



CORPORATE PLAN 2019–20

Acknowledgement of country

Victoria Legal Aid acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land where we work and pays respect to their Elders both past and present. We recognise their continuing connection to country and the resilience and strength of Victoria's Aboriginal communities.

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About us

We serve the broader community by providing information, legal advice and education with a focus on the prevention and early resolution of legal problems.

We prioritise more intensive legal services, such as legal advice and representation, to those who need it the most using evidence to inform what we do. We also recognise the connections between legal and social issues in the way we do our work and advocate for change.

We work to address the barriers that prevent people from accessing the justice system by participating in systemic reforms and strategic advocacy.

Our vision

A fair and just society where rights and responsibilities are upheld.

Our purpose

To make a difference for clients and the community, through the provision of effective legal services and collaborative leadership of a strong and dynamic legal assistance sector.

Our values

Fairness

We stand up for what is fair.

We aim to be fair when making choices about which people we help and how we help them.

Care

We care about our clients and the community in which we live.

We look out for and take care of each other.

Courage

We act with courage backed by evidence about what is best for clients and the community.

We act with courage to be the best we can be.

Our statutory objectives

Victoria Legal Aid was established under the *Legal Aid Act 1978* with the objectives to:

- provide legal aid in the most effective, economic and efficient manner
- manage our resources to make legal aid available at a reasonable cost to the community and on an equitable basis throughout the state
- ensure the coordination of the provision of legal aid so that it responds to the legal and related needs of the community
- ensure the coordination of the provision of legal assistance information so that the information responds to the legal and related needs of the community, including by being accessible, current, high quality and of sufficient breadth
- provide the community with improved access to justice and legal remedies

- pursue innovative means of providing legal aid directed at minimising the need for individual legal services in the community.

The year ahead

In the coming 12 months we will deliver services to best meet the legal needs of our clients as we continue to align our efforts to the directions set in our Strategy 2018–22 ('Strategy 22').

We are reinforcing a strong foundation for delivering more effective, accessible, client-centred services by listening to our clients and developing our data and service design capabilities. We cannot do any of this work in isolation. We will continue to work closely with our practice partners and the legal assistance sector to improve the justice system for Victorians, particularly those who are vulnerable or experiencing disadvantage. We will also be actively supporting the work of a number of Royal Commissions including the Informants Royal Commission.

The effects of a justice sector under pressure

Over the past three years, we made the decision to go into operating deficits and draw on our cash reserves to meet the growing community demand for our services. This has been triggered by a range of issues, including population growth, additional police and child protection officers and reforms to legislation. While we have received pockets of specific-purpose funding in recent years, such as for the expansion of duty lawyer services for family violence, to support the Bail and Remand Court and the implementation of Digital Legal Aid, these resources are targeted and cannot be used to meet the broader increases in demand for our services.

Drawing on cash reserves is no longer possible to meet community demand for our services. We are focused on a more sustainable strategy to enable us to reverse forecasted deficits.

Securing financial sustainability

Moving forward, we plan to return to a balanced budget, and we are taking active steps to secure our long term financial sustainability with the welcome assistance of the Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS), while the government undertakes its review of base funding of departments and government funded agencies. The base review was an efficiencies commitment in the State Budget. We are also developing savings measures in the absence of additional ongoing funding to our base, which will be implemented later this financial year or next as needed. Some savings initiatives will be pursued as a matter of good practice, some will be subject to further consultation with staff, our practice partners and others within the justice sector. The lack of certainty means we must continue our preparations for implementation of our savings measures during the second half of the year.

This has been guided by the following principles:

- prioritise internal savings and efficiency measures before external measures
- acknowledge and quantify the impact of the savings measures on staff, stakeholders and clients
- don't compromise workload or wellbeing objectives
- be transparent with staff and key stakeholders
- do not take on new initiatives or projects unless adequate levels of funding are provided
- exclude initiatives that have tied funding
- utilise tools such as the Client Priority and Capability Policy to help us in identifying the highest-need clients and most effective use of funding.

It is also important that we seek to grow our revenue and not just manage our expenditure. In the coming year, we will work with DJCS, other Victorian legal assistance sector partners and the national Legal Aid Commissions to assist with and support negotiations of the next national agreement for legal assistance services with the Commonwealth Government. We will seek an increase to our base funding from the Commonwealth to meet the growing gap in our ability to address unmet legal need, as well as increased transparency of the funding allocation model.

Setting our priorities

We have carefully considered our priorities for the year ahead to ensure we are being financially responsible and sustainable while coordinating and delivering ongoing critical legal help to the Victorian community. This plan outlines our performance targets and the work we will prioritise in 2019–20. Our priorities are modest, funded, and support the work necessary to meet our strategic goals under Strategy 22. Much of the work over the next 12 months reflects a continuation of work that has already commenced.

Our priorities are also consistent with the controls to manage our risks identified in our risk profile, which is a requirement of the Victorian Government Risk Management Framework.

Our client services

Our services are carefully targeted to meet the diverse needs of our clients, many of whom face complex legal problems and experience language, literacy or cultural barriers, disability or other health issues, or social and geographic isolation.

We provide a continuum of different services to make the most efficient use of our resources.



Performance targets

Table 1 provides an overview of our service delivery performance over the past two years and our targets for 2019–20.

Continuing reforms to Legal Help will enable us to better target services to Victorians. We are expecting to continue to respond to more high priority clients by providing a greater number of complex and time intensive legal advice sessions. This will contribute to a decline in the total number of clients assisted by Legal Help this year due to longer call times and a shift in our resourcing model. We will keep expanding webchat as a service channel because for many people it's a simple and effective way to access legal information and referrals: clients can use webchat anywhere on their mobile devices and wait time is much shorter than the phonenumber.¹ This year, we anticipate up to 25,000 people, or around 20 per cent of Legal Help's total client numbers, will seek and receive assistance through webchat, diverting that demand away from the phonenumber.

Service demand remains high and we are forecasting a similar number of grants of aid when compared to the previous year, and small declines in duty lawyer services (less than one per cent) and the number of legal advice and minor assistance services (approximately five per cent) across a range of criminal, family law and child protection services.

¹ Webchat average wait time is under 30 seconds and the answer rate is approximately 90% compared to the phone line, where the YTD wait time is 14 minutes and answer rate is 69%.

Table 1: Snapshot of key service performance²

Clients	2017–18 actual	2018–19 actual	2019–20 target
Unique clients ³	94,485	100,061	101,273

Independent Mental Health Advocacy	2017–18 actual	2018–19 actual	2019–20 target
High intensity ⁴ occasions of service (advocacy and self-advocacy)	8,301	7,424	2,400
Low intensity ⁵ occasions of service (information and referral)	17,223	17,070	7,500

Preventative services	2017–18 actual	2018–19 actual	2019–20 target
Calls and web chats answered by our Legal Help service	143,219 ⁶	140,224	127,123
Legal information services	124,976	122,761	122,461
Community legal ⁷ education participants	13,958	17,065	15,500
Community legal ⁸ education sessions	359	556	440

² Following a review into our methodology in some aspects of our data, some key metrics have been revised. As a result, the 2017-18 client and service figures presented are slightly different to what was reported last year. Using the new data, a more accurate comparison is available.

³ Unique clients are individual clients who accessed one or more of our legal services. This does not include people for whom a client lawyer relationship was not formed, who received information via telephone, website or in-person at court or at public counters, who participated in community legal education sessions, or clients from community legal centres.

⁴ IHMA data represents occasion of service not client figures and we expect service levels to be similar this year with some growth that represents increased demand for this service. Targets are set by IHMA and DHHS together and are being reviewed.

⁵ Targets are set by IMHA and DHHS together and are being reviewed.

⁶ The 2017-18 actual did not include webchat. Webchat was introduced in 2018-19.

⁷ We expect to do fewer CLE sessions in 2019-20 as we have reduced capacity, and this is reflected in the participant target.

⁸ We expect to do fewer CLE sessions in 2019-20 as we have reduced capacity, and this is reflected in the target.

Sessions on our website ⁹	2,268,256	2,583,255	2,400,000
Early intervention services	2017–18 actual	2018–19 actual	2019–20 target
Legal advice, minor assistance and advocacy	41,901	47,438	44,975
Family Dispute Resolution Service	2017–18 actual	2018–19 actual	2019–20 target
Number of conferences	1,010	1,010	1,000
Legal assistance at courts or tribunals	2017–18 actual	2018–19 actual	2019–20 target
Duty lawyer services ¹⁰	93,564	97,796	95,454
Legal representation	2017–18 actual	2018–19 actual	2019–20 target
Grants of legal assistance	43,095	45,180	45,643

Legal assistance sector

We deliver legal services through a mixed model of service delivery in partnership with the broader legal assistance sector. The mixed model comprises:

- solicitors working as sole practitioners or in law firms and incorporated legal practices
- barristers
- Victoria Legal Aid’s staff practice
- community legal centres
- Aboriginal Legal Services, the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service and the Aboriginal Family Violence Legal Service, Djirra¹¹.

The mixed model provides several benefits, including the flexibility to respond to changes in demand for legal aid services, and support for a client to get assistance from a legal practitioner.

⁹ A session is a group of user interactions with the website that take place within a given time frame.

¹⁰ Duty lawyer services provided by private practitioners includes services delivered by solicitors and barristers. This does not include duty lawyer services provided by CLCs.

¹¹ Aboriginal community controlled legal services form part of the mixed model of service delivery; however, in recognition of the importance of Aboriginal self-determination, Victoria Legal Aid does not undertake strategic planning or direct the funding of Aboriginal legal services.

2019–20 budget

The 2019–20 budget sets out our income and spending plans for the coming financial year and reflects our commitment to implementing savings options to return to a balanced budget. To that end we are budgeting for a balanced operating budget with a net surplus result of \$3.5 million after reflecting the accounting treatment of the Digital Legal Aid (DLA) capital income.

Our revenue

Table 2 shows that Victoria Legal Aid receives funding from a range of sources including State and Commonwealth government grants, and the Legal Services Board. In 2019–20, we have budgeted for \$256.9 million in revenue, which is an increase of 6.2 percent on the level of revenue received in 2018–19. The increased revenue is largely driven by the increased State funding. Commonwealth funding has declined slightly due to higher than expected costs in 2018–19 to support complex criminal trials via the Expensive Commonwealth Criminal Case (‘ECCCF’)¹². We are, though, expecting continued high demand for expensive Commonwealth criminal trials for the year ahead and will work with the Commonwealth Government to seek reimbursement for these matters. The Commonwealth Attorney-General’s Department administers the ECCCF and determines when reimbursement can be sought.

Table 2: 2018–19 revenue by source (\$m)

Source of revenue	2018–19 (Actual)	2019–20 (Budget)	Growth percentage
State Government	129.7	147.5	12.1%
Commonwealth Government	69.9	68.2	-2.5%
Public purpose fund	31.5	31.5	0.0%
Case revenue (including client contributions) & other income	6.8	6.2	-9.7%
Operating Revenue	237.9	253.4	6.1%
Digital Legal Aid income	4.0	3.5	-12.5%
Total Revenue	241.9	256.9	6.2%

Our expenditure

Overall budgeted expenditure is expected to increase by \$14.5 million from \$238.8 million in 2018–19 to \$253.3 million in 2019–20. This is largely due to additional tied funding provided to deliver legal services in support of the rollout of five new specialist family violence courts, and the deferral of some savings measures.

Table 3 shows a breakdown of budgeted expenditure by program. The Criminal Law program continues to be our largest program in terms of services and expenditure at 45.0 percent of overall VLA expenditure or \$114.6 million. Much of the increase in expenditure in our Criminal Law program

¹² Expensive Commonwealth Criminal Cases (ECCCF) are currently funded separately to base funding and on a reimbursement basis and that is critical to our ability to support these matters without detracting substantially and unexpectedly from general legal aid funds.

relates to the growth in grant approvals to private practitioners in response to demand driven by legislative and policy changes.

Expenditure in our Family, Youth and Children’s Law program area is also expected to increase in 2019–20 to \$83.6 million or 33 percent of total VLA spend. This growth is attributable to increased demand for child protection and parenting disputes grant approvals and subsequent payments on legally aided cases, as well as family violence legal services and the roll out of five new specialist family violence courts (‘SFVCs’) across Victoria. VLA received funding in the 2017–18 State Budget to deliver legal services in the SFVCs. The service delivery model within the SFVCs will be therapeutic, resource intensive and developed collaboratively with stakeholders. The intent is for court users to have all their legal needs considered with the aim of promoting safety, reducing risk and reoffending. Working collaboratively with stakeholders and utilising available service demand data, VLA will determine the best way to maximise the mixed model to provide legal services at the SFVCs.

Our support for community legal centres (CLCs) will increase by \$1.2 million¹³, or 3.8. percent, compared to last financial year, reflecting the important role CLCs play in the broader legal assistance sector.

Table 3: Expenditure by program area (\$m)

Program area	2018–19 (Actual)	2019–20 (Budget)	Growth percentage
Criminal Law	108.6	114.6	5.5%
Family, Youth and Children’s Law	74.4	83.6	12.4%
Civil Justice	24.6	22.7	-7.7%
Community Legal Centres (direct costs only)	31.2	32.4	3.8%
Total	238.8	253.3	6.1%

Year two of our strategy

Strategy 22 outlines the three key directions that drive our work over the coming years. These directions act as the foundation for more effective and accessible client-centred services and the collaborative leadership of a strong and dynamic legal assistance sector.



Clients *We listen to our clients and make meeting their diverse needs our priority*

¹³ The increase in funding relates to state funding for further implementation of the Fair Work Commission SACS Equal Remuneration order and specific purpose funding from the state government for various projects and some discretionary funds from VLA for child protection and family law projects.

Impact *We design services using evidence and feedback before deciding how and where they are delivered*

Together *We act in ways that build trust and deepen relationships with colleagues, partners and the community*

To realise our strategic directions and deliver on our statutory objectives, we will deliver 10 priority actions in 2019–20. They are not intended to be a comprehensive or exhaustive picture of our work program; rather, they represent where we must focus our efforts the most to ensure efficient and effective use of our funds.

Clients

To make Victoria Legal Aid a more client-centred organisation where clients feel safe, understood and respected when dealing with us, we will:

- implement our second **Reconciliation Action Plan** to ensure our services are culturally safe, responsive and accessible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and recruitment, retention and career pathways within VLA for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders is strengthened
- deliver our **Client First Strategy** to help us increase the use of client feedback in the design of our policies, services and projects so we understand our clients' experiences and diverse needs, which will lead to better service delivery and improved outcomes for clients
- continue our program of work under **Digital Legal Aid** to make it easier for clients to access our services, especially in high-volume channels such as our Legal Help telephone service, duty lawyer services and our website.

What we will do in 2019–20

1. Reconciliation Action Plan

Priority actions	Success measures	Responsibility
1.1 Develop and implement a Cultural Learning Strategy to ensure our staff and services are culturally appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 120 staff have completed the Aboriginal Cultural eLearning module or face-to-face cultural awareness training • All Executive Directors complete cultural awareness training 	Head of People and Culture and Associate Director Aboriginal Legal Services
1.2 Refresh our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to contribute to the VLA 5 per cent target within our Employment Strategy by 2025 	Head of People Culture

2. Client First Strategy

Priority actions	Success measures	Responsibility
2.1 Finalise our Client First Strategy to improve client experience and embed client feedback and engagement into service design and delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorsed Client First Strategy by end of 2019 • Number of VLA areas using client feedback and engagement and or engagement models • Effective client involvement in the development of the Client First Strategy 	Executive Director, Civil Justice Access and Equity

3. Digital Legal Aid

Priority actions	Success measures	Responsibility
3.1 Develop a new client intake solution to provide Legal Help with the information and functions they need to work efficiently, including Legal Help Chat and client tools to enable information sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased efficiency in Legal Help providing clients with information 	Executive Director, Access & Equity and Executive Director, Corporate Affairs
3.2 Develop a new client intake solution for our duty lawyer services to enable quick and reliable digital capture, transfer and retrieval of client and case information, and provide tools to more effectively triage and assist clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A prototype digital solution for duty lawyer services is deployed in at least one court 	Executive Director, Criminal Law and Executive Director, Corporate Affairs
3.3 Commence redesign of VLA's website to provide intuitive navigation and interactive triage and referral that is responsive to clients' needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have identified functional, design and technical requirements and content management system software for the new website 	Executive Director, Corporate Affairs

Impact

Our use of public funds makes it important for us to monitor and evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of our services across Victoria. To be able to monitor and anticipate evolving needs through more effective use of service data and demographic information, we will:

- continue our program of work under **Digital Legal Aid** to make operations more efficient and strengthen our data and systems capability so we can provide evidence to guide decision-making and measure impact
- implement the first year of our **Regional Services Plan** to ensure we make informed decisions about infrastructure and resource allocation, so we provide the right services to meet the current and emerging needs of outer-metropolitan and regional Victorians using data, evidence and collaborative planning

- work on the justice system as well as within it through **strategic advocacy** that delivers broad community benefit and helps clarify law and policy.

What we will do in 2019–20

4. Digital Legal Aid

Priority actions	Success measures	Responsibility
4.1 Building and maintaining high-quality reports and dashboards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of high-quality reports and dashboards allowing us to engage in evidence-based planning and monitoring • Number of staff accessing data and dashboards 	Executive Director, Corporate Affairs
4.2 Improving the quality of core data sets to improve our analysis and reporting, focusing on matter type data, client characteristic data, service data and workforce data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitions and data models for core data sets and a clear system of record of all data is enforced and maintained • % of staff report that they are confident that the data they receive reflects that data that was captured • % of staff reporting confidence in the accuracy of data collected • Our master data management/data classification tool is populated with matter type, client characteristics and service and workforce data definitions and standards. 	Executive Director, Corporate Affairs

5. Regional Services Program

Priority actions	Success measures	Responsibility
5.1 Review existing regional management structures and develop a scalable, best practice model for the management structures, supervision, responsibilities and capability in our regional offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project plan endorsed and initiated • A new model is identified 	Executive Director, Services and Innovation
5.2 Develop Stage 1 of the Accommodation Forward Plan to prioritise the relocation or refurbishment of our regional offices based on lease expiries, safety concerns and space requirements to ensure they are fit-for-purpose and aligned to need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Accommodation Forward Plan articulates clear priorities to inform funding bids and future decisions • The Ballarat office is relocated to a more suitable premises that meets our functional requirements and security standards in accordance with the Accommodation Forward Plan 	Executive Director, Corporate Affairs

5.3 Develop an interactive legal needs modelling tool and provide evidence for service planning and resource allocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The interactive legal needs modelling tool is delivered and applied. • Number and range of program areas and CLCs using the tool 	Executive Director, Services and Innovation
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6. Strategic advocacy priorities

Priority actions	Success measures	Responsibility
6.1 Contributing to the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System (RCMHS) to inform changes that promote people's rights and recovery and reduce the negative impact of the justice system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System recognises the need for a rights and recovery focussed mental health system and the need to reduce the negative impact of the justice system on people experiencing mental health issues • Number of VLA recommendations to the RCMHS adopted in the final report 	Executive Director, Civil Justice, Access and Equity
6.2 Continuing our Care not Custody campaign to reduce the unnecessary and disproportionate criminalisation of kids in care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A government agreement to reduce the criminalisation of young people in care is publicly launched 	Executive Director, Family Youth and Children's Law
6.3 Increasing access to therapeutic programs such as the Assessment and Referral Court, the Drug Court and other effective non-custodial interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government commits to increasing access to therapeutic courts and programs 	Executive Director, Criminal Law

Together

We are committed to building and maintaining trust with our legal and community sector partners as part of building a stronger, more united legal assistance sector. This year it will be critical to work in a collaborative and inclusive manner with:

- our staff, practice partners and key stakeholders to deliver our **Financial Sustainability Strategy** to achieve our savings projections and seek additional funding through various sources
- our partners across the justice sector as we contribute to significant **summary crime law reforms**, particularly the Magistrates' Court Victoria, Victoria Police and the Department of Justice and Community Safety, to implement savings options that require system wide change
- our partners who deliver **family violence legal services** to support the rollout of Support and Safety Hubs (The Orange Door) and specialist family violence courts in Victoria
- our staff to ensure **people feel safe and supported at work** because safety is prioritised, diversity is embraced, and workloads are managed.

What we will do in 2019–20

7. Financial Sustainability Strategy

Priority actions	Performance measures	Responsibility
7.1 Implement and monitor our savings initiatives, to achieve financial sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve savings projections for 2019–20 Unintended consequences arising from savings identified and acted upon 	Executive Director, Corporate Affairs and Chief Financial Officer
7.2 Work with key partners in the legal assistance sector and other stakeholders in supporting Victoria's negotiations of the next National Partnership Agreement with the Commonwealth Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendations made by VLA and our partners are mirrored in improvements in the NPA 	Executive Director, Corporate Affairs

8. Summary crime reforms (Better Justice Everyday project)

Priority actions	Performance measures	Responsibility
8.1 Contribute to significant reforms in the summary crime system, in partnership with Magistrates' Court Victoria, Victoria Police and the Department of Justice and Community Safety, including by seeking support and funding to prototype a new model for summary crime at one location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High level Summary Crime System Reform group re-formed with common work plan Funding is secured to support the design and prototype of a new summary crime model If funding is secured, design work commences with key partners 	Executive Director, Criminal Law
8.2 Develop a demand-based funding model for the summary crime system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A data/funding model is developed in partnership with Victoria Police, the Magistrates' Court Victoria and the Department of Justice and Community Safety 	Executive Director, Criminal Law
8.3 Advocate to reduce pressure on the Magistrates' Court Victoria by keeping out minor matters and increase access to therapeutic programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government commits to implementing change to reduce number of minor matters into the Magistrates' Court Victoria Government commits to increasing access to therapeutic courts and programs 	Executive Director, Criminal Law

9. Family violence legal services

Priority actions	Performance measures	Responsibility
9.1 Work collaboratively with our partners to help clients of The Orange Door and specialist family violence services get earlier access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have tested and are evaluating a web-based screening, triage and referral tool to help people get earlier legal assistance for family violence and related matters 	Executive Director, Family Youth and Children's Law

to the legal advice and information they need		
9.2 Work collaboratively with the Magistrates' Court of Victoria and our legal assistance partners to develop and begin delivering new legal services for people going through the new Specialist Family Violence Courts in Victoria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are delivering services to clients within the new Specialist Family Violence Courts in Victoria as each court commences 	Executive Director, Family Youth and Children's Law

10. People feel safe and supported at work

Priority actions	Performance measures	Responsibility
10.1 Work with our staff to implement findings of our safe driving review and recent Health Safety Wellbeing audit and attend to high risk worksites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transition to a new government wide Standard Motor Vehicle Policy Implement updated guidelines on fatigue management and safety requirements for personal vehicle use for work purposes with focus on regional areas Upgrade duty lawyer rooms at Broadmeadows Magistrates' Court in partnership with Court Services Victoria 	Executive Director, Corporate Affairs
10.2 Develop a Psychological Wellbeing Plan having regard to the findings of several interim initiatives and pilots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wellbeing plan is endorsed by the Board and launched with staff Number of staff accessing services 	Executive Director, Corporate Affairs
10.3 Cultural Diversity Consultative Committee leads the development of our first Cultural Diversity Inclusion Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural Diversity Inclusion Framework is endorsed by the Board and launched with staff 	Executive Director, Corporate Affairs
10.4 Undertake the People Matters Survey (PMS) to check-in on our progress since our last employee engagement survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement in key areas of attention identified in our last employee engagement results, namely staff workload, IT systems, and professional development opportunities for staff 	Executive Director, Corporate Affairs

Our strategic advocacy priorities

In 2019–20, our priorities for the year are:

- **Making sure change is shaped by the experience and expertise of people directly affected**
 - *We aim to ensure the perspectives and views of our clients and the Victorian community are reflected in reforms to law, policy and practice.*
 - *We promote the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination and culturally responsive and safe services.*
- **Intervening early to promote social inclusion and prevent the escalation of legal and life issues**
 - *We support the early provision of legal and other services to improve people's lives and prevent issues from escalating.*
- **Contributing to a safe, fair, responsive, and accessible justice system with people at its centre**
 - *We seek fair and sustainable reforms to dispute resolution, court and tribunal, and justice system processes that lead to equitable outcomes.*
 - *We support equal and improved access to therapeutic supports across Victoria.*
- **Promoting rights and accountability in systems and processes that affect people's lives**
 - *We pursue open, fair and accountable decision-making and conduct within public bodies.*

We will focus on:

- contributing to the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System to inform changes that promote people's rights and recovery and reduce the negative impact of the justice system
- promoting a fair and lawful social security system, including by challenging Centrelink's 'robodebt' initiative
- continuing our Care not Custody campaign to reduce the unnecessary and disproportionate criminalisation of kids in care
- advocating for family law system reform to ensure the system responds better to family violence and is safe, inclusive and accessible for everyone who needs to use it
- reducing the number of minor criminal matters in court through summary offences reform and improvements to police cautioning, charging and diversion processes
- increasing access to therapeutic programs such as the Assessment and Referral Court, the Drug Court and other effective non-custodial interventions
- advocating for a National Disability Insurance Scheme that gives people with disability and their families the supports and services they want and need.

Measuring our progress

Strategy 22 performance measures

Measure	Target or actions to support the measure
1: Increased client satisfaction with the services we provide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 80% overall satisfaction rate
2: Increased use of client feedback in the design of our services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing framework to support this. See Client First Strategy
3: Increased client and community understanding of how and when to obtain legal help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Result of 85% for clients' 'capacity to get legal support in the future' in client survey
4: Increased use of data and system capabilities to inform service design and delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful application of a new technology platform for Legal Help and our duty lawyer services on other online triage tools (Priority action 3) Use data effectively to ensure that our services are accessible and available where needed most. See Regional Services Plan (Priority action 5)
5: Increased staff engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase staff satisfaction in survey results
6: Increased practice partner satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 65% overall satisfaction rate
7: Increased number of practice partners accessing professional development sessions/resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will set baseline figures for the number of legal practice partners accessing our professional legal education sessions and online practice resources
8: Collaborative Planning Committee recommendations and advice are being applied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Collaborative Planning Committee will meet four times in 2019–20 The Board responds to the advice and recommendations of the Collaborative Planning Committee within three months of receiving a report.

Organisational health measures

Measure	Current level	Target
Staff turnover	14.6%	10–15%
Sick days per person per annum	9	9

Financial measures

Measure	Current level	Target
Net result margin	0.1	More than 0%
Liquidity (ratio)	1.14	More than 1.0

Budget Paper No. 3 measures

As an independent statutory authority, Victoria Legal Aid is accountable to the Victorian Government for the return we provide on investment, and our effectiveness at accomplishing our vision of creating a fair and just society where rights and responsibilities are upheld. As part of the Victorian Government's Performance Management Framework, Victoria Legal Aid publicly reports against performance as part of the annual budget process. These measures are published in Budget Paper No.3, with performance also reported on as part of our annual report.

Measures	Current level	Target
Community legal education and information services – excluding family violence related services	97,705	105,000 – 115,000
Community legal education and information services – family violence related services	25,056	26,000 – 28,000
Duty lawyer services – excluding family violence related services	72,518	69,000 - 71,000
Grants of legal assistance – excluding family violence-related services	32,610	32,900
Legal advice and minor assistance for clients – excluding family violence related- services	39,838	40,000 – 42,000
Family violence legal services	45,448	45,000
Number of unique clients who accessed one or more of our legal services	100,061	105,000

Client satisfaction with services ¹⁴	70%	80%
Average call wait time to the Legal Help phone line	10.21 minutes	Under 10 minutes

Reporting

In addition to reporting against these measures, a qualitative assessment of performance against our 2019–20 Corporate Plan priorities actions will be provided to the Victoria Legal Aid Board on a six-monthly basis to help us assess the progress we have made towards achieving our intended outcomes.

¹⁴ While client overall satisfaction levels remain high at 70% and rates have stabilised across all client types and services, it is anticipated that successful implementation of corporate plan priority 2.1 Client First Strategy will support VLA to bridge the BP3 target gap over coming years.