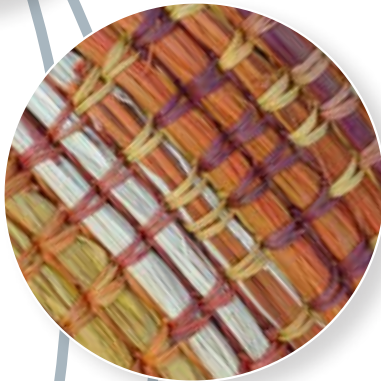
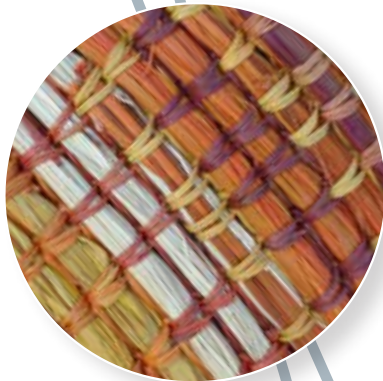
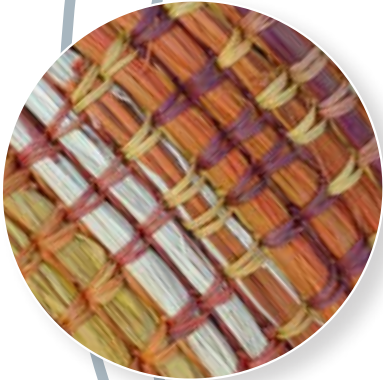


Annual Report 2015/2016



Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission





Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission

The Hon. Natasha Fyles MLA
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice
Parliament House
State Square
DARWIN NT 0800

Dear Attorney-General

It is with pleasure that I present the Annual Report for the Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission. The work that the Commission does and the role it plays in the Territory legal system is an important one. It is vital to have an appropriately funded organisation, to ensure that people in the NT, particularly those who are disadvantaged, have access to quality services to protect and enforce their legal rights and interests. In order to continue to fulfil this purpose in a financially responsible way, the Commission had to make some difficult decisions throughout this financial year, including directing the limit of some services. The subsequent commitment of additional funds, in particular from the Northern Territory Government, but also from the Commonwealth, allowed the Commission to continue to offer the broad range of quality legal services for which it is renowned.

The legal needs of the diverse community that is the Northern Territory are many. With finite resources it is the Board's duty to ensure the Commission's funds are directed to those most in need. We have sort to prioritise and expand capacity in regard to the important areas of domestic and family violence and youth justice. And we have also sort to ensure that those members of the private profession who assist the community by taking on legal aid work, are more appropriately remunerated. Whilst much

of the Commission's case work is done by our employed legal practitioners, the services we offer cannot exist without the mixed model of delivery involving the private legal profession and we are grateful for their continued work.

I also take this opportunity to thank my fellow Board members, including Kenton Winsley, who resigned as the Community representative during this financial year. And in particular, on behalf of the Board, I thank the Director Ms Suzan Cox QC, her Deputy Director and staff, for their excellence and commitment to the organisation and its vision.

Yours faithfully

Elizabeth Morris
Chair
Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission



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Director's Report

This reporting year we provided 27,376 services to the people of the Northern Territory.

We began the year with an increase in funding from the Commonwealth Government under the National Partnership Agreement on Legal Service Delivery entered into between the Northern Territory Chief Minister and the Prime Minister of Australia. Of real concern, however, was a very significant funding shortfall in our NT funding. This shortfall was due to a number of factors outside the Commission's control which impacted on the demand for our legal services. These factors included:

- Government changes to legislation and Government policy initiatives;
- Changes to the court practices and procedures;
- Increased policing and prosecutions;
- Various socio-economic factors including an increase in the reporting of family violence, homelessness, mental illness, drug and alcohol abuse and family breakdowns.

To ensure that our expenditure did not exceed our funding we were forced to make difficult decisions and reduced our services in significant and important areas. Fortunately, we did not have to do so for very long. As applications for stays in criminal trials began to be made the need for additional funding was finally recognised by the Northern Territory Government. As a result the Commission received a "one off" injection of funds and a commitment from the NT Attorney-General and his Department to work with the Commission to increase our base funding in the following budget cycle. This was done and, although it was less than what we had asked for, we did receive a significant increase to our base funding. We greatly appreciate the support of the NT Attorney-General in this regard.

The 2015/16 additional funding allocated by initially the Commonwealth Government and then the NT Government enabled us to do the following:

- Establish an in-house Civil Law Practice which can provide advice and legal task assistance. The Civil Practice also encompasses the Commission's Indigenous Outreach Program which received funding for a further three years through the Prime Minister's Department.
- Increase the fees to the private profession who do our work by 10%. This was particularly significant in that the private profession had not had an increase for some 15 years. It is hoped that ongoing funding will allow regular increases in the future ensuring that the support of our work by the private profession continues.
- Employ an additional criminal lawyer in our Darwin and Alice Springs offices.
- Restructure and increase duty services to people involuntarily detained and appearing before the Mental Health Review Tribunal. This is now done through the newly established Civil Law Practice.
- Continue the implementation of the NTLAC IT Strategy by investing in vital IT infrastructure.
- Employ an additional staff member to work in both the Legal Aid Helpline and in Community Legal Education. This position has a dedicated youth focus.
- Implement changes to data collection as required under the Commonwealth National Data Standards Manual which supports the National Partnership Agreement on Legal Service Delivery.

Family and Domestic Violence in the NT

The Commission has had an ongoing concern with the impact of family violence in our community. The Domestic Violence Legal Service experienced unprecedented demand in the 15/16 year. An audit by National Legal Aid in April 2016 found that in 79% of Family Law cases funded by Legal Aid Commissions

Director's Report (continued)

across Australia, there were allegations of domestic violence. The highest incidents of domestic violence in these family law matters occurred in the NT with allegations of domestic violence in 88% of our cases.

The Commission auspices the Domestic Violence Legal Services and we successfully advocated for the need for increased resources for this service throughout the 15/16 year. We have been informed that some increased resources will be available to this service in the following financial year. We will use these extra resources to fund an additional solicitor, part time administrative support and a local support co-ordinator, who will provide assisted referrals to victims of domestic and family violence. Again we thank the NT and Commonwealth Governments for their continued support in advocating for resources in this demanding area of our work. There is, however, a need for co-ordinated policy input from Government to address the enormous problem of domestic and family violence in the NT.

New Initiatives

Over this year we have also had some exciting initiatives including:

- The development, completion and launch of the Law Handbook On-Line in partnership with the Darwin Community Legal Service and Austlii.
- Development of a plain language law website which will be launched in the 16/17 financial year.
- Participation in the NT Community Legal Education Network Professional Development Workshop in conjunction with the legal and related services in the NT and nationally.
- The first Community Legal Education Road Show which linked services from Darwin to Alice Springs with community legal education training and resources.
- The Darwin Aboriginal Community Legal Education consultation and development of a tool kit.

Over the next year we hope to undertake and develop some key areas of innovative work. We will allocate two additional positions to the Family Law Section to implement a new category of "Legal

Task Assistance" which will provide up to 4 hours of minor assistance to clients who experience particular vulnerabilities, including domestic and family violence.

The Commission will also be employing a Youth Support worker in Darwin and Alice Springs to provide vital non-legal support assistance to young people who are in the criminal justice system. The Commission will also be allocating an additional position to ensure the sustainability of its online publications, in particular the Law Handbook On-Line and the Plain Language Law Website.

Future Needs

We are very grateful for the increased resources we have received from both the Northern Territory and Commonwealth Governments; however, it is clear that these increased resources do not go far enough. We will continue to work closely with both the NT and Commonwealth Governments to develop strategic responses to the issues of children and young people in the criminal justice system, the care and protection of children and domestic and family violence.

If we are to assist more Territorians we will need an injection of funding to do so. Our means test continues to be very mean as we cannot relax the means test without a funding increase. This year 42% of applicants who were refused legal aid were not sufficiently impoverished due to our means test. Most of these people who were refused legal aid could not afford to pay for private legal representation.

In September 2015 the Productivity Commission estimated that additional funding from Australian, State and Territory Government of around \$200 million a year is needed for the legal assistance sector, pointing out that not providing legal assistance can be a false economy as the costs of unresolved problems are often shifted to other areas of government spending such as health care, housing and child protection (Productivity Commission Inquiry Report). As former Chief Justice Gleeson commented some years ago, "Providing legal aid is costly. So is not providing legal aid."

In Darwin and Alice Springs legal advice and representation this year increased by 15% and 16% respectively. We continue to see incarceration rates increase and of particular concern is the over representation of Indigenous Territorians in our prisons and Youth Detention Centres.

In 1974 Professor Norval Morris wrote about how to decrease rates of imprisonment:

“Three paths are believed to lead to the abatement of imprisonment. First, the “overreach” of the criminal law is to be reduced. Second, those who would otherwise be sent to prison are to be “diverted” to other mechanisms of social control. And third, greater reliance is to be placed on “community-based corrections”. These three amount to defining less behaviour as criminal, keeping an increasing proportion of offenders out of prison, and getting an increasing proportion out of prison earlier than at present; all groups so liberated to be controlled and supported in a variety of treatment programs in the community. There is a widespread realization that both the criminal prohibition and the penal institution have been used indiscriminately and excessively.” (The Future of Imprisonment, Studies in Crime and Justice).

Forty two years later imprisonment rates have continued to increase and the paths to abatement of this steady and continual growth need to be embraced. Our Governments needs to urgently address the rate of imprisonment and Indigenous imprisonment, in particular, through appropriate policy and legislative reform. Until this happens, scarce legal assistance resources will necessarily be diverted to criminal representation.

Thank you

The Commission is extremely grateful to the NT Legal Aid Commission Chair, Judge Elizabeth Morris, and to each of our Commission members. In addition, the private profession supports our work and we thank both the solicitors and members of the Bar who have assisted us over the last year. We are also

grateful to our partners in the Community and Justice sector for their support of our work and collaboration with us.

I thank the Attorney-General of the Northern Territory, the Honourable (John) Johan Wessel Elferink and the Attorney-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, the Honourable Senator George Brandis QC, for their ongoing commitment to legal aid.

Finally, I thank my Deputy Director, Fiona Hussin, each of our Managers and all our staff in our Darwin, Palmerston, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs offices, who continue to provide excellent service to the most vulnerable in our community.



Suzan Cox QC
Director
Northern Territory
Legal Aid Commission



Performance Highlights

The Community we assisted



60%

Received Government Benefits



7%

Lived outside a major city/town



37%

Identified themselves as Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islanders



11%

Were under the age of 18



3%

Were over the age of 65



28%

Were born overseas



24%

Were serving a sentence of imprisonment.



9%

Were provided with assistance from an interpreter

The percentages include clients who may have accessed more than one service. The percentages do not include clients who sought assistance from the Legal Aid Helpline, website or community legal education services.

The Services we provided

The Commission provided a total of 27,376 services in 2015-16

10%

LEGAL REPRESENTATION



14%

DUTY LAWYER SERVICE



20%

LEGAL ADVICE PROVIDED



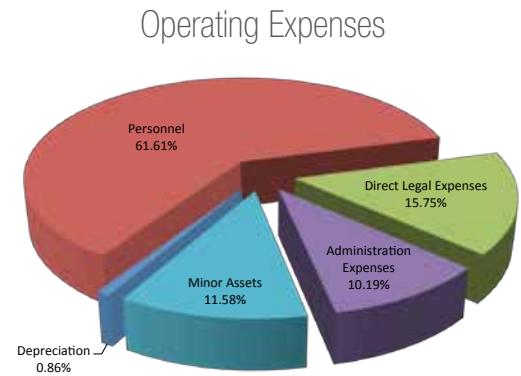
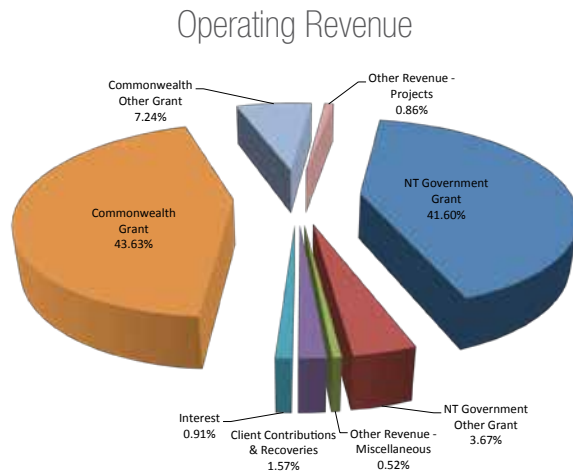
56%

LEGAL INFORMATION & REFERRAL



Performance Highlights (continued)

Financial Summary



4% ↑
Total Assets

6% ↓
Total Liabilities

12% ↑
Equity

10% ↑
Current Ratio

9% ↓
Debt Ratio

6% ↑
Total Revenue

9% ↑
Total Expenses

2014-15 was used to determine the percentage increase or decrease for 2015-16

The Commissioners

Commissioners' Role

The role of the Board of Commissioners is to provide overall strategic guidance for the Commission and effective oversight of management. The Commissioners are appointed in accordance with section 6 of the *Legal Aid Act*

Elizabeth Morris

Chair

Judge Morris was first appointed as the Chair in September 2010, having previously served on the Board as an appointee of the Attorney General. She was appointed as a Magistrate, now Local Court Judge, in April 2010, formerly being the Deputy CEO of the Department of Justice. Her previous positions include being the Executive Director of Racing, Gaming and Licensing, and the Deputy Coroner for the Northern Territory. Her earlier legal career included nine years with the Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission. Judge Morris first came to the Territory in 1990 to work as an Associate in the Supreme Court. She has a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) and a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Sydney, as well as a Graduate Certificate in Public Sector Management.

Suzan Cox Qc

Suzan graduated from UNSW with BA, LLB, 1978; LLM (Criminal Law) NYU 1985. 1980-90 Solicitor, Office of the Public Solicitor, Port Moresby, Senior Criminal Solicitor, CAALAS, Senior Criminal Solicitor, NAALAS (now NAAJA) and practised at the Melbourne Bar. From 1990 until 2002 at the Commission as Senior Solicitor, Family Law Practice, Senior Counsel, Criminal Law Practice, Deputy Director, Acting Director, Director from July 2002 and appointed Queens Counsel in August 2002.

Eileen Terrill

Eileen graduated University of Adelaide with LLB in 1976. Commenced practice in the Northern Territory in 1977. From 1977 to 1985 employed as a solicitor in local Darwin firms. From 1985 to 1986 Manager of the Family and Civil Law Section of the Australian Legal Aid Office, Darwin. From 1986 to 1990 Director of the Australian Legal Aid Office, Darwin. From 1991 to present, Principal of a small Darwin based legal practice. Councillor of Law Society of the NT from 1993 to 2003. On the Executive Committee of the Northern Territory Law Society from 1997 to 2003. Appointed by the Northern Territory Attorney-General, on the nomination of the Law Society. Originally appointed 29 October 1997.

Anne Bradford

Anne joined the Department of Children and Families, as the Chief Executive Officer in March 2015, having been the Chief Executive Officer for the Department of Housing, the Deputy Chief Executive for the Department of Infrastructure, and the Deputy Chief Executive Officer for the Department of Attorney-General and Justice. Previous appointments were held in Defence, Attorney-General's Department, Health and Aged Care and the Education (Secondary) sector. Anne holds a Master of Education (Professional Practices), a Bachelor of Education (Secondary), a Diploma in Training and Assessment Systems and a Diploma of Management. She is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management and a chartered member of the Australian Human Resources Institute.

In 2012 Anne was appointed Chair of both NT Procurement Review Boards and a member of the Government Procurement Council. In 2010 she was appointed Chair of the NT Community Benefit Fund and a Commissioner of the Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission. In 2006 Anne won the National Telstra Women's Hudson Award for Community and Government and the Northern Territory Telstra Business Woman of the Year award. Anne was awarded the Professional Manager of the Year (Public Sector) for the NT in 2003.

The Commissioners (continued)

Samantha Byrne

Samantha joined as a Legal Aid Commissioner in May 2013 as the Treasurer's nomination. Samantha is a long standing public servant with experience in financial management, policy development, procurement and governance. Samantha has undertaken strategic and operational roles and is currently the Senior Director of Economic Policy and Commercial with the Department of Treasury and Finance. Samantha holds a Bachelor of Business, is a Certified Practising Accountant and a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Russell Goldflam

Russell was appointed as a Commissioner in April 2014 following his election as the staff representative on the Board. He has been a lawyer with the Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission since 1997, and Manager of the Commission's Alice Springs office since 2001. Between 1981 and 1991, Russell worked at the Institute for Aboriginal Development, where he was closely involved in the establishment of accredited Aboriginal interpreter

programs and the first Aboriginal Interpreter Service in Central Australia. He graduated in law from Macquarie University in 1995 and was awarded the University Medal for Law. He has served on various governance and advisory bodies, including the Alice Springs College of TAFE Board, the Alice Springs Youth and Accommodation Service Board, 8-CCC Community Radio Board and the Alice Springs Alcohol Reference Panel. Since 2011 he has been President of the Criminal Lawyers Association of the Northern Territory. Russell is also a member of the Northern Territory Law Reform Committee and the Alice Springs People's Alcohol Action Coalition, a Centre Associate of the Indigenous Law Centre of the University of New South Wales, and a White Ribbon Ambassador.



Russell Goldflam (second from left), NT Australian of the Year Nominee

Strategic Plan 2014 - 2017

Our Vision

To be a leader in a fair justice system.

Our Purpose

To ensure that people in the NT, particularly those who are disadvantaged, understand and have access to quality services to protect and enforce their legal rights and interests.

Our Values

Social Justice: Fairness and equity valuing diversity

Integrity: Performing our functions with respect, dignity, compassion and honesty

Professionalism: Committed to the rule of law, ethical standards, innovation, and continuous review and improvement to ensure quality service

Accountability: Accountable for actions and decisions

Our Services

We do this by providing a broad spectrum of services, including:

- Legal representation in courts and tribunals – including criminal law, family law, child protection, domestic violence and mental health
- Duty lawyer services – in criminal, family and civil law
- Early intervention – legal advice and minor assistance over the phone or face-to-face
- Lawyer assisted dispute resolution – for families experiencing separation
- Preventative legal services – community legal education, and information and referrals through our website, telephone information service and customer service counters
- Policy and law reform advice – including impacts and consequences

Our Environment

The Commission strives to meet the continuing challenges of the NT, in the Australian context, whilst also taking into account our location in northern and central Australia. The diverse and isolated population and geographical remoteness present challenges to rural and regional service delivery.

The issues, risks and challenges of our environment include:

- The impact of policy decisions made by governments, alliance partners, and broader economic and social factors
- Changing demographics and subsequent changes to client demand and services required
- Balancing the need to meet demand for services with the need to invest in our people and systems
- Rapidly changing information technology capability and expectations
- Legislative response and priorities at Commonwealth and Territory levels
- Delivering quality services across a large geographic area with a dispersed population

Our Goals and Strategies

1. Service Delivery

Goal statement: Ensure that our services are of high quality and appropriately targeted.

Strategies for 2014-2017:

- Maintain and continue to improve effective service delivery, quality and accessibility for our clients
- Identify barriers to accessing services and identify unmet legal need
- Develop collaborative solutions with our preferred providers and stakeholders

Strategic Plan 2014 - 2017 (continued)

2. Reputation and Influence

Goal statement: Maintain and build our reputation as a trusted organisation with governments, partners, the community, and clients.

Strategies for 2014-2017:

- Maintain relationships with the Attorney-General and other key stakeholders, including the Treasurer, the Commonwealth, the legal profession and judiciary
- Participate in legal and public forums on matters relevant to the Commission's business
- Inform the development of legislation and policy
- Promote the work of the Commission to the community
- Maintain the ability to provide evidence and supporting data around legal issues affecting disadvantaged people

3. Partnerships

Goal statement: Work with other agencies and stakeholders to ensure the best use of all available resources.

Strategies for 2014-2017:

- Explore opportunities to partner with others to share legal expertise, information and resources
- Continue to improve our referral pathways
- Ensure partnerships with other stakeholders are kept viable and responsive
- Initiate and continue to participate in key activities and forums
- Partner with preferred suppliers where possible to ensure quality services

4. Innovation

Goal statement: Foster a culture of innovation and continuous improvement across the Commission.

Strategies for 2014-2017:

- Develop and implement an IT strategic plan to deliver services more efficiently, effectively, ethically and broadly
- Enhance data collection and reporting to enable meaningful evaluation of program activities
- Actively seek the ideas of staff, stakeholders and clients to challenge and improve established systems, processes and practices

5. Organisational Capability and Culture

Goal statement: Develop organisational capability and a culture that enables the Commission and employees to realise their full potential.

Strategies for 2014-2017:

- Maintain a positive and professional team environment based on equity, good governance and transparency
- Ensure comprehensive training and professional development for all staff, including orientation, supervision and performance review
- Prioritise the quality of management and governance
- Create and maintain a healthy and safe work environment
- Support staff in managing and prioritising workloads for a healthy work life balance
- Improve business support systems and technology

Our Obligations

Duties of Commission

The Commission is established under the *Legal Aid Act* (NT) 1990 as amended (*the Legal Aid Act*).

Section 8 of the *Legal Aid Act* provides that the Commission shall:

- ensure that legal assistance is provided in the most effective, efficient and economic manner;
- ensure that its activities are carried on consistently with, and do not prejudice, the independence of the private legal profession;
- liaise and co-operate with, and if the Commission considers it desirable to do so, make reciprocal arrangements with professional bodies representing private legal practitioners and other bodies engaged or interested in the provision of legal assistance in the Territory or elsewhere;
- liaise with professional bodies representing private legal practitioners in order to facilitate the use, in appropriate circumstances, of services provided by private legal practitioners;
- make maximum use of services which private legal practitioners offer to provide on a voluntary basis;
- encourage and permit persons who are not legal practitioners to participate, so far as the Commission considers it practicable and proper to do so, on a voluntary basis, under professional supervision, in the provision of legal assistance by officers;
- provide officers and agencies of the Commonwealth or a State concerned in the provision of legal assistance with such statistical and other information as they reasonably require;
- make its services available to persons eligible for legal assistance by establishing such local offices, and by making such other arrangements, as it considers appropriate within funding limitations;
- determine priorities in the provision of legal assistance as between different classes of persons or classes of matters;
- arrange for the provision of duty lawyer services at sittings in the Territory in such courts as it considers appropriate as funding may permit;
- endeavour to secure the services of language interpreters, marriage counsellors and other appropriate persons to help persons in connection with matters in respect of which they are provided with legal assistance: and
- initiate and carry out educational programs designed to promote an understanding by the public (and by sections of the public having special needs in this respect) of their rights, powers, privileges and duties under the laws in force in the Territory.

Legal aid agreements

In June 2015 Commonwealth funding for the period 2015/16 to 2019/20 financial years was established and is set out in the National Partnership Agreement between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories.

Overview of Our Operations

The provision of legal services by the Commission is governed by the *Legal Aid Act*.

The Commission is independent of the Northern Territory and Commonwealth Governments. Section 27 of the *Legal Aid Act* allows the Commission to provide assistance to a person in relation to a proceeding or matter where the interests of the person are, or may be, adverse to the interests of the Territory, the interests of an authority or body established for a public purpose by or under a law of the Territory or in the interests of a body corporate in which the Territory or such an authority or body has an interest.

The services provided by the Commission take the form of legal information and referral, legal advice, help from one of our duty lawyer services, or legal representation, information, assistance and community legal education.

Legal Information and referral

Free legal information and referral to other appropriate services is available from the Commission's Legal Aid Helpline.

Legal Advice

Free legal advice is available in relation to criminal, family and civil law matters through legal advice clinics and referrals to private solicitors.

Duty Lawyer Services

Free duty lawyer services are available at such sittings of those Courts and Tribunals in the Northern Territory as the Director considers appropriate. Duty lawyers provide legal advice and may provide limited representation.

During this year, duty lawyer services were available as follows:

- To persons experiencing domestic violence through the independent Domestic Violence Legal Service.

- To sittings of the Family and Federal Circuit Courts.
- To people appearing before the Mental Health Review Tribunal.
- In criminal law matters at Magistrates Courts in locations where the Commission has an office.
- In matters under the *Care and Protection of Children Act*.

Legal Assistance

Legal assistance may be provided in accordance with section 26 of the *Legal Aid Act* if:

(a) a person is in need of that legal assistance by reason that she or he is unable to afford the cost of obtaining from private legal practitioners the legal services in respect of which legal assistance is sought; and

(b) it is reasonable in all the circumstances to provide the legal assistance. The assistance may be provided free or on condition that the assisted person contributes to part or all of the cost of providing legal assistance. The majority of clients are required to pay a contribution.

Assistance is provided in accordance with the Commission's Guidelines which are published on the Commission's website.

Legal Assistance Guidelines

The Commission is required by section 12 of the *Legal Aid Act* to determine, and make known to the public, guidelines to be applied in considering applications for legal assistance and in making decisions as to other specified matters involving the exercise of discretion.

The guidelines are available on the Commission's website.

Contributions and Recovery of Costs

Client contributions are collected in accordance with section 29 of the *Legal Aid Act*. Initial contributions of a minimum of \$110.00 are usually imposed, except where the person is in custody or a child. Interim and final contributions may also be imposed, especially where a legally assisted person's financial circumstances have improved during the currency of a grant of aid or they have been released from custody.

Where an assisted person is successful in a civil matter, the Commission may recover some or all of the costs incurred in representing the client.

Client contributions are an important part of the Commission's funding base.

Reconsideration and Review of Decisions

An applicant for legal assistance may request that an unfavourable decision be reconsidered or reviewed in accordance with Part VI of the *Legal Aid Act*.

Where a decision is confirmed or varied following reconsideration by an officer of the Commission, the person affected may request that the decision be referred to a Review Committee for review.

The Review Committee consists of an officer of the Commission, a private legal practitioner and an independent person with relevant experience.

Legal Practices

The Commission conducts legal practices which include criminal law, family law, civil law and family dispute resolution. The Commission also auspices an independent Domestic Violence Legal Service.

Locations

The Commission maintains offices in Darwin, Palmerston, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs, and provides limited services to other regions by utilising either its own staff or private practitioners. The Commission also conducts outreach services outside of these offices, including the courts, prisons, community organisations and remote communities.

Our Offices and Principal Functions

Darwin Office

Financial management, financial and statistical reporting, accounting, information technology, human resource services and grants functions are centralised in Darwin.

The Domestic Violence Legal Service which operates as an independent service at Nichols Place in Darwin.

Located within the Darwin office are the following divisions:

- The Directorate;
- Corporate Services;
- Criminal Law;
- Family Law;
- Civil Law
- Grants Section;
- Early Intervention and Prevention;
- Family Dispute Resolution Program;

The Directorate

Objective:

- In consultation with the Board of Commissioners, manage and provide direction to the operations of the Commission.

Corporate Services

Objective:

- Provide support and infrastructure within the Commission so that services are provided to the people of the Northern Territory in an efficient and effective manner.

Criminal Legal Practice

Objective:

To provide assistance in relation to criminal matters under Northern Territory and Commonwealth legislation.

Legal Advice and Duty Lawyer Services

- concise initial advice to members of the public in respect of their rights and obligations at all offices;
- duty lawyer services at Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs Courts; and
- a duty lawyer service at the prisons each week.
- on call telephone advice to children and adults in custody.



Representation of adults

Where legal aid has been granted:

- representation in pleas of guilty, hearings in contested matters and committals in Courts of Summary Jurisdiction
- representation including for pleas of guilty, trials on indictment, applications in respect to mental impairment, extensions of non-parole periods (for prisoners serving mandatory life sentences) and indefinite sentences for violent offenders and serious sex offences in the Supreme Court;
- Representations in the Mental Health Diversion Court;
- referrals from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal services to assist clients in cases of conflict of interest including attending remote communities;
- Representations to the NT Parole Board; and
- Appeals to the Supreme Court, Court of Criminal Appeal and High Court.

Representation of youth

- Duty lawyer service in the Youth Justice Court ("YJC")

Where legal aid has been granted:

- representation on pleas and contested hearings;
- sentence reviews; and
- appeals to the Supreme Court

The Commission Youth Justice Practice in both the Darwin and Alice Springs Youth Justice Courts is conducted by our dedicated lawyers specialising in youth justice. The practice involves proceedings in the YJC and the Supreme Courts' original and Appellate jurisdiction. Particular skills are required for Youth Justice Advocates who provide children in conflict with the law, a holistic approach to resolving their legal, social and family issues. The Commission makes submissions to government and relevant stakeholders as appropriate in relation to issues or concerns arising from the youth justice system and making recommendations for improvements.

The Commission recognises that we need to keep youth out of the criminal justice system wherever possible. We will continue to be represented on the Youth Justice Advisory Committee ("YJAC"), the Youth Detention Reform Advocacy Group ("YDRAG"), the Central Australian Youth Justice Coalition ("CAYJ") and the Youth Action Group ("YAG") and to provide community legal education to youth and youth services in a range of environments including detention and schools.

Criminal Policy

Our crime solicitors have limited ability to contribute to submissions and commentary on proposed policy initiatives and legislative changes involving criminal law issues. This is an important part of our work and our lawyers are well qualified for this role. In addition, lawyers in the Criminal Law Practice are involved in community legal education initiatives, particularly with children, young people and people from a refugee or migrant background.

The new jurisdiction of the Mental Health Diversion Court impacts on Commission resourcing as it is very resource intensive.

Our Offices and Principal Functions (continued)

Family Law Practice

Objective:

To ensure that our clients, particularly those who are vulnerable or disadvantaged, are able to understand the legal system, their rights, interests and obligations and have access to services to understand, protect and enforce them.

Services:

The practice provides a broad range of legal assistance to people Territory wide through the provision of preventive, early intervention and legal representation services in the form of:

- community legal education
- free legal advice clinics,
- duty lawyer;
- chairing and client representation in lawyer assisted Family Dispute Resolution
- representing parents in Federal and Territory courts;
- representing children's best interests in the Federal Family Law Courts;

in the areas of:

- family law (parenting and property/financial disputes; child support and parentage declarations);
- child in need of protection; and
- domestic and family violence.

The in-house practice is a committed and vibrant team consisting of in-house lawyers supported by paralegal/administrative staff operating from the Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs offices.

Policy, law reform & legal education:

We continue to contribute to and shape policy and law reform and in the last 12 months have made submissions on:

- the Family Law Council second round Discussion Paper: "Families with Complex Needs and the Intersection of the Family Law and Child Protection Systems".
- Response to the Reform of Adoption of Children Act Information Paper (NT);
- Domestic Violence Issues Paper (NT)

Family lawyers also contributed to the overhaul of the NT Law Handbook which went on-line in May 2016.

Partners:

Improvement of client outcomes has also been achieved through engagement and collaboration with important partners and allied stakeholders (such as the Federal Circuit and Local Courts, Domestic Violence Legal Service, private practitioners, Dawn House, NAAJA, CAALAS, CAAFVLU, the Central & Top End Women's Legal Services, the Department of Children and Families, Department of Human Services – Child Support, Family Relationship Service Providers such as Relationships Australia/ Family Relationship Centre).



Civil Law Practice

Objective:

The Civil Law Service is committed to increasing legal assistance to vulnerable clients experiencing civil law problems and ensuring such clients are able to access to the legal services available to them in the Northern Territory.

The Commission has long identified the need for the establishment of a civil law practice within its service. There are many vulnerable people in the community who require specialised civil law advice, minor assistance and representation in civil law matters. This financial year we were fortunate to receive an increase in funds available to be expended against Commonwealth Law matters under the National Partnership Agreement on Legal Service Delivery. This provided the opportunity to establish the practice. Following a significant planning and set up phase the Commission opened a new Civil Law Service in March 2016. The service has a focus on providing legal task assistance (or minor assistance) to vulnerable people experiencing civil law problems.

Legal Task Assistance is not a grant of legal aid, is limited to four hours per civil matter and does not extend to a solicitor taking carriage of a matter in an ongoing, or representative capacity. Types Legal Task Assistance include:

- Preparation or assistance with drafting documents.
- Writing a submission letter.
- Writing a letter to another party asking them to do or not to do something.
- Advocating on behalf of a client without taking ongoing carriage of a matter.

Legal Task Assistance is available to all Northern Territorians, regardless of where they may live in the Territory. The focus is to help individuals with certain vulnerabilities to progress resolution of their civil law problems. The Civil Law Service is also focused on providing increased civil law assistance to vulnerable clients living in remote, regional and rural areas of the NT. The service has been very busy and has received many referrals from remote and regional areas, including Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs. Increased civil law assistance was also provided to clients in immigration detention at the Wickham Point Immigration Detention Centre, until its closure in July 2016.

The Civil Law Service also provide civil advice clinics to clients in the Katherine, Palmerston and Darwin areas and also conducts some grant of aid matters where appropriate. The Civil Law Service also undertakes the duty lawyer representation for all clients appearing before the Mental Health Review Tribunal at the Mental Health Inpatient Unit in Darwin. This duty lawyer service provides representation and advice to all clients in the Top End who are involuntarily admitted to the Mental Health Inpatient Unit in Darwin and those who are subject to a Community Management Order.

Our Offices and Principal Functions (continued)

The Civil Law Service is an enthusiastic and dynamic team of people, and has four solicitors and two administrative assistants in the Darwin office.

The Indigenous Outreach Project team also merged into the Civil Law Service and with a three year commitment of funding under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy funding, the Civil Law Service will also have two additional solicitors and an Indigenous Community Liaison Officer in the Darwin office and a solicitor in the Tennant Creek Office.

Through the Indigenous Outreach Project, a pilot project Health Justice Partnership was established with the Danila Dilba Health Service, an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation providing primary health care to Aboriginal people in Darwin and Greater Darwin area. A civil lawyer and Indigenous Liaison Officer were placed on rostered days at the Danila Dilba Darwin and Palmerston Health Clinics, to provide legal advice, minor legal assistance, information and referrals to vulnerable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients. The Health Justice Partnership pilot project was successful and the project was extended for a further six months.

Grants Section

Objectives:

- Provide grants of aid to the in-house legal practice.
- Provide grants of aid to clients with private solicitors where:
 - applications are received directly from private practitioners;
 - the Commission is conflicted; or
 - the Commission does not have capacity in-house.

- Provide grants of aid to clients referred from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services.
- Administer review and reconsideration process where grants are refused and applicants appeal decision.
- Administer the Family Dispute Resolution Conferencing Program.

Workload in the Grants Section has slightly increased with an increase of 3% in applications received compared with 2014/15. The Grants Section has continued to work with private stakeholders and internal staff to ensure our practices are consistent, accountable and efficient.

The Commission updated its means test this year to reflect changes to the cost of living in the NT. The Commission has also increased the rates it pays to private practitioners by 10% acknowledging that the previous rates were quite low. We continue to work with our funding bodies to ensure the ongoing sustainability of the legal aid 'mixed model.'

The Commission would like to acknowledge the considerable work put in by both internal and private lawyers to comply with our processes and assist clients. We acknowledge that work is often performed without adequate remuneration. Without this many clients would go without representation and advice.

Early Intervention and Prevention Practices

Objective:

- Pursuant to the National Partnership Agreement provide services to help empower people to understand and assert their legal rights and responsibilities and to address, or prevent, legal problems.

Legal Information and Referral

The Legal Aid Helpline operates under the Commission's Information and Referral Strategy. The Legal Aid Helpline provides confidential assistance to people who have a legal problem, or may be unsure whether they have a legal problem. The service operates during business hours.

Callers to the Helpline can speak with paralegal staff to discuss their problem and obtain information, be referred to other helpful services and, if required, make an appointment to obtain free legal advice. The service is continually engaging in professional development training for staff, and developing on-line resources to provide information and assistance to callers. The number of callers to the service continues to expand its volume of service delivery with 15,399 callers being provided with assistance during 2015-2016, an increase of 41% from the previous year.

The Commission has partnered with Supportlink to provide assistance to people requiring legal assistance. Referrals from Supportlink come from the NT Police. Other services such as Health, Education and Housing will also be making referrals through Supportlink. The Legal Aid Helpline receives referrals

from Supportlink and then initiates contact with people requiring legal assistance and/or legal advice. The service takes the possible stress of initiating contact with legal services away from the client. The Helpline makes the call and enquires about the best way to assist the client, whether it be with the provision of legal information or an appointment to obtain legal advice.

Community Legal Education

In 2015-16 the Commission's Community Legal Education (CLE) team grew to over 4 staff coordinating a range of innovative activities that aim to:

"...improve understanding of the law, people's rights and the processes for preventing, minimising or solving legal problems."

Priority target groups are youth, service providers, and remote communities not serviced by others. The Commission's 2014-17 CLE strategy outlines 4 key strategies:

- Combine education methods.
- Produce diverse materials.
- Engage communities innovatively
- Extend CLE capability

Our Offices and Principal Functions (continued)

Family Dispute Resolution

The goal of the program is to assist separated parties reach a negotiated agreement appropriate to the needs of each particular family. The program assists in early resolution of disputes and provides a sound base for parties to move forward as a separated couple.

The Commission offers a lawyer-assisted family dispute resolution program to eligible clients, available in both children and property matters.

Family dispute resolution is valuable in assisting to contain and minimize protracted and extensive legal costs by avoiding or limiting the need for disputes to be resolved by final judicial determination.

FDR conferences are targeted at more complex disputes and may be convened either in early intervention matters or be referred back to the program for further negotiation where litigation has already commenced. This encourages settlement before final hearing in cases where court proceedings have begun. Where

appointed by courts, Independent Children's Lawyers regularly participate in conferences to represent the interests of children.

Conferences are chaired by accredited Family dispute practitioners registered with the Attorney General's Department and who also have either a legal or social science qualification. Clients with complex issues, who require the support and advice of legal representation during and as part of the negotiation process, are benefitted by the program model.

The Family Dispute Resolution program conducted 101 conferences for the financial year 2015/2016, achieving a settlement rate of 84%.

Palmerston Office

The Palmerston office assists with operation and supervision of the Darwin switchboard and is the main location for the Legal Aid Helpline call centre. Legal advice clinics are conducted throughout the week to assist clients with civil, criminal and family law matters. The Domestic Violence Legal Service also conducts a weekly legal advice clinic from these premises.



Katherine Office

Katherine Office

The Katherine office provides legal services in criminal law. Duty Lawyer services and legal representation in criminal law matters are provided at the Katherine Courthouse and courts in the region as required. Free legal advice sessions in criminal law, are conducted from the Katherine office. Legal advice is provided in family and civil law matters from other offices of the Commission by telephone or video conferencing link.

Alice Springs Office

The Alice Springs office provides legal services in criminal, family and civil law in the southern region of the Northern Territory.

Lawyers attend the Alice Springs Courthouse and provide free advice and duty lawyer representation to persons requiring assistance. In addition, free legal advice sessions are conducted at the office three days per week and telephone advice is provided to callers from remote areas.

Solicitors also attend at the Alice Springs prison and hospital to provide advice and representation as required.

Tennant Creek Office

The Tennant Creek office provides duty lawyer services and legal representation in criminal law matters at the Tennant Creek Courthouse. Free legal advice sessions in criminal law and civil law are conducted from the office. Legal advice is provided in family law matters from other offices of the Commission by telephone or video conferencing link.

The office conducts outreach activities including community legal education programs on issues that are relevant to the residents of Tennant Creek and the Barkly Region.

Central Australian Women's Legal Service ('CAWLS') visit Tennant Creek once a month. The Commission has entered into an MOU with CAWLS to use an office in the Tennant Creek office, while they are in town.



Alice Springs Office

Our Staff and Development

Our Employees

As at 30 June 2016 the following persons were employed:

Directorate

Director	Suzan Cox QC, BA LLB, LLM
Personal Assistant	Jodie Bawden
Deputy Director	Fiona Hussin, LLB

Darwin

Criminal Law Practice

Managing Solicitor	Ambrith Abayasekara BCom LLB
Senior Counsel	Ian Read SC, LLB BEc
Solicitors	Chrissy McConnel LLB
.....	Thomas Kaye BA, LLB, GDLP (Leave w/o Pay)
.....	Nicola MacCarron BA (Hons) MA LLB GDLP
.....	Caroline Snell BA, LLB GDLP
.....	Sheetal Balakrishnan BBus, LLB
.....	Alison Crouch BInstSt LLB, GDLP
.....	Mark Jehne BA/LLB (Hons), GDLP
.....	Kelsey Argue BA, LLB, GDLP
Crime Section Supervisor	Haley Richardson
Legal Secretary	Mark Wright

Family Law Practice

Managing Solicitor	Jaquie Palavra Dip Law(SAB)
Solicitors	Sally Bolton BA, LLB (Hons)
.....	Anneleise Hey B.Sc/LLB (Hons)
.....	Maurice Sgarbossa BA, BSW (Dis), LLB, GDLP
.....	Aditi Srinivas LLB, GDLP, MJS
Legal Secretaries	Kristina Fuderer (on Parental Leave)
.....	Emily Smith
.....	Chloe Coleman-Harty
.....	Sarah Carbone
Administrative Support	Jacinta Lacey

Civil Law Practice

Managing Solicitor	Alison Hanley BA, LLB
Solicitors	Alex Clunies-Ross BBus, LLB (Hons), GDLP
.....	Joshua Scotland BA, JD
.....	Tori Marshal BA, LLB (Hons), LLM
Legal Secretary	Jacqueline MacDonald
Administrative Support	Gabriella Cameirao

Indigenous Outreach Services

Manager	Seranie Gamble BSocSci, LLB, Mst (On Parental Leave)
Outreach Solicitor	Position Vacant
.....	Shelley Alvarez BA LLB MHRLP (On Parental Leave)
Liaison Officer	Rebecca Wanganeen

Early Intervention and Prevention Services

Community Legal Education

Officer John Jablonka BA
Multicultural Educator Gail Price
CLE Project Officer Stephanie Booker

Grants Section

Supervising Solicitor Sue Phoo LLB BSC
..... Fiona Kepert LLB (Hon)
..... (On Parental Leave)
Grants Manager Tina Baylis
Administrative Support Ashton Messell
..... (On Parental Leave)
..... Samantha Work
..... Lucia Vorrasi
..... Tara Brown
..... Kaneshia Elba

Family Dispute Resolution

Supervising Solicitor Elizabeth Gross LLB
..... Claire Wyatt BA LLB
..... (On Paternal Leave)
Conference Coordinator: Emma Schluter

Library Services

Library and Information

Coordinator Helen Edney BA Lib&InfoSc

Corporate Services

Finance Manager Barbara Lelli CPA
Human Resource Manager Leeanne Morris BBus

Administrative Support Karen Markos
..... Amanda Bamford
..... Randall Manoharan BSBA
..... Rebecca Sneddon
IT Systems Engineer Robert Goldsmith Dip IT
Darwin Registry Bianca Aloisi
Administrative Support Sue Reddy
..... Christine Shantharam
..... Braedon Cunnington
..... Position Vacant

Family Duty Lawyer Service

Solicitor Natalie Scattini LLB

Palmerston

Manager - Information and
Referral Services Melinda Schroeder
Administrative Support Melissa Kirstenfeldt
Legal Aid Helpline Monica Settele Dip Lib Tech
..... Mario Fitirikkos
..... Anthony McDevitt

Katherine

Managing Solicitor Thomasin Opie BA, LLB
Solicitor Claire Hockin BEcon, LLB
..... (Hons) GDLP
Legal Secretaries Cassie Lamb
..... Grace Day-Hadley

Our Staff and Development (continued)

Tennant Creek

Managing Solicitor	Kevin Banbury BDip, LLBG
Administrative Assistant	Mickayla Giezendanner (On Paternal Leave)
.....	Kirby Fitzpatrick

Alice Springs

Managing Solicitor	Russell Goldflam BA BLEGS (Hons), Grad Dip E
Solicitors	Carly Ingles BA, LLB (Hons)
.....	Rennie Anderson BA LLB
.....	Clement Ng BA, LLB, GDLP
.....	Alexandra Wright BA LLB
.....	Elanor Fenge BA (Hons), MSc, JD, GDLP
Legal Secretaries	Anne Coleman
.....	Wendy Vismans
Administrative Support	Renae Williams

Domestic Violence Legal Service

Managing Solicitor	Annabel Pengilley BA LLB
Solicitors	Alex O'Donnell, LLB/B.Com GDLP
Legal Secretary	Denise Oliver

Volunteers

Under section 8 of the *Legal Aid Act* (NT) 1990 the Commission shall encourage persons who are not legal practitioners to participate, as far as is practicable, in a volunteer capacity whilst under professional supervision. During the year the Commission hosted 17 volunteers.

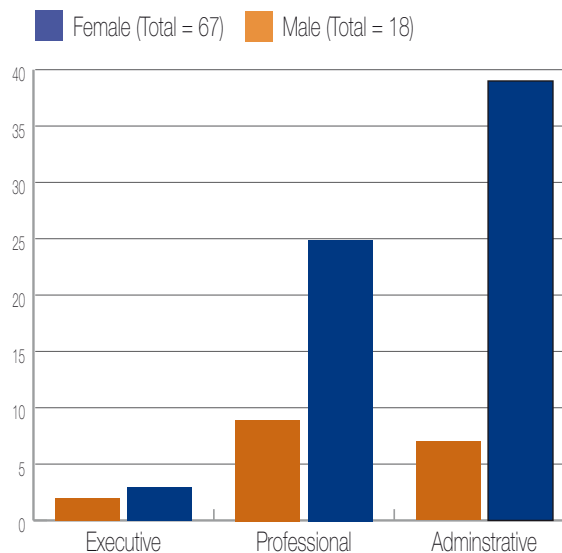
Resignations/Leave Without Pay

During the year 17 people left the Commission's employment.

Equal Employment Opportunity

The Commission has a range of initiatives to ensure that to employees of the Commission have equal employment opportunities.

Distribution of the sexes is as follows:

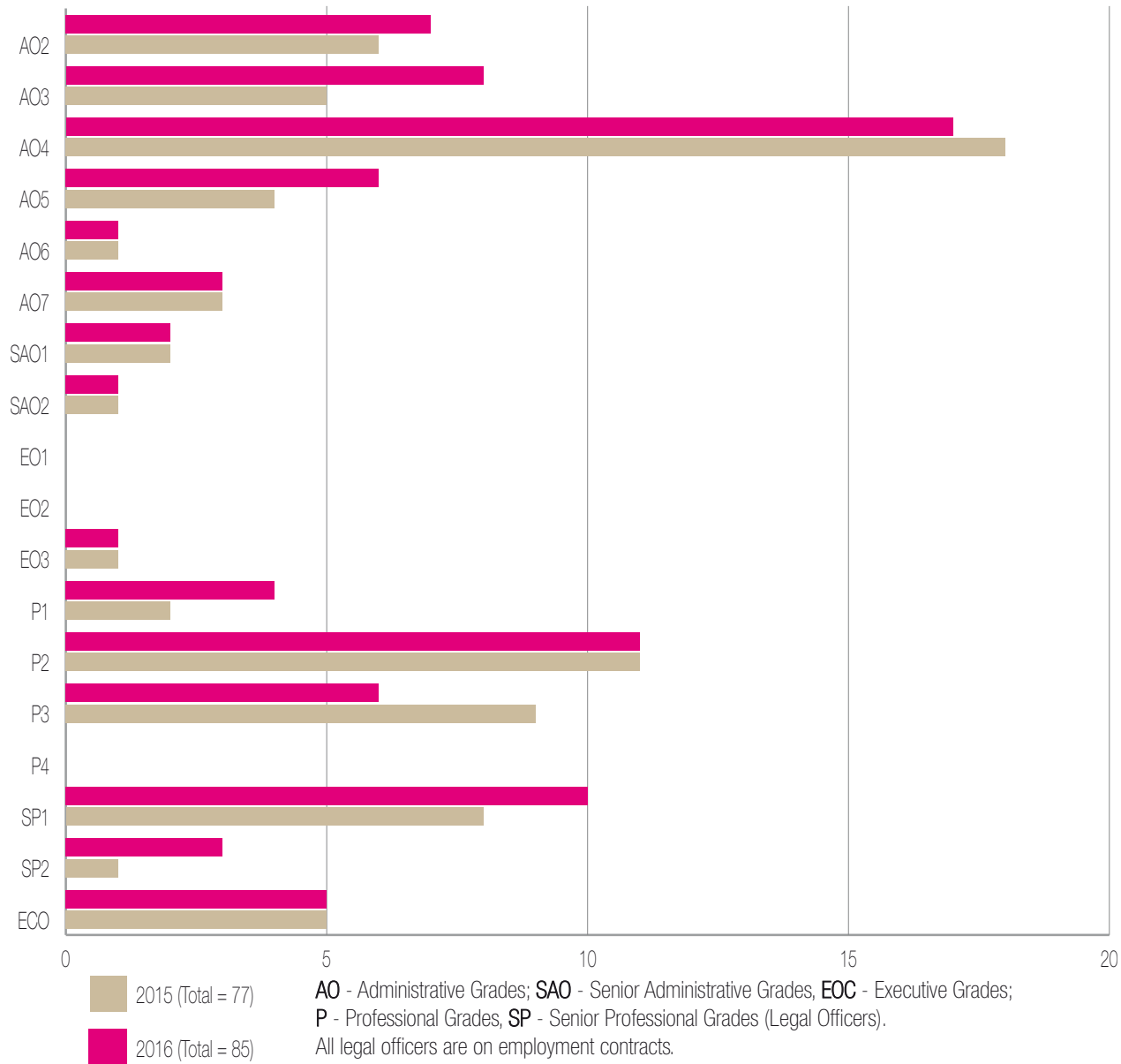


Occupational Health and Safety

Employees are encouraged to adopt safe working practices. The Commission encourages and promotes a healthy work-life balance.

Salary Ranges

Staffing Levels as at 30th June 2016:



Our Staff and Development (continued)

Staff Development

During the year various members of the staff were involved in staff development programs. The nature of the programs included conferences, workshops, seminars, and training courses. The programs included:

- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training
- Australian Library and Information Association Top End Conference
- Criminal Lawyers Working Group Meeting
- Community Legal Education Workshop
- CPD - A Guide to Optimistic Forensic Evidence in Court
- CPD - A Legal Practitioners Duty to the Client and the Court
- CPD - Capacity to Instruct and Cognitive Functioning
- CPD - Civil Actions against the NT Police for Assault
- CPD - Courtroom Etiquette – Get Off to a Good Start
- CPD - Current Issues in Criminal Law
- CPD - Defamation on Social Media
- CPD - Depression: Issue in practicing Law DVD
- CPD - The Neuroscience of Resilience: Helping Brains Bounce Back Better
- CPD - Effective participation of Vulnerable People in the Criminal Justice System
- CPD - Enterprise Bargaining
- CPD - Ethics of Advocacy
- CPD - Everything Administrative Law
- CPD - Forensic Accounting & Forensic IT
- CPD - Identification & Circumstantial Evidence
- CPD - IWD – Pledge for Parity
- CPD - Legal Practitioners Duty to the Client and to the court
- CPD - Mental Health Diversion
- CPD - NTCAT – a Review of its Operations
- CPD - One Day CPD Intensive
- CPD - Outback Kidnapping and Murder
- CPD - Panel Discussion on Domestic Violence
- CPD - Practical Techniques to Manage your Practice
- CPD - Practical Tips for Managing Modern Day Law
- CPD - Practice Management & Business Skills – Mental Health Week
- CPD - Recent Summary Criminal Procedure Changes
- CPD - *Return to Work Act*
- CPD - Risks and Practice management
- CPD - Safe & Together - David Mandel
- CPD - Sentencing in the Youth Justice Court
- CPD - Start at the Top - Family Law Conferencing
- CPD - The Ethics of Advocacy
- CPD - The Exclusionary provisions in the Uniform Evidence Law
- CPD - Time Mastery for Lawyers
- CPD - Trial Advocacy: Effective Evidence in Chief
- CPD - *Uniform Evidence Act*
- CPD - Using New Communication Skills to Manage High Conflict Personalities
- CPD - Walk the Wire: Manage Stress
- CPD - Where's my Interpreter?
- CPD - Working with Fathers
- CPD - Workplace Dispute Prevention & Resolution
- CPD - Depression, an Issue in the Practice of Law
- Cross Cultural Training Course
- Dealing with Challenging Situations
- Domestic Violence Training
- EMR - Support Component (Legal Services)
- Family Dispute Resolution through a Trauma Informed Lens
- Family Law Program
- Family Safety Framework Training
- First Aid Course
- Freedom of Information Training
- Incidental Counselling for Trauma Survivors
- Interaction Between People with a Brain Injury and the Criminal Justice System
- Know Your Assembly
- Language and the Law Conference
- Law Society
- Law via the Internet
- Love Bites - A Preventive Strategy for Addressing Domestic and Family Violence in the NT
- Men and Families in a Family Law Context
- National Community Legal Centre Conference
- National Indigenous Legal Conference
- Plain Language and the Law
- Practical Advocacy Workshop – 2015
- Provide First Aid (Snr)
- Random Acts of Counselling
- Working with Interpreters

Community Legal Education Activities

The Community Legal Education team in line with the Commissions strategy has coordinated a range of innovative activities that prioritize youth, service providers, and remote communities not serviced by others. The Commission's 2014-17 CLE strategy outlines four key strategies:

1. Combine Education Methods

Delivering on multiple channels can more effectively reach disadvantaged community members. Educators, outreach teams, lawyers and paralegals together with other agency partners consult with and provide training for service providers. This links to community outreach activities, films, face-to-face sessions and designing relevant materials for people to learn their rights.

In April 2016, The CLE team undertook the first ever 'roadshow' visiting all Commission offices and partners in each regional centre. After a send-off by colleagues from the Commission and the CLE network in Darwin, the team visited Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs to support local CLE activities, distribute resources, provide training, and identify needs. The team jointly planned and delivered CLE with colleagues from NAAJA, NAAFLS, KWILS, CAALAS, CAAFLU and CAWLS. Visits were warmly received and this will now be an annual event;

The Commission's Culturally and Linguistically Diverse ("CALD") communities project delivered regular presentations to adult migrant English classes at Charles Darwin University's Casuarina, Palmerston and Alice Springs campuses. This assisted new arrivals to understand Australian law, using resources such as National Legal Aid's What's the Law? Australian Law for New Arrivals and the Commission's Australia and My Family, What Are the Laws?

Indigenous outreach teams worked with other service providers and community leaders to identify legal needs and design sessions

for community groups on cyber safety, alcohol protection, driving, domestic violence orders, consumer credit and debt, employment rights. Education resources are being compiled into an indigenous CLE toolkit. The team also trained Aboriginal health centre staff at its health justice outreach site, on how to identify legal problems, provide information and make referrals.

With the Family Law Pathways Network, the Commission's Alice Springs family lawyer designed and presented training to primary school staff and produced a flowchart Family Law Help sheet to help schools deal with families experiencing family law issues.

The Judgment Day schools program was run for students of Taminmin High, St Phillips College, Kormilda College, Casuarina Secondary College, Darwin High School, and Marrara Christian College who learned about criminal justice through a half-day simulation with police, legal aid and courts, based on resources like Cop This & Going to Court.

CLE staff in Darwin worked with NAAJA and NAAFLS staff to design an innovative education activity for young people on cyber safety as part of the midnight basketball program organised by City of Darwin. This innovative program has at-risk youth sharing dinner, education workshops and playing a basketball tournament each Saturday evening for 6 weeks.



Community Legal Education Activities (continued)

2. Produce diverse materials

The Commission continued to review all publications including online information. Resources are promoted and distributed through offices, staff outreach, online, email and the Commission's social media platforms- Facebook and YouTube.

42,800 hard copy publications were distributed during the year - less than the previous year due to a shift to online platforms. Popular materials included helpline, youth rights, family law, child protection and drink driving. Online publications expanded with 3 major projects undertaken. The redesign of the Commission's website will make it responsive, mobile-friendly, current and user-friendly. The NT Law Handbook Online, launched in law week 2016 brought all law handbook information into an easily updated Wiki. The NT CLE network's website Law Info NT will be launched in August 2016 as a website linking Territorians to plain language legal information in a range of formats.

Output Statistics

Snapshot of information and publications 2015-16

Website Visitors	14681
Facebook total page likes	888
Facebook post reach	16296
YouTube views	6,839 (5,161 Aust)
YouTube minutes watched	13,378 (11,164 Aust)
Publications distributed (hard copies)	42800
Publications viewed online	1139
Materials provided by Helpline	10779

3. Engage communities innovatively.

The Commission uses innovative tools like social media alongside face to face contact and word of mouth promotions. Staff members coordinate services with providers in the areas of domestic violence, indigenous programs, youth, mental health, family support, homelessness and housing, refugees and asylum seekers, alcohol and other drugs, family law and local service provider groups. The Commission convenes the NT-wide CLE Network, with over 100 members from more than 30 NT legal and other agencies:

- Sharing information and promoting CLE activities through google groups, an online shared calendar of CLE activities a Facebook page, twitter account and a YouTube channel of film resources.
- Bimonthly NT-wide linkups and alternate month local Darwin and Alice meetings.
- Developing the LawInfoNT website.
- Holding the 4th NT CLE professional development workshop in May 2016 with over 55 attendees and national, regional and local presenters sharing best practice.

The Commission's Communications strategy seeks to improve community understanding of the law through low cost and effective messaging methods including:

- Legal topics, news items and announcement of events, contacts and services on Facebook - this year saw a 76% increase in engagement with Facebook.

- The Commission's YouTube channel airs a range of engaging legal education films and this year views increased by 47% and total minutes watched increased by 28%.
- Face-to-face outreach to services and communities remained a key activity.
- Information stalls were held at diverse community events like Harmony Day, Law Week, Human Rights Day, Supreme Court Open day, and CDU student orientation.
- Distribution of flyers, posters, booklets and other materials online and in print.
- Presentations at a range of forums and conferences such as the Supreme Court's Language and the Law conference, held August 2015.

4. Extend CLE capability

The Commission's NT-wide resources enabled it to continue to develop the capacity of Commission staff, other legal services and partners to deliver more effective CLE, by upskilling educators, promoting clear information and practical education materials. Activities included:

- Commission preventative legal services staff held workshops to learn about and apply evaluation methods twice-yearly.
- Regular updates were provided at monthly NT CLE network meetings.
- Weekly updates were shared by email through the CLE network.
- Presentations at the CLCs conference held in Melbourne in August 2015 and National Legal Aid's Community Legal Education Working Group in May 2016. The Commission took an active role promoting national collaboration in areas that will directly benefit the NT.
- The NT CLE Professional Development workshop, May 2016 included national presenters sharing current best practice in CLE.



Top End Family Law Pathways Network

The NT Legal Aid Commission again received funding from the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department as the Auspice Agency for the Top End Family Law Pathways Network. For the first time, this funding comes under a four year agreement. The Network's objective is to foster strong links with locally based providers who operate as part of, or alongside, the family law system, to enhance collaboration and improve overall assistance to separated and separating families.

Two measures to achieve the Network's objective are:

- Promoting awareness of services
- Conducting cross-sectoral training

The Network facilitates regular meetings of service providers working in the broader family law sector. The Network distributes via Newsletter, sector relevant information to Network members across the Top End of the NT about a range of programs, services, training, events, policies and procedures.

This year the Network developed a stand-alone website which includes a service directory and list of Programs for Families, which is updated regularly. The website also includes the Newsletter, Network information, training events and publications.

Court Based Information & Referral Service Trial (the kiosk):

The trial of the kiosk at the Federal Circuit Court in Darwin, previously postponed pending the re-location of the court to the NT Supreme Court Building was conducted. Kiosks have been running in various Family Court locations for several years, meeting the overarching aim of the FLPNs to improve collaboration and coordination between organisations operating in the family law system to help separating and separated families or other family law court users to obtain appropriate services.

The kiosk operated on the mornings that the Federal Circuit Court in Darwin had a family matters duty list (at that stage, approximately once per month); on eight separate occasions, from 22 June 2015 until 9 November 2015. It was staffed on a rostered basis amongst the major agencies involved in services for separating families – NT Legal Aid Commission, Anglicare Resolve, Relationships Australia NT and Catholic Care NT. However, the kiosk was not accessed at all, and so the trial was discontinued. It was determined that such a service is not a useful or viable (given the staff time and court space resources required) service to provide to persons accessing the family law courts to resolve their family law disputes.

In February 2016 the Network brought David Mandel from the USA to Darwin to deliver two days of workshops. The first day was on the intersection of family violence and child protection and the second day was on working with fathers and families. This was a very well received training, which attracted a broad range of professionals from across the Northern Territory: including child protection officers, police, Family Court Consultant, counsellors, family dispute resolution practitioners, domestic violence and legal professionals.

Information Act 2003 (NT)

The following information is held by the Commission:

Publications information	Personal information	Other information
NTLAC Guidelines and Scale of Costs	Client	Financial
NTCLAF Guidelines	Personnel	Statistical
Community Legal Education		Policies
Booklets (various topics)		Manuals
Pamphlets (various topics)		Administration
Annual Reports		Law Reform

Publications are available upon request free of charge.

Access to information other than personal information or published information must be made on the appropriate application form obtainable from and returnable to:

The Information Officer

Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission
6th Floor, 9-11 Cavenagh Street, Darwin
Postal: Locked Bag 11, Darwin NT 0801
Phone: 1800 019 343
Fax: (08) 8999 3099

Applications must be accompanied by proof of identity (eg. Passport, Drivers' Licence etc). To facilitate the identity check, applications may be lodged in person at any of the Commission's offices. The Application form will be forwarded to the Information Officer in Darwin, if the local office is unable to assist.

Darwin

9-11 Cavenagh Street

Palmerston

Shop 6, Goyder Centre, 25 Chung Wah Terrace

Katherine

20 Second Street

Tennant Creek

Shop 3, 163 Paterson Street

Alice Springs

77 Hartley Street

Fees

Access to or correction of personal information No fee

Access to published information No fee

Access to information other than personal information
or published information A \$30.00 fee and a

60¢ per page charge
for photocopying of documents
of more than 20 pages may apply

Our Committees

Northern Territory Contingency Legal Aid Fund

The Northern Territory Contingency Legal Aid Fund (CLAF) was established in accordance with section 44 of the *Legal Aid Act* on 1 March 1993 with a seeding grant of \$200,000 from the Law Society Public Purposes Trust.

CLAF is available to provide financial assistance to eligible persons to enable them to bring or defend civil proceedings. Financial assistance is available from CLAF to cover the reasonable cost of disbursements and out of pocket expenses that are necessarily incurred during the course of litigation including such items as stamp duty, service fees, expert witness reports, travelling expenses and expert witness Court attendance fees. CLAF does not pay for solicitors' or barristers' professional costs or general office expenses such as photocopying, telephone charges or facsimile charges. The financial position of CLAF appears in Note 15 of the Financial Statements.

Contingency Legal Aid Fund Committee

Committee's Role

To determine whether or not to grant applications for assistance under the Contingency Legal Aid Fund.

Membership of the Committee

Director
Deputy Director

Law Society Nominees:

C. Spurr J. Stewart
D. McConnell M. Spazzapan
E. Terrill G. McMaster
P. Cheong J. Stirk

Commission Appointees:

A Messell
S Work

Statistical Information

The demands on the fund have been:

Applications	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16
Received	20	28	12	12	17
Approved	15	21	9	10	12
Withdrawn	2	6	1	2	3
Refused	2	1	2	0	1
To be Decided	1	0	0	0	2

Review Committee

Committee's Role

To review decisions referred to the Committee under section 35(3) of the *Legal Aid Act*. Under section 35 of the *Act*, persons who feel they have been adversely affected by decisions taken on their application for legal aid may seek reconsideration or review of those decisions.

During 2015-2016 the Review Committee met on 9 occasions to view 9 client requests. The outcome of their deliberations was that 4 decisions were varied in favour of the applicant, and 0 decisions pending.

Membership of the Committee

(Members Participating during the Financial Year 2015 -16)

Private Legal Practitioner:

B. Piper	P. Cheong	M. Hubber	C. Spurr
K. Norrington	R. Lawford	T. Marris	J. Franz
B. O'Loughlin	J. Adams	P. Maley	E. Terrill
P. Tregear	R. Morley		

Independent person with relevant experience:

C. Perry	P. Timney	G. McDonald	D. Kelly
P. Collins	W. Morton		
J. Sharp			

Officer of the Commission:

S. Cox QC	I. Read SC	A. Abayasekara	J. Palavra
F. Hussin	S. Phoo	N. MacCarron	C. McConnel
A. Hey	S. Bolton	L. Scholz	A. Srinivas
S. Balakrishnan	M. Sgarbossa	C. Snell	A. Crouch
A. Clunie-Ross	A. Hanley	J. Scotland	K. Argue
M. Jehne	T. Marshall		

Secretary to Committee: A. Messell / S. Work

Domestic Violence Legal Service

Since April 2009 the Northern Territory Government has funded the Commission to operate, outside of its family law practice, a separate independent Domestic Violence Legal Service (DVLS), with a further 3-year funding provided by the Territory in 2013. The DVLS Managing Solicitor is provided with guidance, support and supervision by the Deputy Director of the Commission as required. To avoid conflicts DVLS maintains its own client database independent of the Commission's client database.

With a mandate to provide specialised domestic violence legal services to victims and people at risk of domestic and family violence in the Darwin Greater Region, the DVLS team of 2 solicitors and the Office Coordinator faced high levels of demand throughout the year. As well as assisting victims making private applications for domestic violence orders, DVLS also provided legal advice, court representation and referrals for protected persons in Police domestic violence orders.

DVLS lawyers assisted victims to obtain orders outside the usual scope including orders utilizing the jurisdiction of the Local Court in relation to making changes to Family Law Orders, orders to protect victims from so-called revenge porn activities, and orders requiring defendants to grant access to premises to allow protected persons to collect their possessions.

Demand for legal advice and representation during the reporting year was in excess of previous years and meant staff resources had to be diverted from services such as community legal education. Nevertheless, DVLS made a major contribution to the NTG review of the *Domestic and Family Violence Act*, advocated for increased resources and training for Court operations to help ensure victim safety and contributed to the NT Law Handbook relating to domestic and family violence.

Output Statistics

Summary of major activities

	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16
Total services provided					
Applications for Aid:					
Received	149	152	115	189	224
Approved	149	148	114	189	224
Refused	0	4	1	0	0
Free Legal Advice Sessions	497	556	621	611	681
Duty Lawyer Services	575	532	371	267	268

Financials **2015 / 2016**

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General Purpose Financial Statements

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Auditor-General
Independent Auditor's Report
to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice
Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission

I have audited the accompanying financial report of Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2016, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, the statement of changes in equity and the statement of cash flows for the year then ended, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the certification of the financial statements by the Director.

The Director's Responsibility for the Financial Report

The Director of the Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and for such internal control as the Director determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

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

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

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

Opinion

In my opinion the financial report gives a true and fair view of the financial position of Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission as at 30 June 2016, and of its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards.

Julie Crisp
Auditor-General for the Northern Territory
Darwin, Northern Territory

3 October 2016

Statement by Directors


In the opinion of the Directors of the Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission:

- (a) the accompanying general purpose financial statements of the Commission present fairly the Commission's financial position as at 30 June 2016, and its performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements;
- (b) at the date of this statement there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Commission will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable; and
- (c) at the time of signing, we are not aware of any circumstances that would render the particulars included in the financial statements misleading or inaccurate.

Signed in Darwin this 29th day of September 2016.



Suzan Cox QC
Director



Fiona Hussin
Deputy Director

Statement of Profit or Loss and other Comprehensive Income

For The Year Ended 30 June 2016

	Notes	2016 \$	2015 \$
Revenue	2	12,716,048	12,028,008
Depreciation Expense		(107,652)	(200,508)
Salaries and Employee Benefits Expense		(7,697,820)	(6,928,715)
Legal Expense		(1,967,964)	(1,901,642)
Administration Expense		(1,237,665)	(1,272,111)
Other Expenses		(1,446,518)	(1,211,589)
Total Expenses	3	(12,457,619)	(11,514,565)
Net income for the period		258,429	513,443
Total comprehensive income for the period		258,429	513,443

Total comprehensive income (loss) for the period as attributable to the owner.

The Statement of Profit or Loss and other Comprehensive Income is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements.

Statement of Financial Position

At 30 June 2016

	Notes	2016 \$	2015 \$
Current Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	4	1,187,253	2,293,552
Trade receivables	5	280,671	108,347
Investments	6	1,500,000	500,000
Other assets	7	176,264	204,441
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		3,144,188	3,106,340
Non-Current Assets			
Property, plant and equipment	8	1,081,538	972,753
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		1,081,538	972,753
TOTAL ASSETS		4,225,726	4,079,093
Current Liabilities			
Trade and other payables	9	174,084	395,407
Provisions	10	1,266,203	1,169,080
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		1,440,287	1,564,487
Non-Current Liabilities			
Provisions	10	384,102	371,698
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		384,102	371,698
TOTAL LIABILITIES		1,824,389	1,936,185
NET ASSETS		2,401,337	2,142,908
Equity			
Retained Earnings	17	271,211	1,076,028
Reserves	16	2,130,126	1,066,880
TOTAL EQUITY		2,401,337	2,142,908

The Statement of Financial Position is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements.

Statement of Cash Flows

For The Year Ended 30 June 2016

	Notes	2016 \$	2015 \$
Cash Flows from Operating Activities			
Cash Receipts in the course of operations		202,137	508,764
Interest received in the course of operations		115,767	94,377
Grants received in the course of operations		12,224,258	11,550,981
Cash Payments in the course of operations		(12,432,024)	(11,159,725)
NET CASH FLOWS FROM/(USED IN) OPERATING ACTIVITIES	13	110,138	994,397
Cash Flows from Investing Activities			
Payments for property, plant and equipment		(216,437)	(86,200)
Net (Payments)/Receipts for investments		(1,000,000)	0
NET CASH FLOWS (USED IN)/FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES		(1,216,437)	(86,200)
Net (decrease)/increase in cash and cash equivalents		(1,106,299)	908,197
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period		2,293,552	1,385,355
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT THE END OF THE PERIOD	4	1,187,253	2,293,552

The Statement of Cash Flows should be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements.

Statement of Changes in Equity

For The Year Ended 30 June 2016

	Notes	Reserves \$	Retained Earnings \$	Total \$
Balance at 30 June 2014		1,276,572	352,893	1,629,465
Profit for the year		0	513,443	513,443
Other comprehensive income		0	0	0
Total comprehensive income		0	513,443	513,443
Transaction with owners in their capacity as owners:				
Transfer to/from Reserves		(209,692)	209,692	0
Balance at 30 June 2015	16 & 17	1,066,880	1,076,028	2,142,908
Profit for the year		0	258,429	258,429
Other comprehensive income		0	0	0
Total comprehensive income		0	258,429	258,429
Transaction with owners in their capacity as owners:				
Transfer to/from Reserves		1,063,246	(1,063,246)	0
Balance at 30 June 2016	16 & 17	2,130,126	271,211	2,401,337

The Statement of Changes in Equity should be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements.

Notes to the Financial Statements

For The Year Ended 30 June 2016

1. Summary Of Significant Accounting Policies

The Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission (the "Commission") was established on 11 June 1990 by the Legal Aid Act 1990. The function of the Commission is to provide legal assistance in accordance with this Act. The Commission commenced its activities on 1 July 1990. The Commission is considered a not-for-profit entity for financial reporting purposes.

a) Principal place of Business

The Commission holds its principal place of business at Level 6, 9-11 Cavenagh Street, Darwin.

b) Number of Employees

The Commission had 85 employees as at 30 June 2016 (2015 – 77 employees).

c) Basis of accounting

The financial report is a general purpose financial report which has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Australian Accounting Standards issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board that apply for the reporting period.

The accounting policies used in the preparation of this report are consistent with previous years and are described below:

(i) The accounts, except for the cash flow information, have been prepared using the accrual basis of accounting applying the historical cost convention and the going concern assumption. The Commission will continually review its operations, levels of service and monitor increased service demands to enable it operate within its funding parameters.

(ii) Cost in relation to assets represents the amount incurred or the fair value of the asset given in exchange adjusted to recoverable amount where necessary. In determining recoverable amount the expected net cash flows have been discounted to their present value.

(iii) Where necessary, comparative information has been reclassified to achieve consistency in disclosure with current financial year amounts and other disclosures.

(iv) The financial report is presented in Australian dollars and all values are rounded to the nearest dollar.

Standards and Interpretations affecting amounts, presentation and disclosure reported in the current period.

The following new and revised accounting standards and interpretations were effective for the first time in 2015-16:

AASB 1048 Interpretation of Standards

This reflects amended versions of Interpretations arising in relation to amendments to AASB 9 Financial Instruments and consequential amendments arising from the issuance of AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers. The standard does not impact the financial statements.

AASB 2014-8 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards arising from AASB 9

This Standard makes amendments to AASB 9 Financial Instruments (December 2009) and AASB 9 Financial Instruments (December 2010). These amendments arise from the issuance of AASB 9 Financial Instruments in December 2014. The standard does not impact the financial statements.

AASB 2015-3 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards arising from the withdrawal of AASB 1031 Materiality

The standard completes the withdrawal of references to AASB 1031 in all Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations, allowing the standard to effectively be withdrawn. The standard does not impact the financial statements.

AASB 2014-1 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards (Part E - Financial Instruments)

Part E of this Standard defers the application date of AASB 9 Financial Instruments to annual reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2018. The standard does not impact the financial statements.

The above new standards/revised standards/interpretations/amending standards issued prior to the sign-off date applicable to the current reporting period did not have a financial impact on the Commission and are not expected to have future financial impact on the Commission.

Notes to the Financial Statements

For The Year Ended 30 June 2016

Future Australian Accounting Standard Requirements

The following standards and interpretations are likely to have an insignificant impact on the financial statements for future reporting periods, but the exact impact is yet to be determined:

Standard/Interpretation	Effective for annual reporting periods beginning on or after
AASB 9 Financial Instruments (December 2014), AASB 2014-7 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards arising from AASB 9 (December 2014)	1 January 2018
AASB 2015-8 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards - Effective date of AASB 15	1 January 2018
AASB 2016-3 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards Clarifications to AASB 15	1 January 2018
AASB 2010-7 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards arising from AASB 9 (December 2009)	1 January 2018
AASB 2012-6 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards - Mandatory Effective Date of AASB 9 and Transitional Disclosures	1 January 2018
AASB 2013-9 Amendments to Australian Accounting - Conceptual Framework, Materiality and Financial Instruments	1 January 2018
AASB 2014-8 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards arising from AASB 9	1 January 2018
AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers, AASB 2014-5 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards arising from AASB 15	1 January 2018
AASB 1057 Application of Accounting Standards	1 January 2018
AASB 2015-9 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards - Scope and Application Paragraphs [AASB 8, 133 and 1057]	1 January 2018

The following standards and interpretations are expected to have a potential impact on the financial statements for future reporting periods:

Standard/Interpretation	Effective for annual reporting periods beginning on or after	Impact
AASB 2015-6 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards - Extending Related Party Disclosures to Not-for-Profit Public Sector Entities [AASB 10,124 and 1049]	1 July 2016	New note disclosure to include remuneration of Key Management Personnel (KMP) and related party transactions.
2016-2 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards - Disclosure Initiative: Amendments to AASB 107	1 January 2017	New disclosure on the reconciliation of the changes in liabilities arising from financing activities
AASB 16 Leases	1 January 2019	Reclassification of operating leases greater than 12 months to finance lease reporting requirements
AASB 2014-1 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards [Part E Financial Instruments]	1 January 2018	Amends various AAS1s to reflect the deferral of the mandatory application date of AASB 9
AASB 2014-4 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards - Clarification of Acceptable Methods of Depreciation and Amortisation [AASB 116 and AASB 138]	1 January 2016	Provides additional guidance on how the depreciation or amortisation of property, plant and equipment and intangible assets should be calculated and clarifies that the use of revenue-based methods to calculate the depreciation of an asset is not appropriate.
AASB 2014-5 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards arising from AASB 15	1 January 2017	Amends the measurement of trade receivables and the recognition of dividends.

Notes to the Financial Statements

For The Year Ended 30 June 2016

It is expected that there will be no material financial impact from the application of these standards as they are primarily disclosure related.

d) Government appropriation and grants

Government appropriation and grants are recognised in the Statement of Profit or Loss at the time of their receipt. All revenue is stated net of the amount of Goods and Services Tax (GST).

e) Cash

For the purposes of the Statement of Cash Flows, cash includes cash on hand and in banks, and money market investments readily convertible to cash within two working days.

f) Financial Assets

The Commission classifies its financial assets in the following categories:

- 'financial assets at fair value through profit or loss';
- 'held-to-maturity investments'; and
- 'loans and receivables'.

The classification depends on the nature and purpose of the financial assets and is determined at the time of initial recognition. Financial assets are recognised and derecognised upon 'trade date'.

Effective interest method

The effective interest method is a method of calculating the amortised cost of a financial asset and of allocating interest income over the relevant period. The effective interest rate is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash receipts through the expected life of the financial asset, or, where appropriate, a shorter period. Income is recognised on an effective interest rate basis.

Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss

Financial assets classified as held for trading are included in the category "financial assets at fair value through profit or loss".

These are classified as held for trading if they are acquired for the purpose of selling in the near term with the intention of making a profit. Gains or losses on financial assets held for trading are recognised in profit or loss and the related assets are classified as current assets in the balance sheet.

Held-to-maturity investments

Non-derivative financial assets with fixed or determinable payments and fixed maturity dates that the Commission has the positive intent and ability to hold to maturity are classified as held-to-maturity investments. Held-to-maturity investments are recorded at amortised cost using the effective interest method less impairment, with revenue recognised on an effective yield basis.

Loans and receivables

Trade receivables, loans and other receivables that have fixed or determinable payments that are not quoted in an active market are classified as 'loans and receivables'. They are included in current assets, except for maturities greater than 12 months after the balance sheet date. These are classified as non current assets. Loans and receivables are measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method less impairment. Interest is recognised by applying the effective interest rate to the relevant balances.

Impairment of financial assets

Financial assets are assessed for impairment at each balance date.

Financial assets held at amortised cost - If there is objective evidence that an impairment loss has been incurred for loans and receivables or held to maturity investments held at amortised cost, the amount of the loss is measured as the difference between the asset's carrying amount and the present value of estimated future cash flows discounted at the asset's original effective interest rate. The carrying amount is reduced by way of an allowance account. The loss is recognised in the Statement of Profit or Loss and other Comprehensive Income.

g) Financial Liabilities

Financial liabilities are classified as either financial liabilities 'at fair value through profit or loss' or 'other financial liabilities.' Financial liabilities are recognised and derecognised upon 'trade date'.

Financial liabilities at fair value through profit or loss

Financial liabilities at fair value through profit or loss are initially measured at fair value. Subsequent fair value adjustments are recognised in profit or loss. The net gain or loss recognised in profit or loss incorporates any interest paid on the financial liability.

Other financial liabilities

Other financial liabilities are initially measured at fair value, net of transaction costs.

Other financial liabilities are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, with interest expense recognised on an effective yield basis.

The effective interest method is a method of calculating the amortised cost of a financial liability and of allocating interest expense over the relevant period. The effective interest rate is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash payments through the expected life of the financial liability, or, where appropriate, a shorter period.

Supplier and other payables

Supplier and other payables are recognised at amortised cost. Liabilities are recognised to the extent that the goods or services have been received (and irrespective of having been invoiced).

h) Contingent Assets and Liabilities

Contingent Assets and Contingent Liabilities are not recognised in the Statement of Financial Position but are reported in the relevant schedules and notes. They may arise from uncertainty as to the existence of an asset or liability or represent an asset or liability in respect of which the amount cannot be reliably measured. Contingent assets are disclosed when settlement is probable but

not virtually certain and contingent liabilities are disclosed when settlement is greater than remote.

i) Acquisition of Assets

Assets are recorded at cost on acquisition except as stated below. The cost of acquisition includes the fair value of assets transferred in exchange and liabilities undertaken.

j) Property, plant and equipment

Freehold land and buildings on freehold land are measured on a fair value basis, less any subsequent accumulated depreciation and subsequent accumulated impairment losses. Revaluations are performed at least every 5 years. All other classes of property, plant and equipment are measured at cost. Cost is determined as the fair value of the asset given as consideration plus incidental costs in getting the asset ready for use.

Any revaluation increase arising on the revaluation of such land and buildings is credited to the asset revaluation reserve, except to the extent that it reverses a revaluation decrease for the same asset previously recognised in profit and loss, in which case the increase is credited to profit and loss to the extent of the decrease previously charged. A decrease in carrying amount arising on the revaluation of such land and buildings is charged to profit and loss to the extent that it exceeds the balance, if any, held in the asset revaluation reserve relating to a previous revaluation of that asset.

The carrying amount of property, plant & equipment is reviewed annually to ensure it is not in excess of the recoverable amount of these assets. The recoverable amount is assessed on the basis of the expected net cash flows that will be received from the assets employment and subsequent disposal. The expected net cash flows have been discounted to their present values in determining recoverable amounts. Property, plant and equipment purchased for less than \$10,000 during the year have been expensed.

Notes to the Financial Statements

For The Year Ended 30 June 2016

k) Depreciation and amortisation of fixed assets

Property, plant and equipment, including buildings and leasehold property but excluding freehold land, are depreciated / amortised over their expected useful economic lives using the straight line method and are measured at cost.

Assets are first depreciated or amortised in the year of acquisition or, in respect of internally constructed assets, from the time an asset is held ready for use. The depreciation rates used for the major class of depreciable assets are:

Fixed Assets	2016	2015
Buildings	30 years	30 years
Plant & Equipment	5 years	5 years

Leasehold improvements are depreciated over the life of the assets or term of the lease, whichever is shorter.

l) Employee benefits

Provision is made for the Commission's liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered by employees to balance sheet date. Employee benefits expected to be settled within one year together with entitlements arising from wages and salaries and annual leave have been measured at their nominal amounts based on remuneration rates which are expected to be paid when the liability is settled.

The liability for long service leave is recognised in the provision for employee benefits and measured as the present value of expected future payments to be made in respect of services provided by employees up to the reporting date. Consideration is given to expected future wage and salary levels, related on costs, experience of employee departures, and periods of service. Expected future payments are discounted using market yields at the reporting date on national government bonds with terms to maturity and currencies that match, as closely as possible, the estimated future cash outflows.

m) Superannuation arrangements

Contributions made by the Commission to employee superannuation funds are expensed.

Employee's Superannuation entitlements are provided through the NT Government and Public Authorities Superannuation Scheme (NTGPASS) and non-government employee nominated schemes for those employees commencing on or after 10 August 1999.

The Commission contributes 9.50% on behalf of the majority of employees. Any liability for superannuation is met directly by the NT Government and the entity has and will continue to have no other direct superannuation liability.

n) Income tax

The Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission is a public authority within the definition of Section 50-25 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 and its income is exempt under the provisions of that Act.

o) Reserves

The Commission maintains reserves that are funded by cash and investments. The fund reserves are as follows:

- **Property, Plant and Equipment Reserve**
This reserve is used to record funds set aside for the purchase, replacement and maintenance of the Commission's property, plant and equipment which includes information technology.
- **Assets Revaluation Reserve**
This reserve is used to record increments and decrements on the revaluation of non-current assets. The reserve may also be adjusted as a result of asset impairment adjustments.
- **Commonwealth Reserve**
This reserve is used to recognise any unexpended funds from Commonwealth Government funding during the period. The reserve is adjusted when the unexpended grant is used.

p) Revenue recognition

Revenue is recognised to the extent that it is probable that the economic benefits will flow to the entity and the revenue can be reliably measured. The following specific recognition criteria must also be met before revenue is recognised:

Rendering of services

Where the contract outcome can be reliably measured, control of the right to be compensated for the services and the stage of completion can be reliably measured. Stage of completion is measured by reference to labour hours incurred to date as a percentage of total estimated labour hours for each contract.

Where the contract outcome cannot be reliably measured, revenue is recognised only to the extent that costs have been incurred.

Interest

Interest revenue is recognised when control of the right to receive the interest payment passes.

q) Leases

Leases are classified at their inception as either operating or finance leases based on the economic substance of the agreement so as to reflect the risks and benefits incidental to ownership.

The Commission enters into operating leases for office accommodation. Rentals payable under operating leases are charged to the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income on a straight-line basis over the term of the relevant lease. Benefits received and receivable as an incentive to enter into an operating lease are also spread on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

r) Goods and Services Tax

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST except:

- Where the GST incurred on a purchase of goods and services is not recoverable from the taxation authority, in which case the GST is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of the asset or as part of the expense item as applicable; and
- Receivables and payables are stated with the amounts of GST included.

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

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

s) Critical accounting estimates and judgements

Estimates and judgements incorporated into the financial report are based on historical knowledge and best available current information. Estimates assume a reasonable expectation of future events and are based on current trends and economic data, obtained both externally and within the Commission.

t) Economic Dependence

The Commission is funded predominantly by annual funding from the Northern Territory Government and the Commonwealth Government to meet proposed cash expenditure on both operational and capital items in the current financial year. These financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis in the expectation that such funding will continue.

Notes to the Financial Statements

For The Year Ended 30 June 2016

2. Revenue

		2016	2015
		\$	\$
Grant revenue from	- NT	5,757,000	6,495,000
	- Commonwealth	6,199,320	4,676,320
	- Others	269,500	380,523
Rendering of services revenue	- Client contributions	119,284	128,763
	- Recovered costs	80,209	231,187
Other revenue	- Interest	115,767	94,377
	- Others	174,968	21,838
		12,716,048	12,028,008

3. Expenses

		\$	\$
Depreciation expense		107,652	200,508
Salaries and employee benefits expense		7,697,820	6,928,715
Administration costs		1,237,665	1,272,111
Legal costs		1,967,964	1,901,642
Other expenses	- Minor assets	361,457	174,242
	- Operating lease expenditure	1,085,061	1,037,347
		12,457,619	11,514,565

4. Cash and Cash Equivalents

		\$	\$
Cash on hand		1,450	1,450
Cash at bank		1,175,803	2,282,102
Advance account		10,000	10,000
		1,187,253	2,293,552

5. Trade Receivables

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
Current		
Trade Debtors	45,587	17,512
Less Provision for Doubtful Debts	0	0
	45,587	17,512
Recoveries Receivable	71,231	91,104
Less Provision for Doubtful Debts	(604)	(269))
	70,627	90,835
GST Receivable	164,457	0
	280,671	108,347
The aging of the receivables is as follows:		
- up to 3 months	37,525	75,670
- 3 to 12 months	13,769	21,735
- 1 to 2 years	19,333	10,942
- 2 to 4 years	450	154
- more than 4 years	154	115
	71,231	108,616
The aging of provision for doubtful debts is as follows:		
- 3 months to 2 years	0	0
- 2 to 4 years	450	154
- more than 4 years	154	115
	604	269
Movements of Provision for Doubtful Accounts are as follows:		
Beginning balance	269	34,211
Doubtful expenses during the year	335	0
Reinstatement of accounts previously written-off	0	0
Amount written off	0	(33,942)
Ending balance	604	269

6. Investments

Current		
Term Deposits	1,500,000	500,000
The term deposits and bank bills are held with commercial banks.	1,500,000	500,000

Notes to the Financial Statements

For The Year Ended 30 June 2016

7. Other Assets

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
Prepayments		
- Insurances	59,657	86,577
- Rent	77,287	73,569
- Salaries	0	9,056
- Other	34,818	32,299
Accrued revenue	4,502	2,940
	176,264	204,441

8. Property, Plant and Equipment

Freehold land at fair value	350,000	350,000
	350,000	350,000
Buildings – at fair value	700,094	700,094
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(305,486)	(261,638)
	394,608	438,456
Leasehold improvements – at cost	1,006,503	790,067
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(795,245)	(781,776)
	211,258	8,291
Plant and equipment – at cost	371,641	371,641
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(245,969)	(195,635)
	125,672	176,006
Total property, plant and equipment – net book value		
Cost	1,378,144	1,161,708
Fair value	1,050,094	1,050,094
	2,428,238	2,211,802
Accumulated depreciation	(1,346,700)	(1,239,049)
	1,081,538	972,753

8. Property, Plant and Equipment (continued)

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
(a) Reconciliations		
Reconciliations of the carrying amounts of each class of property, plant and equipment are set out below:		
Freehold Land		
Carrying amount at beginning of year	350,000	350,000
Net amount of revaluation increments	0	0
Carrying amount at end of year	350,000	350,000
Buildings		
Carrying amount at beginning of year	438,456	482,304
Net amount of revaluation decrements	0	0
Additions	0	0
Depreciation	(43,848)	(43,848)
Carrying amount at end of year	394,608	438,456
Leasehold Improvements		
Carrying amount at beginning of year	8,291	51,279
Additions	216,437	59,785
Disposals	0	0
Depreciation	(13,470)	(102,773)
Carrying amount at end of year	211,258	8,291
Plant and Equipment		
Carrying amount at beginning of year	176,006	203,487
Additions	34,717	26,415
Disposals	(34,717)	(9)
Depreciation	(50,334)	(53,887)
Carrying amount at end of year	125,672	176,006

(b) Valuations

The fair values of freehold land and buildings have been determined by reference to direct valuations, based upon independent valuations obtained from the Australian Valuation Office dated 27 June 2012.

Notes to the Financial Statements

For The Year Ended 30 June 2016

9. Trade and Other Payables

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
Current		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	174,084	395,407
Total Payables	174,084	395,407

10. Provisions

Current		
Employee benefits - Annual Leave	504,254	438,010
- Long Service Leave	566,166	533,319
- Leave Loading	105,618	90,163
	1,176,038	1,061,492
Fringe Benefits Tax	41,271	48,826
Super contribution and others	48,894	58,762
	1,266,203	1,169,080
Non-Current		
Employee benefits - Annual Leave	333,692	317,309
- Long Service Leave	50,410	54,389
	384,102	371,698

11. Superannuation Commitments

Employees' superannuation entitlements are principally provided through the Northern Territory Government and Public Authorities Superannuation Scheme (NTGPASS). Benefits from these schemes are supplemented by an additional "3% productivity" benefit from the Northern Territory Supplementary Superannuation Scheme (NTSSS).

Employee contributions for NTGPASS members are based on an elected rate of 2% to 6% salary. NTSSS benefits are entirely employer funded and do not require employee contributions. As at 30 June 2016 total superannuation expended amounted to \$553,164 (at 30 June 2015 - \$607,341).

From 10 August 1999, new employees are unable to join the above funds and must nominate their own fund into which contributions will be paid.

12. Trust Accounts

The Commission operates a solicitor's trust account and the funds are not used in the achievement of its objectives. Therefore these monies are not brought to account in the financial reports but are disclosed by way of note. The trust account is maintained for verdict and settlement monies held on behalf of legally aided persons. The Commission may recover some costs upon finalisation of these matters. As at 30 June 2016 the trust account had a nil balance (2015 - \$104).

13. Cash Flow Statement

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
Reconciliation of net cash used in operating activities to operating profit		
Operating profit/(loss)	258,429	513,443
Depreciation	107,652	200,508
Loss on disposal of assets/assets donated	0	9
Increase/(Decrease) in provisions	109,527	86,646
Increase/(Decrease) in creditors	(221,323)	64,170
Decrease/(Increase) in receivables	(172,324)	126,977
Decrease/(Increase) in prepayments (non-capital)	28,177	2,644
Net cash flows from/(used in) operating activities	110,138	994,397

14. Expenditure Commitments

Building lease expenditure commitments		
Operating leases (non-cancellable)		
- not later than one year	828,808	925,458
- later than one year but not later than five years	1,583,382	2,412,190
Grants In Aid	1,242,572	711,631
Aggregate lease expenditure and Grants in Aid contracted for at balance date but not provided for	3,654,762	4,049,279

Notes to the Financial Statements

For The Year Ended 30 June 2016

15. Contingency Legal Aid Fund

Under Section 44 of the Northern Territory of Australia Legal Aid Act 1990 the Contingency Legal Aid Fund was established towards the end of the 1992/93 financial year. The funds are not used in the achievement of the Commission's objectives. Therefore these monies are not brought to account in the financial reports but are disclosed by way of note. The fund is available to provide financial assistance to eligible persons to enable them to bring or defend civil proceedings. It was set up with a seeding grant from the Law Society Public Purpose Trust. The details of the funds are as follows:

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
As at 30 June the financial position of the fund which is managed by the Commission was as follows		
Opening balance	995,242	928,863
Income:		
Interest earned	23,850	24,069
Client contributions	1,540	660
Cost recovered	14,531	67,858
Contingency fees	0	3,609
	39,921	96,196
Expenditure:		
Disbursements	55,368	29,809
Bank charges	11	8
	55,379	29,817
Cash balance at year end	979,784	995,242
Less - Clients/grants approved but not paid at year end	(209,454)	(157,312)
Net funds available	770,330	837,930
16. Reserves		
Property, Plant & Equipment Reserve	366,270	190,049
Asset Revaluation	436,154	436,154
Commonwealth Reserves	1,327,702	440,677
	2,130,126	1,066,880

16. Reserves (continued)

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
Movements in reserves:		
(a) Property, Plant & Equipment Reserve (funded)		
Balance at the beginning of the year	190,049	192,370
Transfer (Redistribution to) Retained Earnings	176,221	(2,321)
Balance at the end of the year	366,270	190,049
(b) Asset Revaluation		
Balance at the beginning of the year	436,154	436,154
Revaluation increments on revaluation of:		
- land	0	0
- buildings	0	0
Balance at the end of the year	436,154	436,154
(c) Commonwealth Reserve		
Balance at the beginning of the year	440,677	648,048
Transfer (Redistribution to) Retained Earnings	887,025	(207,371)
Balance at the end of the year	1,327,702	440,677

Notes to the Financial Statements

For The Year Ended 30 June 2016

17. Retained Earnings

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
Equity at beginning of year	1,076,028	352,893
Net Income	258,429	513,443
Net transfer from (to) Reserves	(1,063,246)	209,692
Equity at end of year	271,211	1,076,028

18. Financial Instruments

A financial instrument is a contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity. Financial instruments held by the Commission include cash and short-term monetary investments, receivables and payables. The Commission has limited exposure to financial risk as described below.

Credit Risk

Credit risk represents the loss that would be recognised if counterparties failed to perform as contracted. The credit risk on financial assets of the Commission that have been recognised on the balance sheet is the carrying amount net of any provision for doubtful debts. The Commission has a minimal concentration of credit risk as it undertakes transactions with a large number of customers and counterparties. There are no major concentrations of credit risk on trade debtors due from customers within particular industries. In respect of any dealings with organisations external to Government, the Commission has adopted a policy of dealing with credit worthy organisations and obtaining sufficient collateral or other security where appropriate, as a means of mitigating the risk of financial loss from defaults.

Liquidity Risk

Liquidity risk is the risk that the Commission will not be able to meet its financial obligations as they fall due. The Commission's approach to managing liquidity is to ensure that it will always have sufficient liquidity to meet liabilities when they fall due. The maturity profiles of undiscounted financial liabilities are as follows:

	1 year or less \$'000	> 1 year and < 5 years \$'000	> 5 years \$'000	No term \$'000	Total \$'000
30 June 2016					
Trade and other payables	174	-	-	-	174
30 June 2015					
Trade and other payables	395	-	-	-	395

Interest Rate Risk

Interest rate risk is the risk of financial loss and/or increased cost due to adverse movements in the values of financial assets and liabilities as a result of changes in interest rates. The Northern Territory's Legal Aid Commission's exposure to interest rate risks and the effective interest rates of the financial assets and financial liabilities, both recognised and unrecognised at the balance date, are as follows:

Financial Instrument	Floating Interest		Non-Interest Bearing		Total Carrying Amount as per the Balance Sheet		Weighted Average Effective Interest Rate	
	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000	2016 %	2015 %
Financial assets								
Cash	1,187	2,294	-	-	1,187	2,294	1.96%	2.36%
Receivables - trade (net)	-	-	281	108	281	108	-	-
Term Deposits	1,500	500	-	-	1,500	500	2.86%	3.43%
Other Receivables	-	-	176	204	176	204	-	-
TOTAL FINANCIAL ASSETS	2,687	2,794	457	312	3,144	3,106	-	-
Financial liabilities								
Accounts payable and accruals	-	-	174	395	174	395	-	-
TOTAL FINANCIAL LIABILITIES	-	-	174	395	174	395	-	-

The Commission has no fixed interest financial instruments.

Notes to the Financial Statements

For The Year Ended 30 June 2016

18. Financial Instruments (continued)

Interest Rate Risk Sensitivity Analysis

The following table demonstrates the Commission's sensitivity to movement in interest rates in relation to the value of interest bearing financial assets and liabilities.

	Profit or Loss and Equity	
	100 Basis Points Increase \$'000	100 Basis Points Decrease \$'000
30 June 2016		
Financial Assets - Cash and cash equivalents	12	(12)
Financial Assets – Short-term investments	15	(15)
Net sensitivity	27	(27)
30 June 2015		
Financial Assets - Cash and cash equivalents	23	(23)
Financial Assets – Short-term investments	5	(5)
Net sensitivity	28	(28)

Fair Market Value

The different levels of the fair value hierarchy are defined below:

Level 1 – the fair value is calculated using quoted prices in active markets.

Level 2 – the fair value is estimated using inputs other than quoted prices included in Level 1 that are observable for the asset or liability, either directly (as prices) or indirectly (derived from prices).

Level 3 – the fair value is estimated using inputs for the asset or liability that are not based on observable market data.

The fair values of the Commission's financial assets have been calculated using the market interest rates. The carrying amount of cash and cash equivalents, trade and other receivables, investments, and creditors approximate their fair value due to their short term nature.

The Commission determines fair value for its non-financial assets using the level 2 and 3 inputs in the fair value hierarchy. The following table disclose the fair value at 30 June 2016 and the valuation techniques used to derived its fair value:

Fair value measurement - Valuation technique & Input Used for Non-financial Assets

	Fair value \$	Category	Valuation Technique	Input Used & Range
Non-financial assets				
Land and Buildings Freehold land	350,000	Level 2	- Market based valuation of a direct comparatives	
Building on freehold land	394,608	Level 2	- Capitalisation on an assume income based on comparative properties	
Infrastructure Plant and Equipment				
Plant and Equipment	125,673	Level 3	- Market comparables (Motor vehicles) - Depreciated replacement cost	- Market buying / selling price - Useful lives of 5 years - Replacement cost based on comparable price of modern equivalents
Leasehold improvements	211,257	Level 3	- Depreciated replacement cost	- Useful lives of 2 to 6 years - Replacement cost based on comparable price of modern equivalents
Total Non-financial Assets	1,081,538			

Notes to the Financial Statements

For The Year Ended 30 June 2016

Fair Market Value (continued)

The fair value of the Commission's owner occupied property as at 30 June 2016 has been determined and approved by the Board on the basis of an independent valuation obtained from the Australian Valuation Office dated 27 June 2012. Such valuations are performed on an open market, being the amounts for which the assets could be exchanged between a knowledgeable willing buyer and a knowledgeable willing seller in an arm's length transaction at the valuation date. The independent valuer provides the fair value of the property every 5 years.

The fair value measurement for the freehold land and building has been categorised as Level 2 fair value based on the valuation technique noted above.

For those leasehold improvements and plant and equipment that are carried at cost, their cost approximates their fair market value.

19. Segment Information

The organisation operates in one industry segment and one geographic location, being the provision of legal services in the Northern Territory of Australia.

20. Contingent Assets/Liabilities

There were no known contingent assets or contingent liabilities of a significant nature at 30 June 2016 (2015 – \$nil).

21. Additional Disclosures

(i) Commissioners

The Commissioners of the Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission during the financial year were:

- E Morris
- S Cox QC
- E Terrill
- A Bradford
- S Byme
- R Goldflam

(ii) Transactions with Commissioners

During the year, surplus legal work has been allocated to legal firms in which some Commissioners also hold Executive positions. These transactions are considered to be on an arm's length basis under normal terms and conditions.

22. Remuneration of commissioners

The following sitting fees were in respect of the year ended 30 June 2016:

- E Terrill \$700

23. Auditor's Remuneration

The auditor of the Commission is the Auditor-General for the Northern Territory.

	2015	2014
	\$	\$
Amounts paid, or due and payable to the NT Government for services provided by the Northern Territory Auditor-General for:		
• Audit of the Commission financial statements	16,852	22,827
	16,852	22,827

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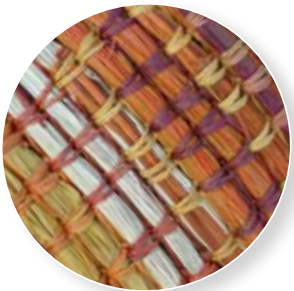


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