



LEGAL AID COMMISSION
OF TASMANIA

Annual Report 2014-15

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At a Glance

About us

The Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania is a statutory body set up by the *Legal Aid Commission Act 1990* (Tas). We started on 1 January 1991. The Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania operates at arms length from Government but is accountable to the Tasmanian Attorney-General, the Hon Dr Vanessa Goodwin MLC.

We are the largest government-funded legal assistance service in Tasmania and we play a central role in providing access to justice for disadvantaged Tasmanians.

The Commission is governed by a Board of eight. It has a staff of 63 full-time employees and a budget of \$12,444,000 from the Commonwealth and State Governments.

The Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania has offices in Hobart, Launceston, Devonport and Burnie. The Commission provides outreach services to Smithton, St Helens, St Marys, Queenstown, Huonville and Carlton.

Our services

We provide a range of quality legal services across Tasmania through our offices. Our focus is on economically and socially disadvantaged Tasmanians.

We provide preventative services such as information about the law through our website and through community legal education sessions. We deliver early intervention services through our telephone helpline, face-to-face consultations, duty lawyer services, minor assistance, and mediation services. We also provide legal representation delivered through grants of aid to private lawyers and to in-house lawyers.

Our community education and advice services are not means tested. Our more intensive services, such as grants of legal aid for representation in court, are means tested.

Our aim

The Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania seeks to deliver a range of high-quality legal services to needy Tasmanians. Our vision is for a safer and fairer Tasmania through enhanced access to justice. We strive to achieve this by:

- **Ensuring that the right people can access legal services;**
- **Delivering high-quality legal services to our clients;**
- **Providing the right mix of information, advice, and representation services;**
- **Supporting an effective and efficient court system; and**
- **Using taxpayers' funds appropriately.**

Our values

The values that drive our choices are:

- **Integrity – we act ethically at all times;**
- **Professionalism – we provide high-quality services;**
- **Efficiency – we use taxpayers' resources responsibly and we pursue continuous improvement;**
- **Fairness – we ensure equitable access to the right services.**



Chairperson's Report



On behalf of the Board I am pleased to introduce the 2014-15 Annual Report.

This report covers a rewarding and interesting period and shows the Legal Aid Commission delivering a range of outstanding legal services that are appropriate, proportionate and tailored to the needs of Tasmanians. Over the year, the Board oversaw a turnaround in the Legal Aid Commission's financial position, improvements in governance and planning, and an expansion of duty lawyer services.

Service delivery

Over the financial year, the Legal Aid Commission delivered high levels of services to the Tasmanian community. The numbers of new grants for legal representation remain very high by national standards. Duty lawyer services increased by 17% and our mediation services, telephone helpline, advice, and community legal education services continue to be provided in high numbers and outstanding quality.

The Board started the process to streamline applications to the Civil Disbursement Fund ("CDF"). The CDF covers the expense of medical reports and other out of pocket expenses incurred by private law firms in civil cases for eligible clients. The Board had been concerned about the slowness in getting approvals through our process. The Board approved removing several unnecessary steps from the process. Once implemented, these reforms should make a big difference and eliminate a source of frustration that currently exists. The Legal Aid Commission is also developing an electronic program, similar to e-lodge, for CDF grants.

Governance and reporting

After several years of deficits covered by cash reserves, the 2014-15 year was one of financial consolidation. During this financial year, the Legal Aid Commission successfully brought its expenses within its budget to ensure ongoing financial sustainability. The Legal Aid Commission finished the year with expenditure more than \$1 million lower than it started the year. Despite this significant reduction in expenditure, the Board was able to avoid restricting the guidelines for granting legal aid. They remain unchanged.

With the needs of the community being so complex, it is vital that the Legal Aid Commission plans for service delivery. Without a plan, agencies simply drift and react to the pressures of the day. Given these considerations, the Legal Aid Commission developed a corporate plan after a planning workshop in late 2014. The Board reflected on the plan and made further changes over two meetings in 2015 before approving the final version. The plan includes an integrated set of actions aimed at increasing our long-term capacity to achieve our statutory functions. It sets a clear direction for the Legal Aid Commission over the 2015-16 year.

In July 2014, the Board consolidated all policies, resolutions and directions concerning grants of legal aid. Some of them dated back to 1997 and these policies and resolutions had never previously been in the one accessible document in a uniform style with standardised headings, and set out in a logical sequence. This exercise represented no change in policy but a consolidation of the existing practices presented in a more readable form.

The Board resolved to better manage risk by setting up a risk register and establishing a Risk and Audit Committee headed by an independent chairperson. The aim is to proactively establish programs and processes that support business objectives while protecting the organisation's assets, staff, property, finances, IT, and reputation from loss or harm. In assessing risk for the register, we surveyed all staff to get the best possible picture of our risk profile.

Reviews

The year saw the release of two reviews bearing on the Legal Aid Commission.

On 3 December 2014 the Commonwealth Government released the Productivity Commission's final report on *Access to Justice Arrangements*. This was a landmark report that documented the value of legal aid and emphasised the need to better fund civil matters. The Legal Aid Commission is working on reforms proposed by the Productivity Commission including legal health check interview tools and a 'no wrong door' approach, where we establish a well-recognised point of entry to the not-for-profit legal assistance sector.



Chairperson's Report

On 4 November 2014, the Attorney-General announced a review of the Legal Aid Commission by the Honourable Peter Evans. The review enjoyed the full co-operation of the Legal Aid Commission at every juncture. It is taxpayers' money that we use and we are an open and accountable organisation that welcomes scrutiny. The review was released publicly on 5 June 2015 with ten recommendations. Over the next financial year, the Board will work with the Department of Justice on an implementation plan for those recommendations.

The Board

I was delighted to be appointed Chairperson of the Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania by the Tasmanian Attorney-General on 4 November 2014.

The term of the previous Chairperson, Peter Worrall, ended on 23 August 2014. I acknowledge his strong leadership and deep commitment to helping disadvantaged Tasmanians. Upon his retirement, the Attorney-General paid tribute to his leadership and told Parliament that 'he was an excellent chair who oversaw a number of major reforms within Legal Aid.' Under Peter's leadership, the Legal Aid Commission became the best in the nation in so many areas.

Daniel Zeeman was appointed to the Board in November 2014 and brings a variety of skills and experience to the role. He will make a significant contribution to the task of providing oversight of the Legal Aid Commission's activities.

The Board met nine times over the year. Most of the meetings were in Hobart but the Board met in Launceston in mid 2014 and in Devonport in March 2015. These northern and north-western meetings allow Commissioners to speak to staff at those offices and meet with lawyers from local law firms that do legal aid work. It is an important part of the proper functioning of the Board to see the Legal Aid Commission's operation in these areas. It is extremely gratifying to see the strong interest that the Board shows in Legal Aid's regional operations.

Thank you

The capacity to provide extensive legal assistance services requires strong government support. I am grateful for the support that the Legal Aid Commission has received from both the State and Commonwealth Governments. I thank the Attorney-General, the Hon Dr Vanessa Goodwin MLC for her ongoing commitment and strong interest in legal aid.

Over the year, the Legal Aid Commission assigned 64% of grants for legal representation to the private profession. I acknowledge the work of the private profession and thank those lawyers who deliver legal aid, at reduced fees, to disadvantaged Tasmanians.

I thank the Director of the Legal Aid Commission Dr Graham Hill for his strong directorship of the Commission, his commitment to the staff and clients of the Commission, his contribution and support of the Board and the very significant changes that he has implemented in a short period of time to improve the efficiencies of the Commission and the very significant contributions that the Commission makes to the administration of justice for the most disadvantaged members of our Tasmanian community.

I thank the staff of the Legal Aid Commission for their hard work and skill in delivering legal assistance services to the people of Tasmania. Their commitment to their clients, their professionalism and their dedication has impressed me greatly.

Since starting as Chairperson in November last year, I have been impressed by the talent, energy, and commitment of the management team and staff of the Legal Aid Commission. It is a privilege to have the opportunity to chair the Board of the Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania.

Patrick Lunn
Chairperson

Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania



Director's Report



This Annual Report showcases the Legal Aid Commission's deep reach into the Tasmanian community and its excellence in service delivery. 2014-15 was a year of financial consolidation and enhanced service delivery as the Commission re-shaped the agency to achieve our vision of a fairer and safer Tasmania. This was my first full year as Director of the Legal Aid Commission and it has been a rewarding and interesting year.

Service delivery

This year the Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania continued to focus on delivering a range of high-quality legal services to disadvantaged Tasmanians. We provide a range of services that are targeted, proportionate, joined-up, and tailored to the diverse needs of Tasmanians. Our aim is to deliver a more holistic approach to justice where our services are better integrated with non-legal services.

In 2014-15 the Legal Aid Commission delivered legal services to over 32,000 Tasmanians. These services included legal representation, duty lawyer services, mediations, minor assistance, and telephone advice. Another 16,000 Tasmanians received help through 'warm referrals' to other service providers and through our community legal education program. If we include people who accessed information through the website, Legal Aid's total count exceeds a third of a million services.

In terms of representation in court, our clients were people who were:

- **In custody**
- **Experiencing family violence**
- **Suffering mental health problems**
- **Living with a disability**
- **Living in poverty; or**
- **Under 18 years of age**

For many of these Tasmanians, the Legal Aid Commission represented their only chance of achieving a just outcome.

In terms of service delivery, the Legal Aid Commission continued to be 'best in class' in many areas:

- **Determining applications for legal aid within one day**
- **High numbers of new grants of legal aid**
- **High rates of approval for grants of legal aid**
- **Australia's most-called Legal Aid telephone helpline**
- **High numbers of mediations combined with high settlement rates**
- **A targeted and far-reaching legal education program**
- **Paying bills to private law firms the next working day; and**
- **Low administrative costs**

We are pleased to report that duty lawyer services increased by 17% over the previous year. In an era of self-represented litigants, duty lawyer services are an invaluable resource for the courts. With lawyers available at court to help litigants and to dispose of matters on-the-spot, the duty lawyer service contributes significantly to the efficiency and effectiveness of the courts.

In May 2015 the Legal Aid Commission merged the northern and southern criminal practices to form a new State-wide criminal practice. A State-wide practice gives us greater flexibility in allocating our senior lawyers to Supreme Court matters.

Over the year the Legal Aid Commission continued to improve its website as it worked toward launching a re-designed website on 12 August 2015. The improvements included ten professionally produced YouTube videos giving facts and information on legal topics of interest to the community. Our research showed that many legal aid clients would prefer to access information through videos instead of written fact sheets. These videos significantly improved the accessibility of information to many in the community.

Every year the Legal Aid Commission gives legal advice to nearly 6,000 people face-to-face through our clinics in Hobart and Launceston. This year saw a significant improvement in service to people in Devonport and Burnie with the introduction of video telephones.



Director's Report

These video telephones enable clients and their lawyer to see and hear each other for a richer media experience that enhances the client-lawyer relationship.

The law provides for independent review committees to review the decisions of grants officers where they refuse legal aid under our guidelines. Review committees overturn grants officers' decisions about a third of the time. This year has seen significant reform to the review committee process with improvements in training, benchmarking, and the imposition of time limits for reviews. These changes will provide a more robust and timely process.

The 2014-15 year also saw improvements in security for clients and staff at Legal Aid Commission offices. These improvements included the installation of closed circuit television cameras, mobile duress alarms, and training for all staff in dealing with aggressive and troubled people.

Another initiative in this financial year was our comprehensive survey of client satisfaction. Over a two-week period in June, we surveyed 403 clients and asked them six questions about our service. The information from this survey will be important because we regard feedback, including complaints, as a way of both assessing and improving our performance. I am pleased to report that 76% of clients rated our service as excellent and 23% rated it as good. 99% of clients said they would recommend our service to others. We are currently analysing the results in detail to properly capture the lessons to be learned.

Financial

The year was one of financial consolidation where the Legal Aid Commission eliminated its structural deficit. The Legal Aid Commission started the financial year with a structural deficit of about \$1 million and ended the year with expenditure that was \$1 million less and within our ongoing budget. These adjustments mean that the Legal Aid Commission is now financially sustainable. Given the difficult funding environment that we are in, our financial result for 2014-15 was outstanding.

It is especially pleasing that we have been able to achieve this result while maintaining service delivery at historically high levels. For example, the Legal Aid Commission granted \$3.8 million to the private profession for costs and disbursements to deliver

legal representation and that amount is higher than was available in 2010-11. We achieved all of this while funding from our own resources the longest trial in Tasmanian history.

The year has also seen ongoing improvements to our financial reporting framework. These improvements have added rigour to our accounts, streamlined our reporting process and have provided improved information to the management team and the Board.

Our partners

Most legal aid for legal representation is delivered to the community by the private profession. Over the year, new grants to the private profession increased by 7% over the previous year. Legal Aid work can be challenging and demanding and private practitioners invariably do more work than is covered by the grant of legal aid. I acknowledge the important role of private lawyers in delivering legal aid to the Tasmanian community. Our partners in the private profession show dedication, commitment and strong social obligation in continuing to provide outstanding legal services to disadvantaged Tasmanians.

Over the year, the Legal Aid Commission has worked closely with the Community Legal Centres ('CLCs') to ensure that there is no duplication of services. At various levels of the organisation, we meet regularly with the CLCs to communicate and collaborate. Our community legal education program is coordinated with the CLCs and, in Hobart, the CLC provides the week-end duty lawyer service for us.

In October 2014, the Legal Aid Commission organised a Tasmanian Legal Assistance Forum meeting. Representatives from Legal Aid, Community Legal Centres Tasmania, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, the Tasmanian Council of Social Services, the Law Society, and the Law Society's pro bono program, make up the forum. Representatives from the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department also attend the forum which is chaired by the Deputy Secretary of the Tasmanian Department of Justice. The aim of the forum is to promote communication and cooperation between member organisations to map need, plan service delivery, avoid duplication of services and to inform governments of emerging issues.



Director's Report

Thank you

I thank the dedicated staff of the Legal Aid Commission who work hard in a challenging environment to help disadvantaged people in Tasmania resolve their legal problems.

I am indebted to the management team of the Legal Aid Commission for their sure-footed leadership and sound management through a year of opportunity, challenge, and change.

I thank the Board of the Legal Aid Commission for setting our direction over the past year under the capable stewardship of both Peter Worrall and Patrick Lunn.

We are grateful to the Secretary of the Department of Justice, Simon Overland; the Deputy Secretary, Ginna Webster; Director of Finance, Stephen Morrison; and Brett Charlton, Assistant Director, Workplace Relations, for their strong support for the Legal Aid Commission. Similarly, our thanks to Elizabeth Quinn, the Assistant Secretary of the Legal Assistance Branch; Esther Bogaart, the Director of the Legal Aid Program; and Brad Smith, all from the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department, for their enthusiastic support, advice, and encouragement of legal aid in Tasmania.

I also thank the Attorney-General of Tasmania, the Hon Dr Vanessa Goodwin MLC, and the Commonwealth Attorney-General the Hon Senator George Brandis QC for their ongoing commitment to legal aid.

The year ahead

The 2015-16 year will be one of opportunity, innovation and reform for the Legal Aid Commission. We will continue our strong focus on service delivery to our clients while maintaining excellent relations with our partners.

The new financial year will see a financially sustainable Legal Aid Commission achieving a budget surplus. A financial priority is to re-build our cash reserves to a prudentially sound level. We will also allocate more resources to our duty lawyer service to save judicial time and better service self represented litigants in the courts.

In an age where 83% of people have internet access at home, it is essential that Legal Aid Commissions have a useful, strong and visible website presence. In the 2015-16 year, we will launch a redesigned website that

will be more intuitive, easier to navigate, adaptable to any device or screen size, with literacy support, and available in 90 different languages. The new website will significantly enhance the Legal Aid Commission's capacity to provide legal information and other preventative services to the Tasmanian community.

We will continue to work with the Community Legal Centres and other not-for-profit legal service providers to develop a well-recognised point of entry to the sector. Research has shown that many disadvantaged people struggle to navigate the fragmented legal assistance sector, try to obtain advice from the wrong place, and end up suffering 'referral fatigue' and giving up. The Legal Aid Commission will work with other providers toward establishing a well-recognised entry point that will either directly help people or have the ability to triage them and transfer them to the correct provider.

Over the coming year the Legal Aid Commission will also adopt a 'legal health check' interview screening tool. This is a structured interview tool that our lawyers will use to identify a person's legal issues beyond the immediate issue that brings them to us. Once an issue is identified, the client can be referred to the appropriate agency for help. For example, research shows that 65% of homeless clients have fines debts that require legal advocacy. However only 5.4% of homeless clients will raise this issue with their lawyer. Legal health checks can therefore go a long way to making the civil justice system more accessible to disadvantaged people.

We will continuously improve in providing a holistic approach that treats the client rather than just the legal problem before our lawyers. Our aim is to be better integrated with non-legal service providers who assist with financial problems, drug and alcohol problems, anger management, and positive lifestyle courses. Over the next year we will continue to improve our relationships with, and our knowledge of, non-legal service providers to achieve a more 'joined up' referral service.

We look forward to leading the Legal Aid Commission into 2015-16 as it enhances its capacity to deliver high quality assistance to disadvantaged Tasmanians.

Graham Hill

Director

Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania



Performance Highlights

Our Reach for 2014-15

Preventative Services	
Telephone Advice Service Number of Matters Dealt With	18,524
Telephone Advice Service Referrals Made	10,050
Telephone Advice Service Justice of the Peace Enquires	822
Community Legal Education sessions	105
Community Legal Education Participants	5,144
Web Site Page Visits	288,153
Early Intervention Services	
Legal Advice and Minor Assistance	5,881
Family Dispute Resolution Conferences	358
Duty Lawyer Services	
Duty Lawyer Services	2,973
Case Work Grants of Legal Assistance	
Grants of Legal Assistance	4,927
Clients On Government Benefits (grants of aid only)	83%
In-house Grants	1,794
Private Practitioner Grants	3,133



Performance Highlights

Financial Summary 2014-2015

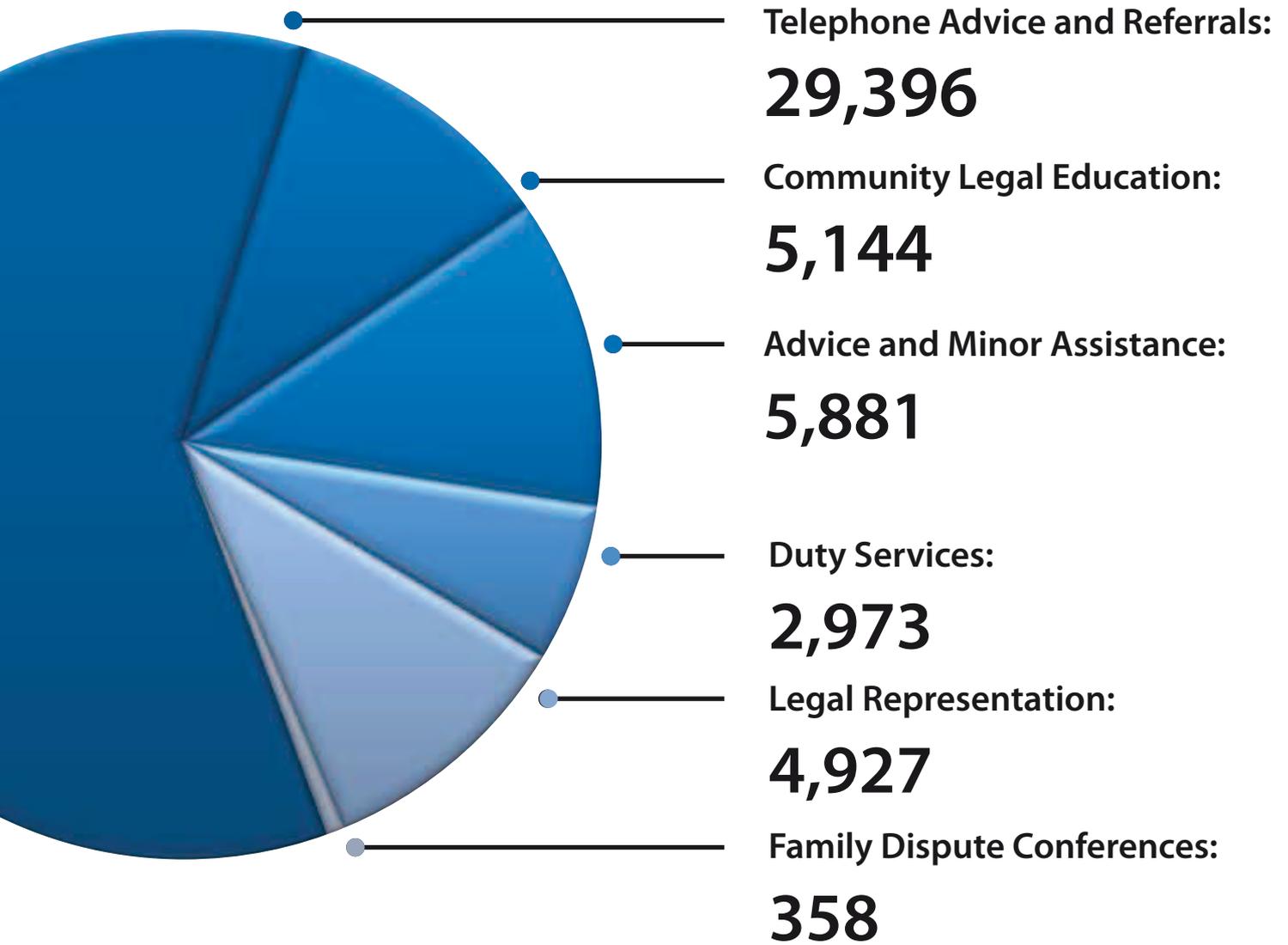
Financial Summary 2014-2015	
Commonwealth Funding	\$6,192,000
State Funding	\$6,032,000
Other funding	\$586,000
Use of Commission Reserves*	\$784,000
Total Funds	\$13,594,000
Total Expenditure	\$13,594,000

*Includes one-off costs for restructuring the Legal Aid workforce.



Performance Highlights

Total Client Services 2014-2015



Total Services excludes information via website page views 288,153.



Performance Highlights

Achievements over the year

The achievements of the Legal Aid Commission over the last financial year are aligned with the five long-term outcomes set out in the Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania corporate plan.

Objective 1

Ensure The Right People Get Access To Legal Aid

- Consolidated all policies, directions and resolutions of the Board concerning grants of legal aid into one easy-to-read and accessible document
- Improved reviews of grants officers' decisions through training, standardised practices, and the setting of benchmarks for best practice

Objective 2

Strike An Appropriate Balance In Allocating Resources Between A Range Of Services

- Targeted community legal education to communities in need
- 14% increase in referrals to other agencies so that Legal Aid is taking a more holistic approach that treats the client rather than just the legal problem
- Re-designed the website to make it more intuitive, adaptable to any sized device, available in over 90 languages, and with a literacy support function

Objective 3

Deliver High Quality Legal Services

- Installed video telephones to improve the legal advice clinic experience for clients in Devonport and Burnie
- Conducted training for over 90% of the State's Independent Children's Lawyers to improve the quality of representation for children
- Enhanced client and staff security with the installation of CCTV cameras and mobile duress alarms
- Conducted a comprehensive survey of client satisfaction

Objective 4

Contribute To The Efficiency And Effectiveness Of The Court System

- 17% increase in duty lawyer services at the courts
- New grants of legal aid to the private profession increased by 7% over the previous year
- Determined applications for legal aid within one working day

Objective 5

Manage Taxpayers' Funds Appropriately

- Reduced overheads by more than \$1 million
- Reformed the financial reporting framework to better assist in the financial management of the Legal Aid Commission
- Limited the administrative cost of granting legal aid to 5% of the total value of grants



Performance Highlights

Our services – a snapshot

We provide a wide range of services to Tasmanians.

Because clients have different needs, the Legal Aid Commission provides a continuum of services that vary in their intensity and cost. Providing a range of services helps to ensure responses are proportionate, tailored and, where possible, that problems are identified and addressed early.

Preventative services for all Tasmanians

Website

Through our website we provide a range of fact sheets, self-help kits, YouTube videos on legal issues and our e-guide to the law. Over the last year, our website registered 288,153 page views from people seeking information.

Community legal education

We conduct targeted community legal education sessions throughout Tasmania. Community legal education enhances the legal knowledge and capability of the Tasmanian public. It improves legal literacy not only among those who are likely to experience legal problems but also among the broader community who may be asked for advice. Over the last year, we conducted 105 community legal education sessions reaching 5,144 people.



Resolving disputes early – timely intervention services

Telephone advice service

We provide legal advice and referral through our telephone helpline. Callers speak directly to a lawyer without any intermediary. With over 43 services per 1,000 head of population, the Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania helpline is the most called service in Australia. Over the last year, we provided 29,396 services.

Face-to-face advice

We provide free legal advice daily to people attending our clinics at four offices around Tasmania. Over the last year, we saw 5,881 people face-to-face for legal advice.

Minor civil assistance

We provide more intensive services for people needing assistance in civil cases. Our lawyers help them write legal letters, draw pleadings and affidavits, and negotiate settlements.



Performance Highlights

Our services – a snapshot

continued

Duty lawyer services

Legal Aid duty lawyers are available at the Magistrates Court, Family Court, and the Federal Circuit Court free of charge. They are available to assist unrepresented litigants at court and will give advice, adjourn matters, or appear for people to finalise the matter on the first appearance. They are available to all persons in custody. They play a significant role in contributing to the efficiency and effectiveness of the courts. Over the last year, duty lawyer services increased by 17% to 2,973 services.

Mediation services

The Legal Aid Commission conducts family dispute resolution mediation to settle high-conflict disputes concerning with whom children live and spend time. Over the last year, we conducted 358 mediations and were able to settle 90% of the time. This represents significant savings in court days.



Representation in court

Grants of legal aid

Where applicants satisfy our means test, we grant aid for a lawyer to act for clients and represent them. Most legal aid for representation is delivered by the private profession on our behalf. About a third of legal representation is delivered by Legal Aid's outstanding in-house practice. Over the last year, we granted aid to nearly 5,000 new cases and the private profession received 7% more grants than it had the previous year.

Civil disbursement fund

Legal Aid will pay the out-of-pocket expenses for eligible applicants pursuing civil claims through private lawyers. In most cases, applicants are pursuing personal injury claims through private lawyers but cannot afford to pay for medical and other expert reports. In these circumstances, Legal Aid covers the cost of expenses and recovers the funds when the claim is successful. Over the years, this service has enabled over 800 clients to have access to justice.



Performance Highlights

Top 10 Services

Top 10 Telephone helpline inquiries	
Matter Type	Number of Matters
Children's matters	3,189
Property settlement	1,463
Inquiries about legal aid services	1,243
Wills and estates	963
Inquiries about executing documents	843
Boundary disputes	840
Consumer issues	728
Driving offences	631
Leases	598
Neighbourhood and personal disputes	511

Top 10 Most visited website pages	
Fact Sheets	Number of Views
Under 18's	14,909
Wills and Estates	9,814
Bankruptcy	5,276
Discrimination	2,992
Arrest and Questioning	1,287
Family Violence	1,003
Property Settlement	682
Children	641
Consumer Law, Credit and Rights	579
Criminal Injuries	363



Our Clients

WE HELPED THOUSANDS OF CLIENTS
IN 2014-2015 THROUGH LAWYER SERVICES.

70%

WERE RECEIVING SOME
FORM OF **GOVERNMENT**
BENEFIT.



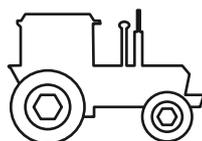
4%

WERE **OVER 65.**



42%

WERE LIVING IN
RURAL TASMANIA



4%

WERE FROM **CULTURALLY**
AND LINGUISTICALLY
DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS.*



5%

WERE OF **ABORIGINAL**
OR **TORRES STRAIGHT**
ISLANDER BACKGROUND.



9%

WERE IN **CUSTODY**



7%

WERE **UNDER 18**



1%

REQUIRED THE ASSISTANCE
OF AN **INTERPRETER.**



* Includes People who were born overseas or speak a Language other than English at home.

Figures are based on the total number of clients many of whom accessed more than one service during the year. This does not include Telephone Advice, Website, Community Legal Education and any other service where we do not create an individual client record.



The People We Help



Every day our staff help clients from disadvantaged backgrounds. Our focus goes beyond the immediate legal problem to helping clients turn their lives around. The examples below set out some of the ways that we help our clients.

Case 1 **Protecting a teenage girl from domestic violence**

Lianna¹ was aged 18 years when her mother brought her to Legal Aid seeking help. Lianna had a boyfriend who had initially been respectful but after they moved in together he started abusing her and throwing things near her. After she fell pregnant, the abuse escalated to physically pushing her around and hitting her. Lianna moved back to her parents' home but the lease on their flat was in joint names and he stopped paying the rent. Even though he was violent and threatening, the boyfriend told Lianna that he would be attending all antenatal appointments and would be present for the birth of the child whether she wanted him there or not.

Legal Aid wrote an outline of the family violence and organised for Lianna to see the Family Violence Counselling and Support Service. With Legal Aid's help, Lianna was able to get a police family violence order in place without her having to go to court. Legal Aid then helped Lianna end the lease through negotiations with the landlords. They pursued the boyfriend for the rent as he was still living in the flat. Acting for Lianna, Legal Aid wrote to the boyfriend about family law children's matters and asked him to get independent legal advice. The boyfriend then understood that he couldn't insist on being present at medical appointments or at the birth. As a result, he's now working on building a respectful, co-operative co-parenting relationship with Lianna.

¹ We have changed our client's name and some facts to protect her privacy and the image used is of a model



The People We Help



Case 2

Helping a separated couple agree on a parenting plan

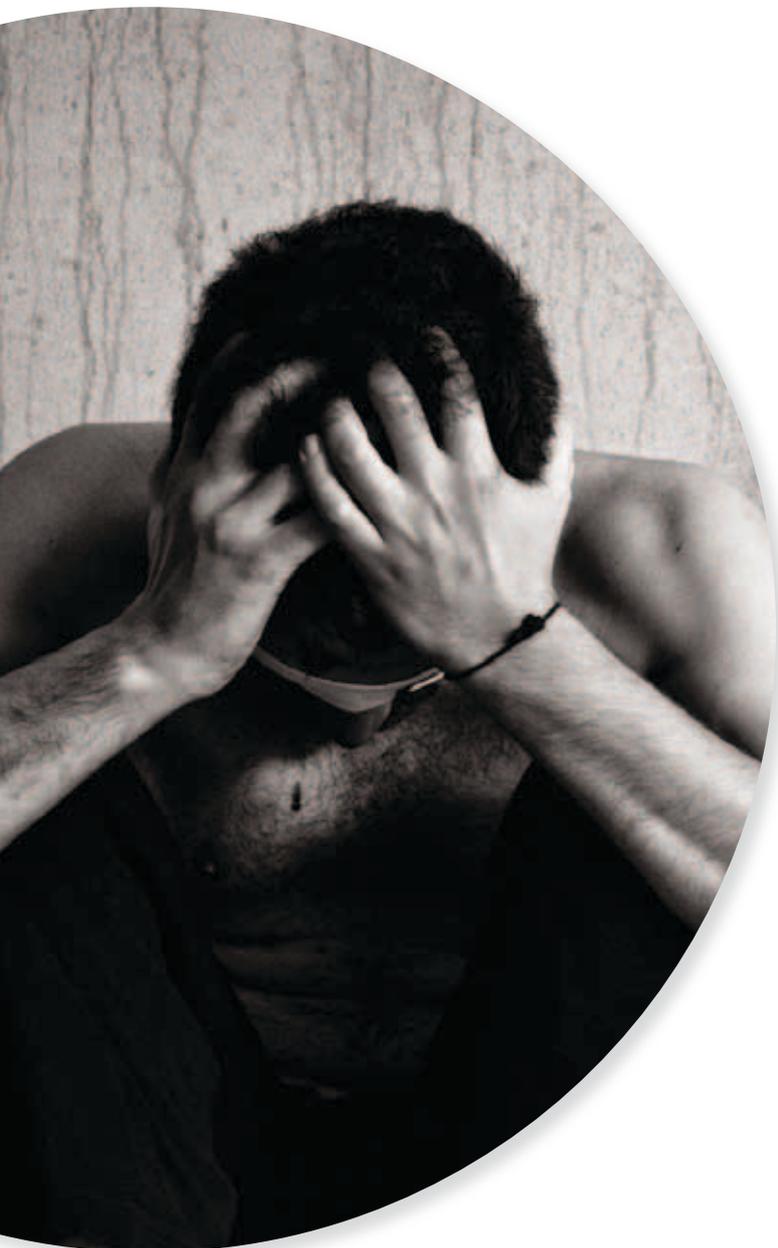
Carl and Robyn² were young parents with two infant children. They had recently separated and the children had been living with Robyn and spending occasional daytime hours with Carl. One day Carl announced that he wasn't returning the children because he wanted longer hours but Robyn had not agreed. Two weeks passed without the children seeing Robyn. There was little communication between the parties because Robyn felt intimidated by Carl's family. Robyn began to panic and sought legal advice about applying to the court for an order to recover the children.

Legal Aid convened an urgent conference chaired by a Legal Aid mediator skilled in dispute resolution. Both parties attended with their lawyers. Robyn wanted the children returned to her. Carl said that he would return the children if Robyn agreed to him having overnight time with the children. However Robyn had concerns about whether Carl had suitable accommodation for the children and whether he could properly care for them overnight.

The Legal Aid mediator made it clear to the parties that the alternative to an agreement was recovery proceedings at court. With recovery proceedings, Carl was at risk of the court disapproving of his unilateral action in withholding the children. Robyn was at risk of the recovery proceedings taking some time to return the children to her. With the mediator focussing the parties on the children's best interests, they agreed to a one-month arrangement. The agreement provided for Carl to return the children to Robyn. Subject to Carl making some changes at home, the agreement included the children spending some overnight time with Carl on a trial basis.

² We have changed the parties' names and some facts to de-identify the case. The images used are of models

The People We Help



Legal Aid convened a second dispute-resolution conference within a month. Since the last conference, the arrangements had been working well and communication between the parties had improved. The parties agreed on further ongoing arrangements and a future conference to finalise long-term arrangements for the children. Carl and Robyn had started to develop a more amicable and cooperative parenting relationship that focussed on the children's best interests.

Carl and Robyn had been caught up in a high-conflict dispute over the living arrangements for their children. The early intervention and prioritisation of this case by Legal Aid provided the parties with a safe, supported environment for discussions, legal advice, and a settlement that avoided court action.

Case 3

Helping a vulnerable man regain control of his life

Oliver³ had a long history of schizophrenia and using illicit drugs. As a result, he had been very unwell and unable to manage his pension. He was at risk of homelessness because he wasn't paying the rent, he had significant debts and was not looking after himself. The Guardianship Board made an administration order appointing an administrator to manage Oliver's finances. The Administrator received Oliver's pension and paid his living expenses including rent and utilities. Three years later, the Board renewed the order because Oliver's GP reported no change in his schizophrenia.

However Oliver had stopped taking illicit drugs and his mental health issues had improved. Oliver's ability to organise and function had also improved. Oliver approached Legal Aid and told us how he felt depressed and humiliated at having to ask the Administrator for money every time he wanted to buy something. He desperately wanted to resume control of his pension and expenses. Legal Aid recognised that Oliver's mental

³ We have changed our client's name and some facts to protect his privacy and the image used is of a model



The People We Help



state had improved from when the Board had originally put the order in place. Also, he was now debt free and in stable accommodation. On Oliver's behalf, Legal Aid applied for a review. Our lawyers were able to persuade the Board that it should give Oliver the opportunity to show he was capable of managing his pension and paying essential living costs. Our lawyers pointed out that he had a support worker who could intervene if things went wrong.

Three months later, Oliver told us that he felt a burden was lifted from his shoulders and he was less angry and frustrated at the lack of control that he had felt before. He was motivated to succeed and not go back to living the way he had when the order was made. He's also saving \$1,500 a year in administrator's fees and this has made a difference to his quality of life.

Case 4 Helping a mother keep her home

Rebecca⁴ was a single mother of four children. She had worked all her life and had bought a house many years earlier. A few years ago, she became unwell and suffered a nervous breakdown. She continued to suffer from depression and had been on medication for several years. As a result of being unwell, she could only work part-time hours and fell behind with her mortgage payments. Rebecca accessed her superannuation and paid the arrears but in the meantime the bank had started legal action to gain possession of the home for non-payment. Rebecca became very stressed after the bank served her with a summons to appear in the Supreme Court. Fearing homelessness for her children, Rebecca had become very emotional and anxious. She was too overwhelmed to negotiate with the bank, write a letter, or even to set out her thoughts in a concise or logical manner.

⁴ We have changed our client's name and other details to protect her privacy and image used is of a model.



The People We Help



Rebecca approached Legal Aid's consumer credit lawyer who explained the process and the options available to her. With our help, she was able to negotiate some hardship assistance and the bank withdrew their legal action upon the basis that Rebecca pay instalments with the help of her extended family. Having stopped the legal action to gain possession of the home, Legal Aid then referred Rebecca to financial counselling and health agencies to address the underlying causes of her financial difficulties.

Case 5 Finding a way through matrimonial debt

Katie⁵ and her husband had separated. The only financial entanglement was a \$47,000 debt to a bank. The loan was in joint names but had been used to buy a car registered in the husband's name. Katie's husband was refusing to pay the loan even though he had the car and was using it. The bank was looking to Katie for payment and had sent her a letter of demand and final notice. There were no assets of the marriage and therefore no expectation of any funds by way of a property settlement. With no money coming her way, Katie couldn't afford a lawyer but she needed to do something because the bank was about to take action. The bank would either force her to pay instalments for a car that she did not have or she would face bankruptcy.

Katie approached Legal Aid. With our help, she completed an application to the Family Court and a supporting affidavit. After starting legal action, Katie's husband got advice and was forced to take a more reasonable position. She was able to settle the matter upon the basis of the husband keeping the car and assuming responsibility for the loan. Katie is now free to start afresh and rebuild her finances without the encumbrance of this car loan.

⁵ We have changed our client's name and other details to protect her privacy and image used is of a model.



Performance Analysis

The Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania set objectives and priorities for the 2014-15 year.

The Legal Aid Commission is able to report against those objectives as follows:

1. Provide high-quality legal representation to disadvantaged Tasmanians

The Legal Aid Commission made 4,927 grants of legal aid during the year. This was 321 grants fewer than the previous year. However there were 1,000 fewer applications for legal aid in 2014-15. Furthermore, duty lawyer services increased by 17% over the year. Duty lawyer services dispose of matters on the first return date at court without the need for a grant of legal aid.

2. Target legal aid services to clients with the greatest need

The means test ensured that the Legal Aid Commission delivered 100% of grants for legal representation for people experiencing financial disadvantage.

3. Provide legal aid services that are appropriate, proportionate and tailored to people's needs and personal legal capability

The Legal Aid Commission has continued to provide a range of services that vary in intensity and cost. A range of services provides greater access to justice by delivering services that are tailored to appropriately match people's legal needs and capabilities. In escalating order of cost and intensity, the range of services includes:

- **Legal information available through the website – 288,153 page views over the year**
- **Legal information through community legal education targeted to communities that experience a high incidence of adverse legal events – 105 sessions reached 5,144 people over the year**
- **Legal information and advice by telephone – 18,524 services over the year**
- **Legal advice in person – 5,881 services over the year**
- **Duty lawyer services at court – 2,973 services over the year**
- **Mediation services – 358 mediations over the year with a 90% settlement rate**
- **Grants of aid for legal representation – 4,927 grants over the year.**



Performance Analysis

4. Be better integrated with non-legal service providers to provide a 'joined up' service that treats the client rather than just the legal problem

Over the year, the Legal Aid Commission's referral of clients to other services increased by 14%. These were referrals to services such as financial counselling, anger management, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, and emergency housing. The Legal Aid Commission maintains a list of 603 agencies for referral and has worked on greater collaboration with those agencies.

5. To increase advice and help for people appearing unrepresented before the courts in criminal and family law cases

Over the year, the Legal Aid Commission afforded priority to duty lawyer services in the Magistrates Court, the Federal Circuit Court and the Family Court. Duty lawyer services increased by 17% in 2014-15. Duty lawyer services are provided free of charge to people who would otherwise be unrepresented at court on that day. Duty lawyer services involve advising an unrepresented litigant, and in appropriate circumstances appearing on their behalf. These services can include bail applications for persons in custody, guilty pleas in mitigation, and representation in urgent interim applications.

6. To assist Commonwealth courts by settling through mediation as many high-conflict cases concerning children as possible

The Legal Aid Commission conducted 358 family dispute resolution mediations over the year. These were high-conflict cases concerning the living arrangements for children. The Legal Aid Commission achieved a 90% rate of settlement in these cases. In terms of numbers of cases and the high rate of settlement, this would be one of the most successful family dispute resolution programs in Australia. These mediations saved many court days and enabled the parties to tailor their own arrangements and have the 'buy in' that comes from a negotiated settlement in preference to the imposition of a court verdict.

7. To start re-designing the Legal Aid Commission website

Legal Aid's website is the authoritative source of legal information for the Tasmanian community. It has registered over 250,000 page views a year. The large number of visitors warranted an updated and re-designed website. Over the year, the Legal Aid Commission completed the mapping, planning, workshops, and scenario-based usability testing necessary to re-design the new website. The aim was to create a website that was more intuitive, with a responsive design that adapts to any screen size, that had literacy support, and that was available in different languages. The website was launched at an event on 12 August 2015.



Performance Analysis

8. To assess the quality of legal services delivered to clients

One of the characteristics of an outstanding Legal Aid Commission is that it delivers high-quality legal services to its clients. To test the quality of services, the Legal Aid Commission carried out a comprehensive survey of client satisfaction. Over a two-week period in June, the Legal Aid Commission surveyed 403 clients and asked them six questions about our service. The information from this survey will be important because the Legal Aid Commission regards feedback, including complaints, as a way of both assessing and improving performance. 76% rated our service as excellent and 23% rated it as good. 99% of clients said they would recommend Legal Aid's service to others.

9. To continue to determine applications for legal aid within a day

National Legal Aid has set a target for Legal Aid Commissions to determine applications for legal aid within 5 days. The Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania has consistently determined applications within one day. Over the last year, the Legal Aid Commission has sustained this success and maintained the one-day processing of applications.

10. To continue to pay lawyers' bills next working day

National Legal Aid has set a target for Legal Aid Commissions to pay lawyers' bills within 14 days. The Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania has consistently paid accounts within one working day. Over the last year, the Legal Aid Commission has maintained the next-day payment of bills. The Legal Aid Commission relies on the private profession to deliver most of the grants of representation in Tasmania. The prompt payment of bills has provided valuable cash flow that has assisted the profession to continue doing legal aid work.

11. To ensure the financial sustainability of the Legal Aid Commission

In recent years, the Legal Aid Commission had been using its cash reserves to fund large deficits. This may have been an appropriate policy in past years but, with reduced reserves, it had to end. In 2014-15, the Legal Aid Commission set about eliminating its deficit and putting itself on a financial footing that would allow the rebuilding of reserves. Over the year, the Legal Aid Commission reduced its expenditure by more than \$1 million and is now budgeting for a surplus that will rebuild reserves. The Legal Aid Commission has achieved this result without significant reductions in service levels.



Performance Analysis

12. To develop a corporate plan for the Legal Aid Commission

Every successful organisation has a plan and knows where it is heading in the future. A corporate plan spells out where an agency is going over the next few years and how it is going to get there. The Legal Aid Commission developed a corporate plan from a planning workshop in late 2014. The Board reflected on the plan and made further changes over two meetings in 2015 before approving a final version. The corporate plan sets a clear direction for the Legal Aid Commission over the 2015-16 year. The plan operates at three levels:

- (a) **It identifies five long-term outcomes that will deliver our vision;**
- (b) **It sets out key strategies to achieve those outcomes;**
and
- (c) **It outlines 27 concrete actions to implement those key strategies.**

13. Reform the Legal Aid Commission's financial reporting framework

In July 2014, the Legal Aid Commission reviewed its financial reporting framework. This internal review identified opportunities to improve the speed, accuracy and accessibility of financial information available to manage the agency during times of budgetary austerity. As a result of this internal review, the Legal Aid Commission reduced its Chart of Accounts, updated its funding allocation methodology, documented internal systems and policies, and changed its reporting structures. Over the year, there has also been a substantial development of the in-house systems and the implementation of Technology 1 financials.



Performance Analysis

Reporting against the National Partnership Agreement

Commonwealth funding to the Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania is governed by the National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services ('NPA').

The period of the NPA was 2010 to 2014. In early 2014, the Commonwealth extended it for another year to 30 June 2015.

The NPA sets out performance indicators and benchmarks. The Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania has performed strongly against a range of NPA indicators and benchmarks.

- A 32.6% increase in the total number of services delivered against the benchmark year of 2009-10 exceeds the Commonwealth target of 25%.
- A 28.6% increase in the number of successful outcomes for people over four years.
- The Commonwealth set a benchmark of less than 20% of legal aid recipients returning with the same type of matter within two years. The Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania exceeded this benchmark with only 4% of applicants returning with the same type of matter within two years.

Reporting Against Commonwealth Performance Indicators*

Performance Indicator	Service count 2009-2010	Service count 2014-2015
Referrals	7,324	10,872
Website page views	214,224	288,153
Early Intervention Services (face to face advice)	4,833	5,881
Dispute Resolution Services	813	928
No. of duty lawyer services, dispute resolution services and grants of aid in commonwealth matters	2,163	2,326

* Selected key indicators are reported only.



Performance Analysis

Measuring Performance

The year saw the release of two reviews bearing on the Legal Aid Commission.

Access to Justice Arrangements

On 3 December 2014 the Commonwealth Government released the Productivity Commission's final report on *Access to Justice Arrangements*. This was a landmark report resulting from a 15 month inquiry into Australia's civil dispute resolution system. This report recommended ways to improve access to justice in civil law (including family law). The report devotes more than two chapters to the not-for-profit legal assistance sector and its recommendations included:

- **State and Commonwealth Governments injecting an extra \$200 million a year into legal aid;**
- **Legal Aid Commissions building on their existing telephone helplines and coordinating with Community Legal Centres to ensure that referrals occur as appropriate according to the 'no wrong door' principle.**
- **Legal Aid Commissions and Community Legal Centres using 'legal health check' interview screening tools to identify and prioritise the legal needs of clients.**

The report also found that the mixed model of service delivery (a mix of in-house and private lawyers) was successful. The Productivity Commission found that the mixed model created competition between public and private lawyers that controlled costs.

Review of the Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania

On 4 November 2014, the Attorney-General announced a review of the Legal Aid Commission by the Honourable Peter Evans. The review enjoyed the full

co-operation of the Legal Aid Commission at every juncture. The review was released publicly on 5 June 2015 and the Department of Justice has identified ten recommendations as follows:

- **Parliament should reduce the Legal Aid Board from ten to five members**
- **Parliament should amend the Act to exempt duty lawyer and advice services from the requirement that the Legal Aid Commission can only assist people who can't afford a lawyer**
- **The Legal Aid Commission should regularly compare the cost of grants being performed in-house against the cost of the private profession providing them**
- **The Legal Aid Commission should permit transfers of legal aid from one private lawyer to another where there is no additional cost**
- **There is no need to set up panels of private lawyers to do legal aid work**
- **The Legal Aid Commission should do all it can to expedite the determination of reviews**
- **The Legal Aid Commission should determine the staff profile it needs and ensure its employment arrangements are flexible**
- **The Legal Aid Commission should ensure its flexibility by using fixed-term contracts of employment whenever possible**
- **When confronted by financial constraints the LACT should first look to cutting the provision of non-means tested services**
- **The Department of Health and Human Services be required to reimburse the Legal Aid Commission for the cost of all child protection grants of aid**

Over the next financial year, the Board will work with the Department on an implementation plan for those recommendations.



Performance Analysis

Against the Legal Aid Commission Corporate Plan 2014-16

Achievements at a glance

1. Ensure the right people get access to legal aid

- Worked to achieve greater consistency in the application of guidelines
- Improved and standardised review committees against best practice benchmarks
- Consolidated all Board policies, resolutions, and directions into one accessible document

2. Strike an appropriate balance in allocating resources between information, advice and representation

- Upgraded the website

3. Deliver high-quality legal services

- Installed video technology to enhance client experience in regional locations
- Completed a client satisfaction survey

4. Contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of the court system

- Increased duty lawyer services
- Completing a project to eliminate the 'daily limit' from grants
- Created a state-wide criminal practice to achieve greater flexibility in allocating senior lawyers to Supreme Court matters

5. Manage taxpayers funds appropriately

- Managers completed training in performance management
- Overhauled the financial reporting framework to provide better information to managers at all levels
- Lowered overheads by more than \$1 million



Safe at Home

Safe at Home



Legal Aid plays an important role in protecting victims of family violence.

The Legal Aid Commission has a Safe at Home team that provides advice, assistance, representation and referrals for victims of family violence. The team also has a Community Legal Education component to raise the personal legal capability of victims and the services that support victims.

Our Safe at Home lawyers help victims get family violence orders and help them to fine-tune existing orders to ensure that they are sufficiently protective or allow safe contact. Apart from getting an order, our team provides further information to clients and referral to other agencies for safety planning, counselling and support. Our Safe at Home lawyers share information about risk and safety with other agencies such as police, family violence counselling, child protection services, and court support and liaison. The sharing of information helps to ensure that significant risks are identified for a coordinated response.

Legal Aid's Safe at Home team is integrated with a broader network of agencies including Tasmania Police's Victim Safety Response Teams, Court Support and Liaison Services, Family Violence Counselling and Support Services, Child Protection Services, the Department of Justice policy unit, and dedicated prosecutors. The idea of the integrated approach is to ensure that victims receive the services they need and all agencies share information to address safety issues.

In 2014-15, Legal Aid provided 1,063 services to victims of family violence. Only 89 of these cases required court appearances.



Mental Health & Disability

Mental Health & Disability



Our role is to empower clients to have access to justice, test the evidence, and ensure that the orders represent the least restrictive intervention consistent with need, health and safety.

People with mental health issues and disabilities are amongst the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our community. Sometimes they have decisions made for them by Boards and Tribunals. In circumstances of disability, these decisions include appointing someone to make financial decisions and decisions about where they live, their medical treatment, where they work, or with whom they associate. The decisions can also authorise treatment for mental illness including detention in hospital.

Legal Aid's mental health and disability service provides advice and representation before the Mental Health Tribunal and the Guardianship Board in relation to the decisions described above. Our role is to empower clients to have access to justice, test the evidence, and ensure that the orders represent the least restrictive intervention consistent with need, health and safety. Without Legal Aid's service, these clients, who are the least able to protect their rights, would face alone the proceedings likely to restrict their ability to make their own choices.

In 2014-15, Legal Aid delivered 916 client services to people living with mental health and disability issues.



Grants of Legal Aid

Grants of Legal Aid

We provide grants of legal aid for people who:

- **cannot afford a lawyer;**
- **are experiencing a legal problem that falls within our guidelines (usually criminal law, family law or child protection matters); and**
- **have a legal problem that we can help with.**

A grant of legal aid enables a lawyer to act for a client. Usually lawyers represent clients in court or at mediations. About 64% of grants of legal aid are to private lawyers while the remainder are to in-house lawyers. Clients choose their own lawyer. In 2014-15, we granted \$3.8 million to the private profession for costs and disbursements to deliver legal aid.

The Legal Aid Commission has a team of four part-time grants officers, a grants manager and administrative support. The cost of administering grants is very low – about 5% of the total value of the grants program. Grants officers determine applications for legal aid very quickly – within one day.

In the 2014-15 year, there were 5,885 new applications for legal aid. There were a further 15,524 applications to extend existing grants of legal aid. A grants officer processes about 85 applications for legal aid every working day.

In 2014-15, grants officers approved 87% of all applications for new grants in crime. Grants officers approved 78% of all applications for new grants in family law.

The 'daily limit'.

The Board of the Legal Aid Commission imposed a 'daily limit' in August 2013. This was a budgetary control measure to ensure that Legal Aid had funds available for grants every day that the courts were open. The 'daily limit' restricts grants officers to a daily figure in State matters and in Commonwealth matters.

Although the 'daily limit' has been an effective budgetary measure, the Legal Aid Commission is working toward removing it. The aim is to have guidelines and eligibility criteria that match the funds available for grants of legal aid. This would deliver more certainty to the community about what matters the Legal Aid Commission is able to fund. The Legal Aid Commission will consult with the community on these proposed changes over the next financial year.



Review of Grants Officers' Decisions

Reviewing the Decisions of Legal Aid Grants Officers

The law provides for Legal Aid to set up Review Committees.

These Review Committees review the decisions made by Legal Aid's grants officers.

By law, Review Committees are made up of three members:

- **A private lawyer**
- **A person who is neither a private lawyer nor an employee working at Legal Aid but who has relevant qualifications and experience to review decisions; and**
- **An employee working at Legal Aid.**

Review Committees have a statutory duty to independently review decisions and to confirm, vary or set aside the grants officer's decision. Legal Aid has three Review Committees and we have set them a target to complete reviews within 14 days.

Over the last year, Legal Aid has re-examined and overhauled the statutory review process. We have developed a training protocol to up-skill newly appointed Review Committee members and for the ongoing development of existing members. Legal Aid has also developed a more targeted approach in allocating reviews. For example, we refer reviews of grants officers' decisions on complex criminal matters to the Committee made up of senior criminal law practitioners.

Over the last financial year, there were 82 reviews of grants officers' decisions by Review Committees. In 2014-15, Review Committees overturned the decisions of grants officers in one third of all reviews. This is not surprising because applicants provide Review Committees with more information than is available to grants officers.

Over the financial year, the Review Committees were made up as follows:

Chair: Patrick Fitzgerald

Private lawyer: Frances DiGiovanni

Relevant qualifications and experience: Jane Hutchison

Chair: Baia Harradine

Private lawyer: Craig Mackie

Relevant qualifications and experience: Catherine Vickers

Chair: Tamila Smith/
Katie Edwards

Private lawyer: Tony Fitzgerald

Relevant qualifications and experience: Anne Matuszek



Our Partners

Working with our partners

The Legal Aid Commission collaborates with the private profession, the Department of Justice and Community Legal Centres to deliver a seamless service that uses taxpayers' funds efficiently.

Private lawyers

The Legal Aid Commission grants aid to private lawyers to represent legally aided clients. The private profession delivers about 64% of all legal aid in Tasmania for representation. Over the financial year, the Legal Aid Commission paid \$3.8 million in making 11,252 new grants and extensions of aid to 156 law firms and service providers. The private profession received 7% more new grants of legal aid than in the previous year.

The Legal Aid Commission publicly acknowledges and thanks all the private lawyers who delivered legal aid to disadvantaged Tasmanians. The Legal Aid Commission could not maintain its high levels of service delivery without the contribution of the private profession.

We provide private lawyers with training opportunities and in return they bring invaluable expertise to our seminars. In 2014-15, the Legal Aid Commission conducted training for over 90% of the State's Independent Children's Lawyers to improve the quality of representation for children.

Tasmanian Legal Assistance Forum

The Tasmanian Legal Assistance Forum ('TASLAF') is a body made up of all the representatives of the

legal assistance sector. It meets to share information, improve coordination, and to encourage collaborative service delivery to disadvantaged people.

TASLAF is made up of the Community Legal Centres, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, the Law Society's free legal service division, the Council of Social Services, the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department, and the Legal Aid Commission. The Deputy Secretary of the Department of Justice chairs this forum and the Legal Aid Commission provided the secretarial support for it. TASLAF is a sector-wide opportunity to share information, map and profile the need for legal assistance, and plan which agencies will provide services to which parts of the sector. It aims to ensure that there is no duplication of services and that the sector is properly servicing areas of need.

TASLAF met on 15 October 2014.

Community Legal Centres

The Legal Aid Commission administered funding to five generalist and specialist community legal centres in Tasmania. The Community Legal Centres and the Legal Aid Commission work closely together to deliver a seamless service to economically and socially disadvantaged Tasmanians. The Legal Aid Commission and Community Legal Centres communicate regularly to avoid duplication of services and gaps in service delivery.

Over the year, the Legal Aid Commission and the CLCs cooperated as follows:

- **Legal Aid consulted with CLCs Tasmania Inc. on our guidelines for grants;**
- **The Director of Hobart CLC, is a member of one of our review committees that reviews the decisions of grants officers;**



Our Partners Cont

- **Hobart CLC is contracted to provide our duty lawyer service on week-ends;**
- **The Director of Legal Aid has visited Hobart, Launceston, and Devonport CLCs and the Women’s Legal Service during the year;**
- **The Director of Legal Aid and the Tasmanian State Program Manager (an officer from Legal Aid who manages the funding to CLCs) attended the AGM of CLCs Tasmania Inc;**
- **The Legal Aid Family Practice Manager met with Launceston and NW CLCs to improve communication and collaboration;**
- **The Legal Aid Grants Manager and Family Dispute Resolution Manager met with the CEO of Launceston CLC to improve communication and collaboration;**
- **Launceston CLC jointly presented six community legal education sessions with Legal Aid officers;**
- **Legal Aid included staff from CLCs in our ‘defusing explosive situations’ training to improve staff safety;**
- **A Legal Aid lawyer is the principal solicitor at Launceston CLC;**
- **Some Legal Aid lawyers volunteer for the after hours advice service at Launceston and Hobart CLCs;**
- **The State Program Manager for CLCs is based out of Legal Aid and assists in the day-to-day coordination and management of the Commonwealth CLC program on behalf of the Commonwealth; and**
- **The Legal Aid Manager for community legal education is holding regular meetings with CLCs to identify need and prepare a program for future community legal education.**

The Department of Justice

The Department of Justice and the Legal Aid Commission work closely together in Human Relations and with other Justice agencies. All officers at the Legal Aid Commission are employees of the Department of Justice.

The Legal Aid Commission attends Justice Output Managers’ meetings convened by the Secretary of the Department of Justice. These meetings work to improve standards in workplace health and safety, reporting, and people management. These meetings help ensure the efficient operation of the justice system in Tasmania.

The Department’s Strategic Legislation and Policy branch regularly consults with the Legal Aid Commission about proposed amendments to legislation in both criminal and civil law.

The Legal Aid Commission also maintains close working relationships with the Commonwealth Attorney-General’s Department and participates in Commonwealth justice system advisory groups including the Family Law Consultative Committee and the Family Pathways Network.



Our Organisation

Organisational Overview

The Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania operates under the Legal Aid Commission Act 1990 (Tas). The purpose of the Legal Aid Commission is to provide vulnerable and disadvantaged Tasmanians with access to justice. This is achieved by delivering a range of legal aid services.

Vision

A safer and fairer Tasmania through enhanced access to justice.

Mission

To deliver a range of high-quality legal services to as many needy Tasmanians as possible.

Values

Integrity

we act ethically at all times

Professionalism

we provide high quality services

Efficiency

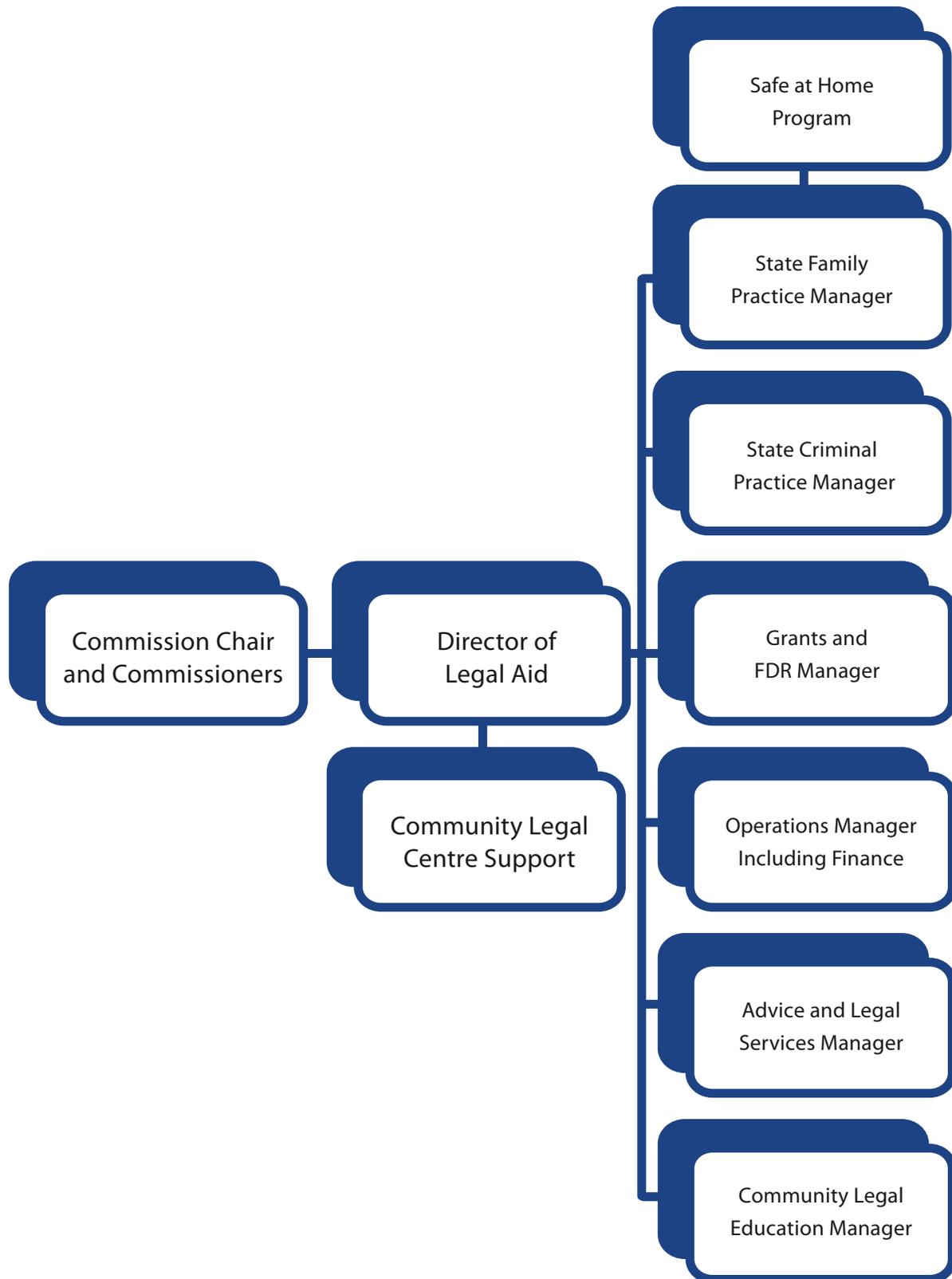
we use taxpayers resources responsibly and pursue continuous improvement

Fairness

we ensure equitable access to the right services



Our Organisation



Our Organisation

Commissioners

The Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania is responsible to a Board of Commissioners, all of whom are appointed to the Commission by the Attorney-General

Patrick Lunn

Patrick graduated from the University of Tasmania with the combined degrees of a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Laws, majoring in political science in 1995. He was admitted to practice in the Supreme Court of Tasmania in 1996, appointed a partner of Simmons Wolfhagen in 2004 and managing partner of Simmons Wolfhagen in 2011.



Patrick has practised in commercial litigation since 1995. His practice has included; debt recovery and securities enforcement, Testator's Family Maintenance Act applications, estate disputes, partnership and shareholder's disputes, bankruptcy and insolvency litigation, professional negligence claims, residential and commercial tenancy disputes and commercial disputes between vendors and purchasers of property and businesses and other contracting parties.

Patrick became a member of the board of management of Plane Tree Studio Inc. in 1997 and has been a chair of its board of management since 1998. On 4 November 2014, Patrick was appointed Chairperson of the Legal Aid Commission

Graham Hill

Graham Hill became Director of the Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania on 28 January 2014.



Graham came from the Department of Justice in Victoria where he had spent three years in a Deputy Secretary role leading courts administration. Before then, Graham had been Director of the Legal Branch at the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet. Graham spent 14 years in private practice and was a partner at the Melbourne law firm of Ryan Carlisle Thomas. He was also an Associate to Justice Gray at the Federal Court of Australia.

Graham was admitted to practice as a Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Victoria and the High Court of Australia in 1990. He has a Bachelor of Economics and a Master of Laws from Monash University. Graham has also completed a doctoral thesis at the University of Melbourne's law school.



Our Organisation

Commissioners

Tamara Jago SC

Ms Jago is the Northern Criminal Practice Manager for the Legal Aid Commission.

Ms Jago was nominated by the Staff and re-appointed on 12 August 2013 for a further term of three years.

She was admitted to practice in 1994 and spent the next 6 years in private practice working in the areas of criminal law and family law. In 2000, Ms Jago joined the Legal Aid Commission, and since then her practice has predominantly involved criminal trial and appellate work.

On 1 April 2010, Ms Jago was appointed Senior Counsel.

Ms Jago is also responsible for the management and professional development of the criminal lawyers employed in the Commission's Launceston, Devonport and Burnie offices.



Yvette Cehtel

Re-appointed on 22 December 2012 for a term of three years.

Ms Cehtel is currently self employed as a consultant in Launceston. She graduated from the University of Tasmania with a Bachelor of Laws in 1995 and was admitted to the Supreme Court of Tasmania in 2000.



Ms Cehtel brings a diverse range of legal experience to the Commission, having worked as a private practitioner with Douglas & Collins, Barristers & Solicitors, for the Crown Law Office in Wellington New Zealand and as Legal Adviser to the former Attorney General, Judy Jackson.

Ms Cehtel's diverse background and experience in government law, private practice, international and treaty law, law reform activities, social justice and the rights of Aborigines led to her appointment to the Commission in September 2009.

Stephen Morrison

Re-appointed on 2 November 2012 for a term of three years.

Mr Morrison has been an employee in the Tasmanian Public Service for a period of 19 years. He is currently the Director Finance in the Department of Justice.



Mr Morrison has previously been employed within the Tasmanian Audit Office, the Department of Treasury and Finance and the former Department of Economic Development in a variety of auditing and accounting roles. Mr Morrison has a Degree in Commerce from the University of Tasmania (1992) and is a FCPA member of CPA Australia.



Our Organisation

Commissioners

Greg Barns

Nominated by the Law Society of Tasmania – appointed on 11 November 2013 for a term of three years.

Mr Barns graduated BA LLB from Monash University in 1984. He is a member of the Tasmanian Bar, and is also a member of the Victorian and Western Australian Bars. Greg practices from Salamanca Chambers in Hobart and Stawell Chambers in Melbourne. He is a Spokesperson for the Australian Lawyers Alliance and was National President of the Alliance in 2011-12. Greg is a founder of the Prisoners Legal Advisory Service. He has experience as a non-executive director of ASX listed companies and is the author of 3 books on Australian politics. He writes a weekly column for the Hobart Mercury.



of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators. He was admitted as a Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Tasmania and the High Court of Australia in 1998, but no longer maintains a legal practising certificate now he works as an academic.

Daniel Zeeman

Nominated by the Law Society of Tasmania and appointed on 7 November 2014 for a term of six months. Daniel is a graduate of the University of Tasmania in Law and Arts. He was admitted to the Supreme Court of Tasmania on 2 September 1992. His areas of practice are defamation, estate litigation and workers' compensation.



Daniel is a past Deputy Chairman of the Parole Board of Tasmania, President of the Law Society of Tasmania and is currently a member of the Andrew Inglis Law Library Management Committee. He is also a member of the Society of Trust in Estate Practitioners (Tasmania Branch). Daniel became a partner of the Hobart law firm Butler, McIntyre and Butler in May 1999.

Tom Baxter

Nominated by the Community Legal Centres in Tasmania - appointed on 18 June 2014 for a term of three years. Tom is a lecturer, and the Corporate Governance Course Coordinator, at the Tasmanian School of Business and Economics, University of Tasmania, where he has worked since June 2003. He previously worked as a lawyer for: the Australian Government statutory authority managing the Great Barrier Reef (January 2000 - May 2003); and Dobson, Mitchell & Allport (September 1997 - December 1999).



Tom holds a PhD in Law (Tasmania), Master of Laws (Australian National University), and Bachelor of Economics and Law (Tasmania). He is a Fellow of the Governance Institute of Australia Ltd and of the Institute



Finance

Statements





Financial Statements

**For the Year Ended
30 June 2015**



Tasmanian Audit Office

Independent Auditor's Report

To Members of the Tasmanian Parliament

Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania

Financial Report for the Year Ended 30 June 2015

Report on the Financial Report

I have audited the accompanying financial report of the Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania (the Commission) which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2015 and the statements of comprehensive income, changes in equity and cash flows for the year ended on that date, a summary of significant accounting policies, other explanatory notes and the statement by the Commissioners.

Auditor's Opinion

In my opinion the Commission's financial report:

- (a) presents fairly, in all material respects, its financial position as at 30 June 2015, and its financial performance, cash flows and changes in equity for the year then ended
- (b) is in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards.

The Responsibility of the Commissioners for the Financial Report

The Commissioners are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards. This responsibility includes establishing and maintaining internal controls relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

Auditor's Responsibility

My responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based upon my audit. My audit was conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. These Auditing Standards require that I comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance as to whether the financial report is free of material misstatement.

...1 of 2

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on my judgement, including the assessment of risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, I considered internal control relevant to the Commissioners' preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate to the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Commission's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the Commissioners, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my audit opinion.

Independence

In conducting this audit, I have complied with the independence requirements of Australian Auditing Standards and other relevant ethical requirements. The *Audit Act 2008* 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 State Entities but precluding the provision of non-audit services, thus ensuring the Auditor-General and the Tasmanian Audit Office are not compromised in their role by the possibility of losing clients or income.

Tasmanian Audit Office



Jara K Dean
**Assistant Auditor-General Financial Audit
Delegate of the Auditor-General**

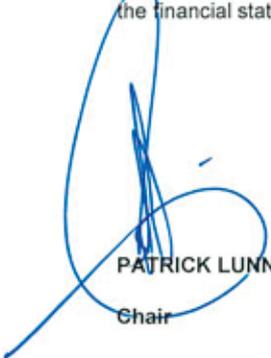
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17 September 2015

LEGAL AID COMMISSION OF TASMANIA
FINANCE REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015

CERTIFICATION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The accompanying financial statements of the Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania have been prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and Australian Interpretations and the Audit Act 2008, and are in agreement with the relevant accounts and records to present fairly the financial transactions for the twelve months ending 30th June 2015 and the financial position as at the 30th June 2015.

At the date of signing we are not aware of any circumstances which would render the particulars included in the financial statements misleading or inaccurate.



PATRICK LUNN
Chair



DR GRAHAM HILL
Director

Dated: 15th September 2015

**LEGAL AID COMMISSION OF TASMANIA
STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015**

	<i>Note</i>	2015 (\$000's)	2014 (\$000's)
Revenues			
Commonwealth Grants and Contributions	<i>11,3</i>	6,192	6,527
Commonwealth Community Legal Centre Grants	<i>11,3</i>	1,725	1,829
State Government Grants and Contributions	<i>11,4</i>	6,032	5,917
State Government Community Legal Centre Grants	<i>11,4</i>	200	200
Other Revenue	<i>11,5</i>	586	2,269
Total Revenues		14,735	16,742
Expenses			
Legal Services Expenses	<i>6</i>	3,863	4,414
Employee Benefits Expenses	<i>7</i>	7,437	7,986
Supplies and Services	<i>8</i>	568	589
Accommodation Expenses	<i>9</i>	780	565
Information and Technology	<i>10</i>	397	420
Other Expenses	<i>11</i>	413	497
Depreciation and Amortisation Expenses	<i>12</i>	115	100
Debts Written Off	<i>13</i>	21	19
Disbursements to Community Legal Centres	<i>14</i>	1,925	2,046
Total Expenses		15,519	16,636
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR		(784)	106
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME		-	-
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE RESULT		(784)	106

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

LEGAL AID COMMISSION OF TASMANIA
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT 30 JUNE 2015

	<i>Note</i>	2015 (\$000's)	2014 (\$000's)
ASSETS			
Current Assets			
Cash and Cash Equivalents	<i>1i, 15</i>	1,865	3,163
Receivables	<i>1m, 16</i>	1,216	568
Other Assets		87	17
Total Current Assets		3,168	3,748
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, Plant & Equipment			
Land and Buildings	<i>1g, 17</i>	361	368
Office Equipment	<i>1g, 17</i>	96	38
Furniture and Fittings	<i>1g, 17</i>	13	3
Leasehold Improvements	<i>1g, 17</i>	88	35
Intangible Assets	<i>1h, 17</i>	138	174
Total Non-Current Assets		696	618
Total Assets		3,864	4,366
LIABILITIES			
Current Liabilities			
Payables	<i>1o, 19</i>	632	256
Provisions	<i>1p, 20</i>	1,126	1,192
Total Current Liabilities		1,758	1,448
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Provisions	<i>1p, 20</i>	264	292
Total Non-Current Liabilities		264	292
Total Liabilities		2,022	1,740
Net Assets		1,842	2,626
EQUITY			
Contributed Equity		325	325
Asset Revaluation Reserve		203	203
Civil Law Disbursement Fund Loan Scheme Reserve		1,138	1,112
Accumulated Surplus/(Loss)		176	986
Total Equity		1,842	2,626

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

**LEGAL AID COMMISSION OF TASMANIA
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015**

	<i>Note</i>	2015 (\$000's) Inflows (Outflows)	2014 (\$000's) Inflows (Outflows)
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Receipts			
Commonwealth Grants and Contributions		6,192	6,527
Commonwealth Grants for Community Legal Centres		1,725	1,829
State Government Grants		6,032	5,917
State Government Grants for Community Legal Centres		200	200
Contributions and Recovered Costs from Clients		89	269
GST Receipts		462	875
Interest Income		68	125
Other		431	2,036
<i>Total Operating Receipts</i>		<u>15,199</u>	<u>17,778</u>
Payments			
Payments for Legal Services		(4,099)	(4,645)
Employee Benefits Expense		(7,531)	(7,778)
Administrative Expense		(2,021)	(2,109)
GST Payments on Purchases		(727)	(875)
Disbursements to Community Legal Centres		(1,925)	(2,046)
<i>Total Operating Payments</i>		<u>(16,303)</u>	<u>(17,453)</u>
Net Cash Provided By/(Used In) Operating Activities	23	<u>(1,104)</u>	<u>325</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Purchase of Non-Current Physical Assets		(171)	-
Purchase of Non-Current Intangible Assets		(23)	-
Net Cash Provided By/(Used In) Investing Activities		<u>(194)</u>	<u>-</u>
Net Increase/(Decrease) in Cash and Cash Equivalents Held		<u>(1,298)</u>	<u>325</u>
Cash Assets and Cash Equivalents at the Beginning of the Year		3,163	2,838
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT THE END OF YEAR	15	<u>1,865</u>	<u>3,163</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

LEGAL AID COMMISSION OF TASMANIA
STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015

	Contributed Equity	Asset Revaluation Reserve	Civil Law Disbursement Fund Loan Scheme Reserve	Accumulated Surplus/Deficit	Total Equity
	\$000's	\$000's	\$000's	\$000's	\$000's
Balance as at 1 July 2014	325	203	1,112	986	2,626
Total Comprehensive Result	-	-	-	(784)	(784)
Transfers to Reserves	-	-	26	(26)	-
Balance as at 30 June 2015	325	203	1,138	176	1,842

	Contributed Equity	Asset Revaluation Reserve	Civil Law Disbursement Fund Loan Scheme Reserve	Accumulated Surplus/Deficit	Total Equity
	\$000's	\$000's	\$000's	\$000's	\$000's
Balance as at 1 July 2013	325	203	834	1,158	2,520
Total Comprehensive Result	-	-	-	106	106
Transfers to Reserves	-	-	278	(278)	-
Balance as at 30 June 2014	325	203	1,112	986	2,626

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

**LEGAL AID COMMISSION OF TASMANIA
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015**

1 Summary of significant accounting policies

(a) General Information

The Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania was established under the Legal Aid Commission Act 1990, on the 1st of January 1991.

These statements have been prepared on a going concern basis in the expectation that the Commission will continue to function and be funded in the future on the basis as set out in the existing Commonwealth/State Agreement which commenced on the 1st July 2010, and was still in effect as at the 30th June 2015. This National Partnership Agreement expired on the 30th June 2015 and was replaced with a new agreement commencing 1st July 2015 and will expire 30 June 2020.

(b) Basis of Preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Audit Act 2008 and Australian Accounting Standards issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB). The following accounting policies have been adopted, and unless otherwise stated are consistent with those adopted in the preceding year, and throughout all periods. The Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania is classified as a not-for-profit entity. Consequently, where appropriate, the Commission has elected to apply options and exemptions with accounting standards that are applicable to not-for-profit entities.

The Financial Statements were signed on the 14th August 2015 by the Commission Chair and the Director of Legal Aid. Following the audit, the Financial Statements were resigned on the 15th of September 2015.

Compliance with the Australian Accounting Standards (AAS) may not result in compliance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), as the AAS include requirements and options available to not-for-profit organisations that are inconsistent with IFRS. The Commission is considered to be not-for-profit and has adopted some accounting policies under the AAS that do not comply with IFRS.

The financial statements have been prepared on the accrual basis of accounting using the historical cost convention, except for the revaluation of land, buildings and other infrastructure which have been measured at fair value. The financial statements are presented in Australian dollars and all values are rounded to the nearest thousand dollars (\$'000) unless otherwise stated.

Judgements made by management in the application of Australian Accounting Standards that have significant effects on the financial statements are disclosed throughout the notes in the financial statements.

Accounting policies are selected and applied in a manner which ensures that the resulting financial information satisfies the concepts of relevance and reliability, thereby ensuring that the substance of the underlying transactions or other events is reported.

The following Australian Accounting Standards applicable to the Commission have recently been issued or amended but as they are not yet effective, management has chosen not to adopt them for the year ended 30th June 2015.

Affected Standard	AASB Amendment	Nature of Change to Accounting Policy	Reporting Periods Commencing On or After	Application Date for the Commission	Impact on Financial Report
AASB 2014-4	Clarification of Acceptable Methods of Depreciation and Amortisation.	Reinforcing the principle for the basis of depreciation and amortisation as being the expected pattern of consumption of the future economic benefits of an asset	1 January 2016	1 July 2016	Changes are not expected to materially affect the Commission.
AASB 9	Financial Instruments.	The Standard was revised to include a model for classification and measurement, a single, forward-looking 'expected loss' impairment model and a reformed approach to hedge accounting	1 January 2018	1 July 2018	Changes are not expected to materially affect the Commission.
Annual Improvement 2012-2014 Cycle	Annual Improvements to AASB 2012-2014 Cycle.	AASB 5 – Changes in methods of disposal of non-current assets. AASB 7 – applicability of amendments to interim financial statements. AASB 119 –clarifies the denomination of corporate bonds used as a discount factor. Changes to other AASB not relevant to the Commission.	1 January 2016	1 July 2016	Changes are not expected to materially affect the Commission.

**LEGAL AID COMMISSION OF TASMANIA
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015**

Summary of significant accounting policies (cont'd)

Affected Standard	AASB Amendment	Nature of Change to Accounting Policy	Reporting Periods Commencing On or After	Application Date for the Commission	Impact on Financial Report
AASB 2015-2	Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Disclosure Initiative.	Further encouragement to companies to apply professional judgment in determining what information to disclose in the financial statements.	1 January 2016	1 July 2016	Changes are not expected to materially affect the Commission.
AASB 2015-3	Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Withdrawal of Materiality	Removes Australian guidance on materiality from Australian Accounting Standards	1 July 2015	1 July 2015	Changes are not expected to materially affect the Commission.
AASB 2015-6	Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Extending Related Party Disclosures to Not-for-Profit Public	Extends to scope of AASB 124 <i>Related Party Disclosures</i> to include not-for-profit public sector entities	1 July 2016	1 July 2016	Changes are not expected to materially affect the Commission.

(c) Goods and services Tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST), except:

- i. where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the taxation authority, it is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of an asset or as part of an item of expense; or
- ii. for receivables and payables which are recognised inclusive of GST.

The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the taxation authority is included as part of receivables or payables.

Cash flows are included in the Statement of Cash Flows on a net basis. The GST component of cash flows arising from investing and financing activities which is recoverable from, or payable to, the taxation authority is classified as operating cash flows.

(d) Reporting Entity

The reporting entity comprises the Commission and there are no related bodies.

(e) Contributed Equity

Contributions made to Legal Aid by the Government (the owner) as contributions by owners are recognised as equity contributions and have been credited directly to Contributed Equity.

(f) Income

Revenue Recognition

Revenues are recognised at fair value of the consideration received, net of GST when applicable. Full details of the revenues received by the Commission are detailed within Notes 3, 4 and 5. The Commission's revenues consist predominantly of contributions by both Commonwealth and State Governments, contributions and recovered costs from legally aided clients and interest income from the investment of unutilised cash holdings.

State and Commonwealth Grants and Contributions

Grant Revenue and Contributions are recognised in the period in which the Commission gains control of the appropriate funds. Control is usually gained upon their receipt. Grant funds and contributions from Federal and State Governments are not required to be repaid if not fully expended within the financial year.

Other Revenue

Civil Law Disbursement Fund Loans Contributions relate to a premium charged on repayment of civil law disbursement loans. This revenue is recognised on a cash received basis as it is dependent on the outcome of the legal proceedings.

Client Contributions and Cost Recoveries are recognised on an accrual basis when the work has been performed.

Interest Income is recognised as the interest accrues to the net carrying amount of the financial asset.

The Solicitors' Trust Distributions represent monies received under Section 361 of the Legal Profession Act 2007. Under the Act if the Guarantee Fund exceeds a predetermined threshold the Minister may invite the Commission to make application for a grant of monies from the Guarantee Fund.

Grants received are recognised as income when the Association has fulfilled the terms and conditions of receiving the grant. When there are conditions attached to grant revenue relating to the use of those grants for specific purposes it is recognised in the statement of financial position as a liability until such conditions are met or services provided.

**LEGAL AID COMMISSION OF TASMANIA
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015**

1 Summary of significant accounting policies (cont'd)

(g) Property, Plant and Equipment

Initial recognition and measurement

All items of property, plant and equipment are initially recognised at cost. Plant and equipment purchased for less than \$5,000 are charged to expense as incurred. Items with a cost of more than \$5,000 but considered to contribute economic benefits beyond one year are held as assets and recorded in the Commission's asset register.

The Commission has not acquired any items of property, plant and equipment at no cost or for nominal consideration, during the reporting period.

Subsequent measurement

After recognition of an asset, the revaluation model is used for the measurement of land and buildings and the cost model for all other plant and equipment, and leasehold improvements. Land and buildings are carried at fair value less accumulated depreciation on buildings and accumulated impairment losses. All other items of plant and equipment are stated at historical cost less accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses.

Revaluation increments, on a class of assets basis, are recognised in other comprehensive income and accumulated in the asset revaluation reserve. Revaluation decreases that offset previous increases of the same class of assets shall be recognised in other comprehensive income under the heading of revaluation surplus and the resultant decrease reflected in the asset revaluation reserve. All other decreases are recognised in profit and loss.

Any accumulated depreciation at the date of the revaluation is eliminated against the gross carrying amount of the asset and the net amount is restated to the revalued amount of the asset.

The Commission has a library which has been progressively depreciated to zero value, with maintenance and additions expensed in the period in which those costs are incurred.

Depreciation and Amortisation

All non-current assets having a limited useful life are systematically depreciated over their estimated useful lives in a manner which reflects the consumption of their future economic benefits.

Land is not depreciated. Depreciation and amortisation on other assets is calculated using the straight line method, using rates which are reviewed annually. Estimated useful lives for each class of depreciable asset are:

Buildings on Freehold Land	25 Years
Office Equipment	4 Years
Furniture and Fixtures	4 Years
Leasehold Improvements	4 Years

(h) Intangible Assets

Software that is an integral part of the related hardware is treated as property, plant and equipment. Software that is not an integral part of the related hardware is treated as an intangible asset and amortised over 10 years. Software costing less than \$5,000 is expensed in the year of acquisition.

The Commission's current policy has been to expense web site development and maintenance in the period in which it occurs.

Key third party applications software is used under license and these costs are expensed in the period in which they are incurred.

The amortisation rate adopted reflects a useful life of 10 years, and this will be subject to annual impairment testing and review. The Case Management System is being amortised over 10 years, and this commenced on 1 July 2007.

(i) Impairment of Assets

Property, plant and equipment and intangible assets are tested for any indication of impairment at each reporting date. Where there is an indication of impairment, the recoverable amount is estimated. Where recoverable amount is less than the carrying amount, the asset is written down to the recoverable amount and an impairment loss is recognised. As the Commission is a not-for-profit entity, unless an asset has been identified as a surplus asset, the recoverable amount is the higher of an asset's fair value less costs to sell and depreciated replacement cost.

**LEGAL AID COMMISSION OF TASMANIA
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015**

1 Summary of significant accounting policies (cont'd)

(j) Grants of Aid

Grants of aid are recognised as an expenditure commitment on the approval of the granting of aid and are based on a provisional cost estimate, and are detailed in Note 22 Legal Case Commitment. The provisional cost estimate reflects the estimated cost of the assignment based on the relevant scale of fees.

Legal costs in relation to the grants of aid are recognised as an expense and a liability on receipt of a claim for services provided.

Levies towards the cost of aid payable by the client are recognised as an asset, *Contributions* on approval of the grant of aid. Provision for impairment is provided for in accordance with Note 16.

(k) Leases

Lease payments are expensed on a straight line basis over the lease term, and in the period in which they are incurred as this represents the pattern of benefits derived from the leased property.

Classification of leases as to whether they are operating leases or finance leases involves the interpretation of the lease arrangement to determine whether the lessors retain the risks and benefits incidental to ownership.

The Commission has not entered into any finance lease arrangements.

(l) Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and cash equivalent assets, comprise cash on hand and short-term deposits with an original maturity of three months or less that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and which are subject to an insignificant risk of changes in value.

For the purposes of the Statement of Cash Flows, cash and cash equivalents consist of cash in the Commission's bank accounts and cash held at the Tasmanian Public Sector Finance Corporation (TASCORP).

(m) Receivables

Unsecured Debtors

Unsecured debtors are recognised and carried at the amounts receivable. The carrying amount is equivalent to fair value. The vast majority of the Commission's unsecured debtors are for small contributions toward the client's legal costs. The collectability of these receivables is reviewed on an ongoing basis and any receivables identified as uncollectible are written-off. The provision for uncollectible amounts is reviewed regularly.

(n) Employee Benefits Expenses

The related expense item includes salaries of Commission employees, superannuation contributions, leave entitlement adjustments, relocation, advertising, other direct related costs and the Commissioner's remuneration.

As at the 30th June 2015 the Commission employed 62.8 (2014: 66.9) full time equivalents.

(o) Payables

Payables are carried at amortised cost; due to their short term nature they are not discounted.

Legal Creditors are recognised upon certification of those amounts for payment. Grant of aid commitments are settled as the case progresses. Matters can be outstanding for between 3 months and several years.

Trade Creditors are recognised when the economic entity becomes obliged to make future payments resulting from the purchase of goods and services. Measurement is based on the agreed purchase/contract cost.

Accrued Salaries represent the amount due to staff but unpaid at the end of the financial year. The amount shown includes the employer funded superannuation contribution.

(p) Provisions

Annual Leave and Long Service Leave

All annual leave and unconditional long service leave provisions are classified as current liabilities as the Commission does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement of the liability for at least 12 months after the reporting date.

Long service leave expected to be settled more than 12 months after the end of the reporting date is measured at the present value of amounts expected to be paid when the liabilities are settled. Leave liabilities are in respect of services provided by employees up to the reporting date.

When assessing the expected future payments, consideration is given to expect future wage and salary levels including non-salary components such as employer superannuation contributions.

Superannuation

The Commission is required to reimburse the Commonwealth Government for the employer share of the cost of Superannuation benefits paid in respect of staff transferred to the Commission and who remained members of the Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme or the Public Sector Superannuation Scheme. The Commission discharges this liability by periodic payments to the Retirement Benefits Office of amounts, expressed as a percentage of the salaries of eligible employees, estimated by the Retirement Benefits Office to be sufficient to meet the Commission's share of the full accruing cost of the pensions granted on the retirement or death of such employees.

LEGAL AID COMMISSION OF TASMANIA
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015

1 Summary of significant accounting policies (cont'd)

For employees who are contributors under the Retirement Benefits Fund Act, the liability for the scheme is accepted by the Crown and administered by the Retirement Benefits Fund Board.

The Commission does not operate an employer sponsored defined benefits fund.

Sick Leave

No amount is shown for non-vested sick leave as no present obligation to employees exists.

(q) **Taxation**

Legal Aid Commission is considered to be a public benevolent institution under the Income Tax Assessment Act and is therefore exempt from income tax and fringe benefits tax. The Commission is also exempt from State based taxation, including Payroll Tax, Stamp Duties and Financial Institution Duty.

(r) **Investments and Other Financial Assets**

Investments and financial assets in the scope of AASB 139 *Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement* are categorised as either financial assets at fair value through profit or loss, loans and receivables, held-to-maturity investments or available-for-sale assets. The classification depends on the purpose for which the investments were acquired. Designation is re-evaluated at each financial year end, but there are restrictions on reclassifying to other categories. The Commission only has *Loans and Receivables* financial assets.

Loans and Receivables are carried at cost. Gains and losses are recognised in the profit or loss when the loans and receivables are derecognised or impaired. These are included in current assets, except for those with maturities greater than 12 months after balance date, which are classified as non-current. In both financial years disclosed the Commission did not have any non-current financial assets.

(s) **Comparative Figures**

When required by Accounting Standards, comparative figures have been adjusted to confirm to changes in presentation for the current financial year.

(t) **Estimates and Judgement**

Estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimates are revised if the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods if the revision affects both current and future periods.

Judgements made by management that have significant effects on the financial statements and estimates with a significant risk of material adjustments in the next year are disclosed, where applicable, in the relevant notes to the financial statements. These include:

- Provisions – Employee Benefits
- Commitments for Expenditure

2 Financial Risk Management Objectives and Policies

The Commission's activities expose it to a variety of financial risks: credit risk, liquidity risk and interest rate risk.

The Commission reviews and agrees policies for managing each of these risks and they are summarised below:

Risk exposures and Responses

Credit Risk

Credit risk arises from the financial assets of the organisation which comprise cash and cash equivalents and receivables. The organisation's exposure to credit risk arises from the potential default of the counter party, with the maximum exposure equal to the carrying amount of these assets.

The Commission is open to credit risks particularly in respect of Contributions due from its clients. It has policies in place to ensure that where possible significant debts due are adequately secured by way of caveats over the properties of the debtor. It is not practicable to secure all contributions either because the amount of the debt is small or the client does not have adequate assets to offer as security. The Commission monitors the debts on an ongoing basis to ensure that they are collected promptly to minimise the amount of irrecoverable debts to be written off.

Civil Law Disbursement Fund Loans comprise loans made for out of pocket legal expenses for items such as medical reports, assessments, court filing fees and other up front civil law case costs. The loans are made after consideration by a panel, and the application of a premium recovery as a buffer against failed claims where the expense is unrecoverable.

Credit risk is minimised due to a majority of the transactions taking place with State and Australian Government entities.

Liquidity Risk

Prudent liquidity risk management implies maintaining a balance between sufficient cash to meet obligations as and when they fall due and maximising revenues from surplus funds by investing in interest bearing investments.

Investment decisions are based on cash flow forecasts subject to ongoing review in order to meet cash requirements in a timely manner. The selection of the term of the investments will be dependent upon the cash flow requirements and the rate of return available for different terms.

**LEGAL AID COMMISSION OF TASMANIA
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015**

2 Financial Risk Management Objectives and Policies (cont'd)

All financial assets and liabilities of the Commission have a maturity of 6 months or less, except for the receivables - *Civil Law Disbursement Fund Loans* which by their nature have an unknown maturity profile.

Interest Rate Risk

The Commission's exposure to market risk for changes in interest rates relates primarily to the investments of surplus operating funds and surplus funds pertaining to the *Civil Law Disbursements Fund Loans* scheme.

The Commission is authorised under its act to invest surplus funds in any of the ways referred to in Section 5 of the Trustee Act 1898. The Commission's policy to manage interest income is by utilising the Tasmanian Public Finance Corporation's on call Cash Management facility. The investment returns obtained are regularly benchmarked in the marketplace.

Interest Rates on Cash and Cash Equivalents

	2015 (\$000's)	2014 (\$000's)
At Call Cash Management Account No 1 – Operating Account	-	2,471
	On Call – Interest Rate of 2.00%	On Call – Interest Rate of 2.50%
At Call Cash Management Account No 2 – Civil Law Disbursements Fund	495	495
	On Call – Interest Rate of 2.00%	On Call – Interest Rate of 2.50%
Operating Account	1,370	197
	On Call – Interest Rate of 2.25%	On Call – Interest Rate of 2.75%
	1,865	3,163

A 1 percentile movement in the interest rate will create \$18,650 (2014: \$31,630) movement in interest income.

The Commission is authorised under its act to invest surplus funds in any of the ways referred to in Section 5 of the Trustee Act 1898. During the reporting period investments were held in an at call cash management facility.

Interest revenue is recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income when earned. As the Commission's investments were held in the above instruments and held over relatively short periods it is considered that any interest rate exposure is minimal.

3 Commonwealth Grants and Contributions

	2015 (\$000's)	2014 (\$000's)
Base Grant	6,131	6,009
Community Legal Centre Administration Agency Payment	61	74
Commonwealth Collaboration Program	-	444
	6,192	6,527
Disbursements to Community Legal Centres	1,725	1,829
	7,917	8,356

Base Grant

Government contributions are the result of a Commonwealth / State National Partnership Agreement which became effective from the 1st July 2010 for a duration of 4 years. This agreement was extended to 30th June 2015.

Community Legal Centre Administration Agency Payment

This payment is an agency payment to cover the costs of support for the Commonwealth Community Legal Centre program.

Disbursements to Community Legal Centres

The Commission disburses Community Legal Centre funding on behalf of the Commonwealth Government. This item shows the revenue component, with outlays shown at Note 14.

**LEGAL AID COMMISSION OF TASMANIA
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015**

4 State Government Grants and Contributions

	2015 (\$000's)	2014 (\$000's)
Base Grant	5,796	5,681
"Safe at Home" Domestic Violence Intervention Program	236	236
	6,032	5,917
Disbursements to Community Legal Centres	200	200
	6,232	6,117

Base Grant

The Base Grant provides for the Service Delivery program agreed to between the Commission and the State Government.

"Safe at Home" Domestic Violence Early Intervention Program

This program provides early intervention and support against domestic violence.

Disbursements to Community Legal Centres

The Commission disburses Community Legal Centre funding on behalf of the State Government for outreach services. This item shows the revenue component, with the outlays shown at Note 14.

5 Other Revenue

	2015 (\$000's)	2014 (\$000's)
Client Contributions and Cost Recoveries	87	108
Interest Income	68	102
Civil Law Disbursement Fund Loans Contributions	25	30
The Solicitors' Trust Distributions	-	1,691
Miscellaneous Income	406	338
	586	2,269

Client Contributions and Cost Recoveries

Contributions consist of amounts levied on clients by in-house practitioners and recovered costs. Not included are amounts collected by private legal practitioners and deducted from their accounts for services rendered to the Commission, prior to payment by the Commission. These payments are immaterial and hence have not been quantified for this report. Recovered costs consist of those costs awarded by the courts to the benefit of the Commission.

Interest Income

Derived from cash flow surpluses from monies held on call, or in short term cash management accounts.

Civil Law Disbursement Fund Loans Contributions

Small premiums charged against each loan as a buffer against actions that may be unsuccessful and unrecoverable.

The Solicitors' Trust Distribution

This disbursement is as a result of a determination made in accordance with Section 361 of the Legal Profession Act 2007.

6 Legal Services Expenses

	2015 (\$000's)	2014 (\$000's)
Grants of Legal Aid	3,802	4,345
Duty Lawyer Services	61	69
	3,863	4,414

Grants of Legal Aid

Grants of Legal Aid comprise payments made to private sector business partners for legal work undertaken during the course of the year. In addition to payments for legal services this includes payments for expenditure for items such as medical reports and other specialist services.

Duty Lawyer Services

The Commission engages external service providers for Duty Lawyer services in the Magistrates Court to support its own internal services.

**LEGAL AID COMMISSION OF TASMANIA
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015**

7 Employee Benefits Expenses

	2015 (\$000's)	2014 (\$000's)
Salaries, Superannuation and Related Costs	6,114	7,124
Employee Restructure Costs	705	-
Temporary Staff and Agency Staff Engagements	518	662
Professional Development	77	24
Annual Leave Entitlements	(76)	(24)
Long Service Leave Entitlements	99	200
	7,437	7,986

Salaries, Superannuation and Related Costs

Includes salaries and employer funded superannuation and workers compensation insurance.

Temporary Staff and Agency Staff Engagements

Includes temporary and agency staffing costs, as well as agency fees and staff relocation costs.

Professional Development

Includes costs of courses and seminar fees.

Annual Leave and Long Service Leave Entitlements

These amounts are the net movements to the annual and long service leave provision accounts held on the Commission's Statement of Financial Position.

8 Supplies and Services

	2015 (\$000's)	2014 (\$000's)
Communications	243	271
Travel	148	148
Office Machines	48	53
Consumables	54	45
Motor Vehicle Expenses	75	72
	568	589

9 Accommodation Expenses

	2015 (\$000's)	2014 (\$000's)
Lease Rentals and Associated Costs	548	313
Cleaning	76	76
Storage	4	11
Rates and Taxes	57	44
Power	53	61
Maintenance	30	38
Security	7	12
Insurance	5	10
	780	565

10 Information Technology

	2015 (\$000's)	2014 (\$000's)
Systems Maintenance and Development	288	315
Hardware Maintenance	1	1
Online Library Resources	76	50
Software License Fees	24	41
Consumables	8	13
	397	420

11 Other Expenses

	2015 (\$000's)	2014 (\$000's)
Department of Justice Administration Fees	78	36
Audit Fees	23	25
Other	312	436
	413	497

LEGAL AID COMMISSION OF TASMANIA
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015

12 Depreciation and Amortisation Expenses

	2015 (\$000's)	2014 (\$000's)
Office Equipment	22	34
Furniture and Fittings	1	-
Leasehold Improvements	26	7
Buildings	7	6
Intangibles – In-house Software Development	59	52
	115	100

13 Debts Written Off

	2015 (\$000's)	2014 (\$000's)
Bad Debt Write Off - Case Management System	15	7
Civil Law Disbursement Fund Loans	6	12
	21	19

The amount of \$14,943 (2014: \$7,201) reported comprises the bad debt write off as reported by the Commissions Case Management System. Bad Debts written off, if later recovered are shown as a revenue item in the year in which they are recovered.

Civil Law Disbursement Fund Loans are written off when the loan is deemed unrecoverable.

14 Disbursements to Community Legal Centres

	2015 (\$000's)	2014 (\$000's)
<u>Commonwealth Program</u>		
North West Community Legal Centre Inc.	220	114
Environmental Defender's Office (Tas) Inc.	-	250
Hobart Community Legal Service Inc.	619	596
Launceston Community Legal Centre Inc.	411	413
Tenant's Union of Tasmania Inc.	69	66
Women's Legal Services (Tas) Inc.	406	406
	1,725	1,846
<u>State Program</u>		
Hobart Community Legal Service Inc.	100	100
North West Community Legal Centre Inc.	100	100
	200	200
	1,925	2,046

15 Cash and Cash Equivalents

	2015 (\$000's)	2014 (\$000's)
Unrestricted Cash and Cash Equivalents		
Cash on Hand – Petty Cash	2	8
Bank Accounts	1,283	61
Investments – TASCORP No. 1	-	2,471
	1,285	2,540
Restricted Cash and Cash Equivalents		
Bank Account	85	128
Investments – TASCORP No. 2	495	495
	580	623
Total Cash and Cash Equivalents	1,865	3,163
Held as		
Operating Cash	1,285	2,540
State Civil Law Disbursements Fund Loans Scheme	580	623
Total and Balance as per Statement of Cash Flows	1,865	3,163

**LEGAL AID COMMISSION OF TASMANIA
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Restricted Cash and Cash Equivalents - Civil Law Disbursements Fund Loans Scheme

The Civil Law Disbursements Fund Loans Scheme was established in June 2004. Over the following 3 year period the State Government provided funding of \$560,000 for the Scheme. In the June 2014 financial year monies obtained from the Solicitors Guarantee Fund were injected into the Scheme. The Scheme provides eligible applicants access to legal aid for disbursement costs, such as medical reports and court filing fees, in State Civil Law matters. The disbursements made are recovered upon successful completion of the matter. A small premium is applied as a buffer against actions that are unsuccessful, and disbursement loans deemed unrecoverable.

Unrecoverable loans for 2015 are shown at Note 13.

16 Receivables

	2015 (\$000's)	2014 (\$000's)
Contributions Receivable	14	23
Less Provision for Impairment	(2)	(2)
Civil Law Disbursement Fund Loans	558	490
Trade Debtors	324	-
Good and Services Tax (GST) Recoveries Due	322	57
	1,216	568

Contributions Receivable

Contributions consist of small amounts owing by clients as a contribution toward the cost of their legal matter. At the conclusion of each financial year a provision for impairment is recalculated. This estimate is made after a review of the current debtor's portfolio and the likelihood of payments being made. The provision consists of small contributions unlikely to be paid for which recovery action is considered uneconomical.

Civil Law Disbursement Fund Loans

Civil Law Disbursement Fund Loans are those amounts recoverable from the proceeds of successful actions by civil law litigants supported by the State Government Civil Law Disbursement Fund Loans Scheme. The loans are recovered with the addition of a small premium which is reinvested into the fund, to offset any failed or unsuccessful actions which may be written off. Details of loans written off are detailed in Note 13.

Contributions owing is the only receivable where the age of the debt may be relevant to the likelihood of receipt. All Contributions owing except those identified as impaired, are considered receivable.

2015	Gross Amount	Past Due and Impaired	Due < 30 Days	Past Due but not Impaired 31 – 60 Days	Past Due but not Impaired 61 – 90 Days	Past Due but not Impaired > 90 Days
Contributions Owing	14	2	4	3	2	3
Trade Debtors	324	-	323	1	-	-
	338	2	327	4	2	3

2014	Gross Amount	Past Due and Impaired	Due < 30 Days	Past Due but not Impaired 31 – 60 Days	Past Due but not Impaired 61 – 90 Days	Past Due but not Impaired > 90 Days
Contributions Owing	23	2	6	6	3	6
Trade Debtors	-	-	-	-	-	-
	23	2	6	6	3	6

LEGAL AID COMMISSION OF TASMANIA
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015

17 Non-Current Assets

Property, Plant & Equipment

	2015 (\$000's)	2014 (\$000's)
LAND & BUILDINGS		
Land at Fair Value	195	195
Buildings at Independent Valuation	250	249
Less: Accumulated Amortisation	(84)	(76)
Land and Buildings at Fair Value	361	368

The Commission owns its Burnie property unencumbered.

A formal independent valuation of the Commission's Freehold Property was obtained in April 2013 from Opteon (Tasmania) Pty Ltd. The valuation was based on Current Market Value on "an existing use" basis. The valuation received accorded with the buildings book value inclusive of improvements capitalised in the 2013 financial year. The Commission's policy is to review its freehold property every 3 years.

	2015 (\$000's)	2014 (\$000's)
OFFICE EQUIPMENT		
Historical cost	153	432
Less: Accumulated Amortisation	(57)	(394)
	96	38

	2015 (\$000's)	2014 (\$000's)
FURNITURE & FITTINGS		
Historical cost	23	42
Less: Accumulated Amortisation	(10)	(39)
	13	3

	2015 (\$000's)	2014 (\$000's)
LEASEHOLD IMPROVEMENTS		
Historical cost	225	87
Less: Accumulated Amortisation	(137)	(53)
	88	34

Intangibles

	2015 (\$000's)	2014 (\$000's)
INTANGIBLE ASSETS		
Historical cost	586	564
Less: Accumulated Amortisation	(448)	(390)
	138	174

The Commission developed a Case Management System with an "Off the Shelf" development application, which was deployed in July 2007. Costs represent software acquisition costs, installation and development.

**LEGAL AID COMMISSION OF TASMANIA
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015**

17 Non-Current Assets (cont'd)

Property, Plant & Equipment

Movement in the carrying amounts for each class of property, plant and equipment:

	2015 (\$000's)	2014 (\$000's)
LAND & BUILDINGS		
Opening Written Down Value	368	374
Depreciation Expense	(7)	(6)
Closing Written Down Value	361	368

	2015 (\$000's)	2014 (\$000's)
OFFICE EQUIPMENT		
Opening Written Down Value	38	73
Additions	80	-
Depreciation Expense	(22)	(35)
Closing Written Down Value	96	38

	2015 (\$000's)	2014 (\$000's)
FURNITURE & FITTINGS		
Opening Written Down Value	3	3
Additions	11	-
Depreciation Expense	(1)	-
Closing Written Down Value	13	3

	2015 (\$000's)	2014 (\$000's)
LEASEHOLD IMPROVEMENTS		
Opening Written Down Value	34	41
Additions	80	-
Depreciation Expense	(26)	(7)
Closing Written Down Value	88	34

Intangibles

Movement in the carrying amount of intangibles:

	2015 (\$000's)	2014 (\$000's)
INTANGIBLES		
Computer Software		
Opening Written Down Value	174	226
Additions	23	-
Amortisation Expense	(59)	(52)
Closing Written Down Value	138	174

18 Impairment of Assets

There were no indications of impairment of property, plant and equipment and intangible assets at 30 June 2015.

**LEGAL AID COMMISSION OF TASMANIA
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015**

19 Payables

	2015 (\$000's)	2014 (\$000's)
Accrued Salaries	194	199
Other Operating Costs	438	58
	632	256

Other Operating Costs

Other Operating Costs include Legal Creditors, where the transaction cost or face value is deemed equivalent to fair value. The Commission facilitates prompt payment for legal services by the provision of an online invoicing facility, on its internet based business system.

Other Operating Costs also include Trade Creditors, where the carrying amount of trade creditors is equivalent to fair value, as they are generally settled within 30 days.

20 Provisions

	2015 (\$000's)	2014 (\$000's)
Current		
Employee Benefits Provision:		
Annual Leave	378	488
Long Service Leave	748	704
	1,126	1,192
Non-Current		
Employee Benefits Provision:		
Long Service Leave	264	292
	1,390	1,484

21 Contingent Liabilities

The organisation does not have any contingent liabilities or claims of a material nature which have not already been disclosed in these financial statements.

22 Commitments for expenditure

Legal Case Commitment

At 30th June 2015 the Commission's case management system disclosed a commitment of \$901,534.25 (2014 1,068,857) in respect of applications for legal assistance made and accepted by the Commission or its predecessors and which had not been paid or accrued as at the end of the financial year. The commitment was estimated on the basis of scale fees and/or hourly rates, depending on the nature of the action concerned and includes possible future recoveries.

Lease Commitments

The Commission has entered into standard commercial non-cancellable operating lease arrangements for its Hobart, Launceston and Devonport offices. The Burnie office is owned by the Commission. In addition the Commission leases multi-function document centres in all of its offices.

From 1st July 2014 a new lease arrangement was entered into for the Hobart office for 5 years with options for renewal for a further 5 years. Contingent rent provisions within the lease agreements variously require that the minimum lease payments shall be increased by the Consumer Price Index or a predetermined percentage per annum.

The aggregate of lease commitments for which no provisions are included in the financial statements can be classified as follows:

	2015 (\$000's)	2014 (\$000's)
Due within 1 year	386	142
Due within 1 - 5 years	893	24
	1,279	166

**LEGAL AID COMMISSION OF TASMANIA
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015**

23 Reconciliation of Net Operating Surplus / Deficit to Net Cash Flows Provided by/(Used In) Operating Activities

	2015 (\$000's)	2014 (\$000's)
Operating Result – Surplus	(784)	106
<u>Change In Assets – (Increase) / Decrease</u>		
Depreciation & Amortisation Expense	115	100
Loss on Sale of Fixed Assets	2	-
(Increase)/Decrease in Receivables	(648)	(51)
(Increase)/Decrease in Other Assets	(71)	-
<u>Change in Liabilities – Increase / (Decrease)</u>		
Increase/(Decrease) in Provisions	(94)	175
Increase/(Decrease) in Payables	376	(5)
Net Cash provided from Operating Activities	(1,104)	325

24 Financing Facilities Available

	2015 (\$000's)	2014 (\$000's)
Facility Limit	46	92
Less Used / Committed	(9)	(9)
	37	83

The nature of the credit facility is a corporate credit card facility, which is direct debited against the Commission's main operating bank account on a monthly basis. It is primarily used for travel and purchases of equipment and supplies.

25 Events Occurring after Balance Date

There were no events occurring after balance date which relate to any conditions existing at balance date or were material in relation to the financial statements.

26 Remuneration of Auditors

	2015 (\$000's)	2014 (\$000's)
Audit Fee	23	22
	23	22

The Tasmanian Audit Office audits the accounts of the Commission. The Audit comprises the annual financial statement audit.

27 Remuneration of Commissioners

	2015	2014
\$0 - \$10,000	2	4
\$10,001 - \$20,000	4	1
\$20,001 - \$30,000	-	1
Commissioners Remuneration	63,618	63,539

There are eight Commissioners and two of these are State Public Servants. Commissioners are remunerated on an annual basis and superannuation is also paid to these Commissioners in accordance with the superannuation guarantee legislation.

**LEGAL AID COMMISSION OF TASMANIA
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015**

28 Remuneration of Senior Officers

The number of Senior Officers, excluding Commissioners, whose total salaries, superannuation and other benefits for the financial year fall within the following bands are:

	2015	2014
\$0 - \$60,000	2	-
\$60,001 - \$80,000	-	-
\$80,001 - \$100,000	1	2
\$100,001 - \$120,000	3	2
\$120,001 - \$140,000	1	1
\$140,001 - \$160,000	-	2
\$160,001 - \$180,000	-	-
\$180,000 +	2	3
Total Remuneration of Senior Officers	1,055,179	1,814,212

29 Related Party Transactions

The Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania has not entered into any transactions during the 2015 financial year (2014: Nil) that would meet the definition of a related party transaction.

The Commission has not provided loan funds to any Board Member or related party.

30 Client Trust Funds

The following transactions of the Commission acting as trustee have not been included in the financial statements. The Commission holds client funds in a Trustee capacity pending final settlement of case files.

	2015 (\$000's)	2014 (\$000's)
Balance at WESTPAC Bank as at 1 July	-	-
Plus receipts	34,200	-
Less payments	(25,200)	-
Balance at Westpac Bank as at 30 June	9,000	-

Finance

Payments to the profession



LEGAL AID COMMISSION OF TASMANIA

SOLICITOR, BARRISTER AND COUNSEL GRANTS PAYMENTS TO PRIVATE LEGAL FIRMS

Between 1/07/2014 and 30/06/2015

Not part of audited statements

Total Payments

Adrian J Hall Barrister & Solicitor	Criminal	\$18,970.40
	Total	\$18,970.40
Andrei Slicer	Criminal	\$63,979.10
	Total	\$63,979.10
Baker Wilson Lawyers	Criminal	\$660.00
	Total	\$660.00
Bartletts	Civil	\$2,849.00
	Criminal	\$70.00
	Family	\$17,099.00
	Total	\$20,018.00
Bassano Law	Family	\$1,300.00
	Total	\$1,300.00
Ben Lillas	Civil	\$796.50
	Total	\$796.50
Bennett Howroyd	Civil	\$6,007.80
	Criminal	\$6,110.20
	Family	\$8,085.00
	Total	\$20,203.00
Bishops	Civil	\$23,683.10
	Criminal	\$4,302.60
	Family	\$104,925.00
	Total	\$132,910.70
Blissenden Lawyers	Civil	\$8,125.00
	Criminal	\$15,363.90
	Family	\$28,112.55
	Total	\$51,601.45
Butler McIntyre & Butler	Civil	\$33,360.70
	Criminal	\$80,804.85

		Total Payments
Butler McIntyre & Butler	Family	\$100,075.75
	Total	\$214,241.29
Cameron Scott - Barrister at Law	Civil	\$1,831.82
	Criminal	\$10,526.73
	Total	\$12,358.55
Cann Legal	Civil	\$25,604.65
	Criminal	\$284.50
	Family	\$31,425.30
	Total	\$57,314.45
Caroline Graves Barrister at Law	Civil	\$22,010.50
	Criminal	\$20,852.20
	Family	\$6,798.30
	Total	\$49,661.00
Charmaine Gibson	Civil	\$17,500.00
	Criminal	\$4,002.60
	Family	\$33,932.60
	Total	\$55,435.20
Clarke & Gee	Criminal	\$1,120.00
	Total	\$1,120.00
Craig Rainbird Barrister & Solicitor	Criminal	\$65,090.60
	Total	\$65,090.60
David N Lewis Barrister at Law	Civil	\$17,953.15
	Family	\$37,636.40
	Total	\$55,589.55
Dobson Mitchell Allport	Civil	\$2,275.00
	Family	\$28,415.30
	Total	\$30,690.30
Douglas & Collins	Criminal	\$6,965.00
	Total	\$6,965.00
Fairley + Associates	Criminal	\$2,235.20
	Total	\$2,235.20
FitzGerald and Browne	Civil	\$33,412.16

		Total Payments
FitzGerald and Browne	Criminal	\$6,912.15
	Family	\$108,677.15
	Total	\$149,001.47
Friend & Edwards Lawyers	Civil	\$863.00
	Criminal	\$5,548.50
	Family	\$5,059.50
	Total	\$11,471.00
G A Richardson	Criminal	\$107,886.85
	Total	\$107,886.85
G&M Lawyers	Family	\$1,062.73
	Total	\$1,062.73
Garth Stevens	Criminal	\$47,715.08
	Total	\$47,715.08
Glade-Wright & Mahindroo	Criminal	\$780.00
	Total	\$780.00
Grant Tucker	Civil	\$10,211.30
	Criminal	\$77,064.90
	Family	\$59,113.90
	Total	\$146,390.10
Greg Barns Barrister	Civil	\$1,761.30
	Criminal	\$22,746.10
	Total	\$24,507.40
Gunson Williams	Criminal	\$2,440.00
	Total	\$2,440.00
Helberg & Associates	Family	\$2,398.18
	Total	\$2,398.18
Henry Wherrett & Benjamin	Criminal	\$1,340.00
	Total	\$1,340.00
Ian Guest & Associates	Civil	\$5,634.00
	Criminal	\$330.00
	Family	\$12,513.50
	Total	\$18,477.50

Total Payments

Ierino & Associates	Criminal	\$1,728.00
	Family	\$860.00
	Total	\$2,588.00
J N Perks	Criminal	\$37,579.90
	Total	\$37,579.90
James Crotty Barristers & Solicitors	Criminal	\$2,102.50
	Total	\$2,102.50
Jennifer Mary White	Civil	\$667.80
	Criminal	\$1,630.20
	Total	\$2,298.00
John Green	Civil	\$7,236.30
	Criminal	\$390.00
	Family	\$590.00
	Total	\$8,216.30
Kate Cuthbertson	Civil	\$1,170.00
	Criminal	\$29,164.70
	Total	\$30,334.70
Kate Mooney	Civil	\$10,605.00
	Family	\$23,170.00
	Total	\$33,775.00
Kay & Ruddle	Civil	\$3,097.50
	Criminal	\$1,495.00
	Family	\$5,715.40
	Total	\$10,307.90
Kim Baumeler	Civil	\$10,879.40
	Criminal	\$203,581.52
	Total	\$214,460.92
Legal Solutions	Civil	\$7,047.80
	Criminal	\$260.00
	Family	\$37,142.00
	Total	\$44,449.80
Levis Stace & Cooper	Civil	\$5,998.00

		Total Payments
Levis Stace & Cooper	Criminal	\$19,698.60
	Family	\$41,933.46
	Total	\$67,630.06
Mackie Crompton	Civil	\$13,980.00
	Criminal	\$19,089.20
	Total	\$33,069.20
Mary Anne Ryan	Civil	\$520.00
	Family	\$2,482.00
	Total	\$3,002.00
Matthew Verney Lawyers	Civil	\$38,176.70
	Criminal	\$980.00
	Family	\$44,342.79
	Total	\$83,499.49
McGrath & Co.	Civil	\$455.00
	Criminal	\$1,942.70
	Family	\$15,864.95
	Total	\$18,262.65
McVeity & Associates	Civil	\$31,949.55
	Family	\$96,067.30
	Total	\$128,016.85
Milton & Meyer	Civil	\$32,302.50
	Criminal	\$147,853.39
	Family	\$2,870.00
	Total	\$183,025.89
Murdoch Clarke	Civil	\$1,110.00
	Criminal	\$980.00
	Family	\$1,240.00
	Total	\$3,330.00
Murray & Associates	Family	\$22,763.00
	Total	\$22,763.00
Neisha Shepherd Solicitor	Family	\$4,254.55
	Total	\$4,254.55

		Total Payments
Ogilvie Jennings	Civil	\$14,441.44
	Criminal	\$5,515.00
	Family	\$85,215.82
	Total	\$105,172.25
P L Corby & Company	Family	\$16,435.00
	Total	\$16,435.00
Pagett & Associates	Civil	\$6,050.00
	Family	\$20,690.80
	Total	\$26,740.80
Paul Sullivan	Criminal	\$7,454.60
	Total	\$7,454.60
Peter Heerey Lawyer	Civil	\$12,264.10
	Criminal	\$5,844.00
	Total	\$18,108.10
Philip Theobald	Family	\$19,308.50
	Total	\$19,308.50
Philip Welch	Civil	\$16,487.50
	Family	\$32,876.80
	Total	\$49,364.30
Philippa Morgan	Civil	\$3,330.00
	Criminal	\$41,144.60
	Total	\$44,474.60
PWB Lawyers	Civil	\$40,355.80
	Criminal	\$1,766.30
	Family	\$123,945.40
	Total	\$166,067.50
Rae & Partners Lawyers	Civil	\$5,370.00
	Criminal	\$185,155.86
	Family	\$64,682.00
	Total	\$255,207.86
SGW Law	Criminal	\$1,300.00
	Total	\$1,300.00

		Total Payments
Simmons Wolfhagen	Civil	\$5,937.00
	Criminal	\$5,597.50
	Family	\$14,828.00
	Total	\$26,362.50
Steven Chopping	Criminal	\$32,234.40
	Total	\$32,234.40
Todd P. Kovacic	Criminal	\$42,839.05
	Total	\$42,839.05
Verekers Wollongong Lawyers	Family	\$280.00
	Total	\$280.00
W J Friend	Family	\$18,375.00
	Total	\$18,375.00
Walker Henderson Lawyers	Civil	\$20,023.90
	Criminal	\$2,680.00
	Family	\$69,399.70
	Total	\$92,103.60
Wallace Wilkinson & Webster	Civil	\$19,825.80
	Criminal	\$12,450.30
	Family	\$106,256.00
	Total	\$138,532.10
Walsh Day James Mihal Pty	Civil	\$12,112.80
	Criminal	\$5,096.70
	Family	\$16,954.59
	Total	\$34,164.09
Wayne Olding LI B	Criminal	\$2,008.18
	Total	\$2,008.18
Worrall Lawyers	Family	\$590.00
	Total	\$590.00
Wright Gilmour Barristers & Solicitors	Civil	\$4,554.00
	Criminal	\$26,252.55
	Total	\$30,806.55
Total		\$3,435,506.31