

Legal
Aid For
Tasmanians

Annual Report 2019 –20

2019–20

Our Year at a Glance



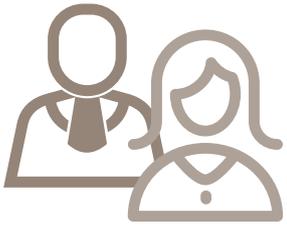
Mental health and disability services increased

30%



Acknowledgement of Country

Tasmania Legal Aid acknowledges and pays respect to the palawa (Tasmanian Aboriginal people) as the traditional and original owners, and continuing custodians of the land and waters of this island, lutruwita (Tasmania), where we live and work.



1,811

Family Advocacy and Support Service (FASS) duty lawyer services provided



FASS Men's Service increased

42%



368

Family dispute resolution conferences settled

Grants of legal aid to private lawyers

\$5.9m



5,777

Legal aid grant applications received



24,643 extensions

Average **120** per day

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Chair's report



The 2019–2020 financial year will be remembered most for the impact of COVID-19. Tasmania Legal Aid (TLA) was not immune from its reach.

Whilst the impact of COVID-19 has been greater on others, we recognise the efforts and commitments of staff and stakeholders in adapting quickly to continue to deliver our services to our community. The resilience exhibited in responding to the impact of COVID-19 on our community, and their concern for the wellbeing of each other and our clients, stands as a great measure of TLA's commitment to one of its key foci under its new strategic plan: wellbeing and resilience.

Planning for TLA's Strategic Plan 2020–2023 began in November 2019, and was finalised and presented to all staff and stakeholders in July 2020 under our new brand reflecting our new direction.

In keeping with:

1. Our Vision that all Tasmanians are safe, respected and have their voices heard; and
2. Our Purpose to:
 - provide legal services to help Tasmanians understand their rights, navigate the system to resolve their legal issues and get the assistance they need;
 - to support and advocate for vulnerable and marginalised Tasmanians; and
 - to work with our clients, staff, legal partners and community to improve the legal system.

TLA's Strategic Plan 2020–2023 was developed through the great collaboration of clients, staff, management, the Commission and our community and legal partners.

With:

- our core Values of Honesty, Courage and Engagement;
- the Prioritisation of Community – addressing the needs of our clients, staff, our partners and the Tasmanian community; Communication – improving the way that we communicate within our organisation and with our community, and Collaboration – proactively engaging with clients, staff, legal partners, and our community; and
- a focus on Children, Family Violence, and Wellbeing and Resilience

we are looking forward to implementing the plans that we have set to achieve the goals that we have set for the next three years, and measuring that success.

In May of this year, TLA signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Women's Legal Service of Tasmania to provide better coordinated family violence legal services for Tasmanians. This MoU responds to:

- the joint commitment of both organisations to provide effective and responsive legal services that address family violence; and
- our statutory obligation to provide legal aid in the most effective, efficient and economic manner; ensuring that our services are targeted towards identified need, and that there is no unnecessary duplication of services within the sector.

With an increasing need for our services in our community, funding for TLA continues to remain a concern for the Commission. This year we delivered our services to within \$10,000 of a \$17 million dollar budget. This is a credit to the management and staff responsible for delivering

our services in times of unprecedented demand, and managing our resources in extraordinary times.

We continue to recognise and appreciate the support that we received from the Attorney General and Treasurer, and for the top-up funding that we received from the State Government to make up for the shortfall from the Commonwealth Government under the last year of the 2015–20 National Partnership Agreement. Our hope is that this will continue under new arrangements.

The Commission thanks our Director Vincenzo Caltabiano for the extraordinary leadership and direction he has provided to TLA this year; and the management, staff and stakeholders of TLA for contributing to this years' success.

We'll look forward to reporting on the initial outcomes of the implementation of our new Strategic Plan under the new National Legal Assistance Partnership in next year's report.



Patrick Lunn
Chair
Tasmania Legal Aid

Director's report



As we review and reflect on the last year it is an understatement to say that a lot has happened. While there has been a great deal of disruption, I'm proud that TLA has continued to grow and launch several new initiatives to benefit our clients and the Tasmanian community.

A key factor to achieving our goals are the strong relationships within the justice sector. The willingness of people, within TLA and externally, has seen us work together to achieve our goals.

We saw this coming together in the collaboration between TLA and Community Legal Centres in response to COVID-19. The sector collaborated to share resources, get information out to the community and to argue for sustained support and services for vulnerable Tasmanians.

The justice sector also came together to ensure that people could have continued access to court – quickly adapting to use technology. This quick response showed how TLA, the legal profession and the justice system is able and willing to adapt to suit community needs.

Although TLA closed its doors for a period we were able to continue to provide information, advice and referrals through a range of means. I am grateful for the versatility demonstrated by staff who responded quickly to the challenge and ensured continuity of service throughout the pandemic lockdown and since.

The closure of courts and the need for physical distancing meant that there were fewer overall Duty Lawyer and clinic services delivered.

A highlight of the year was the all-staff planning day held in Campbell Town in January 2020. This was a first for TLA – staff from around the state coming together to discuss who we are and what we do. For many it was the first face-to-face meeting with colleagues in different offices they have worked alongside for many years but never met in person. There was a tremendous sense of unity and commitment to continuing to improve how we do things.

The planning day was one of the key steps in the development of the Strategic Plan 2020–23. From this came a clear sense of our vision and how we will work with others to achieve it, with priority focus on Community, Communication and Collaboration.

Specific purpose Commonwealth funding supported the launch of several initiatives, including the Family Violence and Cross Examination Scheme, which provides funding to prevent the direct cross-examination of a person by the alleged perpetrator of family violence.

Similarly, the Family Law Property Mediation Trial was established with Commonwealth funding to help parties resolve family law property disputes, with 106 participating parties taking part in the first half of 2020. The high demand indicates there is a strong need for this service and we hope that its success will lead to ongoing funding.

In both instances we worked closely with the legal profession to ensure that the structure was appropriate. I wish to thank Kristen Wylie, Susie Winter and Anthea d’Emden for their work in realising these projects, and the private practitioners for their valuable input.

Other new initiatives include the Family Advocacy and Support Service’s Men’s Service and Your Story, a free support service for those who want to participate in the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

There has been a steady increase in demand for legal aid services in recent years, and 2019–20 was no exception. There were around 280 more grants of assistance than the previous year (up 5.7%) and 3,200 more extensions of aid (up 15.2%). Legal aid grants to private practitioners grew by nearly 14%, from \$5.193 million to \$5.9 million. Over the last four years the number of extensions rose 60% and expenditure on legal services increased 58%.

I acknowledge the work of staff and private practitioners who have delivered legal aid services for Tasmanians. I also acknowledge the work of our grants staff who ensure that this increasing demand is dealt with in a timely way, processing an average of 120 applications a day.

Tasmanians’ ongoing and increasing demand for legal aid needs to be supported by appropriate funding. Over the coming year we are committed to working to implement our Strategy. We will work with the justice system and the community more broadly to improve legal services and support for Tasmanians.



Vincenzo Caltabiano
Director
Tasmania Legal Aid

Who are we?

Tasmania Legal Aid is an independent statutory body established by the *Legal Aid Commission Act 1990 (Tas)* to provide legal information, advice and representation to all Tasmanians.

1



Legal Aid For Tasmania

Honesty.
Courage.
Engagement.

2020, the Alcohol To...
Tasmania invited the Tas...
ate International Ch...
the 31st of August.
10,000 images represent...
ed by the community to remember...
nd to wish for a world free from o...

Our Organisation

For almost 30 years Tasmania Legal Aid has been helping Tasmanians gain access to justice.

We support vulnerable and marginalised people and have a focus on improving our services for children, responding to family violence, and to build the skills, wellbeing and resilience of our clients, staff and legal practitioners.

We were established under the *Legal Aid Commission Act of 1990* (Tas) and have worked independently of the State and Federal governments throughout our three decades of operation.

We are governed by a Board of five Commissioners, which includes the Director of Tasmania Legal Aid who also oversees operations.

We are the largest government-funded legal assistance service in Tasmania and play a central role in providing access to justice for disadvantaged Tasmanians, including people living with disability, young people and the elderly.

Tasmania Legal Aid now has over 85 full-time employees, mostly directed to frontline service delivery, including lawyers and administrative staff, or in processing grants of assistance.

Our organisation has grown over the past year to improve service delivery and implement new programs such as amica, Your Story and the Family Advocacy and Support Service (FASS) Men's Unit.

We have a budget of over \$17 million that comes from the Commonwealth and State governments, the Solicitors Guarantee Fund and client contributions. Our offices are in Hobart, Launceston, Devonport and Burnie and we deliver outreach services to various other locations around Tasmania.

2020 marked the beginning of our new Strategic Plan 2020–2023 with focus on further engaging with the Tasmanian community, especially those who are most vulnerable; communicating with our clients, partners and staff to empower, engage and inform; and collaborating with our partners and stakeholders to ensure the Tasmanian legal system delivers the best outcomes for our most vulnerable clients.

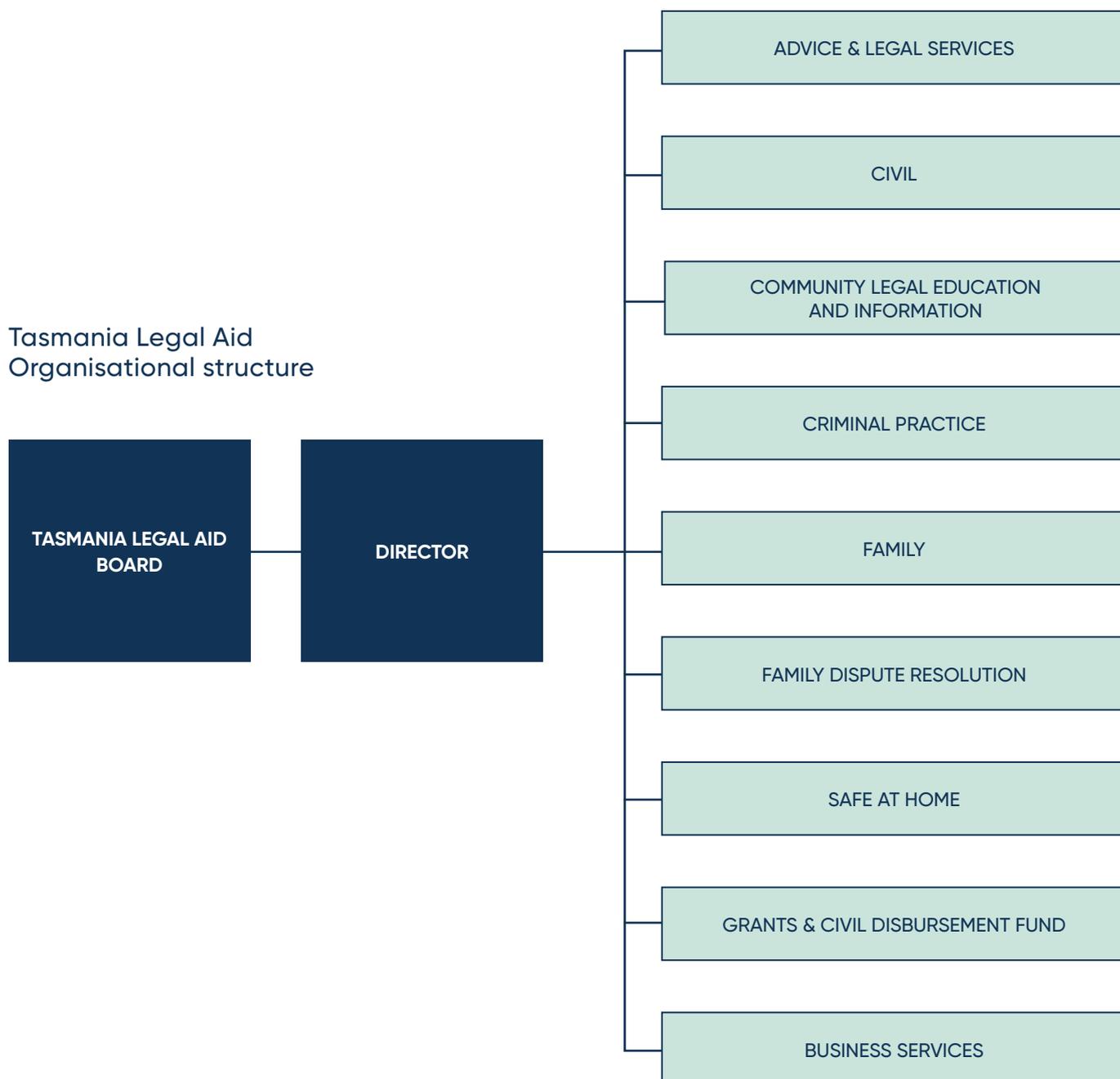
Our vision

All Tasmanians are safe, respected and have their voices heard.

Our purpose

- > To provide legal services to help Tasmanians understand their rights, navigate the system to resolve their legal issues, and get the assistance they need.
- > To support and advocate for vulnerable and marginalised Tasmanians.
- > To work with our clients, staff, legal partners and community to improve the legal system.

Tasmania Legal Aid
Organisational structure



Tasmania Legal Aid Strategic Plan 2020–2023 Framework

OUR VISION

All Tasmanians are safe, respected and have their voices heard

OUR PURPOSE

- To provide legal services to help Tasmanians understand their rights, navigate the system to resolve their legal issues, and get the assistance they need
- To support and advocate for vulnerable and marginalised Tasmanians
- To work with our clients, staff, legal partners and community to improve the legal system.

OUR VALUES

Honesty

- We communicate openly and clearly
- We provide clear, accurate and realistic advice; are accountable to our clients, our partners and our community.

Courage

- We speak up, listen to different views, and take on feedback
- We advocate for our clients, our sector and our organisation; are open to new ideas and adaptable to change.

Engagement

- We are involved in the design of services, programs and policies
- We are committed to the best outcomes for our clients and our community; and work collaboratively with our partners and our clients.

OUR PRIORITY AREAS

COMMUNITY

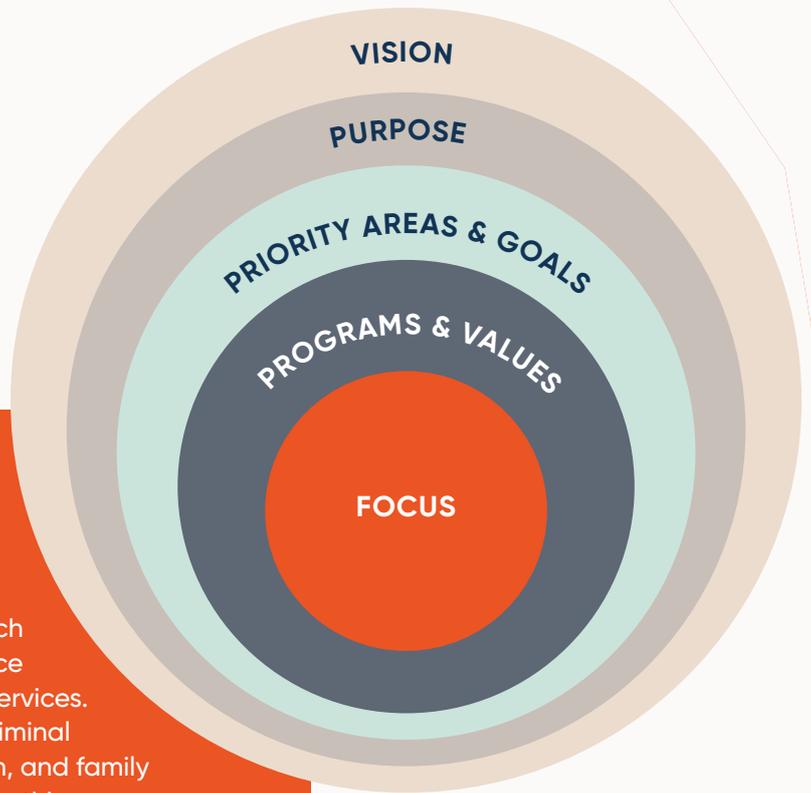
We provide high quality, accessible legal services to Tasmanians, especially those who are most vulnerable, delivered by skilled and well supported staff.

OUR GOALS

1. Our clients feel safe and respected and receive high quality legal advice.
2. Children are at the centre of our service delivery and women and children experiencing family violence are prioritised.
3. Our staff feel valued and proud to work at Legal Aid.

SUCCESS

Our clients and staff are engaged in the design and evaluation of our services, programs and policies.



OUR FOCUS

Children · Family Violence · Wellbeing & Resilience

Our focus is the lens through which we approach planning and service delivery across our full range of services. Most of our work – across civil, criminal and family law – involves children, and family violence in its broadest context. In this way, we will develop a systemic organisational response to improve our services for children, to respond to family violence and to build the skills, wellbeing and resilience of our clients, staff and legal partners.

OUR STATUTORY OBLIGATION

To sustainably provide legal aid in the most effective, efficient and economical manner.

COMMUNICATION

We communicate with our clients, partners, staff and community to ensure that they are informed, engaged and empowered.

1. Our community is informed about our services, their legal rights and options to prevent or intervene early in legal problems.
2. We are a leading voice for legislative and social reforms that support improved outcomes for our clients.
3. Our communications with our clients, staff, partners and community are clear, accessible, consistent, regular and transparent.

More Tasmanians access our services for legal advice, information and education.

COLLABORATION

We work collaboratively with our partners and stakeholders to ensure the Tasmanian legal system delivers the best outcomes for the most vulnerable clients.

1. We play a key role in developing a vibrant Tasmanian legal profession, supporting private practitioners to help legal aid clients, and in improving legal proceedings, particularly for criminal matters.
2. Our service delivery and organisational decisions are evidence-based, and informed by consultation with clients, staff and partners to best respond to clients with multiple needs.
3. We collaborate with our legal and community partners in research, community education and other projects to promote the interests of our clients.

Collaborative partnerships contribute to a fairer, more timely and responsive Tasmanian legal system.

Our Board



Patrick Lunn – Chair

Patrick was first appointed Chair of Tasmania Legal Aid on 6 November 2014 for a three-year term. The Minister for Justice re-appointed Patrick for a further three-year term commencing on 6 November 2017.

Patrick graduated from the University of Tasmania with the combined degrees of Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Laws in 1995.

Patrick has practiced in commercial litigation and dispute resolution since 1995 with a particular emphasis on banking and finance, commercial disputes between businesses, securities enforcement, debt recovery, professional indemnity insurance claims and personal and corporate insolvency.

Patrick has been the Managing Partner/Director of Simmons Wolfhagen since 2011. He 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.



Vincenzo Caltabiano – Director

Vincenzo was appointed Director of Tasmania Legal Aid on 13 May 2019 for a five-year term. Vincenzo commenced practice in Victoria in 1991 and has 17 years' experience as a private practitioner, including 7 years in his own firm with the focus on Family Law and Criminal Law.

Vincenzo spent almost 11 years at Victoria Legal Aid (VLA) in a range of roles, 7 years in the Criminal Law Program including as a Duty Lawyer, Manager of the Advocacy Team and as the inaugural Summary Crime Program Manager. Vincenzo has experience in conducting complex indictable and summary crime matters. He subsequently conducted the Review of VLA Legal Aid Child Protection Legal Services and was later appointed as Associate Director, Child Protection Transformation at VLA.



Naomi Walsh

The Minister for Justice appointed Naomi Walsh as a member Legal Aid Board for a term of three years on 27 July 2017.

Naomi is a Teaching Fellow at the University of Tasmania and has a range of non-executive director roles. She has 30 years' experience in finance and commercial management roles. She brings general management, corporate governance and financial expertise to the Board. Naomi has Bachelor of Business and Master of Business degrees from the University of Tasmania, is a fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants and a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



Julia Higgins

Julia Higgins was appointed on 2 May 2017 for a term of three years.

Julia graduated from the University of Tasmania with a combined degree of Bachelor Commerce and Bachelor of Laws in 2001. Julia has practiced family law at the Launceston law firm of Bishops since August 2002. Julia specialises in all the areas of Family Law (Children and Financial matters) as well as appearing in the child protection jurisdiction.

Julia is the Chair of the Family Law Practitioners Association of Tasmania and is a current Northern Representative for the Law Council of Tasmania. Julia was for many years President of the Northern Young Lawyers Committee.



Gavin Wailes

The Minister for Justice appointed Gavin Wailes to the Board on 15 January 2018.

Gavin graduated from the University of Tasmania with a Bachelor of Commerce in 2001, has a Graduate Certificate in Public Sector Management and is a member of CPA Australia.

Gavin is currently the Director of Finance with the Department of Justice and has previously worked for the Departments of Treasury and Finance, Police, Fire and Emergency Management, and for the Tasmania Prison Service in a variety of accounting and management roles.

Our Relationships

Who We Are

Tasmania Legal Aid's vision is that all Tasmanians are safe, respected and have their voices heard. We provide legal aid in the most effective, efficient and economical manner.

We continue working to improve access to justice for Tasmania's disadvantaged communities with our practice partners in private practice, State and Commonwealth governments, Community Legal Centres and National Legal Aid, as well as advocacy groups working throughout social and legal sectors.

Private Lawyers

Private lawyers help a large number of disadvantaged clients, often at heavily discounted rates – or sometimes pro-bono in special circumstances.

In 2019–2020, 79 law firms and barristers assisted on 3,004 new Legal Aid case files.

Private lawyers assisted 58% of all people who received a new legal aid grant, including serious criminal trials, family law cases, and children being represented in the Magistrates Court.

Legal Aid has firm relationships with lawyers across the state, which helps our clients find representation close to where they live.

Legal Aid's relationship with the private profession is crucial to helping us achieve our goals: delivering high quality, client-focused legal services while providing further access to justice for Tasmanians.

Law Society of Tasmania

"The relationship between Legal Aid and the Law Society is a vital one. The collaborative work between the organisations during the challenges presented by COVID-19 has been invaluable in assisting the entire legal profession and the justice system generally to function effectively through a time of significant change.

Legal Aid has shown its ability to adapt and evolve with changes to the way it delivers its services, including the implementation of new Grant Guidelines for means tests to minimise the effect of Commonwealth COVID-19 income supplements. This has all occurred with minimal interruption to the essential services it provides.

Court delays were a concern to our organisations even before the pandemic hit. We have worked jointly to continue to address Court delays.

The critical funding needed for the legal assistance sector into the future remains key to ensure access to justice for the community and the Law Society will continue to advocate that appropriate funding be provided to enable Legal Aid to continue to assist Tasmanians in need."

Crystal Garwood, President
Law Society of Tasmania

Bar Association of Tasmania

"The Tasmanian Bar have welcomed the open dialogue it has had with the TLA in the last year. It appreciates its co-operation on issues in which the two organisations have compatible interests relating to the administration of justice."

Sandra Taglieri, President
Tasmanian Bar Association

Community Legal Centres

Legal Aid continues to build on our strong partnerships with Tasmania's Community Legal Centres (CLCs) located across the state, delivering coordinated legal assistance at a local level while avoiding unnecessary duplication of our resources and services.

We continue to deliver community legal education across Tasmania and TLA lawyers volunteer their services to offer after-hours legal advice at CLCs, while the Hobart CLC provides Duty Lawyer services at the local Magistrates Court on our behalf.

The CEOs of Hobart, Launceston and North West CLCs serve on Legal Aid committees reviewing decisions by grants officers.

"The last year has seen a strengthening of the relationship between Tasmania Legal Aid and Community Legal Centres Tasmania with regular meetings between our respective organisations and collaboration around community legal education, service delivery and resource sharing. Notably, during COVID-19 we collaborated to advocate for greater protections for those impacted by COVID-19 including residential tenants, persons affected by family violence and financial assistance for the socially and financially disadvantaged.

Jane Hutchison, Chair
Community Legal Centres Tasmania

Department of Justice (Tasmania)

Tasmania Legal Aid and the Department of Justice have a productive and collaborative relationship. We are involved in a number of committees and provide comments and submissions on possible law changes.

Although we are an independent statutory body, TLA staff are State employees and the Department assists with Human Resources, Work Health & Safety and similar matters.

TLA attends the department's senior management meetings that aim to improve the Tasmanian justice system. We are involved in the department's Collaborative Service Planning which brings together legal and non-legal service providers to discuss how we can better coordinate and communicate among our sector and with the public.

National Legal Aid

National Legal Aid (NLA) represents the eight state and territory Legal Aid Commissions in Australia.

NLA's purpose is to lead and encourage a national system of legal aid which allows economically disadvantaged people to obtain access to justice, and provide a forum for engagement at a national level with government, stakeholders, community; and for the individual Legal Aid Commissions to engage with each other about best practice of legal aid and related issues.

NLA works nationally with the Commonwealth Government to improve legal assistance and is supported by working groups and networks with representatives from each of the Legal Aid Commissions. TLA provides the Office of the NLA Secretariat, and supports the work of NLA in enhancing access to justice for disadvantaged people by bringing the Tasmanian experience and perspective to national initiatives and law reform.

NLA initiatives supported by the Commonwealth Government during 2019–2020 included:

- **amica** – an online dispute resolution service to help separating couples resolve their disagreements and to record agreements in plain language.
- **Your Story** Disability Legal Support – a national, free, legal service that provides independent information and advice to people with disability, their families, carers, supporters and advocates. Your Story aims to support people to safely share their stories with the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.
- Submissions to the Australian Government and parliamentary committee inquiries in relation to a range of matters such as the National Disability Insurance Scheme and family law and domestic violence.

Attorney General's Department (Commonwealth)

Tasmania Legal Aid works closely with the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department. We participate in advisory groups and law review committees and provided crucial collaboration in the development of national initiatives such as **amica**, **Your Story** and Family Violence Law Help.

Our Collaborations

SafeChoices Tasmania

"Throughout 2019-20 SafeChoices has been working with Tasmania Legal Aid Safe at Home lawyers to assist Tasmanian women and children to stay safe in family violence situations.

SafeChoices staff attend Legal Aid sessions with Safe at Home lawyers and provide clients with a 'second set of ears' to listen to expert family violence legal advice given by lawyers.

Our staff are able to support clients and provide understanding and compassion to victims/survivors of family violence and their children. Clients have found this service really beneficial, saying that it is hard to take it all in during such a difficult time for them and their children."

**Jacinta Atkins, Manager
SafeChoices Tasmania**

Council of the Ageing (COTA) Tasmania

"For three years, a popular free monthly legal clinic hosted by COTA Tasmania has provided a non-threatening, confidential space for older people to talk to Legal Aid's expert civil lawyers about their legal options. More recently, we have referred older people to the Commission's new specialised elder-abuse service, Senior Assist, confident they will receive the case management we know in so many cases is vital to ensuring their rights are protected."

**Sue Leitch, CEO
COTA Tasmania**

The Family Violence Counselling and Support Service

"Tasmania Legal Aid's Safe at Home Legal Service provides a vital and important role in supporting people affected by family violence. The Family Violence Counselling and Support Service (FVCSS) within the Safe at Home partnership works with the lawyers across the state daily to ensure that clients of FVCSS are informed on a range of matters, including:

- Conditions of a Family Violence Order or a Police Family Violence Order
- Private applications
- Court outcomes
- Making a statement
- Following up with other Safe at Home partners
- Providing general information about Family Court matters
- Referrals for victim support, such as FVCSS

A strong collaborative working relationship has developed over the years between the TLA Safe at Home lawyers and FVCSS with an appreciation of the expertise and knowledge that the Safe at Home lawyers bring to the service area; they have an awareness and insight in the complex area of family violence, and are cognisant of the trauma that family violence brings.

Clients of FVCSS comment frequently on their positive experience with the TLA Safe at Home lawyers, with clients stating that they feel confident that the lawyer was committed to getting the best possible outcomes."

**Jane Fleming, Statewide Manager
FVCSS and staff**

TLA and Women's Legal Service Tasmania working together

Tasmania Legal Aid signed a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Women's Legal Service Tasmania (WLST) to bring renewed focus on assisting women affected by inequality and family violence. The purpose of the MOU was to ensure as many women as possible received assistance.

The MoU allows our two organisations to work more closely together, helping as many Tasmanian women as possible receive assistance with navigating the legal system and better coordinating family violence legal services for Tasmanians.

Already Legal Aid and WLST have been working together to build a more holistic approach to the legal system among the community.

Knowledge sharing has already begun with WLST staff receiving training on Family Court affidavits and how to use amicus briefings to better support clients.

WLST CEO Yvette Cehtel said the renewed focus on collaboration was very positive, and will help address unmet community need.

"The two organisations took part in the 16 Days of Action Against Gender Violence in Burnie, running workshops to raise awareness about violence against women and children.

Together we have also ran clinics at Smithton and provide duty list support for women when TLA are unable to act.

TLA and WLST are continuing to advance their collaboration, including working toward helping people with legal matters as well as underlying health concerns that can arise from dealing with legal problems. Both organisations are keen to explore new service delivery models and new ways of working to enable us to reach people earlier in their interaction with the law.

Together, TLA and WLST are improving the co-ordination of family violence legal services to the Tasmanian community. Together both services are working to provide a framework for collaboration and the exchange of information, pursuing mutual objectives in a cost-effective way while sharing skills across a growing professional network."

Yvette Cehtel, CEO
Women's Legal Service Tasmania



Our Collaborations (continued)

Tasmania Department of Justice – Safe at Home

"The ongoing partnership between Tasmania Legal Aid and Safe at Home, through dedicated Safe at Home Lawyers, has continued to lead to positive outcomes for families during 2019-2020. With a focus on working with people experiencing family violence, the Safe at Home Legal Aid team have demonstrated the benefits of subject matter expertise in this area. They have supported Safe at Home clients through court, but have also provided significant support to victim/survivors when reporting family violence to police.

In addition to providing front-line legal services, the Safe at Home Legal Aid team continue to actively engage in the operational and procedural oversight of the Safe at Home initiative, through engagement in the Safe at Home Interdepartmental Committee (IDC). The Safe at Home Legal Aid Practice Manager provides a legal lens to discussions regarding practice and policy issues around the Government's criminal justice response to family violence, and has actively raised practice issues, shared best practice and research articles, and ensures the Safe at Home IDC is up to date with any changes or developments to legal practice in the area of family violence."

**Emily Chase, Senior Consultant
Safe at Home Coordination Unit
Department of Justice**

Advocacy Tasmania

"Advocacy Tasmania provides support to people living with disability or mental illness, older people, people who use alcohol or other drugs.

AdvoTas operates the Tasmanian Elder Abuse Helpline and values the professional relationship with Tasmania Legal Aid that enables an efficient referral pathway for older persons to the Legal Aid Senior Assist unit. This is an invaluable reciprocal arrangement with a Memorandum of Understanding in place. AdvoTas discussed Legal Aid Senior Assist with 68% of helpline callers in the last financial year. AdvoTas also works collaboratively with Legal Aid for NDIS appeals cases and to provide information sessions about elder abuse."

**Nita Joy
Elder Abuse Liaison
Advocacy Tasmania**

Our Reach



	2018/19	2019/20	% DIFFERENCE
Preventative Services			
Website page visits	585,841	686,536	↑ 17.19%
Community Legal Education sessions	75	109	↑ 45.33%
Community Legal Education participants	5067	4,378	↓ 13.66%
Legal Talk chats	3,465	3,213	↓ 7.27%
Telephone advice - number of matters dealt with	21,813	22,621	↑ 3.70%
Telephone advice - referrals made	32,675	35,013	↑ 7.16%
Early Intervention services			
Legal advice and minor assistance	5,031	4,832	↓ 3.96%
Family Dispute Resolution (FDR) conferences	395	368	↓ 6.84%
Duty Lawyer services			
Family Advocacy and Support Service (FASS)	1936	1,811	↓ 6.46%
Family Law duty	294	244	↓ 17.01%
Civil Law duty	29	42	↑ 44.83%
Criminal Law duty	4374	3,776	↓ 13.67%
Legal Representation			
Grants of Legal Aid	4,905	5,184	↑ 5.96%
Total grants to private practitioners (\$million)	5.193	5.905	↑ 13.71%
Total payments made to private practitioners (\$million)	4.826	5.157	↑ 6.87%
In-house grants	1,778	2,180	↑ 22.61%
% of grants of aid to private lawyers	63.75%	57.95%	↓ 5.80%
Applications for legal aid	26,892	30,240	↑ 12.45%
Applications for new cases	5,498	5,777	↑ 5.07%
Applications to extend existing grants	21,394	24,643	↑ 14.35%

Our Services

Preventative Services

Our website is a reliable source of legal information with fact sheets, self help kits, YouTube videos, Legal Aid guidelines and a comprehensive referral list for legal and non legal services.

TOP 5 MOST POPULAR WEBSITE FACT SHEETS

Estates	27,535
Boundary fences	21,931
Preparing a plea in mitigation	21,080
Power of Attorney	15,411
Family Violence	12,518



Community Legal Education

109 sessions delivered
reaching **4,378** participants

Telephone Advice Line

We provide free and confidential legal advice and referrals on our telephone advice line. Anyone in Tasmania can call and speak directly to one of our lawyers. It is our most widely used service.

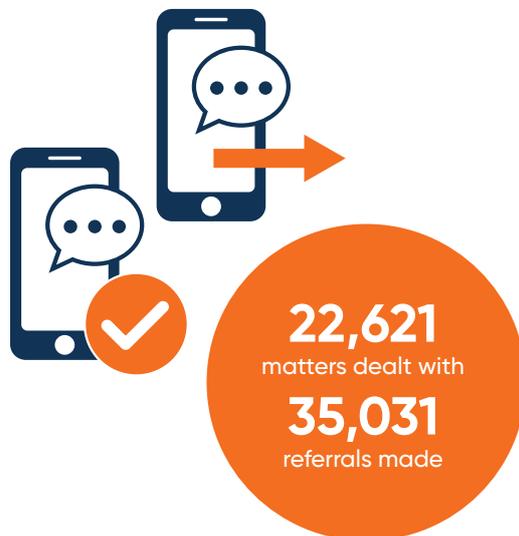
TOP 5 REFERRALS MADE VIA TELEPHONE ADVICE LINE

General civil law matters	8,313
General criminal matters	4,099
Children's matters	3,317
Enquiries about legal aid services	2,145
Property matters	1,165



Legal Talk

Legal Talk is an online legal information service that people access via our website



Early Intervention Services

Face to Face Clinic

4,370 individuals received advice, information and referral to other services to assist them to resolve their issues.



Duty Lawyer Services

Available at the Magistrates Court, Family Court and Federal Circuit Court, free of charge.

Family Dispute Resolution Service



368

family dispute resolution conferences held

49

court-ordered mediations

22

child inclusive conferences

10

ICL conferences

5,873

services provided

Overall settlement rate (full or partial) of **83.97%**

Legal Representation

We provide legal representation through grants of aid to private lawyers and to in-house lawyers. Most of the cases are criminal law, family law, child safety and family violence matters.

More than **57%** of grants of aid went to private lawyers and the balance to in-house lawyers.

30,240

applications for legal aid

5,777

were for new cases, **24,463** applications to extend existing grants

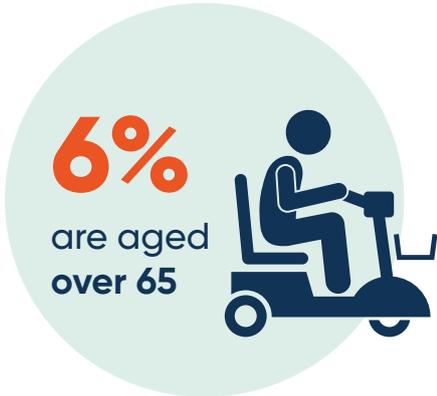


- Telephone advice and referrals (57,634)
- Community Legal Education participants (4,378)
- Legal advice and minor assistance (4,832)
- Duty Lawyer services (5,837)
- Family Dispute Resolution conferences (368)
- Grants of Legal Aid (5,184)

Total Client Services excludes 686,536 total website page visits

Our Clients – a snapshot

We help thousands of Tasmanians through our legal services.



Clients across Tasmania

Total clients by municipality



Our Services

- OFFICE LOCATIONS
- OUTREACH LAWYER

Review of our 2017–20 Corporate Plan

The 2019–20 period brought Tasmania Legal Aid's 2017–20 Corporate Plan to a close as we began our new 2020–23 Strategic Plan.

Overall the now-complete Corporate Plan met its five goals but there remain areas we will continue to address in our new Strategic Plan.

Goal One

Ensure our priority clients have access to legal assistance

TLA provided access to more services and continues to work toward better means testing and targeted services based on client data. This will enable us to assist priority clients get legal assistance and prioritise our resources in the areas of greatest need.

- 100% of grants of legal aid went to people of socio-economic or financial disadvantage, had a disability or were elderly Tasmanians
- 3,693 grants of legal aid and extensions to existing grants, an increase of 15%
- Approved 90% of all legal aid grant requests
- 5,873 Duty Lawyer services provided
- Civil Law Duty Lawyer service increased 45%
- Implemented new legal aid grant guidelines in response to COVID-19 pandemic to ensure vulnerable Tasmanians receiving additional government pandemic subsidies were not barred when applying for aid
- \$5.90 million in grants of legal aid to the private profession to represent clients, an increase of 14%

Goal Two

Strike an appropriate balance in allocating resources between a range of services

Legal Aid struck an appropriate balance in allocating resources among our wide-ranging services by providing a range of services that are preventative, timely and encourage self-help when appropriate. We continue to strive for more flexibility in how our services meet our clients' needs in these areas and in providing better representation.

- Expanded FASS services that combines legal and social support to meet the needs of clients experiencing family violence
- 42.5% increase in social support services
- Extended clinic services in Launceston to meet increasing demand
- Senior Assist staff helped 78 older Tasmanians who were experiencing or at risk of elder abuse

Goal Three

Deliver high quality and flexible legal services that deliver value for money

We were able to deliver high-quality and flexible legal services that provide clients and stakeholders the best resources and services at value for money. Legal Aid clients are highly satisfied, and we continue to maintain our great reputation with our stakeholders and the broader community, delivering continuity of service within a changing environment.

- Referrals from our telephone advice line to other services increased by 7%
- Helped establish and support the Community Legal Education Steering Group with CLC Tas
- Held 109 face-to-face community legal education sessions delivered to 4,378 participants
- Delivered 12 Safe At Home community education sessions to 143 participants
- 13 COVID-19 Fact Sheets created, accounting for over 15,000 pageviews from more than 6,700 unique visitors

Goal Four

Contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of the justice system

Legal Aid is proud of our contribution to the justice system, providing in-depth and appropriate service to those with the highest need while advocating appropriate outcomes. Our open dialogue process has enhanced our positive collaboration with the legal community. We have also made inroads toward educating and empowering our clients and the wider Tasmanian community while delivering a higher percentage of early resolutions in legal matters.

- 84% of family dispute resolution conferences resulted in an agreement, avoiding the need for court action
- Increased grants of assistance in legal aid by 5.7%
- Worked with the Director of Public Prosecutions to achieve timely and appropriate resolution of cases

By engaging employees through surveys and by maintaining open feedback channels we continue building on our organisational strengths, identify challenges and focus on the topics that must be advanced as the new Strategic Plan 2020–23 takes flight.

As an organisation, we have a strong shared purpose, close alignment between our organisational and personal values and overwhelming consistency in job satisfaction.

Goal Five

Be a financially sustainable and accountable organisation

We continue to work towards having sustainable and continued funding for our core work while adapting and attracting new funding and meeting our funders' expectations. We meet our compliance responsibilities while maintaining sufficient reserves, which we detail in regular and transparent reporting.

- Secured additional Commonwealth funding for Senior Assist and the Family Advocacy and Support Service
- Regular reporting about how we were tracking financially
- Delivered a balanced result
- Appropriate reserves to deal with changes in the environment



How do we help?

We provide high quality, accessible legal services to Tasmanians, especially those who are most vulnerable, delivered by skilled and well supported staff.



Civil Law

The Civil Law program expanded this year with a lawyer appointed in February to help Tasmanians with legal problems that may land them in court. These issues usually relate to problems with contracts.

Our lawyer also advised seniors at our monthly outreach clinic with our partner Council on the Ageing Tas (COTA), which we run once a month at COTA's Hobart office.

Your Story

Your Story Disability Legal Support helps Tasmanians and their supporters make submissions to the Disability Royal Commission. We are collaborating with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service on this national project.

Collaboration

Your Story is a collaborative national service to provide legal advice and assistance to people living with disability who want to tell their story to the Disability Royal Commission (DRC). This service is a joint project delivered by National Legal Aid and National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services and funded by the Commonwealth until 30 June 2022.

Tasmania Legal Aid's Your Story lawyer, David Cocker, is working closely with Josie Short from Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service to reach Tasmanians and help them share their story with the Royal Commission. We have made connections with a number of advocacy and counselling services, and continue to forge relationships with a wide range of service providers, peak bodies, government agencies and other organisations to promote the service.

Reach

Your Story includes an advice line and a team of mobile lawyers. The Tasmanian Your Story arm offers legal advice about safely engaging with the DRC to Tasmanians living with disability, their carers, family, advocates and supporters. We also provide legal advice and assistance for ancillary legal matters and a facilitated referral program.

Your Story supports the whole of Tasmania with outreach around the state, including King and Flinders islands.

Making a Difference

Your Story has made some promising inroads with a range of stakeholders, including with the Department of Corrections. This is a significant development because not only is prison a tough environment for people with a disability, the Disability Royal Commission has identified prisons as an area of interest for its investigation.

It is also a new relationship for TLA's Civil Law program. We have reached an in principle agreement with prison administrators to set-up a free advice phone line within prisons that will be available once technical details are ironed out.

In the meantime we are educating prisoners about the Your Story service and working with prison staff so they can help inmates with disabilities tell their stories to the DRC.

How do we help?

Your Story recently assisted Tony who wanted to tell his loved one's story to the DRC. Tony also had an unresolved court application against a service provider. Tony had been helped by a law firm free of charge, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic they could not continue to assist him.

Your Story assisted Tony to explore and understand his options for legal support. He was also offered advice and assistance to resolve another problem and was grateful for the assistance Your Story provided, empowering him to make an informed decision about how to proceed.

We have changed our client's name and some facts to protect their privacy.

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

Collaboration

Our National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) service provides advice and representation for Tasmanians who are unhappy with a decision made by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).

Many cases are for people whose application for support has been refused by the NDIS or their NDIS plan is not enough to support their needs.

This year, we assisted 11 clients appeal NDIA decisions, include getting funding for much needed support and improved funding packages. These decisions have a huge impact on the lives of the people we help.

We work closely with Advocacy Tasmania's disability advocates to get the best support for our clients. This collaboration has led to successful outcomes for vulnerable Tasmanians.

Reach

The NDIS is about helping Australians with permanent illnesses and disabilities get the best quality of life through quality care. But for some people, their special needs might not be recognised or met when first assessed.

TLA supports people to argue for the NDIS to meet their needs, wherever they live in Tasmania. We help vulnerable people fight for a better, fairer outcome that suits the circumstances of them and their families.

How do we help?

Sam is a vibrant young boy with a rare genetic condition that affects his muscles, physical development and appetite. The impact on Sam and his family's life is significant as he requires round-the-clock one-to-one supervision and a wheelchair for outings.

Simple things that children enjoy, like birthday parties and play dates, became a source of great stress for Sam and his parents. His parents applied for NDIS funding so Sam could go out during school holidays.

Sam's application for a wheelchair was refused. The family decided to appeal the decision to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT), at which point Tasmania Legal Aid stepped in to help.

We helped Sam get funding for a wheelchair and a support worker to help him enjoy trips to the park or museum. He even went to V8 Supercars to watch his favorite driver, Craig Lowndes, who Sam was excited to meet.

We have changed our client's name and some facts to protect their privacy.



Senior Assist

Collaboration

Senior Assist is a new elder abuse prevention unit that includes a team of lawyers and case managers. We provide free legal advice, assistance and support to seniors who are experiencing elder abuse. We also provide advice and information to prevent elder abuse.

The Senior Assist integrated service model is part of a Commonwealth funded project. Senior Assist also receives support from the Tasmanian Government.

Elder abuse is a single, or repeated act, or a lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust that causes harm or distress to an older person. Elder abuse can take various forms such as financial, physical, psychological and sexual abuse. It can also be the result of intentional or unintentional neglect.

Senior Assist partners with Advocacy Tasmania and its Tasmanian Elder Abuse Help Line, Council on the Ageing Tas and Relationships Australia Tas. Together we provide a better service with referrals, joint community education and outreach clinics. We also work closely with many other service providers including police, hospital and community based social workers, Housing Connect, health care professionals, home care package providers, the Public Trustee and Public Guardian.

Working alongside other Legal Aid programs, we assist seniors who are not experiencing elder abuse but have other civil issues. These include contractual disputes, Guardianship Board or Mental Health Tribunal proceedings and applications for restraint orders.

How do we help?

The Tasmanian Elder Abuse Help Line referred 90-year-old Robert to Senior Assist. Robert had been issued with a legal default notice from a bank for \$41,000 as he was guarantor on his son's loan. Robert had been coerced to guarantee the loan.

Senior Assist helped Robert write a letter outlining the situation and requesting he be removed as guarantor from the loan. He called Senior Assist to say the bank had removed him as guarantor and agreed to pay him \$1,000 for the inconvenience.

It goes without saying that Robert was delighted with this outcome and extremely grateful for our help.

We have changed our client's name and some facts to protect their privacy.

Reach

Senior Assist supports seniors throughout Tasmania and can visit people in their home or a safe place. Anyone can access Senior Assist if they are 65+ years of age (50+ for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people).

We:

- Help seniors to understand their rights
- Support them to make their own decisions
- Give legal advice and support to stop elder abuse
- Help seniors to report matters to police or other agencies
- Provide emotional support
- Refer seniors to other services

In 2020, Senior Assist provided 359 services to 78 clients who were experiencing or at risk of elder abuse.

How do we help?

Simon, a man in his early 80s distressed by his adult son's behaviour, spoke with Senior Assist. Simon's son was living at his house and abusing him physically, emotionally, financially and damaged Simon's property. Simon was stressed and frightened for his safety. He did not know what to do.

As there were several significant safety concerns, Simon was told to contact the police if he felt unsafe. Our case manager and lawyer worked with him for several months to help him cope with his situation. We worked through his options, providing support and counselling so he could make decisions about stopping the abuse.

With our support Simon asked his son to leave the property and applied for a restraining order. Our Safe at Home colleagues helped Simon find a safe area at court as he felt extremely vulnerable about seeing his son in the waiting room while our Senior Assist case manager gave Simon emotional support. Simon obtained a 12-month restraining order. Senior Assist worked closely with police to ensure his son left his property.

"I cannot thank you both enough for your endeavors to bring peace to our house," Simon said.

We have changed our client's name and some facts to protect their privacy.

Mental Health

Collaboration

Our Mental Health and Disability team works with and receives referrals from a wide range of organisations and individuals including:

- Individuals, family members and other Legal Aid programs
- Hospital and Community Mental Health Services
- Advocacy Tasmania
- The Public Guardian and Public Trustee
- Community Legal Services
- Support workers

A collaborative approach helps us connect with and assist many people who may not know they can access Legal Aid's free representation. Our team is committed to strengthening these relationships so we can assist more people in times of need.

We work with Advocacy Tasmania on Your Say, a mental health representation scheme that helps those who might struggle to speak for themselves. Your Say means our clients can count on having someone in their corner and our organisations can share skills, knowledge and resources without waste or duplication.

Reach

We advise and represent Tasmanians involved in Mental Health Tribunal and Guardianship and Administration Board hearings.

Our clients include people who are living with a disability in the community, hospitals, aged care facilities and group homes.

We also deliver an outreach clinic to patients in the psychiatric ward at the Launceston General Hospital (although this was affected during the COVID-19 pandemic). Planning to resume this service is underway.

With 332 grants of legal aid, a 12% increase, we see that demand in this area remains high.

Making a Difference

People often do not understand the legal process. That is why they appreciate us explaining what the hearing is about, why it is happening and ensuring that their voices are heard.

We also gave voice to our clients' concerns in our submission to the *Mental Health Act 2013* review.

We focused on a person's right to make their own decisions wherever possible. We spoke about:

- Inconsistencies in the law around the processes of assessment, examination and treatment which led to confusion and poor outcomes for some people
- People being treated involuntarily when they don't meet the legal test for compulsory treatment
- Confusion about when someone has decision-making capacity
- The test for treatment being set too low

Our submission was highly influential and reflected in the review outcomes.

How do we help?

Charlotte was admitted to a psychiatric ward when she experienced a relapse of her mental illness. Unable to make decisions about her health treatment, a compulsory treatment order was made – a first for Charlotte. It meant that she would be forced to stay in hospital and take medication.

When her case was to be considered by the Mental Health Tribunal, Charlotte felt she had recovered and was ready to go home, provided she had support from the community mental health team. Charlotte was keen to get home as she was her elderly mother's primary carer. But hospital doctors disagreed.

Before her hearing, our lawyer walked Charlotte through what to expect. Together we were able to show how Charlotte's health had improved so she could make decisions about her treatment.

The Tribunal agreed and Charlotte was able to return home to care for herself and her mother.

We have changed our client's name and some facts to protect their privacy.

Safe at Home

Collaboration

Through the Safe at Home program we work with Tasmania Police, the Family Violence Counselling & Support Service, Child Safety Services and the Court Support & Liaison Service and others to address the safety of victims and their families.

We make referrals to other services such as Safe Choices, the Family Violence Counselling & Support Service, the Huon Domestic Violence Service and Engender Equality for safety planning, counselling and support, assistance with housing and other forms of practical assistance.

Sharing information helps to ensure a coordinated response, better outcome and more efficient use of resources. Best of all, collaborating with our partners helps people avoid having to tell upsetting details of their story over and over again.

Reach

Our Safe at Home lawyers provide a broad range of services to victims of family violence state-wide:

- At our four Legal Aid offices and in courts
- Through outreach services in the Circular Head area and Queenstown, delivered in collaboration with the Women's Legal Service Tasmania
- By outreach lawyers visiting women's shelters, community centres and other services
- We provide Community Legal Education, such as providing several sessions in Burnie during the local event for 16 Days of Action to End Gender-Based Violence
- During COVID-19, we worked on staying connected by phone and audio-visual means

We help people who experience family violence – whatever their gender, socio-economic status or cultural background. We provide advice and help with family violence orders to ensure they are protected.

The number of reported family violence incidents in Tasmania has stayed steady even through COVID-19. This means that many people are seeking help.

This year, our Safe at Home lawyers:

- Provided legal advice to 763 clients
- Opened 111 grants files
- Opened 315 minor assistance files
- Provided 40 Duty Lawyer services

We also delivered 12 community education sessions for victims of family violence, workers in the non-legal support services who help them and lawyers likely to have family violence-affected clients. More than 140 people participated in the sessions.

Making a Difference

The Safe at Home lawyers are here to help people who have experienced family violence to know what their choices are and how legal systems work, and help people get good outcomes. In Court, our service's focus is protective orders.

We know not everyone who has experienced family violence wants the relationship to end; many would like the relationship to continue, but the abuse to stop. If protective orders do not allow any contact, they might not be what the protected person wants.

Ending relationships is hard, even when the decision is mutual. If one person won't accept the end of the relationship or there is abuse or violence, it can be very difficult.

It can really help to know what options there are, where to seek help and what is involved. Better informing people helps them to be less afraid and better able to protect themselves and their children.

How do we help?

After Cheryl and Andrew broke up, things did not go well: Andrew used drugs; he hit her and other family members; he made threats to burn the house down.

Even years later, he continued to follow Cheryl in public, calling and telling her he could see what she was doing. He told her that during their relationship he had downloaded all the photos and videos from her phone and he still had them, including an intimate video they'd made together.

When Cheryl still didn't do what Andrew wanted, he posted the video on a 'revenge porn' site.

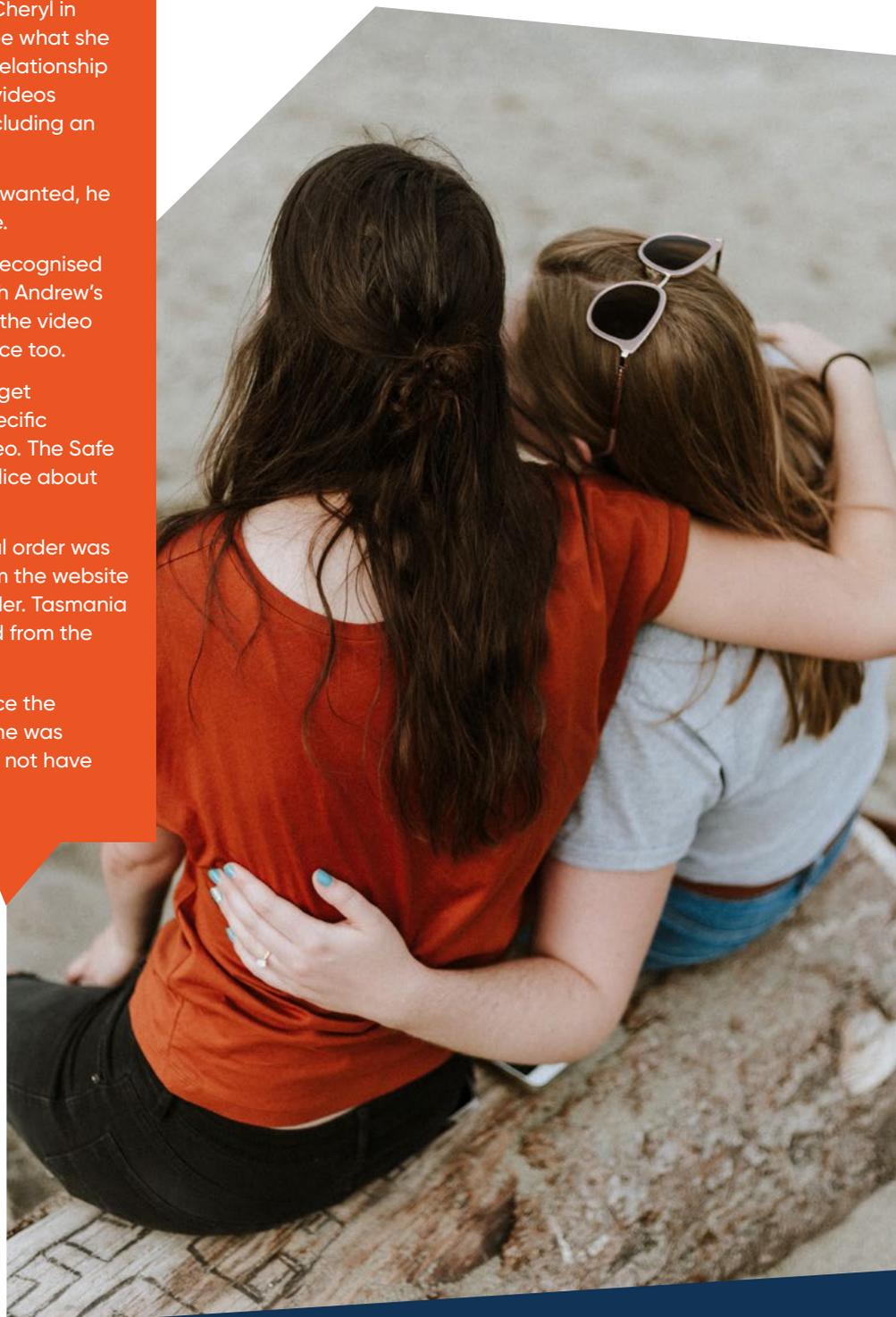
Cheryl told police, but at first it was not recognised as family violence offending, even though Andrew's behaviour involved stalking and posting the video without Cheryl's permission was an offence too.

The Safe at Home lawyer helped Cheryl get an interim Family Violence Order with specific instructions that Andrew remove the video. The Safe at Home lawyer spoke with Tasmania Police about the family violence and the orders.

Andrew didn't turn up to court and a final order was made. He failed to remove the video from the website and was charged with breaching the order. Tasmania Police have since had the video removed from the site.

Cheryl has not had any more trouble since the final Family Violence Order was made. She was happy with the result, and felt she would not have succeeded without our help.

We have changed our client's name and some facts to protect their privacy.



Advice and Legal Services (ALS)

Collaboration

Advice & Legal Services (ALS) provides general advice, information and referrals to thousands of Tasmanians, often as their first step toward legal aid assistance. By helping people get answers to legal questions and concerns early we support the timely resolution of legal problems.

We openly and actively engage with our clients, provide referrals to appropriate services, and work with our community partners.

“ Many people are confused about which legal service offers the help they need. To address this prevalent issue, managers of the Hobart Community Legal Service and TLA’s Advice & Legal Services hold staff meetings to enable streamlined referrals, prepare clients for appointments and to keep abreast of changes.

Tasmanians appreciate public funds being used effectively by not duplicating services and those that are disadvantaged especially appreciate not being on a roundabout of referrals. ”

Jane Hutchison
Director,
Hobart Community Legal Service

Reach

Our frontline services are open to all members of the Tasmanian public through:

- Telephone Advice Line
- Face-to-face drop in clinic services
- Legal Talk, an online chat service

ALS delivered 22,621 telephone advice services and referred 35,013 callers to other services. We helped 3,213 people through Legal Talk and delivered clinic advice services to 4,370 people.

ALS services continued despite COVID-19 restrictions. While offices were closed the face-to-face service adapted to become “contactless”. This meant that anyone anywhere in the state could still get help. Contactless clinics continue to be offered alongside the face-to-face option.

All ALS services provided by our team are confidential and free of charge.

Making a Difference

We take a holistic approach to problem solving. In addition to giving Tasmanians legal information we refer our callers to other support services that can help address their needs.

We see that when people gain new knowledge and skills and get much-needed support in other aspects of their lives, they are better empowered to resolve their problems.

Typical examples of early intervention include:

- People with mortgage stress or other debt issues
- Questions about how to create a binding superannuation nomination
- Drafting letters on someone’s behalf that help address debt situations

Often that first step starts with a call to ALS.

How do we help?

Jane, a young mother, had never been in trouble with the law before.

Out one night, a girlfriend got into a drunken fight. Police arrived and arrested the friend. Jane stepped in thinking she would try to protect her. Instead she was charged with Disorderly Conduct and given a court summons.

Jane had been couch-surfing with her baby at a friend's house after an argument with her parents.

A police officer suggested Jane contact Legal Aid. When she arrived at the clinic she was crying, frightened and had no idea what steps she needed to take to keep her freedom and her baby.

Jane was overwhelmed by her situation. The ALS lawyer took the time to reassure Jane she had come to the right place before asking her about the charge and explaining the court process. The lawyer looked at the whole picture and helped Jane break it down into smaller parts so she could address each one in turn.

The lawyer contacted police to get the court paperwork so Jane could have everything ready for when she went to court.

The ALS lawyer found out Jane had been seeing a psychologist for many years to treat anxiety and mental illness. The lawyer told Jane that a letter from her psychologist about this could help her case.

As Jane was not at risk of going to prison she was connected with the local Community Legal Centre (CLC) to have someone represent her on her day in court.

With Legal Aid help gathering the police documents, a letter from her psychologist, and organising a CLC duty lawyer, Jane was able to face court and got a 12-month good behavior bond but no conviction or fine.

Legal Aid and the CLC also helped Jane secure supported accommodation for her and her baby. Jane is now studying social work at TAFE and hopes to help young people deal with life's challenges.

We have changed our client's name and some facts to protect their privacy



Community Legal Education and Information (CLEI)

Collaboration

Community Legal Education and Information (CLEI) is Tasmania Legal Aid's community engagement and education program.

A focus of our work is educating young Tasmanians about the law, in particular about potential legal pitfalls of life online, such as cyber bullying, sexting and how to use technology safely.

Through our website, social media and Community Legal Education (CLE) sessions we reach hundreds of thousands of Tasmanians every year. One of our greatest tools are our CLE sessions, when we visit schools and talk with students face-to-face, empowering them to better understand how the law affects their lives and helping them to navigate through life and the legal system.

We participated in a Mental Wellness Day Expo at Kingston High School with other service providers. We engaged with approximately 700 students, teachers and parents during the day to raise awareness of Legal Aid services, particularly our CLEI program.

The event built on our existing relationship with the school and was a great opportunity to engage with students outside the classroom. We were also able to introduce ourselves to primary students making the transition to high school in the new school year, a crucial period in their personal development.

Reach

- 109 face-to-face community legal education sessions delivered to 4,378 participants
- 686,536 website hits
- 91,649 Fact Sheet views

Top five fact sheets

- Estates
- Boundary Fences
- Preparing a plea in mitigation
- Power of Attorney
- Family Violence

Top five COVID-19 fact sheets

- Funerals and Weddings During COVID-19
- Leaving Home During COVID-19
- Renting During COVID-19
- Will Making and COVID-19
- Court Appearances During COVID-19



Making a Difference

With the COVID-19 pandemic impacting so many aspects of our lives, CLEI was limited in how it could deliver education in the usual settings. We were unable to speak with people through face-to-face engagement and had to adapt our processes.

We responded by providing information on how COVID-19 restrictions would impact individual rights, what new laws had been introduced and how the practice of the legal profession had adapted.

Responding to the rapidly changing situation, our COVID-19 resources were regularly updated to reflect the changing legal and social situation. We created 13 Coronavirus specific fact sheets dealing with issues as broad as employment rights, child care arrangements, tenancy issues as well as weddings and funerals.

With schools closed we invested our time into research and development. During the pandemic lockdown, data indicated there was an increase in cyber-related issues concerning young people. As a response the CLEI team developed a new online learning module on cyber safety, bullying and sexting and commenced testing this with selected schools. Being Cyber Safe combines videos, animation and online activities to help reinforce key messages about the problems and pitfalls young people might encounter in the online space – and how they can get help when needed.

Research into teenage online behaviour indicates that young people are sexting less than 5 years ago, which can be attributed to greater education around the risks of sexting. It's incredibly satisfying that our CLE sessions are having an impact on young people in our community.

How do we help?

Hobart College
March-April 2020

"As part of our Home Group Program at Hobart College, we have been fortunate to have Stuart Davey from Legal Aid visit and present to our students about how to keep safe when online. The presentation was invaluable in highlighting to our young adults how, in the 21st century, it is so easy for them to become a target in an online environment. Stuart was also able to explain to them what their legal rights are and how they are able to access assistance if they ever find themselves in a situation where they require support. We are incredibly grateful to Stuart and Legal Aid for providing this fantastic service that allows our students to learn about issues that will be so important to them both during and beyond their formal schooling years."

Lou Christie
Teacher
Hobart College, Hobart

How do we help?

SPACE for Learning
August 2019

"Matt Hills was fantastic. He was able to craft a message for our cohort of students by combining humour, examples and an informal but focused presentation and encouraged questions as the session progressed. Matt really engaged the students (which can be often difficult!).

I would highly recommend Matt to present to other Tier 4 programs throughout Tasmania."

Norm Symmons
Community Liaison Officer
Space Learning Program, Devonport

Family Dispute Resolution (FDR)

Collaboration

The Family Dispute Resolution (FDR) program is thriving thanks to our working relationship with many legal and non-legal service providers across Tasmania.

Participants in our FDR Conferences are provided with legal assistance – before, during and after their conference – by Legal Aid lawyers and private legal practitioners.

Our Child Inclusive Practice collaborates with Child Consultants around the state to offer parents a model of conferencing where we consider children's views.

Our Court Ordered Mediations provide participants with the opportunity to return to the conference room with their lawyers to try and reach an agreement that they can tell the Judge about.

Our Conference Coordinators and Chairpersons help participants seek assistance for many social, non-legal issues as we recognise that our participants often require more than just legal assistance.

Reach

The FDR program is continually looking at ways to expand the services we offer and how participants can access our service. Our program offers flexibility in many varied ways and seeks to improve so we can provide the best service and opportunity for participants to resolve their disagreements.

Conferences can be carried out in a range of formats, from face-to-face, shuttle, telephone link, and now video conferencing. Video conferencing has been a great success, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic, with many participants from regional and remote areas of Tasmania now able access our service and participate in conferences at home.

In January 2020 Tasmania Legal Aid embarked on a two-year trial offering Property Mediation in the FDR program. The trial has been extremely successful with 106 parties participating and receiving legal advice and assistance regarding their financial and property settlement. The mediation program has already seen high rates of settlement with participants favouring the informal conference to the courtroom setting.

The value of Child Inclusive practice in FDR

I am passionate about giving children a voice in situations where separated parents are making decisions about their children's arrangements and have worked for TLA as an independent Child Consultant for a number of years.

All parents want to do the best for their children but in those situations where parents are either uncertain about or have differing views on their children's needs, Child Inclusive (CI) mediation can provide a way forward. Not only can CI provide evidence-based information, it can also serve as a reality check for lawyers and their clients and streamline the FDR process.

One particular strength of Child Inclusive mediation is that it enables involved professionals to work together as a team – FDR conference chair, lawyers and the child consultant – offering tangible, knowledge-based interventions to assist parents in their decision making.

All too often children may be confused and uncertain about their wishes or caught up in the trauma of divided parental loyalty. The CC is able to make recommendations based not just on children's expressed wishes but also on what is likely to be developmentally appropriate and reflect their needs.

Marianne Robertson
Child Consultant

Making a Difference

Each year FDR helps hundreds of Tasmanian families and couples with their parenting arrangements.

Family separation can be extremely stressful and emotional, so it is important matters relating to children are discussed and agreed upon as soon as possible.

The FDR program provides parties an opportunity to come together with their lawyers and an independent chairperson soon after separation. This provides a safe setting where separated couples can work toward an agreement that is in the best interests of the children.

We know the best arrangements for children are the ones parents make themselves. That's why we continue to see very high rates of settlement through this program.

Last year 368 FDR conferences were held, with 84% either fully or partially settled.

We also conducted 49 court ordered mediations, 22 child inclusive conferences and 10 Independent Children's Lawyer conferences.

Endorsement of FDRs from Federal Court Judge Terry McGuire

Judge McGuire highly commends the Family Dispute Resolution conferences that are conducted by Legal Aid. They are conducted in a very timely and professional manner.

He applauds the excellent settlement rate they accomplish saving the parties the time and expense of a trial in the Federal Circuit Court. Parties are more content in the knowledge they have settled their matter themselves without a Judge having to make their decisions for them that either one/or both may not be happy with.

– From the Chambers of Judge Terry McGuire
Federal Circuit Court of Australia
Launceston & Melbourne Registry

How do we help?

Tom and Fiona separated one year ago. They have three children together aged 6, 9 and 12. While they were able to work out some parenting matters between themselves there were some important matters they could not agree on.

Through Tasmania Legal Aid's Family Dispute Resolution program Tom and Fiona were able to come together with their lawyers and an independent Chairperson and discuss matters relating to their children. Being able to talk about co-parenting, the children's development, and how to create a path for communication enabled Tom and Fiona to reach a parenting agreement.

Having resolved parenting matters they were able to focus on their financial and property matters. Tom and Fiona discussed this with their lawyers and both of them received a grant of legal aid through Tasmania Legal Aid's Property Mediation Trial.

They each received legal advice and assistance from their lawyers about the value of their assets, their income and liabilities, and how the courts deal with these cases.

Tom and Fiona came together once again with their lawyers and a conference Chairperson to negotiate how to divide their finances. The informal, calm environment proved effective and once again Tom and Fiona reached an agreement.

TLA's FDR program provided Tom and Fiona with the opportunity to raise and discuss all matters relating to their separation. They were able to reach agreement about caring for their children and dividing their property, all while receiving legal advice and assistance every step of the way.

We have changed our clients' names and some facts to protect their privacy

Family

Collaboration

The Australian Government and National Legal Aid joined us to launch **amica**, a ground-breaking online service to help separating couples resolve their differences.

The amica program helps couples reach amicable agreements about property settlements and parenting arrangements. It is a secure digital service developed by National Legal Aid and Tasmania Legal Aid.

We also launched the Family Violence and Cross-examination Scheme In September 2019, which provides legal representation for people who have been banned from personally cross-examining their former partner in Family Law trials.

The Commonwealth-funded scheme stops alleged perpetrators from personally cross-examining their victims. This helps victims give evidence free of perpetrator intimidation and reduces the risk of victims being re-traumatised.

We developed a specialist register of lawyers to do this important work, also training them on how to better respond to men who use family violence.

Our lawyers contributed to policy, law reform and professional development in the family law sector, including:

- National Legal Aid – Family Law Working Group
- The Family Law Practitioner’s Association (including Child Safety sub-committee), Law Society Family Law Committee, Family Law Pathways Network, Family Law Courts – Child Safety Committee, Case Management Committee and Family Violence Consultative Committee
- Collaborating with The Women’s Legal Service to deliver educational material about family law and family violence to students at Elizabeth College
- Submitting a paper to the Council of Attorneys General – Family Violence Working Group on options for improving the family violence competency of legal practitioners
- Working group for Anglicare’s Social Action and Research Centre for the *Rebalancing the Scales* report

Reach

We deliver a range of services in Family Law and in Child Safety cases to Tasmanians across the state; in our four

offices, at Family Law Courts and through our private profession partners.

While our clients are diverse in their location, age, cultural backgrounds and needs, family violence is a concerning and prevalent issue for the children and parents we help. The review of the Family Law System by the Australian Law Reform Commission identified:

- 60% of separated families reported experiencing family violence
- Up to 70% of parents reported their children had been exposed to family violence
- Of people who went to court, 85% reported emotional abuse and 54% reported being physically hurt

Data indicates that approximately 79% of people accessing Legal Aid Family Services have experienced family violence. The COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to an increase in family violence. The Australian Institute of Criminology reported that for many women, the pandemic coincided with the onset or escalation of violence and abuse. Two-thirds of women who experienced physical or sexual violence by a current or former partner since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic said the violence had started or escalated. Many women, particularly those experiencing more serious or complex forms of violence and abuse, reported safety concerns were a barrier to seeking help.

The pandemic has also seen an increase in people going to the Family Law Courts with the Courts reporting in April a 39% increase in people filing in the Family Court and a 23% increase of those filing in the Federal Circuit Court over a four week period in March and April.

The impacts of increased family violence and increased demand for access to court have led to increased demand for legal aid family law services.

- 30.6% increase in family law applications approved compared to 2018–19
- \$2,632,877 paid to private lawyers to represent children and parents, an increase of 9.6%
- 57% increase in the representation of children (ICLs) in family law cases

Despite the increase in demand for family law services, we experienced a 24% drop in State child protection party and Separate Representative cases. The demand for service for child protection this year was similar to that for the 2017–18 year, after a 25% spike in 2018–19.

How do we help?

Dane and Angie separated when their daughter Chantelle was only two years old. It wasn't an easy separation and Dane applied for legal aid so he could see his daughter regularly. Legal Aid helped with mediation and Dane and Angie reached an agreement that became Court Orders.

As Chantelle got older they agreed to get new Court Orders so Dane could spend time with his daughter.

Last year Dane wanted the arrangements changed to fit better around his casual job.

Angie was accommodating at first but then stopped sending Chantelle. She said the Orders weren't clear about Dane's working arrangements. Unhappy with the situation, Angie applied to suspend the Orders.

Dane was stressed and struggling with the separation from his daughter. Angie was anxious and stressed about the court hearing. Chantelle was sad about not seeing her dad, and for her mum, who was not herself.

The Court decided Chantelle needed a voice and asked that she be represented by a Legal Aid-appointed Independent Children's Lawyer (ICL).

Chantelle told her ICL how she was feeling and what she hoped would happen.

Chantelle's ICL arranged a Court Ordered Mediation and acted as Chantelle's voice in the room. The ICL and the mediator helped Dane and Angie identify their problems and come up with their own solutions.

They agreed Chantelle would spend time with Dane again and that the ICL would stay involved with the family and help if any problems arose. They agreed to meet again in three months' time and to stop the court case if all went well after six months.

All were happy with the outcome as they found their own solutions without the stress of a court hearing.

Today, Chantelle is happy because now she sees her mum and dad. And Dane and Angie are less stressed and anxious because they found a solution together.

We have changed our clients' names and some facts to protect their privacy

Making a Difference



I just wanted to take the time to write to you about my legal aid lawyer.

I'm really not sure how I can put into words just how incredible I think she is, not only as a lawyer but as a person too. She is so professional and yet so beautiful in nature and continues to put me and my children as her number one priority at all times. Her efforts reach above and beyond. She fights for me and she has never given up on me. She is my rock.

I suffer severe anxiety and I know she will protect me and yet keep it completely professional all at the same time. She has made my anxiety ease with each court process that I have had to endure.

She is so reassuring and kind hearted and she works around the clock to get things done to the highest of standards for me and the children.

I have so much trust in her and how she handles my case. I am so happy I was able to be given the privilege of such a wonderful and incredibly intelligent woman to fight for the rights of myself and my three children.

She is always one step ahead and looking deep into situations and making sure that she has everything needed and known, so I have my case heard correctly. She is my voice when my voice fails me. She is strong minded and strong at heart the most professional and kind woman I have ever known.

She guides me and helps me with every single dreaded thing I have to face. She makes me feel like she is right there beside me, making it possible for me to step forward with more and more courage each and every day. She is more than a lawyer. She is a gift.

She is extraordinary in every single way and I just really wanted to reach out, because she deserves to be acknowledged for the incredibly talented and beautiful woman that she is. She has made my life a thousand times over more easy to bear and without her I wouldn't be as strong as I am today.

She truly is the most exceptional lawyer. I will forever be grateful that I was lucky enough to have her represent me.



Anonymous, from a client

Family Advocacy & Support Service (FASS)

Collaboration

Family Advocacy and Support Service (FASS) collaborates with many different agencies to streamline referrals, provide service information and coordinate and improve service delivery for clients and families affected by family violence. These include:

- SafeChoices
- Strong Families Safe Kids – Communities TAS
- Jireh House
- Positive Solutions
- Community Corrections
- Relationships Australia
- Salvation Army
- Laurel House
- Kentish House
- Tas Tafe
- Mission Australia
- The Migrant Resource Centre
- Your Town
- Tasmania Police – Family Violence Unit
- Yang and Gain Network
- Men's Resources Tasmania
- Dads in Distress
- Defendant Liaison Services

FASS contributes to:

- Family Law Courts – Family Violence Consultative Committee, Child Safety Committee and Case Management Committee
- The Family Law Practitioners Association of Tasmania
- The Tasmanian Pathways Network
- North West Forum Service Providers

FASS delivered family violence training in partnership with Anglicare Tasmania. The 'No to Violence' training gave lawyers and social workers strategies on working with men who use family violence.

Reach

FASS is an integrated service providing legal and social support for families affected by family violence in need of family law help.

This wrap-around service recognises that people have legal and social needs and addresses both.

We partner with Anglicare to deliver this Commonwealth funded service.

The FASS Men's Unit, launched in August 2019, provides dedicated social support services to men. It works alongside the FASS Women's Unit in keeping families supported and safe.

FASS typically delivers services at Family Law Courts, Legal Aid Offices and Anglicare offices. However, the COVID-19 pandemic closed public access to courts and offices. FASS quickly transitioned to offering remote services, which clients quickly embraced. The efficient transition enabled FASS to continue service delivery with minimal disruption.

While many services saw declines due to COVID-19 restrictions, FASS Duty Lawyer services only dropped by 6% overall, and services to men increased 42%.

FASS Duty Lawyer delivered 1,810 service and FASS Social Support Workers delivered 1,287 services. Women represent 73% of those helped and men 27%. The primary services delivered by social support workers were safety assessments, safety planning and counselling.

Social support workers made 435 referrals, a 33% increase on last year. The referrals were primarily to family violence and counselling services.

Making a Difference

In 2020 Anglicare Tasmania and Tasmanian Legal Aid continued their partnership to deliver the Family Advocacy and Support Service (FASS). Anglicare's court-based family violence support workers provided trauma-informed and high-quality social support services to 553 families affected by family violence, so that non-legal issues (that elevate the risk of family violence, such as drug and alcohol use, mental illness and homelessness) were identified and addressed alongside the legal issues. With the introduction of the program to support men there were 160 more families who have accessed support during 2019-20 compared to the previous year. With the stresses related to COVID-19 there has been additional strains on families and reported increases in incidents of family violence. The FASS program has been invaluable in these times for providing a well-respected service to support families in difficult times.

Noel Mundy
General Manager
Housing and Community Services

How do we help?

Talia was referred to FASS by Strong Families Safe Kids. She suffers from a chronic health condition and was in hospital following a significant physical assault by Tim, her partner and father of 5-year-old Ollie.

Talia was told she would be in hospital for a while as her recovery from the assault had been complicated by her chronic health condition. She was on heavy pain medication.

The FASS coordinator found out Talia's partner was on remand and was not about to be released. She also learnt that Talia did not have a safe place to live after leaving hospital. The coordinator identified that Talia's social needs were the most pressing and arranged for the FASS Social Support worker to see her at the hospital.

The FASS Social Support worker met with Talia and her mother Lyn. Lyn too had been assaulted by Tim and was hospitalised. She asked for an early discharge to care for Ollie while Talia remained in hospital.

The Social Support worker developed a safety plan for Ollie, mum and grandma. It included helping Talia find a safe house for her and Ollie and explored safe places and respite care options for Ollie when Talia was unwell.

The support worker used a FASS information sharing protocol to help Talia confirm details of a Violence Order to protect her and Ollie. They also helped Lyn to talk with police about safety planning for the family leading up to Tim's release from prison.

Due to the significant history of family violence the FASS lawyer advised Talia to apply for sole parental responsibility of Ollie and bar Tim from spending time with him.

As well as getting an aid grant for a private lawyer to help with court orders, FASS developed a safety plan for Talia, Ollie and Lyn and found them safe housing. We also helped arrange counselling with family violence services support so Talia, her mum and her son could re-establish and rebuild their family safely at home and together.

We have changed our clients' names and some facts to protect their privacy

Criminal

Reach

Our legal and therapeutic court services include:

- Duty Lawyer services for any person remanded in custody anywhere in Tasmania
- Court Duty Lawyer services for any person appearing in court in Launceston, Devonport and Burnie
- Outreach lawyers in the regional courts of St Helens, Scottsdale, Smithton, Queenstown, Whitemark and Currie
- In depth representation in hearings in all Tasmanian Magistrates and Supreme Courts
- Dedicated Youth Justice lawyers for the Youth Justice Court
- Specialised lawyers for the Court Mandated Drug Diversion Program
- Specialised lawyers for the Mental Health Diversion List
- Representation for all Defendants subject to orders under s8A of the *Evidence (Children and Special Witnesses) Act 2001*.

Our priority is early intervention throughout the criminal justice system. We work hard to uncover and fix the underlying causes of offending behaviour by getting our clients the help they need to be happy and healthy in our society. Homelessness, drug and alcohol abuse, and inadequately managed mental health problems are still the most common problems leading to offending behaviour.

We focus on early resolution of legal problems, communicating daily with prosecutors to bring cases to a close quickly. When prosecutors play hardball, we fight just as hard for our clients.

When a child gets into trouble we work hard and fast to keep them out of the court system. We know diverting troubled kids away from criminal activity and the criminal justice system, and back to school and pro-social activities, is the best overall outcome. Across all our client groups, youth justice has the lowest rate of repeat clients.

Duty solicitor services: 3,773

Our Duty Lawyer helped 3,776 clients throughout the 2019-20 period.

In addition to the Duty Lawyer service, our in-house lawyers represented a further 1,070 clients in the Magistrates Court, including 221 children, who received a grant of legal aid.

We also provided funding to 1,507 people who were represented by private lawyers.

In the Supreme Court our in-house lawyers represented 100 clients, while a further 275 were represented by private lawyers. This was a 28% increase in the number of people represented in the Supreme Court in the previous year.

We paid \$2,390,339 to the private lawyers who helped people with criminal matters, a 3.3% increase from the \$2,310,891 paid in 2018-19.

Collaboration

We know the best way to reduce offending, and the best way to keep all Tasmanians safe, is through community based sentencing.

We work hard with Community Corrections, the Court Mandated Drug Diversion Program, Forensic Mental Health Services and Youth Justice Services to keep as many of our clients as possible out of the courts and prison system.

We work with our partners to provide a holistic service, helping clients address underlying health, social and economic problems that negatively impact their lives and wellbeing and contribute to their offending behaviour.

How do we help?

Tim was a 32 year old tradesman who lived with his partner and two children. His mother passed away from cancer in 2018, leaving him with no remaining older relatives. He had a close relationship with his mother and her death affected him deeply.

Unable to process his grief, he turned to alcohol. His heavy drinking led to arguments in the family home. He threatened his partner, leading to a Police Family Violence Order. He had to vacate the family home and stopped going to work. Within a few months he was unemployed, sleeping in his car and facing charges for breaching the family violence order.

Legal Aid helped put Tim in contact with a grief counsellor, a drug and alcohol rehabilitation service and a family violence offender program through the Defendant Health Liaison Service. He gained control of his drinking and an insight into how harmful his behaviour was to his partner, their children and himself. After a few months of therapy he came to terms with his mother's passing. His criminal matters were also resolved. The Magistrate was impressed at how far he had come, and considered his risk of reoffending to be very low. He has now been sober for four months and is back working.



We have changed our client's names and some facts to protect their privacy

Grants

Collaboration

In all areas of Grants, we employ a collaborative approach with private practitioners as it is the most effective strategy for streamlining applications and ensuring vulnerable Tasmanians are assisted.

Reach

We provide grants of legal aid to people who:

- Cannot afford a lawyer
- Meet our eligibility criteria
- Are experiencing a legal problem covered by our grants funding program

A grant of legal aid provides fees to a lawyer to give legal advice, prepare legal documents, and represent clients in court or dispute resolution processes. We help with certain types of criminal, family, children's and civil law matters. TLA's Guidelines determine whether a person is eligible for a grant of aid based on:

- Their financial situation
- The type of legal problem
- How successful the case is likely to be

Clients with a grant of legal aid can be helped by a lawyer employed by TLA or a lawyer on one of TLA's practitioner panels or registers.

We use an online grants management system (called E-Lodge) to process applications for grants of legal aid. Lawyers submit applications via E-Lodge on behalf of their clients which are assessed by TLA officers. A client who has been refused aid can request an independent review of the decision.

This year there were 5,777 new applications for legal aid, and 24,643 applications to extend those initial grants of aid. This work is undertaken by one Grants Support Officer and one Grants Officer daily, and the average number of applications processed is about 120 per day. Legal aid grant applications have continued to see growth each year. New applications increased by 5% and extensions of aid by 14% since 2018-19.

In 2019-20, 90% of applications were approved, and 58% of grants of legal aid were for people represented by private lawyers, at a cost of \$5.905 million.

91% of all new matters in Criminal Law were approved; 84% of all new Family Law applications were approved; and 93% of all new Civil Law applications (includes child safety, family violence, mental health and NDIS matters) were also approved.

Making a Difference

Responding to the global effects of the Coronavirus pandemic, the Grants team implemented a number of changes to ensure its services remained accessible:

- A new guideline was created to ensure vulnerable Tasmanians were not disadvantaged from being able to access legal aid services. Additional Government COVID-19 financial payments increased the level of income support some Tasmanians received, despite many being affected by job and income losses. This affected their eligibility against the means test for a grant of legal aid. The new guideline enabled the TLA to disregard some types of the COVID-19 financial assistance in assessing eligibility for aid.
- To comply with social distancing requirements practitioners were increasingly providing services by telephone and email. TLA had to adapt and changed its processes to no longer require clients' physical signature on applications for assistance. Practitioners were enabled to take the required declarations by phone instead of having the application form signed in person.

Private practitioners play an important role in delivering legal services to vulnerable Tasmanians. In long standing recognition of this and to maintain the value of fees paid to them, in 2020 Tasmania Legal Aid undertook work to increase the hourly rate paid to legal practitioners by 2%.

Reviewing the decisions of grants officers

Any person can ask for an independent review of a grants officer's decision to refuse an application for legal aid.

The Review Committee can affirm, vary or set aside the decision of a grants officer. In the 2019-20 period, 54 decisions were reviewed (less than 1% of applications) and 19 were varied – just over one third (35%) of reviewed decisions.

Often a decision is varied because the Review Committee is given additional information or more information about the individual's situation than was available to the initial grants officer.

The Review Committee's decisions often play an educational role, helping people to better understand Tasmania Legal Aid grant guidelines, which can help them to better articulate their case.

The committee provides regular reports to TLA on social and legal trends, as well as other relevant information obtained through review process.

Over the 2019-20 period there were 12 members of the Review Committee, with each review conducted by a panel - a private lawyer, a Legal Aid lawyer and a stakeholder who is not a lawyer but has relevant qualifications or experience in the justice system.

We thank the Review Committee members for their commitment to this role throughout the 2019-20 period.

Legal Aid Lawyers

Edwina Gelston (TLA)

Patrick Fitzgerald (TLA)

Vaia Harradine (TLA)

Pip Monk (TLA)

Community Members

Jane Hutchison (Hobart Community Legal Services)

Kym Goodes (TasCOSS & 3P Advisory)

Nicky Snare (Launceston Community Legal Centre)

Private Lawyers

Frances Di Giovanni

Natalie Everett

Tony FitzGerald

Craig Mackie

Chris Young

Civil Disbursement Fund

We also manage the Civil Disbursement Fund (CDF) on behalf of the State Government. The CDF provides financial assistance for people who have a personal injury or worker's compensation claim and cannot afford to cover costs such as expert reports and witness expenses in their case.

There were **36** new applications to the CDF for assistance, compared to 21 last year.

Solicitor, Barrister & Counsel Grants Payments

Payments to private legal firms, between 1 July 2019 and 30 June 2020
(not part of the audited statements)

Milton & Meyer (Closed)	Criminal	\$862.80
	Total	\$862.80
Andrei Slicer	Criminal	\$134,209.11
	Total	\$134,209.11
Baker Wilson Davies Lawyers	Civil	\$2,665.45
	Criminal	\$10,706.30
	Family	\$23,884.98
	Total	\$37,256.74
Barclay Churchill Chambers	Civil	\$771.40
	Criminal	\$1,541.40
	Total	\$2,312.80
Bishops	Civil	\$29,584.00
	Criminal	\$12,332.50
	Family	\$159,111.69
	Total	\$201,028.19
Blissenden Lawyers	Civil	\$990.00
	Criminal	\$26,932.80
	Family	\$5,810.00
	Total	\$33,732.80
Bold Lawyers	Civil	\$1,550.00
	Criminal	\$54,966.10
	Total	\$56,516.10
Butler McIntyre & Butler	Civil	\$57,786.80
	Criminal	\$147,307.98
	Family	\$108,530.40
	Total	\$313,625.18
Cameron Scott - Barrister at Law	Criminal	\$19,185.00
	Total	\$19,185.00
Cann Legal	Civil	\$24,718.80
	Criminal	\$7,361.80
	Family	\$60,351.30
	Total	\$92,431.90
Caroline Graves Barrister at Law	Civil	\$35,823.20
	Criminal	\$93,599.20
	Family	\$6,860.00
	Total	\$136,282.40
Carswell & Company Solicitors	Family	\$780.00
	Total	\$780.00

Charmaine Gibson	Civil	\$36,449.80
	Criminal	\$6,890.00
	Family	\$35,610.00
	Total	\$78,949.80
Claire Wong	Criminal	\$1,260.00
	Total	\$1,260.00
Clairs Keeley Lawyers	Family	\$1,680.00
	Total	\$1,680.00
Clarke & Gee	Civil	\$10,579.20
	Criminal	\$200,465.41
	Family	\$66,927.00
	Total	\$277,971.61
Craig Rainbird Barrister & Solicitor	Criminal	\$123,115.60
	Total	\$123,115.60
Crotty Legal	Civil	\$2,660.00
	Criminal	\$180,523.50
	Family	\$8,830.00
	Total	\$192,013.50
David N Lewis Barrister at Law	Civil	\$6,216.00
	Family	\$69,430.00
	Total	\$75,646.00
Dobson Mitchell Allport	Civil	\$980.00
	Family	\$24,090.80
	Total	\$25,070.80
Douglas & Collins	Civil	\$1,165.00
	Criminal	\$12,752.50
	Total	\$13,917.50
Empire Barristers & Solicitors	Family	\$980.00
	Total	\$980.00
Everett Flight & Associates	Criminal	\$4,097.80
	Total	\$4,097.80
Fabiano Cangelosi	Civil	\$490.00
	Criminal	\$162,147.70
	Total	\$162,637.70
FitzGerald and Browne	Civil	\$5,050.00
	Criminal	\$220.00
	Family	\$19,342.40
	Total	\$24,612.40

Friend & Edwards Lawyers	Criminal	\$6,653.00
	Family	\$2,733.00
	Total	\$9,386.00
G A Richardson	Criminal	\$62,435.60
	Total	\$62,435.60
Garth Stevens	Criminal	\$68,256.11
	Total	\$68,256.11
Grant Tucker	Civil	\$20,170.00
	Criminal	\$101,171.15
	Family	\$19,591.40
	Total	\$140,932.55
Greg Barns Barrister	Civil	\$1,050.00
	Criminal	\$13,121.40
	Total	\$14,171.40
Greg Melick	Criminal	\$19,500.00
	Total	\$19,500.00
Greg Smith & Co	Civil	\$7,597.20
	Criminal	\$7,707.40
	Family	\$4,972.00
	Total	\$20,276.60
Hugo Aston Barrister	Family	\$490.00
	Total	\$490.00
Ian Guest & Associates	Civil	\$2,251.40
	Criminal	\$2,822.00
	Family	\$9,022.00
	Total	\$14,095.40
J Jovanovic & Associates	Criminal	\$297.50
	Total	\$297.50
Jacobs Family Law	Civil	\$20,846.40
	Family	\$63,056.60
	Total	\$83,903.00
Jeff Thompson	Family	\$360.00
	Total	\$360.00
Jessica Sawyer	Civil	\$6,031.40
	Criminal	\$18,504.00
	Total	\$24,535.40
JGD Legal	Family	\$1,650.00
	Total	\$1,650.00
Kate Cuthbertson	Civil	\$14,210.00
	Total	\$14,210.00

Kate Mooney	Civil	\$8,260.00
	Family	\$27,810.00
	Total	\$36,070.00
Kim Baumeler	Civil	\$2,940.00
	Criminal	\$211,622.86
	Total	\$214,562.86
Legal Solutions	Family	\$700.00
	Total	\$700.00
List G Barristers	Civil	\$11,080.00
	Total	\$11,080.00
Mai Truong Lawyers	Criminal	\$5,575.00
	Total	\$5,575.00
Mary Anne Ryan	Civil	\$15,740.00
	Family	\$30,356.99
	Total	\$46,096.99
Matthew Verney Lawyers	Civil	\$66,527.40
	Criminal	\$95,542.40
	Family	\$159,573.00
	Total	\$321,642.80
McGrath & Co.	Civil	\$14,456.80
	Criminal	\$5,029.20
	Family	\$28,175.20
	Total	\$47,661.20
McLean McKenzie & Topfer	Criminal	\$4,495.45
	Total	\$4,495.45
McVeity Dean Lawyers	Civil	\$28,049.40
	Family	\$113,467.80
	Total	\$141,517.20
Michael Trezise	Family	\$11,920.00
	Total	\$11,920.00
Murdoch Clarke	Civil	\$3,010.00
	Criminal	\$4,825.00
	Family	\$24,555.31
	Total	\$32,390.31
Murray & Associates	Family	\$74,140.00
	Total	\$74,140.00
Nick Beattie Barrister and Solicitor	Civil	\$1,820.00
	Total	\$1,820.00

Payments to private legal firms, between 1 July 2019 and 30 June 2020 (continued)

Ogilvie Jennings	Civil	\$83,604.00	Rae & Partners Lawyers	Civil	\$13,690.00
	Criminal	\$47,864.20		Criminal	\$163,109.35
	Family	\$198,138.60		Family	\$141,668.20
	Total	\$329,606.80		Total	\$318,467.55
Pagett & Associates	Civil	\$38,720.40	Romer Maud Family Lawyers Pty Ltd	Family	\$920.00
	Criminal	\$1,265.00	Total	\$920.00	
	Family	\$16,260.00	Ross A Hart Barrister and Solicitor	Civil	\$1,400.00
	Total	\$56,245.40	Total	\$1,400.00	
Patrick O'Halloran	Civil	\$1,330.00	SGW Law	Civil	\$1,505.00
	Criminal	\$33,742.50		Criminal	\$104,124.90
	Total	\$35,072.50	Total	\$105,629.90	
Paul Sullivan	Criminal	\$700.00	Simmons Wolfhagen	Civil	\$23,870.00
Total	\$700.00		Family	\$8,861.40	
Peter Heerey Lawyer	Civil	\$13,052.00	Total	\$32,731.40	
	Criminal	\$17,650.00	Tasmanian Mediation Services	Family	\$4,854.55
	Total	\$30,702.00	Total	\$4,854.55	
Peter Neil Slipper	Civil	\$3,388.40	Tierney Law Pty Ltd	Civil	\$910.00
	Criminal	\$16,015.00		Criminal	\$2,540.00
	Total	\$19,403.40		Family	\$16,998.40
Petersen Legal	Civil	\$1,804.10	Total	\$20,448.40	
	Criminal	\$13,710.07	Todd P. Kovacic	Civil	\$910.00
	Family	\$57,941.40		Criminal	\$29,875.00
	Total	\$73,455.57	Total	\$30,785.00	
Philip Theobald	Family	\$16,544.00	Tremayne Fay & Rheinberger Lawyers	Civil	\$5,000.00
Total	\$16,544.00		Family	\$26,971.40	
Philip Welch	Civil	\$17,380.95	Total	\$31,971.40	
	Family	\$7,760.00	Walker Henderson Lawyers	Civil	\$18,484.40
	Total	\$25,140.95		Family	\$30,420.00
Philippa Morgan	Civil	\$17,428.20	Total	\$48,904.40	
	Criminal	\$68,984.50	Wallace Wilkinson & Webster	Civil	\$31,913.40
	Total	\$86,412.70		Family	\$67,832.68
Philippa Willshire	Civil	\$73,208.20	Total	\$99,746.08	
	Criminal	\$36,170.50	Walsh Day James Mihal, Barristers & Solicitors	Civil	\$40,848.80
	Family	\$16,652.60		Criminal	\$25,810.00
Total	\$126,031.30		Family	\$14,299.45	
PWB Lawyers	Civil	\$10,334.00	Total	\$80,958.25	
	Family	\$46,642.80	Total	\$5,157,289.46	
	Total	\$56,976.80			
Rae & Partners Devonport	Civil	\$30,044.00			
	Criminal	\$742.00			
	Family	\$59,048.00			
	Total	\$89,834.00			

Tasmania Legal Aid's Finances

for the year ended
30 June 2020

3

Independent Auditor's report



Independent Auditor's Report

To the Members of Parliament

Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania

Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

Opinion

I have audited the financial report of the Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania (trading as Tasmania Legal Aid), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2020, statements of comprehensive income, changes in equity and cash flows for the year then ended, notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies and the statement of certification by the Commissioners.

In my opinion, the accompanying financial report:

- (a) presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Tasmania Legal Aid as at 30 June 2020 and its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended
- (b) is in accordance with the *Audit Act 2008* and Australian Accounting Standards.

Basis for Opinion

I conducted the audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of my report. I am independent of Tasmania Legal Aid in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)* (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Australia. I have also fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

The *Audit Act 2008* further promotes the independence of the Auditor-General. The Auditor-General is the auditor of all Tasmanian public sector entities and can only be removed by Parliament. The Auditor-General may conduct an audit in any way considered appropriate and is not subject to direction by any person about the way in which audit powers are to be exercised. The Auditor-General has for the purposes of conducting an audit, access to all documents and property and can report to Parliament matters which in the Auditor-General's opinion are significant.

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

...1 of 3

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Responsibilities 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, and the financial reporting requirements of the *Audit Act 2008* and for such internal control as determined necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the Commissioners are responsible for assessing Tasmania Legal Aid's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless Tasmania Legal Aid is to be dissolved by an Act of Parliament, or the Commissioners intend to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of Tasmania Legal Aid's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Commissioners.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Commissioner's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on Tasmania Legal Aid's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusion is based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause Tasmania Legal Aid to cease to continue as a going concern.

...2 of 3

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- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the Commissioners regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.



Leigh Franklin
Assistant Auditor-General, Financial Audit Services
Delegate of the Auditor-General

Tasmanian Audit Office

20 October 2020
Hobart

...3 of 3

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Annual Financial Statements

Tasmania Legal Aid
ABN 70 223 103 968
For the year ended 30 June 2020

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Certification of Financial Statements

Tasmania Legal Aid For the year ended 30 June 2020

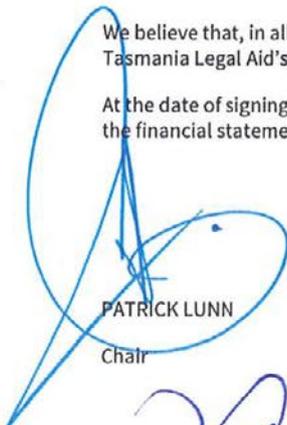
Certification of Financial Statements

The accompanying financial statements of Tasmania Legal Aid are in agreement with the relevant accounts and records and have been prepared in compliance with:

- Australian Accounting Standards
- Australia Interpretations
- Audit Act 2008

We believe that, in all material respects, the financial statements present a view which is consistent with our understanding of Tasmania Legal Aid's financial position as at 30 June 2020, financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended.

At the date of signing this representation, I am not aware of any circumstances which would render the particulars included in the financial statements misleading or inaccurate.



PATRICK LUNN

Chair



VINCENZO ALTABIANO

Director

Dated: 20/10/20

Statement of Comprehensive Income

Tasmania Legal Aid

For the year ended 30 June 2020

	NOTES	30-JUNE-20 (\$)	30-JUNE-19 (\$)
Revenues			
Commonwealth Grants and Contributions	3	7,570,714	6,621,806
State Government Grants and Contributions	4	8,355,446	8,170,765
Other Revenue	5	1,288,547	1,386,987
Total Revenues		17,214,707	16,179,558
Expenses			
Legal Services Expenses	6	6,358,699	5,390,256
Employee Benefits Expenses	7	8,489,215	7,499,172
Supplies and Services	8	464,853	572,561
Accommodation Expenses	9	337,353	654,819
Information and Technology	10	782,602	568,678
Other Expenses	11	298,020	321,181
Depreciation and Amortisation Expenses	12	469,564	81,195
Debts Written Off	13	5,081	10,335
Total Expenses		17,205,386	15,098,198
Net Surplus / (Deficit) for the Year		9,320	1,081,360
Total Comprehensive Result		9,320	1,081,360

Statement of Financial Position

Tasmania Legal Aid As at 30 June 2020

	NOTES	30-JUNE-20 (\$)	30-JUNE-19 (\$)
Assets			
Current Assets			
Cash & Cash Equivalents	14	4,073,930	7,017,214
Investments	15	2,821,391	-
Receivables	16	1,012,062	536,914
Other Assets		173,178	151,187
Total Current Assets		8,080,561	7,705,315
Non-Current Assets			
Property, plant and equipment			
Land and Buildings	17	349,422	357,831
Office Equipment	17	52,298	75,930
Furniture and Fittings	17	5,352	6,437
Leasehold Improvements	17	39,431	46,274
Total Property, plant and equipment		446,502	486,472
Intangible Assets	17	5,637	6,746
Right-of-Use Assets	19	2,234,127	-
Total Non-Current Assets		2,686,266	493,219
Total Assets		10,766,827	8,198,533
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Payables	20	1,343,285	1,120,919
Provisions	21	1,211,066	1,154,244
Lease Liabilities	23	302,044	-
Total Current Liabilities		2,856,395	2,275,163
Non-Current Liabilities			
Provisions	21	140,494	117,486
Lease Liabilities	23	1,954,733	-
Total Non-Current Liabilities		2,095,227	117,486
Total Liabilities		4,951,622	2,392,648
Net Assets		5,815,205	5,805,885
Equity			
Capital Contribution		325,000	325,000
Asset Revaluation Reserve		235,829	235,829
Civil Disbursement Fund Reserve		1,148,140	1,118,770
Accumulated Surplus		4,106,236	4,126,285
Total Equity		5,815,205	5,805,885

Statement of Cash Flows

Tasmania Legal Aid For the year ended 30 June 2020

	NOTES	30-JUNE-2020 (\$)	30-JUNE-2019 (\$)
Statement of Cash Flows			
Cash flows from Operating Activities			
Operating Receipts			
Commonwealth Grants and Contributions		7,617,198	6,621,806
State Government Grants		8,355,446	8,170,765
Contributions and Recovered Costs from Clients		246,936	101,125
GST Receipts		(2,211)	7,273
Interest Income		75,033	108,758
Other		474,616	1,087,290
Total Operating Receipts		16,767,018	16,097,017
Operating Payments			
Payments for Legal Services		(6,358,699)	(5,390,256)
Employee Benefits Expense		(8,337,278)	(7,534,414)
Administrative Expense		(1,787,101)	(2,042,395)
Total Operating Payments		(16,483,078)	(14,967,065)
Total Cash flows from Operating Activities	24	283,940	1,129,952
Cash flows from Investing Activities			
Payments for Investments		(2,821,391)	-
Purchase of Plant and Equipment		(111,082)	(71,513)
Total Cash flows from Investing Activities		(2,932,473)	(71,513)
Cash flows from Financing Activities			
Principal Lease Repayments		(294,751)	-
Total Cash flows from Financing Activities		(294,751)	-
Net increase / (Decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		(2,943,284)	1,058,439
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of the period	14	7,017,214	5,958,775
Cash and cash equivalents at end of the period	14	4,073,930	7,017,214

Statement of Changes in Equity

Tasmania Legal Aid For the year ended 30 June 2020

	CONTRIBUTED EQUITY	ASSET REVALUATION RESERVE	CIVIL LAW DISBURSEMENT FUND LOAN SCHEME RESERVE	ACCUMULATED SURPLUS	TOTAL EQUITY
Change in Equity (\$)					
2020 Financial Year					
Balance as at 1 July 2019	325,000	235,829	1,118,770	4,126,286	5,805,885
Total Comprehensive Result	-	-	-	9,320	9,320
Transfers to Reserves	-	-	29,370	(29,370)	-
Balance as at 30 June 2020	325,000	235,829	1,148,140	4,106,236	5,815,205
2019 Financial Year					
Balance as at 1 July 2018	325,000	235,829	1,100,336	3,063,360	4,724,524
Total Comprehensive Result	-	-	-	1,081,360	1,081,360
Transfers to Reserves	-	-	18,434	(18,434)	-
Balance as at 30 June 2019	325,000	235,829	1,118,770	4,126,286	5,805,885

Notes to the Financial Statements

Tasmania Legal Aid For the year ended 30 June 2020

1. Statement of Significant Accounting Policies

General Information

The Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania ('the Commission') was established under the *Legal Aid Commission Act 1990*, on 1 January 1991.

On 1 July 2020 the Commission registered the legal trading name 'Tasmania Legal Aid' ('TLA'). This name has therefore been referenced throughout the remainder of these statements.

These statements have been prepared on a going concern basis in the expectation that TLA will continue to function and be funded in the future on the basis as set out in the new Commonwealth/State agreements. These agreements commenced on 1 July 2020, and have a 5 year term.

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). Under the *Legal Aid Commission Act 1990*, TLA is not required to prepare general purpose financial statements, but rather has elected to adopt and comply with relevant accounting standards. The following accounting policies have been adopted, and unless otherwise stated are consistent with those adopted in the preceding year, and throughout all periods. TLA is classified as a not-for-profit entity.

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. TLA 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 and buildings which have been measured at fair value. The financial statements are presented in Australian dollars. 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 TLA are now effective and management has adopted them for the year ended 30 June 2020.

Affected Standard	AASB Amendment	Nature of Change to Accounting Policy	Reporting Periods Commencing On or After	Application Date for TLA	Consideration of Impact on Financial Report
AASB 1058	Income of Not-for-Profit Entities	AASB 1058 simplifies the recognition requirements for not-for-profit entities relating to revenue from contracts with customer (AASB 15)	1 January 2019	1 July 2019	Changes have not materially impacted TLA as it does not engage volunteer services.
AASB 15	Revenue from Contracts with Customers	AASB 15 provides principles regarding the reporting of useful information arising from contracts with customers.	1 January 2019	1 July 2019	Changes have not substantively impacted the reporting practices of TLA.

AASB 16	Leases	The key feature is to recognise all leases with a term of more than 12 months as assets and liabilities, unless the underlying value is less than \$10,000.	1 January 2019	1 July 2019	This has impacted the assets and liability disclosures of TLA as it currently has operating leases as disclosed in note 23.
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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. 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.

Reporting Entity

The reporting entity comprises TLA and there are no related bodies.

Contributed Equity

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

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 TLA are detailed within Notes 3, 4 and 5. TLA'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 received by TLA are assessed as to whether the contract is enforceable and has sufficiently specific performance obligations in accordance with AASB 15. When both these conditions are satisfied, TLA:

- identifies each performance obligation relating to the grant;
- recognises a contract liability for its obligations under the agreement; and
- recognises revenue as it satisfies its performance obligations.

Where the contract is not enforceable or does not have sufficiently specific performance obligations, TLA:

- recognises the asset received in accordance with the recognition requirements of other applicable accounting standards;
- recognises related amounts; and
- recognises income immediately in the Statement of Comprehensive Income as the difference between the initial carrying amount of the asset and the related amount.

If a contract liability is recognised as a related amount above, TLA recognises income in the Statement of Comprehensive Income when or as it satisfies its obligations under the contract.

Capital Grant receipts are recognised as a liability for the excess of the initial carrying amount of the financial asset received over any related amount recognised under other Australian Accounting Standards. TLA recognises income in the Statement of Comprehensive Income when or as TLA satisfies its obligations under the terms of the grant.

TLA has applied *AASB 15: Revenue from Contracts with Customers* and *AASB 1058: Income of Not-for-Profit Entities* from 1 July 2019. There was no adjustment to the historical way TLA recognised revenue, subsequent to the adoption of these standards.

Other Revenue

Civil Law Disbursement Fund Loan 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 TLA to make application for a grant of monies from the Guarantee Fund.

Distributions from The Solicitors' Trust are grants with specific obligations. The monies are recognised as a liability until TLA has fulfilled the obligations relating to the grant, at which time the monies are recognised as revenue.

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 recognised on the asset register but fully charged to expense as incurred. Items with a cost of more than \$5,000 are considered to contribute economic benefits beyond one year and are held as assets and recorded in TLA's asset register.

TLA has not acquired any items of property, plant and equipment for no or 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 the Statement of Comprehensive Income.

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.

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

Intangible Assets

Software that is an integral part of the related hardware is treated as 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.

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

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 the recoverable amount is less than the carrying amount, the asset is written down to the recoverable amount and an impairment loss is recognised. As TLA 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.

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 as detailed in Note 23 Legal Case Commitment. A liability for the grant of aid is not recognised on the Statement of Financial Position until the claim has been made by the lawyer post the completion of the work for which the aid was granted. The provisional cost estimate reflects the estimated cost of the assignment based on the relevant scale of fees.

Legal Services Expenses are recognised as an expense on the receipt of a claim for services provided.

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

Lease Liabilities and Right-of-Use Assets

Initial Application of AASB 16

TLA has adopted AASB 16 Leases modified retrospectively with the cumulative effect of initially applying AASB 16 recognised at 1 July 2019. In accordance with AASB 16, the comparatives for the 2019 reporting period have not been restated.

TLA has recognised a lease liability and right-of-use asset for all leases (with the exception of short term and low value leases) recognised as operating leases under AASB 117 where TLA is the lessee. The lease liabilities are measured at the present value of the remaining lease payments.

The right of use assets for leases were measured and recognised in the Statement of Financial Position as at 1 July 2019 by taking into consideration the lease liability, prepaid and accrued lease payments previously recognised. The following practical expedients have been used by TLA in applying AASB 16 for the first time:

- for a portfolio of leases that have reasonably similar characteristics, a single discount rate has been applied;
- leases that have remaining lease terms of less than 12 months as at 1 July 2019 have been accounted for in the same way as short-term leases;
- the use of hindsight to determine lease terms and contracts that have options to extend or terminate;
- applying AASB 16 to leases previously identified as leases under AASB 117 and Interpretation 4: *Determining whether an arrangement contains a lease* without reassessing whether they are, or contain, a lease at the date of initial application; and
- not applying AASB 16 to leases previously not identified as contained a lease under AASB 117 and Interpretation 4.

TLA's incremental borrowing rate on 1 July 2019 applied to lease liabilities was 1.32% for the Launceston Lease and 2.07% for the Hobart Lease.

The initial adoption of this standard resulted in the recognition of a \$292,935 lease liability and corresponding right-of-use asset as at 1 July 2019. Refer notes 19 and 23 for further information.

Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and cash equivalent assets under AASB 107 comprise cash on hand and short-term investments with an original maturity of up to 3 months 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 TLA's bank accounts and cash held at the Tasmanian Public Sector Finance Corporation (TASCORP).

Receivables

Unsecured debtors are recognised and carried at the amounts receivable. The carrying amount is equivalent to fair value. The vast majority of TLA'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.

Employee Benefits Expense

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

As at 30 June 2020 TLA employed 83.8 (2019: 73.4) full time equivalents.

The increase in full time equivalents is the result of filling previously vacant positions within TLA, as well as additional funded programs being managed by TLA, creating further employment positions to fulfil approved purposes.

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.

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.

Provisions

Annual Leave and Long Service Leave

All annual leave and unconditional long service leave provisions are classified as current liabilities as TLA 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 expected future wage and salary levels including non-salary components such as employer superannuation contributions, duration of service and employee departures, and are discounted at rates determined by market yields at the end of the reporting period on high quality corporate bonds.

Superannuation

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

Superannuation expenses relating to defined benefit schemes relate to payments into the Consolidated Fund. The amount of the payment is based on an agency contribution rate determined by the treasurer, on the advice of the State Actuary. The current agency contribution is 12.95 per cent of salary.

Superannuation expenses relating to defined contribution schemes are paid directly to superannuation funds at a rate of 9.5 per cent of salary. In addition, TLA is also required to pay into the Consolidated Fund a "gap" payment equivalent to 3.45 per cent of salary in respect of employees who are members of contribution schemes.

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.

TLA 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.

Taxation

TLA 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. TLA is also exempt from State based taxation, including Payroll Tax, Stamp Duties and Financial Institution Duty.

Comparative Figures

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

Investments and Other Financial Assets

Investments and financial assets in the scope of AASB 9 *Financial Instruments* are categorised as either subsequently measured at amortised cost, fair value through comprehensive income or fair value through profit and loss and depends on TLA's business model for managing financial assets and the contracted cash flow characteristics of the financial asset.

Receivables are initially measured at transaction price with gains and losses recognised in the profit or loss when the receivables are derecognised or impaired.

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:

- Performance obligations under *AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers*
- Lease terms and options to extend under *AASB 16 Leases*
- Provisions– Employee Benefits
- Commitments for Expenditure

2. Financial Risk Management Objectives and Policies

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

TLA 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.

TLA 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. TLA 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 loan 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.

All financial assets and liabilities of TLA have a maturity of 12 months or less, except for the receivables - *Civil Law Disbursement Fund Loans* which by their nature have an unknown maturity profile.

Interest Rate Risk

TLA'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.

TLA is authorised under its act to invest surplus funds in any of the ways referred to in Section 5 of the Trustee Act 1898. TLA's policy is to manage interest income with reference to what rates are offered by Tascorp and other major banking institutions.

Interest Rates on Cash, Cash Equivalents and Investments

	30-June-20	30-June-19
	(\$)	(\$)
At Call Cash Management Account No 1 – Operating Account	399 On Call – Interest Rate of 0.25%	396 On Call – Interest Rate of 1.25%
At Call Cash Management Account No 2 – Civil Law Disbursements Fund	1,978 On Call – Interest Rate of 0.25%	1,964 On Call – Interest Rate of 1.25%
Westpac Operating Accounts	4,071,553 On Call – Interest Rate of 0.50%	7,014,854 On Call – Interest Rate of 1.75%
Westpac Term Deposit	2,821,391 Fixed - Interest Rate of 0.70%	- -
	6,895,321	7,017,214

A 1 percentile upward movement in the interest rate will create \$68,950 (2019: \$70,170) movement in interest income.

TLA 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 TLA's investments were held in the above instruments and held over relatively short periods it is considered that any interest rate exposure is minimal.

	30-JUNE-20	30-JUNE-19
	(\$)	(\$)
3. Commonwealth Grants and Contributions		
Commonwealth Base Grant	5,945,000	5,903,000
Family Advocacy Support Service Funding	1,006,000	605,000
National Disability Insurance Scheme Funding	157,344	91,979
Family Violence Cross-Examination Funding	28,632	11,100
Senior Assist Funding	346,861	10,727
Your Story Disability Legal Support Funding	29,672	-
Property Mediation Funding	57,205	-
Total Commonwealth Grants and Contributions	7,570,714	6,621,806

Base Grant

Government funds are the result of a Commonwealth / State National Partnership Agreement which became effective from 1 July 2015 for duration of 5 years. This agreement expired on 30 June 2020. These funds are recognised on receipt as there is no specific obligation under the agreement. A new Commonwealth / State National Partnership Agreement has been entered into from 1 July 2020 for a duration of 5 years. The new agreement expires on 30 June 2025.

Family Advocacy and Support Service

This funding has been recognised on receipt as there are no specific performance obligations attached to the terms of the agreement. This funding is to provide social services support to families experiencing domestic issues.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

This provides funding for support services to assist applicants in navigating the process of Administrative Appeals Tribunal review of National Disability Insurance Agency decisions.

Family Violence Cross-Examination Funding

The purpose of this grant is to fund Legal Aid Commissions to represent parties subject to the ban on direct cross-examination under the *Family Law Act 1975*. The receipt of this funding is recognised on fulfilment of specific obligations.

Senior Assist Funding

The purpose of this funding is to improve the government's knowledge of, and expand its options to provide, senior assistance, in a variety of forms. The receipt of this funding is recognised on fulfilment of specific obligations.

Your Story Disability Legal Support Funding

The purpose of this funding is to fund the legal service that supports the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of people with disabilities. The receipt of this funding is recognised on fulfilment of specific obligations.

Property Mediation Funding

The purpose of this funding is to provide legal support to separating couples with small value property pools who require legal advice and representation to mediate and reach agreement on family law property splits. The receipt of this funding is recognised on fulfilment of specific obligations.

	30-JUNE-20 (\$)	30-JUNE-19 (\$)
4. State Government Grants and Contributions		
State Government Base Grant	7,103,000	6,909,000
Safe at Home Program	400,446	493,765
State One Off Funding	852,000	768,000
Total State Government Grants and Contributions	8,355,446	8,170,765

Base Grant

The Base Grant provides for the Service Delivery program agreed to between TLA and the State Government. These funds are recognised on receipt as there is no specific obligation under the agreement.

“Safe at Home” Domestic Violence Early Intervention Program

This program provides early intervention and support against domestic violence. These funds are recognised on receipt as there is no specific obligation under the agreement.

State One Off Funding

This funding includes both Acting Judges Funding, to contribute towards the increased resources required as a result of additional court sessions being held by acting judges, and State Top Up Funding provided to supplement Commonwealth Funded programs whilst the National Legal Aid Partnership Agreement was negotiated. These funds are recognised on receipt as there is no specific obligation under the agreement.

	30-JUNE-20 (\$)	30-JUNE-19 (\$)
5. Other Revenue		
Client Contributions and Cost Recoveries	211,418	60,842
Interest Income	78,277	108,758
Civil Disbursement Fund Loans Contributions	26,439	17,586
Solicitors' Trust Distributions	587,955	606,794
Miscellaneous Income		
National Legal Aid (NLA) Administration Fee	42,000	42,000
National Legal Aid (NLA) Cost Recoveries	342,457	551,007
Total Miscellaneous Income	384,457	593,007
Total Other Revenue	1,288,547	1,386,987

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 TLA, prior to payment by TLA. 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 TLA.

Interest Income

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

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 Distributions

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

Miscellaneous Income

Reimbursements from other State Commissions for their share of National Legal Aid (NLA) expenses paid for by TLA on behalf of all States.

	30-JUNE-20 (\$)	30-JUNE-19 (\$)
6. Legal Services Expense		
Grants of Legal Aid	5,713,224	5,082,528
Social Worker Services	552,545	233,644
Weekend Duty Lawyer Service	92,929	74,084
Total Legal Services Expense	6,358,699	5,390,256

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.

Social Worker Services

TLA engages external service providers for the outsourcing of social worker services under the Family Advocacy Support Service and Senior Assist programs.

Weekend Duty Lawyer Services

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

	30-JUNE-20 (\$)	30-JUNE-19 (\$)
7. Employee Benefits Expense		
Salaries, Superannuation and Related Costs	7,955,600	7,061,131
Temporary Staff	399,064	488,694
Professional Development	54,719	40,621
Annual Leave and Long Service Leave Entitlements	79,831	(91,274)
Total Employee Benefits Expense	8,489,215	7,499,172

Salaries, Superannuation and Related Costs

Includes salaries and employer funded superannuation, workers compensation insurance and parental leave pay.

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 TLA's Statement of Financial Position.

	30-JUNE-20 (\$)	30-JUNE-19 (\$)
8. Supplies and Services		
Communication	230,113	245,312
Travel Costs	127,274	205,340

Office Machines and Equipment	38,911	41,563
Consumables and Safety	68,555	80,346
Total Supplies and Services	464,853	572,561
	30-JUNE-20 (\$)	30-JUNE-19 (\$)

9. Accommodation Expenses

Property Rent	62,481	402,842
Cleaning and Security	114,659	102,505
Property Maintenance	35,745	24,811
Rates and Taxes	53,581	44,095
Water Rates	4,082	6,552
Electricity	55,652	63,695
Insurance	11,154	10,318
Total Accommodation Expenses	337,353	654,819

Property Rent expenditure has decreased significantly when compared to the prior year as a result of TLA adopting *AASB 16: Leases*. The impact on the Statement of Comprehensive Income of adopting *AASB 16: Leases* is a reduction in property rent and an increase in lease interest (Note 11) and amortisation (Note 12).

	30-JUNE-20 (\$)	30-JUNE-19 (\$)
10. Information Technology		
IT Systems and Consulting	649,251	452,350
Library	128,911	116,328
NLA Archiving and Storage	4,440	-
Total Information Technology	782,602	568,678
	30-JUNE-20 (\$)	30-JUNE-19 (\$)

11. Other Expenses

Department of Justice Administration Costs	121,201	121,782
Audit Fee and Costs	25,090	25,090
Other Expenses		
Consultant Fees	52,984	107,517
Advertising	1,619	5,727
NLA Cost Recoveries	6,569	15,046
LAT Services Fee Expense (NLA Only)	42,000	42,000
Bank Charges	858	4,020
Lease Interest	47,699	-
Total Other Expenses	151,729	174,309
Total Other Expenses	298,020	321,181

	30-JUNE-20 (\$)	30-JUNE-19 (\$)
12. Depreciation and Amortisation Expenses		
Depreciation - Office Equipment	115,468	48,050
Depreciation - Furniture & Fittings	1,085	1,136
Depreciation - Leasehold Improvements	16,148	21,300
Depreciation - Buildings	8,409	9,600
Depreciation - Software (Intangibles)	11,051	1,110
Amortisation - Leases	317,402	-
Total Depreciation and Amortisation Expenses	469,564	81,195
	30-JUNE-20 (\$)	30-JUNE-19 (\$)

13. Debts Written Off

Legal Case and CDF Doubtful Debts Expense	-	10,335
Civil Disbursements Fund - Write-Offs	5,081	-
Total Debts Written Off	5,081	10,335

TLA has considered the impact of AASB 9 Financial Instruments and have concluded that as write-offs are immaterial there is no requirement to further assess a provision allowance for bad debts.

14. Cash and Cash Equivalents

	30-June-20 (\$)	30-June-19 (\$)
Unrestricted Cash and Cash Equivalents		
Cash on Hand – Petty Cash	2,050	2,050
Bank Accounts	3,181,290	6,159,941
	3,183,340	6,161,991
Restricted Cash and Cash Equivalents		
Bank Account	888,612	853,259
Investments – TASCORP No. 2	1,978	1,964
	890,590	855,223
Total Cash and Cash Equivalents	4,073,930	7,017,214
Held as		
Operating Cash	3,183,340	6,161,991
State Civil Law Disbursements Fund Loans Scheme	890,590	855,223
Total and Balance as per Statement of Cash Flows	4,073,930	7,017,214

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 restricted amounts include the above cash component, as well as receivable disbursement recoveries to form the total restricted accumulated reserve balance of \$1,148,140 (2019: \$1,118,770).

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 2020 are shown at Note 13.

	30-JUNE-20 (\$)	30-JUNE-19 (\$)
15. Investments		
Term Deposit	2,821,391	-
Total Investments	2,821,391	-

During 2020 TLA began holding a balance of cash in short term investments. These investments included terms greater than 3 months but no more than 7 months.

	30-JUNE-20 (\$)	30-JUNE-19 (\$)
16. Receivables		
Contributions Receivable	19,610	14,344
Provision for Doubtful Debts	(2,000)	(2,000)
Loan - Civil Disbursement Fund	250,014	264,359
Accounts Receivable	157,913	200,238
Goods and Services Tax (GST)	63,254	59,973
Grants Receivable	523,270	-
Total Receivables	1,012,062	536,914

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.

Trade Debtors

Trade Debtors consist of amounts owing by other Legal Aid State Branches for reimbursement of National Legal Aid Secretariat (resident in TLA) expenditure incurred, as well as amounts owing from Attorney General's Department for other grant monies that are receivable.

Grants Receivable

Grants Receivable consists of grant monies receivable for the Solicitors Guarantee Fund. These funds have been agreed upon by TLA but not yet received at 30 June 2020.

All Contributions and Trade Debtors owing except those identified as impaired are considered receivable.

2020	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	21,610	2,000	6,031	3,276	2,459	7,844
Trade Debtors	157,913	-	157,913	-	-	-
Grants Receivable	523,270	-	523,270	-	-	-
	702,793	2,000	687,214	3,276	2,459	7,844

2019	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	16,344	2,000	6,424	2,096	707	5,117
Trade Debtors	200,238	-	188,427	-	-	11,811
Grants Receivable	-	-	-	-	-	-
	216,582	2,000	194,851	2,096	707	16,928

	30-JUNE-20 (\$)	30-JUNE-19 (\$)
17. Non-Current Assets		
Property, Plant and Equipment		
Land & Buildings		
Land and Buildings at Cost	405,236	405,236
Revaluation of Land and Buildings	71,836	71,836
Accumulated Depreciation of Land and Buildings	(127,650)	(119,241)
Total Land & Buildings	349,422	357,831
Office Equipment		
Office Equipment at Cost	395,879	304,043
Accumulated Depreciation of Office Equipment	(343,581)	(228,113)
Total Office Equipment	52,298	75,930
Furniture and Fittings		
Furniture and Fittings	19,676	19,676
Accumulated Depreciation of Furniture and Fittings	(14,325)	(13,239)
Total Furniture and Fittings	5,352	6,437
Leasehold Improvements		
Leasehold Improvements at Cost	209,589	200,284
Accumulated Amortisation of Leasehold Improvements	(170,158)	(154,010)
Total Leasehold Improvements	39,431	46,274
Total Property, Plant and Equipment	446,502	486,472
Intangibles		
Intangible Assets		
Software Assets	603,623	593,682
Accumulated Amortisation of Software	(597,987)	(586,936)
Total Intangible Assets	5,637	6,746
Total Non-Current Assets	452,139	493,219

The movement in the carrying amounts for each class of property, plant and equipment is reflected as follows:

	30-June-2020 (\$)	30-June-2019 (\$)
LAND & BUILDINGS		
Opening Written Down Value	357,831	367,431
Revaluation	-	-
Depreciation Expense	(8,409)	(9,600)
Closing Written Down Value	349,422	357,831

	30-June-2020	30-June-2019
	(\$)	(\$)
OFFICE EQUIPMENT		
Opening Written Down Value	75,930	63,890
Additions	91,835	60,090
Depreciation Expense	(115,467)	(48,050)
Closing Written Down Value	52,298	75,930

	30-June-2020	30-June-2019
	(\$)	(\$)
FURNITURE & FITTINGS		
Opening Written Down Value	6,437	7,571
Depreciation Expense	(1,085)	(1,134)
Closing Written Down Value	5,352	6,437

	30-June-2020	30-June-2019
	(\$)	(\$)
LEASEHOLD IMPROVEMENTS		
Opening Written Down Value	46,274	56,151
Additions	9,305	11,423
Depreciation Expense	(16,148)	(21,300)
Closing Written Down Value	39,431	46,274

	30-June-2020	30-June-2019
	(\$)	(\$)
INTANGIBLES		
Computer Software		
Opening Written Down Value	6,746	7,856
Additions	9,942	-
Amortisation Expense	(11,051)	(1,110)
Closing Written Down Value	5,637	6,746

A formal independent valuation of TLA's Freehold Property was obtained in August 2016 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 2018 financial year. The property has been revalued in line with the prepared valuation. TLA's policy is to review its freehold property every 4 years.

TLA 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.

18. Impairment of Assets

There were no indications of impairment of property, plant and equipment and intangible assets at 30 June 2020.

19. Right-of-Use Assets

From 1 July 2019, AASB 16 requires TLA to recognise a right-of-use asset, where it has control of the underlying asset over the lease term. A right-to-use asset is measured at the present value of initial lease liability, adjusted by any lease payments made at or before the commencement date and lease incentives, and any initial direct costs incurred. Right-of-use assets includes assets in respect of leases previously treated as operating leases under AASB 117, and therefore not recognised on the Statement of Financial Position.

TLA has elected not to recognise right-of-use assets and lease liabilities arising from short-term leases and leases for which the underlying asset is of low-value. An asset is considered low-value when it is expected to cost less than \$10,000.

Right-of-use assets are depreciated over the shorter of the assets useful life and the term of the lease. Where TLA obtains ownership of the underlying lease asset or if the cost of the right-of-use asset reflects that TLA will exercise a purchase option, TLA depreciates the right-of-use asset over its useful life.

	158 Liverpool Street, Hobart (\$)	64 Cameron Street, Launceston (\$)	Total (\$)
Carrying value at 1 July 2019	-	292,935	292,935
Additions	2,258,593	-	2,258,593
Depreciation and amortisation	225,859	91,542	317,401
Carrying value at 30 June 2020	2,032,734	201,393	2,234,127

	30-JUNE-20 (\$)	30-JUNE-19 (\$)
20. Payables		
Accrued Employee Entitlements	128,035	55,928
Unexpended Grants	822,750	776,267
Other Operating Costs	392,500	288,725
Total Payables	1,343,285	1,120,919
	30-JUNE-20 (\$)	30-JUNE-19 (\$)

21. Provisions

Current

Provision for Annual Leave	536,439	390,371
Provision for Long Service Leave	674,627	763,872
Total Current	1,211,066	1,154,244

Non-Current

Provision for Long Service Leave	140,494	117,486
Total Non-Current	140,494	117,486

Total Provisions	1,351,560	1,271,729
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22. 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.

23. Commitments for Expenditure

Legal Case Commitment

At 30 June 2020 TLA's case management system disclosed a commitment of \$1,183,336 (2019: \$949,921) in respect of applications for legal assistance made and accepted by TLA 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

On 1 July 2019, a lease liability is measured at the present value of the lease payments that are not paid at that date. The discount rate used to calculate the present value of the lease liability is the rate implicit to the lease. In this case, the Tascorp indicative lending rate including the relevant administration margin is used.

TLA has elected not to recognise right-of-use assets and lease liabilities arising from short-term leases and leases for which the underlying asset is of low-value. An asset is considered low-value when it is expected to cost less than \$10,000. TLA has entered into the following lease arrangements:

Right-of-Use Asset	Details of Leasing Arrangement
158 Liverpool Street, Hobart	5 year lease, term ending 30 June 2024. Option for additional 5 year lease extending term to 30 June 2029
64 Cameron Street, Launceston	5 year lease, term ending 31 August 2022.

Current	30-June-20 (\$)
Lease Liabilities	302,044
Non-current	
Lease Liabilities	1,954,733
Total	2,256,777

The following amounts are recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income:

	30-June-20 (\$)
Interest on lease liabilities included in Note 11	47,699
Lease amortisation expenses included in Note 12	317,402
Net expenses from leasing activities	365,101

	30-JUNE-20 (\$)	30-JUNE-19 (\$)
24. Reconciliation of Net Operating Surplus to Net Cash Flows Provided by/(Used In) Operating Activities		
Cash flows from operating activities		
Net Surplus / (Deficit)	9,320	1,081,360
Non-Cash Items		
Depreciation and Amortisation	469,564	81,195
Total Non-Cash Items	469,564	81,195
Change in assets and liabilities		
Decrease / (Increase) in Receivables	(475,149)	(72,102)
Decrease / (Increase) in Other Assets	(21,991)	(10,556)
Increase / (Decrease) in Provisions	79,830	(91,273)
Increase / (Decrease) in Payables	222,366	141,328
Total Change in assets and liabilities	(194,944)	(32,603)
Total Cash flows from operating activities	283,940	1,129,952

25. Financing Facilities Available

	30-June-20	30-June-19
	(\$)	(\$)
Facility Limit	63,000	71,000
Less Used / Committed	(5,171)	(8,717)
	57,829	62,283

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

26. 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.

27. Remuneration of Auditors

	30-June-20	30-June-19
	(\$)	(\$)
Audit Fee	25,090	25,090
	25,090	25,090

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

28. Remuneration of Commissioners

		30-June-20			
		Short-Term Benefits		Long-Term Benefits	Total Benefits
Commissioners	Band	Salary	Other Benefits	Superannuation	Total
1	\$0 - \$10,000	8,440	-	802	9,242
2	\$10,001 - \$20,000	22,504	-	2,138	24,642
1	\$20,001 - \$30,000	21,098	-	2,004	23,102
4	Remuneration Total (\$)	52,042	-	4,944	56,986

		30-June-19			
		Short-Term Benefits		Long-Term Benefits	Total Benefits
Commissioners	Band	Salary	Other Benefits	Superannuation	Total
3	\$10,001 - \$20,000	33,756	-	3,207	36,963
1	\$20,001 - \$30,000	21,098	-	2,004	23,102
4	Remuneration Total (\$)	54,854	-	5,211	60,065

Commissioners are remunerated on an annual basis and superannuation is also paid to these Commissioners in accordance with the superannuation guarantee legislation. There were no leave benefits, termination benefits, or other benefits paid to any Commissioner in the 2019 or 2020 financial years.

29. Remuneration of Key Management Personnel

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

30-June-20					
		Short-Term Benefits	Long-Term Benefits		Total Benefits
Number of Employees	Band	Salary	Superannuation	Leave Benefit	Total
1	\$40,001 - \$60,000	53,174	5,023	-	58,197
1	\$60,001 - \$80,000	60,578	6,391	6,686	73,655
1	\$220,001 - \$240,000	197,177	19,276	4,122	220,575
3	Remuneration Total (\$)	310,929	30,690	10,808	352,427

30-June-19					
		Short-Term Benefits	Long-Term Benefits		Total Benefits
Number of Employees	Band	Salary	Superannuation	Leave Benefit	Total
1	\$0 - \$40,000	25,408	2,210	-	27,618
1	\$140,001 - \$160,000	119,771	16,792	9,897	146,460
1	\$180,001 - \$200,000	166,621	22,453	6,904	195,978
3	Remuneration Total (\$)	311,800	41,455	16,801	370,056

No termination or other benefits have been paid other than what has been reflected above.

30. Related Party Transactions

Some Commissioners are associates with private legal firms to which TLA made grants payments. These payments are for external legal services only at the standard rate. Commissioners have not been engaged to provide any contracted services other than those associated with granted legal service arrangements.

Key Management Personnel are deemed to be any person(s) having authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the entity, directly or indirectly, including any director (whether executive or otherwise) of that entity is considered a key management personnel.

All transactions with the private legal firms were conducted on an arm's length basis in the normal course of business and on standard terms and conditions.

Details of Commissioners and their associated entities, along with key personnel and their positions, are listed as follows:

Commissioners	Practice / Employer	Position
Patrick Lunn	Simmons Wolfhagen	Managing Director
Naomi Walsh	University of Tasmania	Teaching Fellow
Gavin Wailes	Department of Justice	Director Finance
Julia Higgins	Bishops	Partner

Key Management Personnel	Position
Vincenzo Caltabiano	Director, TLA
Gerard Mellor	Operations Manager (Acting), TLA - Ceased January 2020
Andrea Ramondino	Business Services Manager, TLA - Commenced January 2020

At the appointment of Andrea Ramondino, the Operations Manager position was re-titled to "Business Services Manager". Gerard Mellor reverted to his original position as Computer Systems Officer.

31. Client Trust Funds

TLA did not hold client funds in a Trustee capacity pending final settlement of case files as at 30 June 2020 (2019 Nil)

32. Underlying Operating Result

TLA receives the majority of funds from Federal and State Government grants ('base grants'). With these grants TLA manages the legal aid service, provides in-house legal advice, education and representation to those who meet the eligibility criteria, including availability of funding. The balance of the grant funds are granted to the private sector to provide representation to those that meet the eligibility criteria, including availability of funds. There is no specific obligation to grant funds to the private sector.

Under the current AAS the grants are deemed non-reciprocal, particularly on the basis there is no specific obligation associated with the provision of base grants, which means TLA as a not-for-profit entity is not permitted to match the costs associated with the grants with grant revenue. Rather, all grant revenue is recognised on receipt. For profit entities can match the recognition of revenue with the related expenditure. Given there is a timing difference between the granting of legal aid and the payment of that aid, there is a disconnect between the recognition of revenue and the expenses associated with that revenue, which results in an overstatement of the operating result of TLA.

In addition, taking up a liability on the granting of aid to the private sector, though the majority of aid granted is subsequently paid, has not been deemed to meet the definition of a liability under AASB 137 *Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets*. Larger Legal Aid jurisdictions are taking up a liability for work deemed completed by the private sector on aid granted and unpaid, based on actuarial calculations. The liability of granted but unpaid legal aid is identified in this financial report by way of commitment at Note 22.

TLA for a number of years paid out additional aid based on accumulated surpluses that did not include a provision for legal aid granted and unpaid. The below table identifies the accumulated surplus position when granted but unpaid aid is factored into the financial statements.

Underlying Accumulated Surplus	30-June-20	30-June-19
	(\$)	(\$)
Accumulated Surplus	4,106,236	4,126,284
Granted but unpaid at 30 June	(1,183,336)	(949,921)
Accumulated Surplus Including Granted but Unpaid Aid	2,926,485	3,176,363
Underlying Net Surplus / (Deficit) for the Year		
Net Surplus / (Deficit) for the Year	9,320	1,081,360
Movement in Granted but Unpaid Aid	(233,415)	(15,375)
Net Surplus / (Deficit) Including Movement of Granted but Unpaid Aid	(224,095)	1,065,985

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