

Appendix 8 Report on multicultural and disability-related inclusion

The reporting below follows requirements under the Multicultural NSW Multicultural Policies and Services Program (MPSP) Multicultural Framework and the NSW Family and Community Services Disability Inclusion Action Plan Guidelines.

The Legal Aid NSW Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2022–23 is an inclusive plan that has two main objectives: to achieve a diverse and inclusive workforce and to provide services that recognise and respond to the legal and support needs of diverse clients. Our diverse clients cover a broad range of groups, including people with disability, people from culturally diverse communities, people from rural and regional areas and people from LGBTQIA+ communities.

Focus area: Service delivery

Key outcome area: Mainstream services deliver for everyone

A total of 9.3% of our casework services were provided to clients born in non-English speaking countries. We spent \$1,375,302.59 (excl. GST) on interpreting and translation services. In addition, 14.5% of our community legal education sessions were presented to culturally and linguistically diverse audiences, and 7.9% were presented to newly arrived migrant audiences.

Our panel member law practices speak 50 languages other than English.

Key outcome area: Targeted programs

Legal Aid NSW provides a number of targeted programs working with clients from diverse communities. For example:

- our Refugee Service provided legal education and assistance to clients on refugee or humanitarian visas, and
- our Immigration Service provided advice to clients on immigration issues, including bringing family members to Australia and the process of seeking asylum for those fleeing persecution.

Focus area: Planning

This year, the Legal Aid NSW Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, chaired by the CEO, contributed to Project Respect, bringing together the voices of our staff representatives, the Chairs of our staff networks, management representatives and a Public Service Association representative.

Focus area: Leadership

Legal Aid NSW has established a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) employee network that will provide CALD staff with a safe space to meet and discuss cultural safety and career advancement within Legal Aid NSW and contribute to related policy and process design.

Focus area: Engagement

The Legal Aid NSW Refugee Service employs a community engagement officer to support refugee clients, manage stakeholder relationships with community organisations and facilitate community legal education sessions for clients and service providers.

Focus area: Employment

We developed the Hiring Managers Guide to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander targeted recruitment as a resource to guide managers through the key steps to running a successful and culturally safe targeted or identified recruitment.

Focus area: Disability

These achievements are reported against the key outcome areas of the NSW Family and Community Services Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines.

Key outcome area: Liveable communities

Your Story Disability Legal Support (Your Story) gave free independent legal support to people sharing their stories with the Disability Royal Commission. Your Story also provides legal support to people with disability, their families, carers and supporters about other legal problems they may be experiencing.

Your Story is the first time that legal aid commissions have partnered across Australia to provide a national service. The service is delivered by community-controlled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services and legal aid commissions in each state and territory, including Legal Aid NSW.

Throughout the Royal Commission, Your Story received over 11,000 calls, emails and website enquiries from people with disability, their families, friends and supporters. Your Story lawyers provided 15,000 legal services, including legal advice, support with private sessions, preparing submissions and at public hearings and connecting clients with counselling, advocacy and other legal support. These services included providing support to people in prison, juvenile detention, forensic mental health facilities, group homes and immigration detention.

Your Story continues to support people with disability, their families, carers and supporters with the final report, and other legal problems.

Key outcome area: Employment

Legal Aid NSW is committed to promoting an inclusive workplace that fully supports workplace adjustments and ensuring that the design and implementation of human resources and workplace policies, rules, practices and operations do not create barriers or discrimination. We have established a Workplace Adjustments working group to ensure best practice occurs at Legal Aid NSW.

Legal Aid NSW has met the NSW Premier's Priority target of 5.6% of government sector roles held by people with disability. An estimated 9.8% of our staff identify as people with acknowledged disability.

Key outcome area: Systems and processes

Legal Aid NSW has worked towards the automation of our workplace adjustment requests. Our online application form is easy to access and guides the applicant through the process. It also acts as a central record for workplace adjustment requests, allowing us to assign responsibility and measure the time to respond to requests. Further, we have embedded Anti-Discrimination NSW's Workplace Adjustment Series into our manager's toolkit. The series aims to increase awareness and improve access and delivery of workplace adjustments.

Key outcome area: Community attitudes and behaviours

Your Story Disability Legal Support has provided community legal education to raise awareness about the Disability Royal Commission, disability rights and access to legal support.

Your Story travelled extensively across Australia, delivering legal education to communities from Bunbury (WA) to Barcaldine (Qld), Malmesbury (Vic) to Manyallaluk (NT), Port Macquarie (NSW) to Port Augusta (SA), Gawangal (ACT) to Geeveston (Tas), and everywhere in between. Across the Royal Commission, Your Story has delivered 1,303 legal education events to the community. These events have included presentations, panel discussions, information sessions, morning and afternoon teas, expo stalls, webinars and media interviews. Your Story has developed 242 accessible legal information resources, including factsheets, brochures and podcasts in various languages, videos with audio, Auslan and captions, and Easy Read guides.

We worked with our partners to increase awareness about the Disability Royal Commission and the free supports available to diverse communities, including people at risk of or experiencing homelessness, the Deafblind community, First Nations communities, multicultural communities and the LGBTIQ+ community. Your Story continues to provide accessible community legal education about the Final Report of the Disability Royal Commission, to advance the rights of people with disability and change attitudes about disability in the community as envisaged by its recommendations.

Focus area: Other actions

These achievements are performance highlights that are not covered in the Legal Aid NSW Strategic Plan outcomes or actions.

Key outcome area: Systems and processes

The Community Language Allowance Scheme, known as CLAS, recognises the skills of employees who can provide on-the-spot language assistance in the workplace. CLAS is an allowance payable to employees with a basic level of competency in a language other than English who work in locations and roles where their language skills can be used to assist in client service. Legal Aid NSW reviewed our CLAS processes to ensure better client and staff outcomes.

On 30 August 2022, the Board of Legal Aid NSW approved the establishment of a Racism and Inclusion Special Consultative Committee to be chaired by the Chair of the Board.

Project Respect was a concentrated program of work to support a fair, inclusive and diverse workplace. Bringing together different voices, the project has engaged staff to discuss what a fair, respectful and inclusive workplace means, with the ultimate goal of strengthening our workplace culture. The Project Respect program of work will be implemented through a staged approach over several years.