on cash assets	3,426	3,378	3,426	3,378
Total	3,532	3,469	3,532	3,469
(c) Grants and contributions				
Cluster Agency recurrent contribution	192,294	177,429	192,294	177,429
Cluster Agency capital contribution	3,600	3,600	3,600	3,600
Law Society Public Purpose Fund ¹	31,270	37,885	31,270	37,885
Commonwealth Government Community Partnerships base grants ²	8,908	9,439	8,908	9,439
Other grants and contributions ³	7,657	10,132	7,657	10,132
Total	243,729	238,485	243,729	238,485
¹ This fund provided a grant of \$28.67m (\$34.82m in 2013-2014) to provide legal aid services in State matters.				
Other specific grants from this fund include:				
Community Legal Centres	1,250	1,387	1,250	1,387
Children's Court Assistance Scheme	187	228	187	228
Homeless Persons	415	504	415	504
Older Persons Legal Service	479	582	479	582
Aboriginal Legal Access Program	270	369	270	369
Total	2,601	3,070	2,601	3,070
² \$8,583m in Community Partnerships base grants plus a further \$0.325 SACS ERO funding, totalling \$8.908m (2013-2014 \$9.439m), received from the Commonwealth Government were earmarked for distribution to various Community Legal Centres. The amount of the grant to individual Community Legal Centres is determined by the Commonwealth.				
³ Other Grants and contributions include:				
Part of the Commonwealth Government Community Partnerships base grants used to meet administrative costs	177	174	177	174
State Department of Juvenile Justice for the Juvenile Justice Visiting Legal Service	181	194	181	194
State Attorney General's Department - Video Conferencing Facilities	21	107	21	107
Commonwealth Government special funding for expensive criminal cases	4,275	3,139	4,275	3,139
Collaboration Funding	-	4,581	-	4,581
Homelessness Action Plan	755	755	755	755
State Attorney General's Department - 2 new Womens Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services	839	592	839	592
State Attorney General's Department - Domestic and Family Violence Framework for Reform	884	303	884	303
Bail Court Training	-	100	-	100
Aboriginal Women Leaving Custody Project	-	127	-	127
State Attorney General's Department - Voluntary Redundancy	397	-	397	-
Other	128	60	128	60
Total	7,657	10,132	7,657	10,132
(d) Other revenue				
Miscellaneous	580	469	580	469
Total	580	469	580	469

Financial statements

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

	Consolidated		Parent	
	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
4 GAIN/(LOSS) ON DISPOSAL				
Gain/(Loss) on disposal of plant and equipment				
Proceeds from disposal	-	10	-	10
Less: Written down value of assets disposed	(171)	21	(171)	21
Total	(171)	(11)	(171)	(11)
5 OTHER GAINS / (LOSSES)				
Impairment gain/(loss) on receivables	(291)	(275)	(291)	(275)
Gain/(loss) on make good provision	64	-	64	-
Total	(227)	(275)	(227)	(275)

6 SERVICE GROUPS / ACTIVITIES OF LEGAL AID NSW

Service Group 1 - Criminal Law Services

This service group covers the provision of legal assistance and counsel to those facing criminal charges. This assistance ranges from advice, information and duty services for more minor criminal law matters, through to representation by barristers in extended and complex trials where clients who are found guilty may face very heavy penalties.

Service Group 2 - Civil Law Services

This service group covers the provision of legal services in matters such as housing, mental health, consumer and human rights law. The assistance ranges from relatively straightforward advice and information services, through to legal representation in lengthy and complex court cases.

Service Group 3 - Family Law Services

This service group covers the provision of assistance to families in dispute over areas such as separation, divorce and parenting arrangements. It also assists in matters where the State seeks to take children thought to be at risk of abuse and neglect into care.

Service Group 4 - Community Partnerships

This service group covers funding of community organisations for specific purposes. It includes providing legal assistance to disadvantaged people undertaking law reform activities, and providing specialised court-based assistance for women and children seeking legal protection from domestic violence.

7 CURRENT ASSETS - CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

Cash at bank and on hand	10,171	86,082	10,171	86,082
Short term deposits	74,645	-	74,645	-
Total Cash	84,816	86,082	84,816	86,082

For the purposes of the Statement of Cash Flows, cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, cash at bank and short term deposits. The Short-term deposits are highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and are subject to an insignificant risk of changes in value.

Cash and cash equivalent assets recognised in the Statement of Financial Position are reconciled at the end of the financial year to the Statement of Cash Flows as follows:

Cash and cash equivalents (per Statement of Financial Position)	84,816	86,082	84,816	86,082
Closing cash and cash equivalents (per Statement of Cash Flows)	84,816	86,082	84,816	86,082

Refer Note 20 for details regarding credit risk, liquidity risk and market risk arising from financial instruments.

The Legal Aid Commission of NSW has a business credit card facility of \$0.090m (2013 -2014: \$0.040m), which is the total of the credit limit for all issued credit cards. The balance in this facility is cleared monthly.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

	Consolidated		Parent	
	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
8 CURRENT / NON-CURRENT ASSETS - RECEIVABLES				
Current				
Sale of goods and services	1,886	1,537	1,886	1,537
Less: Allowance for impairment	(519)	(395)	(519)	(395)
	<u>1,367</u>	<u>1,142</u>	<u>1,367</u>	<u>1,142</u>
Other debtors	824	13	824	13
GST recoverable from Australian Taxation Office	2,172	2,017	2,172	2,017
Prepayments	580	505	580	505
Total Current	<u>4,943</u>	<u>3,677</u>	<u>4,943</u>	<u>3,677</u>
Non-Current				
Sale of goods and services	2,909	2,787	2,909	2,787
Less: Allowance for impairment	(408)	(497)	(408)	(497)
Total Non-Current	<u>2,501</u>	<u>2,290</u>	<u>2,501</u>	<u>2,290</u>
Movement in the allowance for impairment				
Balance at 1 July	892	945	892	945
Amounts written off during the year	(266)	(339)	(266)	(339)
Amounts recovered during the year	(10)	(12)	(10)	(12)
Increase/(decrease) in allowance	311	298	311	298
Balance at 30 June	<u>927</u>	<u>892</u>	<u>927</u>	<u>892</u>

Details regarding credit risk, liquidity risk and market risk, including financial assets that are either past due or impaired, are disclosed in Note 20.

Receivables from the sale of goods and services (both current and non-current) in the amount of \$2.64m (2013-2014: \$2.54m) are secured by way of caveat.

9 NON-CURRENT ASSETS - PLANT AND EQUIPMENT**At 1 July - fair value**

Gross Carrying Amount	29,659	28,586	29,659	28,586
Less: Accumulated depreciation and impairment	(18,266)	(18,019)	(18,266)	(18,019)
Net Carrying Amount at Fair Value	<u>11,393</u>	<u>10,567</u>	<u>11,393</u>	<u>10,567</u>

At 30 June - fair value

Gross Carrying Amount	31,165	29,659	31,165	29,659
Less: Accumulated depreciation and impairment	(20,151)	(18,266)	(20,151)	(18,266)
Net Carrying Amount at Fair Value	<u>11,014</u>	<u>11,393</u>	<u>11,014</u>	<u>11,393</u>

Reconciliation

A reconciliation of the carrying amounts of plant and equipment at the beginning and end of the current reporting period is set out below.

Net carrying amount at start of year	11,393	10,567	11,393	10,567
Additions	3,920	4,619	3,920	4,619
Disposals	(167)	(20)	(167)	(20)
Transfers	77	21	77	21
Depreciation expense	(4,209)	(3,794)	(4,209)	(3,794)
Net carrying amount at end of year	<u>11,014</u>	<u>11,393</u>	<u>11,014</u>	<u>11,393</u>

Refer Notes 1(h) & 2(c).

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Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

	Consolidated		Parent	
	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
10 INTANGIBLE ASSETS				
At 1 July - fair value				
Cost (gross carrying amount)	13,516	12,410	13,516	12,410
Less: Accumulated amortisation and impairment	(10,632)	(9,389)	(10,632)	(9,389)
Net Carrying Amount at Fair Value	2,884	3,021	2,884	3,021
At 30 June - fair value				
Cost (gross carrying amount)	13,716	13,516	13,716	13,516
Less: Accumulated amortisation and impairment	(11,246)	(10,632)	(11,246)	(10,632)
Net carrying amount at fair value	2,470	2,884	2,470	2,884
Reconciliation				
A reconciliation of the carrying amounts of intangible assets at the beginning and end of the current reporting period is set out below.				
Net carrying amount at start of year	2,884	3,021	2,884	3,021
Additions	876	1,180	876	1,180
Disposals	(4)	-	(4)	-
Transfers	(77)	(21)	(77)	(21)
Amortisation (recognised in "depreciation and amortisation")	(1,209)	(1,296)	(1,209)	(1,296)
Net carrying amount at end of year	2,470	2,884	2,470	2,884
Refer Notes 1(h) & 2(c).				
11 CURRENT LIABILITIES - PAYABLES				
Accrued salaries, wages and on-costs	2,937	2,311	-	-
Legal Aid Commission Staff Agency - accrued salaries, wages and on-costs	-	-	2,937	2,311
Creditors - Legal	939	792	939	792
Accrued Expenses	1,591	1,876	1,591	1,876
Accrual of estimated legal expenses ¹	9,519	9,002	9,519	9,002
Total	14,986	13,981	14,986	13,981
¹ Being accrual of the estimated net cost of work in progress by external legal practitioners who have not submitted claims to the Legal Aid Commission of NSW at the end of the reporting period. Refer to Notes 1(i)(ii) & 2(f).				
12 CURRENT / NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES - PROVISIONS				
Current				
Employee benefits and related on-costs				
Annual leave	6,734	7,326	-	-
Annual leave taken after 12 months	1,450	129	-	-
Long service leave	1,389	2,033	-	-
Long service leave taken after 12 months	12,497	11,537	-	-
Provision for related on-costs	4,692	4,515	-	-
Superannuation Liability (Refer Note 14)	34,588	29,592	-	-
Payable to the Legal Aid Commission Staff Agency - Superannuation	-	-	34,588	29,592
Legal Aid Commission Staff Agency - provision for personnel services	-	-	26,762	25,540
Total Current	61,350	55,132	61,350	55,132
Non-Current				
Employee benefits and related on-costs				
Long service leave	1,045	1,021	-	-
Provision for related on-costs	257	251	-	-
Legal Aid Commission Staff Agency - provision for personnel services	-	-	1,302	1,272
Total Non-Current	1,302	1,272	1,302	1,272

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

	Consolidated		Parent	
	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
Other Provisions				
Restoration costs	4,136	3,675	4,136	3,675
	4,136	3,675	4,136	3,675
Restoration costs refers to the present value of estimated cost of make good obligations (in accordance with AASB 137) that will arise when existing office accommodation leases expire. The provision is adjusted annually for unwinding and changes in discount rates. Any cost variations in make good expenses at the time of implementation will be recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income.				
Total Non-Current Provisions	5,438	4,947	5,438	4,947
Aggregate employee benefits and related on-costs				
Provisions - current	61,350	55,132	-	-
Provisions - non-current	1,302	1,272	-	-
Accrued salaries, wages and on-costs (Note 11)	2,937	2,311	-	-
	65,589	58,715	-	-
Movements in provisions (other than employee benefits)				
Restoration Provision				
Carrying amount at start of financial year	3,675	2,212	3,675	2,212
Additional provisions recognised	384	1,460	384	1,460
Amounts used	-	(64)	-	(64)
Unwinding / change in the discount rate	77	67	77	67
Carrying amount at end of financial year	4,136	3,675	4,136	3,675
13 NON-CURRENT LIABILITY - OTHER				
Lease incentive liability	182	268	182	268
Total Non Current Liability - Other	182	268	182	268

14 SUPERANNUATION FUND INFORMATION

The following information has been provided by the Scheme actuary:

	SASS 30-Jun-15	SANCS 30-Jun-15	SSS 30-Jun-15	TOTAL 30-Jun-15
Member Numbers				
Contributors	58	79	21	158
Deferred benefits	0	0	4	4
Pensioners	0	0	55	55
Pensions fully commuted	0	0	13	13
Superannuation Position for AASB 119 purposes	A\$	A\$	A\$	A\$
Accrued liability (Note 1)	26,299,167	5,321,762	95,738,616	127,359,545
Estimated reserve account balance	(27,947,635)	(6,716,724)	(58,107,330)	(92,771,689)
1. Deficit/(surplus)	(1,648,468)	(1,394,962)	37,631,286	34,587,856
2. Future Service Liability (Note 2)	4,707,631	1,764,556	1,896,574	8,368,761
3. Surplus in excess of recovery available from schemes (- 1. - 2. and subject to a minimum of zero)	0	0	0	0
4. Net (asset)/liability to be recognised in statement of financial position (1. + 3.)	(1,648,468)	(1,394,963)	27,631,286	34,587,856

Note 1:

The accrued liability includes a contribution tax provision. This is calculated based on grossing up the deficit less the allowance for past service expenses and insurable death and disability liabilities at a contribution tax rate of 15%.

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Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

Note 2:

The Future Service Liability (FSL) does not have to be recognised by an employer. It is only used to determine if an asset ceiling limit should be imposed (AASB 119 para 64). Under AASB 119, any prepaid superannuation asset recognised cannot exceed the present value of any economic benefits that may be available in the form of refunds from the plan or reductions in future contributions to the plan. Where the "surplus in excess of recovery" is zero, no asset ceiling limit is imposed. Note: this also includes a contribution tax provision).

Nature of the benefits provided by the fund

The Pooled Fund holds in trust the investments of the closed NSW public sector superannuation schemes:

- State Authorities Superannuation Scheme (SASS)
- State Superannuation Scheme (SSS)
- Police Superannuation Scheme (PSS)
- State Authorities Non-contributory Superannuation Scheme (SANCS).

These schemes are all defined benefit schemes – at least a component of the final benefit is derived from a multiple of member salary and years of membership. Members receive lump sum or pension benefits on retirement, death, disablement and withdrawal.

All the Schemes are closed to new members.

Description of the regulatory framework

The schemes in the Pooled Fund are established and governed by the following NSW legislation: *Superannuation Act 1916*, *State Authorities Superannuation Act 1987*, *Police Regulation (Superannuation) Act 1906*, *State Authorities Non-Contributory Superannuation Scheme Act 1987*, and their associated regulations.

The schemes in the Pooled Fund are exempt public sector superannuation schemes under the *Commonwealth Superannuation Industry (Supervision) Act 1993 (SIS)*. The SIS Legislation treats exempt public sector superannuation funds as complying funds for concessional taxation and superannuation guarantee purposes.

Under a Heads of Government agreement, the New South Wales Government undertakes to ensure that the Pooled Fund will conform with the principles of the Commonwealth's retirement incomes policy relating to preservation, vesting and reporting to members and that members' benefits are adequately protected.

The New South Wales Government prudentially monitors and audits the Pooled Fund and the Trustee Board activities in a manner consistent with the prudential controls of the SIS legislation. These provisions are in addition to other legislative obligations on the Trustee Board and internal processes that monitor the Trustee Board's adherence to the principles of the Commonwealth's retirement incomes policy.

An actuarial investigation of the Pooled Fund is performed every three years. The last actuarial investigation was performed as at 30 June 2012. The next actuarial investigation is due as at 30 June 2015 and is due to be released by the end of 2015.

Description of other entities' responsibilities for the governance of the fund

The Fund's Trustee is responsible for the governance of the Fund. The Trustee has a legal obligation to act solely in the best interests of fund beneficiaries. The Trustee has the following roles:

- Administration of the fund and payment to the beneficiaries from fund assets when required in accordance with the fund rules;
- Management and investment of the fund assets; and
- Compliance with other applicable regulations.

Description of risks

There are a number of risks to which the Fund exposes the Employer. The more significant risks relating to the defined benefits are:

- **Investment risk** - The risk that investment returns will be lower than assumed and the Employer will need to increase contributions to offset this shortfall.
- **Longevity risk** – The risk that pensioners live longer than assumed, increasing future pensions.
- **Pension indexation risk** – The risk that pensions will increase at a rate greater than assumed, increasing future pensions.
- **Salary growth risk** - The risk that wages or salaries (on which future benefit amounts for active members will be based) will rise more rapidly than assumed, increasing defined benefit amounts and thereby requiring additional employer contributions.
- **Legislative risk** - The risk is that legislative changes could be made which increase the cost of providing the defined benefits.

The defined benefit fund assets are invested with independent fund managers and have a diversified asset mix. The Fund has no significant concentration of investment risk or liquidity risk.

Description of significant events

There were no fund amendments, curtailments or settlements during the year.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

	SASS Financial Year to 30 June 2015 A\$	SANCS Financial Year to 30 June 2015 A\$	SSS Financial Year to 30 June 2015 A\$	Total Financial Year to 30 June 2015 A\$
Reconciliation of the Net Defined Benefit Liability/(Asset)				
Net Defined Benefit Liability/(Asset) at start of year	(494,070)	(728,735)	30,814,700	29,591,896
Current service cost	1,013,544	250,186	412,191	1,675,920
Net Interest on the net defined benefit liability/(asset)	(32,104)	(29,393)	1,091,602	1,030,104
Past service cost	0	0	0	0
(Gains)/losses arising from settlements	0	0	0	0
Actual return on Fund assets less Interest income	(2,067,353)	(482,444)	(4,247,355)	(6,797,151)
Actuarial (gains)/losses arising from changes in demographic assumptions	(25,166)	(2,211)	40,962	13,585
Actuarial (gains)/losses arising from changes in financial assumptions	589,828	207,334	8,395,604	9,192,765
Actuarial (gains)/losses arising from liability experience	177,277	(420,478)	1,598,831	1,355,630
Adjustment for effect of asset ceiling	0	0	0	0
Employer contributions	(810,423)	(189,221)	(475,249)	(1,474,893)
Net Defined Benefit Liability/(Asset) at end of year	(1,648,468)	(1,394,963)	37,631,286	34,587,856
Reconciliation of the Fair Value of Fund Assets				
Fair value of Fund assets at beginning of the year	26,757,391	6,172,979	53,891,691	86,822,061
Interest income	925,002	213,646	1,892,597	3,031,244
Actual return on Fund assets less Interest income	2,067,353	482,444	4,247,355	6,797,151
Employer contributions	810,423	189,221	475,249	1,474,893
Contributions by participants	407,592	0	308,880	716,472
Benefits paid	(2,875,262)	(447,006)	(2,865,147)	(6,187,415)
Taxes, premiums & expenses paid	(144,864)	105,441	156,706	117,283
Transfers in	0	0	0	0
Contributions to accumulation section	0	0	0	0
Settlements	0	0	0	0
Exchange rate changes	0	0	0	0
Fair value of Fund assets at end of the year	27,947,635	6,716,724	58,107,330	92,771,689
Reconciliation of the Defined Benefit Obligation				
Present value of defined benefit obligations at beginning of the year	26,263,321	5,444,244	84,706,391	116,413,957
Current service cost	1,013,544	250,186	412,191	1,675,920
Interest cost	892,897	184,252	2,984,198	4,061,348
Contributions by participants	407,592	0	308,880	716,472
Actuarial (gains)/losses arising from changes in demographic assumptions	(25,166)	(2,211)	40,962	13,585
Actuarial (gains)/losses arising from changes in financial assumptions	589,828	207,334	8,395,604	9,192,765
Actuarial (gains)/losses arising from liability experience	177,277	(420,478)	1,598,831	1,355,630
Benefits paid	(2,875,262)	(447,006)	(2,865,147)	(6,187,415)
Taxes, premiums & expenses paid	(144,864)	105,441	156,706	117,283
Transfers in	0	0	0	0
Contributions to accumulation section	0	0	0	0
Past service cost	0	0	0	0
Settlements	0	0	0	0
Exchange rate changes	0	0	0	0
Present value of defined benefit obligations at end of the year	26,299,167	5,321,762	95,738,616	127,359,545
Adjustment for effect of asset ceiling at beginning of the year	0	0	0	0
Change in the effect of asset ceiling	0	0	0	0
Adjustment for effect of asset ceiling at end of the year	0	0	0	0

The adjustment for the effect of asset ceiling has been determined based on the maximum economic benefit available to the entity in the form of reductions in future employer contributions.

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Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

Fair value of Fund assets

All Pooled Fund assets are invested by STC at arm's length through independent fund managers and assets are not separately invested for each entity. As such, the disclosures below relate to total assets of the Pooled Fund.

Asset category	Total (A\$'000)	Quoted prices in active markets for identical assets Level 1 (A\$'000)	Significant observable inputs Level 2 (A\$'000)	Unobservable inputs Level 3 (A\$'000)
Short Term Securities	2,641,516	95,603	2,545,913	-
Australian Fixed Interest	2,656,598	958	2,638,759	16,881
International Fixed Interest	1,003,849	(110)	1,003,959	-
Australian Equities	10,406,940	9,898,541	503,999	4,400
International Equities	13,111,481	9,963,287	2,585,150	563,044
Property	3,452,609	948,421	718,406	1,785,782
Alternatives	7,170,187	622,102	3,020,225	3,527,860
Total	40,443,180	21,528,802	13,016,411	5,897,967

The percentage invested in each asset class at the reporting date is:

As at	30-Jun-15
Short Term Securities	6.5%
Australian Fixed Interest	6.6%
International Fixed Interest	2.5%
Australian Equities	25.7%
International Equities	32.4%
Property	8.6%
Alternatives	17.7%
Total	100.0%

*Additional to the assets disclosed above, at 30 June 2015 Pooled Fund has provisions for receivables/(payables) estimated to be around \$1.74 billion, giving an estimated assets totalling around \$42.2 billion.

Level 1 - quoted prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities. The assets in this levels are listed shares; listed unit trusts.

Level 2 - inputs other than quoted prices observable for the asset or liability either directly or indirectly. The assets in this level are cash; notes; government, semi-government and corporate bonds; unlisted trusts containing where quoted prices are available in active markets for identical assets or liabilities.

Level 3 - inputs for the asset or liability that are not based on observable market data. The assets in this level are unlisted property; unlisted shares; unlisted infrastructure; distressed debt; hedge funds.

Derivatives, including futures and options, can be used by investment managers. However, each manager's investment mandate clearly states that derivatives may only be used to facilitate efficient cashflow management or to hedge the portfolio against market movements and cannot be used for speculative purposes or gearing of the investment portfolio. As such managers make limited use of derivatives.

Fair value of entity's own financial instruments

The disclosures below relate to total assets of the Pooled Fund.

The fair value of the Pooled Fund assets include as at 30 June 2015 of \$209.2 million in NSW government bonds. Of the direct properties owned by the Pooled Fund:

- GPNSW occupies part of a property owned by the Pooled Fund with a fair value of \$159 million (30 June 2014: \$153 million).
- NSW Ambulance occupies part of a property 50% owned by the Pooled Fund with a fair value of \$204 million (30 June 2014: \$205 million).

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

Significant Actuarial Assumptions at the Reporting Date

As at	30-Jun-15
Discount rate	3.03% pa
Salary increase rate (excluding promotional increases)	2.50% 2015/2016 to 2018/2019; 3.50% 2019/2020; 3.00% pa 2021/2022 to 2024/2025; 3.50% pa thereafter
Rate of CPI increase	2.50% 2015/2016; 2.75% 2016/2017 & 2017/2018; 2.50% pa thereafter
Pensioner mortality	The pensioner mortality assumptions are as per the 2012 Actuarial Investigation of the Pooled Fund. These assumptions are disclosed in the actuarial investigation report available from the trustee's website. The report shows the pension mortality rates for each age.

Sensitivity Analysis

The entity's total defined benefit obligation as at 30 June 2015 under several scenarios is presented below. The total defined benefit obligation disclosed is inclusive of the contribution tax provision which is calculated based on the asset level at 30 June 2015.

Scenarios A to F relate to sensitivity of the total defined benefit obligation to economic assumptions, and scenarios G and H relate to sensitivity to demographic assumptions.

	Base Case	Scenario A -1.0% discount rate	Scenario B -1.0% discount rate
Discount rate	3.03%	2.03%	4.03%
Rate of CPI increase	as above	as above	as above
Salary inflation rate	as above	as above	as above
Defined benefit obligation (A\$)	127,359,545	146,997,437	111,535,560
	Base Case	Scenario C +0.5% rate of CPI increase	Scenario D -0.5% rate of CPI increase
Discount rate	as above	as above	as above
Rate of CPI increase	as above	above rates plus 0.5% pa	above rates less 0.5% pa
Salary inflation rate	as above	as above	as above
Defined benefit obligation (A\$)	127,359,545	135,287,931	120,181,592
	Base Case	Scenario E +0.5% salary increase rate	Scenario F -0.5% salary increase rate
Discount rate	as above	as above	as above
Rate of CPI increase	as above	as above	as above
Salary inflation rate	as above	above rates plus 0.5% pa	above rates less 0.5% pa
Defined benefit obligation (A\$)	127,359,545	128,693,557	126,085,535
	Base Case	Scenario G +5% pensioner mortality rates	Scenario H -5% pensioner mortality rates
Defined benefit obligation (A\$)	127,359,545	126,188,295	128,601,583

The defined benefit obligation has been recalculated by changing the assumptions as outlined above, whilst retaining all other assumptions.

Asset-Liability matching strategies

The Trustee monitors its asset-liability risk continuously in setting its investment strategy. It also monitors cashflows to manage liquidity requirements. No explicit asset-liability matching strategy is used by the Trustee.

Funding arrangements

Funding arrangements are reviewed at least every three years following the release of the triennial actuarial review and was last reviewed following completion of the triennial review as at 30 June 2012. Contribution rates are set after discussions between the employer, STC and NSW Treasury.

The next triennial review as at 30 June 2015, the report is expected to be released by the end of 2015.

Funding positions are reviewed annually and funding arrangements may be adjusted as required after each annual review.

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Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

Surplus/deficit

The following is a summary of the 30 June 2015 financial position of the Fund calculated in accordance with AAS 25 "Financial Reporting by Superannuation Plans":

	SASS	SANCS	SSS	Total
	30-Jun-15	30-Jun-15	30-Jun-15	30-Jun-15
	A\$	A\$	A\$	A\$
Accrued benefits*	23,545,019	4,472,951	47,702,764	75,720,734
Net market value of Fund assets	(27,947,635)	(6,716,724)	(58,107,330)	(92,771,689)
<i>Net (surplus)/deficit</i>	(4,402,616)	(2,243,774)	(10,404,566)	(17,050,955)

*There is no allowance for a contribution tax provision within the Accrued Benefits figure for AAS 25. Allowance for contributions tax is made when setting the contribution rates.

Contribution recommendations

	SASS	SANCS	SSS
	multiple of member contributions	% member salary	multiple of member contributions
Recommended contribution rates for the entity are:	1.9	2.5	1.6

Economic assumptions

The economic assumptions adopted for the 30 June 2012 actuarial investigation of the Pooled Fund are:

Weighted-Average Assumptions

Expected rate of return on Fund assets backing current pension liabilities	8.3% pa
Expected rate of return on Fund assets backing other liabilities	7.3% pa
Expected salary increase rate	SASS, SANCS, SSS 2.7% pa (PSS 3.5% pa) to 30 June 2018, then 4.0% pa thereafter
Expected rate of CPI increase	2.5% pa

	SASS	SANCS	SSS	Total
	Financial Year to 30 June 2015	Financial Year to 30 June 2015	Financial Year to 30 June 2015	Financial Year to 30 June 2015
	A\$	A\$	A\$	A\$
Expected contributions				
Expected employer contributions	774,425	209,275	494,208	1,477,908

Maturity profile of defined benefit obligation

The weighted average duration of the defined benefit obligation is 13.7 years.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

	SASS	SANCS	SSS	Total
	Financial Year to 30 June 2015	Financial Year to 30 June 2015	Financial Year to 30 June 2015	Financial Year to 30 June 2015
	A\$	A\$	A\$	A\$
Profit and Loss Impact				
Current service cost	1,013,544	250,186	412,191	1,675,920
Net interest	(32,104)	(29,393)	1,091,602	1,030,104
Past service cost	0	0	0	0
(Gains)/Loss on settlement	0	0	0	0
Defined benefit cost	981,439	220,792	1,503,792	2,706,024
Other Comprehensive Income				
Actuarial (gains) losses on liabilities	741,939	(215,356)	10,035,397	10,561,981
Actual return on Fund assets less Interest income	(2,067,353)	(482,444)	(4,247,355)	(6,797,151)
Adjustment for effect of asset ceiling	0	0	0	0
Total remeasurement in Other Comprehensive Income	(1,325,414)	(697,799)	5,788,042	3,764,829

	Consolidated		Parent	
	2015	2014	2015	2014
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
15 COMMITMENTS FOR EXPENDITURE				
(a) Capital Commitments				
Aggregate capital expenditure contracted for at balance date and not provided for:				
Not later than one year	143	44	143	44
Total (including GST)	143	44	143	44
(b) Operating Lease Commitments				
Future non-cancellable operating lease rentals not provided for and payable:				
Not later than one year	11,179	10,387	11,179	10,387
Later than one year and not later than 5 years	16,687	18,765	16,687	18,765
Later than 5 years	950	-	950	-
Total (including GST)	28,816	29,152	28,816	29,152

The operating lease commitments above relate to the rental of office accommodation and motor vehicles. Lease periods generally range from 1 - 5 years with some office accommodation lease extending beyond 5 years. Rental accommodation is indexed by either CPI, market or fixed annual increments.

The total commitments in (a) & (b) above include input tax credits of \$2.63m (2013-14:\$2.65m) that are expected to be recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office.

16 CONTINGENT LIABILITIES AND CONTINGENT ASSETS

At the date of this report, there is no current litigation involving the Legal Aid Commission of NSW from which a contingent liability or contingent asset may arise (2013-2014: nil).

Financial statements

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

17 BUDGET REVIEW

Net Result

The Net Result is lower than budget by \$0.9m. This result is mainly due to Actuarial adjustments at year end.

Assets and Liabilities

Total Assets are \$5.7m higher than budget primarily due to a higher than budgeted cash balance along with an increase in fixed assets.

Total Liabilities are \$11.1m higher than budget, as a result of Actuarial adjustments to superannuation provisions.

Cash Flows

Net Cash Flows from Operating Activities were \$2.3m higher than budget.

The main reason for the variance was that salaries scheduled to be paid out in the original budget did not occur.

The budget for Other contains the expected revenue from the Public Purpose Fund due to NSW Treasury classification, however the actual amounts for these are contained in Grants and Contributions.

	Consolidated		Parent	
	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
18 RECONCILIATION OF CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES TO NET RESULT				
Reconciliation of cash flows from operating activities to the net result as reported in the Statement of Comprehensive Income				
Net cash generated/(used) on operating activities	3,069	7,838	3,069	7,838
Depreciation and amortisation	(5,418)	(5,090)	(5,418)	(5,090)
Decrease / (increase) in provisions	(6,709)	1,037	(6,709)	1,037
Decrease / (increase) in other liabilities	86	6	86	6
Decrease / (increase) in creditors	(1,005)	659	(1,005)	659
Actuarial (gains)/losses on superannuation	3,765	(2,632)	-	-
Increase / (decrease) in prepayments and other assets	1,477	237	1,477	237
Net Gain/(Loss) on disposal of plant and equipment	(171)	(11)	(171)	(11)
Net Gain/(Loss) on other - Lease make good	461	1,460	461	1,460
Net Result	(4,445)	3,504	(8,210)	6,136

19 TRUST FUNDS

The Legal Aid Commission of NSW administers, but does not control the funds in the following trust:

Legal Aid Commission Trust Account¹

	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
Cash balance at the beginning of the financial year	921	1,756
Add: Receipts	2,851	2,909
Less: Expenditure	(2,932)	(3,744)
Cash balance at the end of the financial year	840	921

As the Legal Aid Commission of NSW performs only a custodial role in respect of trust monies, and because the monies cannot be used for the achievement of its objectives; that is, the definition criteria for assets is not met, trust funds are not brought to account in the financial statements, but are shown in the notes for information purposes. Refer to Note 1(h)(xii).

¹Pursuant to Section 64A of the *Legal Aid Commission Act 1979*, a Legal Aid Commission Trust Account is maintained for verdict and settlement moneys held on behalf of legally aided persons represented by Commission in-house practitioners. The Legal Aid Commission of NSW may recover some costs upon finalisation of these matters.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

20 FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

The principal financial instruments of the Legal Aid Commission of NSW are outlined below. These financial instruments arise directly from the operations of the Legal Aid Commission of NSW or are required to finance the operations of the Legal Aid Commission of NSW. The Legal Aid Commission of NSW does not enter into or trade financial instruments, including derivative financial instruments, for speculative purposes.

The main risks arising from financial instruments for the Legal Aid Commission of NSW are outlined below, together with the objectives of the Legal Aid Commission of NSW, policies and processes for measuring and managing risk. Further quantitative and qualitative disclosures are included throughout the financial statements.

The Board and Audit and Risk Committee has overall responsibility for the establishment and oversight of risk management and reviews and agrees policies for managing each of these risks. Risk management policies are established to identify and analyse the risks faced by the Legal Aid Commission of NSW, to set risk limits and controls and to monitor risks. Compliance with policies is reviewed by the Internal Auditors on a continuous basis.

(a) Financial Instrument Categories

	Note	Category	Carrying Amount 2015 \$'000	Carrying Amount 2014 \$'000
Financial Assets				
Class:				
Cash & Cash equivalents	7	n/a	84,816	86,082
Receivables ¹	8	Receivables (at amortised cost)	4,692	3,445
Financial Liabilities				
Class:				
Payables ²	11	Financial Liabilities measured at amortised cost	13,624	12,710

¹Excludes statutory receivables and prepayments (i.e. not within scope of AASB 7)

²Excludes statutory payables and unearned revenue (i.e. not within scope of AASB 7)

(b) Credit Risk

Credit risk arises when there is the possibility of the debtors of the Legal Aid Commission of NSW defaulting on their contractual obligations, resulting in a financial loss to the Legal Aid Commission of NSW. The maximum exposure to credit risk is generally represented by the carrying amount of the financial assets (net of any allowance or impairment).

Credit risk arises from the financial assets of the Legal Aid Commission of NSW, including cash, receivables and authority deposits. The Legal Aid Commission of NSW has secured a portion of its receivables by way of caveat. The Legal Aid Commission of NSW has not granted any financial guarantees.

Credit risk associated with the financial assets of the Legal Aid Commission of NSW, other than receivables, is managed through the selection of counterparties and establishment of minimum credit rating standards. Authority deposits held with NSW TCorp are guaranteed by the State.

Cash

Cash comprises of the Legal Aid Commission of NSW funds that are held in the general operating bank account as well as fixed term deposits managed by TCorp. Interest is earned on the daily balances of the bank accounts. Refer Note 7. The average rate of interest earned on bank accounts was 3.01% (2013-2014: 3.37%)

Financial statements

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

Receivables

All receivables are recognised as amounts receivable at reporting date. Collectability of trade debts is reviewed on an ongoing basis. Procedures as established in the Treasurer's Directions are followed to recover outstanding amounts, including letters of demand. Debts which are known to be uncollectible are written off. An allowance for impairment is raised when there is objective evidence that the Legal Aid Commission of NSW will not be able to collect all amounts due. The credit risk is the carrying amount (net of any allowance for impairment). The carrying amount approximates fair value. Interest is charged on overdue trade debtors' accounts under section 71A of the *Legal Aid Commission Act 1979* as amended and applicable interest rates were as follows:

- Overdue debt (Section 71A of *Legal Aid Commission Act*)
 - 01/07/2014 - 31/12/2014 - 4.25%
 - 01/01/2015 - 30/06/2015 - 4.25%
- Local Court judgements (Section 101 of *Civil Procedure Act 2005*)
 - 01/07/2014 - 31/12/2014 - 8.50%
 - 01/01/2015 - 30/06/2015 - 8.50%
- Family Court judgements (Section 117B of *Family Law Act*)
 - 01/07/2014 - 31/12/2014 - 8.50%
 - 01/01/2015 - 30/06/2015 - 8.50%

Based on past experience, debtors that are not past due (2015:\$0.613m 2014: \$0.715m;) and not less than 1 month past due (2015: \$0.117m 2014: \$0.74m) are not considered impaired and together these represent 14.0% of the total debtors (2014: 19.19%).

The only financial assets that are past due or impaired are "Sales of Goods and Services" in the "Receivables" category of the Statement of Financial Position.

	Total \$'000	Past due but not impaired ^{1,2} \$'000	Considered impaired ^{1,2} \$'000
2015			
< 3 months overdue	269	159	110
3 months - 6 months overdue	-	-	-
> 6 months overdue	3,604	2,587	1,017
2014			
< 3 months overdue	142	95	47
3 months - 6 months overdue	69	3	66
> 6 months overdue	2,920	2,372	548

¹Each column in the table reports 'gross receivables'

²The ageing analysis excludes statutory receivables, as these are not within the scope of AASB7 and excludes receivables that are not past due and not impaired. Therefore, the 'total' will not necessarily reconcile to the receivables total recognised in the Statement of Financial Position.

Authority Deposits

During 2014/15 funds were deposited into various Financial Institutions' fixed term deposits approved by the Treasurer under the PAFA Act and managed by TCorp. The Institutions long term credit rating are AA-. The interest rates payable by the Institutions are fixed for the term of the deposit. The deposits at balance date were earning an average interest rate of 2.89% while over the year the weighted average interest rate was 3.01% on a weighted average balance of \$108.3m. None of these assets are past due or impaired.

(c) Liquidity risk

Liquidity risk is the risk that the Legal Aid Commission of NSW will be unable to meet its payment obligations when they fall due.

The exposure of the Legal Aid Commission of NSW to liquidity risk is deemed insignificant based on prior periods' data and current assessment of risk.

The liabilities are recognised for amounts due to be paid in the future for goods and services received, whether or not invoiced.

Amounts owing to suppliers (which are unsecured) are settled in accordance with the policy set out in NSW TC 11/12. If trade terms are not specified, payment is made within 14 days from the date of the receipt of the invoice. The Legal Aid Commission of NSW did not incur any penalty interest for late payment of claims.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

The table below summarises the maturity profile of the financial liabilities of the Legal Aid Commission of NSW, together with the interest rate exposure.

Maturity analysis and interest rate exposure of financial liabilities:	Consolidated		Parent	
	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
Payables:				
Weighted Average Effective Interest Rate	-	-	-	-
Nominal Amount ¹	13,624	12,710	13,624	12,710
Fixed Interest Rate	-	-	-	-
Variable Interest Rate	-	-	-	-
Non-interest bearing	-	-	-	-
Maturity Dates < 1 year	13,624	12,710	13,624	12,710
Maturity Dates 1-5 years	-	-	-	-
Maturity Dates > 5 years	-	-	-	-

¹The amounts disclosed are the contractual undiscounted cash flows of each class of financial liabilities and therefore will not reconcile to the Statement of Financial Position.

(d) Market risk

Market risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market prices. The exposure to market risk of the Legal Aid Commission of NSW is minimal. The Legal Aid Commission of NSW has no exposure to foreign currency risk and does not enter into commodity contracts.

The effect of profit and equity due to a reasonably possible change in risk variable is outlined in the information below, for interest rate risk. A reasonably possible change in risk variable has been determined after taking into account the economic environment in which the Legal Aid Commission of NSW operates and the time frame for the assessment (i.e. until the end of the next annual reporting period). The sensitivity analysis is based on risk exposures in existence at the reporting date. The analysis is performed on the same basis for 2014. The analysis assumes that all other variables remain constant.

Interest rate risk

The Legal Aid Commission of NSW does not account for any fixed rate financial instruments at fair value through profit or loss or as available-for-sale. Therefore, for these financial instruments, a change in interest rates would not affect profit or loss or equity. A reasonably possible change of +/- 1% is used, consistent with current trends in interest rates. The basis will be reviewed annually and amended where there is a structural change in the level of interest rate volatility. The exposure of the Legal Aid Commission of NSW to interest risk is set out below.

	Carrying Amount	-1% Profit	Equity	1% Profit	Equity
2015					
<i>Financial assets</i>					
Cash & cash equivalents	84,816	(848)	(848)	848	848
Receivables	4,692	(47)	(47)	47	47
<i>Financial liabilities</i>					
Payables	13,624	(136)	(136)	136	136
2014					
<i>Financial assets</i>					
Cash & cash equivalents	86,082	(861)	(861)	861	861
Receivables	3,445	(34)	(34)	34	34
<i>Financial liabilities</i>					
Payables	12,710	(127)	(127)	127	127

(e) Fair value measurement

Financial instruments are recognised at amortised cost, which approximate fair value because of their short-term nature.

21 EVENTS AFTER REPORTING PERIOD

No events have occurred subsequent to the reporting date, which will materially affect the financial statements.

END OF AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Legal Aid Commission Staff Agency

The Legal Aid Commission Staff Agency provides personnel services to the Legal Aid Commission (statutory corporation).

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Statement by Chief Executive Officer

LEGAL AID COMMISSION STAFF AGENCY

Statement by Chief Executive Officer

Pursuant to Section 41C(1B) of the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*, and in accordance with a resolution of the Board of the Legal Aid Commission of NSW, we declare on behalf of the Legal Aid Commission of NSW that in our opinion:

1. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*, *Public Finance and Audit Regulations 2015*, applicable Australian Accounting Standards (which include Australian Accounting Interpretations), and specific directions issued by the Treasurer.
2. The accompanying financial statements exhibit a true and fair view of the financial position of the Legal Aid Commission Staff Agency as at 30 June 2015 and transactions for the year then ended.
3. There are no circumstances that render any particulars included in the financial statements to be misleading or inaccurate.



Bill Grant
Chief Executive Officer



Clare Hamilton
Executive Director Finance

Independent Auditor's Report



INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

Legal Aid Commission Staff Agency

To Members of the New South Wales Parliament

I have audited the accompanying financial statements of the Legal Aid Commission Staff Agency (the Agency), which comprise the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2015, 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 significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

Opinion

In my opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Agency as at 30 June 2015, and of its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards
- are in accordance with section 41B of the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983* (PF&A Act) and the Public Finance and Audit Regulation 2015.

My opinion should be read in conjunction with the rest of this report.

The Chief Executive Officer's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for preparing financial statements that give a true and fair view in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and the PF&A Act, and for such internal control as the CEO determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that give a true and fair view and are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

My responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial statements based on my audit. I conducted my audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Those Standards require that I comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including an assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation of the financial statements that give a true and fair view in order to design audit procedures appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

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

My opinion does *not* provide assurance:

- about the future viability of the Agency
- that it carried out its activities effectively, efficiently and economically
- about the effectiveness of the internal control
- about the security and controls over the electronic publication of the audited financial statements on any website where they may be presented
- about other information which may have been hyperlinked to/from the financial statements.

Independence

In conducting my audit, I have complied with the independence requirements of the Australian Auditing Standards and other relevant ethical pronouncements. The PF&A Act further promotes independence by:

- providing that only Parliament, and not the executive government, can remove an Auditor-General
- mandating the Auditor-General as auditor of public sector agencies, but precluding the provision of non-audit services, thus ensuring the Auditor-General and the Audit Office of New South Wales are not compromised in their roles by the possibility of losing clients or income.



David Daniels
Director, Financial Audit Services

22 September 2015
SYDNEY

Financial statements

START OF AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Statement of comprehensive income for the year ended 30 June 2015

	Notes	Actual 2015 \$'000	Actual 2014 \$'000
Revenue			
Personnel Services	3	107,151	94,504
Total Revenue		107,151	94,504
Expenses			
Employee related	2(a)	103,121	96,949
Other operating expenses	2(b)	265	187
Total Expenses		103,386	97,136
Net result	9	3,765	(2,632)
Other comprehensive income			
Items that will not be reclassified to net result			
Superannuation actuarial gains/(losses)		(3,765)	2,632
Total other comprehensive income for the year		(3,765)	2,632
Total Comprehensive Income		0	0

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements

Statement of financial position as at 30 June 2015

	Notes	Actual 2015 \$'000	Actual 2014 \$'000
ASSETS			
Current Assets			
Receivables	5	64,287	57,443
Total Current Assets		64,287	57,443
Non Current Assets			
Receivables	5	1,302	1,272
Total Non-Current Assets		1,302	1,272
Total Assets		65,589	58,715
LIABILITIES			
Current Liabilities			
Payables	6	2,937	2,311
Provisions	7	61,350	55,132
Total Current Liabilities		64,287	57,443
Non Current Liabilities			
Provisions	7	1,302	1,272
Total Non Current Liabilities		1,302	1,272
Total Liabilities		65,589	58,715
Net Assets		0	0
EQUITY			
Accumulated funds		0	0

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements

Financial statements _____

Statement of changes in equity for the year ended 30 June 2015

	Notes	Accumulated Funds \$'000	Total \$'000
Balance at 1 July 2014		0	0
Net result for the Year		3,765	3,765
Other Comprehensive income:			
Superannuation actuarial gains/(losses)	8	(3,765)	(3,765)
Total other comprehensive income		(3,765)	(3,765)
Total comprehensive income for the year		0	0
Balance at 30 June 2015		0	0
Balance at 1 July 2013		0	0
Net result for the Year		(2,632)	(2,632)
Other Comprehensive Income:			
Superannuation actuarial gains/(losses)	8	2,632	2,632
Total other comprehensive income		2,632	2,632
Total comprehensive income for the year		0	0
Balance at 30 June 2014		0	0

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements

Statement of cash flows for the year ended 30 June 2015

	Notes	Actual 2015 \$'000	Actual 2014 \$'000
Cash Flows from Operating Activities			
Payments			
Employee Related		(96,247)	(99,295)
Total Payments		(96,247)	(99,295)
Receipts			
Legal Aid Commission - personnel services		96,247	99,295
Total Receipts		96,247	99,295
Net Cash Flows from Operating Activities	9	0	0
Net Increase/(Decrease) in Cash		0	0
Opening cash and cash equivalents		0	0
Closing Cash and Cash Equivalents		0	0

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements

Financial statements

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

1. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

(a) Reporting Entity

The Legal Aid Commission Staff Agency (the Agency) is a Division of the Government Service, established pursuant to the Government *Sector Employment Act 2013*. The Agency is a not-for-profit entity as profit is not its principal objective. It is consolidated as part of the Legal Aid Commission of New South Wales Accounts. It is domiciled in Australia and its principal office is at 323 Castlereagh Street, Haymarket, Sydney.

The Agency's objective is to provide personnel services to the Legal Aid Commission of New South Wales, the parent entity, at cost. The financial statements were authorised for issue by the Chief Executive Officer on 18 September 2015.

(b) Basis of Preparation

The Agency's financial statements are prepared in accordance with the requirements of applicable Australian Accounting Standards (which include Australian Accounting Interpretations), the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*, and *Public Finance and Audit Regulation 2015*, and specific directions issued by the Treasurer.

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention and the financial statements do not take into account changing money values or current valuations.

The accrual basis of accounting has been adopted in the preparation of the financial statements, except for cash flow information.

Judgements, key assumptions and estimates are disclosed in the relevant notes to the financial statements.

All amounts are rounded to the nearest one thousand dollars and are expressed in Australian currency.

(c) Statement of Compliance

The financial statements and notes comply with Australian Accounting Standards, which include Australian Accounting Interpretations.

(d) Revenue

Revenue is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable. Revenue from the rendering of personnel services is recognised when the service is provided and only to the extent that the associated recoverable expenses are recognised.

(e) Receivables

Receivables are non-derivative financial assets with fixed or determinable payments that are not quoted in the active market.

Receivables are recognised initially at fair value, usually based on transaction cost or face value. Subsequent measurement is at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less an allowance for any impairment of receivables. Any changes are recognised in the Net Result for the year when impaired, derecognised or through the amortisation process.

Short-term receivables with no stated interest rate are measured at the original invoice amount where the effect of discounting is immaterial.

An allowance for impairment is established where there is objective evidence that a receivable may not be collectable. The amount of any impairment loss is recognised in the Net Result for the year.

(f) Payables

These amounts represent liabilities for goods and services provided to the entity and other amounts. Payables are recognised initially at fair value, usually based on the transaction cost or face value. Subsequent measurement is at amortised cost using the effective interest method. Short-term payables with no stated interest rate are measured at the original invoice amount where the effect of discounting is immaterial.

(g) Employee Benefits and other Provisions

Salaries and wages, annual leave, sick leave and on-costs

Salaries and wages (including non-monetary benefits) and paid sick leave that are expected to be settled wholly within 12 months after the end of the period in which the employees render the service are recognised and measured at the undiscounted amounts of the benefits. Annual leave is not expected to be settled wholly before twelve months after the end of the annual reporting period in which the employees render the related service. As such, it is required to be measured at present value in accordance with AASB 119 Employee Benefits (although short-cut methods are permitted). Actuarial advice obtained by Treasury has confirmed that the use of a nominal approach plus the annual leave on annual leave liability (using 7.9% of the nominal value of annual leave) can be used to approximate the present value of the annual leave liability. The entity has assessed the actuarial advice based on the entity's circumstances and has determined that the effect of discounting is immaterial to annual leave.

Unused non-vesting sick leave does not give rise to a liability as it is not considered probable that sick leave taken in the future will be greater than the benefits accrued in the future.

The outstanding amounts of payroll tax, fringe benefits tax and workers' compensation insurance premiums which are consequential to employment are recognised as liabilities and expenses where the employee benefits to which they relate have been recognised.

Superannuation and leave liabilities are recognised as expenses and provisions when the obligations arise, which is usually through the rendering of service by employees.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

Long service leave is measured at present value in accordance with AASB 119 Employee Benefits using a shorthand measurement technique based on valuation factors provided by Mercer (Australia) Pty Ltd.

The Agency's superannuation position is calculated based on economic assumptions determined by the independent actuary, Pillar Administration, as advised by the SAS Trustee Corporation (STC). All Fund assets are invested by STC at arm's length through independent fund managers. Any variation between the Agency's gross superannuation liability and employer reserve account balance is recognised in the Statement of Financial Position as an unfunded liability or prepaid contribution. Refer Notes 2, 7 & 8.

(h) Comparative Information - General

Except when an Australian Accounting Standard permits or requires otherwise, comparative information is disclosed in respect of the previous period for all amounts reported in the financial statements.

(i) New Australian Accounting Standards issued but not effective

Effective for the first time in 2014-15

The accounting policies applied in 2014-15 are consistent with those of the previous financial year except as a result of the following new or revised Australian Accounting Standards that have been applied for the first time in 2014-2015.

- AASB 1055 Budgetary Reporting applies from 01 July 2014.
- AASB 10 Consolidated Financial Statements applies to the annual reporting periods of not-for-profit entities on or after 01 January 2014

It is considered that these Standard will have no direct impact on Legal Aid Commission of NSW.

Issued but not yet effective

Certain new accounting standards and interpretations have been published that are not mandatory for 30 June 2015 reporting periods. The following new Accounting Standards and Interpretations have not yet been adopted and are not yet effective:

- AASB 9 *Financial Instruments*
- AASB 2010-7
- AASB 2013-9 (Part C)
- AASB 2014-1 (Part E)
- AASB 2014-7 and AASB 2014-8 regarding financial instruments
- AASB 15 and AASB 2014-5 regarding Revenue from Contracts with Customers
- AASB 1056 Superannuation Entities
- AASB 2014-4 regarding acceptable methods of depreciation and amortisation
- AASB 2014-9 regarding equity method in separate financial statements
- AASB 2015-1 regarding annual improvements to Australian Accounting Standards 2012-2014 cycle
- AASB 2015-2 regarding amendments to AASB 101 disclosure initiatives
- AASB 2015-3 regarding materiality

It is considered that the impact of these new Standards and Interpretations in future periods will have no material impact on the financial statements of the Legal Aid Commission of NSW.

Financial statements

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

	2015	2014
	\$'000	\$'000
2 EXPENSES		
(a) Employee related expenses		
Salaries and wages (including recreation leave)	84,878	81,311
Superannuation - defined benefit plans*	2,706	2,790
Superannuation - defined contribution plans	7,107	6,338
Long service leave	2,256	1,018
Workers' compensation insurance	1,013	795
Payroll tax and fringe benefits tax	5,161	4,697
Total	103,121	96,949

The Agency does not employ staff that are directly involved in day-to-day servicing or maintenance. Audit fees of \$2,200 (2013-2014: \$2,200) are paid on the Agency's behalf by the Parent entity, the Legal Aid Commission of NSW.

* Refer Note 8. Superannuation actuarial loss of \$3.8m (2013-14: actuarial gains of \$2.6m) are recognised in the 'Statement of Changes in Equity'. Total superannuation loss, including actuarial loss recognised in the 'Statement of Comprehensive Income' is \$6.47m (2013-2014: \$0.16m loss).

(b) Other operating expenses

Other	265	187
	265	187

3 REVENUE

Rendering of services

Personnel services revenue	107,151	94,504
Total	107,151	94,504

The Agency provides personnel services to the Legal Aid Commission of NSW in terms of the *Government Sector Employment Act 2013* (GSE Act) at cost.

4 PROGRAMS / ACTIVITIES OF THE AGENCY

The Agency provides personnel services to the Legal Aid Commission of NSW so that the Commission may deliver legal services to eligible persons under Commonwealth law and State legislation and undertake community legal education and provide advice to the socially and economically disadvantaged

5 CURRENT / NON-CURRENT ASSETS - RECEIVABLES

Current

Legal Aid Commission of NSW- accrued salaries, wages and on-costs ¹	2,937	2,311
Legal Aid Commission of NSW- provision for employee benefits ¹	26,762	25,540
Receivable from the Legal Aid Commission of NSW - Superannuation liability	34,588	29,592
Total Current	64,287	57,443

Non- Current

Legal Aid Commission of NSW - provision for employee benefits ¹	1,302	1,272
Total Non-Current	1,302	1,272

¹ All expenses incurred by the Agency in providing personnel services to the Legal Aid Commission of NSW are recovered from the Commission as they are incurred at cost. Current and non-current employee benefits are measured in accordance with AASB 119 and include recreation leave, long service leave, superannuation and related on-costs. Refer Note 7

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

	2015	2014
	\$'000	\$'000
6 CURRENT LIABILITIES - PAYABLES		
Current		
Accrued salaries, wages and on-costs	2,937	2,311
Total Current	<u>2,937</u>	<u>2,311</u>
7 CURRENT / NON CURRENT LIABILITIES - PROVISIONS		
Current		
Employee benefits and related on-costs		
Annual leave	6,734	7,326
Annual leave taken after 12 months	1,450	129
Long service leave taken after 12 months	12,497	11,537
Long service leave	1,389	2,033
Provision for related on-costs	4,692	4,515
Superannuation Liability (Refer Note 8)	34,588	29,592
Total Current	<u>61,350</u>	<u>55,132</u>
Non-Current		
Employee benefits and related on-costs		
Long service leave	1,045	1,021
Provision for related on-costs	257	251
Total Non-Current	<u>1,302</u>	<u>1,272</u>
Aggregate employee benefits and related on-costs		
Provisions - current	61,350	55,132
Provisions - non-current	1,302	1,272
Accrued salaries, wages and on-costs (Note 6)	2,937	2,311
	<u>65,589</u>	<u>58,715</u>

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Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

8 SUPERANNUATION FUND INFORMATION

The following information has been provided by the Scheme actuary:

	SASS 30-Jun-15	SANCS 30-Jun-15	SSS 30-Jun-15	TOTAL 30-Jun-15
Member Numbers				
Contributors	58	79	21	158
Deferred benefits	0	0	4	4
Pensioners	0	0	55	55
Pensions fully commuted	0	0	13	13
Superannuation Position for AASB 119 purposes	A\$	A\$	A\$	A\$
Accrued liability (Note 1)	26,299,167	5,321,762	95,738,616	127,359,545
Estimated reserve account balance	<u>(27,947,635)</u>	<u>(6,716,724)</u>	<u>(58,107,330)</u>	<u>(92,771,689)</u>
1. Deficit/(surplus)	(1,648,468)	(1,394,962)	37,631,286	34,587,856
2. Future Service Liability (Note 2)	<u>4,707,631</u>	<u>1,764,556</u>	<u>1,896,574</u>	<u>8,368,761</u>
3. Surplus in excess of recovery available from schemes (- 1. - 2. and subject to a minimum of zero)	0	0	0	0
4. Net (asset)/liability to be recognised in statement of financial position (1. + 3.)	<u>(1,648,468)</u>	<u>(1,394,963)</u>	<u>27,631,286</u>	<u>34,587,856</u>

Note 1:

The accrued liability includes a contribution tax provision. This is calculated based on grossing up the deficit less the allowance for past service expenses and insurable death and disability liabilities at a contribution tax rate of 15%.

Note 2:

The Future Service Liability (FSL) does not have to be recognised by an employer. It is only used to determine if an asset ceiling limit should be imposed (AASB 119 para 64). Under AASB 119, any prepaid superannuation asset recognised cannot exceed the present value of any economic benefits that may be available in the form of refunds from the plan or reductions in future contributions to the plan. Where the "surplus in excess of recovery" is zero, no asset ceiling limit is imposed. Note: this also includes a contribution tax provision).

Nature of the benefits provided by the fund

The Pooled Fund holds in trust the investments of the closed NSW public sector superannuation schemes:

- State Authorities Superannuation Scheme (SASS)
- State Superannuation Scheme (SSS)
- Police Superannuation Scheme (PSS)
- State Authorities Non-contributory Superannuation Scheme (SANCS).

These schemes are all defined benefit schemes – at least a component of the final benefit is derived from a multiple of member salary and years of membership. Members receive lump sum or pension benefits on retirement, death, disablement and withdrawal.

All the Schemes are closed to new members.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

Description of the regulatory framework

The schemes in the Pooled Fund are established and governed by the following NSW legislation: *Superannuation Act 1916*, *State Authorities Superannuation Act 1987*, *Police Regulation (Superannuation) Act 1906*, *State Authorities Non-Contributory Superannuation Scheme Act 1987*, and their associated regulations.

The schemes in the Pooled Fund are exempt public sector superannuation schemes under the *Commonwealth Superannuation Industry (Supervision) Act 1993* (SIS). The SIS Legislation treats exempt public sector superannuation funds as complying funds for concessional taxation and superannuation guarantee purposes.

Under a Heads of Government agreement, the New South Wales Government undertakes to ensure that the Pooled Fund will conform with the principles of the Commonwealth's retirement incomes policy relating to preservation, vesting and reporting to members and that members' benefits are adequately protected.

The New South Wales Government prudentially monitors and audits the Pooled Fund and the Trustee Board activities in a manner consistent with the prudential controls of the SIS legislation. These provisions are in addition to other legislative obligations on the Trustee Board and internal processes that monitor the Trustee Board's adherence to the principles of the Commonwealth's retirement incomes policy.

An actuarial investigation of the Pooled Fund is performed every three years. The last actuarial investigation was performed as at 30 June 2012. The next actuarial investigation is due as at 30 June 2015 and is due to be released by the end of 2015.

Description of other entities' responsibilities for the governance of the fund

The Fund's Trustee is responsible for the governance of the Fund. The Trustee has a legal obligation to act solely in the best interests of fund beneficiaries. The Trustee has the following roles:

- Administration of the fund and payment to the beneficiaries from fund assets when required in accordance with the fund rules;
- Management and investment of the fund assets; and
- Compliance with other applicable regulations.

Description of risks

There are a number of risks to which the Fund exposes the Employer. The more significant risks relating to the defined benefits are:

- **Investment risk** - The risk that investment returns will be lower than assumed and the Employer will need to increase contributions to offset this shortfall.
- **Longevity risk** - The risk that pensioners live longer than assumed, increasing future pensions.
- **Pension indexation risk** - The risk that pensions will increase at a rate greater than assumed, increasing future pensions.
- **Salary growth risk** - The risk that wages or salaries (on which future benefit amounts for active members will be based) will rise more rapidly than assumed, increasing defined benefit amounts and thereby requiring additional employer contributions.
- **Legislative risk** - The risk is that legislative changes could be made which increase the cost of providing the defined benefits.

The defined benefit fund assets are invested with independent fund managers and have a diversified asset mix. The Fund has no significant concentration of investment risk or liquidity risk.

Description of significant events

There were no fund amendments, curtailments or settlements during the year.

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Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

Reconciliation of the Net Defined Benefit Liability/(Asset)

	SASS Financial Year to 30 June 2015 A\$	SANCS Financial Year to 30 June 2015 A\$	SSS Financial Year to 30 June 2015 A\$	Total Financial Year to 30 June 2015 A\$
Net Defined Benefit Liability/(Asset) at start of year	(494,070)	(728,735)	30,814,700	29,591,896
Current service cost	1,013,544	250,186	412,191	1,675,920
Net Interest on the net defined benefit liability/(asset)	(32,104)	(29,393)	1,091,602	1,030,104
Past service cost	0	0	0	0
(Gains)/losses arising from settlements	0	0	0	0
Actual return on Fund assets less Interest income	(2,067,353)	(482,444)	(4,247,355)	(6,797,151)
Actuarial (gains)/losses arising from changes in demographic assumptions	(25,166)	(2,211)	40,962	13,585
Actuarial (gains)/losses arising from changes in financial assumptions	589,828	207,334	8,395,604	9,192,765
Actuarial (gains)/losses arising from liability experience	177,277	(420,478)	1,598,831	1,355,630
Adjustment for effect of asset ceiling	0	0	0	0
Employer contributions	(810,423)	(189,221)	(475,249)	(1,474,893)
Net Defined Benefit Liability/(Asset) at end of year	<u>(1,648,468)</u>	<u>(1,394,963)</u>	<u>37,631,286</u>	<u>34,587,856</u>

Reconciliation of the Fair Value of Fund Assets

Fair value of Fund assets at beginning of the year	26,757,391	6,172,979	53,891,691	86,822,061
Interest income	925,002	213,646	1,892,597	3,031,244
Actual return on Fund assets less Interest income	2,067,353	482,444	4,247,355	6,797,151
Employer contributions	810,423	189,221	475,249	1,474,893
Contributions by participants	407,592	0	308,880	716,472
Benefits paid	(2,875,262)	(447,006)	(2,865,147)	(6,187,415)
Taxes, premiums & expenses paid	(144,864)	105,441	156,706	117,283
Transfers in	0	0	0	0
Contributions to accumulation section	0	0	0	0
Settlements	0	0	0	0
Exchange rate changes	0	0	0	0
Fair value of Fund assets at end of the year	<u>27,947,635</u>	<u>6,716,724</u>	<u>58,107,330</u>	<u>92,771,689</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

Reconciliation of the Defined Benefit Obligation

	SASS	SANCS	SSS	Total
	Financial Year to 30 June 2015	Financial Year to 30 June 2015	Financial Year to 30 June 2015	Financial Year to 30 June 2015
	A\$	A\$	A\$	A\$
Present value of defined benefit obligations at beginning of the year	26,263,321	5,444,244	84,706,391	116,413,957
Current service cost	1,013,544	250,186	412,191	1,675,920
Interest cost	892,897	184,252	2,984,198	4,061,348
Contributions by participants	407,592	0	308,880	716,472
Actuarial (gains)/losses arising from changes in demographic assumptions	(25,166)	(2,211)	40,962	13,585
Actuarial (gains)/losses arising from changes in financial assumptions	589,828	207,334	8,395,604	9,192,765
Actuarial (gains)/losses arising from liability experience	177,277	(420,478)	1,598,831	1,355,630
Benefits paid	(2,875,262)	(447,006)	(2,865,147)	(6,187,415)
Taxes, premiums & expenses paid	(144,864)	105,441	156,706	117,283
Transfers in	0	0	0	0
Contributions to accumulation section	0	0	0	0
Past service cost	0	0	0	0
Settlements	0	0	0	0
Exchange rate changes	0	0	0	0
Present value of defined benefit obligations at end of the year	<u>26,299,167</u>	<u>5,321,762</u>	<u>95,738,616</u>	<u>127,359,545</u>

Reconciliation of the effect of the Asset Ceiling

Adjustment for effect of asset ceiling at beginning of the year	0	0	0	0
Change in the effect of asset ceiling	0	0	0	0
Adjustment for effect of asset ceiling at end of the year	0	0	0	0

The adjustment for the effect of asset ceiling has been determined based on the maximum economic benefit available to the entity in the form of reductions in future employer contributions.

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Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

Fair value of Fund assets

All Pooled Fund assets are invested by STC at arm's length through independent fund managers and assets are not separately invested for each entity. As such, the disclosures below relate to total assets of the Pooled Fund.

Asset category	Total (A\$'000)	Quoted prices in active markets for identical assets Level 1 A\$'000	Significant observable inputs Level 2 A\$'000	Unobservable inputs Level 3 A\$'000
Short Term Securities	2,641,516	95,603	2,545,913	-
Australian Fixed Interest	2,656,598	958	2,638,759	16,881
International Fixed Interest	1,003,849	(110)	1,003,959	-
Australian Equities	10,406,940	9,898,541	503,999	4,400
International Equities	13,111,481	9,963,287	2,585,150	563,044
Property	3,452,609	948,421	718,406	1,785,782
Alternatives	7,170,187	622,102	3,020,225	3,527,860
Total	40,443,180	21,528,802	13,016,411	5,897,967

The percentage invested in each asset class at the reporting date is:

As at	30-Jun-15
Short Term Securities	6.5%
Australian Fixed Interest	6.6%
International Fixed Interest	2.5%
Australian Equities	25.7%
International Equities	32.4%
Property	8.6%
Alternatives	17.7%
Total	100.0%

*Additional to the assets disclosed above, at 30 June 2015 Pooled Fund has provisions for receivables/(payables) estimated to be around \$1.74 billion, giving an estimated assets totalling around \$42.2 billion.

Level 1 - quoted prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities. The assets in this levels are listed shares; listed unit trusts.

Level 2 - inputs other than quoted prices observable for the asset or liability either directly or indirectly. The assets in this level are cash; notes; government, semi-government and corporate bonds; unlisted trusts containing where quoted prices are available in active markets for identical assets or liabilities.

Level 3 - inputs for the asset or liability that are not based on observable market data. The assets in this level are unlisted property; unlisted shares; unlisted infrastructure; distressed debt; hedge funds.

Derivatives, including futures and options, can be used by investment managers. However, each manager's investment mandate clearly states that derivatives may only be used to facilitate efficient cash flow management or to hedge the portfolio against market movements and cannot be used for speculative purposes or gearing of the investment portfolio. As such managers make limited use of derivatives.

Fair value of entity's own financial instruments

The disclosures below relate to total assets of the Pooled Fund.

The fair value of the Pooled Fund assets include as at 30 June 2015 of \$209.2 million in NSW government bonds.

Of the direct properties owned by the Pooled Fund:

- GPNSW occupies part of a property owned by the Pooled Fund with a fair value of \$159 million (30 June 2014: \$153 million).
- NSW Ambulance occupies part of a property 50% owned by the Pooled Fund with a fair value of \$204 million (30 June 2014: \$205 million).

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

Significant Actuarial Assumptions at the Reporting Date

As at	30-Jun-15
Discount rate	3.03% pa
Salary increase rate (excluding promotional increases)	2.50% 2015/2016 to 2018/2019; 3.50% 2019/2020; 3.00% pa 2021/2022 to 2024/2025; 3.50% pa thereafter
Rate of CPI increase	2.50% 2015/2016; 2.75% 2016/2017 & 2017/2018; 2.50% pa thereafter
Pensioner mortality	The pensioner mortality assumptions are as per the 2012 Actuarial Investigation of the Pooled Fund. These assumptions are disclosed in the actuarial investigation report available from the trustee's website. The report shows the pension mortality rates for each age.

Sensitivity Analysis

The entity's total defined benefit obligation as at 30 June 2015 under several scenarios is presented below. The total defined benefit obligation disclosed is inclusive of the contribution tax provision which is calculated based on the asset level at 30 June 2015.

Scenarios A to F relate to sensitivity of the total defined benefit obligation to economic assumptions, and scenarios G and H relate to sensitivity to demographic assumptions.

	Base Case	Scenario A -1.0% discount rate	Scenario B +1.0% discount rate
Discount rate	3.03%	2.03%	4.03%
Rate of CPI increase	as above	as above	as above
Salary inflation rate	as above	as above	as above
Defined benefit obligation (A\$)	127,359,545	146,997,437	111,535,560

	Base Case	Scenario C +0.5% rate of CPI increase	Scenario D -0.5% rate of CPI increase
Discount rate	as above	as above	as above
Rate of CPI increase	as above	above rates plus 0.5% pa	above rates less 0.5% pa
Salary inflation rate	as above	as above	as above
Defined benefit obligation (A\$)	127,359,545	135,287,931	120,181,592

	Base Case	Scenario E +0.5% salary increase rate	Scenario F -0.5% salary increase rate
Discount rate	as above	as above	as above
Rate of CPI increase	as above	as above	as above
Salary inflation rate	as above	above rates plus 0.5% pa	above rates less 0.5% pa
Defined benefit obligation (A\$)	127,359,545	128,693,557	126,085,535

	Base Case	Scenario G +5% pensioner mortality rates	Scenario H -5% pensioner mortality rates
Defined benefit obligation (A\$)	127,359,545	126,188,295	128,601,583

The defined benefit obligation has been recalculated by changing the assumptions as outlined above, whilst retaining all other assumptions

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Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

Asset-Liability matching strategies

The Trustee monitors its asset-liability risk continuously in setting its investment strategy. It also monitors cash flows to manage liquidity requirements. No explicit asset-liability matching strategy is used by the Trustee.

Funding arrangements

Funding arrangements are reviewed at least every three years following the release of the triennial actuarial review and was last reviewed following completion of the triennial review as at 30 June 2012. Contribution rates are set after discussions between the employer, STC and NSW Treasury.

The next triennial review as at 30 June 2015, the report is expected to be released by the end of 2015.

Funding positions are reviewed annually and funding arrangements may be adjusted as required after each annual review.

Surplus/deficit

The following is a summary of the 30 June 2015 financial position of the Fund calculated in accordance with AAS 25 "Financial Reporting by Superannuation Plans":

	SASS	SANCS	SSS	Total
	30-Jun-15	30-Jun-15	30-Jun-15	30-Jun-15
	A\$	A\$	A\$	A\$
Accrued benefits	23,545,019	4,472,951	47,702,764	75,720,734
Net market value of Fund assets	(27,947,635)	(6,716,724)	(58,107,330)	(92,771,689)
<i>Net (surplus)/deficit</i>	(4,402,616)	(2,243,774)	(10,404,566)	(17,050,955)

*There is no allowance for a contribution tax provision within the Accrued Benefits figure for AAS 25. Allowance for contributions tax is made when setting the contribution rates.

Contribution recommendations

Recommended contribution rates for the entity are:

	SASS	SANCS	SSS
	multiple of member contributions	% member salary	multiple of member contributions
	1.9	2.5	1.6

Economic assumptions

The economic assumptions adopted for the 30 June 2012 actuarial investigation of the Pooled Fund are:

Weighted-Average Assumptions

Expected rate of return on Fund assets backing current pension liabilities	8.3% pa
Expected rate of return on Fund assets backing other liabilities	7.3% pa
Expected salary increase rate	SASS, SANCS, SSS 2.7% pa (PSS 3.5% pa) to 30 June 2018, then 4.0% pa thereafter
Expected rate of CPI increase	2.5% pa

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

Expected contributions

	SASS Financial Year to 30 June 2015 A\$	SANCS Financial Year to 30 June 2015 A\$	SSS Financial Year to 30 June 2015 A\$	Total Financial Year to 30 June 2015 A\$
Expected employer contributions	774,425	209,275	494,208	1,477,908

Maturity profile of defined benefit obligation

The weighted average duration of the defined benefit obligation is 13.7 years.

Profit and Loss Impact

Current service cost	1,013,544	250,186	412,191	1,675,920
Net interest	(32,104)	(29,393)	1,091,602	1,030,104
Past service cost	0	0	0	0
(Gains)/Loss on settlement	0	0	0	0
Defined benefit cost	981,439	220,792	1,503,792	2,706,024

Other Comprehensive Income

Actuarial (gains) losses on liabilities	741,939	(215,356)	10,035,397	10,561,981
Actual return on Fund assets less Interest income	(2,067,353)	(482,444)	(4,247,355)	(6,797,151)
Adjustment for effect of asset ceiling	0	0	0	0
Total remeasurement in Other Comprehensive Income	(1,325,414)	(697,799)	5,788,042	3,764,829

9 RECONCILIATION OF CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES TO THE NET RESULT

Reconciliation of cash flows from operating activities to the net result as reported in the Statement of Comprehensive Income:	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
Net cash from operating activities	-	-
(Increase) / decrease in provisions	(2,483)	(132)
(Increase) /decrease in creditors	(626)	(154)
(Decrease) /increase in prepayments and other assets	6,874	(2,346)
Net Result	3,765	(2,632)

10 CONTINGENT LIABILITIES AND CONTINGENT ASSETS

The Agency has no contingent liabilities or assets at 30 June 2015 (2013-2014: nil).

11 COMMITMENTS FOR EXPENDITURE

The Agency did not have any expenditure commitments in 2014-15 (2013-2014: nil).

12 FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

The Agency's principal financial instruments are outlined below. These financial instruments arise directly from the Agency's operations or are required to finance the Agency's operations. The Agency does not enter into or trade financial instruments, including derivative financial instruments, for speculative purposes.

Financial statements

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

(a) Financial Instrument Categories	Note	Category	Carrying Amount 2015 \$'000	Carrying Amount 2014 \$'000
Financial Assets				
Class:				
Receivables ¹	5	Receivables (at amortised cost)	2,937	2,311
Financial Liabilities				
Class:				
Payables ²	6	Financial Liabilities	2,937	2,311

¹ Excludes statutory receivables and prepayments (i.e.. not within scope of AASB 7)

² Excludes statutory payables and unearned revenue (i.e.. not within scope of AASB7)

(b) Credit Risk

Credit risk arises when there is the possibility of the Agency's debtors defaulting on their contractual obligations, resulting in a financial loss to the Agency. The maximum exposure to credit risk is generally represented by the carrying amount of the financial assets (net of any allowance or impairment)

(c) Liquidity risk

Liquidity risk is the risk that the Agency will be unable to meet its payment obligations when they fall due. The Agency's exposure to liquidity risk is deemed insignificant based on prior periods' data and current assessment of risk.

The liabilities are recognised for amounts due to be paid in the future for goods and services received, whether or not invoiced. Amounts owing to suppliers (which are unsecured) are settled in accordance with the policy set out in Treasurer's Direction 219.01. If trade terms are not specified, payment is made within 14 days from the date of the receipt of the invoice. The Agency did not incur any penalty interest for late payment of claims.

The table below summarises the maturity profile of the Agency's financial liabilities, together with the interest rate exposure.

Maturity analysis and interest rate exposure of financial liabilities:	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
Payables:		
Weighted Average Effective Interest Rate	-	-
Nominal Amount ¹	2,937	2,311
Fixed Interest Rate	-	-
Variable Interest Rate	-	-
Non-interest bearing	-	-
Maturity Dates < 1 year	2,937	2,311
Maturity Dates 1-5 years	-	-
Maturity Dates > 5 years	-	-

¹The amounts disclosed are the contractual undiscounted cash flows of each class of financial liabilities and therefore will not reconcile to the 'Statement of Financial Position'.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2015

(d) Market risk

Market risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market prices. The Agency's exposure to market risk is minimal. The Agency has no exposure to foreign currency risk and does not enter into commodity contracts.

Interest rate risk

The Agency does not account for any fixed rate financial instruments at fair value through profit or loss or as available-for-sale. Therefore, for these financial instruments, a change in interest rates would not affect profit or loss or equity. A reasonably possible change of +/- 1% is used, consistent with current trends in interest rates. The basis will be reviewed annually and amended where there is a structural change in the level of interest rate volatility. The Agency's exposure to interest rate risk is set out below.

	\$'000	-1%	Equity	1%	Equity
	Carrying Amount	Profit		Profit	
2015					
Financial assets/Receivables	2,937	(29)	(29)	29	29
Financial liabilities /Payables	2,937	(29)	(29)	29	29
2014					
Financial assets/Receivables	2,311	(23)	(23)	23	23
Financial liabilities/Payables	2,311	(23)	(23)	23	23

(e) Fair value measurement

Financial instruments are recognised at amortised cost, which approximate fair value because of their short-term nature.

13 AFTER BALANCE DATE EVENTS

No events have occurred subsequent to the reporting date, which will materially affect the financial statements.

END OF AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Other information

1 Payment Performance

(a) Payment to Creditors

Legal Aid NSW processed 98.88 of invoices received within 30 days during 2014-2015 compared to 98.90 in 2013-2014.

Period	2014-2015		2013-2014	
	Invoices	%	Invoices	%
Within 30 days	131,266	98.88%	130,451	98.90%
Over 30 days	1,487	1.12%	1,455	1.10%
Total	132,753	100%	131,906	100%

Accounts paid within 30 days by quarter is as follows:

Accounts Paid within 30 days by quarter	Target %	Achieved %	Amount paid within 30 days \$000	Total Amount Paid \$000
September	100.00	98.80%	45,492	46,045
December	100.00	96.95%	38,185	39,388
March	100.00	98.96%	42,707	43,156
June	100.00	98.68%	40,133	40,669

(b) Ageing of Creditors

Aged Creditors analysis at end of each quarter is as follows:

Quarter	\$'000 Current	\$'000 < 30 Days	\$'000 31 - 60 Days	\$'000 61 - 90 Days	\$'000 > 90 Days
September	820	3	19	0	0
December	730	1	10	0	0
March	1,060	8	297	0	0
June	942	3	0	0	0

2 Annual reporting legislation requirements

The *Legal Aid Commission Act 1979* prescribes the method by which Legal Aid NSW is to administer its finances. The Act provides for the establishment of a Legal Aid Fund for legal and administrative payments, and the maintenance of a separate account for monies received for and on behalf of legally assisted persons represented by private lawyers and those represented by Legal Aid NSW lawyers.

Overseas visits

There were no overseas visits made by staff during the year.

Consultancies

Consultancies equal to or more than \$50,000

Legal Aid NSW engaged one consultant, whose individual cost was greater than \$50,000 during 2014-2015. The total cost of this consultant was \$50,200.

Consultancies less than \$50,000

Legal Aid NSW engaged 12 consultants, whose individual cost was less than \$50,000 during 2014-2015.

The total cost of these consultancies was \$165,100.

Charitable and Deductible Gift Recipient Institution

Legal Aid NSW is a Charitable Institution and a Deductible Gift Recipient institution under the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*. Gifts to Legal Aid NSW of monies or property with a value of \$2, or more, may be claimed by the donor as a tax deduction.

Unclaimed Monies

Pursuant to Section 14 of the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*, all unclaimed monies are forwarded to the Treasury for credit to the Consolidated Fund and are available for refund from that account. No unclaimed amounts have been held in the accounts of Legal Aid NSW.

Risk Management

Legal Aid NSW maintains insurance policies for motor vehicles, workers compensation, miscellaneous property and public liability with the NSW Treasury Managed Fund. The 2014-2015 deposit premium for workers compensation was \$575,392. This is a decrease of nine per cent from the 2013-2014 premium which was \$633,257. The 2014-2015 deposit premium for motor vehicles decreased by 6.3 per cent to \$39,039 (2013-2014 \$41,650).

Motor Vehicle Claims

The number of motor vehicle claims in 2014-2015 was 17 (15 in 2013-2014) which incurred a net cost of \$48,659 (\$28,537 in 2013-2014). The average number of vehicles in the Legal Aid NSW fleet in 2014-2015 was 69 (59 in 2013-2014) which results in an average claim cost per vehicle of \$705 compared to \$484 in 2013-2014.

Workers compensation

Fourteen workers compensation claims were lodged in 2014-2015. Ten of these were accepted, one was withdrawn, two were declined and one remained under investigation as at 30 June 2015.

The cost incurred to 30 June 2015 of new claims reported was \$88,860 compared to \$53,593 last year, an increase of \$35,267 or 65.8 per cent.

The number of accepted claims (includes claims accepted under provisional liability) increased from nine in 2013-2014 to 10 in this reporting period.

Of the accepted claims in this reporting period, there were four fall/slip and three body stress (e.g. Repetitive Strain Injury) claims amounting to \$52,966 or 59.6 per cent of the total cost of claims.

Five claims for psychological injury (e.g. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Anxiety Disorders and Depression) were lodged, up from two last year. Of these five, one was accepted, one withdrawn, two declined and one remained under investigation as at 30 June 2015. Costs incurred by these psychological claims amounted to \$32,857 or 37 per cent of the total cost of claims for the year.

The number of full time equivalent (FTE) (on average) staff for this financial year is 945.85, an increase of 41.94 FTE from 903.91 in 2013-2014. This equates to an average claim cost of \$93.95 per staff member compared to \$59.29 in 2013-2014, \$153.41 in 2012-2013 and \$404.54 in 2011-2012.

Investment Performance

Legal Aid NSW is authorised under section 65 of the *Legal Aid Commission Act 1979* to invest funds that are not immediately required. The avenues of investment are restricted to any securities approved by the Treasurer on the recommendation of the Minister. Legal Aid NSW provides for its daily expenditure needs via an on-call bank account. Legal Aid NSW's current banker is the Westpac Banking Corporation. The average yield obtained from this account was 3.01% (3.35% in 2013-2014).

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Appendix 1 Human resources information

Central Sydney/Regional

FTE Staff as at 30 June 2015

Central Sydney	523.28
Regional Offices	422.57
Total Staff FTE	945.85

Effective Full-time FTE Staff as at 30 June 2015

CEO/SES	6
Legal Officers	483.61
Legal Admin Support Staff	456.24
Total staff FTE	945.85

Number of actual staff by employment type

	2012–2013	2013–2014	2014–2015
Ongoing Full Time	586	585	675
Ongoing Part-time	161	165	184
Temporary Full Time	161	191	132
Temporary Part-time	41	44	42
Contract SES	5	4	6
Non – SES	0	0	0
Casual	5	5	7
Other	0	0	0
Total	959	994	1,046

Number of actual staff by type of work

	Central Sydney	Regional	Total
Lawyers	244	289	533
Administrative	323	190	513
Total	567	479	1,046

Number of executive roles

Band	Range (\$)	Average remuneration		2014		2015	
		2014	2015	Female	Male	Female	Male
Band 4 (Secretary)	\$430,451 - \$497,300	N/A	N/A	0	0	0	0
Band 3 (Chief Executive Officer)	\$305,401 - \$430,450	\$336,850	\$343,183	0	1	0	1
Band 2 (Executive Director)	\$242,801 - \$305,400	\$259,820	\$270,000	0	1	0	1
Band 1 (Director)	\$170,250 - \$242,800	\$177,179	\$194,064	6	3	6	3
Total				6	5	6	5

Notes:

2.52% of the Legal Aid NSW employee related expenditure in 2014-2015 was related to senior executives, compared with 2.26% in 2013-2014.

Public Service Commission Circular 2014-09 requires that all Senior Officers and Senior Executive Service Officers that are still to transition to the Public Sector Executive bands are to be included in the equivalent band. Legal Aid NSW has five Senior Officers still to transition.

Appendices

Appendix 2 Workforce diversity groups

Number of actual staff in different workforce diversity groups

	2012–2013	2013–2014	2014–2015
Men	257	263	277
Women	702	731	769
Aboriginal people	41	45	48
People from racial, ethnic, ethno–religious minority groups	153	157	165
People whose first language is not English	61	65	80
People with a disability	37	35	36
People with a disability requiring a work-related adjustment	19	14	16
Total	959	994	1,046

Parliamentary annual report tables

Table 1: Trends in the representation of workforce diversity groups

WORKFORCE DIVERSITY GROUP	Benchmark or target (%)	% Total staff		
		2013	2014	2015
Women	50	73.3	74.0	73.5
Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders	2.6	5.0	5.7	4.6
People whose first language spoken as a child was not English	19.0	6.3	6.3	7.6
People with a disability	N/A	5.7	5.1	3.4
People with a disability requiring a work-related adjustment	1.5	2.0	1.7	1.5

Table 2: Trends in the distribution of workforce diversity groups

WORKFORCE DIVERSITY GROUP	Benchmark or target	Distribution index		
		2013	2014	2015
Women	100	88	89	90
Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders	100	81	86	86
People whose first language spoken as a child was not English	100	94	96	95
People with a disability	100	102	102	104
People with a disability requiring a work-related adjustment	100	100	N/A	N/A

Notes:

Staff numbers as at 30 June 2015.

Excludes casual staff.

A Distribution Index of 100 indicates that the centre of the distribution of the EEO groups across salary levels is equivalent to that of other staff. Values less than 100 mean that the EEO group tends to be more concentrated at lower salary levels than is the case for other staff. The more pronounced this tendency is, the lower the index will be. In some cases the index may be more than 100, indicating that the EEO group is less concentrated at lower salary levels.

The Distribution Index is not calculated where Workforce Diverse group or non-Workforce Diverse group numbers are less than 20.

Appendix 3 Learning and development

	Legal Aid NSW staff	Private lawyers	Other (including not-for-profit)	Total
Legal Aid NSW conferences				
Civil Law Conferences	278	14	59	351
Criminal Law Conferences	323	181	35	539
Family Law Conferences	414	282	483	1,179
Total	1,015	477	577	2,069
Legal Aid NSW seminars				
Generic CPD*				
Face-to-face	38	29	10	77
Online	107	23	31	161
Civil Law CPD				
Face-to-face	315	1	12	328
Online	90	14	14	118
Criminal Law CPD				
Face-to-face	202	141	32	375
Online	152	91	25	268
Family Law CPD				
Face-to-face	107	67	86	260
Online	33	12	9	54
Total	1,044	378	219	1,641
Legal Aid NSW training sessions				
Business Skills				
Face-to-face	1,385	2	41	1,428
Online	498	1	11	510
Customer Service				
Face-to-face	153	2	17	172
Online	9	0	0	9
Health and Wellbeing				
Face-to-face	157	3	12	172
Online	109	1	0	110
Leadership and Management				
Face-to-face	147	0	28	175
Online	2	0	0	2
Team and Culture				
Face-to-face	86	17	10	113
Online	71	1	8	80
Total	2,617	27	127	2,771
Lawyers attending Legal Aid NSW conferences seminars and training				
Legal Aid NSW lawyers				3,118
Private lawyers				882
Total conferences, seminars and training (face-to-face and online)				
		Seminars and conferences (face-to-face)		3,109
		Training sessions (face-to-face)		2,060
		Online seminars and training		1,312
		TOTAL		6,481

*CPD Continuing Professional Development

Appendices

Appendix 4 Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program funding¹

As part of the program, we provided funding to 28 Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services (WDVCASs).

WDVCAS	Service Provider	Total Payments (\$)
Blue Mountains	Blue Mountains Women's Health and Resource Centre Inc	199,899
Burwood	Burwood Community Welfare Services Inc	252,426
Central Coast	Central Coast Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service Inc	334,092
Central West	Housing Plus	433,188 ²
Far South Coast	Southern Women's Group Inc	200,706
Far West	Far West Community Legal Centre Inc	263,540 ³
Hunter	Hunter Women's Domestic Violence Court Service Inc	415,014
Hunter Valley	Carrie's Place Domestic Violence and Homelessness Services Inc	281,236
Illawarra	Wollongong Women's Information Service Inc	326,176
Macarthur	Macarthur Legal Centre	751,183 ⁴
Macquarie	Macquarie Legal Centre Inc	365,065 ⁵
Mid-North Coast	Mid-Coast Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Inc	250,372
New England	Tamworth Family Support Services Inc	208,562
North Coast	Warrina Women and Children's Refuge Co-operative Society Ltd	348,276
North West	Inverell Refuge Centre	185,866
North West Sydney	Hawkesbury Nepean Community Legal Centre	314,220
Northern Rivers	Northern Rivers Community Legal Centre	461,139 ⁶
Northern Sydney	CatholicCare Broken Bay	293,544
Riverina	Linking Communities Network Ltd	187,402
South Coast	YWCA NSW	206,014
South Eastern	Molonglo Women's and Children's Services	193,964
South West Sydney	South West Sydney Legal Centre Inc	524,882 ⁷
Southern	Women's Centre for Health and Wellbeing (Albury-Wodonga) Inc	181,584
Southern Sydney	Sutherland Shire Family Services Inc	400,774
Sydney	Redfern Legal Centre Inc	737,695 ⁸
Wagga Wagga	Wagga Wagga Family Support Services Inc	599,537 ⁹
Western	Dubbo Emergency Accommodation Project Inc	334,257
Western Sydney	Penrith Women's Health Centre Inc	359,104
WDVCAS NSW Chairperson	Macarthur Legal Centre	6,000
Aboriginal Specialist Worker Network Chairperson	Hawkesbury Nepean Community Legal Centre	6,000
CALD Specialist Worker Network Chairperson	Wollongong Women's Information Service Inc	6,000
WDVCAS NSW	Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service NSW Inc (peak representative body for WDVCASs)	156,654 ¹⁰
TOTAL		\$9,784,371

Notes:

- Amounts in this table exclude GST but include indexation. They also include the \$214,000 provided by NSW Treasury and \$27,000 provided by Department of Justice to assist WDVCASs with the cost of wage increases associated with the Social and Community Services (SACS) Modern Award Equal Remuneration Order (ERO).
- In 2014-2015, Central West WDVCAS received \$235,040 for Local Coordination Point implementation as part of the NSW Government *It Stops Here: Safer Pathway* reforms. This funding is provided by the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS).
- In 2014-2015, Far West WDVCAS received \$63,351 for Local Coordination Point implementation as part of the NSW Government *It Stops Here: Safer Pathway* reforms.
- In 2014-2015, Macarthur WDVCAS received \$465,139 for case management and case tracking. This funding is provided by the Department of Justice.
- In 2014-2015, Macquarie WDVCAS received \$59,768 for Local Coordination Point implementation as part of the NSW Government *It Stops Here: Safer Pathway* reforms.
- In 2014-2015, Northern Rivers WDVCAS received \$96,520 for Local Coordination Point implementation as part of the NSW Government *It Stops Here: Safer Pathway* reforms.
- In 2014-2015, South West Sydney WDVCAS received \$124,017 for Local Coordination Point implementation as part of the NSW Government *It Stops Here: Safer Pathway* reforms.
- In 2014-2015, Sydney WDVCAS received \$288,204 for Local Coordination Point implementation as part of the NSW Government *It Stops Here: Safer Pathway* reforms.
- In 2014-2015, Wagga Wagga WDVCAS received \$374,087 for case management and case tracking. This funding is provided by the Department of Justice.
- In 2014-2015, WDVCAS NSW Inc. received a one-off grant of \$60,000 to undertake a joint research project with Legal Aid NSW.

Appendix 5 Community Legal Centres Program Funding

Community Legal Centre	Commonwealth Funding (\$)	State Funding (\$)	Public Purpose Fund Funding (\$)	Total Payments (\$)	Additional Care Partner Payments (\$)
Australian Centre for Disability Law	220,579	42,679	79,747	343,006	0
Central Coast Community Legal Centre	426,998	39,069	161,105	627,172	42,750
Community Legal Centres NSW	81,000	305,012	82,500	468,512	0
Court Support Scheme	36,247	8,273	4,192	48,712	0
Domestic Violence Advocacy Service	0	477,623	0	477,623	0
Elizabeth Evatt Community Legal Centre	178,682	194,290	89,518	462,489	28,500
Environmental Defender's Office	0	208,797	0	208,797	0
Far West Community Legal Centre	468,396	0	61,507	529,902	28,500
Financial Rights Legal Centre	434,841	143,636	0	578,476	0
Hawkesbury/Nepean Community Legal Centre	213,004	139,511	127,018	479,532	28,500
HIV/AIDS Legal Centre	96,733	93,456	123,012	313,201	0
Hume Riverina Community Legal Service	0	0	69,077	69,077	28,500
Hunter Community Legal Centre	597,373	278,620	0	875,993	57,000
Illawarra Legal Centre	466,500	234,276	79,424	780,200	42,750
Immigration Advice & Rights Centre	107,210	264,728	0	371,938	0
Inner City Legal Centre	171,195	176,467	65,782	413,444	28,500
Intellectual Disability Rights Service	0	0	94,625	94,625	57,000
Kingsford Legal Centre	283,450	141,915	0	425,365	0
Macarthur Legal Centre	302,478	231,184	79,424	613,086	57,000
Macquarie Legal Centre	448,940	360,312	167,696	976,948	57,000
Marrickville Legal Centre	305,277	314,102	0	619,378	28,500
Mid North Coast Community Legal Centre	329,445	209,041	0	538,486	57,000
Mt Druitt & Area Community Legal Centre	271,617	19,154	0	290,771	28,500
North & North West Community Legal Service	278,319	19,253	94,625	392,197	28,500
Northern Rivers Community Legal Centre	484,253	55,066	132,125	671,444	42,750
Public Interest Advocacy Centre	0	133,944	0	133,944	0
Redfern Legal Centre	222,843	274,138	0	496,980	28,500
Refugee Advice & Casework Service	0	80,000	94,625	174,625	0
Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre	426,374	246,825	37,500	710,699	28,500
South West Sydney Community Legal Centre	433,637	258,717	0	692,353	28,500
Tenants' Union of NSW	81,541	133,623	0	215,165	0
The Aged Rights Service	163,910	58,620	160,223	382,754	0
Welfare Rights Centre	352,123	134,879	0	487,002	0
Western NSW Community Legal Centre	364,238	55,376	94,625	514,240	57,000
Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre	0	512,212	94,625	606,838	42,750
Women's Legal Services NSW	755,042	353,752	0	1,108,794	57,000
Grants for interpreter services	0	51,742	0	51,742	0
TOTAL ALLOCATION	9,002,244	6,250,290	1,992,978	17,245,512	883,500

Notes:

- From 1 January 2015, Legal Aid NSW entered into Care Partner Service Agreements with 22 Community Legal Centres. State Government funding was provided for the provision of early intervention care and protection legal services under the 'Safe Home for Life' reforms. An additional \$19,876 was also provided to enable CLCs to attend Care Partner training. A \$5,000 payment was also made to the Intellectual Disability Rights Service for the development of an online training resource concerning 'Working with Parents with an Intellectual Disability in Care Proceedings'.
- The Commonwealth payments to Illawarra Legal Centre have been reduced by \$36,815 to recognise payment for a sub-contracting arrangement that the Centre has with the Early Intervention Unit of Legal Aid NSW to provide legal services at Wollongong Family Relationship Centre.
- The Commonwealth funding for The Aged Rights Service includes \$50,000 project grant provided by Legal Aid NSW under the Legal Aid NSW/CLC Partnerships Program. Other funding provided by Legal Aid NSW from its Commonwealth allocation is included above for CLCNSW.
- The Commonwealth funding excludes one off direct grants paid and administered by the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department.
- The Commonwealth funding for Women's Legal Services NSW no longer includes funding for the Indigenous Women's Legal Program as this is now administered by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.
- The PPF grants exclude grants to the Environmental Defender's Office and Public Interest Advocacy Centre which are administered directly by the PPF.

Appendices

Appendix 6 Legal practice operational statistics

LEGAL AID NSW TOTALS	2012-2013	2013-2014	% change from previous year	2014-2015	% change from previous year
Case Matters					
Applications Received	46,759	44,715	-4.4%	44,205	-1.1%
Applications Refused	9,150	9,280	1.4%	8,839	-4.8%
Inhouse Grants	12,613	11,138	-11.7%	11,231	0.8%
Assigned Grants	25,387	24,634	-3.0%	24,106	-2.1%
Total Case Grants	38,000	35,772	-5.9%	35,337	-1.2%
Grant Rate	80.6%	79.4%	-1.5%	80.0%	0.7%
Applications Determined	47,150	45,052	-4.4%	44,176	-1.9%
Applications Undetermined at year end	1,205	1,011	-16.1%	1,116	10.4%
Grants Finalised	43,111	24,006	-44.3%	54,717	127.9%
Current Grants on Hand at year end	52,724	64,749	22.8%	39,321	-39.3%
Duty Services					
Inhouse Duty Services	107,352	111,132	3.5%	110,974	-0.1%
Assigned Duty Services	64,836	60,633	-6.5%	63,588	4.9%
Total Duty Services	172,188	171,765	-0.2%	174,562	1.6%
Other Services					
Advice	92,854	98,939	6.6%	96,410	-2.6%
Minor assistance	35,865	41,790	16.5%	53,986	29.2%
Information	633,743	654,958	3.3%	564,958	-13.7%
Total Other Services	762,462	795,687	4.4%	715,354	-10.1%
Total Client Services	972,650	1,003,224	3.1%	925,253	-7.8%

CRIMINAL LAW TOTALS

Case Matters					
Applications Received	27,012	25,432	-5.8%	24,782	-2.6%
Applications Refused	3,518	4,184	18.9%	3,954	-5.5%
Inhouse Grants	9,228	8,194	-11.2%	7,730	-5.7%
Assigned Grants	14,666	13,015	-11.3%	13,019	0.0%
Total Case Grants	23,894	21,209	-11.2%	20,749	-2.2%
Grant Rate	87.2%	83.5%	-4.2%	84.0%	0.6%
Applications Determined	27,412	25,393	-7.4%	24,703	-2.7%
Applications Undetermined at year end	314	384	22.3%	502	30.7%
Grants Finalised	24,759	16,207	-34.5%	30,578	88.7%
Current Grants on Hand at year end	24,108	29,275	21.4%	15,812	-46.0%
Duty Services					
Inhouse Duty Services	97,356	101,343	4.1%	102,001	0.6%
Assigned Duty Services	52,177	47,332	-9.3%	48,124	1.7%
Total Duty Services	149,533	148,675	-0.6%	150,125	1.0%
Other Services					
Advice	29,789	28,408	-4.6%	27,080	-4.7%
Minor assistance	4,817	4,246	-11.9%	4,569	7.6%
Information	296,655	317,938	7.2%	262,063	-17.6%
Total Other Services	331,261	350,592	5.8%	293,712	-16.2%
Total Client Services	504,688	520,476	3.1%	464,586	-10.7%

FAMILY LAW TOTALS	2012-2013	2013-2014	% change from previous year	2014-2015	% change from previous year
Case Matters					
Applications Received	17,381	17,251	-0.7%	17,295	0.3%
Applications Refused	4,595	4,209	-8.4%	4,072	-3.3%
Inhouse Grants	2,594	2,219	-14.5%	2,798	26.1%
Assigned Grants	10,134	11,101	9.5%	10,469	-5.7%
Total Case Grants	12,728	13,320	4.7%	13,267	-0.4%
Grant Rate	73.5%	76.0%	3.4%	76.5%	0.7%
Applications Determined	17,323	17,529	1.2%	17,339	-1.1%
Applications Undetermined at year end	762	582	-23.6%	572	-1.7%
Grants Finalised	16,704	6,711	-59.8%	21,546	221.1%
Current Grants on Hand at year end	25,344	32,034	26.4%	21,524	-32.8%
Duty Services					
Inhouse Duty Services	7,253	7,096	-2.2%	6,652	-6.3%
Assigned Duty Services	1,966	2,268	15.4%	2,772	22.2%
Total Duty Services	9,219	9,364	1.6%	9,424	0.6%
Other Services					
Advice	30,138	30,133	0.0%	28,253	-6.2%
Minor assistance	14,761	16,927	14.7%	20,981	23.9%
Information	146,259	141,814	-3.0%	128,360	-9.5%
Total Other Services	191,158	188,874	-1.2%	177,594	-6.0%
Total Client Services	213,105	211,558	-0.7%	200,285	-5.3%

CIVIL LAW TOTALS

Case Matters					
Applications Received	2,366	2,032	-14.1%	2,128	4.7%
Applications Refused	1,037	887	-14.5%	813	-8.3%
Inhouse Grants	790	725	-8.3%	703	-3.0%
Assigned Grants	588	518	-11.9%	618	19.3%
Total Case Grants¹	1,378	1,243	-9.8%	1,321	6.3%
Grant Rate	57.1%	58.4%	2.3%	61.9%	6.1%
Applications Determined	2,415	2,130	-11.8%	2,134	0.2%
Applications Undetermined at year end	129	45	-65.1%	42	-6.7%
Grants Finalised	1,648	1,088	-34.0%	2,593	138.3%
Current Grants on Hand at year end	3,272	3,440	5.1%	1,985	-42.3%
Duty Services					
Inhouse Duty Services	2,743	2,693	-1.8%	2,321	-13.8%
Assigned Duty Services	10,693	11,033	3.2%	12,692	15.0%
Total Duty Services	13,436	13,726	2.2%	15,013	9.4%
Other Services					
Advice	32,927	40,398	22.7%	41,077	1.7%
Minor assistance	16,287	20,617	26.6%	28,436	37.9%
Information	190,829	195,206	2.3%	174,535	-10.6%
Total Other Services	240,043	256,221	6.7%	244,048	-4.8%
Total Client Services	254,857	271,190	6.4%	260,382	-4.0%

Appendices

Appendix 6 Legal practice operational statistics

Commonwealth and State allocation of Legal Aid Services

	State Matter	State Matter %	Commonwealth Matter	Commonwealth Matter %	Total
Family Law					
Grants	4,693	35.4%	8,574	64.6%	13,267
Duty Appearances	3,943	41.8%	5,481	58.2%	9,424
Advice	2,382	8.4%	25,871	91.6%	28,253
Minor assistance	1,764	8.4%	19,217	91.6%	20,981
Information Services	15,901	12.4%	112,459	87.6%	128,360
Total	28,683	14.3%	171,602	85.7%	200,285
Criminal Law					
Grants	20,422	98.4%	327	1.6%	20,749
Duty Services	148,000	98.6%	2,125	1.4%	150,125
Advice	26,587	98.2%	493	1.8%	27,080
Minor assistance	4,461	97.6%	108	2.4%	4,569
Information Services	245,714	93.8%	16,349	6.2%	262,063
Total	445,184	95.8%	19,402	4.2%	464,586
Civil Law					
Grants	1,056	79.9%	265	20.1%	1,321
Duty Services	15,013	100.0%	-	0.0%	15,013
Advice	26,629	64.8%	14,448	35.2%	41,077
Minor assistance	18,019	63.4%	10,417	36.6%	28,436
Information Services	132,672	76.0%	41,863	24.0%	174,535
Total	193,389	74.3%	66,993	25.7%	260,382
Legal Aid NSW Total					
Grants	26,171	74.1%	9,166	25.9%	35,337
Duty Services	166,956	95.6%	7,606	4.4%	174,562
Advice	55,598	57.7%	40,812	42.3%	96,410
Minor assistance	24,244	44.9%	29,742	55.1%	53,986
Information Services	394,287	69.8%	170,671	30.2%	564,958
Total	667,256	72.1%	257,997	27.9%	925,253

Family dispute resolution – family law

	2012–2013	2013–2014	% change from previous year	2014–2015	% change from previous year
Number of conferences	2,665	2,726	2.3%	2,676	-1.8%
Agreements reached	2,134	2,173	1.8%	2,137	-1.7%
Agreement rate	80.1%	79.7%	-0.5%	79.9%	0.2%

Inhouse and private lawyer allocations of legal work

	Inhouse lawyer	Inhouse lawyer %	Private lawyer	Private lawyer %	Total
Family Law					
Duty Services	6,652	70.6%	2,772	29.4%	9,424
Grants of Legal Aid	2,798	21.1%	10,469	78.9%	13,267
Total	9,450	41.6%	13,241	58.4%	22,691
Criminal Law					
Duty Services	102,001	67.9%	48,124	32.1%	150,125
Grants of Legal Aid	7,730	37.3%	13,019	62.7%	20,749
Total	109,731	64.2%	61,143	35.8%	170,874
Civil Law					
Duty Services	2,321	15.5%	12,692	84.5%	15,013
Grants of Legal Aid	703	53.2%	618	46.8%	1,321
Total	3,024	18.5%	13,310	81.5%	16,334
Legal Aid NSW Total					
Duty Services	110,974	63.6%	63,588	36.4%	174,562
Grants of Legal Aid	11,231	31.8%	24,106	68.2%	35,337
Total	122,205	58.2%	87,694	41.8%	209,899

Community legal education*

	2012–2013	2013–2014	% change from previous year	2014–2015	% change from previous year
Criminal Law	755	785	4.0%	913	16.3%
Family Law	774	1,084	40.1%	843	-22.2%
Civil Law	986	1,291	30.9%	1,219	-5.6%
Total	2,515	3,160	25.6%	2,975	-5.9%

Note:

*The tables at pages 136-138 do not include these services.

Appendices

Appendix 7 Law reform submissions

In 2014-2015, Legal Aid NSW made 25 law reform submissions to a range of government and non-government bodies about issues that impact upon our clients and our organisation.

Criminal law submissions

- Amendment to Local Court Practice Note 1 (Chief Magistrate's Office) October 2014, May 2015
- NSW Police Force proposal to amend section 306M of the *Criminal Procedure Act 1986* (NSW) (NSW Department of Justice) April 2015
- Sentencing of child sexual assault offenders (NSW Department of Justice) March 2015
- The family response to the murders in Bowraville (NSW Parliament) February 2015
- Review of offences applying to fatalities involving motor vehicles on private land (NSW Law Reform Commission) February 2015
- Provisions to allow a replacement judicial officer in criminal jury trials (NSW Department of Justice) January 2015
- Sentencing of child sexual assault offenders (NSW Parliament) January 2015
- Additional show cause offences (NSW Sentencing Council) October 2014

Civil law submissions

- Review of Police Oversight in NSW (NSW Department of Justice) June 2015
- Workplace Relations Framework Public Inquiry (Productivity Commission) March 2015
- *Tribunals Amalgamation Bill 2014* (NSW) (Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee) February 2015
- Social Housing in NSW: A discussion paper for input and comment (NSW Department of Family and Community Services) February 2015
- Statutory Review of the *Coroners Act 2009* (NSW) (NSW Department of Justice) December 2014
- Time limits on loans payable on demand (NSW Attorney General) September 2014
- Financial System Inquiry Interim Report (Financial System Inquiry) August 2014

Family law submissions

- Families with complex needs and the intersection of the family law and child protection systems (Family Law Council) April 2015
- Children's Representation Principles 4th Edition (Law Society of NSW) October 2014
- Contributed to National Legal Aid submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the Child Support Program (Commonwealth Parliament) June 2015.

General law submissions

- Technology facilitated abuse in domestic and family violence (NSW Department of Justice) June 2015
- Issues Paper: Experiences of Police and Prosecution Responses (Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse) June 2015
- Inquiry into Access to legal assistance services (Commonwealth Parliament) May 2015
- Legal Profession Uniform General Rules 2014 (Legal Services Council) January 2015
- Aboriginal Women Leaving Custody (Report for Housing NSW) January 2015
- Equality, Capacity and Disability in Commonwealth Laws (Australian Law Reform Commission) July 2014
- Dispute resolution: frameworks in NSW (NSW Law Reform Commission) July 2014

Appendix 8 Right to Information

Obligations under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*

1. Review of proactive release program – Clause 7(a)

Under Section 7 of the GIPA Act, agencies must review their programs for the release of government information to identify the kinds of information that can be made publicly available. This review must be undertaken at least once every 12 months. Our agency's program for the proactive release of information involves providing information on the Legal Aid NSW website. During the reporting period, we uploaded additional documents to the site and will continue to update the site regularly.

2. Number of access applications received – Clause 7(b)

During the reporting period, our agency received a total of 15 formal access applications (including withdrawn applications but not invalid applications).

3. Number of refused applications for Schedule 1 information – Clause 7(c)

During the reporting period, our agency refused a total of 2 formal access applications (either wholly or partly) because the information requested was information referred to in Schedule 1 to the GIPA Act.

4. Statistical information about access applications – Clause 7(d) and Schedule 2

TABLE A: Number of applications by type of applicant and outcome*

Applicant Type	Access granted in full	Access granted in part	Access refused in full	Information not held	Information already available	Refuse to deal with application	Refuse to confirm/deny whether information is held	Application withdrawn
Media	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Members of Parliament	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Private sector business	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not for profit organisations or community groups	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Members of the public (by legal representative)	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Members of the public (other)	6	1	1	0	1	0	0	0

*More than one decision can be made in respect of a particular access application. If so, a recording must be made in relation to each such decision. This also applies to Table B.

TABLE B: Number of applications by type of application and outcome

Application Type	Access granted in full	Access granted in part	Access refused in full	Information not held	Information already available	Refuse to deal with application	Refuse to confirm/deny whether information is held	Application withdrawn
Personal information applications*	5	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Access applications (other than personal information applications)	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0
Access applications that are partly personal information applications and partly other	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

*A personal information application is an access application for personal information (as defined in clause 4 of Schedule 4 to the Act) about the applicant (the applicant being an individual).

TABLE C: Invalid applications

Reason for invalidity	No of applications
Application does not comply with formal requirements (section 41 of the Act)	3
Application is for excluded information of the agency (section 43 of the Act)	0
Application contravenes restraint order (section 110 of the Act)	0
Total number of invalid applications received	3
Invalid applications that subsequently became valid applications	0

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TABLE D: Conclusive presumption of overriding public interest against disclosure: matters listed in Schedule 1 to the Act

	Number of times consideration used*
Overriding secrecy laws	0
Cabinet information	0
Executive Council information	0
Contempt	0
Legal professional privilege	2
Excluded information	0
Documents affecting law enforcement and public safety	0
Transport safety	0
Adoption	0
Care and protection of children	0
Ministerial code of conduct	0
Aboriginal and environmental heritage	0

*More than one public interest consideration may apply in relation to a particular access application and, if so, each such consideration is to be recorded (but only once per application). This also applies in relation to Table E.

TABLE E: Other public interest considerations against disclosure: matters listed in table in section 14 of the Act

	Number of occasions when application not successful
Responsible and effective government	0
Law enforcement and security	0
Individual rights, judicial processes and natural justice	1
Business interests of agencies and other persons	0
Environment, culture, economy and general matters	0
Secrecy provisions	2
Exempt documents under interstate Freedom of Information legislation	0

TABLE F: Timeliness

	Number of applications
Decided within the statutory timeframe (20 days plus any extensions)	14
Decided after 35 days (by agreement with applicant)	0
Not decided within time (deemed refusal)	0
Total	14

TABLE G: Number of applications reviewed under Part 5 of the Act (by type of review and outcome)

	Decision varied	Decision upheld	Total
Internal review	0	0	0
Review by Information Commissioner*	1	1	2
Internal review following recommendation under section 93 of Act	1	1	2
Review by ADT/NCAT	2	1	3
Total	4	3	7

*The Information Commissioner does not have the authority to vary decisions, but can make recommendations to the original decision-maker. The data in this case indicates that a recommendation to vary or uphold the original decision has been made by the Information Commissioner.

TABLE H: Applications for review under Part 5 of the Act (by type of applicant)

	Number of applications for review
Applications by access applicants	5
Applications by persons to whom information the subject of access application relates (see section 54 of the Act)	0

TABLE I: Applications transferred to other agencies under Division 2 of Part 4 of the Act (by type of transfer)

	Number of applications transferred
Agency-initiated transfers	0
Applicant-initiated transfers	0

Appendix 9 Diversity Action Plan: diversity and inclusion

The Diversity Action Plan 2014-2015 is an inclusive plan that targets a broad range of people including people from multicultural backgrounds, people with disability, younger people, older people, women, gender and sexuality diverse people, and people living in rural and regional areas. The plan was developed against the four objectives of the Legal Aid NSW Plan.

Multicultural matters and disability-related matters are subject to mandatory reporting. The reporting below follows requirements in the Multicultural NSW *Multicultural Policies and Services Program* (MPSP) Multicultural Framework and Family and Community Services' Disability Inclusion Action Plan Guidelines. Actions from the *Diversity Action Plan 2014-2015* for multicultural and disability achievements are reported separately, below.

Multicultural	These achievements are reported against the activity areas of the MPSP
Activity areas	What we achieved
Planning and evaluation	<p>Conducted a client satisfaction survey where approximately four percent of interviews were conducted in languages other than English.</p> <p>Introduced targets into community legal centre plans for services to people in one or more of the diversity target groups.</p> <p>Completed an evaluation (by the Law and Justice Foundation of NSW) on the partnership between Legal Aid NSW and Settlement Services International (SSI) to provide legal outreach services to disadvantaged members of multicultural communities.</p>
Capacity building and resourcing	Conducted two training sessions on "Speak plainly: principles of clear communication" in June 2015.
Programs and services	<p>Delivered 90 face-to-face community legal education workshops for multicultural workers and 146 workshops for multicultural clients.</p> <p>Translated 15 publications on a range of topics into various community languages including Arabic, Chinese Vietnamese, Farsi, Urdu and Burmese.</p>
Building potential through partnerships	<p>Collaborated with the Community Migrant Resource Centre to deliver two training sessions for staff on improving communication with clients from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and African countries.</p> <p>Collaborated with Kingsford Legal Centre to produce five fact sheets on identified legal issues for Asian women workers.</p>

Disability	These achievements are reported against the key outcome areas under Family and Community Services' Disability Inclusion Action Plan Guidelines*
Key outcome areas	What we achieved
Attitudes and behaviours	<p>Established the Legal Aid NSW Staff Disability Network.</p> <p>Amended the Incident Report form to include psychological injury.</p>
Liveable communities	<p>Developed procedures on reasonable adjustments for the delivery of community legal education.</p> <p>Developed new <i>Best For Kids</i> video resources with audio descriptions for people with visual impairment and captions for people with hearing impairment.</p> <p>Developed a new video resource 'Separation & divorce' in Auslan.</p> <p>Created a page on the Legal Aid NSW website for all resources in Auslan.</p>
Employment	<p>Reviewed and updated the Reasonable Adjustment Guidelines.</p> <p>Provided mentors to 24 students and job seekers with disability through the PACE Mentoring Program.</p>
Systems and processes	<p>Conducted an audit on accessibility on all pages of the Legal Aid NSW website.</p> <p>Reviewed service agreements and policy documents for the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services to include equity principles and participation in the e-learning on disability awareness.</p>

Other diversity actions	Reported against Legal Aid NSW Plan objectives
Objectives	What we achieved
To promote access to justice through early intervention and prevention and better targeting of legal assistance to disadvantaged people	Conducted four training sessions on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ) matters for in-house lawyers.
To pursue excellence, innovation and efficiency in legal service delivery	<p>Developed equity principles for website development.</p> <p>Reviewed finance processes and policies to include equity principles.</p> <p>Developed a domestic violence related policy directory on the Intranet and the Legal Aid NSW website.</p>
To support and develop our people and improve our systems to meet organisational goals	<p>Conducted a training session on employment-related discrimination at the Civil Law Conference in July 2014.</p> <p>Published staff communiques 'Table Talk' on inclusion and being respectful.</p>
To build strong, effective service partnerships to respond to the legal and non-legal needs of our clients	<p>Conducted outreach training for civil, criminal and family lawyers at the Outreach Network Forum in July 2014.</p> <p>Conducted 15 training sessions on sexual assault communication privilege for community sector workers, health sector workers, and in-house and private lawyers.</p>

*Note: The actions reported here are those extracted from the Diversity Action Plan 2014-2015 only. Other actions for multicultural and disability-related matters are on page 26.

Appendices

Appendix 10 Private law firm expenditure

Expenditure across the private law firms which received the highest aggregate payments for legal aid services 2014-2015.

	Firm name	Case payments (\$)	Number of case files on which payments made	Duty payments (\$)	Number of duty services provided	Total amount paid *
1	Hadden Kemp Solicitors Pty Ltd	833,760	481	118,470	549	952,230
2	Matouk Joyner Lawyers	836,505	67	0	0	836,505
3	Blair Criminal Lawyers Pty Limited	708,895	133	0	0	708,895
4	Tim Mara Solicitor With Rafton Family Lawyers Parramatta	676,031	339	29,187	134	705,219
5	George Sten & Co	702,976	63	0	0	702,976
6	Nyman Gibson Miralis (Sydney)	662,049	81	0	0	662,049
7	O'Brien Solicitors	589,157	166	61,687	598	650,844
8	Scott Murrell Lawyers	536,601	218	30,438	249	567,040
9	Mark Rumore	564,012	92	825	3	564,837
10	O'Brien Winter Partners Pty Ltd	436,792	196	108,812	914	545,604
11	Bannisters Lawyers	511,170	85	0	0	511,170
12	Blue Water Legal	487,499	254	20,950	209	508,449
13	Phillip Ryan	433,207	117	68,000	592	501,207
14	Verekers Wollongong Lawyers	480,072	220	5,250	29	485,322
15	Kiki Kyriacou Lawyers	472,341	38	0	0	472,341
16	Rice More & Gibson	431,801	241	13,674	85	445,475
17	Archbold Legal Solutions	435,619	68	0	0	435,619
18	William O'Brien & Ross Hudson Solicitors	421,789	58	0	0	421,789
19	Mark Whelan Lawyer Pty Limited	415,894	106	5,475	23	421,369
20	Aquila Lawyers Pty Ltd	421,016	47	0	0	421,016

Note:

Individual cases vary in duration and complexity and individual firms vary in size and capacity to undertake legal aid services.

*These figures include disbursements as well as legal costs. Disbursements can include counsel's fees and expert reports.

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Note:

Entries in bold are reported in accordance with the Annual Reports (Departments) Regulation 2015, Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Regulation 2015 and the Commonwealth, State, and Territory Disability Agreement.

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