



Annual Report 2024–25

Access to justice for Victorians



Victoria Legal Aid

Service snapshot

Over **490,000¹** services delivered to people across Victoria

Our clients

81,874² unique clients of legal services (-1%)



✕ More on page 4

Legal aid grants

40,854³ grants of legal assistance (+1%)



✕ More on page 7

Help at court

109,288⁴ duty lawyer services (-2%)



✕ More on page 8

Pre-court services

7244 Help Before Court services for criminal matters (+15%), leading to fewer unnecessary adjournments and 8% of clients getting diversion

19,306 referrals accepted for family violence pre-court engagement (+22%)

✕ More on page 8

Legal Help phone line and webchat

120,982 information sessions (-1%)

16,933 advice sessions (+21%)

✕ More on page 8

Family dispute resolution

885 dispute resolution conferences (+8%)

Settlement rates:

83% (early intervention with children's issues)

74% (litigation intervention with children's issues)

75% (property disputes)

✕ More on page 9

Percentage increases and decreases are in comparison to 2023–24 data.

- ¹ This includes all services listed in this snapshot, plus other face-to-face information and advice services, legal aid grant extensions and court-ordered legal aid funding requests. It does not include visits to legal information content on our website or publications distributed.
- ² A unique client is a person who accessed one or more of our legal services. This does not include: people for whom a client-lawyer relationship was not formed; people who received information via telephone, website, court or public counter; participants in community legal education sessions; clients from community legal centres; and clients of our independent non-legal advocacy services.
- ³ Includes grants provided to community legal centres (which are included in our Department Performance Statement reporting on page 10) and family violence services.
- ⁴ Includes services provided by community legal centres (which are not included in our Department Performance Statement reporting on page 10) and family violence services.

Independent advocacy services

Independent Mental Health Advocacy

51,720 advocacy, self-advocacy support and debriefing services (+26%)

65,634 information, referral and intake services (+41%)

Independent Family Advocacy and Support

4999 advocacy, self-advocacy support and debriefing services (+74%)

4002 information, referral and intake services (+35%)

✕ More on page 9

Community legal education and information

11,734 education session participants (+67%)

170,470 publications distributed (+14%)

✕ More on page 15

New and expanded services

Remand Support Service

Non-legal support for people on remand

See page 12

Legal advice by webchat

Legal Help webchat advice service made permanent

See page 8

Help Before Court

Expanded reach of pre-court service for criminal matters

See page 8

Independent Family Advocacy and Support

Continued expansion across Victoria

See page 10

1300 MOB VLA

Legal helpline for First Nations people

See page 12

Assessment and Referral Court

Legal assistance supporting court's expansion

See page 13

Migration services

More legal assistance for permanent protection visa appeals

See page 13

Ovens Murray region

New office providing services to the region

See page 14

Chairperson's declaration

In accordance with section 12N of the *Legal Aid Act 1978* (Vic) and provisions of the *Financial Management Act 1994* (Vic), I am pleased to present the Victoria Legal Aid Annual Report for the year ending 30 June 2025.

Bill Jaboor

Bill Jaboor

Chairperson

24 September 2025



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Acknowledgement of Country

This report was written on the lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands across Victoria and pay respect to Elders past and present. We recognise the continuing connection to Country, culture and identity and the importance of self-determination for creating better futures for First Nations people.

O1

About us

Our vision

Our vision is for a fair, just and inclusive society where people can get help with their legal problems and have a stronger voice in how laws and legal processes affect them.

Our purpose

To make a difference for clients and the community by helping to effectively address legal problems, supporting the coordination of a strong and dynamic legal assistance sector and working with partners to create fairer laws and systems.

Our values

Fairness

We are committed to fairness in society and to facilitating fair and equitable access to legal support.

Care

We care about our clients and the community and we approach our work with an awareness of the effects that trauma and discrimination can have. We treat each other with kindness and respect.

Courage

We approach our work with strength and confidence. We are guided by our values and what matters most to our clients and society.

Inclusion

We provide an inclusive environment for clients, staff and referral partners.

Our strategy

Our Strategic Plan 2022–26 is founded on our Outcomes Framework, an eight-year view of the difference we want to make through our work. This annual report reflects our progress in delivering our strategy and outcomes, as well as our Corporate Plan 2024–25.

Our functions

We are a statutory authority established under the *Legal Aid Act 1978* (Vic). Our objectives are to:

- provide legal aid in the most effective, economic and efficient manner
- make legal aid available at a reasonable cost and on an equitable basis across Victoria
- provide improved access to justice and legal remedies
- provide legal aid innovatively to minimise the need for individual legal services
- coordinate legal aid provision so it responds to community needs.

More detail about our functions is available on our website and in the *Legal Aid Act*.

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Foreword

This past year, we were proud to deliver over 490,000¹ services to people across Victoria.

Our range of services include legal representation, advice and information, family dispute resolution, early engagement and intervention, non-legal advocacy and support, and community legal education. We deliver these in partnership with private practitioners and community legal centres.

Our clients face complex life circumstances and are often marginalised by systems. We help them navigate the law and understand their rights and responsibilities. By getting involved early, we help prevent legal problems from escalating, easing pressure on justice and government systems.

Guided by our vision for a fair and equitable society, we remain deeply committed to meeting the high demand for legal assistance and non-legal support and advocacy. But without sustainable funding for our sector, the justice system cannot be fair and equitable for all.

We thank the state and federal governments for their support and welcome investment under the National Access to Justice Partnership. We also thank the Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner for the important funding it provides.

Although we have been able to expand some of our services this year, we know that large unmet demand for legal services continues. In addition, we are grappling with the sustainability of some of our key funding models to meet current demand. As a result, we are carefully using our limited unallocated cash reserves to defer the need to reduce services in the short term. At the same time, we are acutely aware that any service reductions will negatively impact our clients, the justice system and the community.



Guided by our vision for a fair and equitable society, we remain deeply committed to meeting the high demand for legal assistance and non-legal support and advocacy.

Serving our clients and community

We are very proud of what we have achieved across our practice areas.

Acting on recommendations of a review into our remand services, we commenced a pilot service to better meet the non-legal needs of people remanded at the Melbourne Magistrates' Court. In the one month the service operated during the 2024–25 financial year, it helped 35 people in custody facing remand. Addressing immediate non-legal needs which flow from being taken into custody means people are better able to engage in the legal process and advocate for their rights.

Thanks to government investment, we are further developing the reach of our Help Before Court and Independent Family Advocacy and Support services across Victoria. Investment has also enabled us to grow our services at the Assessment and Referral Court as part of its statewide expansion and to review and improve our legal service model, working together with lived experience experts. These programs support better client outcomes and achieve greater efficiency in the justice system.

Through the Victims Legal Service, alongside our partners we are assisting victims of crime to understand their rights and options and apply for financial assistance through the new Victims of Crime Financial Assistance Scheme. The scheme, which started in November 2024, will make it easier for victim-survivors to get financial assistance and other support without them needing to go to court.

The legislated opt-out model of access to our Independent Mental Health Advocacy service for all people subject to compulsory treatment has been in place since September 2023. We published a report on the first 12 months of statewide operations. Our support has meant more consumers than ever have access to mental health support and advocacy.

Thanks to specific federal funding, we have increased legal assistance for people appealing permanent protection visa decisions, helping to achieve visa certainty for clients while reducing the immigration system backlog. Ongoing funding would enable this impactful work to continue.

¹ This includes legal aid grants (including grant extensions and court-ordered funding requests), duty lawyer services, pre-court services, Legal Help phone and webchat sessions, family dispute resolution, independent non-legal advocacy, community legal education sessions and other face-to-face information and advice services. It does not include visits to legal information on our website or publications distributed.

As we continue to see high demand for family violence legal services across the state, we welcome the extension of funding for pre-court engagement services for another three years. Earlier intervention in these matters is an important way to improve safety and the court user experience. We continue to provide a significant number of family violence legal services to victim-survivors and respondents, in partnership with community legal centres and panel practitioners.

As a service for all Victorians, we have continued to invest in our facilities around the state to improve our capacity to meet demand. We were pleased to establish new services in Wodonga, where we are working in partnership with existing community legal services and panel practitioners to serve communities in the Ovens Murray region.

Commitment to First Nations justice

We are committed to increasing access to justice and strengthening practice to uphold justice for First Nations people in Victoria. We are proud of our progress in initiatives that aim to address systemic racism and disadvantage. By embedding First Nations justice outcomes in our core work, following the leadership and expertise of First Nations-led organisations, we hope to reach this goal.

In 2024–25, we worked with the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS) and Djirra to co-design a dedicated legal helpline for First Nations people – 1300 MOB VLA. We also supported the development of a framework for a project led by VALS, in partnership with us and the Law Institute of Victoria, to build First Nations cultural capability in the legal profession.

We recognise that increasing First Nations employment opportunities contributes to a more diverse and responsive service. First Nations representation in our workforce rose from 3.5 per cent to four per cent, supported by clerkship, graduate and leadership development opportunities.

We also introduced team leaders in the North, South-East and South-West regions as part of the expansion of our Aboriginal Community Engagement Officer program across Victoria.



We recognise that increasing First Nations employment opportunities contributes to a more diverse and responsive service.

Fairer laws and systems

Advocating for fairer laws, policies and systems is core to our work and purpose.

We are monitoring the impact of new bail laws and continue to share our practice experience with the government to help inform the changes. We have seen firsthand the disproportionate impacts that previous bail law changes had on our clients, particularly First Nations women, children and others at risk. We continue to advocate for appropriate protections for those most at risk, and for the expertise of First Nations-led organisations to be followed.

Following years of advocacy through the Power to Prevent Coalition, we welcomed the passage of federal legislation on costs protection, implementing the final outstanding recommendation of the landmark Respect@Work report. The changes mean that applicants will not have to risk financial ruin to enforce their rights under anti-discrimination law.



We are monitoring the impact of new bail laws and continue to share our practice experience with the government to help inform the changes.

We are concerned about an increase in children needing legal assistance to respond to family violence and personal safety intervention orders. We presented new research and practice insights at a cross-sector forum addressing adolescent violence in the home in March 2025 ahead of releasing our full report in July 2025, calling for a system that better supports children and families.

Our people and partners

We are grateful for the invaluable contributions of Andrew Jackomos PSM and George Habib, who have left our Board. We were pleased to welcome Llewellyn Prain and Elly Patira, whose experience and insight will help shape our path ahead.

We also farewellled Louise Glanville, who has left a substantial and lasting impact following six years of dedicated service as our CEO. The Board welcomes the appointment of Toby Hemming as CEO and his continued focus on our vision and values.

We extend our sincere thanks to private practitioners, community legal centres, VALS, Djirra, the Federation of Community Legal Centres, the Law Institute of Victoria, the Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner, the Victorian Bar, the Department of Justice and Community Safety and others for their vital work and collaboration. We also thank our Board, executives and senior leaders for their outstanding leadership.

Finally, none of our work would be possible without the efforts of our staff. We will continue to support the wellbeing, diversity and inclusion of our people. Their commitment, compassion and professionalism are the heart of this organisation.

Bill Jaboor

Bill Jaboor
Chairperson

Toby Hemming

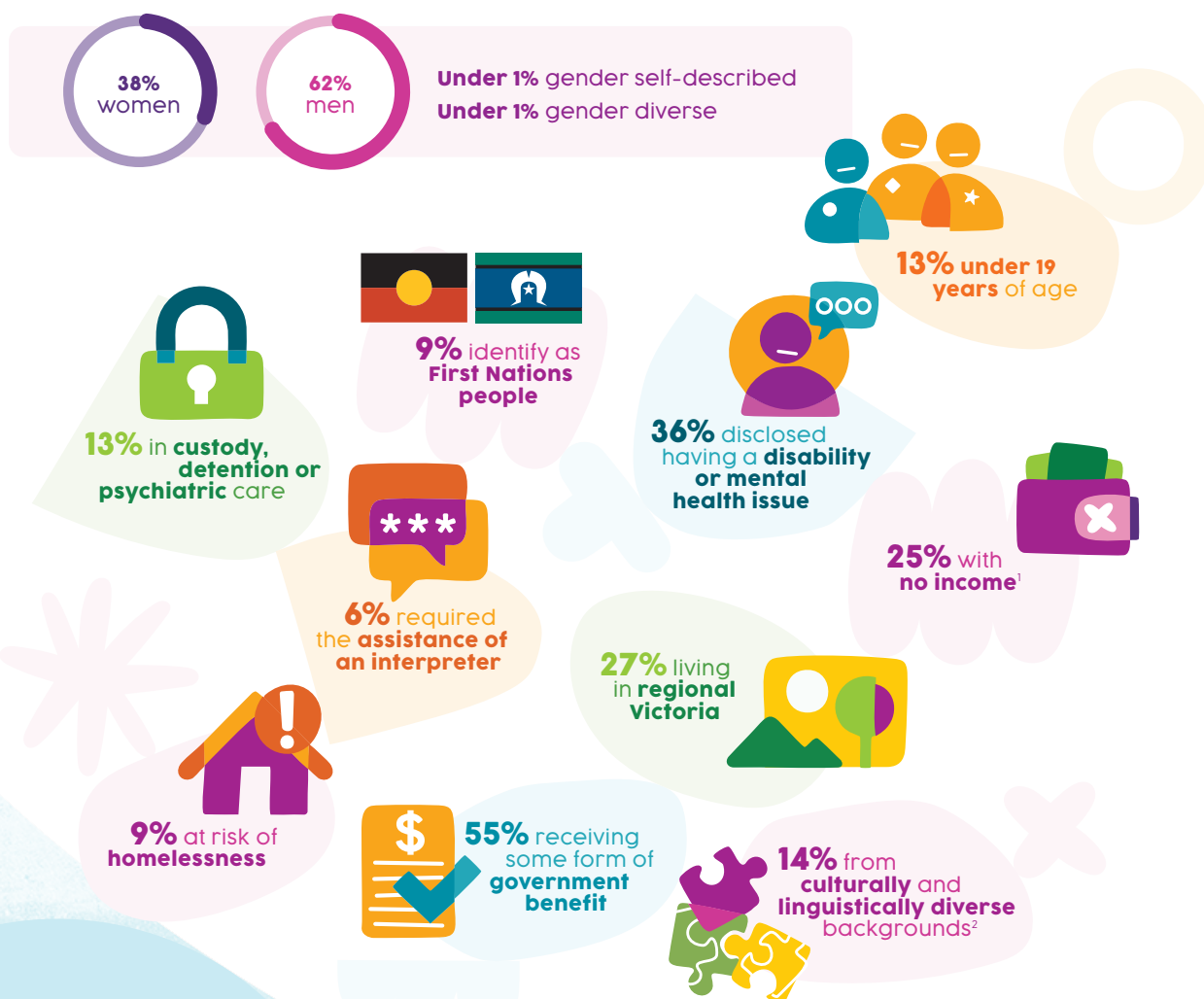
Toby Hemming
Chief Executive Officer

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Our clients

Our clients include a diverse range of people across Victoria. Many face complex legal problems and experience cultural barriers, discrimination, disability, mental health issues or social and geographic isolation. For many clients, these issues or experiences intersect and can compound. More than one descriptor is often appropriate for our clients.

Who our clients are



These figures do not include clients seen by a private practitioner or who accessed information-only services.

¹ Examples include children and young people, people experiencing homelessness, people in custody and immigration detention, and psychiatric patients.

² Based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics definition of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Includes people who speak a language other than English at home and people who were born in a non-English speaking country.

What clients said about us

We ask our clients for feedback about our service in our client experience survey to help us better understand their experience and expectations. We received responses from 926 clients who are broadly representative across our service areas and programs.

Overall, clients were positive about our services and interacting with our staff and felt that we helped build their capacity to deal with legal problems in the future.



Client feedback

“

The lawyer I spoke with provided the information I required, in a warm and intelligent way. Any questions I had, were answered promptly and professionally.

“

I went through some stuff and wasn't judged, they took time to understand me, they were lovely for my mental health.

“

I really appreciate that the lawyers I have interacted with are highly sensitive in their approach to working with victims of trauma, which has made a significant difference in how supported and secure we feel.

“

I said to the lawyer after leaving court, you've made me feel like a stronger woman.

Feedback on areas to improve were around providing clients more specific information, ensuring that staff consider personal circumstances more deeply, and continuing to improve the effectiveness of the initial contact process.

Almost half of survey respondents told us that they had personal or cultural needs that they needed us to consider, with 60 per cent of all identified needs either fully or partially met. The most common needs related to disability, experience of violence and caring responsibilities.

These continue to be areas we focus on to improve overall client experience and equity of access.

This map shows the number of unique clients we helped in each local government area (LGA) during 2024–25. Client locations are based on the primary address they nominate. This may include prisons, hospitals, remand centres and temporary accommodation facilities.

Clients assisted by a private practitioner duty lawyer are not included in this map.



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Our services

We serve the Victorian community by providing information, legal advice and education and recognise the intersections between legal and social issues.

Our early intervention and early engagement and resolution services prevent legal problems from escalating and connect our clients with allied services. More intensive services, such as legal representation, non-legal advocacy and family dispute resolution, are provided to those who need them most.

Legal aid grants

We fund legal assistance for clients through grants of aid. Clients can be helped by an in-house lawyer, private practitioner, community legal centre or Aboriginal legal service.

In 2024–25, we provided 40,854 new grants of legal assistance (one per cent more than in 2023–24). In addition, we provided 23,679 further grants ('extensions') for matters that progressed and administered 4226 court ordered funding requests. The number of grant extensions is consistent with feedback from practitioners that matters are becoming increasingly complex.

Eighty per cent of legal assistance services were delivered by private practitioners, while 17 per cent were by in-house lawyers and three per cent by community legal centres.

Ruth's story

We represented Ruth¹ in a protracted family law matter. Her case shows the impact of changes to the *Family Law Act 1975* (Cth) in 2024.

Ruth came to Australia as a refugee in 2010 as a single parent with her children. She established herself in regional Victoria. She later married Steve and had a daughter, Viola.

Soon after their marriage, Steve became increasingly controlling, manipulative and verbally abusive. He also told their community leader that he married Ruth to stay in Australia. Ruth felt humiliated. In 2018, she got a family violence protection order for herself and the children.

We acted for Ruth in protracted family law litigation between 2020 and 2024 where Steve wanted primary care of Viola. Final parenting orders were made for Viola to live with Ruth and spend time with Steve in a gradually increasing, age-appropriate regime.

In 2025, Steve started new proceedings to get Viola in his care. Ruth was worried and reached out to us. We helped her get Steve's application dismissed, avoiding protracted litigation a second time. The court found that there had not been any significant change in Viola's home life, wellbeing or safety, and that reopening these proceedings may burden Viola.

Changes to family law legislation in 2024 helped speed this process up. The amendments codified that the court must not reconsider a final parenting order unless there is a significant change of circumstances and that it is in the best interests of the child.

Resolving the case swiftly without any interviews involving Viola was a relief for Ruth. She was pleased that her voice was heard.

1 Names in this story have been changed.

Help at court

We support clients on the day of their hearing through duty lawyer services. We aim to prioritise serious cases and clients who need help the most. Information about who can see a duty lawyer and the help they can provide is on our website.

In 2024–25, we delivered 109,288 duty lawyer services (two per cent fewer than in 2023–24). Sixty-eight per cent of these were delivered in-house, while 17 per cent were by private practitioners and 15 per cent by community legal centres delivered.

Pre-court services

Criminal matters

Our Help Before Court service provides people with support or advice ahead of their court hearing rather than on the day for criminal matters in the Magistrates' Court. It allows clients to seek legal advice and prepare for court before their court event, reducing the need for unnecessary adjournments.

In 2024–25, we delivered 7244 Help Before Court services (15 per cent more than in 2023–24).

Help Before Court clients receive better outcomes with more time to prepare. In 2024–25, eight per cent of Help Before Court clients were diverted out of the criminal justice system, compared to three per cent for clients who only received a duty lawyer service.

We have begun an expansion of the service, thanks to funding from the Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner. The initial phase has focused on increasing our capacity through centralised intake and advice and service need assessment. We will continue to build capacity across the state and implement processes that support clients.

Family violence matters

Our Pre-Court Engagement service provides legal advice and support for people with family violence intervention order matters up to two weeks before a hearing date. We deliver the service with community legal centres in eight Magistrates' Court locations.

In 2024–25, the service accepted 19,306 pre-court referrals (22 per cent more than in 2023–24). Forty-six per cent of these were taken on by community legal centres. This work included legal advice, negotiations and, in some cases, resolution prior to the court hearing date.

We welcome the state budget funding to continue the service for another three years. This means we can continue to engage families at an early stage to address matters in a trauma-informed way.

Legal Help phone line and webchat

In 2024–25, our Legal Help phone line and webchat remained key entry points for Victorians seeking legal assistance.

We delivered 120,982 information sessions (one per cent fewer than in 2023–24) and 16,933 advice sessions (21 per cent more than in 2023–24). Sixty-five per cent of sessions were by phone and 35 per cent by webchat. We answered 64 per cent of phone calls and 99 per cent of webchats; the combined average wait time was 15:09 minutes.

We launched a new Legal Help service delivery model and organisational structure after a change consultation process and significant changes in our services and workforce. These major reforms modernise how we work and are designed to better meet growing demand, increased complexity and evolving community expectations. The changes support scalable, innovative, high-volume service delivery while enabling us to provide more tailored support for those most in need.

New initiatives include a permanent webchat advice service offering a safer and more accessible alternative to phone support. We are also piloting a rapid assessment and referral service for people who need assistance with issues outside our scope. In its first six months, this has significantly reduced wait times for people who we need to refer to other organisations.

Also, read about:

- the most common legal issues we dealt with through Legal Help (page 15)
- our new legal helpline for First Nations people – 1300 MOB VLA (page 12)
- our work to improve safety for people contacting Legal Help with family violence matters (page 14).

Kai's story

Kai¹ contacted Legal Help after receiving a notice to vacate a property. She was referred to our Economic and Social Rights team in Civil Justice. Her story highlights the benefit of legal assistance in preventing evictions into homelessness for clients who are lacking other social and community supports.

I am a young trans girl, and I was facing homelessness. I was being evicted from my deceased father's property where I lived with my three animals.

I called Victoria Legal Aid and they told me I have rights. I worked together with my lawyer on the submissions and I got some further evidence like a letter from my doctor.

It was very stressful. I thought it was a long shot but it went in our favour, you really advocated for me and it felt like a big win. I was so grateful to stay in my house and have that connection to my father. Without this I would have been facing hardship and homelessness.

I still feel very connected to my father even after he has passed by being in this home. I lost the rest of my family when I came out as transgender. It means the world to me to be able to stay in my home, I don't feel alone anymore. I can carry on knowing I have my dad with me and his support. If I didn't get this place, I don't know where I would be mentally.

I felt safe as a trans person working with Victoria Legal Aid. I was accepted as a person, I was accepted as a human. I felt welcomed, and the vibes were awesome. There were no delays or lags, you guys did a great job. I was really surprised with how positive it all was.

It finally feels like there is a light at the end of the tunnel, and that brighter days are coming.

Family dispute resolution

Our Family Dispute Resolution Service helps parents, children and others involved in family separation resolve their family law disputes. It provides a forum for decision making with the help of an independent mediator, case managers and lawyers.

In 2024–25, the service received 1277 legal aid grants to initiate mediation and held 885 mediation conferences (eight per cent more than in 2023–24).

In the 748 conferences with children's issues, the settlement rates were:

- 83 per cent (for early intervention mediation)
- 74 per cent (for litigation intervention mediation).

With early intervention, conflict is often less entrenched and there are more opportunities to shift perspectives and involve young people in decision making through our Kids Talk program. 173 children from 83 families took part in Kids Talk (33 per cent more children than in 2023–24).²

Independent children's lawyers represented children and young people's interests in 249 conferences, representing 71 per cent of court-referred children's issues cases we mediated.

Our service also helps with property disputes, which supports financial security and safety, particularly for women and children. In the 137 property dispute conferences, the settlement rate was 75 per cent.

We continue to promote psychological and cultural safety for family dispute resolution participants. An internship program is also providing opportunities for First Nations staff to become registered family dispute resolution practitioners, benefiting our services and the families accessing them.

Independent advocacy services

Independent Mental Health Advocacy

Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA) provides non-legal advocacy to people at risk of and subject to compulsory mental health treatment so they can have as much say as possible about their assessment, care and personal recovery. As an independent, non-legal service, IMHA helps achieve better outcomes by empowering people to advocate for themselves and their rights.

In 2024–25, IMHA delivered 51,720 advocacy, self-advocacy support and debriefing services (26 per cent more than in 2023–24) and 65,634 information, referral and intake services (41 per cent more than in 2023–24).

We published a report on the first 12 months of the legislated op-out model of access to IMHA services for all people subjected to compulsory treatment. It showed that the new model has greatly increased access to the service since it came into effect on 1 September 2023.

¹ Not her real name.

² While 130 children met with a child consultant in 2023–24, the 113 reported in the last annual report were those who had their case reach a conference.

Independent Family Advocacy and Support

Independent Family Advocacy and Support (IFAS) provides non-legal advocacy to parents and primary carers navigating the early stages of the child protection system. This non-legal service helps achieve better justice outcomes by diverting families from the court system in child protection matters.

In 2024–25, IFAS delivered 4999 advocacy, self-advocacy support and debriefing services (74 per cent more than in 2023–24) and 4002 information, referral and intake services (35 per cent more than in 2023–24).

We have progressed in our phased expansion of IFAS across the state. New IFAS advocates are in place in metropolitan Melbourne, Wimmera south-west and northern Victoria. IFAS will be available statewide with the final phase of expansion to south-east Victoria to be completed in late 2025.

Chambers services

Our chambers advocates represent and appear for legally aided clients in state and federal courts and tribunals across Victoria and undertake strategic litigation intended to benefit the broader community. We provide advice, legal education and mentoring across our civil justice, criminal law and family, youth and children's law teams.

In 2024–25, chambers advocates appeared in 2161 court and tribunal matters (22 per cent more than in 2023–24), provided formal advice 492 times (37 per cent more than in 2023–24) and provided formal staff training 105 times (23 per cent fewer than in 2023–24). In addition, our advocates contributed heavily to the development of legal resources for our staff practice and the legal assistance sector.

Service delivery performance

This section outlines our performance against targets set in the Department Performance Statement (DPS).

In 2024–25, we saw continued high demand for family violence legal services, which is in line with the growing number of family violence offences being reported. As a result, we delivered 40 per cent more family violence legal services than our target, and six per cent more than in 2023–24.

The DPS measures we reported against in 2024–25 for duty lawyer services, grants of legal assistance, and legal advice and minor assistance are outdated and do not accurately represent the extent or manner in which we currently deliver certain services. This is because they do not include services where family violence was a feature, which represent 38 per cent of services. This is the predominant reason they are below target.

In the next reporting period, 2025–26, we will report against new measures that more accurately reflect the services we provide. In particular, they will reflect the extent of our family violence-related work, as well as our non-legal advocacy and support services, and changes in our operating environment. This will allow for more transparency and better representation of our work.

Measure	2024–25 target	2024–25 actual	2023–24 actual
Unique clients of legal services	105,000	81,874	82,606
Community legal education and information services (excluding family violence)	102,000	104,615	107,321
Community legal education and information services (family violence)	27,000	24,662	22,597
Duty lawyer services (excluding family violence) ¹	71,000	55,095	59,328
Grants of legal assistance (excluding family violence)	33,000	27,191	27,711
Legal advice and minor assistance (excluding family violence)	41,000	24,435	24,041
Family violence legal services	46,000	64,269 ²	60,361
Client satisfaction with services	80%	68%	65%
Average wait time to Legal Help (phone line and webchat)	15:00 min	15:09 min ³	9:58 min

1 This does not include duty lawyer services provided by community legal centres.

2 These include 37,151 duty lawyer services, 13,663 grants of legal assistance and 13,454 legal advice and minor assistance services.

3 The large increase from 2023–24 is temporary due to the disruptions caused by the design and implementation of a new operating model. See Legal Help phone line and webchat (page 8) for details.

O5

Our impact

This section outlines our impact in our five strategic outcome areas: access to justice for clients, improving community legal understanding, a collaborative legal assistance sector, fairer laws and systems and an effective and sustainable Victoria Legal Aid.



Strategic outcome 01
Access to justice for clients



Strategic outcome 04
Fairer laws and systems



Strategic outcome 02
Improving community legal understanding



Strategic outcome 05
An effective and sustainable Victoria



Strategic outcome 03
Collaborative legal assistance sector



Strategic outcome 01

Access to justice for clients

We aim to improve access to justice and support people to develop stronger legal capability. In 2024–25, we implemented programs that support a range of people in the community.

First Nations people

In 2024–25, we strengthened our Aboriginal Community Engagement Officer (ACEO) program ahead of its regional expansion. We updated the program logic, introduced three regional team leader roles (for the North, South-East and South-West regions), and enhanced oversight through our new First Nations Services directorate.

We have also begun developing tools to help us better monitor, manage and evaluate the program and understand the benefits it brings to First Nations clients. These foundations will improve our ability to identify and respond to legal issues for First Nations communities.

See the Community legal education section (page 15) for details on ACEOs' education work.

We also developed 1300 MOB VLA, a new legal helpline offering free, confidential and culturally safe legal assistance for First Nations people and direct referral to other culturally appropriate service providers. The service strengthens access to justice for First Nations people in a culturally safe and responsive way. We launched it in early 2025–26.

We are fortunate to have created the service model with the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS) and Djirra through a co-design process facilitated by Yamagigi Consulting.

Our offering of culturally appropriate services through Independent Mental Health Advocacy has continued to grow with the recruitment of First Nations advocates, project workers and a program manager. They work closely with VALS to increase access to non-legal advocacy for First Nations people at risk of and subject to compulsory mental health treatment.

See the Reconciliation Action Plan section (page 22) for more about how we support First Nations people.

People on remand

In June 2025, we launched our Remand Support Service (RSS) pilot at the Melbourne Custody Centre to address the immediate non-legal needs of people on remand.

The service provides non-legal support to clients eligible for duty lawyer services at the Melbourne Magistrates' Court, including the after-hours Bail and Remand Court. It prioritises First Nations people, young people and those in custody for the first time or experiencing emotional distress.

In the one month the service operated during the 2024–25 financial year, the RSS supported 35 clients with needs such as family contact, medical access advocacy and help navigating court processes. A senior lived experience consultant and a lived experience advisory panel inform the design and evaluation of this service.

The RSS was developed in response to recommendations from an independent review of our remand services. It is funded by the Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner.

Supporting a client on remand

Our Remand Support Service (RSS) supported a young client on remand in 'the trap', a cell for people who cannot be relocated to a visiting booth.

In 'the trap', communication is via a slot in the door. The client was mumbling, walking away and not able to engage with our lawyer. He agreed to speak to our RSS staff.

The RSS staff asked the client to come closer to help them understand what he was saying. He appeared to have significant physical injuries. They asked about his drug use and if he was taking any medication, which he denied. He asked the RSS to call his mum. He also said he was thirsty and hungry, and that he wanted to apply for bail.

The RSS passed on the client's request for food and drink to custody management. They called his mother who spoke of her son's past drug use and its effect on her family. They provided her with trauma-informed guidance and support.

The RSS was able to connect with a client who was unable to engage with their lawyer at first. He was able to reengage with his lawyer and apply for bail. The staff also advocated for his immediate material needs and provided support for a family member.

Victims of crime

The Victims Legal Service (VLS) is Victoria's first dedicated, statewide specialist legal service for victims of crime. It is delivered through a collaborative model involving us, VALS, Djirra, Women's Legal Service Victoria, and seven generalist community legal centres.

From its establishment in March 2023 to 31 December 2024, the VLS helpline responded to 5527 enquiries and referred 539 individuals for intensive legal assistance.

In March 2024, the VLS expanded under a Commonwealth-funded pilot to provide legal advice to sexual violence victim-survivors seeking to protect confidential communications – such as counselling or medical records – during court proceedings. From March to December 2024, the helpline responded to over 50 such enquiries, with 26 warm referrals for further legal support.

The new Victims of Crime Financial Assistance Scheme replaced the courts-based Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal in November 2024. The VLS has helped victim-survivors understand their rights and options in relation to the new scheme.

We welcomed funding to extend the VLS by 12 months in the 2025–26 federal budget.

People with mental health issues

In 2024–25, we established the Mental Health Legal Rights Service in partnership with the Mental Health Legal Centre and Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service. The consumer-centred service introduced a specialist helpline in September 2024 to provide free legal advice and information about mental health legal rights.¹

This service is the outcome of a co-design process we coordinated in 2023 in response to a recommendation of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System.

We also continued to expand our legal services in the Assessment and Referral Court (ARC) as part of its statewide rollout. ARC provides a therapeutic, person-centred approach to justice for people with significant mental health or cognitive issues.

We established new ARC legal services in Shepparton and Sunshine, with services at Ringwood, Broadmeadows and Geelong to come. We engaged with diverse lived experience and community groups to design a culturally safe and accessible service model.

For more, see the Independent Mental Health Advocacy section (page 9) to learn about its work.

Refugees and people seeking asylum

We have been proud to play an increased role in providing legal assistance for people appealing permanent protection visa decisions and reducing the backlog in the immigration system.

Alongside the establishment of the new Administrative Review Tribunal (ART) in October 2024, federal funding has enabled us to introduce a new guideline to help people seeking asylum and refugees in the ART. We have also been able to increase the number of applicants we can assist with judicial review in the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia.

In 2024–25, we helped 620 clients with 2009 legal services, including 801 legal advice services and 147 representations. We achieved positive outcomes in 90 per cent of cases, including the overturning of protection visa refusals and matters being remitted to the ART for further review.

Thomas' story

The story of our client, Thomas², shows how the new Administrative Review Tribunal (ART) is enabling asylum seekers to be treated fairly and the impact of legal assistance.

In 2012, Thomas arrived in Australia alone, after a dangerous journey across the sea to escape harm in his home country. He had fled because of his perceived support for a group involved in a long-running internal conflict. He had to leave behind his young family, hoping to find safety and start again.

His protection visa application was refused by the immigration department. The Immigration Assessment Authority (IAA) refused his application for limited merits review without providing him any opportunity to attend an interview and tell his story.

He then applied to the court where he waited almost seven years for the court to review his case and decide that the decision of the IAA was unlawful. Throughout that time, his life was put on hold and he was prevented from reuniting with his wife and children.

The introduction of the ART meant Thomas finally had access to a fair merits review process. His case was sent back to the newly formed ART to decide whether he was a genuine refugee. This time he had a legal aid lawyer.

This was the first time Thomas had the opportunity to speak in person at a hearing about the reasons he fled his country and why he could not return. He was nervous and uncertain. His lawyer took the time to help him feel supported and safe.

When the hearing came, Thomas was heard – and believed. Within a month of the ART's positive decision, he was granted a permanent protection visa.

¹ Our specialist mental health lawyers represented consumers at 1250 Mental Health Tribunal hearings and delivered specialist legal advice about mental health legal issues for consumers approximately 4000 times (in addition to the advice provided by the Mental Health Legal Rights Service helpline). Our lawyers also represented consumers at 14 review hearings at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

² Not his real name.

People impacted by family violence

We received an independent evaluation of the legal services we provide with community legal centres to support Victoria's first five specialist family violence courts. The report highlighted the important role holistic legal assistance plays in addressing gender-based violence. We continue to advocate for additional funding to extend this successful model of legal services across Victoria.

In partnership with Queerspace and Q+Law, we developed a new training module to help staff better support LGBTIQ+ people impacted by family violence. Part of our Client Safety Framework, the training promotes trauma-informed, inclusive practice and equips lawyers and client-facing staff with the skills to improve client safety.

We also developed tools and resources to help our Legal Help phone line and webchat staff provide more trauma-informed, client-centred support in family violence matters. Designed with people with lived experience of family violence, the suite includes an interactive tool and practical guides to help staff in crafting sensitive email responses and making appropriate referrals to support services.

For more, see the Pre-court services section (page 8) to learn about our early engagement service for people with family violence intervention order matters.

Children and young people

We commenced a comprehensive evaluation of our services for children and young people across different areas of law. The review has actively involved children and young people with lived experience of justice systems, helping to shape child-centred processes aimed at improving services and better addressing the complex and interconnected legal needs of young people.

The review is set to be completed later in 2025.

Regional Victorians

We have continued to invest in our facilities around the state to improve our capacity to meet growing demand in the regions.

We were pleased to establish new services in Wodonga, helping strengthen duty lawyer service delivery in the Ovens Murray region. Our team in Wodonga began duty lawyer services and casework in summary crime, family violence and child protection in early 2025.

We are working in collaboration with private practitioners and Hume Riverina Community Legal Service (HRCLS), whose ongoing services in the region are vital. Our additional service will enable more people in the region to access legal assistance.

We are also partnering with HRCLS, ARC Justice, Djirra, VALS, and Legal Aid New South Wales to form the Ovens Murray Collaborative Planning Group. The group aims to improve coordinated service delivery and deepen our understanding of local legal needs.



Strategic outcome 02

Improving community legal understanding

We aim to improve understanding of legal issues in the community to stop legal problems from happening or getting worse. We do this by providing education and information on legal rights and responsibilities, a central part of our commitment to early intervention and prevention services.

In 2024–25, we built on successful community engagement work and started new legal information projects to help people get the right information when, where and how they needed it.

Community legal education

In 2024–25, we continued to offer statewide and local legal education through community engagement sessions and saw a strong increase in participants.

As part of our focus on preventative education for young people, we delivered 186 sessions to 7423 young people at risk of disengaging from education or coming into contact with the justice system. We delivered this through our ongoing partnership with the Education Justice Initiative.

We had a stronger focus on education for First Nations communities. Our Aboriginal Community Engagement Officer team delivered 30 education sessions for 1521 participants (92 per cent more than in 2023–24).

We also expanded our work in prisons, delivering 15 education sessions across six prisons around Victoria, helping people in prison better navigate the legal system.

Community legal education	Number	Change on 2023–24
Sessions	267	+7%
Participants	11,734	+67%

Community legal information

Providing legal information is our largest service and is available to everyone through our website, publications, offices, Legal Help phone line and webchat and Help Before Court service.

In 2024–25, we continued to shift our delivery of legal information towards digital, while ensuring legal information remains accessible in multiple formats. As part of this, we streamlined several of our printed resources with directions to more detailed content online.

We published a new edition of our popular brochure *Am I old enough? Common legal issues for young people* and began a project to improve our information on family law and child support.

We have seen legal information from our website appearing in the new artificial intelligence overviews at the top of Google search results. This means people can access our information without visiting our website, explaining the decline in engaged sessions.

Community legal information	Number	Change on 2023–24
Engaged sessions on legal information website pages	963,513	-11%
Publications distributed	170,470	+14%
Information services ¹	129,010	-1%

Common legal issues

The most common issues addressed with legal information were centred on relationships, family violence, family disputes, mental health and the needs of young people. This helps provide a picture of general community issues of concern.

Legal information website pages – most visited

Divorce, separation and marriage annulment
Age of consent for having sex
Writing a character reference
Family violence and family violence intervention orders
Driving and accidents

Legal information publications – most ordered

Take control of your future decision-making: an introduction (booklet)
Independent Mental Health Advocacy (postcard)
Independent Mental Health Advocacy (postcard for First Nations communities)
Police powers: Your rights in Victoria (booklet)
Age of consent – cyberbullying (wallet card)

Legal Help phone line and webchat – top issues

Family violence – respondent
Family violence – applicant
Property settlement (family law)
Parenting plan (family law)
Victim of crime assistance

¹ These are typically delivered through Legal Help, Help Before Court or face-to-face at an office, court or public counter.



Strategic outcome 03

Collaborative legal assistance sector

We're committed to building strong and effective partnerships within the legal assistance sector to provide quality services across Victoria.

National funding agreement

The National Access to Justice Partnership was finalised and signed by all attorneys-general in November 2024. It came into effect on 1 July 2025.

The agreement provides additional investment for legal assistance services, particularly for women and children at risk of family violence and First Nations people. National Legal Aid – which we are part of – welcomed this funding commitment into the legal assistance sector.

However, National Legal Aid also pointed out that the agreement will not address critical funding pressure points for legal aid commissions. There will continue to be unmet demand for family law services and below-market rates for private practitioners delivering legally aided family law services.

We will continue to collaborate as a sector through National Legal Aid to look at options to address these ongoing service delivery gaps.

Working with First Nations partners

We are committed to working with First Nations-led organisations and communities to improve the quality and accessibility of our legal services.

In 2024–25, our Board met with the Boards of the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS) and Djirra, providing opportunities to discuss areas of shared concern and interest. We also had regular policy meetings with VALS and Djirra to discuss collaborative approaches to policy work.

We were proud to be part of the development of a framework for building First Nations cultural capability in the legal profession, launched in June 2025. This was part of a project led by VALS in partnership with us and the Law Institute of Victoria. The framework lays the foundations for a more culturally responsive legal sector.

We were also fortunate to collaborate with VALS and Djirra in creating the service model of our 1300 MOB VLA legal helpline through a co-design process facilitated by Yamagigu Consulting. For more on this, see the section on access to justice for First Nations people (page 12).

Supporting the mixed model

We work with private practitioners, barristers and community legal centres to deliver legally aided services throughout Victoria. This is called the mixed model of service delivery.

Private practitioners

Private panel practitioners remain essential to delivering quality legal assistance across Victoria.

National Legal Aid's first national private practitioners census showed their strong long-term commitment. Over half of Victorian respondents said they have worked in legal aid for more than a decade, with most remaining committed for the next five years.

The report also highlighted concerns about low practitioner fees and the administrative burden of current grants systems. We have been working to address these issues.

In January 2025, we introduced targeted fee increases and changes in criminal and family law, recognising the valuable work that panel practitioners do in a challenging financial environment. While we know there is more to do, these were changes we could make within our limited funding. We continue to advocate for increased and more sustainable funding for legal aid grants.

We have been developing a new grants management system to reduce administrative load and improve timeliness, consulting directly with practitioners as part of the design process. The upgrade of our system is an important step in strengthening our partnership with panel firms.

To support practitioners, we held regional network meetings twice in each region, offering opportunities to connect, ask questions and access training in grants, fees and vicarious trauma. We also progressed work on revised practice standards in preparation for the rollout of our new framework to monitor quality of legal aid work and compliance with terms and conditions of grants.

Barristers

In 2024–25, 38 per cent of all brief fees from our in-house lawyers and private practitioners went to women barristers, up from 36 per cent in 2023–24. Our total payments to barristers at the private Bar were \$31.7 million, of which \$11.9 million were made to women barristers.

We met the in-house targets set in our Equitable Briefing Strategy. However, we fell slightly short of the targets for all legally aided matters, including those from private practitioners. We regularly report on our progress on our website. We also continue to help lawyers find and brief diverse counsel for legally aided matters through our Equity and Diversity List.

On 30 June 2025, there were 222 barristers from the Victorian Bar and 14 public defenders from our chambers on our Criminal Trial Preferred Barristers List. We liaise with the Criminal Bar Association and the Indictable Crime Certificate Committee at the Victorian Bar about the list.

Community legal centres

Community legal centres (CLCs) are a critical part of the mixed model, providing legal assistance and related services that are client-centred, efficient and effective in meeting legal needs and improving access to justice.

In 2024–25, we worked with CLCs to:

- review the Community Legal Services Program agreement to ensure it reflects government requirements under the National Access to Justice Partnership
- undertake legal needs analysis and collaborative service planning and design
- provide professional development and training opportunities
- identify actions to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and accessibility of referral pathways.

Funding administered under the Community Legal Services Program totalled \$67,878,382 to 38 CLCs, the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service, Djirra and the Federation of Community Legal Centres.

This included core and special purpose funding for:

- supporting victims of crime
- strengthening family violence services, including response to increasing demand for family violence duty lawyer services
- supporting people with mental health conditions to access the justice system
- frontline support to address workplace sexual harassment
- domestic violence units and health-justice partnerships
- legal services related to citizenship for young people of refugee backgrounds
- increasing capacity for family law services
- tenancy and employment legal support for international students.

Collaborative Planning Committee

We take part in the Collaborative Planning Committee, a forum for senior representatives across the legal assistance sector. It aims to pursue common strategic priorities, focusing collaboration, transparency and effectiveness within the legal assistance sector.

The committee met five times in 2024–25 to discuss sector priorities, including:

- the National Access to Justice Partnership
- cultural capability in the legal assistance sector
- artificial intelligence
- advocacy on key issues affecting our clients
- opportunities to improve and coordinate referral practices for legal assistance.

The committee is co-chaired by the Department of Justice and Community Safety and the Federation of Community Legal Centres.



Strategic outcome 04

Fairer laws and systems

In 2024–25, we pursued improvements in law and policy in a range of criminal, civil, family and children's law areas and elevated clients' stories and voices through this advocacy.

For all submissions we made, visit the Victoria Legal Aid Library website.

Fairer bail laws

In response to the state government's changes to bail laws, we communicated our views about the proposals. We are monitoring the impacts of the new laws and continue to share our practice experience with the government to help inform the changes.

We have seen firsthand the disproportionate impacts that bail laws can have on our clients, particularly First Nations women, children and others at risk. We continue to advocate for appropriate protections for those most at risk, and for the expertise of First Nations-led organisations to be followed.

Youth justice

We welcomed the new *Youth Justice Act 2024* (Vic), which took effect in September 2024. We believe it will make a positive difference for children and young people and lay the groundwork for ongoing reform. The Act raises of the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 12 and prioritises diversionary options to help address issues which bring children into contact with the legal system.

We also drew on our practice work and clients' experiences in a submission to a Senate inquiry examining the outcomes and impacts of youth justice systems in Australia. In the submission, we stressed that the urgent and transformational reform set out by the Yoorrook Justice Commission must be implemented to keep children out of the youth justice system.

Victims of crime

In February 2025, we published a response to the review of the *Victims' Charter Act 2006* (Vic) by the Victims of Crime Commissioner.

Our response made number of recommendations that would strengthen the charter and its implementation. We conveyed our strong support for victims of crime having greater access to specialist legal assistance. This includes helping victims be aware of their charter entitlements and understand and navigate criminal proceedings and other legal options.

See the Access to justice for clients section (page 12) to learn about our Victims Legal Service.

Compulsory mental health treatment

We worked with 16 people with lived and living experience of compulsory mental health treatment in Victoria to share their stories and their hopes for change. Our *Being believed, being heard* report brings these stories together and highlights common themes and issues.

Many spoke of the lasting adverse impacts of compulsory treatment in their lives and how their voices were ignored. These experiences should inform ongoing mental health and wellbeing reform.

For more, see the Independent Mental Health Advocacy section (page 9) to learn about its work.

Cyan, Blaise and Matilda's stories

Cyan¹, Blaise¹ and Matilda were among many who shared their powerful stories of compulsory mental health treatment in our *Being believed, being heard* report.

'When I was a teenager, I started to struggle with my mental health. I saw all the messaging like, 'it's OK not to be OK' and I thought, I'll reach out for some help. I couldn't afford to see a private psychologist as I was on Centrelink at the time.

The irony now is that I fought to voluntarily get into a public youth mental health service. I had no idea that it would lead to me being stuck in the system for over a decade and being traumatised by my experiences. I feel like I was sold a lie.' – Cyan

'The antipsychotics changed everything. I was forced to have this treatment that was making everything worse. The mental health team wouldn't listen to me, they wouldn't listen when I told them about the horrible side effects, both mentally and physically. I think they think you're just faking the side effects so you can be taken off the medication.' – Blaise

'I wish I knew then what I know now – I have rights in this system. I should be listened to. Young people go into hospital thinking "a doctor says I must do this. I have no say."' – Matilda

¹ Not their real names.

Fairer family law system

In July 2024, we made a submission to the Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs inquiry into family violence orders. Based on our experience in providing legal assistance in some of the most complex family law matters, we highlighted opportunities to improve how the law can help families separating and support the best interests of children.

We made suggestions to improve the experiences of victim-survivors in the family law system, including expanding legal aid eligibility, adopting a model definition of family violence, and training people working in family law. We also endorsed recommendations made by National Legal Aid.

Children on intervention orders

In 2024-25, we conducted new research on child respondents to intervention orders. Drawing on our practice insights, the research noted our concern about an increase in children needing legal assistance to respond to intervention orders. It looked at the drivers behind this increase, the impacts on children's lives, and how children and families can be supported.

We presented the research at Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare's AVITH symposium in March 2025, ahead of releasing our full report in July 2025.

Serena's story

We shared the story of Serena and her children in our report on the impact the intervention order system on children and young people. See the full story in the report.

Serena is a proud First Nations woman living in regional Victoria with her teenage children, Lydia and Blake. Her kids had a fight with another girl at school. No one was injured, but police applied for a personal safety intervention order on behalf of the other girl.

The court made an interim order against Lydia and Blake without them being present. Serena says she was only told about the application and order by police officers afterwards.

'They came to the house and said the kids had an order against them, but that we didn't have to come to court for the next part. I was like, really?', she said.

'I'm not being rude, but they must think because we're black we don't understand this system, or we won't want to go to court.'

The school's response to the order also disappointed Serena. 'My daughter wasn't allowed to go to the canteen on some days because that girl sits near there at lunch. But I didn't know whose safety it was for, my kids or the other persons.'

Serena says her children have experienced racism at school for years, and that it has been hard to watch them go from liking school to not knowing where they stand.

'I just want my kids to be able to go to school and not be tarnished. Because school is supposed to be a place where kids can be safe and they're not.'

With our help, the intervention order was withdrawn after four months. But Serena says it should never have been made.

'I'm here to make a change. It might take me a while but if you keep picking on my kids and tarnishing them well, I'm not going away I'm going to fight and I'm not laying down'.

Equity in discrimination claims

Following years of advocacy through the Power to Prevent Coalition, we welcomed the passage of *Australian Human Rights Commission Amendment (Costs Protection) Act 2024* (Cth) in September 2024. The Act adopts a model where people who bring discrimination or sexual harassment claims will not have to risk financial ruin to enforce their rights under anti-discrimination law.

The Act implemented the final outstanding recommendation of the Respect@Work sexual harassment national inquiry conducted by the Australian Human Rights Commission in 2020.

Strategic litigation

Our advocacy and law reform work includes strategic litigation, such as running test cases to clarify points of law or challenging the way laws are applied in practice.

High Court ruling on mandatory visa cancellation

We welcomed a landmark decision¹ that a notice of a visa cancellation is not valid when the recipient lacks legal capacity to respond to that notice.

The court found that the Department of Home Affairs did not give valid notice of visa cancellation to our client, as he did not have capacity to understand or respond to the notice issued to him while in prison.

This set an important precedent for the rights of non-citizens in prison or detention who are subject to visa cancellation where they do not have capacity to take action in response. It also reinforces the need for early legal and non-legal assistance so people with disability or mental health issues can be supported to exercise their rights.

The court ordered that our client's previous visa cancellation notice be quashed and reissued to his advocate guardian at the Office of the Public Advocate. This later occurred, and our client was permitted to respond to the notice.

After the Department refused to restore his visa, he sought review at the Administrative Review Tribunal. In July 2025, the tribunal made a decision reinstating his permanent visa. He now has access to his funds from the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

This case demonstrates the harsh impacts of the government's mandatory visa cancellation policy. We support calls in our sector for the policy's repeal.

¹ *BIF23 v Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs* [2024] HCA 44



Strategic outcome 05

Effective and sustainable Victoria Legal Aid

We aim to build an effective organisation by investing in our people, technology and systems.

Enterprise agreement

We successfully negotiated our Enterprise Agreement 2024–28 with the Community and Public Sector Union. The agreement improves work conditions, wellbeing and equity in our organisation. Some of its highlights include pay increases and financial benefits, a more modern job classification framework, and new leave entitlements.

Diversity, equity and inclusion

Fostering a diverse, equitable and inclusive workforce that values staff wellbeing remains a priority.

In 2024–25, some of our work to support gender equality included updating recruitment practices to consider pay equity in hiring and salary decisions and supporting women to take up leadership development opportunities. As part of our new enterprise agreement, we introduced paid leave for reproductive and fertility health and a more equitable job classification framework.

We're proud that our gender pay gap for women declined to eight per cent, down from 10 per cent and below the national gender pay gap of 12 per cent.¹ However, we know that there is more to do.

We are also committed to taking tangible actions towards dismantling racism. Senior leaders and staff have undertaken anti-racism training to build skills in recognising and responding to racism. We supported four women of colour to attend the Women of Colour Leadership and Allyship Summit.

To foster discussion, we held staff events for the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, National Reconciliation Week and the International Day of People with Disability. We also shared staff's personal reflections on a range of diversity issues, including First Nations justice, racism, women's health, gender identity, migration and more.

We will soon begin developing an integrated diversity, equity and inclusion strategy. The strategy will renew and bring together our work on cultural diversity, anti-racism, disability, gender equality and other diversity through an intersectional lens.

Safe and supportive workplaces

We aim to maintain a culture of safety and wellbeing for everyone in our workplaces.

In 2024–25, there was an increase in reports of inappropriate behaviour experienced or witnessed by staff at work. We have zero tolerance for inappropriate behaviour, which we know has historically been underreported. It has been encouraging to see more staff feeling confident to seek support.

While this suggests an increase in trust in how we handle these sensitive matters, we know we must continue to build trust and safety in our reporting processes and monitor any concerning patterns.

We are also continuing to implement our psychosocial wellbeing framework, which addresses workplace stress and supports a healthy and sustainable workforce.

For more information, see the Health, safety and wellbeing section (page 26).

Technology, cybersecurity and data

We continually improve our technology to better support staff, practice partners, and clients.

In 2024–25, this included work on a new grants management system to streamline applications and improve the accuracy and timeliness of client support. We have also been improving our finance and internal human resource systems to support a more modern and sustainable workforce.

We are at the early stages of implementing artificial intelligence technology ethically and safely to support staff productivity and wellbeing, helping achieve better client services. We have also supported staff with guidance on how to use publicly available artificial intelligence tools responsibly.

Robust protections keep our systems and information safe from cybersecurity attacks. Some of our improvements in 2024–25 included better training, device security and security response systems. We have also continued to improve our document and data management processes.

¹ We use the gender pay gap definition used by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency. Data was sourced from our payroll system on 18 January 2025 and is a snapshot of our workforce on that day.

First Nations strategies

We have a set of strategies that guide our work in building a more client-centred and responsive organisation for First Nations people. These include our Aboriginal services strategy, employment strategy and cultural learning strategy.

In 2024–25, we focused on bolstering our First Nations Services directorate and embedding its governance over First Nations projects and initiatives. The appointments of an executive director, director and associate director – as well as the employment of new staff – have elevated First Nations leadership and strategic guidance in our organisation.

We recognise that increasing First Nations employment opportunities contributes to a more diverse and responsive service. On 30 June 2025, we had 58 First Nations staff (11 more than on 30 June 2024), representing four per cent of our workforce. We are committed to increasing this to five per cent.

Seven First Nations people were in our clerkship, graduate and new lawyers programs. A number of First Nations staff also engaged in leadership and professional development. For example, we supported two staff to undertake a Graduate Diploma in Family Dispute Resolution Practice.

To build cultural understanding and awareness, we continued to offer cultural learning opportunities for our staff. As of 30 June 2025, 92 per cent of staff had completed mandatory cultural training and 37 per cent undertook additional training with the Koorie Heritage Trust. Teams in our regional offices also engaged with local Traditional Owners to attend cultural immersion training to build understanding of their unique histories and culture.

The new First Nations Cultural Capability Framework (led by the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service) will guide our future approach to building the cultural capability of our staff.

Reconciliation Action Plan

Our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2023–25 reflects our commitment to making reconciliation our everyday business.

This is an overview of key highlights in 2024–25. However, while we are proud of the increased embeddedness of reconciliation in our work in recent years, there is much more to do.

For details on our work, see the sections on access to justice for clients (page 12), working with First Nations partners (page 16) and First Nations strategies (on left).

Relationships

We are deepening our collaboration with First Nations communities and organisations to support self-determination. We continue to follow the leadership of the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service and Djirra on shared projects and initiatives. We also held a staff event for National Reconciliation Week with guest speaker Jidah Clark from the Treaty Authority, which allowed us to reflect on cultural authority in Treaty and justice reform.

Respect

We are committed to being a culturally safe, inclusive and responsive organisation for First Nations clients and staff. We are proud to have been involved in the Yoorrook Walk for Truth and NAIDOC Week march. Our staff, leadership and Board continued to engage in cultural learning activities that build understanding and respect for First Nations cultures and histories.

Opportunities

We are proud of the increase in First Nations employment in our organisation, supported by clerkship, graduate and leadership development opportunities. Part of this increase related to the growth of our First Nations Services directorate, Aboriginal Community Engagement Officer program and other designated roles.

Governance

We have embedded stronger governance structures to oversee our RAP implementation and reporting. We published a mid-term report, outlining our progress and challenges in the first 12 months of the RAP. We also re-established our RAP Champions staff network, enabling passionate staff to be strong reconciliation advocates and good allies to First Nations people.

06

Our governance

Governance structure

Our governance structure includes our Board, chief executive officer, executive management group and senior leadership team. Our organisational chart is available on our website.

Data in this section is current as of 30 June 2025.

Board

Our Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring we meet our statutory objectives and carry out our functions in accordance with the *Legal Aid Act 1978* (Vic).

We were pleased to welcome two new members to our Board, following the departure of Andrew Jackomos PSM and George Habib.

Llewellyn Prain, an experienced company director and strong advocate for the rights of people with disability, was appointed in July 2024. Elly Patira, an experienced legal, regulatory and public policy professional, was appointed in December 2024. We are fortunate to have their experience and insight to help shape our path ahead.

Members

Bill Jaboor (Chairperson)

Robbie Campo

George Habib (until 3 July 2024)

Andrew Jackomos (until 25 July 2024)

Tal Karp

Clare Morton

Elly Patira (from 17 December 2024)

Llewellyn Prain (from 3 July 2024)

Andrew Saunders

Diversity

This data represents Board members on 30 June 2025.

Gender:

Female: 5

Male: 2

Self-described: 0

Location:

Metro Melbourne: 6

Regional: 1

LGBTIQ+: 0

First Nations: 1

Culturally and linguistically diverse: 2

Disability¹: 3

Age:

under 35: 0

35–44: 2

45–54: 1

55 and over: 4

¹ We intend the term 'disability' to encompass the social model of disability with a broad and inclusive meaning. It encompasses any impairment, including physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment. It also includes a functional limitation – whether permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person's full and equal participation in society.

Sub-committees

Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee

Andrew Saunders (Chairperson)
Robbie Campo
Bill Jaboor
Tal Karp (from 21 August 2024)

Workplace Wellbeing, Health and Safety Committee

Clare Morton (Chairperson)
Bill Jaboor
Tal Karp (until 20 August 2024)
Elly Patira (from 12 February 2025)
Llewellyn Prain (from 21 August 2024)

Data and Digital Committee

Tal Karp (Chairperson)
Robbie Campo
Andrew Saunders

Performance Committee

Bill Jaboor (Chairperson)
Tal Karp
Clare Morton
Andrew Saunders

Executive management

Chief Executive Officer

Toby Hemming (from 17 February 2025)
Louise Glanville (until 20 September 2024)

Chief Operating Officer

Cameron Hume

Executive Director, Criminal Law

Kate Bundrock (from 2 September 2024)¹
Dan Nicholson (until 26 July 2024)

Executive Director, Family, Youth and Children's Law

Joanna Fletcher

Executive Director, First Nations Services

Ashley Morris (from 18 November 2024)²

Executive Director, Legal Practice, Civil Justice, Legal Help

Rowan McRae

Executive Director, Regions and Service Delivery

Peter Noble

Senior leadership

Chief Counsel

Julia Munster

General Counsel

Sarah Nieuwenhuysen

Chief Information and Digital Officer

Martin Edwards

Chief Financial Officer

Matthew Dale

Director, Civil Justice

Lucy Adams

Director, Client Services and Sector Engagement

Zione Walker-Nthenda

Director, Family Violence and Family Law

Eila Pourasgheri

Director, Legal Help

Jon Cina

Director, Legal Practice

Sonia Law (from 14 October 2024)

Director, People and Workplace Services

Daniella Calkoen

Director, Summary Crime and Therapeutic Justice

Elanor Peattie (from 5 May 2025, job-share)³
Jen Black (from 5 May 2025, job-share)
Kate Bundrock (until 30 August 2024)⁴

More information about our senior leaders is available on our website.

Diversity

This data represents senior leaders on 30 June 2025.

Gender:

Female: 12

Male: 7

Self-described: 0

Location:

Metro Melbourne: 18

Regional: 1

LGBTIQA+: 1

First Nations: 1

Culturally and linguistically diverse: 3

Disability⁵: 2

Age:

under 35: 1

35–44: 2

45–54: 12

55 and over: 3

¹ Kate Bundrock acted in the role from 29 July to 30 August 2024.

² Ashley Morris was Director, First Nations Services until 15 November 2024.

³ Elanor Peattie acted in the role from 29 July 2024 to 2 May 2025.

⁴ Kate Bundrock acted as Executive Director, Criminal Law, from 29 July to 30 August 2024.

⁵ We intend the term 'disability' to encompass the social model of disability with a broad and inclusive meaning. It encompasses any impairment, including physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment. It also includes a functional limitation – whether permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person's full and equal participation in society.

Staff and employment

Employment and conduct principles

Our staff are bound by the values and employment principles in the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees and the *Public Administration Act 2004* (Vic). Our Recruitment and Selection Policy also sets out a best practice approach to recruitment and selection that ensures employment decisions are based on merit and support the code of conduct values of impartiality, integrity, accountability and respect.

Employment levels

In 2024–25, our workforce grew by 141.2 full-time equivalent (FTE) roles, which represents a 12 per cent increase from 2023–24. This was related to continued service expansions aligned with state and federal funding decisions, particularly for First Nations services, early intervention and engagement, therapeutic justice, migration law, non-legal support, Legal Help, and services in the Ovens Murray and flood-affected regions.

30 June 2025								30 June 2024							
All employees		Ongoing				Fixed term and casual		All employees		Ongoing				Fixed term and casual	
No.	FTE	F/T	P/T	FTE	No.	FTE		No.	FTE	F/T	P/T	FTE	No.	FTE	
Gender															
Female	1120	1006.2	599	344	848.1	177	158.1	986	884.4	529	297	741.9	160	142.5	
Male	332	317.2	233	44	265.1	55	52.1	312	297.7	219	34	243.9	59	53.8	
Self-desc	14	13.3	10	2	11.6	2	1.7	14	13.4	9	1	9.8	4	3.6	
Age															
15-24	83	71.4	33	26	50.7	24	20.7	85	72.2	35	18	46.4	32	25.8	
25-34	506	476.9	317	79	375.0	110	101.9	450	421.3	277	75	331.1	98	90.2	
35-44	427	386.0	240	128	332.8	59	53.2	376	341.2	214	106	290.7	56	50.5	
45-54	258	233.8	150	82	212.0	26	21.8	228	208.1	136	69	187.6	23	20.6	
55-64	150	134.4	84	53	122.1	13	12.3	132	119.2	78	43	108.9	11	10.3	
65+	42	34.3	18	22	32.3	2	2	41	33.5	17	21	30.9	3	2.6	
Employment classification level															
VLA2	283	246.8	126	102	198.1	55	48.8	257	219.6	107	88	168.7	62	50.8	
VLA3	553	507.7	313	139	414.7	101	93	525	483.7	306	118	389.6	101	94.1	
VLA4	433	395.6	269	109	347.0	55	48.6	358	328.6	221	91	287.1	46	41.5	
VLA5	135	128.6	90	25	109.2	20	19.4	117	112.1	82	23	100.1	12	12.0	
VLA6	42	39.4	30	9	37.3	3	2.1	38	35.1	28	8	33.6	2	1.5	
VLA7	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Non-exec	1447	1319	829	384	1107.1	234	211.9	1295	1179	744	328	979.1	223	199.9	
Execs	19	17.7	13	6	17.7	0	0	17	16.5	13	4	16.5	0	0.0	
Total	1466	1336.7	842	390	1124.8	234	211.9	1312	1195.5	757	332	995.6	223	199.9	

Senior Executive Service officers

The workforce data tables below include Senior Executive Service (SES) officers active in the final full pay period of 2024–25. Variations are compared to 2023–24.

Number of ongoing executive officers

	All		Male		Female	
	No.	Var.	No.	Var.	No.	Var.
SES-3	1	0	1	1	0	-1
SES-2	6	1	3	0	3	1
SES-1	12	1	3	-1	9	2
Total	19	2	7	0	12	2

Reconciliation of executive numbers

Role	2025	2024
Executives	21	18
Accountable officer	0	0
(Less) separations	2	1
Total executive numbers at 30 June¹	19	17

Executive salaries

These salaries are for the full financial year at a 1-FTE rate and exclude superannuation.

Income band	Executives
\$200,000–\$219,999	4
\$220,000–\$239,999	7
\$240,000–\$259,999	1
\$260,000–\$279,999	3
\$280,000–\$299,999	3
\$440,000–\$459,999	1

Health, safety and wellbeing

We take workplace health, safety and wellbeing (HSW) seriously and have programs and initiatives in place to support this, built on the foundation of an HSW management system.

In 2024–25, we made progress in developing frameworks and implementing targeted interventions to support wellbeing. We continued to manage psychosocial hazards – our main HSW concern.

Key achievements included:

- launching a workload and demand management framework, which provides structured guidance for managing work-related stressors and preventing burnout
- expanding group reflective practice trials with successful outcomes and plans for further expansion
- continuing to develop a psychosocial wellbeing framework and preparing for the implementation of new psychosocial regulations expected in late 2025
- addressing mental health stigma in the workplace and promoting open dialogue and support-seeking behaviours.

We made targeted improvements to our HSW management system, focusing on incident management processes and expanding training. Our training emphasised vicarious trauma and trauma-informed practice, provided to staff and private panel practitioners via regional networks. These changes supported better identification, reporting, prevention and resolution of HSW issues.

Our Board-level Workplace Wellbeing Health and Safety Committee and collaborative Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee provided strategic direction and active oversight of our HSW initiatives, ensuring they were aligned with operational needs and regulatory requirements.

¹ See financial statement note 9.4.

Incident management

This data is based on 1336.7 as the FTE figure at end of 2024-25. Claims data is sourced from our authorised WorkCover agent.

Performance indicator	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23
Incidents (and rate per 100 FTE)	253 (18.93)	206 (17.23)	209 (20.78)
New standard claims (and rate per 100 FTE)	2 (0.15)	2 (0.17)	4 (0.40)
New lost time claims (and rate per 100 FTE)	2 (0.15)	1 (0.09)	4 (0.40)
Fatality claims	0	0	0
Average cost per standard claim ¹	\$10,418	\$2859	\$24,024
Average incurred costs per standard claim ²	\$18,841	\$12,073	\$153,517

The total number of incident reports increased by 23 per cent compared to in 2023-24. This was expected, based on improvements to our incident reporting tool and internal promotion of the value of incident reporting. There was also an increase in 'near miss' reporting, indicating a proactive shift towards a positive safety culture.

The average cost and average incurred cost of the two new standard claims were slightly higher than in the previous year but were still relatively low. There is little that can be inferred from these figures given the small number of claims for an organisation of our size.

1 Actual cost spent per premium impacting claim received during the financial year, averaged over each standard premium impacting claim.

2 Actual cost spent per premium impacting claim received during the financial year, plus the case estimate, averaged over each standard premium impacting claim.

Expenditure procurement

Consultancies

In 2024–25, we had five consultancy engagements where the total fees payable were less than \$10,000. The total expenditure was \$24,758 (excluding GST).

We had 18 consultancy engagements where the total fees payable were \$10,000 or greater. They are listed in this table. The total expenditure was \$1,160,094 (excluding GST).

Consultant	Purpose	Total approved project fee (excl. GST)	Expenditure (excl. GST)	Future expenditure (excl. GST)
Allen & Clarke Consulting	Development of quality assurance framework review	\$19,886	\$19,886	\$0
Arinco	Development of a data warehouse replacement pilot solution.	\$40,050	\$23,400	\$16,650
Bevington Group	Artificial intelligence strategy, plan and support	\$135,293	\$135,293	\$0
Deloitte Consulting	Market scan and development of business case for a new human resource information system	\$202,780	\$202,780	\$0
Fitzroy Legal Service	Development of training module on working with LGBTIQ+ clients	\$11,333	\$11,333	\$0
K Murray Consulting	Review of fees and mental health report	\$109,800	\$80,100	\$29,700
K Murray Consulting	Strategic planning support – Disaster Legal Help Victoria	\$18,000	\$18,000	\$0
KPMG Chartered Accountants	Service data initiative and cost benefit analysis for legal aid demand funding model	\$316,462	\$283,724	\$32,738
La Trobe University	Evaluation of Independent Mental Health Advocacy program	\$51,997	\$51,997	\$0
Louw Consulting	Digital strategy engagement	\$38,000	\$38,000	\$0
NICCAS Cultural Infusion Services	Cultural safety audit	\$25,500	\$15,500	\$10,000
Portable	Modernisation of Legal Help functions	\$14,012	\$14,012	\$0
RMIT University	Evaluation of Specialist Family Violence Courts legal practice, resourcing and allocations	\$52,889	\$52,889	\$0
SenateSHJ	Crisis simulation exercise	\$62,727	\$27,060	\$5,349
Social Ventures Australia	Client services strategy research	\$16,529	\$16,529	\$0
Votar Partners	Document retention and authority	\$14,800	\$14,800	\$0
Worklogic	Employment and human resource advice	\$18,710	\$18,710	\$0
Yamagigu Consulting	First Nations legal helpline project	\$136,080	\$136,080	\$0

Reviews and studies

In addition to these reviews and studies, others were conducted as part of consultancy engagements and are listed in the Consultancies section (page 28).

Name	Purpose	Scope	Anticipated outcomes	Estimated cost for year (excl. GST)	Final cost (excl. GST)	Publicly available
Assurance mapping internal audit	To refresh our assurance map	Audit to refresh our assurance map of risk controls against the 'three lines model'	Report mapping risk controls against 'three lines model' and identifying opportunities to strengthen control arrangements	\$47,495	\$47,495	No
Children's legal services project	To review services for young people with multiple or complex legal services to inform service improvements	Analysis of grants data and consultation with young people	Better understanding of entry points to legal assistance and how to enhance services	\$1960	\$1960	No
Client experience survey	To understand client experience with our services	Annual online and phone survey to obtain client feedback	Data and insights to inform continuous improvement to our services	\$77,246	\$77,246	Yes Available on website
Client outcomes research	To understand outcomes of legal assistance services, particularly legal advice	Qualitative consultation with clients with in-depth interviews, focusing on legal advice services	Insights on client experience and suggestions for improvements	\$85,000	\$85,000	No
Data governance internal audit	To audit our third-party data risk	Assessment of the effectiveness of our third-party data risk management	Findings and recommendations to ensure effective practices across the organisation	\$47,495	\$47,495	No
Early intervention services study	To draw together our evidence and lessons on outcomes produced by our early intervention services	Review of literature, internal stakeholder interviews and preliminary findings workshop	Informing design and improvement of early intervention services, and guidance for future investment decisions	\$30,000	\$39,600	No
Family law fee review ¹	To better align family law fee structure with court processes and more accurately reflect work required to represent clients	Targeted review of our family law fees and fee structure	Increase panel practitioner satisfaction and retention	\$26,836	\$115,142	No

¹ The estimated and final costs are of the review itself and not implementation of fee changes.

Name	Purpose	Scope	Anticipated outcomes	Estimated cost for year (excl. GST)	Final cost (excl. GST)	Publicly available
First Nations employment policies review	To identify anti-discrimination and unconscious bias provisions in policies and procedures	Review of existing employment policies and procedures	Improved policies and procedures and removal of barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week	N/A (budgeted for 2023-24)	\$10,750	No
Lotjpa Independent Legal Service review	To understand the successes, challenges and learnings from the Lotjpa Independent Legal Service	Desktop research and analysis of data and materials to inform reflections of the service	Learnings and recommendations for future truth telling activities and services that aim to meet the needs of First Nations people	\$59,000	\$59,000	No Summary on website
Managing challenging interactions risk assessment	To review health, safety and wellbeing systems and supports for staff to provide and maintain a safe place of work	Analyse current state and create behaviour classification system and prevention and management framework	Development and implementation of a framework for managing challenging interactions with clients and others	\$4050	\$30,000	No
Procure-to-pay internal audit	To audit our procurement cycle	Evaluate the design and operating effectiveness of our procure-to-pay lifecycle	Findings and recommendations to ensure procurement practices are effective and appropriate	\$47,495	\$47,495	No
Standing directions internal audit	To support compliance with standing directions	Audit of our processes to support compliance with the Standing Directions 2018 of the Minister of Finance	Findings and recommendations to help ensure our financial management practices align with standing directions	\$20,355	\$20,355	No

Information and communication technology

In 2024–25, we had a total information and communication technology (ICT) expenditure of \$8,920,223, an increase of 12 per cent compared to in 2023–24.

This increase can be attributed to increases in vendor storage and software costs plus support for staff growth through service expansion and capital project activity.

Business as usual ICT expenditure

Capital expenditure

	Digital Legal Aid	ICT equipment and intangibles
\$6,350,350	\$2,040,361	\$529,512

Government advertising

The disclosure threshold for government advertising expenditure (campaigns with a media spend) is \$100,000 (excluding GST). Our total advertising expenditure in 2024–25 did not meet this threshold.

Major contracts

There were no contracts entered into during the financial year that require specific disclosure as they were all less than \$10 million in value.

Local Jobs First

In 2024–25, we had one procurement that met the Local Jobs First threshold of \$3 million or more in metropolitan Melbourne or for state-wide activities. This was the provision of a document management system request for proposal. However, the activity is still in evaluation and the outcomes are not final. Reporting will be included in our next annual report.

We had no other projects that require specific disclosure under the *Local Jobs First Act 2003* (Vic).

Competitive neutrality policy

We comply with the requirements of the National Competition Policy, where relevant, to ensure competitive neutrality where any services compete, or potentially compete, with the private sector.

Emergency procurement

There was no activation of our Emergency Procurement Plan this year resulting in no spending on emergency procurements.

Social procurement

In line with the government's Social Procurement Framework, we prioritise the following social procurement objectives:

- opportunities for Victorian Aboriginal people
- supporting safe and fair workplaces
- opportunities for Victorians with a disability
- women's equality and safety
- sustainable Victorian regions.

During 2024–25, we:

- engaged 24 social benefit suppliers, spending a total of \$401,940 with certified social enterprises, Aboriginal businesses and disability enterprises
- engaged 19 Victorian Aboriginal businesses, representing 2.1 per cent of our total suppliers.

We also maintained initiatives to support social procurement. This included a requirement in our procurement policy and process to search available databases for social benefit suppliers, and incorporating social and sustainable evaluation criteria into procurement documentation.

Buildings

We are exempt from notifying our compliance with the building and maintenance provisions of the *Building Act 1993* (Vic) as we do not own any buildings.

Complaints

Complaints give us information about our clients' experience and inform how we can improve our services. We use complaints data to detect issues early and direct our quality assurance processes. Information about how to make a complaint is available on our website.

Overview of complaints

What complaint was about	Number	Change on 2023-24
Our services and staff	Number of complaints	228 +46%
	Resolved within 28 days	73% +387%
Private panel practitioner services ¹	Number of complaints	172 +19%
	Resolved within 28 days	69% +23%
Total	Number of complaints	400 +33%
	Resolved within 28 days	71% +103%

There are likely to be a range of factors contributing to the increase in the number of complaints. For example, this may include:

- the increased number of enquiries to our Internal Legal Services team
- the growth in volume and complexity of our services
- greater awareness of the complaints process
- increase in complaints against certain private practitioners.

Complaints about our services and staff

Complaints were most commonly about the quality of legal advice (11 per cent), delay or failure to progress a case (11 per cent) or seeking our services (10 per cent).

Those that proceeded to an investigation were most commonly resolved by explanation and information provision (30 per cent) and apology (14 per cent).

We have also introduced an early resolution officer role to manage complaints about our services and staff, which led to greater effectiveness and responsiveness in handling these complaints.

Complaints about private panel practitioner services

The number of complaints we received about private practitioners remained low at approximately one complaint per 81 grants of legal assistance (compared to one per 79 grants in 2023-24).

Complaints were most commonly about lack of communication (25 per cent), quality of legal advice (18 per cent) or failure to follow instructions (15 per cent). They were most commonly resolved by referral to another service (34 per cent) and information provision (29 per cent).

Sixteen per cent of complaints were still under investigation on 30 June 2025.

Complaints about procurement

We received no formal procurement complaints in 2024-25.

Public interest disclosure

We support the objectives of the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012* (Vic) and the protection of people who disclose improper conduct. Information about how to make a protected disclosure and our commitment to protection from detrimental action in reprisal for protected disclosures is available on our website.

¹ Private panel practitioners are required to have an internal complaint handling policy. Complaints resolved under those policies are not captured in our data.

Information and privacy

Information and records management

As a public office, we must comply with relevant legislative and regulatory obligations for information and records management. Our staff must create and maintain full and accurate records of the business they conduct while representing our clients.

In 2024–25, we improved information and records management by:

- supporting staff to send physical records offsite, resulting in almost all our offices now being ‘paper-free’
- identifying common information management needs across the organisation and starting the development of guidance to support those needs
- continuing to embed best practices in new system implementations, greatly assisting in improving information management requirements, security and compliance with Public Records Office of Victoria standards and legislation
- beginning to develop a retention and disposal program to improve information lifecycle management and reduce privacy and security risks of retaining information longer than required
- starting a review of our data collection and retention to identify personal identification information with the aim of reducing collection and disposing through documented and scheduled disposal programs.

Information privacy

Our obligations for information privacy are governed by the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic). We are committed to ensuring our clients understand how we collect and use the private information they entrust to us.

In 2024–25, the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner (OVIC) referred one complaint to us about an alleged privacy breach. The matter was resolved without OVIC making a finding. We did not breach any privacy laws.

Information about how we handle personal information is available on our website.

Freedom of information

The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Vic) provides a public right of access to certain information and documents that we hold. Information about the types of freedom of information (FOI) requests we handle and how to make a request is on our website.

In 2024–25, we received 95 applications (88 per cent more than in 2023–24). All were made by members of the public. Of these:

- two resulted in full release of documents
- five resulted in partial release of documents
- one was refused
- five resulted in no documents
- 77 resulted in release of documents outside of the Act
- five were not processed (FOI fee not paid)
- none were withdrawn or abandoned.

All decisions made within the statutory time periods. There were no decisions made after mandatory extensions had been applied or extensions were agreed upon by the applicant.

OVIC notified us of one request for a review.

Environmental performance

We support the Victorian Government’s commitment to minimising the public sector’s impact on the environment. Our Climate Change Strategy 2023–26 has guided our actions and pushed us to invest in 100 per cent GreenPower for all our sites.

Reporting period and boundary

We are using the fringe benefit tax (FBT) year, 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 for this reporting. This is the approach taken by various Victorian Government entities to reduce the need to rely on estimates where data is not available for the financial year at the time of reporting. It also means that we can use actual data from utility bills and meet annual reporting deadlines.

Our reporting includes 15 offices. Our new co-working space in Wodonga is excluded as it is outside of our operational control and we do not receive utility bills for the site.

Indicator	2024–25	2023–24
Total full-time equivalent (FTE) employees	1334 ¹	1111
Total office area (m ²)	17,458	17,439
Number of offices	15	14

1 This figure is the average for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 and may be different to other FTE totals appearing in this report.

Greenhouse gas emissions

Our overall emissions decreased by 29 per cent from 2023–24. This is a result of switching to 100 per cent GreenPower energy on 1 July 2023.

Indicator	2024–25	2023–24
Total Scope 1 ¹ emissions (tonnes CO ₂ -e) – car fleet	90.4	60.4
Total Scope 2 ² emissions (tonnes CO ₂ -e) – electricity	0	48.0
Total Scope 3 ³ emissions (tonnes CO ₂ -e) – air travel	11.5	35.2

For Scope 1 emissions, the 49 per cent increase was driven by:

- an expansion in our services
- an increase in the number of cars in our fleet (consistent with service expansions)
- changes to the models in our fleet
- increased vehicle use.

The expansion of the Independent Mental Health Advocacy service has led to increased visits to hospitals and mental health service providers, contributing to emissions.

For Scope 2 emissions, a market-based calculation method was used as this considers our use of GreenPower and the zero emissions from the renewable sources used by our electricity suppliers.

For Scope 3 emissions, there was a 67 per cent decrease in emissions. The emissions were due to a higher than usual number of flights taken while our Mildura office was being expanded and refurbished. There was an increase in staff based in Melbourne travelling to Mildura to assist with capital works, while new Mildura staff were travelling to Melbourne for training and development.

Electricity production and consumption

We purchased 100 per cent GreenPower to power our offices. GreenPower is a government managed scheme that commits our electricity providers to buying the equivalent of our electricity usage from renewable energy sources.

There was a six per cent increase in our electricity consumption as we had increased staffing levels to support new and expanding services, particularly in our non-legal advocacy services.

Indicator	2024–25	2023–24
Total electricity consumption – purchased electricity (office buildings) (MWh)	922.0	872.0
GreenPower	922.0	651.3

Stationary fuel use

As we lease our office spaces, we do not have operational control over the buildings' heating systems and diesel back-up generators. We are not able to collect or apportion this data as we do not have access to billing information from fuel suppliers. As a result, the reported stationary fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions from this source are zero.

Transportation

Our car fleet has 37 passenger vehicles, primarily used to support regional and rural service delivery. All are petrol and diesel hybrids, except for one fully diesel vehicle. Most of our fleet are Subaru Forester Hybrids.

There was a 157 per cent increase in the total energy used in transportation due to an increase in the amount of petrol and diesel purchased. This was the result of:

- a change in calculation methodology for a more accurate estimate
- a 112 per cent increase in the volume of fuel purchased
- a lack of availability of our previous car fleet models, which were more fuel efficient⁴
- an increase in car use to support staff visiting clients at hospitals and mental health facilities.

1 Scope 1 greenhouse gas emissions are from sources owned or controlled by us, which is currently our car fleet. The fugitive greenhouse gas emissions that result from kitchen fridges and car air conditioning were estimated and have been excluded as they are less than one per cent of our total emissions and therefore do not meet materiality.

2 Scope 2 greenhouse gas emissions are from the purchase of GreenPower electricity from the grid.

3 Scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions are from commercial air travel undertaken to carry out our work.

4 The Toyota Camry and Corolla vehicles in our previous fleet had an average fuel efficiency of 4.1 litres per 100 kilometers. Our current fleet (mainly Subaru Forester) has an average fuel efficiency of 6.7 litres per 100 kilometers.

We are planning to transition to 100 per cent zero emission vehicles in the long-term, consistent with the Victorian Government's commitment as a signatory of the COP26 declaration on accelerating the transition to 100 per cent zero emission cars and vans.

Indicator	2024-25	2023-24
Number of vehicles – passenger, internal combustion engine	37	31
Total energy used in transportation – vehicles (MJ) ¹	1,331,751	516,833
Greenhouse gas emissions from vehicle fleet (tonnes CO ₂ -e)	90.4	60.4
Total distance travelled by commercial air travel (passenger kilometres)	56,072	114,705

Total energy use

Total energy use increased by 27 per cent from 2023-24 due to increased transportation and electricity use. Energy from electricity use was from certified renewable sources, whereas our energy from our car fleet is currently from non-renewable sources.

Indicator	2024-25	2023-24
Total energy from fuels – stationary and transportation (MJ)	1,331,751	516,833
Total energy used from electricity (MJ)	3,318,549	3,140,519
Units of energy used normalised by FTE (MJ)	3486	3292

Environmentally sustainable design in new buildings and infrastructure

We lease four and a half floors of a 5 Star NABERS Energy rated building in Melbourne CBD. Our office in Sunshine has a 4.5 Star NABERS Energy rating. None of our other offices are currently rated under the NABERS scheme.

¹ For a more accurate estimate, the 2024-25 figure is based on a new calculation methodology using litres of fuel purchased. Consistent with our last annual report, the 2023-24 figure is based on the old methodology using kilometres travelled. The 2023-24 result using the new methodology is 622,088 MJ.

Additional information on request

In compliance with the Standing Directions of the Minister for Finance under the *Financial Management Act 1994* (Vic), information relating to the 2024-25 reporting period is to be made available to ministers, members of parliament and the public on request and subject to the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Vic).

Financial Management Compliance Attestation Statement

I, Bill Jaboor, on behalf of the Responsible Body, certify that Victoria Legal Aid has no Material Compliance Deficiency with respect to the applicable Standing Directions under the *Financial Management Act 1994* and Instructions.

Bill Jaboor

Bill Jaboor
Chairperson

24 September 2025

07

Our finances

We thank the state and federal governments for their support and welcome investment under the National Access to Justice Partnership 2025–30. We also thank the Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner for the important funding it provides. Despite this, we know that large unmet demand for legal services continues.

In addition, we are grappling with the sustainability of some of our key funding models to meet current demand. As a result, we are carefully using our limited unallocated cash reserves to avoid service reductions, and this is the main driver for our funding deficit of \$3.3 million this year.

The inadequacy of private practitioner fees, as shown in the first national private practitioner census from National Legal Aid, may mean fewer practitioners doing legally aided work. We continue to advocate for increased and more sustainable funding for legal aid grants to ensure the continuing health of the legal aid scheme.

In January 2025, we introduced modest, targeted fee increases and changes for some criminal and family law matters, recognising the very valuable work panel practitioners do in a challenging financial environment. There is much more to do, however we were able to make these small changes within our current funding model.

Given these challenges, we are carefully using our limited unallocated cash reserves to defer the need to reduce vital services. However, this is not sustainable longer term. Our cash reserves are currently high due to a range of factors, including funds received that are required to meet future year commitments to many tied initiatives and grant commitments, which often span multiple years in line with court activity.

Without additional funding in the future, we will need to reduce services which will negatively impact our clients, the justice system and the community.

Financial summary	2024–25 \$'000	2023–24 \$'000	2022–23 \$'000	2021–22 \$'000	2020–21 \$'000
Total income from transactions	352,825	339,926	284,447	276,148	272,639
Total expenses from transactions	-356,264	-325,872	-291,289	-268,447	-247,943
Net result from transactions	-3439	14,054	6842	7701	24,696
Net result for the period	-3254	13,486	-5267	3795	24,933
Net cash from (used in) operating activities	4339	29,021	12,671	23,825	43,113
Total assets	171,918	184,122	170,446	175,192	176,670
Total liabilities	88,978	97,927	97,738	97,216	102,489
Total equity	82,941	86,195	72,709	77,976	74,181

Financial performance

Income

Our total income of \$352.8 million was \$12.9 million more than in 2023–24.

The state and federal governments provided almost 79 per cent of our operating income, while the Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner (VLSB+C) administered Public Purpose Fund provided 18 per cent.

The majority of the increase in income was related to project funding from the VLSB+C to support:

- service capacity and capability for First Nations clients
- data and digital innovation and cybersecurity
- the pilot of a new remand support service.

Through the National Legal Assistance Partnership, the federal government provided \$59.8 million in funding (\$3.4 million more than in 2023–24, primarily due to indexation). The federal government also contributed specific funding of \$17.8 million (\$4 million less than in 2023–24). The reduction in specific funding this financial year was mainly due to the end of the Federal Circuit and Family Court consequential funding.

The remaining operating income of \$11.4 million (\$0.6 million more than in 2023–24) was mostly from higher interest income due to an increase in interest rates, client contributions towards legal assistance, and costs recovered and awarded from the Appeals Cost Fund.

Expenses

Our total expenditure of \$356.2 million was \$30.3 million more than in 2023–24.

Case-related payments were \$123.5 million (\$2.1 million less than in 2023–24), largely due to the ending of conciliation conferences at the Children's Court. These funds are paid to private practitioners, barristers, medical experts, interpreters and other third parties for services on in-house cases.

The other major expense was employee related costs of \$159.7 million (\$30.1 million more than in 2023–24). The increase was mainly related to state government decisions to expand:

- Help Before Court and Independent Family Advocacy and Support
- our services at the Assessment and Referral Court as part of its statewide expansion
- legal assistance for people appealing permanent protection visa decisions.

Other operating expenditure was \$21.8 million (\$2.4 million more than in 2023–24). This increase was mainly due to increased information technology costs associated with higher vendor storage and software expenses, as well as other inflation-related increases.

Financial position

Our total assets of \$171.9 million were \$12.2 million less than in 2023–24. This primarily reflects the decrease in cash reserves and usage of property plant and equipment for the delivery of our services.

Our total liabilities of \$88.9 million were \$8.9 million less than in 2023–24.

Financial statements

Responsible body's declaration

The attached financial statements for Victoria Legal Aid have been prepared in accordance with Direction 5.2 of the Standing Directions of the Assistant Treasurer under the *Financial Management Act 1994*, the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission Act 2012*, the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulations 2022*, applicable Financial Reporting Directions, Australian Accounting Standards (AAS) including interpretations, and other mandatory professional reporting requirements.

We further state that, in our opinion, the information set out in the comprehensive operating statement, balance sheet, statement of changes in equity, cash flow statement and accompanying notes, presents fairly the financial transactions during the year ended 30 June 2025 and financial position of Victoria Legal Aid at 30 June 2025.

At the time of signing we are not aware of any circumstance which would render any particulars included in the financial statements to be misleading or inaccurate.

We authorise the attached financial statements for issue on 24 September 2025.

Bill Jaboor

Bill Jaboor
Chairperson

24 September 2025

Toby Hemming

Toby Hemming
Chief Executive Officer

24 September 2025

Menaka Kiriella Bandara

Menaka Kiriella Bandara
Acting Chief Financial Officer

24 September 2025



Independent Auditor's Report

To the Board of Victoria Legal Aid

Opinion	I have audited the financial report of Victoria Legal Aid (the Authority) which comprises the: • balance sheet as at 30 June 2025 • comprehensive operating statement for the year then ended • statement of changes in equity for the year then ended • cash flow statement for the year then ended • notes to the financial statements, including material accounting policy information • Responsible Body's declaration. In my opinion the financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Authority as at 30 June 2024 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of Part 7 of the <i>Financial Management Act 1994</i> and Division 60 of the <i>Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012</i>, and complies with applicable Australian Accounting Standards- Simplified Disclosures and Division 60 of the <i>Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulations 2022</i>.
Basis for opinion	I have conducted my audit in accordance with the <i>Audit Act 1994</i> which incorporates the Australian Auditing Standards. I further describe my responsibilities under that Act and those standards in the <i>Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report</i> section of my report. My independence is established by the <i>Constitution Act 1975</i>. My staff and I are independent of the Authority in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the <i>Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012</i> and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 <i>Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)</i> (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Victoria. My staff and I have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.
The Board's responsibilities for the financial report	The Board of the Authority is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards- Simplified Disclosures, the <i>Financial Management Act 1994</i> and the <i>Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012</i>, and for such internal control as the Board determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. In preparing the financial report, the Board is responsible for assessing the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless it is inappropriate to do so.

**Auditor's
responsibilities
for the audit of
the financial
report**

As required by the *Audit Act 1994*, my responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on the audit. My objectives for the audit are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

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

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

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

I also provide the Board with a statement that I have complied with relevant ethical requirements regarding independence, and to communicate with them all relationships and other matters that may reasonably be thought to bear on my independence, and where applicable, related safeguards.



Charlotte Jeffries
as delegate for the Auditor-General of Victoria

MELBOURNE
3 October 2025



Auditor-General's Independence Declaration

To the Board, Victoria Legal Aid

The Auditor-General's independence is established by the *Constitution Act 1975*. The Auditor-General, an independent officer of parliament, is not subject to direction by any person about the way in which his powers and responsibilities are to be exercised.

Under the *Audit Act 1994*, the Auditor-General is the auditor of each public body and for the purposes of conducting an audit has access to all documents and property and may report to parliament matters which the Auditor-General considers appropriate.

Independence Declaration

As auditor for Victoria Legal Aid for the year ended 30 June 2025, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been:

- no contraventions of auditor independence requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* in relation to the audit
- no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

MELBOURNE
03 October 2025

Charlotte Jeffries
as delegate for the Auditor-General of Victoria

Comprehensive operating statement⁽ⁱ⁾

For the financial year ended 30 June 2025

	Notes	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
CONTINUING OPERATIONS			
Revenue and income from transactions			
Grants from Government			
Grants received from the Commonwealth Government	2.2	78,136	78,351
Grants received from the State Government	2.2	200,441	199,991
Grants received from the Public Purpose Fund	2.3	62,841	50,800
Total - Grants from Government		341,418	329,142
Other Income			
Client contributions towards legal assistance	2.4	2,821	2,785
Costs recovered and costs awarded from the Appeal Costs Fund	2.5	2,041	1,529
Interest and other income	2.6	6,545	6,470
Total - Other Income		11,407	10,784
Total revenue and income from transactions		352,825	339,926
Expenses from transactions			
Case-related professional payments	3.2	(123,492)	(125,632)
Community legal centre payment - State Government grant funded	3.3	(38,625)	(39,714)
Employee benefit expenses	3.4	(159,684)	(129,584)
Depreciation and amortisation	5.1.2 & 5.2	(11,021)	(9,825)
Interest expense	7.1	(1,683)	(1,805)
Other operating expenses	3.5	(21,759)	(19,312)
Total expenses from transactions		(356,264)	(325,872)
Net result from transactions (net operating balance)		(3,439)	14,054
Other economic flows included in net result			
Net gain/(loss) on non-financial assets ⁽ⁱⁱ⁾	9.2	186	(568)
Total other economic flows included in net result		186	(568)
Net result from continuing operations		(3,254)	13,486
Net result		(3,254)	13,486

(i) This format is aligned to AASB 1049 *Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting*.

(ii) 'Net gain/(loss) on non-financial assets' includes unrealised and realised gains/(losses) from revaluations, impairments, and disposals of all physical assets and intangible assets, except when these are taken through the asset revaluation surplus.

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Balance sheet⁽ⁱ⁾

As at 30 June 2025

	Notes	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Assets			
Financial assets			
Cash and deposits	7.2.1	104,706	111,695
Receivables	6.1	16,251	15,354
Other assets	6.2	1,316	1,691
Total financial assets		122,273	128,740
Non-financial assets			
Property, plant and equipment	5.1	38,054	43,211
Intangible assets	5.2	11,591	12,171
Total non-financial assets		49,645	55,382
Total assets		171,918	184,122
Liabilities			
Payables	6.3	24,027	30,457
Leases	7.1	34,137	40,544
Employee related provisions	3.4.2	28,856	25,046
Other provisions	6.4	1,958	1,880
Total liabilities		88,978	97,927
Net assets		82,941	86,195
Equity			
Contributed capital		43,576	43,576
Accumulated surplus		39,365	42,619
Net worth		82,941	86,195

(i) This format is aligned to AASB 1049 *Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting*.

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Cash flow statement⁽ⁱ⁾

For the financial year ended 30 June 2025

	Notes	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Receipts from Government Grants			
Receipts from the Commonwealth Government		48,843	52,592
Receipts from State Government		227,995	229,986
Receipts from Public Purpose Fund		62,841	50,800
Client contributions received		2,001	2,186
Costs recovered and costs awarded from the Appeal Costs Fund		1,653	1,646
Interest received		6,459	6,309
Goods and services tax recovered from the ATO ⁽ⁱⁱ⁾		20,108	18,534
Other receipts		95	151
Total receipts		369,995	362,204
Payments to suppliers and employees			
Case-related professional payments		(127,214)	(122,554)
Payments to employees		(162,031)	(131,701)
Interest payments		(1,683)	(1,805)
Community legal centre payment - State Government Grant funded		(38,316)	(44,046)
Other payments		(36,270)	(33,077)
		(365,514)	(333,183)
Net cash flows from/(used in) operating activities		4,481	29,021
Cash flows from investing activities			
Payments for non-financial assets		(3,874)	(7,137)
Proceeds from sale of non-financial assets		304	145
Net cash from/(used in) investing activities		(3,570)	(6,992)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Repayment of principal portion of lease liabilities ⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾		(7,813)	(6,929)
Net cash flows from/(used in) financing activities		(7,813)	(6,929)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		(6,902)	15,100
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year		110,814	95,714
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year^(iv)	7.2.1	103,912	110,814

(i) This format is aligned to AASB 1049 *Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting*.

(ii) GST received from the Australian Taxation Office is presented on a net basis.

(iii) Victoria Legal Aid has recognised cash payments for the principal portion of lease payments as financing activities; cash payments for the interest portion as operating activities consistent with the presentation of interest payments and short-term lease payments for leases and low-value assets as operating activities.

(iv) Excludes funds on deposit for IBAC matters.

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Statement of changes in equity⁽ⁱ⁾

For the financial year ended 30 June 2025

	Accumulated Surplus \$'000	Contributed Capital \$'000	Total \$'000
Balance at 1 July 2023	29,133	43,576	72,709
Net result for the year	13,486	-	13,486
Balance at 30 June 2024	42,619	43,576	86,195
Net result for the year	(3,254)	-	(3,254)
Balance as 30 June 2025	39,365	43,576	82,941

(i) This format is aligned to AASB 1049 *Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting*.

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

1 About this report

Victoria Legal Aid is a statutory authority of the State of Victoria. The authority was established under the *Legal Aid Act 1978*.

Its principal address is:

Victoria Legal Aid
570 Bourke Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

A description of the nature of our operations and principal activities is included in the Report of Operations, which does not form part of the financial statements.

Basis of preparation

These financial statements are Tier 2 general purpose financial statements prepared in accordance with AASB 1060 *General Purpose Financial Statements – Simplified Disclosures for For-Profit and Not-for-Profit Tier 2 Entities* and Financial Reporting Direction 101 *Application of Tiers of Australian Accounting Standards* (FRD 101). Where required prior year comparatives have been changed to align with the Tier 2 reporting requirements.

Victoria Legal Aid is a Tier 2 entity in accordance with FRD 101. These financial statements are the first general purpose financial statements prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting standards - Simplified Disclosures. Victoria Legal Aid's prior years financial statements were general purpose financial statements prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting standards (Tier 1). As Victoria Legal Aid is not a "significant entity" as defined by FRD 101, it was required to change from Tier 1 to Tier 2 reporting effective from July 2024.

These financial statements are in Australian dollars and the historical cost convention is used unless a different measurement basis is specifically disclosed in the notes to the financial statements.

The accrual basis of accounting has been applied in preparing these financial statements, whereby assets, liabilities, equity, income and expenses are recognised in the reporting period to which they relate, regardless of when cash is received or paid.

Consistent with the requirements of AASB 1004 *Contributions*, contributions by owners (that is, contributed capital and its repayment) are treated as equity transactions and, therefore, do not form part of the income and expenses of the organisation.

Capital Grants which have been designated as contributions by owners are recognised as contributed capital. Other transfers that are in the nature of contributions to or distributions by owners have also been designated as contributions by owners.

Judgements, estimates and assumptions are required to be made about financial information being presented. The significant judgements made in the preparation of these financial statements are disclosed in the notes where amounts affected by those judgements are disclosed. Estimates and associated assumptions are based on professional judgements derived from historical experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised and also in future periods that are affected by the revision. Judgements and assumptions made by management in applying Australian Accounting Standards (AAS) that have significant effects on the financial statements and estimates are disclosed in the notes under the heading: 'Significant judgement or estimates'.

All amounts in the financial statements have been rounded to the nearest \$1,000 unless otherwise stated.

Compliance information

These general-purpose financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the *Financial Management Act 1994*, the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission Act 2012*, the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulations 2022* and the applicable AASs, which includes interpretations issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB).

Where appropriate, those AASs paragraphs applicable to not-for-profit entities have been applied. Accounting policies selected and applied in these financial statements ensure that the resulting financial information satisfies the concepts of relevance and reliability, thereby ensuring that the substance of the underlying transactions or other events is reported.

Going concern

The financial report has been prepared on a going-concern basis. Victoria Legal Aid is funded predominantly by regular grants from the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments. The Commonwealth funding is provided under the National Access to Justice Party (NAJP) Partnership Agreement, which has been signed up to 2030. The Department of Justice and Community Safety Victoria provides continued support through the annual Victorian State Budget Papers. Ongoing discussions are continuing with the Victorian Government to seek additional funding to meet the long-term challenges of increasing demand for legal assistance.

These financial statements have been prepared in the reasonable expectation that such funding will continue from both the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments.

2 Funding delivery of our services

Introduction

This section presents the sources and amounts of revenue raised by Victoria Legal Aid.

The objectives of Victoria Legal Aid as detailed in the *Legal Aid Act 1978* are:

- (i) to provide legal aid in the most effective, economic and efficient manner;
- (ii) to manage its resources to make legal aid available at a reasonable cost to the community and on an equitable basis throughout the state;
- (iii) to ensure the coordination of the provision of legal aid so that it responds to the legal and related needs of the community;
- (iv) to 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;
- (v) to provide to the community improved access to justice and legal remedies; and
- (vi) to pursue innovative means of providing legal aid directed at minimising the need for individual legal services in the community.

Structure

- 2.1 Summary of income that funds the delivery of our services
- 2.2 Government grants
- 2.3 Public Purpose Fund grants
- 2.4 Client contributions towards legal assistance
- 2.5 Costs recovered and costs awarded from the Appeal Costs Fund
- 2.6 Interest on investments and other income

Commonwealth Government Funding

The Commonwealth Government \$78.1 million of grant funding in 2025 (2024: \$78.3 million).

The Commonwealth Government funding is provided through the National Legal Partnership Agreement 2020-25 (NLAP). The Commonwealth and the Victorian State Government entered into this agreement on 1 July 2020 and expired on 30 June 2025. The agreement specifies arrangements for the delivery of Commonwealth-funded services by the State. Funding flows through the Victorian Government to Victoria Legal Aid and is reported as National Legal Assistance Partnership Agreement based funding, 2025: \$59.9 million (2024: \$56.5 million).

Effective from 1 July 2025, the Commonwealth and Victorian State Government entered into a new five-year agreement, the National Access to Justice Partnership (NJAP), which will run until 30 June 2030. The agreement aims to deliver accessible, effective, and high-quality legal assistance services, particularly to vulnerable and disadvantaged Australians.

The Commonwealth also provides funding to community legal centres on a quarterly basis which Victoria Legal Aid receives on their behalf and then distributes as per the funding schedule provided by the Commonwealth. Victoria Legal Aid does not control the allocation of grants received from the Commonwealth Government and consequently does not account for these funds in its financial statements as income or expenditure. The total amount received from the Commonwealth for community legal centres to 30 June 2025 was \$29.2 million (2024: \$26.8 million) and is disclosed in note 4.1 Administered items.

State Government Funding

The State Government provided \$200.4 million of grant funding in 2025 (2024: \$199.4 million).

Victoria Legal Aid administers the distribution of base funding for community legal centres (CLC) on behalf of the Victorian State Government. Victoria Legal Aid respects the historical basis for these funding allocations set by the Victorian State Government and seeks advice annually on any indexation received and ensures the equivalent funding is passed onto CLCs. For the year ended 30 June 2025, Victoria Legal Aid administered \$28.4 million of direct funds (2024: \$26.9 million) and \$10.2 million of project funds (2024: \$12.8 million). Victoria Legal Aid has accounted for these grants as revenue in its financial statements.

Public Purpose Fund

Funds are also provided from the Public Purpose Fund as detailed in note 2.3.

2.1 Summary of revenue and income that funds the delivery of our services

	Notes	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Government grants	2.2	278,577	278,342
Public Purpose Fund grants	2.3	62,841	50,800
Client contributions towards legal assistance	2.4	2,821	2,785
Costs recovered and costs awarded from the Appeal Costs Fund	2.5	2,041	1,529
Interest and other income	2.6	6,545	6,470
Total revenue and income from transactions		352,825	339,926

Revenue and income that fund the delivery of Victoria Legal Aid's services are accounted for consistently with the requirements of the relevant accounting standards disclosed in the following notes. All amounts of income over which Victoria Legal Aid does not have control are not included in the totals above and are disclosed as administered income (see note 4.2).

2.2 Government grants

Grants recognised under AASB 1058

Victoria Legal Aid has determined that the grant income included in the table below under AASB 1058 has been earned under arrangements that are either not enforceable and/or not linked to sufficiently specific performance obligations.

Income from grants without any sufficiently specific performance obligations, or that are not enforceable, is recognised when Victoria Legal Aid has an unconditional right to receive cash which usually coincides with receipt of cash. On initial recognition of the asset, Victoria Legal Aid recognises any related contributions by owners, increases in liabilities, decreases in assets, and revenue ('related amounts') in accordance with other Australian Accounting Standards. Related amounts may take the form of:

- contributions by owners, in accordance with AASB 1004 *Contributions*;
- revenue or a contract liability arising from a contract with a customer, in accordance with AASB 15 *Revenue from Contracts with Customers*;
- a lease liability in accordance with AASB 16 *Leases*;
- a financial instrument, in accordance with AASB 9 *Financial Instruments*; or
- a provision, in accordance with AASB 137 *Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets*.

Income received for specific purpose grants for on-passing is recognised simultaneously as the funds are immediately passed on to the relevant recipient entities on behalf of the Commonwealth Government.

Grants recognised under AASB 15

Income from grants that are enforceable and with sufficiently specific performance obligations are accounted for as revenue from contracts with customers under AASB 15.

Revenue is recognised when Victoria Legal Aid satisfies the performance obligation by delivering the relevant outcomes to the relevant customers. This is recognised based on the consideration specified in the funding agreement and to the extent that it is highly probable a significant reversal of the revenue will not occur. The funding payments are normally received in advance or shortly after the relevant obligation is satisfied.

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Grants recognised under AASB 1058 as Income of Not-for-profit entities:		
Commonwealth grants		
National Legal Assistance Partnership Agreement base funding	59,871	56,475
Expensive Commonwealth Criminal Cases	459	-
Specific project grants	17,806	21,876
Total Commonwealth grants	78,136	78,351
Grants recognised under AASB 15 as revenue from contract with customers:		
State grants		
Ongoing base funding		
Base funding	85,596	82,259
Discrete demand funding	51,234	52,031
Total ongoing funding	136,830	134,290
One-off Initiatives	24,802	25,697
Total one-off initiative funding	24,802	25,697
Community legal centre funding		
Community legal centre base funding	28,626	27,172
Community legal centre projects	10,183	12,833
Total Funding community legal centre funding	38,809	40,005
Total State grants	200,441	199,991
Total grants	278,577	278,342

2.3 Public Purpose Fund grants

Funding grants from the Public Purpose Fund are distributed to the Legal Aid Fund pursuant to section 6.7.9 of the *Legal Profession Act 2004* and are recognised as revenue when received. The Public Purpose Fund comprises interest and investment earnings on clients' funds held in solicitors' trust accounts. The amount of any distribution from the Public Purpose Fund to Victoria Legal Aid can vary from year to year depending on its investment performance and any other calls that may be made on the fund, as set out in the *Legal Profession Act 2004*. Increased funding this year reflects support for increased service capacity and capability for First Nations clients, data and digital innovation, cyber security and pilot of a new remand support service.

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Public Purpose Fund - base funding	56,353	40,000
Public Purpose Fund - project funding	6,488	10,800
Total	62,841	50,800

2.4 Client contributions towards legal assistance

Granting of legal assistance

Pursuant to the *Legal Aid Act 1978*, as amended, Victoria Legal Aid is empowered to make a grant of legal assistance subject to certain conditions. Under section 27 of the Act, Victoria Legal Aid may require a client to:

- make a contribution towards the cost of providing assistance;
- make a contribution in respect of any out-of-pocket expenses incurred in providing assistance;
- pay contributions in such a manner and within such a time as Victoria Legal Aid directs; or
- provide Victoria Legal Aid with security against costs incurred on their behalf

In accordance with Victoria Legal Aid's means test and asset guidelines, a client may or may not be required to make a contribution towards the cost of their legal assistance and an assessment is made to determine the amount. Revenue from the provision of legal services to clients is recognised at its recoverable amount. Contributions for services are only recognised when the recoverable amount can be reliably determined. Annually this amount is reviewed for impairment and a provision for impairment raised for estimated irrecoverable amounts and presented as a receivable in note 6.1. Where contributions are deemed to be irrecoverable they are written off as bad debts when identified. There are two types of contributions that can be imposed, secured and unsecured:

- **secured contributions** are established based on expected proceeds from the disposal of property and a client is directed to sign an agreement that will place a caveat over the client's property; and
- **unsecured contributions** are where the client is directed to make regular cash payments towards their legal matters.

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Client contributions - secured	1,743	1,742
Client contributions - unsecured	1,077	1,043
Total	2,821	2,785

2.5 Costs recovered and costs awarded from Appeal Costs Fund

Revenue arising from costs recovered and costs awarded from the Appeal Costs Fund is recognised when Victoria Legal Aid has the right to receive revenue.

Costs recovered relate to court ordered reimbursements of legal costs incurred to be made to Victoria Legal Aid from a third party.

Costs awarded from the Appeals Cost Fund are court ordered reimbursements in criminal cases to cover costs that would otherwise be incurred more than once due to adjournments and abandonment of proceedings at no fault of the prosecution or the defendant. The administration and payment of these matters is handled by the Appeal Costs Board.

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Costs recovered	1,371	1,084
Costs awarded	670	445
Total	2,041	1,529

2.6 Interest and other income

Interest income includes interest received on bank deposits. Interest income is recognised using the effective interest method, which allocates the interest over the relevant period.

Other income includes reimbursements and other minor income and is recognised when the right to receive payment is established.

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Interest income	6,459	6,309
Other income	86	161
Total	6,545	6,470

3 The cost of delivering services

Introduction

This section provides an account of the expenses incurred by Victoria Legal Aid in delivering our services.

In section 2, the funds that enable the provision of services were disclosed and in this note the costs associated with provision of services are recorded.

Structure

- 3.1 Expenses incurred in delivery of services
- 3.2 Case-related professional payments
- 3.3 Community legal centre payments
- 3.4 Employee benefit expenses
- 3.5 Other operating expenditure

3.1 Expenses incurred in delivery of services

	Notes	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Case-related professional payments	3.2	123,492	125,632
Community legal centre payments	3.3	38,625	39,714
Employee benefit expenses	3.4.1	159,684	129,584
Other operating expenditure	3.5	21,759	19,312
Total expenses incurred in delivery of services		343,560	314,242

3.2 Case-related professional payments

Case related and duty lawyers expenses are payments made to private sector panel members for legal work undertaken on behalf of Victoria Legal Aid. Other case-related expenditure includes mediation, interpreter fees, medical reports and conduct monies. Payments are recognised as an expense in the reporting period in which they are incurred and fluctuate depending on demand and types of cases funded.

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Case-related legal expenditure	111,051	112,676
Duty lawyer expenses	6,584	6,514
Other case-related expenditure	5,858	6,442
Total case-related professional payments	123,492	125,632

3.3 Community legal centre payments

Payments made to community legal centres are recognised as an expense in the reporting period in which they are incurred.

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Base funds to community legal centres	28,442	26,881
Project funds to community legal centres	10,183	12,833
Total community legal centre payments⁽ⁱ⁾	38,625	39,714

Funding is provided from the State Government to administer the distribution of funds for community legal centres.

Victoria Legal Aid also receives and administers funding to community legal centres on behalf of the Commonwealth Government which is included in note 4.2.

(i) Excludes costs incurred by Victoria Legal Aid in the administration of community legal centre funding.

3.4 Employee benefit expenses

3.4.1 Employee benefit expenses in the comprehensive operating statement

Employee benefit expenses include all costs related to employment including wages and salaries, fringe benefits tax, leave entitlements and WorkCover premiums.

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Employee benefit expenses		
Salaries and wages ⁽ⁱ⁾	126,315	102,561
Annual leave and long service leave	16,468	13,776
Superannuation	16,443	12,788
WorkCover premiums	458	459
Total employee benefit expenses	159,684	129,584

(i) The increase in salaries and wages primarily relates to expanded service delivery reflecting new positions funded through State Government budget initiatives, the expansion of the Independent Family Advocacy and Support, Help Before Court services and Aboriginal Community Engagement Officer program.

The amount recognised in the comprehensive operating statement in relation to superannuation is employer contributions for members of both defined benefit and defined contribution superannuation plans that are paid or payable during the reporting period. The defined benefit plan(s) provides benefits based on years of service and final average salary. The basis for determining the level of contributions is determined by the various actuaries of the defined benefit superannuation plans. Victoria Legal Aid does not recognise any defined benefit liabilities because it has no legal or constructive obligation to pay future benefits relating to its employees. Instead, Victoria Legal Aid accounts for contributions to these plans as if they were defined contribution plans under AASB 119 *Employee Benefits*. The Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) discloses in its annual financial statements the net defined benefit cost related to the members of these plans as an administered liability (on behalf of the State as the sponsoring employer).

Termination benefits are payable when employment is terminated before normal retirement date, or when an employee accepts an offer of benefits in exchange for the termination of employment. Termination benefits are recognised when Victoria Legal Aid is demonstrably committed to terminating the employment of current employees according to a detailed formal plan without possibility of withdrawal or providing termination benefits as a result of an offer made to encourage voluntary redundancy.

3.4.2 Employee related provisions

Provision is made for benefits accruing to employees in respect of wages and salaries, annual leave and long service leave (LSL) for services rendered to the reporting date and recorded as an expense during the period the services are delivered.

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Current provisions		
Annual Leave	9,201	8,073
Long Service Leave	11,679	10,427
On-costs	2,473	2,115
Total current provision for employee benefits	23,353	20,615
Non-current provisions		
Employee benefits	4,920	3,976
On-costs	583	455
Total non-current provisions for employee benefits	5,503	4,431
Total provision for employee benefits	28,856	25,046

Wages, salaries, sick leave and annual leave

Liabilities for wages and salaries (including non-monetary benefits, annual leave and on-costs) are recognised as part of the employee benefit provision as current liabilities, because Victoria Legal Aid does not have an unconditional right to defer settlements of these liabilities.

The liability for salaries and wages are recognised in the balance sheet at remuneration rates which are current at the reporting date. As Victoria Legal Aid expects the liabilities to be wholly settled within 12 months of reporting date, they are measured at undiscounted amounts.

The annual leave liability is classified as a current liability and measured at the undiscounted amount expected to be paid, as Victoria Legal Aid does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement of the liability for at least 12 months after the end of the reporting period.

No provision has been made for sick leave as all sick leave is non-vesting and it is not considered probable that the average sick leave taken in the future will be greater than the benefits accrued in the future. As sick leave is non-vesting, an expense is recognised in the Comprehensive Operating Statement as it is taken.

Employment on-costs such as workers compensation and superannuation are not employee benefits. They are disclosed separately as a component of the provision for employee benefits when the employment to which they relate has occurred.

Long service leave

Liability for long service leave (LSL) is recognised in the provision for employee benefits.

Unconditional long service leave is disclosed as current liability (representing seven or more years of continuous service) even where Victoria Legal Aid does not expect to settle the liability within 12 months because it will not have the unconditional right to defer the settlement of the entitlement should an employee take leave or depart within 12 months.

The components of this current LSL liability are measured at:

- undiscounted value—component that Victoria Legal Aid expects to settle within 12 months; or
- present value—component that Victoria Legal Aid does not expect to settle within 12 months.

Conditional long service leave is disclosed as non-current liability (representing less than seven years of continuous service). There is a conditional right to defer the settlement of the entitlement until the employee has completed the requisite years of service. This non-current liability is measured at present value.

Any gain or loss following revaluation of the present value of non-current long service leave liability is recognised as a transaction except to the extent that a gain or loss arises due to changes in bond interest rates which is recognised as 'other economic flows' in the Comprehensive Operating Statement.

3.5 Other operating expenditure

Other operating expenditures generally represent the day-to-day running costs incurred in normal operations.

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Contractors and consultants	2,816	3,354
Supplies and Services	3,905	3,760
Occupancy expenses	4,170	3,755
Information Technology expenses	6,350	4,954
Bad debts	110	204
Other operating expenses	4,410	3,286
Total other operating expenditure	21,759	19,312

Contractors and consultants

Contractors and consultants are recognised as an expense in the period in which they are incurred.

Supplies and services

Supplies and services are recognised as an expense in the reporting period in which they are incurred. The carrying amounts of any inventories held for distribution are expensed when the inventories are distributed.

Occupancy expenses

The following lease payments are recognised on a straight-line basis:

- Short-term leases – leases with a term 12 months or less; and
- Low value leases – leases with the underlying asset's fair value (when new, regardless of the age of the asset being leased) is no more than \$10,000.

Variable lease payments that are not included in the measurement of the lease liability (i.e. variable lease payments that do not depend on an index or a rate and which are not, in substance fixed) such as those based on performance or usage of the underlying asset, are recognised in the Comprehensive Operating Statement (except for payments which has been included in the carrying amount of another asset) in the period in which the event or condition that triggers those payments occur.

Remaining leases are recognised as a Right of Use Asset or Liability in line with AASB 16 *Leases* and are disclosed in note 7.1

Information technology expenses

Information management systems expense includes equipment maintenance and licence fees associated with internet, video conferencing and software.

Bad debts

Bad and doubtful debts are assessed on a regular basis. In line with AASB 9, Victoria Legal Aid account for the expected loss on an annual basis until the date it is paid. The concept of expected credit losses (ECLs) means that Victoria Legal Aid must look at how current and future economic conditions impact the amount of loss.

Other operating expenses

Other operating expenses are minor in nature such as travel, audit fees, bank fee representing day to day running cost incurred in normal operations. They are recognised as an expense in the period in which they are incurred.

4 Administered (non-controlled items)

This section provides information on funds administered by Victoria Legal Aid which it does not control and consequently are not included in its financial statements as income or expenditure. Administered items are consolidated into the financial statements of the State.

Structure

- 4.1 Community legal centre payments - Commonwealth Government grant funded
- 4.2 Trust account

4.1 Community legal centre payments - Commonwealth Government grant funded

The Commonwealth and the Victorian Government entered into the National Legal Partnership Assistance Agreement 2020-25 (NLAP) on 1 July 2020 which expired on 30 June 2025. The agreement specifies arrangements for the delivery of Commonwealth-funded services by the state. Under this agreement the Commonwealth Government provides funding to community legal centres on a quarterly basis which Victoria Legal Aid receives on their behalf and distributes as per the State's accountability under the NLAP. Victoria Legal Aid does not control the allocation of grants received from the Commonwealth Government in this instance and consequently does not include these funds in its financial statements as income or expenditure. The total amount received from the Commonwealth for community legal centres to 30 June 2025 was \$29.2 million (2024: \$26.8 million).

Effective from 1 July 2025, the Commonwealth and Victorian State Government entered into a new five-year agreement, the National Access to Justice Partnership (NAJP), which will run until 30 June 2030. The agreement aims to deliver accessible, effective, and high-quality legal assistance services, particularly to vulnerable and disadvantaged Australians.

4.2 Trust account

Victoria Legal Aid as a corporate entity under the *Legal Practice Act 1996* (Vic) maintains a trust account in accordance with that Act for the purpose of receiving money on account of legal costs in advance of provision of legal services from clients or their representatives.

Administered (non-controlled) items

For the financial year ended 30 June 2025

	Community legal centres		Trust account		Total	
	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Administered income from transactions						
Income received from the Commonwealth	29,254	26,827	-	-	29,254	26,827
Trust account receipts	-	-	672	340	672	340
Total administered income from transactions	29,254	26,827	672	340	29,926	27,167
Administered expenditure from transactions						
Payments made on behalf of the Commonwealth Government	(29,254)	(26,827)	-	-	(29,254)	(26,827)
Trust account payments	-	-	(275)	(200)	(275)	(200)
Total administered expenditure from transactions	(29,254)	(26,827)	(275)	(200)	(29,529)	(27,027)
Total administered net result from transactions	-	-	397	140	397	140
Assets						
Financial assets	-	-	397	319	397	319
Total assets	-	-	397	319	397	319
Liabilities						
Income in advance	-	-	(397)	(319)	(397)	(319)
Total liabilities	-	-	(397)	(319)	(397)	(319)
Net assets	-	-	-	-	-	-

5 Key assets available to support delivery of our services

Introduction

Victoria Legal Aid controls property, plant, equipment and intangible assets that are utilised in fulfilling its objectives and conducting its activities.

Structure

5.1 Property, plant and equipment

5.2 Intangibles

5.1 Property, plant and equipment

	Gross carrying amount		Accumulated depreciation		Net carrying amount	
	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Information technology at fair value ⁽ⁱ⁾	4,394	4,036	(3,241)	(1,980)	1,153	2,055
Building and leasehold improvement at fair value	80,741	78,414	(48,226)	(41,441)	32,515	36,973
Furniture, fixtures and fittings at fair value	285	285	(155)	(129)	130	156
Motor vehicle at fair value	1,110	1,078	(457)	(539)	653	539
Office machines and equipment at fair value	294	294	(274)	(272)	20	22
Cultural assets at fair value	180	180	-	-	180	180
Assets under construction at cost ⁽ⁱⁱ⁾	3,403	3,286	-	-	3,403	3,286
Net carrying amount	90,407	87,573	(52,353)	(44,361)	38,054	43,211

(i) Excludes software and other IT intangibles disclosed separately in note 5.2.

(ii) The assets under construction balance is due to the Digital Legal Aid program, primarily funded through the Public Purpose Fund and major building works at various sites. This will be transferred to intangible assets on completion.

Items of property, plant and equipment (PPE) are measured initially at cost and subsequently revalued at fair value less accumulated depreciation and impairment. Where an asset is acquired for no or nominal cost, the cost is its fair value at the date of acquisition.

The following tables are right-of-use assets included in the PPE balance above, presented by subsets of buildings, motor vehicles and information technology equipment.

5.1 (a) Total right-of-use assets: building, motor vehicles, and information technology equipment

	Gross carrying amount	Accumulated depreciation	Net carrying amount	Gross carrying amount	Accumulated depreciation	Net carrying amount
	2025 \$'000	2025 \$'000	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000	2024 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Building	63,015	(36,721)	26,294	62,901	(30,903)	31,998
Motor vehicles	1,110	(457)	653	1,078	(539)	539
Information technology equipment	3,375	(2,530)	845	3,140	(1,411)	1,729
Net carrying amount	67,500	(39,708)	27,792	67,119	(32,853)	34,266

	Building \$'000	Motor vehicles \$'000	Information technology equipment \$'000
Opening balance - 1 July 2024	31,998	539	1,729
Additions	745	437	239
Disposals	-	(7)	(2)
Depreciation	(6,448)	(316)	(1,119)
Closing balance - 30 June 2025	26,294	653	845

	Building \$'000	Motor vehicles \$'000	Information technology equipment \$'000
Opening balance - 1 July 2023	32,854	101	2,017
Adjustment	(222)	42	(55)
Additions	5,594	572	670
Disposals	-	-	-
Depreciation	(6,228)	(177)	(903)
Closing balance - 30 June 2024	31,998	539	1,729

Right-of-use assets acquired by lessee - initial measurement

A right-of-use asset and a lease liability is recognised at the lease commencement date. The right-of-use asset is initially measured at cost which comprises the initial amount of the lease liability adjusted for:

- any lease payments made at or before the commencement date less any lease incentive received;
- any initial direct costs incurred; and
- an estimate of costs to dismantle and remove the underlying asset or to restore the underlying asset or the site on which it is located.

Right-of-use-asset - Subsequent measurement

Victoria Legal Aid depreciates the right-of-use assets on a straight line basis from the lease commencement date to the earlier of the end of the useful life of the right-of-use asset or the end of the lease term. The right-of-use assets are also subject to revaluation as required by FRD 103 *Non-Financial Assets*. In addition, the right-of-use asset is periodically reduced by impairment losses, if any and adjusted for certain remeasurements of the lease liability. For right-of-use assets the net present value of the remaining lease payments is often the appropriate proxy for fair value of relevant right-of-use assets.

Impairment of property, plant and equipment

The recoverable amount of primarily non-cash-generating assets of not-for-profit entities, which are typically specialised in nature and held for continuing use of their service capacity, is expected to be materially the same as fair value determined under AASB 13 *Fair Value Measurement*, with the consequence that AASB 136 *Impairments of Assets* does not apply to such assets that are regularly revalued.

Leasehold improvements

The cost of improvements to leasehold properties is depreciated over term of the lease or the estimated useful life of the improvement. Leasehold improvements are measured at cost less accumulated depreciation and impairment.

Where applicable, leasing contract include a component for leasehold make-good at the end of the lease. A corresponding provision for decommissioning expense is created based on expected expense.

Cultural assets

Cultural assets such as artworks that Victoria Legal Aid intends to preserve because of their unique cultural and historical attributes are valued at fair value.

Depreciation

All buildings, plant and equipment and other non-financial physical assets that have finite useful lives, are depreciated. The exceptions to this rule include items under assets held for sale, cultural assets and land.

Depreciation is calculated on a straight-line basis to write off the net cost of each item over its expected useful life to its estimated residual value. Estimates of useful lives, residual values and depreciation method are reviewed on a regular basis. Typical estimated useful lives for the different asset classes for current and prior years are included in the table below:

The following useful lives are used for each major class of depreciable assets for the current and prior years:

Information technology equipment	3 years
Buildings and leasehold improvements	3 - 13 years
Furniture, fixtures and fittings	10 years
Motor vehicles	3 years
Office machines and equipment	6 - 10 years
Intangible assets	3 - 10 years

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

Leasehold improvements are depreciated over the shorter of the lease term and their useful lives.

Indefinite life assets: Land and cultural assets, which are considered to have an indefinite life, are not depreciated. Depreciation is not recognised in respect of these assets because their service potential has not, in any material sense, been consumed during the reporting period.

5.1.2 Reconciliation of movements in carrying amount of property, plant and equipment

	Information technology	Furniture, fixtures and fittings	Building and leasehold improvement	Motor vehicles	Office machines and equipment	Cultural assets	Assets under construction	Total
	At fair value \$'000	At fair value \$'000	At fair value \$'000	At fair value \$'000	At fair value \$'000	At fair value \$'000	At cost \$'000	\$'000
2025								
Carrying amount at start of year	2,055	156	36,973	539	22	180	3,286	43,211
Additions - property, plant and equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,874	3,874
Additions - right-of-use	239	-	745	437	-	-	-	1,421
Disposals	(2)	-	-	(7)	-	-	-	(9)
Transfers in/(out) to property, plant & equipment	123	-	2,213	-	-	-	(2,336)	-
Transfers out to intangible assets	(27)	-	(17)	-	-	-	(1,421)	(1,465)
Depreciation	(1,235)	(26)	(7,399)	(316)	(2)	-	-	(8,978)
Carrying amount at end of year	1,153	130	32,515	653	20	180	3,403	38,054

5.2 Intangible assets

Victoria Legal Aid intangible assets consist of software.

	2025 \$'000
Gross carrying Amount	
Opening balance	24,000
Transfers in from property, plant and equipments	1,465
Closing balance	25,465
Accumulated amortisation and impairment	
Opening balance	(11,829)
Amortisation	(2,043)
Closing balance	(13,872)
Net balance	11,591

Initial recognition

Purchased intangible assets are initially recognised at cost. When the recognition criteria in AASB 138 *Intangible Assets* is met, internally generated intangible assets are recognised at cost. Subsequently, intangible assets with finite useful lives are carried at cost less accumulated amortisation and accumulated impairment losses. Depreciation and amortisation begins when the asset is available for use, that is, when it is in location and condition necessary for it to be capable of operating in the manner intended by management.

An **internally generated intangible asset** arising from development is recognised if, and only if, all of the following are demonstrated:

- (a) the technical feasibility of completing the intangible asset so that it will be available for use or sale;
- (b) an intention to complete the intangible asset and use or sell it;
- (c) the ability to use or sell the intangible asset;
- (d) the intangible asset will generate probable future economic benefits;
- (e) the availability of adequate technical, financial and other resources to complete the development and to scrap or sell the intangible asset; and
- (f) the ability to measure reliably the expenditure attributable to the intangible asset during its development.

Subsequent measurement

Intangible assets are measured at cost less accumulated amortisation and impairment, and are amortised on a straight-line basis over their useful lives. The amortisation period is three to ten years.

Impairment of intangible assets

Intangible assets are tested annually for impairment and whenever there is an indication that the asset may be impaired.

Significant intangible assets

Victoria Legal Aid has capitalised software development expenditure for the development of software from the Digital Legal Aid program. The total amount capitalised in 2024-25 for Digital Legal Aid software development expenditure is \$1.42 million (2024: \$4.7 million).

6 Other assets and liabilities

Introduction

This section sets out those assets and liabilities that arose from Victoria Legal Aid's operations.

Structure

- 6.1 Receivables
- 6.2 Other non-financial assets
- 6.3 Payables
- 6.4 Other provisions

6.1 Receivables

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Contractual		
Secured		
Secured client contributions receivable ⁽ⁱ⁾	21,291	21,248
Provision for secured client contributions	(10,760)	(10,764)
Total secured client contributions receivable at net present value	10,531	10,484
Unsecured		
Unsecured client contributions receivable	7,199	5,998
Provision for unsecured client contributions	(3,148)	(2,885)
Total unsecured client contributions receivable at net present value	4,051	3,113
Total client contributions	14,582	13,597
Other receivables	31	236
Total contractual receivables	14,613	13,833
Statutory		
GST receivable	1,639	1,522
Total statutory receivables	1,639	1,522
Total receivables	16,251	15,354
<i>Represented by:</i>		
Current receivables	3,240	3,138
Non-current receivables	13,011	12,216
	16,251	15,354

(i) includes secured client contributions receivables on unfinalised matters

Receivables

Include client contributions, net GST receivables and other receivables.

Contractual receivables

Contractual receivables are classified as financial instruments and categorised as 'financial assets at amortised cost'. They are initially recognised at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction costs. Victoria Legal Aid holds the contractual receivables with the objective of collecting the contractual cash flows, they are therefore subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less any impairment.

Statutory receivables

Statutory receivables do not arise from contracts and are recognised and measured similarly to contractual receivables (except for impairment), but are not classified as financial instruments for disclosure purposes. Victoria Legal Aid applies AASB 9 for initial measurement of the statutory receivables and as a result statutory receivables are initially recognised at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction cost.

Client contributions

Measurement of receivables for client contributions is based on an actuarial assessment completed by Finity Consulting Pty Limited actuaries who perform an annual independent assessment of the net present value of receivables. The analysis undertaken reviews the receivable portfolio, recovery history and the current and forecast financial environment to determine a recoupment pattern. This payment pattern was discounted by 4.70% (2024: 4.65%) for secured receivables, which is the forecast earnings rate of Victoria Legal Aid's investment portfolio to determine the net present value. The average repayment time for unsecured receivables is significantly less than that for secured, and therefore a different discount rate of 4.40% was used for 2025 (2024: 4.50%).

6.1.1 Movement in the provision for client contributions receivable

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Provision for secured client contributions		
Balance at 1 July 2024	10,764	10,381
Movements in actuarial assessment of secured client contributions receivable	(4)	383
Balance at 30 June 2025	10,760	10,764
Provision for unsecured client contributions		
Balance at 1 July 2024	2,885	2,658
Increase/(decrease) in provision for re-assessments and bad debt write-downs	108	311
Movements in actuarial assessment of unsecured client contributions receivable	155	(84)
Balance at 30 June 2025	3,148	2,885
Total provision for client contributions	13,908	13,649

A provision is made against secured client contributions, determined by the actuarial assessment of the recoverable amount. Secured debtors are long term, therefore the balance is measured at the net present value. The recoverable amount estimates the extent of future debts receivable after adjustments and the discount to net present value.

A provision for impairment has been made for unsecured client contributions receivable. The assessment estimates future cash flows receivable after adjustments and bad debts determined by reference to past default experience, and discounts the estimate to the net present value.

6.2 Other assets

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Current other assets		
Prepayments	1,312	1,642
Accrued Income	4	49
Total current other assets	1,316	1,691

Prepayments represent payments in advance of receipt of goods or services or the payments made for services covering a term extending beyond that financial accounting period.

Accrued income represents amounts that Victoria Legal Aid has earned through the provision of goods and services or obtained the right to receive. The amounts are recognised as an asset and income if the income recognition criteria are met but the cash will be received in the new reporting period.

6.3 Payables

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Contractual payables		
Case-related professional	13,676	18,387
Supplies and services	9,119	10,823
Funds on deposit for Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC) matters	1,191	1,200
Statutory payables		
GST	41	47
Total payables	24,027	30,457
<i>Represented by:</i>		
Current payables	24,027	30,457
Non-current payables	-	-
	24,027	30,457

Payables are recognised when Victoria Legal Aid becomes obliged to make future payments resulting from the purchase of goods and services.

Payables consist of:

- **contractual payables**, classified as financial instruments and measured at amortised cost. Accounts payable represent liabilities for goods and services provided to Victoria Legal Aid prior to the end of the financial year that are unpaid; and
- **statutory payables**, that are recognised and measured similarly to contractual payables, but are not classified as financial instruments and not included in the category of financial liabilities at amortised cost, because they do not arise from contracts.

Case-related professional payables

This represents amounts owing to Victoria Legal Aid's panel members for legal work undertaken on behalf of Victoria Legal Aid. The amount owing to legal creditors for work performed comprises two components:

- (i) amounts certified but not paid; and
- (ii) amounts incurred but not yet invoiced at balance date.

This amount does not reflect the total expected expenditure related to all approved grants of legal assistance. The remaining grant commitment is reflected in note 7.3 which will be incurred in future years. Victoria Legal Aid needs to retain sufficient level of cash to ensure it can meet these commitments when they fall due.

Measurement of outstanding payments for case-related professional creditors is based on an assessment of outstanding claims. The assessment makes reference to historical debt recognition, repayments and balance movements to model the updated estimate.

An assessment was undertaken by Victoria Legal Aid to identify amounts owing to legal creditors for work performed prior to 30 June 2025 but not yet invoiced. The assessment is based on an analysis of all historical files. These were examined to determine an average cost per file, the average period for finalisation and typical payment profile. We have estimated the value of work in progress by comparing the payments made on each file at balance date with the expected average payment for the file, and made an adjustment to our legal creditors balance for the difference.

No interest charge is applicable.

Supplies and services payable

Supplies and services represent liabilities for goods and services provided to Victoria Legal Aid prior to the end of the financial year that are unpaid with an average credit period of 30 days.

The terms and conditions of amounts payable to the government and agencies vary according to the particular agreements and as they are not legislative payables, they are not classified as financial instruments.

Funds on deposit for IBAC matters

Victoria Legal Aid receives funding from the Department of Justice and Community Safety to provide legal assistance for witnesses examined by IBAC. The money is held on deposit and drawn down when expenditure is incurred.

6.4 Other provisions

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Current provisions		
Make-Good provision	220	213
Total current provisions	220	213
Non-current provisions		
Make-Good provision	1,738	1,667
Total non-current provisions	1,738	1,667
Total provisions	1,958	1,880

Other provisions are recognised when Victoria Legal Aid has a present obligation, the future sacrifice of economic benefits is probable, and the amount of the provision can be measured reliably. The amount recognised as a provision is the best estimate of the consideration required to settle the present obligation at reporting date, taking into account the risks and uncertainties surrounding the obligation.

Where a provision is measured using the cash flows estimated to settle the present obligation, its carrying amount is the present value of those cash flows, using a discount rate that reflects the time, value of money and risks specific to the provision.

When some or all of the economic benefits required to settle a provision are expected to be received from a third party, the receivable is recognised as an asset if it is virtually certain that recovery will be received and the amount of the receivable can be measured reliably.

The make-good provision is recognised in accordance with the lease agreement to restore the premises to its original condition at the end of the lease term.

7 How we financed our operations

Introduction

This section provides information on the sources of finance utilised by Victoria Legal Aid during its operations and information on current commitments for expenditure and other information related to financial activities of Victoria Legal Aid.

This section includes disclosures of balances that are financial instruments (such as cash balances). Note 8.1 provides additional, specific financial instrument disclosures.

Structure

- 7.1 Leases
- 7.2 Cash flow information and balances
- 7.3 Commitments for future expenditure

7.1 Leases

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Current leases		
Lease liabilities ⁽ⁱ⁾	8,234	8,253
Total current leases	8,234	8,253
Non-current leases		
Lease liabilities ⁽ⁱ⁾	25,903	32,291
Total non-current leases	25,903	32,291
Total leases	34,137	40,544

(i) Secured by the assets leased. Leases liabilities are effectively secured as the rights to the leased assets revert to the lessor in the event of default.

Terms and conditions of lease liabilities

	Weighted average interest rate (%)	Maturity dates						
		Carrying amount \$'000	Nominal amount \$'000	Less than 1 month \$'000	1-3 months \$'000	3 months- 1 year \$'000	1 - 5 years \$'000	> 5 years \$'000
2025								
Lease liabilities	4%	34,137	37,553		2,427	6,926	27,380	820
Total		34,137	37,553	-	2,427	6,926	27,380	820
2024								
Lease liabilities	4%	40,544	45,505	-	2,274	6,879	32,746	3,606
Total		40,544	45,505	-	2,274	6,879	32,746	3,606

Interest expense

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Interest on lease liabilities	1,683	1,805
Total interest expense	1,683	1,805

Interest expense consists of the interest component of lease repayments and is recognised in the period in which it is incurred.

7.1.1 Right-of-use assets

Victoria Legal Aid leases various properties, equipment and motor vehicles. The lease contracts are typically made for fixed periods of 1-13 years with an option to renew the lease after that date. Information about leases for which Victoria Legal Aid is a lessee is presented below. Right-of-use assets are presented in note 5.1(a).

Recognition and measurement of leases as a lessee

For any new contracts entered into, Victoria Legal Aid considers whether a contract is, or contains a lease. A lease is defined as 'a contract, or part of a contract, that conveys the right to use an asset (the underlying asset) for a period of time in exchange for consideration'. To apply this definition Victoria Legal Aid assesses whether the contract meets three key evaluations which are whether:

- the contract contains an identified asset, which is either explicitly identified in the contract or implicitly specified by being identified at the time the asset is made available to Victoria Legal Aid and for which the supplier does not have substantive substitution rights;
- Victoria Legal Aid has the right to obtain substantially all of the economic benefits from use of the identified asset throughout the period of use, considering its rights within the defined scope of the contract and Victoria Legal Aid has the right to direct the use of the identified asset throughout the period of use; and
- Victoria Legal Aid has the right to take decisions in respect of 'how and for what purpose' the asset is used throughout the period of use.

Lease liability – initial measurement

The lease liability is initially measured at the present value of the lease payments unpaid at the commencement date, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease if that rate is readily determinable or at Victoria Legal Aid incremental borrowing rate.

Lease payments included in the measurement of the lease liability comprise the following:

- fixed payments (including in-substance fixed payments);
- variable payments based on an index or rate, initially measured using the index or rate as at the commencement date;
- amounts expected to be payable under a residual value guarantee; and
- payments arising from renewal and termination options reasonably certain to be exercised.

Lease liability – subsequent measurement

Subsequent to initial measurement, the liability will be reduced for payments made and increased for interest. It is remeasured to reflect any reassessment or modification, or if there are changes in-substance fixed payments.

When the lease liability is remeasured, the corresponding adjustment is reflected in the right-of-use asset, or profit and loss if the right of use asset is already reduced to zero.

	Minimum future lease payments ⁽ⁱ⁾	
	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Future lease payments		
Not longer than 1 year	9,353	9,153
Longer than 1 year but not longer than 5 years	27,380	32,746
Longer than 5 years	820	3,606
Minimum future lease payments⁽ⁱ⁾	37,553	45,505
Less future finance charges	3,416	4,962
Present value of minimum lease payments	34,137	40,544

(i) Minimum future lease payments include the aggregate of all base payments and any guaranteed residual.

7.2 Cash flow information and balances

7.2.1 Cash and cash deposits

Cash and deposits, including cash equivalents, comprise cash on hand and cash in banks.

The cash reserves are not all discretionary and need to be carefully managed to ensure we meet our existing commitments of \$79.9 million (inclusive of GST) . This includes grants of legal assistance of up to \$ 72.5 million (inclusive of GST) million which have already been approved and committed to but where the work has not been completed, reflected in note 7.3. In addition, this balance is also required to meet externally funded initiative commitments in future years and for the replacement of assets to ensure we can continue to meet service demands and protect the safety and wellbeing of staff.

For cash flow statement presentation purposes, cash and cash equivalents includes cash at bank and cash deposit on the balance sheet, as indicated in the reconciliation below and excludes funds on deposit for IBAC matters.

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Cash at bank	103,912	110,814
Funds on deposit for IBAC matters	1,191	1,200
Administered funds	(397)	(319)
Total cash at bank and cash deposit	104,706	111,695

Funds on deposit for IBAC matters

These funds are for the purpose of administering specific matters and are held from the Department of Justice and Community Safety.

7.3 Commitments for expenditures

Commitments for future expenditure include operating and capital commitments arising from contracts. These commitments are recorded at their nominal value and inclusive of GST. Where it is considered appropriate and provides additional relevant information to users, the net present values of significant individual projects are stated. These future expenditures cease to be disclosed as commitments once the related liabilities are recognised in the balance sheet.

Total commitments payable

Nominal amounts	Less than 1 year	1 - 5 years	> 5 years	Total
2025	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	
Capital expenditure payable	1,524	123	-	1,647
Intangible assets commitments payable	1,129	1,891	-	3,020
Other commitments payable	1,783	1,025	-	2,808
Approved grants of legal assistance ⁽ⁱ⁾	57,405	15,091	-	72,496
Total commitments (inclusive of GST)	61,841	18,130	-	79,971
Less GST recoverable	5,622	1,648	-	7,270
Total commitments (exclusive of GST)	56,219	16,482	-	72,701

	Less than 1 year	1 - 5 years	> 5 years	Total
2024	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	
Capital expenditure commitments payable	1,399	-	-	1,399
Intangible assets commitments payable	260	647	-	907
Other commitments payable	3,211	2,960	-	6,171
Approved grants of legal assistance ⁽ⁱ⁾	53,371	20,070	-	73,441
Total commitments (inclusive of GST)	58,241	23,677	-	81,918
Less GST recoverable	5,295	2,152	-	7,447
Total commitments (exclusive of GST)	52,946	21,525	-	74,471

(i) The approved grant of legal assistance reflects the estimated cost to provide the remaining legal services for grants committed in current and previous financial years. The final cost may be more or less than the amount disclosed due to the nature and progress of the matter.

8 Financial instruments, contingencies and valuation judgements

Introduction

It is often necessary for Victoria Legal Aid to make judgements and estimates associated with recognition and measurement of items in the financial statements. This section sets out financial instrument specific information, as well as those items that are contingent in nature or require a higher level of judgement to be applied, which for Victoria Legal Aid related mainly to fair value determination.

Structure

- 8.1 Financial instruments specific disclosures
- 8.2 Contingent assets and contingent liabilities
- 8.3 Fair value determination

8.1 Financial instruments specific disclosures

Introduction

Financial instruments arise out of contractual agreements that give rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity. Due to the nature of Victoria Legal Aid's activities, certain financial assets and financial liabilities arise under statute rather than a contract (for example taxes, fines and penalties). Such assets and liabilities do not meet the definition of financial instruments in AASB 132 *Financial Instruments: Presentation*.

Categories of financial assets

Financial assets at amortised cost

Financial assets are measured at amortised costs if both of the following criteria are met and the assets are not designated as fair value through net result:

- the assets are held by Victoria Legal Aid to collect the contractual cash flows, and
- the assets' contractual terms give rise to cash flows that are solely payments of principal and interest.

These assets are initially recognised at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction costs and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method less any impairment.

Victoria Legal Aid recognises the following assets in this category:

- cash and deposits; and
- receivables (excluding statutory receivables).

Derecognition of financial assets: A financial asset (or, where applicable, a part of a financial asset or part of a group of similar financial assets) is derecognised when:

- the rights to receive cash flows from the asset have expired; or
- Victoria Legal Aid retains the right to receive cash flows from the asset, but has assumed an obligation to pay them in full without material delay to a third party under a 'pass through' arrangement; or
- Victoria Legal Aid has transferred its rights to receive cash flows from the asset and either:
 - has transferred substantially all the risks and rewards of the asset; or
 - has neither transferred nor retained substantially all the risks and rewards of the asset, but has transferred control of the asset.

Where Victoria Legal Aid has neither transferred nor retained substantially all the risks and rewards or transferred control, the asset is recognised to the extent of Victoria Legal Aid's continuing involvement in the asset.

Categories of financial liabilities

Financial liabilities at amortised cost are initially recognised on the date they are originated. They are initially measured at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction costs. Subsequent to initial recognition, these financial instruments are measured at amortised cost with any difference between the initial recognised amount and the redemption value being recognised in the net result over the period of the interest bearing liability, using the effective interest rate method. Victoria Legal Aid recognises the following liabilities in this category:

- payables (excluding statutory payables); and
- lease liabilities.

Derecognition of financial liabilities: A financial liability is derecognised when the obligation under the liability is discharged, cancelled or expires.

When an existing financial liability is replaced by another from the same lender on substantially different terms, or the terms of an existing liability are substantially modified, such an exchange or modification is treated as a derecognition of the original liability and the recognition of a new liability. The difference in the respective carrying amounts is recognised as an 'other economic flows' in the comprehensive operating statement.

Interest rate analysis is based upon the investment term of financial assets not exceeding one year. Investments are all on fixed interest rates. Minimum and maximum exposures are calculated at shifts of 50 basis points (2023: 50 basis points). A net decrease in interest translates into a fall in revenue as investment income is reduced.

8.2 Contingent assets and contingent liabilities

Contingent assets and contingent liabilities are not recognised in the balance sheet but are disclosed and, if quantifiable, are measured at nominal value. Contingent assets and liabilities are presented inclusive of GST receivable or payable respectively.

Contingent assets

Contingent assets are possible assets that arise from past events, whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence or non-occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the entity.

These are classified as either quantifiable, where the potential economic benefit is known, or non-quantifiable.

Contingent liabilities

Contingent liabilities are:

- possible obligations that arise from past events, whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence or non-occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the entity
- present obligations that arise from past events but are not recognised because it is not probable that an outflow of resources embodying economic benefits will be required to settle the obligations or the amount of the obligations cannot be measured with sufficient reliability.

Contingent liabilities are also classified as either quantifiable or non-quantifiable.

Non-quantifiable contingent liabilities:

A number of potential obligations are non-quantifiable at this time arising from:

- indemnities provided in relation to transactions, including financial arrangements and consultancy services, as well as for directors and administrators;
- performance guarantees, warranties, letters of comfort and the like;
- deeds in respect of certain obligations; and
- unclaimed monies, which may be subject to future claims by the general public against the State.

Victoria Legal Aid does not have any contingent assets, contingent liabilities or claims of a material nature at 30 June 2025 which have not already been disclosed in these financial statements (2024: Nil).

8.3 Fair value determination

Significant judgement: Fair value measurements of assets and liabilities

Fair value determination requires judgement and the use of assumptions. This section discloses the most significant assumptions used in determining fair values. Changes to assumptions could have a material impact on the results and financial position of Victoria Legal Aid.

This section sets out the information on how Victoria Legal Aid determined fair value for financial reporting purposes. Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date.

Property, plant and equipment, intangible assets, financial assets and financial liabilities are carried at fair value.

Fair value hierarchy

In determining fair values a number of inputs are used. To increase consistency and comparability in the financial statements, these inputs are categorised into three levels, also known as the fair value hierarchy. The levels are as follows:

- Level 1 – quoted (unadjusted) market prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities;
- Level 2 – valuation techniques for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is directly or indirectly observable; and
- Level 3 – valuation techniques for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is unobservable.

Victoria Legal Aid determines whether transfers have occurred between levels in the hierarchy by reassessing categorisation (based on the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement as a whole) at the end of each reporting period.

The Valuer General Victoria (VGV) is Victoria Legal Aid's independent valuation agency. In conjunction with VGV, Victoria Legal Aid monitors changes in the fair value of each asset and liability through relevant data sources to determine whether revaluation is required.

How this section is structured

For those assets and liabilities for which fair values are determined, the following disclosures are provided:

- valuation techniques; and
- details of significant assumptions used in the fair value determination.

8.3.1 Fair value determination: Non-financial physical assets

AASB 2022-10 *Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Fair Value Measurement of Non-Financial Assets of Not-for-Profit Public Sector Entities* amended AASB 13 *Fair Value Measurement* by adding Appendix F Australian implementation guidance for not-for-profit public sector entities. Appendix F explains and illustrates the application of the principles in AASB 13 *Fair Value Measurement* on developing unobservable inputs and the application of the cost approach. These clarifications are mandatorily applicable annual reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2024. FRD 103 permits Victorian public sector entities to apply Appendix F of AASB 13 in their next scheduled formal asset revaluation or interim revaluation process whichever is earlier).

Victoria Legal Aid currently holds a range of financial instruments that are recorded in the financial statements where the carrying amounts approximate to fair value, due to their short-term nature or with the expectation that they will be paid in full by the end of the current reporting period.

All financial assets of Victoria Legal Aid are categorised at level 1 except receivables which is categorised at level 2.

All financial liabilities of Victoria Legal Aid are categorised at level 3 except funds deposit ion IBAC matters is categorised at level 1.

The last scheduled full independent valuation of Victoria Legal Aid's non-financial physical assets was undertaken by the Valuer-General Victoria (VGV) in 2021. The next scheduled revaluation was due to take place in 2025-26, however on 13 August 2025, Victoria Legal Aid obtained approval from the DTF for a one-off deferral of the scheduled formal revaluation.

As a result, the next formal revaluation will be conducted in 2026-2027 which is still in line with FRD 103 requirements, where Victoria Legal Aid will incorporate Appendix F during this revaluation, and all future annual fair value assessments will continue to be conducted in accordance with Appendix F of AASB 13.

For all assets measured at fair value, Victoria Legal Aid considers the current use is the highest and best use.

Information technology equipment excluding intangibles and is held at fair value. When equipment is specialised in use, such that it is rarely sold other than as part of a going concern, fair value is determined using the current replacement cost method.

Furniture, fixtures and fittings is held at fair value. When furniture, fixtures and fittings is specialised in use, such that it is rarely sold other than as part of a going concern, fair value is determined using the current replacement cost method.

Building leases are held at fair value and reported in line with AASB 16 *Leases*.

Motor Vehicles (including right-of-use assets) are valued using the current replacement cost method. Victoria Legal Aid acquires new vehicles and at times disposes of them before the end of their economic life. The process of acquisition, use and disposal in the market is managed by experienced fleet managers who set relevant depreciation rates during use to reflect the utilisation of the vehicles.

Office machines and equipment are held at fair value. When office machines and equipment is specialised in use, such that it is rarely sold other than as part of a going concern, fair value is determined using the current replacement cost method.

Cultural assets refer to artwork that is valued using the market approach, whereby assets are compared to recent comparable sales or sales of comparable assets that are considered to have nominal value.

There were no changes in valuation techniques throughout the period to 30 June 2025.

Description of significant assumptions applied to fair value measurements

Asset	Valuation techniques ⁽ⁱ⁾	Significant assumption ⁽ⁱ⁾	Range (weighted average) ⁽ⁱ⁾
Building - lease	At cost	Lease per building	\$317,930 - \$43,352,605 (\$3,836,110)
		Lease term of buildings	2-13 years (9 years)
Building - Leasehold improvements	Current replacement cost	Cost per improvement	\$322 - \$2,495,007 (\$70,905)
		Lease term of buildings	3-13 years (5 years)
Computer - Lease	At cost	Lease per computer	\$18,350 to 456,005 (\$224,013)
		Lease term of computers	3 years (3 years)
Cultural	Market approach	Comparable sale price per unit	\$50 - \$16,000 per unit (\$1,963)
Furniture, fixtures and fittings	Current replacement cost	Cost per Unit	\$2,156 - \$33,471 per unit (\$4,669)
		Useful life of furniture, fixtures and fittings	10 years (10 years)
Information technology and equipment	Current replacement cost	Cost per Unit	\$531 to \$222,046 per unit (\$15,317)
		Useful life of information technology	3 years (3 years)
Intangible	Current replacement cost	Cost per unit	\$362 - \$6,571,197 per unit (\$184,312)
		Useful life of intangibles	3-10 years (8 years)
Motor vehicles	At cost	Lease per Motor vehicle	\$23,490 - \$50,463 (\$30,001)
		Lease term of motor vehicles	3 years (3 years)
Office machine and equipment	Current replacement cost	Cost per Unit	\$3,988 to \$38,753 per unit (\$11,482)
		Useful life of Office machine and equipment	6-10 years (6 years)

(i) Illustrations on the valuation techniques and significant assumptions and unobservable inputs are indicative and should not be directly used without consultation with entities' independent valuer.

9 Other disclosures

Introduction

This section includes additional material disclosures required by accounting standards or otherwise, for the understanding of this financial report.

Structure

- 9.1 Ex-gratia expenses
- 9.2 Other economic flows included in net result
- 9.3 Responsible persons
- 9.4 Remuneration of executives
- 9.5 Related parties
- 9.6 Remuneration of auditors
- 9.7 Subsequent events

9.1 Ex-gratia expenses

Ex gratia expenses are the voluntary payments of money or other non-monetary benefit (e.g. a write-off) that is not made either to acquire goods, services or other benefits for the entity or to meet a legal liability, or to settle or resolve a possible legal liability of or claim against the entity.

Victoria Legal Aid made total ex-gratia payments of \$0.12 million during the period upon termination of employment (2024: \$0.17 million).

9.2 Other economic flows included in net results

Other economic flows are changes in the volume or value of an asset or liability that do not result from transactions.

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Other economic flows		
Net gains/(losses) on non-financial assets		
Net gains/(losses) on disposal of property, plant and equipment	304	178
Net actuarial gains/(losses) on receivable amounts		
Net actuarial gains/(losses) of secured client contributions receivables– net present value ⁽ⁱ⁾	4	(383)
Net actuarial gains/(losses) on impairment of unsecured client contribution receivables ⁽ⁱ⁾	169	(227)
Total net actuarial gains/(losses) on recoverable amounts	173	(610)
Net gains/(losses) arising from other economic flows		
Net gains/(losses) arising from revaluation of long service leave liability due to changes in discount bond rates and staff retention	(290)	(135)
Total other economic flows	186	(568)

(i) Including increase/(decrease) in provision for doubtful debts and bad debts from other economic flows – refer to note 6.1.

9.3 Responsible persons

In accordance with the Ministerial Directions issued by the Assistant Treasurer under the *Financial Management Act 1994* (FMA), the following disclosures are made regarding responsible persons for the reporting period.

Names

The persons who held the positions of Ministers and Accountable Officer in Victoria Legal Aid are as follows:

Responsible ministers

Victorian Attorney-General	The Hon. Jaclyn Symes, MP	1 July 2024 to 18 December 2024
	The Hon. Sonya Kilkenny, MP	19 December 2024 to 30 June 2025
Acting Victorian Attorney-General	The Hon. Enver Erdogan, MP	1 November 2024 to 5 November 2024

Responsible Body and Board

Mr Bill Jaboor	Chairperson	1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
Ms Robbie Campo	Director	1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
Mr George Habib	Director	1 July 2024 to 3 July 2024
Mr Andrew Jakomos	Director	1 July 2024 to 25 July 2024
Ms Tal Karp	Director	1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
Ms Clare Morton	Director	1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
Mr Andrew Saunders	Director	1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
Ms Elly Patira	Director	17 December 2024 to 30 June 2025
Ms Llewellyn Prain	Director	3 July 2024 to 30 June 2025

Accountable Officer

Chief Executive Officer (current)	Toby Hemming	17 February 2025 to 30 June 2025
Chief Executive Officer	Louise Glanville	1 July 2024 to 20 September 2024
Acting Chief Executive Officer	Ms Rowan McRae	22 November 2024 to 17 February 2025
	Mr Peter Noble	21 September 2024 to 21 November 2024
	Mr Peter Noble	25 July 2024 to 30 July 2024

Remuneration

Remuneration received or receivable by the Accountable Officer in connection with the management of Victoria Legal Aid during the reporting period was in the range: \$480,000- \$490,000 (\$480,000 – \$490,000 in 2023-24).

9.4 Remuneration of executives

The number of Senior Executive Service officers, other than Ministers and the Accountable Officer, and their total remuneration during the reporting period are shown in the table on the following page. Total annualised employee equivalents provides a measure of full time equivalent Senior Executive Service officers over the reporting period.

Remuneration comprises employee benefits (as defined in AASB 119 *Employee Benefits*) in all forms of consideration paid, payable or provided by the entity, or on behalf of the entity, in exchange for services rendered. Accordingly, remuneration is determined on an accrual basis.

Several factors affected total remuneration payable to executives over the year. A number of executives were appointed and employment contracts were renegotiated.

	Total remuneration	
	2025	2024
	\$'000	\$'000
Total remuneration	4,242	3,663
Total number of executives⁽ⁱ⁾	19	17
Total annualised employee equivalents⁽ⁱⁱ⁾	15.4	14.6

(i) The total number of Senior Executive Service officers includes persons who meet the definition of Key Management Personnel (KMP) of the entity under AASB 124 *Related Party Disclosures* and are also reported within the related parties note disclosure (refer to note 9.5). Where necessary prior year comparatives have been changed.

(ii) Annualised employee equivalent is based on the time fraction worked over the reporting period. Where necessary prior year comparatives have been changed.

9.5 Related parties

Victoria Legal Aid is a statutory authority and a controlled entity of the State of Victoria. Related parties of Victoria Legal Aid include:

- all key management personnel and their close family members and personal business interests;
- all cabinet ministers and their close family members; and
- all departments and public sector entities that are controlled and consolidated into the whole of state consolidated financials.

All related party transactions have been entered into on an arm's length basis.

Key management personnel

Key management personnel of Victoria Legal Aid includes, Minister, Board Members and the Executive Management Group of Victoria Legal Aid.

Key management personnel	Position title
Mr Bill Jaboor	Chairperson
Ms Robbie Campo	Director
Ms Tal Karp	Director
Ms Clare Morton	Director
Mr Andrew Saunders	Director
Ms Elly Patira	Director
Ms Llewellyn Prain	Director
Mr Toby Hemming	Chief Executive Officer and Accountable Officer
Mr Cameron Hume	Chief Operating Officer
Mr Peter Noble	Executive Director - Regions and Service Delivery
Ms Joanna Fletcher	Executive Director - Family, Youth and Children's Law
Ms Kate Bundrock	Executive Director - Criminal Law
Ms Rowan McRae	Executive Director - Legal Practice, Civil Justice and Legal Help
Mr Ashley Morris	Executive Director - First Nations Services

Remuneration of key management personnel

The compensation detailed below excludes the salaries and benefits the Portfolio Minister receives. The Minister's remuneration and allowances is set by the *Parliamentary Salaries and Superannuation Act 1968* and is reported within the State's Annual Financial Report.

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Compensation of Key Management Personnel	2,351	2,189
Total⁽ⁱ⁾	2,351	2,189

(i) Note that KMPs are also reported in the disclosure of Responsible Persons (Refer to note 9.3) and Remuneration of Executives (Refer to note 9.4).

Significant transactions with government-related entities

Victoria Legal Aid received funding from and made payments to the Consolidated Fund during the year. Victoria Legal Aid had the following government-related entity transactions:

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Receipts		
Commonwealth Grants		
National Legal Assistance Partnership Agreement	59,871	56,475
Attorney-General Department	459	-
Project grants	17,806	21,876
Total Commonwealth Grants	78,136	78,351
State Grants		
Base funding	136,830	134,290
Department of Justice and Community Safety - community legal centres	28,626	27,172
Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner	56,353	40,000
Total State Grants	221,809	201,462
Specific Project Grants		
Department of Justice and Community Safety	9,352	12,470
Department of Justice and Community Safety - community legal centres	7,167	9,997
Department of Jobs, Precincts & Regions - community legal centres	876	515
Department of Jobs, Precincts & Regions	-	15
Department of Health and Human Services	15,366	13,034
Department of Health and Human Services - community legal centres	2,140	2,320
Department of Premier and Cabinet	84	179
Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner	6,488	10,800
Total Specific project grants	41,473	49,330
Total State grants and specific project grants	263,282	250,791
Total receipts from government-related entities	341,418	329,142
Payments		
Community legal centres ⁽ⁱ⁾	38,625	39,714

(i) Excludes Commonwealth grants recorded as administered (non-controlled items). See note 4.

Transactions and balances with key management personnel and other related parties

Given the breadth and depth of State government activities, related parties transact with Victorian public sector in a manner consistent with other members of the public e.g. stamp duty and other government fees and charges. Further employment processes within the Victorian public sector occur on terms and conditions consistent with the *Public Administration Act 2004* and Codes of Conduct and Standards issued by the Victorian Public Sector Commission. Procurement processes occur on terms and conditions consistent with the Victorian Government Purchasing Board requirements.

Outside of normal citizen type transactions, there were no related party transactions that involved key management personnel, their close family members and their personal business interests. No provision has been required, nor any expense recognised, for impairment of receivables from related parties.

9.6 Remuneration of auditors

	2025 \$'000	2024 \$'000
Victorian Auditor-General's Office		
Audit of the financial statements	67	64
	67	64

9.7 Subsequent events

There are no other matters or circumstances that have arisen since 30 June 2025 that have significantly affected or may significantly affect the operations, or results, or state of affairs of Victoria Legal Aid.

08

Disclosure index

Our annual report is prepared in **accordance with all relevant Victorian legislation**. This index enables identification of our compliance with statutory disclosure requirements, including Financial Reporting Directions (FRDs) and Standing Directions (SDs).

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Declaration

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