

Legal Aid NSW Strategic Plan 2023-2028

We are proud to introduce Legal Aid NSW's Strategic Plan for 2023 to 2028.

On behalf of the Board of Legal Aid NSW I am pleased to introduce the Legal Aid Strategic Plan for 2023-2028. The Strategic Plan establishes the vision for Legal Aid, where we want to be over the next five years and how we plan to get there.

This plan has been developed through a robust process of review, consultation and staff engagement at all levels of the organisation.

Thank you to the staff of Legal Aid for taking time out from your busy schedules to give your perspectives on what is needed to ensure Legal Aid is the best it can be. I also acknowledge the work of the Legal Aid executives and the input from the Board members in developing this plan.

The Board will closely monitor the implementation of the Plan and the progress towards achieving the identified goals.

We can look forward to Legal Aid NSW continuing on its path of reaching those people who are in most need of assistance through continuing to improve our service offerings and strengthening social justice in NSW.

Craig Smith
Chair, Legal Aid NSW

It is with great pleasure and immense pride that I introduce our next five-year Strategic Plan 2023 - 2028. As the CEO of this remarkable agency, I welcome this opportunity to outline our vision for the future and the path we will take to achieve this over the next 5 years.

Legal Aid NSW has a well-deserved reputation for legal excellence and unwavering commitment to our clients. The world around us is evolving at an astonishing pace, with technological advancements as well as social and economic challenges that impact on the way we work. This accelerating pace of change presents both new challenges and exciting opportunities.

We undertook extensive consultations to hear how we can best meet those challenges and harness opportunities in developing this strategic plan. Our priorities support our vision for a justice system that delivers fair outcomes for people experiencing disadvantage. And in doing so, they also provide a framework to ensure that we are an organisation that champions our staff, their wellbeing and commitment to provide the best possible services to our clients.

I am looking forward to this journey over the next five years. I pay particular tribute and acknowledge the efforts of our staff, for their unwavering commitment to our organisation and our clients.

Monique Hitter
CEO, Legal Aid NSW

Our new Strategic Plan 2023-2028 will consolidate and build on our transformation to date.

Legal Aid NSW provides high-quality legal services to people experiencing disadvantage

For more than 40 years, we have provided high-quality legal services to people facing disadvantage across the state in criminal, family and civil law, and worked with our partners on reforms and innovations that have made the justice system fairer and more accessible. In 2020, we welcomed LawAccess NSW into Legal Aid NSW, continuing their provision of high-quality legal information and referral to anyone with a legal problem in NSW.

Our passionate and committed people work across NSW to provide fair outcomes for people facing disadvantage.

- A network of 27 offices, two satellite offices and regular outreach locations across the state
- Over 1,500 staff across lawyers and corporate services
- Answered nearly 18,000 calls to our hotline for young people in 2022
- Represented clients in over 37,000 legal matters in 2022 (across in-house and private practitioner lawyers)
- Partnerships with community legal centres, the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) and pro bono legal services
- LawAccess NSW assisted over 130,000 customers via telephone and over 13,000 via webchat in 2021-22
- Provided over 100,000 advice and minor assistance services in 2022

Over the past five years, Legal Aid NSW has transformed key areas to better meet the needs of our clients and supported the wellbeing and safety of our staff. During the development of this Strategic Plan, staff from across Legal Aid NSW shared what they thought should be our priorities over the next five years as we embed and build on our transformation to date. These perspectives have played a critical role in shaping our focus on delivering social justice for people experiencing disadvantage, and ensuring our workforce is valued, safe and supported.

Our Strategic Plan 2023-2028 responds to key challenges facing the justice system

<p>Growing demand for legal assistance</p> <p>Demand continues to grow due to ongoing economic and social challenges, natural disasters and increased reporting of crimes such as domestic and family violence.</p>	<p>Increasing complexity of issues facing our clients'</p> <p>Many of our clients face complex issues and require tailored support to help them achieve successful outcomes.</p>	<p>Uncertain social and economic environment</p> <p>The 'post-COVID-19' era and declining economic conditions may affect funding.</p>	<p>Competitive labour market</p> <p>The expertise of our people is in high demand across the justice sector. The tight labor market requires additional attention on recruitment and retention.</p>	<p>Digital transformation</p> <p>Digital advances offer both opportunities for greater efficiencies as well as challenges in ensuring cyber security and digital inclusion.</p>
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STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

OUR CLIENTS

High quality, consistent services tailored to meet client and community needs

GOALS

1. Strengthen service models that best serve our clients
2. Serve clients no matter where they live in NSW
3. Streamline client pathways for legal assistance
4. Deliver consistent, high-quality services through both in-house and private practitioners

VISION

A justice system that delivers fair outcomes for people experiencing disadvantage

PURPOSE

To use the law and our expertise to inform and represent our clients, and advocate for social justice

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

OUR PEOPLE

A diverse workforce that is safe, supported and valued

GOALS

1. Prioritise staff safety, health and wellbeing
2. Embed an inclusive and respectful culture
3. Attract, retain, develop and reward a highly engaged workforce
4. Transform our recruitment

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

OUR PROCESSES

Systems and processes responsive to our needs

GOALS

1. Enhance business processes for our clients, our people and private practitioners
2. Transform our digital technology to support our work
3. Strengthen data governance
4. Optimise data security and privacy

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

OUR JUSTICE SYSTEM

A fair and effective justice system

GOALS

1. Strengthen our partnerships to achieve better outcomes for our clients
2. Drive justice system reform and innovation
3. Action Closing the Gap priority reforms
4. Communicate and promote the value of our work

OUR CLIENTS

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1



OUR CLIENTS

High quality, consistent services tailored to meet client and community needs

GOAL 1

Strengthen service models that best serve our clients

DESCRIPTION:

We will strengthen cultural competency and update service models where systems and structures fail and cause legal vulnerabilities; particularly for people in custody, children and young people, and Aboriginal people.

We will better support clients with disability through a dedicated action plan.

We will develop our multi-disciplinary services and models to better address complex legal and social issues, including embedding trauma-informed service delivery.

We will deepen cross-divisional collaboration on issues that intersect across clients and practice.

GOAL 2

Serve clients no matter where they live in NSW

DESCRIPTION:

We will strengthen our capacity to respond to state-wide service demand.

We will work with private practitioners to develop and extend alternative service models to respond to state-wide demand and market failure.

GOAL 3

Streamline client pathways for legal assistance

DESCRIPTION:

We will focus on creating consistent and innovative end-to-end experiences for people seeking legal assistance.

We will embed our civil law service blueprint and work across divisions to provide the best possible services for clients.

GOAL 4

Deliver consistent, high-quality services through both in-house and private practitioners

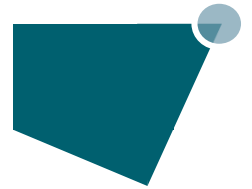
DESCRIPTION:

We will embed service standards and a quality framework to ensure consistency and quality across service delivery.

We will bring the work allocation for in-house and private practitioners into one program to ensure efficient and effective resource allocation and a consistently high-quality service for clients.

OUR PEOPLE

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2



OUR PEOPLE

A diverse workforce that is safe, supported and valued

GOAL 1

Prioritise staff safety, health and wellbeing

DESCRIPTION:

We recognise that our work can involve challenging and confronting issues that can affect the mental health and wellbeing of our staff. We will prioritise staff wellbeing and safety by developing and implementing a dedicated wellbeing strategy.

We will enhance in-house resource prioritisation processes and vacancy management to support staff workload management and reduce burnout and stress.

GOAL 2

Embed an inclusive and respectful culture

DESCRIPTION:

We will strengthen cultural safety for our staff through a dedicated internal dispute resolution model and targeted strategies to promote inclusivity, diversity and respect.

We will recognise intersectionality and provide tailored support for staff; particularly staff with disability, accessibility requirements, and Aboriginal staff.

We will continue to support and strengthen all staff networks and implement recommendations from Project Respect.

GOAL 3

Attract, retain, develop and reward a highly engaged workforce

DESCRIPTION:

We will recognise high-performing staff and develop targeted training to strengthen our management capability.

We will strengthen our employee value proposition to ensure ongoing relevance and meaning for current and future staff.

We will continue key career pathway partnerships to enable a pipeline for quality recruits.

We will strategically consider our workforce capability requirements, including the need for a multi-disciplinary approach and allied professionals to provide holistic services for our clients.

GOAL 4

Transform our recruitment

DESCRIPTION:

We will strengthen the inclusivity of our recruitment processes to support diversity and ensure our workforce reflects the needs of our diverse clients.

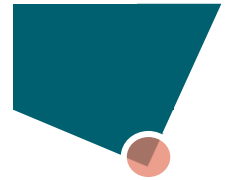
We will develop targeted approaches to support Aboriginal employment pathways, career progression and opportunities for graduates.

We will simplify recruitment processes and policies to make it easier to recruit.

We will explore opportunities to implement a Human Capital Management (HCM) system and embed innovative recruitment strategies.

OUR JUSTICE SYSTEM

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3



OUR JUSTICE SYSTEM

A fair and effective justice system

GOAL 1

Strengthen our partnerships to achieve better outcomes for our clients

DESCRIPTION:

We will review our current partnerships and continue to develop our key partnerships to better support our clients.

We will proactively explore opportunities for new partnerships with other government agencies to improve how we operate and achieve better outcomes for our clients.

GOAL 2

Drive justice system reform and innovation

DESCRIPTION:

We will develop a new strategic law reform agenda and work with our partners to advocate for priority reforms to the legal system. The knowledge and expertise of our staff will inform this agenda and our approach.

We will develop a domestic and family violence strategy to advocate for children and young people, those in out of home care, and those experiencing family violence.

GOAL 3

Action Closing the Gap priority reforms

DESCRIPTION:

We will continue our program of work to reduce systemic disadvantage for Aboriginal people who are in contact with the justice system.

We will explore new and innovative solutions, continue collaboration with our Closing the Gap Project Board and Steering Committee, and establish targeted programs to support Aboriginal clients.

We will refine and embed our Aboriginal Officer Program to better connect with Aboriginal people and communities.

GOAL 4

Communicate and promote the value of our work

DESCRIPTION:

We will proactively communicate and promote our value to the wider justice system and general public.

We will develop and implement an external communications strategy which identifies key stakeholders, messages and materials to highlight the value of our work.

OUR PROCESSES

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4



OUR PROCESSES

Systems and processes responsive to our needs

GOAL 1

Enhance business processes for our clients, our people and private practitioners

DESCRIPTION:

We will implement an enhanced resource management system to automate and improve the efficiency of HR management.

We will strengthen our enterprise service management system to best support business needs.

We will build the digital literacy of our staff through tailored training and support; also enabling the implementation of new systems and processes.

GOAL 2

Transform our digital technology to support our work

DESCRIPTION:

We will seek funding to replace our grants management system to better support our clients.

We will continue to improve the CCMS platform to increase internal case management efficiency.

We will launch a WDVCS case management system to improve information sharing and client management across the sector.

We will implement our ICT and Digital strategy to uplift of internal information sharing, document management and data reporting.

We will transform our client-facing channels to increase access, understanding and communication.

GOAL 3

Strengthen data governance

DESCRIPTION:

We will strengthen our data governance to outline clear and consistent approaches to how we manage data and our compliance obligations, including around data collection, reporting, storage, retention and access.

GOAL 4

Optimise data security and privacy

DESCRIPTION:

We will continue to uplift our cyber security capability to manage risks and strengthen our processes. Including a continued focus on client data privacy.