

LEGAL AID COMMISSION (ACT)

Purpose

The Legal Aid Commission (ACT) (the Commission), was established by the *Legal Aid Act 1977* (the Act) and provides a range of legal aid services in accordance with the Act.

The mission of the Commission is to promote a just society in the Territory by:

- ensuring that vulnerable and disadvantaged people receive the legal services they need to assert or defend their rights;
- developing an improved community understanding of the law; and
- seeking reform of laws that adversely affect those assisted by the Commission.

A range of high quality legal aid services are delivered through internal staff and professional partners. The Commission's services include legal information, legal advice and minor assistance, duty lawyer services, grants of legal assistance (legally assisted cases), family dispute resolution services and community legal education.

2011-12 Priorities

Strategic and operational issues to be pursued in 2011-12 include:

- implementing the online grants management system (eGrants) covering online lodgement and processing of applications for legal assistance, extensions and invoices resulting in faster processing and savings in administrative costs;
- establishing the Legal Aid Helpdesk function including improved access to legal services and earlier identification and resolution of legal problems through the provision by Helpdesk staff of information, legal advice and referral to appropriate services;
- increasing the number of preventative, early intervention and dispute resolution services;
- providing comprehensive legal information services and seamless referral for preventative and early intervention legal assistance services;
- improving the targeting of services to disadvantaged people, especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; and
- collaborating with other legal assistance providers in the Territory to promote seamless referral, 'joined up' service delivery and a holistic approach to meeting people's needs.

Estimated Employment Level

2009-10 Actual Outcome	2010-11 Budget	2010-11 Est. Outcome	2011-12 Budget
59 Staffing (FTE)	60	57	54 ¹

Note:

1. The decrease of 3 FTEs in the 2011-12 Budget from the 2010-11 estimated outcome results from reductions in staffing costs due to budget constraints.

Strategic Objectives

The Commission's Strategic Plan (2008-2012) is designed to improve the range, quality and targeting of legal aid services in the Territory. This will be achieved by pursuing strategic goals which align with the Commission's mission statement.

The strategic objectives for the Commission in the 2011-12 Budget are:

Strategic Objective 1

Legal Advice and Representation

To ensure that people are not prevented, by disadvantage, from obtaining the legal services they need to assert or defend their rights. This goal will be achieved by:

- promoting access to legal services and early identification and resolution of legal problems through the establishment of the Legal Aid Helpdesk;
- improving the timeliness of grants decision making and reducing the administrative cost of providing legal assistance through the implementation of the eGrants online grants management system;
- improving the targeting of services to disadvantaged people, especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; and
- improving the extent of collaboration with other legal assistance providers in the Territory.

Strategic Objective 2

Community Legal Education

To develop within the community an improved understanding of the law and legal system operating in the Territory. To achieve this goal the Commission will provide targeted legal education programs to groups it has identified as having special needs, such as socially isolated people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Strategic Objective 3

Law Reform

To promote the reform of laws that adversely affect those we assist. To achieve this goal the Commission will monitor the impact of laws on disadvantaged members of the community and make submissions for reform of those laws, where appropriate.

Output Classes

	Total Cost		Government Payment for Outputs	
	2010-11	2011-12	2010-11	2011-12
	Est. Outcome \$'000	Budget \$'000	Est. Outcome \$'000	Budget \$'000
Output Class 1: Legal Aid Services	11,818	11,761	8,949	9,094
Output 1.1: Legal Aid Services Provided by Private Legal Practitioners	5,082	5,057	3,848	3,910

Output Description

The Commission, under arrangements with private practitioners, provides legal aid services to the community. This output includes payments to private practitioners and the cost to the Commission of administering these arrangements.

Private practitioners are engaged by the Commission to provide legal aid services. They are paid professional fees and disbursements on the basis of agreed scales, up to a commitment level determined by the Commission on an individual case basis.

	Total Cost		Government Payment for Outputs	
	2010-11	2011-12	2010-11	2011-12
	Est. Outcome \$'000	Budget \$'000	Est. Outcome \$'000	Budget \$'000
Output 1.2: Legal Aid Services Provided by Commission Staff	6,736	6,704	5,101	5,184

Output Description

The Commission's staff provide a full range of legal aid services to the community. The cost of these services is calculated on the same basis as Output 1.1 except that the professional fees component is replaced by salaries and related costs.

Accountability Indicators

	2010-11 Targets	2010-11 Est. Outcome	2011-12 Targets
Output Class 1: Legal Aid Services			
Output 1.1: Legal Aid Services Provided by Private Legal Practitioners			
a. Total number of legal advice services provided in person ¹	400	40	100
b. Total number of duty lawyer services provided ^{1,2}	500	790	800
c. Grants referred to private practitioners ³	1,400	1,250	1,250

Notes:

- Legal advice is specific advice of a legal nature concerning a person's individual circumstances. Minor assistance is provided in cases where advice given includes recommended action that the person may have difficulty taking on their own behalf. The variance from the target is caused by greater use of *pro bono* services provided by private legal practitioners. The target for the 2011-12 Budget takes into account the expectation of increased early intervention including advice under the proposed National Partnership Agreement.
- Duty lawyer services are legal services provided by a legal practitioner at a court or tribunal to people who would otherwise be unrepresented. Duty lawyer services consist of advising the person, and in appropriate circumstances appearing on their behalf, in relation to the proceeding or event.
- Grants of legal assistance is financial assistance to enable people (who would not otherwise be able to afford legal services) to obtain legal representation in legal proceedings, or in other legal matters of a substantial nature. Grants of legal assistance are provided in criminal, family and general law matters. The variance in the 2010-11 estimated outcome from the original target is the result of an overall reduction in the number of grants for budgetary reasons.

	2010-11 Targets	2010-11 Est. Outcome	2011-12 Targets
Output 1.2: Legal Aid Services Provided by Commission Staff			
a. Total number of information and referral services provided ¹	10,000	20,000	22,000
b. Total number of legal advice and minor assistance services provided in person ²	3,200	3,650	4,000
c. Total number of legal information and advice services provided by the Legal Aid Helpline ³	9,000	6,800	7,000
d. Total number of duty lawyer services provided ⁴	2,500	2,750	2,750
e. Grants referred to Commission staff ⁵	1,200	1,000	1,000

Notes:

- The method of recording this measure has changed to enable more accurate reporting. However, there is likely to continue to be some under-recording of information because by nature these services are frequent and brief contacts by telephone, at the counter or at court.
- Legal advice is specific advice of a legal nature concerning a person's individual circumstances. Minor assistance is provided in cases where advice given includes recommended action that the person may have difficulty taking on their own behalf.
- The variance in the 2010-11 estimated outcome may be due to increasing use of online information services and the availability of alternative telephone advice services.
- Duty lawyer services are legal services provided by a legal practitioner at a court or tribunal to people who would otherwise be unrepresented. Duty lawyer services consist of advising the person, and in appropriate circumstances appearing on their behalf, in relation to the proceeding or event.
- Grants of legal assistance is financial assistance to enable people (who would not otherwise be able to afford legal services) to obtain legal representation in legal proceedings, or in other legal matters of a substantial nature. Grants of legal assistance are provided in criminal, family and general law matters. The variance in the 2010-11 estimated outcome from the original target is the result of an overall reduction in the number of grants for budgetary reasons.

Changes to Appropriation

Changes to Appropriation - Controlled

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Government Payment for Outputs	Est. Out.	Budget	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
2010-11 Budget	8,904	8,529	8,659	8,727	8,727
2011-12 Budget Policy Adjustments					
Legal Aid Helpdesk	-	228	467	481	495
Street Law	-	225	-	-	-
Revised Wage Parameters	-	65	132	133	134
2011-12 Budget Technical Adjustments					
Revised Indexation Parameters	-	-	-	-	58
National Partnership - Legal Aid	45	47	53	115	187
2011-12 Budget	8,949	9,094	9,311	9,456	9,601

**Legal Aid Commission (ACT)
Operating Statement**

2010-11 Budget		2010-11 Est.Outcome \$'000	2011-12 Budget \$'000	Var	2012-13 Estimate \$'000	2013-14 Estimate \$'000	2014-15 Estimate \$'000
\$'000				%			
Income							
Revenue							
8,904	Government Payment for Outputs	8,949	9,094	2	9,311	9,456	9,601
359	User Charges - Non ACT Government	474	503	6	513	524	535
1,289	Interest	1,473	1,518	3	1,556	1,595	1,635
10,552	Total Revenue	10,896	11,115	2	11,380	11,575	11,771
Gains							
0	Total Gains	0	0	-	0	0	0
10,552	Total Income	10,896	11,115	2	11,380	11,575	11,771
Expenses							
4,802	Employee Expenses	5,138	5,081	-1	5,087	5,102	5,250
713	Superannuation Expenses	801	823	3	842	854	883
5,220	Supplies and Services	5,347	5,432	2	5,311	5,419	5,529
345	Depreciation and Amortisation	337	410	22	421	431	442
70	Other Expenses	195	15	-92	16	16	16
11,150	Total Ordinary Expenses	11,818	11,761	..	11,677	11,822	12,120
-598	Operating Result	-922	-646	30	-297	-247	-349
-598	Total Comprehensive Income	-922	-646	30	-297	-247	-349

**Legal Aid Commission (ACT)
Balance Sheet**

Budget as at 30/6/11 \$'000		Est.Outcome as at 30/6/11 \$'000	Planned as at 30/6/12 \$'000	Var %	Planned as at 30/6/13 \$'000	Planned as at 30/6/14 \$'000	Planned as at 30/6/15 \$'000
Current Assets							
2,260	Cash and Cash Equivalents	4,056	3,838	-5	3,858	3,880	3,782
241	Receivables	20	36	80	51	66	81
179	Other	73	73	-	73	73	73
2,680	Total Current Assets	4,149	3,947	-5	3,982	4,019	3,936
Non Current Assets							
100	Receivables	31	31	-	31	31	31
2,097	Property, Plant and Equipment	3,121	2,874	-8	2,619	2,356	2,084
253	Intangibles	148	150	1	150	150	150
0	Capital Works in Progress	204	204	-	204	204	204
2,450	Total Non Current Assets	3,504	3,259	-7	3,004	2,741	2,469
5,130	TOTAL ASSETS	7,653	7,206	-6	6,986	6,760	6,405
Current Liabilities							
342	Payables	396	396	-	396	396	396
28	Finance Leases	44	44	-	44	44	44
1,018	Employee Benefits	1,556	1,754	13	1,829	1,850	1,844
331	Other Provisions	90	90	-	90	90	90
0	Other	85	85	-	85	85	85
1,719	Total Current Liabilities	2,171	2,369	9	2,444	2,465	2,459
Non Current Liabilities							
34	Finance Leases	24	24	-	24	24	24
136	Employee Benefits	146	147	1	149	149	149
0	Other Provisions	1,085	1,085	-	1,085	1,085	1,085
170	Total Non Current Liabilities	1,255	1,256	..	1,258	1,258	1,258
1,889	TOTAL LIABILITIES	3,426	3,625	6	3,702	3,723	3,717
3,241	NET ASSETS	4,227	3,581	-15	3,284	3,037	2,688
REPRESENTED BY FUNDS EMPLOYED							
3,241	Accumulated Funds	4,227	3,581	-15	3,284	3,037	2,688
3,241	TOTAL FUNDS EMPLOYED	4,227	3,581	-15	3,284	3,037	2,688

**Legal Aid Commission (ACT)
Cash Flow Statement**

2010-11 Budget		2010-11 Est.Outcome \$'000	2011-12 Budget \$'000	Var %	2012-13 Estimate \$'000	2013-14 Estimate \$'000	2014-15 Estimate \$'000
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES							
Receipts							
8,904	Cash from Government for Outputs	8,949	9,094	2	9,311	9,456	9,601
359	User Charges	474	428	-10	437	446	455
1,289	Interest Received	1,473	1,518	3	1,556	1,595	1,635
176	Other Revenue	176	176	-	176	176	176
10,728	Operating Receipts	11,072	11,216	1	11,480	11,673	11,867
Payments							
4,653	Related to Employees	4,650	4,720	2	4,828	4,899	5,075
713	Related to Superannuation	801	823	3	842	854	882
5,369	Related to Supplies and Services	5,497	5,594	2	5,493	5,601	5,711
247	Other	247	247	-	247	247	247
10,982	Operating Payments	11,195	11,384	2	11,410	11,601	11,915
-254	NET CASH INFLOW/ (OUTFLOW) FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	-123	-168	-37	70	72	-48
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES							
Payments							
211	Purchase of Property, Plant and Equipment and Capital Works	638	50	-92	50	50	50
268	Purchase of Land and Intangibles	268	0	-100	0	0	0
479	Investing Payments	906	50	-94	50	50	50
-479	NET CASH INFLOW/ (OUTFLOW) FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES	-906	-50	94	-50	-50	-50
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES							
Receipts							
429	Capital Injection from Government	429	0	-100	0	0	0
429	Financing Receipts	429	0	-100	0	0	0
429	NET CASH INFLOW/ (OUTFLOW) FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES	429	0	-100	0	0	0
-304	NET INCREASE/ (DECREASE) IN CASH HELD	-600	-218	64	20	22	-98
2,564	CASH AT BEGINNING OF REPORTING PERIOD	4,656	4,056	-13	3,838	3,858	3,880
2,260	CASH AT THE END OF THE REPORTING PERIOD	4,056	3,838	-5	3,858	3,880	3,782

Legal Aid Commission (ACT) Statement of Changes in Equity

Budget as at 30/6/11 \$'000		Est.Outcome as at 30/6/11 \$'000	Planned as at 30/6/12 \$'000	Var %	Planned as at 30/6/13 \$'000	Planned as at 30/6/14 \$'000	Planned as at 30/6/15 \$'000
	Opening Equity						
3,410	Opening Accumulated Funds	4,720	4,227	-10	3,581	3,284	3,037
3,410	Balance at the Start of the Reporting Period	4,720	4,227	-10	3,581	3,284	3,037
	Comprehensive Income						
-598	Operating Result for the Period	-922	-646	-30	-297	-247	-349
-598	Total Comprehensive Income	-922	-646	-30	-297	-247	-349
0	Total Movement In Reserves	0	0	-	0	0	0
	Transactions Involving Owners Affecting Accumulated Funds						
429	Capital Injections	429	0	-100	0	0	0
429	Total Transactions Involving Owners Affecting Accumulated Funds	429	0	-100	0	0	0
	Closing Equity						
3,241	Closing Accumulated Funds	4,227	3,581	-15	3,284	3,037	2,688
3,241	Balance at the End of the Reporting Period	4,227	3,581	-15	3,284	3,037	2,688

Notes to the Budget Statements

Significant variations are as follows:

Operating Statement

- government payment for outputs: the net increase of \$0.145 million in the 2011-12 Budget from the 2010-11 estimated outcome is due to new initiatives for the Legal Aid Help Desk and Street Law, revised wage parameters and indexation less supplementation for the statutory interest shortfall received in 2010-11.
- interest: the increase of \$0.184 million in the 2010-11 estimated outcome from the original budget is due to higher receipts of statutory interest and interest on higher term deposits.
- employee expenses: the increase of \$0.336 million in the 2010-11 estimated outcome from the original budget is due to higher annual and long service leave. Initiatives are planned in 2011-12 specifically targeting this area contributing to the decrease of \$0.057 million in the 2011-12 Budget.
- supplies and services: the increase of \$0.127 million in the 2010-11 estimated outcome compared with the original budget is mainly due to the increased accommodation costs and the increase of \$0.085 million in the 2011-12 Budget from the 2010-11 estimated outcome is due to indexation and an increase in the cost of services being provided.

- other expenses: the increase of \$0.125 million in the 2010-11 estimated outcome compared with the original budget is mainly due to the introduction of a more conservative impairment policy in respect of outstanding client contributions.
- depreciation and amortisation: the increase of \$0.073 million in the 2011-12 Budget from the 2010-11 estimated outcome is due to completion of the accommodation fitout, security, ICT and business continuity upgrades in 2010-11 and the ICT upgrade works due for completion in 2010-11.

Balance Sheet

- cash and cash equivalents:
 - the increase of \$1.796 million in the 2010-11 estimated outcome from the original budget is mainly due to the unbudgeted receipt of a lease incentive payment of \$1.120 million and additional funds received from the Commonwealth totalling \$0.400 million; and
 - the decrease of \$0.218 million in the 2011-12 Budget from the 2010-11 estimated outcome reflects the cash impact of the budgeted deficit and capital purchases.
- receivables current and non current: the decrease of \$0.290 million in the 2010-11 estimated outcome from the original budget is mainly due to the introduction of a more conservative impairment policy in respect of outstanding client contributions.
- property, plant and equipment:
 - the increase of \$1.024 million in the 2010-11 estimated outcome from the original budget is due to the flow-on impact of the 30 June 2010 audited outcome and increased purchases of property, plant and equipment; and
 - the decrease of \$0.247 million in the 2011-12 Budget from the 2010-11 estimated outcome reflects annual depreciation in excess of capital acquisitions.
- capital works in progress represents the New Directions program not previously recognised in the original budget
- employee benefits current and non current: the increase of \$0.548 million in the 2010-11 estimated outcome from the original budget is due to increased expense in the period as noted above.
- other provisions noncurrent: the increase of \$1.085 million in the 2010-11 estimated outcome from the original budget is due to changes in the accounting treatment of the new office accommodation lease.

Cash Flow Statement

Variances in the statement are explained in the notes above.

Statement of Changes in Equity

Variances in the statement are explained in the notes above.