

Justice.
Respect.
Quality.
Effectiveness.

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For further information about this annual report, contact:

The communications manager on (07) 3238 3004, fax (07) 3238 3340 or email publications@legalaid.qld.gov.au

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The Honourable Jarrod Bleijie MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice
State Law Building
Ann Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Attorney

I am pleased to present the Annual Report 2011-12 and financial statements for Legal Aid Queensland.

I certify that this report complies with:

- the prescribed requirements of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* and the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009*, and
- the detailed requirements set out in the Annual report requirements for Queensland Government agencies.

A checklist outlining the annual reporting requirements can be accessed at www.legalaid.qld.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Rachel Hunter
Chairperson, Legal Aid Queensland Board

Chair's report

As 2011-12 ends, Legal Aid Queensland is well positioned to meet the challenge of ensuring frontline services are revitalised, while supporting the government to manage Queensland's difficult budget situation through our continued prudent approach to financial management.

Overall, our legal services increased in 2011-12 (see table 2), a significant achievement in a year without any significant budget increases.

Our sound financial management has enabled Legal Aid Queensland's guidelines for grants of aid to be expanded, allowing people facing imprisonment for the first time to apply for a grant of aid for legal representation when pleading guilty in the magistrates court.

The board also approved an increase in the fees paid to criminal duty lawyers from 1 July 2012, in recognition of the important work they do representing people in magistrates courts across Queensland, as well as the increased workload they have undertaken since the introduction of the Moynihan reforms.

Legal Aid Queensland's Flood and Cyclone Legal Help team has continued to help people in dispute with their insurers following the floods and cyclones of 2010-11. This has been an excellent example of frontline services in action and due to our existing financial sustainability, was undertaken without any additional support for Legal Aid Queensland from the former state government.

A real priority for Legal Aid Queensland continues to be helping people affected by domestic violence. Our major annual community legal education event, the Law Week Hypothetical, this year looked at domestic violence and the new *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012*. In preparation for the Act coming into effect in September 2012, Legal Aid Queensland's domestic violence publications, including a comprehensive guide on how to apply for a protection order, and our grants of aid, are being updated to reflect the changes to the law.

Our Referral Pathway for Legal Advice program, which helps vulnerable women receive legal advice, expanded to the Gold Coast last year and there are plans for further pathway networks.

Legal Aid Queensland provided almost 3500 domestic violence legal advices in 2011-12, an increase of almost 10 percent on the previous year.

Legal Aid Queensland receives funding from the federal and state governments. In 2012, we welcomed a new state Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Jarrod Bleijie, and a new federal Attorney-General, Nicola Roxon. The Legal Aid Queensland Board looks forward to working collaboratively with both governments in 2012-13.

I would like to thank Legal Aid Queensland staff for their continued commitment to our values of social justice, respect, quality and effectiveness. Legal Aid Queensland could not operate without your commitment, work ethic and passion.



Rachel Hunter
Board chairperson

CEO's report

During 2011-12, Legal Aid Queensland has continued to provide high quality legal services to disadvantaged Queenslanders, guided by the four objectives of our Strategic Plan.

In pursuit of the goals of the National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services, our first strategic plan objective is to support the early resolution of legal problems and improve social inclusion. In 2011-12 we built on our longstanding focus on early resolution and social inclusion through the delivery of two rounds of funding from our Community Legal Education Collaboration Fund that has successfully supported a range of collaborative initiatives with Community Legal Centres located across Queensland.

Providing quality legal services statewide to our clients is our second and core strategic plan objective. As table 2 demonstrates, the number of legal services we provided increased overall in 2011-12. We also increased our investment in preferred suppliers (private law firms who carry out legal work on behalf of Legal Aid Queensland) by more than \$1.6 million over the last 12 months.

In 2011-12, we developed an in-house Quality Legal Services Framework encompassing all the measures Legal Aid Queensland has in place to ensure our employed lawyers maintain a high standard of service delivery to our clients, including our improved in-house file audit programs. We also commenced the selection process for a new round of preferred supplier contracts to ensure clients receive a consistently high level of service from our suppliers.

Our third objective is to work collaboratively with our justice system partners to meet the legal needs of disadvantaged Queenslanders. We convened two meetings of the Queensland Legal Assistance Forum during 2011-12, which brings together legal professional bodies and service providers across the state to address legal assistance issues. The successful implementation of the Queensland Flood and Cyclone Legal Help Response in 2011-12 has continued to rely upon many of these partnerships.

Our final objective focuses on building our business capability and sustainability. We have done a lot of work this year to update our regional IT network and modernise our systems for granting aid to reduce red tape and improve integrity and accountability. Our Cairns, Mackay and Caboolture regional offices were also improved during the past year.

As you can see, it has been another productive year for Legal Aid Queensland. None of this would have been achieved without the commitment of our hard-working board, committed management team, fantastic staff and loyal preferred suppliers. Thanks to everyone for their support and contribution over the last year.



Anthony Reilly
Chief executive officer

Corporate governance

Corporate governance is the system by which our organisation is managed, directed and held accountable.

Sound corporate governance means:

- achieving our strategic goals and objectives
- being accountable for our actions
- fulfilling legal requirements
- managing risks
- monitoring, reporting on and evaluating our corporate performance
- meeting government and community expectations.

Our corporate governance framework guides the way we manage our strategic and operational programs. The framework ensures we deliver efficient and effective services with due diligence and accountability.



Figure 1. Corporate governance framework

Legal Aid Queensland Board

The Legal Aid Queensland Board (the board) is responsible for managing Legal Aid Queensland and ensuring the organisation achieves its objectives. The board is our organisation's governing body and is responsible to the Attorney-General.

The board decides the organisation's priorities and strategies, leads policy direction and ensures sound and prudent financial management.

The board has five members. Each member has specific knowledge or experience that helps in the organisation's management. The areas of expertise include public administration, financial management, and law and legal services provision.

The board is headed by a chairperson, who is appointed by the Governor in Council. Board members are appointed by the Governor in Council for three-year terms. The board met 10 times in 2011-12. All board meetings are attended by the chief executive officer and deputy chief executive officer. Executive Management Team directors also attend as required to present papers and discuss issues with the board.

Board members

Rachel Hunter - Chair

Board member since November 2010
Rachel Hunter is a former director-general of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General and the Department of Education, Training and the Arts and former Public Service commissioner. She is also the chair of the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority. She brings a wealth of experience and expertise to the Legal Aid Queensland Board, having worked in the Queensland public sector for more than 30 years.

Iyla Davies

Board member since June 2005

Iyla Davies was admitted as a solicitor in 1984 and is currently the Head and Chief Executive of The Women's College in the University of Queensland.

She is an Adjunct Professor in the Faculty of Law at the Queensland University of Technology and the University of Queensland, a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and of the Australian Institute of Management. For more than 20 years she was a law academic specialising in family law, dispute resolution and mediation.

Dan Toombs

Board member since

November 2007

Dan Toombs is a lawyer. He has been the recipient of numerous state and Commonwealth awards for his work. He has recently written *Disability and the Queensland Criminal Justice System* published by Thomson Reuters in 2012.

Allan Welsh

Board member since July 2008

Allan Welsh has led major projects in the public and private sectors for the past 20 years, with extensive experience in managing capital infrastructure, information and business system projects and events. He was awarded a Public Service Medal in the 2008 Australian Honours for his work in managing capital projects in the arts sector.

Terry Browne

Board member since June 2011

Terry Browne was admitted as a solicitor in 1994 and is an accredited specialist in criminal law. He is a partner of the law firm Arthur Browne & Associates and has served as a member of the Queensland Law Society's Criminal Law section as well as the Access to Justice and Pro-Bono section. Terry practises primarily in regional areas and is also a casual lecturer at James Cook University.



Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee

The Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee is a sub-committee of the Legal Aid Queensland Board and acts in a review and advisory capacity to the board. The committee provides independent assurance and assistance to the board on our financial administration and reporting, audit control and independence, legal compliance, internal controls, and risk oversight and management.

The committee meets four times a year and comprises:

- Legal Aid Queensland Board member Iyla Davies (Chair)
- Queensland Treasury principal analyst Trevor Dann
- Department of Justice and Attorney-General Financial Services executive director Peter Cook
- Len Scanlan (former Auditor-General of Queensland).

Two committee members are public servants and do not receive remuneration for meetings. Iyla Davies' attendance is recorded as a board meeting for remuneration purposes and Len Scanlan received remuneration between \$0 and \$5,000 in 2011-12.

The chief finance officer attends the committee's meetings with the CEO and Corporate Services director.

The committee's key achievements in 2011-12 included:

- reviewing the 2010-11 financial statements prior to signing by the board chair
- reviewing the external auditor's recommendations from the 2010-11 audit
- meeting with the newly appointed external auditors and reviewing the audit strategy for 2011-12
- reviewing the results of in-house compliance audits of preferred suppliers' files
- reviewing and updating the organisation's risk register
- leading the implementation of a formal compliance program to address the broad range of legislative, professional and business requirements expected of the CEO and the board.

The committee has operated in line with its charter and has met four times during the year. The charter is based on Queensland Treasury's Audit Committee Guidelines.

Executive Management Team

The *Legal Aid Queensland Act 1997* creates the position of chief executive officer and gives the position responsibility, under the board, for controlling Legal Aid Queensland's day to day administration, providing legal services to legally assisted persons, and arranging and supervising the provision of legal services by Legal Aid lawyers.

The CEO is supported in this role by the Executive Management Team. The team's functions are to:

- monitor our strategies and activities to ensure legal assistance is provided to disadvantaged people in the most effective, efficient and economical way
 - review and approve policies and standards and ensure these are implemented so we meet our statutory obligations
 - ensure management systems and practices are effective and that they reflect ethics obligations and the Code of Conduct
 - oversee our budget and monitor financial performance
 - promote, sponsor and develop a culture of risk management, service delivery improvement and innovation
- ensure we have an organisational culture and environment that attracts and retains high-performing employees
 - consider and make decisions on significant issues affecting the organisation
 - communicate important information to staff.

The team meets weekly and comprises:

- CEO Anthony Reilly
- Deputy CEO Paul Davey
- Family Law, Civil Justice and Advice Services director Nicky Davies
- Criminal Law Services director Peter Delibaltas
- Public Defender John Allen
- Grants director Louise Martin
- Corporate Services director Ian Warren
- Policy, Communication and Community Legal Education director Mary Burgess.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee monitors and reviews our financial, budget and performance processes.

Specifically, the committee:

- oversees the annual budget preparation and recommends its approval to the CEO and board
- ensures our budget is framed to maximise the outputs from the strategic plan and government priorities
- ensures the budget is effectively managed so we achieve budget targets and comply with government requirements
- monitors our financial performance and position, identifying the key financial performance drivers and establishing measures for determining success
- monitors non-financial performance.

The Finance Committee comprises:

- CEO Anthony Reilly
- Deputy CEO Paul Davey
- Corporate Services director Ian Warren
- A/Chief finance officer Rajesh Patel.

Information Technology Steering Committee

The Information Technology Steering Committee was established in 2011 to ensure IT operations, investments and initiatives are aligned with Legal Aid Queensland's strategic emphasis on service delivery systems and business processes.

The responsibilities of the committee include:

- providing corporate governance for the planning, approval and prioritisation of significant IT investments and initiatives
- engaging stakeholders to inform and evaluate IT investments and initiatives
- ensuring IT investments and initiative proposals:
 - are and remain consistent with the organisation's strategic plan, Legal Aid Queensland's priorities, budget strategy, and resourcing capability
 - are responsive to identified needs of clients and staff
 - fully consider people management, change management, and communications issues
 - monitor any exceptions to the progress of approved IT investments and initiatives against their project plan, and budget.

The Information Technology Steering Committee comprises:

- Deputy CEO Paul Davey
- Corporate Services director Ian Warren
- Grants director Louise Martin
- Policy, Communication and Community Legal Education director Mary Burgess
- Information Technology manager Russell Scott.

Human Resources Committee

The Human Resources Committee provides advice and support to the CEO to ensure human resource strategies:

- support and achieve equal employment opportunity
- improve service delivery quality, effectiveness and efficiency
- encourage high levels of productivity, performance and innovation
- improve our capacity to meet new priorities and challenges
- improve our ability to attract and retain skilled employees
- result in employment expenses being managed efficiently and effectively
- reflect the quality framework for public sector workplaces.

The Human Resources Committee comprises:

- Corporate Services director Ian Warren

- Human Resources manager Ken Raymer
- Principal human resource officer Kelly Camden
- Divisional representatives Patrick O'Brien (Criminal law), Toni Bell (Family law), Rosemarie Coxon (Regional services) and Cathy Carr (Grants).

External scrutiny

We are subject to all of the external accountability mechanisms that apply to a statutory body in Queensland, including regular budget and performance updates with Queensland Treasury and the Department of Justice and Attorney-General.

Accountability mechanisms that complement the internal corporate governance framework include:

- external audit and certification
- judicial review of administrative decisions
- the Queensland Ombudsman
- the Crime and Misconduct Commission
- the Parliamentary Estimates Committee
- the Public Accounts Committee
- the Legal Services Commission
- public performance reporting, for example, through this annual report and the annual Service Delivery Statement.

Organisation structure

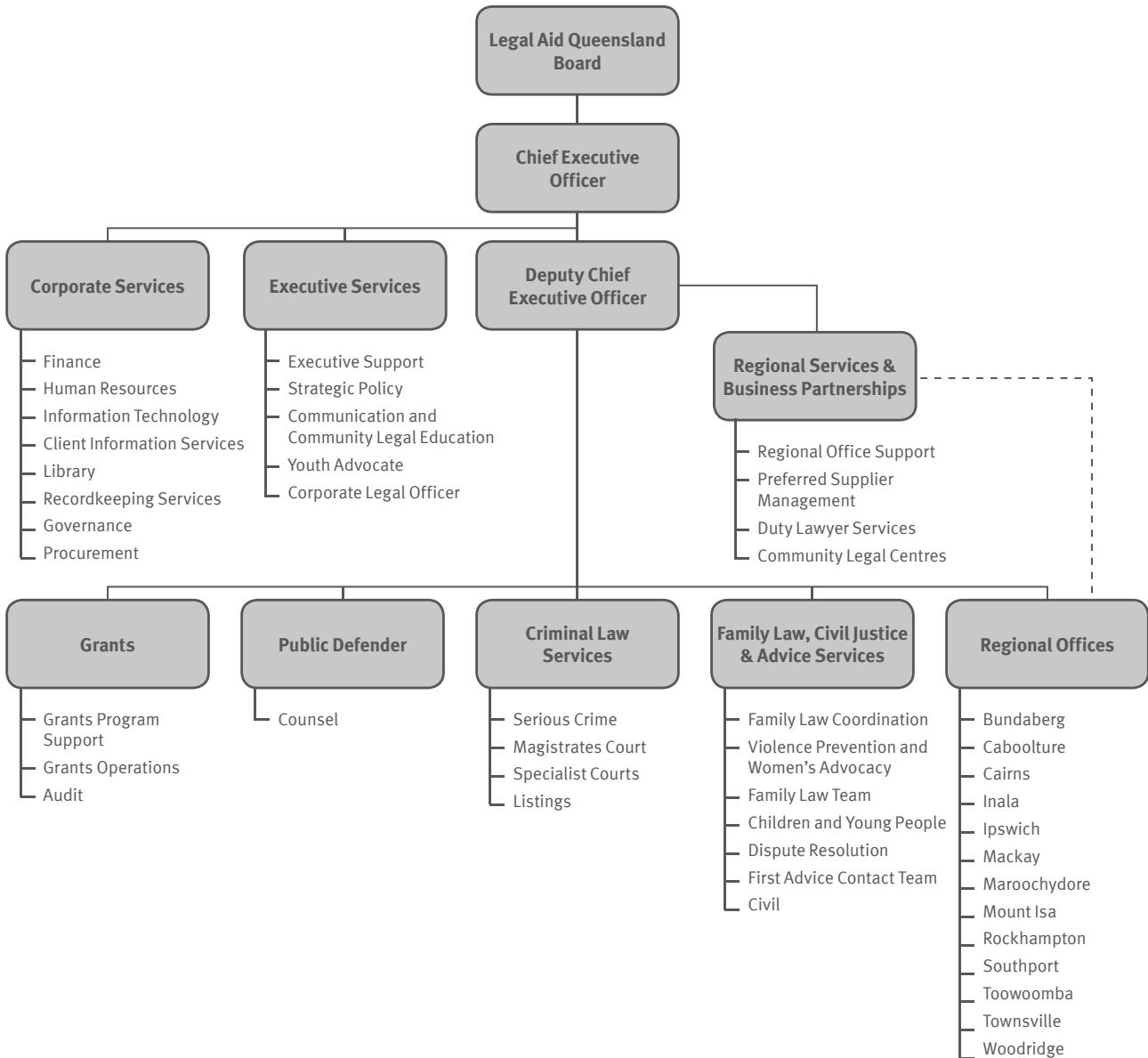


Figure 2. Organisation structure

Report card

Queensland Government community objective

- Revitalise frontline services for families.

Outputs

- Preventative legal services – community legal education, and information and referrals through our website, statewide call centre and customer service counters
- Early intervention – legal advice and minor assistance over the phone or face-to-face
- Lawyer assisted dispute resolution – for families facing separation, and for consumers and farmers
- Duty lawyer services – in criminal, family and administrative law
- Representation in courts and tribunals – including criminal law, family law, child protection, domestic violence, anti-discrimination, and consumer protection matters.

Performance measures

- Access to services by disadvantaged groups
- Progress towards National Partnership Agreement targets
- Achievement of other government service delivery targets
- Legal services suppliers' compliance with agreements and standards
- Community Legal Education Strategy implemented
- Client satisfaction
- Preferred supplier satisfaction
- Policy submissions made to government
- Queensland and regional legal assistance forums held
- New collaborative arrangements
- Services delivered within budget
- Target benefits achieved from business improvement projects
- Workforce Strategy developed
- Information and Communication Technology Strategy developed
- Staff satisfaction.



Outcomes

- Ensured clients from identified disadvantaged groups were able to access our services (see Table 4 on page 30).
- Worked to achieve National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services targets (see Table 2 on page 18).
- Worked to achieve state and federal government targets (see Tables 2 and 3 on page 18).
- Ninety-three percent of audited preferred suppliers achieved an acceptable level of compliance with agreements and standards, an increase of three percent from 2010-11.
- Launched and began to implement our Community Legal Education Strategy (see page 19 for more detail).
- Received the results from our biannual Client Satisfaction Survey, which was conducted by market research firm Colmar Brunton. Satisfaction with our services remains high, with clients awarding Legal Aid Queensland an average satisfaction score of 7.8 out of a possible 10.
- A preferred supplier satisfaction survey was not conducted in 2011-12.
- Provided 14 policy responses to government, including the new *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012* (see page 32 for more information).
- Convened two Queensland Legal Assistance Forum meetings and 28 Regional Legal Assistance Forum meetings.
- Collaborated with service providers and liaised with government and community stakeholders on issues like our Flood and Cyclone Legal Help service and through the Queensland Legal Assistance Forum.
- Delivered our services within budget (see financial overview on pages 14-16).
- Achieved targets set for business improvement projects (see pages 35-36 for more detail).

Priorities for the future

- Continue to provide frontline legal services to disadvantaged Queenslanders.
- Continue prudent management of Legal Aid Queensland's finances.
- Support the implementation of the *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012* through:
 - improving our grants of aid
 - expanding our Domestic Violence Referral Pathway Network program
 - updating our web information and publications to reflect changes to the legislation, including our guide on how to apply for a protection order
 - updating our Best Practice Framework and Guidelines for practitioners and service providers working with clients who have been affected by domestic violence.
- Complete the update of the Duty Lawyer Handbook and publish as an electronic publication for use by all duty lawyers.
- Review the accessibility of our frontline service delivery to people at risk of social exclusion.
- Continue to improve our grants systems, including updating our Grants Handbook.
- Complete the upgrade of our regional IT network and finalise the implementation of our electronic document records management system.
- Implement improvements to LAQ Office for preferred suppliers.

Financial overview

Managing the budget

Our budgeted expenditure for 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012 was \$111 million.

	Budget \$'000	Actual \$'000
User charges	2,907	3,161
Grants and other contributions	108,604	108,629
Other revenue	1,585	1,877
Total income	113,096	113,667
Employee expenses	40,391	40,797
Supplies and services	8,407	7,777
Grants and subsidies	119	145
Depreciation and amortisation	1,801	1,523
Private legal practitioner expenses	57,957	57,889
Impairment losses	250	321
Other	2,375	2,190
Total expenses	111,300	110,642
Operating result from continuing operations	1,796	3,025

Table 1. Published 2011–12 budget versus actual performance

Summary

Our overall financial position for 2011-12 is healthy and reflects the board and management's commitment to sound financial management principles, and ensuring the long term sustainability of services.

We had an operating surplus of \$3.025 million for the year ended 30 June 2012 compared with a budgeted surplus of \$1.796 million. The organisation has performed well financially, with most revenue and expenditure categories coming in line or under budget. This result is consistent with our strategic plan objective of 'legal services being sustainable and delivering value'. To achieve

this result we have maintained our focus on financial management, including strengthening our balance sheet. We will continue to minimise costs and risks in relation to liabilities and contingent liabilities.

The actual operating surplus of \$3.025 million for the year ended 30 June 2012 was comparatively less than the actual surplus for the year ended 30 June 2011. The

revenue in 2011-12 was similar to the previous year but the expenditure in 2011-12 was higher due to a range of factors including payments to private legal practitioners which increased from \$56.27M in 2010-11 to \$57.89M in 2011-12. Some additional employee costs arising from initiatives such as Legal Aid Queensland's flood legal response also contributed to the reduced surplus.



Income

Federal and state government grants are our main income source, with relatively little income coming from service charges or clients' contributions towards their legal costs. We also receive a significant amount of funding from the Legal Practitioner Interest on Trust Accounts Fund (LPITAF).

Expenses

Most expenditure is paid to private law firms to carry out legal aid work on our behalf. This is consistent with our service delivery model which allocates approximately 80 percent of legally-aided matters to private lawyers. The remaining costs support the in-house legal practice and infrastructure for all service delivery.

Assets

The most valuable assets we have are cash and cash equivalents (of \$29.9 million), and our land and building in Brisbane (worth approximately \$16.5 million). Other assets include our unique computer-based business systems and money owed to us by clients.

Our total assets have increased compared with 2010-11 because of increased cash reserves and investment in software.

Liabilities

Our biggest liability is money we have to put aside to pay private lawyers for work assigned to them but not yet completed. Sometimes these cases can take years to complete so money needs to be kept aside from the outset.

Equity

Equity is made up of two components. The first is the land revaluation reserve component which represents the increase in the value of the land. This reserve is not available as money in the bank to be spent on services. The second component is the accumulated surplus which is available as money in the bank and can be spent to meet business needs. In earlier years the land revaluation reserve portion increased sharply, before reducing and stabilising at \$10 million since 2008-09. The accumulated surplus has been increasing over the last few years due to management taking appropriate steps to increase equity in order to ensure Legal Aid Queensland is able to continue to provide sustainable services.

Cash

We have maintained healthy cash levels over the past few years to make sure we can pay private solicitors for matters they finalise and to allow us to replace equipment and other assets. We invest this cash in low-risk funds that are managed by state government institutions. This provides us with some income from interest but also protects us from market fluctuations.

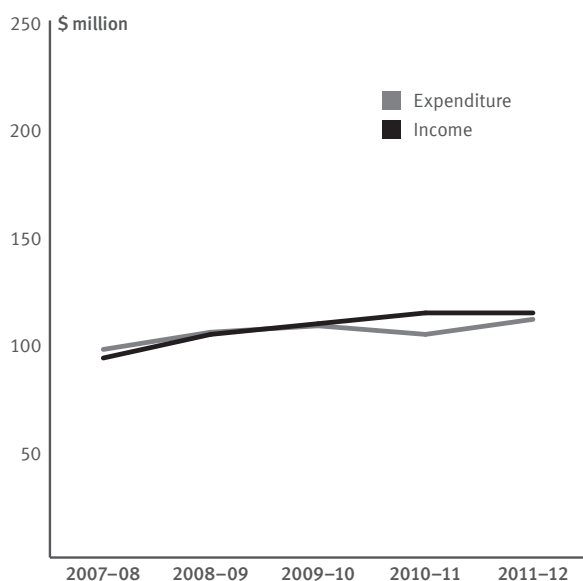


Figure 3. Income and expenditure

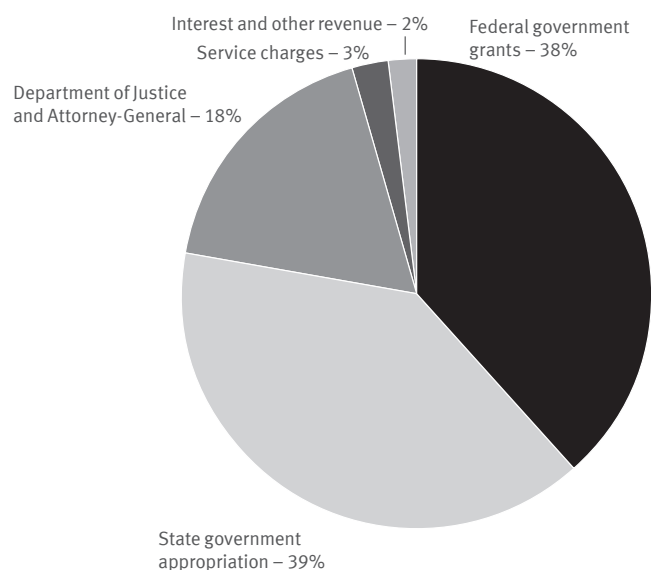


Figure 4. Income 2011-12

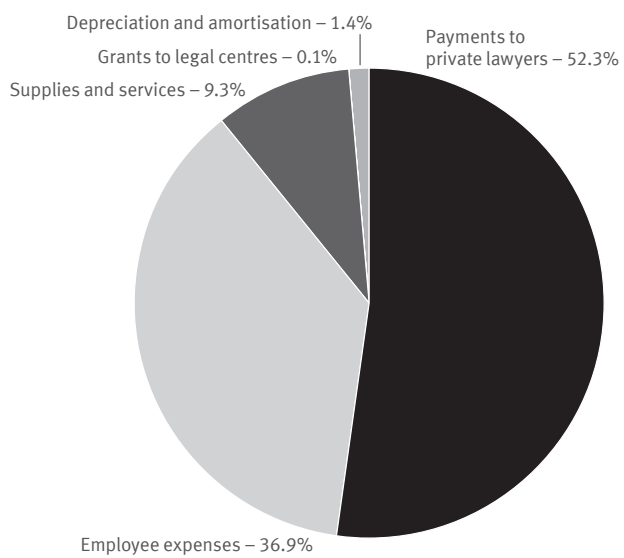


Figure 5. Expenses 2011-12

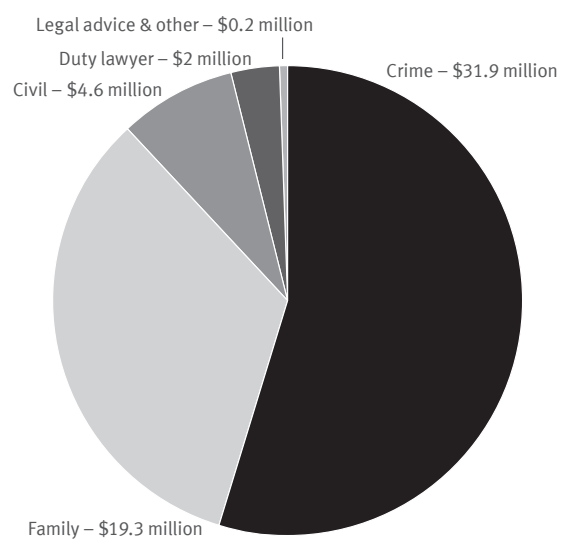


Figure 6. Payments to private lawyers 2011-12

About us

Our purpose, vision and values

Our purpose

To provide legal services to financially disadvantaged people.

Our vision

To be a leader in a fair justice system where people are able to understand and protect their legal rights.

Our values

Social justice

We seek to protect people's rights, promote fair treatment, and help those at risk of social exclusion.

Respect

We respect the people we assist and those with whom we work.

Quality

We continue to improve the quality of our work and the outcomes for our clients.

Effectiveness

We deliver innovative, sustainable and cost-effective services.

Who we are and what we do

Legal Aid Queensland provides legal help to financially disadvantaged Queenslanders. We are an independent statutory authority that operates under the *Legal Aid Queensland Act 1997*.

Legal Aid Queensland receives state government funding to provide legal services for state law matters, and federal government funding to provide the legal services designated in the National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services.

Our range of services include community legal education, information and referral, advice and minor assistance, lawyer assisted dispute resolution, duty lawyer services, and litigation services. Our services are provided across a range of areas of law including crime, family, child protection, child support, domestic violence, social security, consumer protection and anti-discrimination law.

Our work contributes to the Queensland Government's priority of revitalising frontline services for families. We deliver vital legal services to disadvantaged Queenslanders who cannot afford to engage a lawyer. Many of our programs, like our advice services, child protection program, domestic violence, and consumer protection services, are helping to break the cycle of disadvantage for Queensland families.

Our head office is in Brisbane. To meet the needs of Queenslanders living in rural and regional areas, we offer our full range of legal aid services from 13 regional offices: Southport, Ipswich, Toowoomba, Woodridge, Inala, Caboolture, Maroochydore, Bundaberg, Rockhampton, Mackay, Mount Isa, Townsville and Cairns. Our regional office staff work with a network of community access points which act as information outposts and referral points in communities. We also coordinate regional legal assistance forums around the state to identify emerging legal needs and help determine which service is best placed to meet needs.

We provide free legal information, advice and duty lawyer services to all Queenslanders, and legal education to the community. While our advice services are not formally means and merit tested, we do seek to focus them on people most at risk of social exclusion.

We purchase litigation and dispute resolution services from our in-house legal practice and preferred supplier law firms around the state to maximise legal services available to disadvantaged Queenslanders. Staff assess individual legal aid applications by applying a means and merit test and manage the funding arrangements for cases where aid is approved.

We also work with the state and federal governments to advocate for law reform, and policy and system changes that improve outcomes for our clients and enhance the justice system's efficiency.

Our performance

Overview of services

	Total
Preventative legal services ¹	1,532,561
Early intervention services ²	
- Criminal	16,129
- Family	23,517
- Civil	13,889
Dispute resolution services ³	
-Family	6,898
-Civil	906
Duty lawyer services	
- Criminal	67,121
- Family	1,989
Litigation services ⁴	
- Applications received	35,847
- Applications approved	27,847
- Applications refused ⁵	8,000

Table 2: Overview of legal aid services

1 Preventative legal services includes community legal education, information and referral. In accordance with the NPA counting rules, the count of preventative legal services includes unique web page views of Legal Aid Queensland's web legal information pages.

2 Early intervention services include advice, minor assistance and advocacy. The category of advocacy is a NPA term.

3 Dispute resolution services refer to lawyer assisted family law dispute resolution services. Service count represents the number of people attending Legal Aid Queensland conferences of 5,538 plus 1,360 certificates issued per s.60I of the *Family Law Act*.

4 Litigation services represents grants of aid for litigation.

5 Some applications received may have been initially refused and subsequently approved on review.

Queensland Government service delivery statement targets

SDS Target	2011-12 Target	2011-12 Actual
Percentage of decisions to refuse funding that are referred for external review	8%	11.70%
Percentage of refusals that go to external review that are overturned on review	6%	4.55%
Average cost of State services provided – legal representation	\$2,400	\$2,335
Average cost of State services provided – legal advice	\$80	\$67
Average cost of State services provided – duty lawyer	\$80	\$73.65
Percentage of duty lawyer matters resolved without further court proceedings	50%	50.62%

Table 3: State government service standards

Strategic objectives

Objective 1: Support the early resolution of legal problems

Objective 2: Provide quality services

Preventative legal services

Community legal education

Community legal education activities are an integral part of the services offered by Legal Aid Queensland.

Our community legal education activities are coordinated through a strategy that targets priority client groups and legal problems and aims to:

- improve community understanding of the law
- reduce litigation and costs of the justice system
- assist clients and stakeholders to understand our services and how to access them.

Our Community Legal Education Strategy is delivered through:

- web based legal information
- written publications including factsheets, information kits and legal guides

- legal information sessions by lawyers for community and government workers and other community audiences
- community development projects that focus on increasing awareness within hard-to-reach communities and vulnerable sections of the community
- community legal education events such as the annual Law Week Hypothetical or policy forums on law reform issues.

The National Partnership Agreement's focus on prevention, early intervention legal services and collaboration has been a key driver for the strategy and the coordination of our community legal education work.

Some of the highlights over the last year included:

- Legal Aid Queensland Community Legal Education Strategy launched
- Community Legal Education Assistance Forum network developed and resourced
- *What's the law? Australian law for new arrivals* DVD launched at the Queensland Multicultural Festival and 772 resource kits distributed to TAFE English Language and Literacy Services, government departments and settlement support services within the multicultural sector

- initiated and administered two rounds of Legal Aid Queensland's Community Legal Education Collaboration Fund to resource collaborative initiatives and partnerships to extend the reach of our community legal education work
- 2012 Law Week Hypothetical targeting domestic violence
- released the *Life after separation - putting the pieces back together* DVD to provide accessible legal information about family law and dispute resolution processes, how to navigate these legal systems and where to go for help
- embraced social media and set up a YouTube channel where a number of Legal Aid Queensland resources have been uploaded for viewing by the community.

Information and referral

Legal Aid Queensland provides comprehensive, state-wide, free legal information and referral services to disadvantaged Queenslanders. Our free legal information and referral services can be accessed online via the Legal Aid Queensland website, by phone through our call centre, and in

person at one of our 14 offices throughout metropolitan, rural and regional Queensland.

The organisation first established a state-wide call centre in 1997 to provide telephone information services to the general public. The Legal Aid Queensland website (www.legalaid.qld.gov.au) complements this service, containing comprehensive legal information on a range of legal issues, as well as a state-wide network of referral agencies. Clients can also access information in person by visiting one of our Legal Aid Queensland offices, or one of our community access points.

An Information and Referral Strategy was developed during 2010-11 and implemented in 2011-12, to increase the number of information and referral services, improve the links between Legal Aid Queensland and other services and improve the accuracy and effectiveness of referral practices.

Legal information and referral services provided to the public in 2011-12 increased by more than 30% on 2010-11.

Early intervention

Advice and minor assistance

Financially disadvantaged Queenslanders can access our free legal advice and minor assistance services by telephone, videoconference, at Legal Aid Queensland offices and at designated outreach services. The legal advice service is primarily provided by our Brisbane-based First Advice Contact Team (FACT), specialist teams and regional offices. FACT provides advice to clients at our Brisbane office and telephone advice to clients state-wide.

We also provide a Prison Advice Service. Videoconferencing is used to provide legal advice services to people in Queensland's prisons, which achieves significant travel time and cost savings.

We also provide minor assistance services for people who might need help with preparing letters and other documents following on from initial legal advice.

During 2011-12 we completed our Legal Advice Renewal Project, which prioritised the areas of law in which clients could access legal advice. The project has helped to ensure advice services are targeted around the issues affecting clients who experience, or are at risk of experiencing, social exclusion and has helped with planning our print and online legal information resources to support the advice services provided. We have also developed a policy and procedure manual for our information, advice and referral services.

We provide free legal advice in:

Criminal law

- Criminal charges in magistrates, district or supreme courts
- Youth justice
- Traffic matters

Family law

- Parenting issues, eg arrangements about children
- Relationship issues, eg divorce, property settlement
- Domestic and family violence
- Child support and maintenance
- Child protection
- Family dispute resolution

Legal Aid Queensland provided 53,535 legal advice and minor assistance services to people in 2011-12, an increase of 5.3% on 2010-11.

Civil law

- Anti-discrimination
- Peace and good behaviour
- Victim Assist Queensland
- Motor vehicle property damage
- Excluding young people from school and services
- Consumer/debt (including unpaid wages).

Administrative appeals duty lawyer program

We continued to provide a duty lawyer advice service at the Administrative Appeals Tribunal to assist clients considering appeals in areas such as social security law. The service helped us reach clients who may not have sought legal help, including older clients and people with a disability.

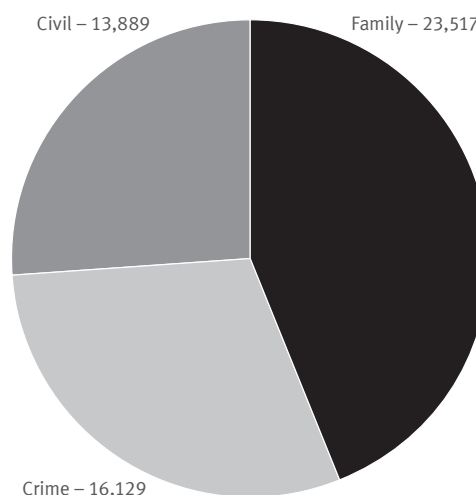


Figure 7. Early intervention services provided by Legal Aid Queensland in 2011-12.



Lawyer assisted dispute resolution services

Resolving family law problems through dispute resolution processes

Legal Aid Queensland is a national leader in the provision of lawyer assisted family law dispute resolution. We provide a state-wide lawyer assisted family dispute resolution program. We aim to resolve family law disputes before matters go to court, or before a final hearing is necessary if court proceedings have started.

We have dispute resolution conference organisers in Brisbane and other regional centres around the state to help families. Family law dispute resolution conferences are held at our Brisbane and regional offices to help separating couples resolve their family law issues without the need to resort to litigation. We also provide a support service to help people implement their conference agreement. An important part of our dispute resolution program is our property arbitration program.

Our criminal law duty lawyer service ensured 67,121 children and adults were represented in a court in 2011-12, an increase of 4.2% on 2010-11.

Providing services to the farming community

Our Farm and Rural Legal Service helps farmers, primary producers and primary producer-based businesses who are experiencing financial hardship with their legal positions and supports negotiations with their banks and finance providers.

Flood and Cyclone Legal Help

In 2011-12 our Consumer Protection Unit continued to provide legal assistance services on flood insurance matters to Queenslanders affected by the floods of early 2011.

We helped hundreds of Queenslanders through insurers' internal dispute resolution processes, and if appropriate through external dispute resolution with the Financial Ombudsman Service, to resolve claims without needing to go to court.

Duty lawyer services

Criminal law duty lawyer program

Legal Aid Queensland is dedicated to providing quality representation to our clients, and quality assistance to our courts. Duty lawyer services are based in Queensland's magistrates and childrens courts and play a crucial role in our juvenile and adult justice systems. Duty lawyer services are provided by our in-house lawyers and authorised private lawyers who deliver services under roster or tender arrangements. In July 2012, fees paid to rostered duty lawyers were increased by \$10 per hour to \$120 an hour.

Legal Aid Queensland's duty lawyer services offer free, initial legal advice and representation to people charged with criminal and some traffic offences, who are on bail or in custody in Queensland. Duty lawyers can enter guilty pleas, make bail applications or request remands for clients.

Following the introduction of the *Civil and Criminal Jurisdiction Reform and Modernisation Amendment Bill 2010*, Legal Aid Queensland has been actively engaged in the implementation of the Moynihan reforms to the magistrates court criminal process. As a result of these

reforms we have increased our level of duty lawyer representation in the courts because of the new callovers. Legal Aid Queensland now provides duty lawyer services in new callover courts each week, as well as in arrest, custody, and breach courts. We have engaged in duty lawyer specific advocacy training for our officers, and have received positive feedback from courts and prosecutions in various jurisdictions since the commencement of the new magistrates court criminal process.

In line with the reforms, Legal Aid Queensland is committed to case conferencing matters with the prosecution to ensure our clients have their legal issues resolved as soon as possible. This can have significant sentencing benefits for clients and can also result in savings to the criminal justice system by avoiding unnecessary court time. It also means witnesses and victims do not have to go through the stress of attending court.

During the year we began working on a project to update one of the duty lawyer's key tools of the trade – the Duty Lawyer Handbook. The handbook is being updated by our in-house legal staff and will be completed in late 2012 as an electronic publication.

Family law duty lawyer program

Our Family Law Duty Lawyer service provides assistance to self represented litigants in the Family Court of Australia and the Federal Magistrates Court throughout Queensland for family law matters. We provided services in Brisbane, Townsville, Cairns, Mackay, Bundaberg, Rockhampton, Maroochydore, Toowoomba, Southport, Hervey Bay and Ipswich.

As part of this duty lawyer service, we provide information, legal advice, referrals and representation. We also help people complete forms and documents, negotiate and settle consent orders and seek adjournments. We help people complete applications for legal aid or access our review process if they have previously been unsuccessful with applications for aid.

Legal representation

Demand for our services is high so we use strict criteria when granting aid for legal representation. Our Grants division is responsible for processing applications for legal assistance and ongoing management of matters following approval. Grants decisions are made in the Brisbane office and across our regional offices.

Applications are received electronically direct from private law firms or are submitted in paper form by clients or in-house solicitors who have provided advice or duty lawyer assistance.

In determining whether to approve a grant of aid, grants officers assess requests according to our guidelines, which are set by the Legal Aid Queensland Board, and apply the means and merit tests. This process looks at the financial means of the person applying and the relative merit of the case. If an application is refused, internal and external review processes are available to applicants.

Approved applications for grants of aid increased to 27,847 in 2011-12, compared to 27,186 in 2010-11.

Funding grants of aid for private law firms

We work with private law firms – preferred suppliers – to provide access to justice for disadvantaged Queenslanders. Preferred suppliers are private practitioners who have entered into three year service agreements with us to provide legal services. In 2011-12, we worked with preferred suppliers to deliver legal aid services to the Queensland community. Preferred suppliers take on work on our behalf in serious crime, general crime, juvenile justice, general family and civil law matters.

We provide grants of aid to these private law firms to take on cases on behalf of legally-aided clients. More than 80 percent of our grants of aid are provided to private law firms, with the remainder going to our in-house practices. Funding private law firms to do legal aid work makes up more than 50 percent of our total expenditure. In 2011-12, our payments to private law firms for representing our clients increased by over \$1.6 million.

During 2011-12, we reviewed and updated our process for managing preferred supplier contracts and introduced a new selection process, as well as ongoing monitoring against performance criteria, to ensure clients receive a consistently high level of service from our suppliers.

Legal Aid Queensland expenditure to private law firms was \$57.89M in 2011-12, an increase of more than \$1.6M on 2010-11

Legal Aid Queensland family law duty lawyer services increased by 18.4% in 2011-12.

Criminal law services

Serious crime

Two Serious Crime teams within our in-house practice specialise in the defence of complex criminal cases, including murder, major fraud, and drug prosecutions. The defence of these matters is challenging and demanding, requiring extensive research, investigation and preparation.

In order to manage the cost of providing criminal law representation, especially in complex and very high-cost cases, our in-house practice took on a significant number of expensive cases during 2011-12.

A large number of complex cases consisted of murder charges as well as the people smuggling cases transferred to Queensland. Legal Aid Queensland has an arrangement with the federal government to be reimbursed for the costs of all people smuggling cases.

Magistrates court

Two Magistrates Court teams provide frontline representation to the majority of duty lawyer and magistrates court clients represented by Legal Aid Queensland in Brisbane city.

Since the introduction of the Moynihan legislative reforms passed in late 2010, our lawyers have been proactively involved in the case conferencing process. The Brisbane-based case conferencing model has been working effectively to resolve a high percentage of cases before the Brisbane Magistrates Court.

An active contribution has also been made to the settling of a case conferencing protocol by the Chief Magistrate which will be used to streamline the process of negotiation between prosecution and defence in the magistrates court jurisdiction in some major Queensland centres.

Appeals

Legal Aid Queensland represents people on appeal in the District Court appellate jurisdiction, Queensland Court of Appeal and the High Court of Australia. Legal Aid Queensland only funds appeals after applying a merit test, which involves experienced in-house or private counsel considering the applicant's likely prospects of succeeding in their cases.

Assisting mental health clients

Our Mental Health Unit provides advice and representation for people charged with criminal offences who have been referred to the Mental Health Court. We are dedicated to helping Queenslanders affected by mental illness or significant impairment and strive to provide them with a voice in the justice system. The team works closely with our in-house counsel to conduct matters, representing the vast majority of non-privately represented clients appearing in the Mental Health Court.

Dangerous prisoner applications

We continued to provide legal assistance in *Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act 2003* matters. Under the Act, the Attorney-General can apply to the Supreme Court for an order to detain a convicted sex offender in prison after their court ordered sentence has been completed or seek that such offenders be released on a supervision order.

We act for people responding to dangerous prisoner applications brought by the Attorney-General, at periodic reviews of continuing detention orders, and in contravention proceedings for respondents alleged to have contravened their supervision order.

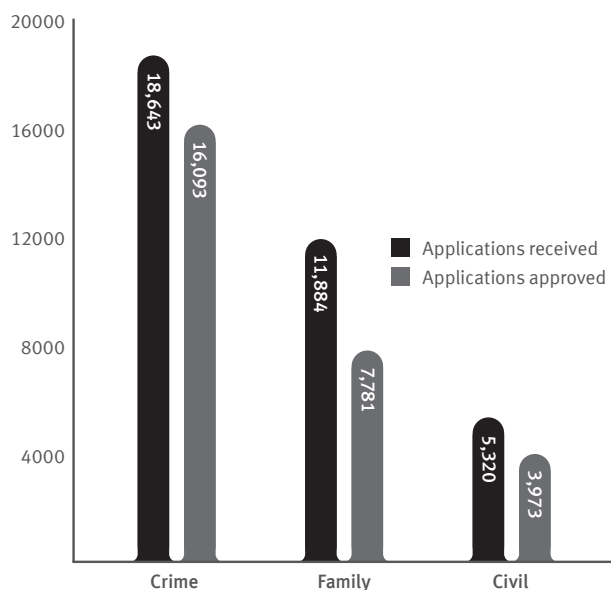


Figure 8. Applications for grants of aid received and approved by type in 2011-12

Assisting young people in the criminal justice system

Our Youth Legal Aid team provides specialist legal assistance to children and young people in the juvenile justice system. The team is a significant stakeholder in the youth justice sector and advocates strongly on behalf of vulnerable children.

We represent young people primarily in casework matters and duty lawyer services throughout Queensland. The team also provides legal advice services at regular sessions to young people in detention.

Special Circumstances program

The Special Circumstances program continues to operate in the Brisbane Magistrates Court. The program is a bail and sentence-based diversionary program, designed to help adult defendants address the issues which led to their offending such as homelessness and impaired decision making as a result of drug or alcohol dependence, mental health problems, intellectual disability, and brain or neurological disorders. Defendants must meet eligibility criteria and only certain offences trigger eligibility.

In 2011-12 we supported the Special Circumstances program by continuing to provide a lawyer and a part-time administrative support officer to help most clients appearing before the court.

Addressing drug-dependency issues

Drug courts operate in Southport, Ipswich, Beenleigh, Townsville and Cairns.

We supply a lawyer to each court, who advocates for applicants and participates at sentencing, sanctions hearings and hearings where an IDRO termination is being sought. Our lawyers also represent participants' legal interests as part of a multidisciplinary team while they are on a drug rehabilitation order.

Counsel

In 2011-12, our in-house team of barristers again showed their commitment to providing quality specialist legal advocacy services efficiently and effectively.

In addition to the considerable work performed in the criminal jurisdiction of the supreme, district and magistrates courts, we also appeared in all Mental Health Court sittings and in the Supreme Court's civil jurisdiction for respondents in applications brought under the dangerous prisoners legislation and in some judicial review hearings. Counsel also provided advice and representation in family and civil law matters.

Our Townsville and Brisbane-based barristers also appear in regional courts, including those in remote areas such as Mount Isa, the Gulf of Carpentaria, Thursday Island and Cape York Peninsula. We provide opinions about the prospects of matters succeeding on appeal so decisions could be made about granting aid, and conduct appeals against sentences and/or convictions in the Queensland Court of Appeal, including matters in which the Attorney-General had appealed against the sentence, and in the High Court of Australia.

The complexity and diversity of work undertaken by in-house counsel places them among Queensland's top defence lawyers, allowing them to be recognised and respected within the legal profession.

Family law services

Helping domestic violence victims

We represent parties in domestic violence matters through grants of aid to private law firms and through our in-house legal practice.

Our Domestic Violence Prevention service provided information sessions to women dealing with domestic violence matters at the Brisbane Magistrates Court. During the year, we also worked in conjunction with the Beenleigh Court Support Program to provide advice and representation to people in the Logan area who were applying for domestic violence protection orders in the Beenleigh Magistrates Court.



We continued to support the state government's Breaking the Cycle of Domestic and Family Violence in Rockhampton Court Pilot project, which focuses on early intervention and integrated service delivery to assist people who have experienced domestic and family violence. We employ a specialist domestic violence lawyer to represent victims before the court and to help them apply for ongoing legal representation if they have associated family law and child protection matters. We also provide a duty lawyer at the court to assist people who have been charged with breaching domestic violence orders.

Social work

Our social workers and psychologist play an integral role in delivering our legal services to vulnerable clients. Social workers support people through legal processes, chair family dispute resolution conferences, complete social assessment and family reports, and provide counselling services. We provide social work services from our Brisbane and Townsville offices.

During the year, our in-house social workers and psychologist completed forensic assessment reports for independent children's lawyers and separate representatives involved in family law and child protection matters, and provided testimony before the courts.

Our social workers and psychologist assisted our lawyers by providing clients with information and referrals to appropriate external organisations for help with non-legal matters such as mental health problems, substance dependencies and accommodation difficulties.

Helping people with child support issues

We provided information, referral, legal advice and representation services to clients with child support needs. We can explain how the child support formula works, how the Family Tax Benefit is affected and how to prove paternity.

Children and young people

Addressing the best interests of children is a key focus of the work conducted by our family and child protection lawyers. We continued to provide legal services for children and young people involved in family law and child protection matters.

Independent children's lawyers and separate representatives provide best interests representation for children in family law matters and child protection cases, where judicial officers order that a child's interests be separately represented.

Independent children's lawyers and separate representatives play a unique and difficult role within the family law and child protection systems. They gather and assess independent evidence and provide measured guidance and recommendations to the courts in relation to the best interests of children and young people. The cases they work on are complex and demanding.

A significant number of appointments of independent children's lawyers and separate representatives are made by courts exercising family law and child protection jurisdiction. Many of these matters are dealt with by specialist in-house lawyers. The in-house independent children's lawyers and separate representatives have a great deal of experience and knowledge in relation to these cases.

In-house lawyers undertake considerable work in the Family Court of Australia's Magellan list, which is a case management list devoted to cases where there are allegations of serious physical abuse or sexual abuse of children. Practitioners provide representation services both for parties and as independent children's lawyers, in the Brisbane, Townsville and Cairns Registries of the Family Court.

Independent children's lawyer and separate representative panel meetings are facilitated to ensure that knowledge is shared and issues are discussed between the private practitioners on the panel and in-house specialist lawyers to ensure a consistent, quality approach to the representation of children and young people.

Child protection

We are the largest legal service provider in child protection matters in Queensland, providing information and advice, representation of parents, direct representation of young people, separate representation of children and young people and limited representation in the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

Civil law services

Consumer Protection Unit

Our Consumer Protection Unit provides specialist legal services including representation in consumer law matters. The unit assisted people suffering mortgage stress to try to protect people's homes from repossession. During 2011-12, our Consumer Protection Unit staff played a key role in our Flood and Cyclone Legal Help service, assisting Queenslanders who had insurance related legal problems resulting from Queensland's summer of disasters in early 2011 (see page 21 for more information).

Assistance at coronial inquests

Our civil law team provided representation for a number of families involved in the coronial inquest into the deaths caused by the south-east Queensland floods of January 2011. Legal Aid Queensland lawyers attended the inquest with the families and presented evidence to clarify circumstances surrounding the deaths. Legal Aid Queensland's Public Defender John Allen instructed by civil lawyer Janette Fadden appeared at the inquest on behalf of the families.

The civil law team has further provided representation at inquests which involved substantial public interest elements. Representation was provided for a client from a linguistically diverse background in which cultural issues specific to the client's background were relevant to the inquest.

Victims of crime

Victim Assist Queensland was introduced in December 2009 and is an administrative rather than court-based process. Our role in the compensation process is significantly reduced.

In 2011-12 we continued to represent people who are eligible for compensation under the old court-based scheme. Many matters have been finalised with compensation payments made to victims of crime. The applications have been in courts across the state including Brisbane, Beenleigh, Townsville, Cairns, Maroochydore and Ipswich. The unit has completed numerous final submissions in relation to direct applications to the Department of Justice and Attorney-General for compensation for victims of crimes.

As these files are completed, the lawyers and support staff working in the Victims of Crime Compensation Unit have been diverted to assisting clients with other civil justice legal needs ensuring disadvantaged and vulnerable people continue to have access to our justice system.

Civil Law Legal Aid Scheme

The Civil Law Legal Aid Scheme offers help in a variety of civil litigation cases, with priority given to cases involving children, personal injury, and cases which, if not litigated, may result in the person losing their home or livelihood. The Civil Law Legal Aid Scheme was set up by the state government so that Queenslanders can obtain legal assistance for civil law matters to be heard in a Queensland court or a tribunal where there is the power to award costs.

The scheme is funded by the Public Trustee of Queensland and administered by Legal Aid Queensland in Brisbane. The Civil Law Legal Aid Scheme provides assistance with outlays associated with civil claims approved under the schemes' guidelines and in some circumstances contributes towards the solicitors' professional costs.



Anti-discrimination services

The Anti-Discrimination Unit provides advice and representation in all areas of anti-discrimination law including sexual harassment and complaints about race, sex, impairment, pregnancy and gender identity. The unit also contributes to Legal Aid Queensland's policy development, law reform initiatives and community education activities about human rights and anti-discrimination laws.

Matters in which the unit provides legal representation include:

- assistance to draft complaints to the Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland or the Australian Human Rights Commission where the applicant is unable to do so themselves because of special circumstances, such as a disability, language barriers or being in custody
- advocacy at the conciliation conference in the relevant commission where a complaint is not settled in the commission.

Legal help for war veterans and their dependants

We receive federal funding under the War Veterans' Legal Aid Scheme to provide assistance to veterans and their dependants to appeal Veterans Review Board decisions regarding:

- war-caused disability pension entitlements or assessment claims under Part 2 of the *Veterans Entitlement Act 1986*
- claims under the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* about warlike or non-warlike service about:
 - accepting liability
 - rehabilitation programs
 - permanent impairment
 - incapacity payments for former members
 - special rate disability pensions
 - dependant benefits.

Access by disadvantaged groups

Assisting culturally and linguistically diverse clients

In 2011-12 we continued our commitment to clients from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. Within these communities we promoted greater awareness of our services and sought to improve their access to justice by:

- delivering targeted community legal education sessions to culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- distributing translated legal information to culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- attending the Queensland Multicultural Festival
- participating in the interdepartmental committee on multicultural affairs convened by Multicultural Affairs Queensland
- supporting the provision of free interpreter services to clients in accordance with the government's Language Services Policy.

We distributed the National Legal Aid-developed community legal education resource *What's the law? Australian law for new arrivals* to Queensland TAFE colleges. The resource is an education kit containing a DVD and activity sheets that can be used by English language teachers to teach new arrivals about Australian laws and customs. In all, 772 kits have been distributed to TAFEs, community legal centres, multicultural groups and other government agencies.

Improving services for Indigenous clients

We are committed to providing services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Our CEO meets regularly with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service (ATSILS) to discuss strategies and issues affecting service delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Strategies undertaken by Legal Aid Queensland included:

- providing funding to support ATSILS to provide duty lawyer services in Cape York Peninsula and Gulf of Carpentaria communities
- funding disbursements such as counsel for ATSILS clients in criminal law and other matters

- promoting our Indigenous Information Hotline, which gives priority to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander callers so they can access legal information and advice for the cost of a local call from anywhere in Queensland
- providing outreach services in Aurukun, Bamaga, Bowen, Cooktown, Hopevale, Ingham, Injino, Mapoon, Napranum, New Mapoon, Palm Island, Seisia, Thursday Island, Tully, Umagico, Weipa and Wujal Wujal to help ensure Indigenous clients in these areas can access free face-to-face legal advice
- representing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients who enter the Queensland Indigenous Alcohol Diversion Program — a voluntary treatment program for Indigenous people appearing in the magistrates court for alcohol related offences, or the childrens court for child protection matters where alcohol misuse has contributed to the situation
- coordinating regional legal assistance forums, which include ATSILS representatives
- hosting a ‘Member Benefit’ seminar with the Queensland Law Society and ATSILS on communication skills and cultural considerations when representing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients

- maintaining best practice guidelines for in-house and private lawyers performing legal aid work to ensure legal services are provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients in a culturally appropriate way
- publishing legal information brochures, factsheets, wallet cards and posters that specifically target Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Women as a priority client group

Legal Aid Queensland treats women, especially women experiencing domestic violence, as a priority client group. The percentage of women receiving legal advice and grants of aid increased in 2011-12 over 2010-11. We support the Queensland Government strategy to reduce domestic and family violence by delivering legal information, advice and representation to disadvantaged Queenslanders experiencing domestic and family violence.

We have a specialist legal unit that deals with clients experiencing domestic violence — the Violence Prevention and Women’s Advocacy team. This team is comprised of specialist female lawyers and social workers that provide services to women and practical policy advice on domestic violence issues.

Their mission is to increase access to improve the responsiveness of Legal Aid Queensland to meet women’s needs. They work to develop and maintain effective working relationships with service providers and identify, review and respond to issues impacting on women’s access to justice.

The unit acts for women with complex legal matters in the areas of family law, child protection, discrimination, domestic violence and crime. They also provide services to women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and women with intellectual disabilities.

We also have a network of family lawyers in our 13 regional offices across the state that deliver domestic violence services to their local communities.

Legal Aid Queensland’s Violence Against Women Strategy is an integrated, collaborative and consistent response to clients who have been affected by domestic violence. Under the strategy we have developed and implemented a number of practical tools for our practitioners including:

- Best Practice Guidelines for Working with Clients Affected by Domestic Violence
- Best Practice Guidelines for Working with Sexual Assault Victims

- a domestic violence risk assessment tool
- an internal policy for responding to staff experiencing domestic violence.

This year our Law Week Hypothetical was based on a fictional scenario involving a young woman and her child who were experiencing domestic violence. The Hypothetical which was hosted in the Banco Court by the Chief Justice of Queensland, the Honourable Paul de Jersey AC and moderated by Channel 7 presenter Kay McGrath, attracted a full house of university, TAFE and secondary school students and interested members of the public. A video of the event will soon be posted on the Legal Aid Queensland website and our YouTube channel.

Disability and mental illness

In the recent case of *R v AAM; ex parte A-G* (Queensland), the Court of Appeal set aside the convictions of a defendant who had a significant intellectual impairment and had pleaded guilty in the magistrates court, on the basis that she was unfit to plead and did not enter the pleas in the exercise of a free choice.



The Court of Appeal identified the absence of a legislative framework for dealing with people with a mental illness or intellectual or cognitive disability charged with simple offences whose disability was so significant that they were unfit to plead or be tried.

This case highlights the difficulties the justice system has in dealing with people charged with simple offences who have an intellectual or cognitive disability of such severity that they are unfit to plead guilty or be tried or cannot be held criminally responsible for their actions.

Where a lawyer has a real and substantial doubt about a client's fitness to plead, the lawyer should not conduct a plea of guilty for the client. However, not all people with an intellectual or cognitive impairment or a mental illness are necessarily unfit to plead or be tried or have a defence of unsoundness of mind.

It is important to respect the right of a person with an intellectual or cognitive disability to take responsibility for themselves and be treated as a person in court, rather than a patient under care.

Following this case, Legal Aid Queensland has conducted a continuing professional development intensive seminar for our duty lawyers on representing clients who have a mental illness or intellectual impairment in the magistrates court.

We have almost completed the update of our Duty Lawyer Handbook, which will include a section for duty lawyers about representing clients with an intellectual disability or cognitive impairment. The handbook will be finalised later this year.

Legal services for regional, rural and remote Queenslanders

Legal Aid Queensland supports legal services to rural, regional and remote areas of Queensland. Legal Aid Queensland has 13 regional offices providing services to regional Queensland, and a state-wide network of regional preferred supplier private law firms.

We provide direct legal services such as grants of aid, legal advices and duty lawyer services to people in rural, regional and remote Queensland. Other services offered by Legal Aid Queensland that are available to regional people include:

- providing family court duty lawyer services in Brisbane, Townsville, Cairns, Mackay, Bundaberg, Rockhampton, Maroochydore, Toowoomba, Southport, Hervey Bay and Ipswich
- providing criminal law duty lawyer services in regional towns across Queensland
- in-house counsel appearing in regional courts' circuits including Mount Isa, the Gulf of Carpentaria, Thursday Island, Cape York Peninsula, Mackay, Hervey Bay, Gympie, Bundaberg, Kingaroy and Maryborough
- legal outreach clinics from Legal Aid Queensland offices at Caboolture, Cairns, Toowoomba and Townsville where lawyers travel to surrounding regions or link in by video conferencing to provide legal advice services
- a free state-wide telephone legal help line and an Indigenous Information Hotline that people can call from anywhere in Queensland for the cost of a local call
- pilot program with a Charleville preferred supplier private law firm to provide face-to-face legal advice to people from the local community
- access for preferred supplier law firms to Legal Aid Queensland's Continuing Professional Development program and library resources
- thirty-four community access points across Queensland providing a range of community support services, information about Legal Aid Queensland's services, a sample of our publications and assistance to access free telephone legal advice
- supporting the Western Queensland Justice Network to provide free legal services to people living in regional Queensland
- coordinating the work of 12 Regional Legal Assistance Forums across the state, which help to identify emerging legal issues in their communities.

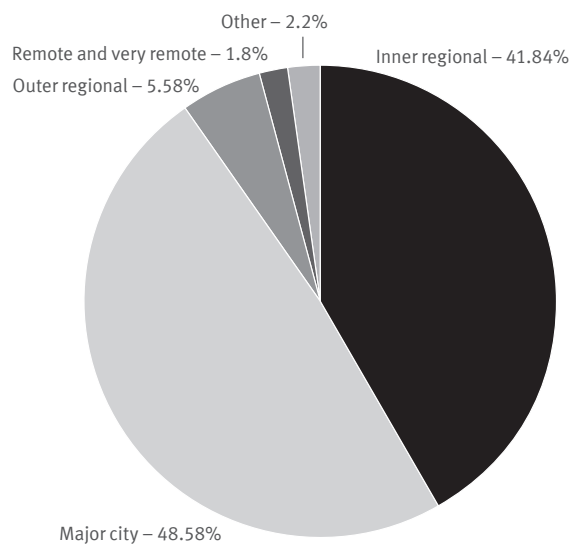


Figure 9. Applications for grants of aid received by location

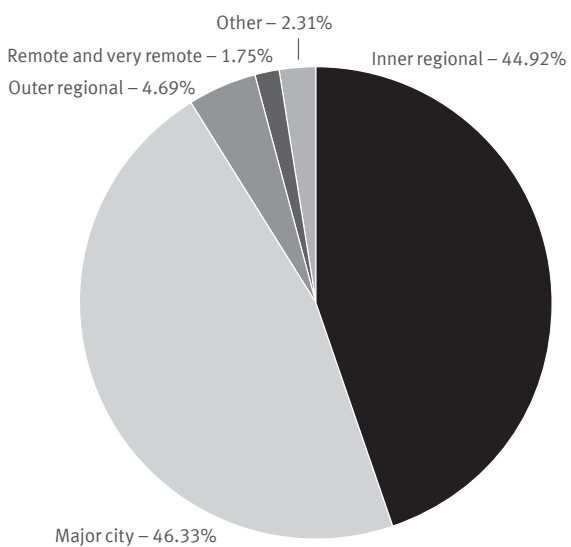


Figure 10. Legal advices provided by location

Access and equity

	Crime	Family	Civil	Overall
Legal Advice				
Women	25%	67%	55%	50%
Indigenous	6%	5%	5%	5%
Rural and Remote	5%	7%	9%	7%
CALD	9%	10%	12%	10%
Applications Received				
Women	20%	63%	62%	41%
Indigenous	15%	8%	10%	12%
Rural and Remote	8%	7%	6%	8%
CALD	5%	7%	9%	7%
Applications Approved				
Women	19%	62%	66%	38%
Indigenous	15%	9%	10%	13%
Rural and Remote	8%	6%	5%	7%
CALD	5%	6%	9%	6%

Table 4. Access and equity

Objective 3: Progress our vision through collaboration and advocacy

Queensland Legal Assistance Forum

The Queensland Legal Assistance Forum was established to help member organisations address legal assistance issues by facilitating cooperative working relationships with other legal service providers in rural and regional areas.

Members of the forum include:

- Legal Aid Queensland
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service
- Queensland Law Society
- Queensland Public Interest Law Clearing House
- Queensland Association of Independent Legal Services
- Bar Association of Queensland
- Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service
- Representatives from the state and federal governments.

Meetings provide a forum for debate and discussion on current justice system issues and initiatives, particularly relating to access for economically or socially disadvantaged people.

Regional Legal Assistance Forums

There are 12 Regional Legal Assistance Forums (RLAFs) based around the state. During 2011-12, we continued to coordinate the work of those forums.

The purpose of the RLAFs is to encourage collaborative and cooperative working relationships between legal aid service providers in each region. By working together, service providers have been able to identify emerging legal needs in their communities, help determine which legal service is best placed to meet legal needs, and ultimately reduce service delivery gaps.

The forums continue to work on initiatives to meet the needs of the community within their regions including working collaboratively with other service providers to present joint community legal education (CLE) sessions. Three of the Regional Legal Assistance Forum networks successfully applied for funding from the CLE Collaboration Fund to provide CLE in partnership with other local legal service agencies. Community consultations identified 'hot topics' which included child protection, youth justice, family law and domestic violence, and community legal education sessions have been provided to both community members and organisations dealing with these issues.

Funding for community legal centres in 2011-12

Centre	Total Funding
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Legal Advocacy Service	329,967
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Legal Service NQ Inc	282,514
Banana Shire Community Legal Centre	112,558
Bayside Community Legal Service	111,443
Cairns Community Legal Centre	375,506
Care Goondiwindi Association Inc	111,798
Carers Queensland	261,271
Caxton Legal Centre	1,050,290
Centacare	141,464
Central Qld Community Legal Centre	349,224
Court Network Incorporated	221,271
DVConnect Ltd	114,860
Environmental Defender's Office Brisbane	191,745
Environmental Defender's Office North Qld	231,095
Gladstone Community Legal Advice Program	112,558
Gold Coast Legal Service	542,950
ILS Qld Limited	86,145
Logan Legal Advice Centre	147,459
Logan Youth Legal Service	280,651
Mackay Regional Community Legal Service	275,778
North Qld Women's Legal Service	612,887
Nundah Community Legal Service	111,798
Peninsula Community Legal Service	111,443
Pine Rivers Community Legal Service	326,326
Prisoners Legal Service	411,405
Queensland Advocacy Inc	114,860
Queensland Aged and Disability Advocacy	114,860
Queensland Public Interest Law Clearing House	470,047
Refugee and Immigration Legal Service	620,152
Roma Community Legal Service	287,762
Sisters Inside	114,860
South West Brisbane Community Legal Centre	610,633
Suncoast Community Legal Service	298,435
Taylor Street Community Legal Service	294,884
Tenants Union of Queensland	212,701
The Advocacy and Support Centre	839,552
Ipswich Community Legal Centre	164,797
Townsville Community Legal Service	302,747
Welfare Rights Centre	557,899
Western Queensland Justice Network	254,229
Women's Legal Service	872,269
Youth Advocacy Centre	280,270
Queensland Association of Independent Legal Services Secretariat	198,781
Total	13,514,144

Table 5. Funding for community legal centres (from federal and state governments including LPITAF) in 2011-12



The work of the RLAFs aligns with the National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services, with its focus on increased collaboration and cooperation between legal assistance providers. It also enables legal assistance services to target people who experience, or are at risk of experiencing, social exclusion.

Supporting community legal centres

We act as state program manager for community legal centres (CLCs), monitoring their financial reporting and strategic planning and ensuring service delivery targets are met. During 2011-12, we administered funding on behalf of the state and federal governments to 43 CLCs throughout Queensland.

In 2011-12, Queensland centres received total funding of \$13,514,144. This included one-off funding provided by the federal Attorney-General's department to one centre totalling \$70,000. One-off funding totalling \$645,300 was also provided by the state from the Legal Practitioners Interest on Trust Account Fund (LPITAF) to 14 centres for a variety of initiatives.

Policy and law reform activities

This year we continued to participate in government policy and legislation development processes drawing on our extensive legal practice expertise to inform our policy contributions. One of the major legislation development projects that we were involved in was the development of the new *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012*. During the year we contributed formal policy submissions and feedback on proposed legislative reforms on 14 occasions.

We again partnered with the Queensland Law Society and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service to deliver a seminar for lawyers about communicating with Indigenous clients.

Our public submissions on law reform issues can be read at www.legalaid.qld.gov.au

Providing staff and service providers with quality information resources

In 2011-12, we continued to ensure staff and preferred suppliers had access to the legal knowledge they needed to do their jobs effectively. We:

- further refined the design and functionality of our intranet's 'Library and research' area to improve staff access to legal and related information resources
- maintained and continued to develop unique specialist legal databases of comparable sentences, criminal injuries compensation verdicts, dangerous prisoners, drug court matters, domestic violence hearings, official misconduct, and criminal appeals, and several popular legal current awareness tools, including Crime Online and Family Law Notes
- designed and implemented additional new specialist legal databases of people smuggling, anti-discrimination and social security appeals decisions
- trained Brisbane and regional in-house staff and preferred suppliers in effectively using the range of legal information resources available to them.

Key in-house legal information resources are freely available to preferred supplier law firms who do legal aid work, community legal centres and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service (ATSILS). These resources allow our partners to better serve our clients and are a powerful incentive for private practitioners and firms to become or remain preferred suppliers.

Objective 4: Build on our capability and sustainability

Our people

Continuing professional development

We continued to provide our in-house continuing professional development program (CPD) during 2011-12. Most sessions are open to all staff, as well as law firms that provide legal aid services, with audio conference facilities available to regional offices. Our program aims to ensure our lawyers are up to date with the latest legislative changes and have the opportunity to develop their professional skills and legal knowledge. The program allows legal staff to earn continuing professional development points, which are required to renew practicing certificates each year.

We also provided staff with training opportunities to familiarise them with our policies and procedures and to develop their skills and knowledge. Training included:

- civil law, family law and legal advice intensive seminars and workshops
- Code of Conduct and workplace behaviours training
- Dispute Resolution Services conference organisers intensive
- frontline services and customer service skills for front-counter staff

- Grants operations training
- HR for managers
- induction training for new staff
- leadership/management development for existing and emerging leaders
- litigation support intensive for staff from regional offices
- managing the psychological impacts of practicing law (vicarious trauma)
- ongoing call centre training and coaching
- recruitment and selection and applying for jobs
- staff performance development planning.

Attracting and retaining staff

We want our staff to be able to find an appropriate work-life balance. In 2011-12, we continued to offer and promote flexible working options, including working part-time, job sharing, telecommuting and purchasing supplementary leave. We also continued to provide remote computer access to many staff.

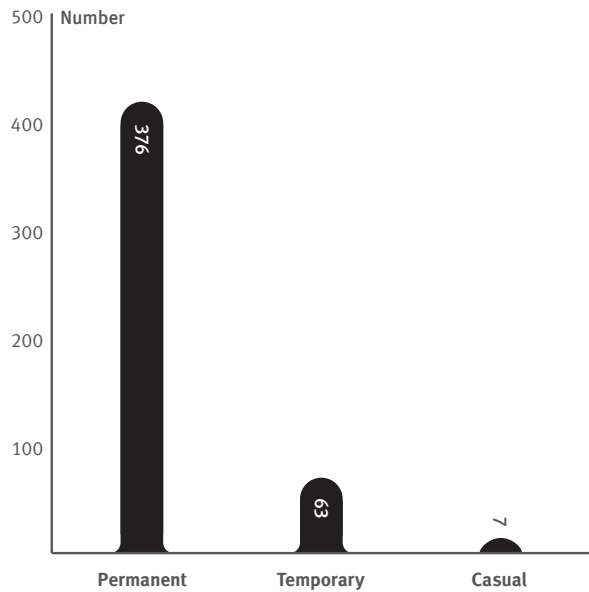


Figure 11. Actual staff by employment type (by FTE)

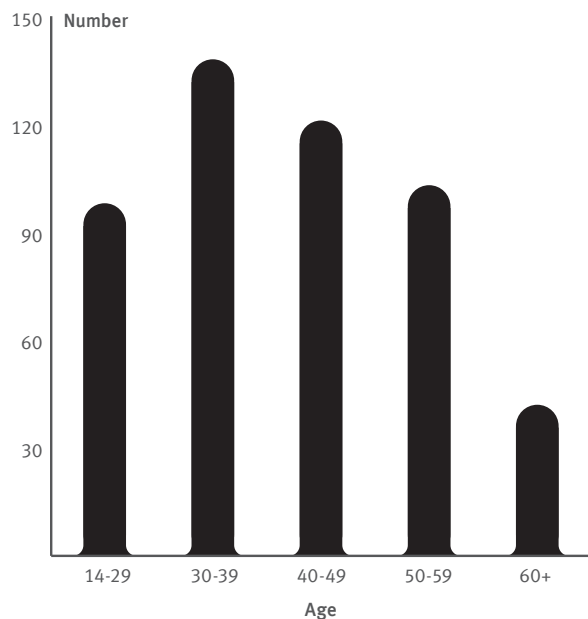


Figure 12. Staff age profile



We have implemented strategies to help our staff effectively manage the possible impact of their work on their mental health and emotional wellbeing. We are particularly aware that our lawyers and support staff are routinely involved in work that is confronting and stressful, which puts them at risk of suffering vicarious trauma. In 2011-12, we responded to these risks by arranging workshops on managing the psychological impacts of practicing family law. We also provided staff with information about available support networks and self-help strategies, and access to confidential counselling services.

Workplace composition (full-time equivalents)

At 30 June 2012, Legal Aid Queensland had 446 full-time equivalent employees working in 14 offices throughout the state.

Early retirement, redundancy and retrenchment

Four early retirement, redundancy and retrenchment packages were provided during 2011-12, with a total gross value of \$167,634.66.

There were no voluntary separation program payments in 2011-12.

Equal employment opportunity

We are committed to equal employment opportunity (EEO) principles and have successfully implemented these principles across the organisation. Our current EEO statistics highlight the success of our EEO plan (see Figure 14).

Code of Conduct

Legal Aid Queensland is covered by a whole of government Code of Conduct. The single Code of Conduct reflects ethical values contained in the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994* and covers the following principles:

- integrity and impartiality
- promoting the public good
- commitment to the system of government
- accountability and transparency.

The code guides us in managing issues like:

- conflict of interest
- personal conduct
- commitment to service delivery
- information sharing and relationship building across agencies
- adherence to organisational values and policies
- continuous performance improvement
- appropriate use of official information and resources.

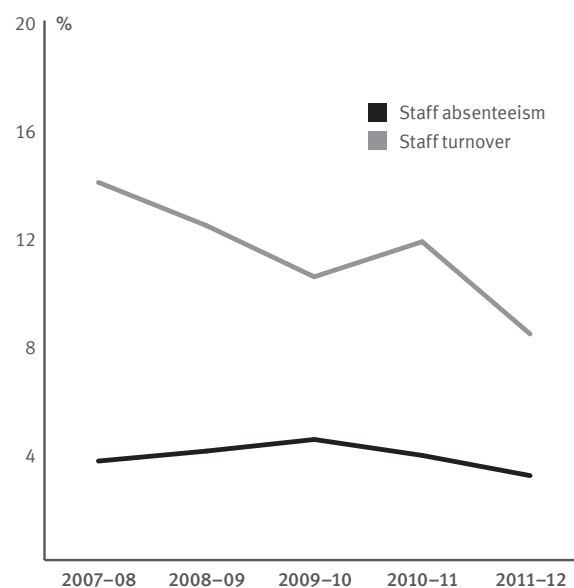


Figure 13. Staff absenteeism and turnover

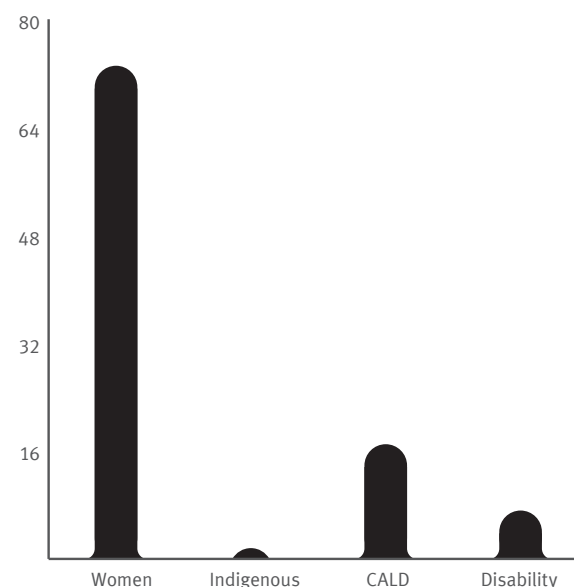



Figure 14. Equal employment opportunity target group membership



Work has been undertaken to develop and implement e-learning training packages that will assist us to identify mechanisms for dealing with ethical problems and set out the process for dealing with breaches of the code.

Our systems and processes

Quality Legal Services Framework developed

In May 2012, we consolidated all of our quality assurance policies and procedures into one document – the Quality Legal Services Framework for Legal Aid Queensland employed lawyers. The document encompasses all the measures we have in place to ensure we maintain a high standard of service delivery to our clients including our induction and continuing professional development programs, through to legal professional supervision, compliance with standards and complaints management.

Modernising grant management systems

During the year, we implemented a major program to modernise the way grants of legal aid are managed. This has involved a comprehensive overhaul of our business rules and processes for managing grants of legal aid, supported by improvements to our core information systems that support grants management – Grants Online and LAQ Office. This approach will ensure the ongoing integrity of our information and the improved effectiveness of our grants management systems; making the system easier to use for preferred suppliers.

Implementing an electronic document management system

Physical and electronic records are necessary for business operations, accountability requirements and meeting community expectations.

All Legal Aid Queensland records are ‘public records’ as defined under the *Public Records Act 2002*. Legal Aid Queensland started a project in 2010-11 to implement an electronic document and records management system (eDRMS) to enable:

- reliable and secure access to information
- informed decision making
- cost effective use of information resources
- business continuity
- compliance with legislation.

In 2011-12 we:

- continued to develop the business rules and processes we will use with our eDRMS
- installed and tested our eDRMS system, Hewlett Packard (HP) TRIM
- developed training programs for our staff
- delivered recordkeeping awareness training to all business units
- investigated opportunities for integrating HP TRIM with our existing business systems.

In 2012-13 we will:

- complete testing of HP TRIM
- provide training to all staff on the use of HP TRIM
- roll out HP TRIM to all business units.

Case management system rollout continues

We continued to rollout our new case management system, Visualfiles, in 2011-12. Visualfiles streamlines the processes involved in the day to day management of case files. It holds file-related information in one central location, provides automatic prompts for key dates and tasks and simplifies the process of generating and storing all client correspondence.

Upgrade to regional IT network

In 2011-12, work began on a major refurbishment of our information technology (IT) data network, which provides computer systems access to all Legal Aid Queensland regional offices.

The refurbishment includes:

- significantly increasing bandwidth (data transmission capacity) to each regional office
- upgrading software to the latest versions required to deliver our business systems and services to the regions
- replacing network hardware components, including installing new telecommunications equipment and terminals in the regions.

As part of the process, the network changes were initially rolled out to both our Southport and Maroochydore offices to ensure they delivered the required improvements and were reliable and stable, before extending the rollout to our other regional offices.

In 2012-13, we will complete the rollout to our remaining regional offices. We will also look for other ways to improve the capabilities and performance of our regional IT network.

Recordkeeping

Under the *Public Records Act 2002*, we are required to make and keep full and accurate records of our activities, and to respect and follow the recordkeeping policies, standards and guidelines issued by the State Archivist.

In 2011-12 we:

- continued to assess our recordkeeping practices against Information Standard 40: Recordkeeping Requirements
- participated in consultation processes with Queensland State Archives to improve recordkeeping in the Queensland public sector
- continued recordkeeping reforms that improved and supported good corporate governance.

A major part of our work over the past year has been contributing to the development of our new recordkeeping system (TRIM). This has involved ensuring our existing tools and practices translate to the electronic environment, setting up support structures and the trialling of scanning.

Auditing service providers

We aim to provide an accessible, high-quality legal service to our clients, and provide value for money to our funding bodies. One way we do this is by auditing preferred suppliers' files to ensure they meet our practice and case management standards.

Our audit program also includes auditing in-house grants files for compliance with our policies, guidelines and file management standards.

In 2011-2012, we monitored 126 law firms to ensure they met their preferred supplier and independent children's lawyer agreements. We also audited their compliance with our practice and case management standards.

Reviewing legal aid applications

Legal aid applicants can ask for a funding decision made about their matter to be reviewed.

Each request for review is considered by an internal review officer (IRO) who may overturn the decision made. If the IRO confirms the original funding decision, the request for review is referred to an external review officer (ERO). EROs are solicitors and barristers in private practice and are independent of Legal Aid Queensland. An ERO may confirm the original funding decision, vary the decision, or substitute their own decision for the original decision.

Our environment

Reducing environmental impact

During 2011-2012, we continued to improve our resource efficiency to help reduce our environmental impact.

We have achieved water savings of 56 percent and energy savings of 21 percent since 2007-08.

We continued to achieve these significant savings by:

- maintaining a system that allows us to use rain water collected in our water tanks to flush our toilets
- reusing water (condensation) we capture from our air-conditioning systems to flush our toilets
- closely measuring, monitoring and publicising our energy and water use
- reducing our use of air-conditioning systems during the cooler months
- increasing our use of sensor lighting and timers
- educating staff about ways they can help save water and energy
- participating in events like Earth Hour
- constantly looking for opportunities to further reduce our water and energy use.



We also worked to reduce our environmental footprint in other ways including:

- using videoconferencing facilities to reduce transport-related carbon emissions, energy use and associated costs
- choosing more energy efficient cars when replacing vehicles in our fleet.

We continued to be involved with other waste management practices, including recycling paper, cardboard, cans, glass and printer toner cartridges.

Accommodation

During 2011-12, we completed a master planning project for our primary office building at 44 Herschel Street, Brisbane. The process provided us with a master plan for the building, including future refurbishments and the improvements required to upgrade the building to current building and access standards.

Our Mackay and Caboolture offices were expanded and refurbished during 2011-12. The refurbished Mackay office provides additional accommodation space for staff, improved and expanded conference and client interview rooms, a larger waiting area for clients and a new disabled toilet that

services the whole building. The expanded Caboolture office also provides additional space for staff, along with extra family law dispute resolution facilities, which allows multiple conferences to be held in the office at the one time.

Our Cairns office was relocated to new expanded premises in 2011-12. The new office, located in the heart of the Cairns CBD, provides vastly improved conditions for both staff and clients, with significantly improved client interview and conference facilities now available.

Looking forward, planning is currently underway to acquire new accommodation for our Ipswich and Bundaberg offices, which are both in need of improved and expanded facilities.

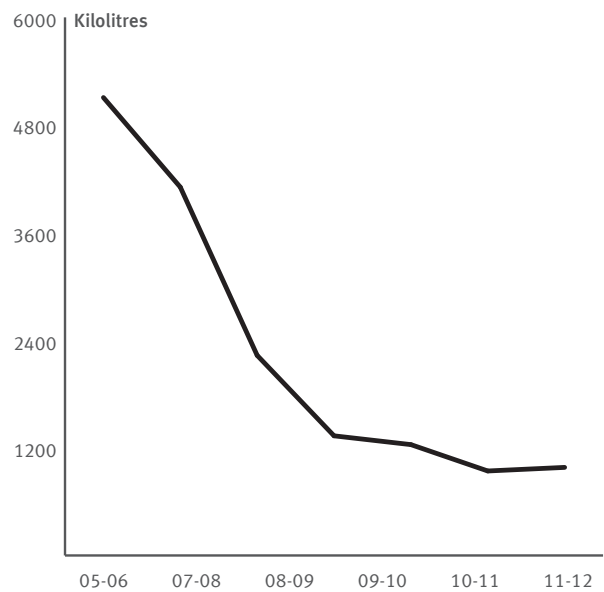


Figure 15. Water consumption

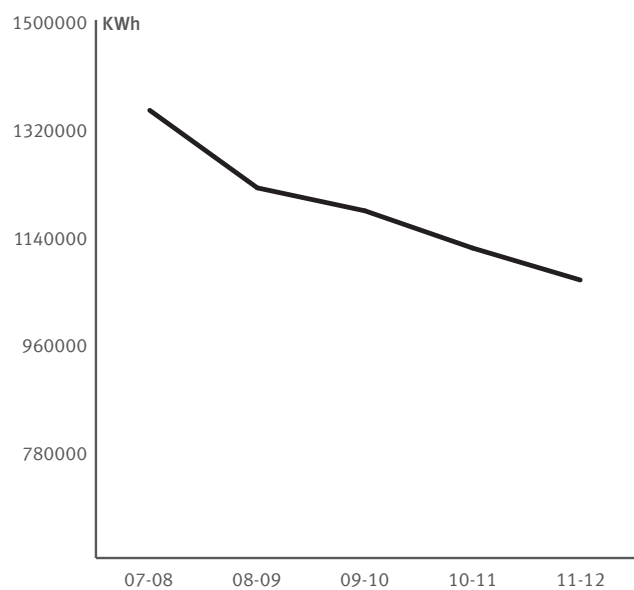


Figure 16. Energy consumption

Financial statements

Statement of Comprehensive Income for the year ended 30 June 2012

	Note	2012 \$'000	2011 \$'000
Income from continuing operations			
Revenue			
Grants and other contributions	2	108,629	108,962
Service charges		3,161	3,066
Other revenue		1,877	1,835
Total income from continuing operations		113,667	113,863
Expenses from continuing operations			
Supplies and services	3	65,666	63,120
Employee expenses	4	40,797	36,946
Grants to legal centres		145	471
Depreciation and amortisation	5	1,523	1,576
Impairment losses	6	321	192
Other	7	2,190	1,948
Total expenses from continuing operations		110,642	104,253
Operating result from continuing operations		3,025	9,610
Other comprehensive income			
Increase (decrease) in asset revaluation surplus		–	–
Total other comprehensive income		–	–
Total comprehensive income		3,025	9,610

The accompanying notes form part of these statements.

Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2012

	Note	2012 \$'000	2011 \$'000
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	8	29,902	26,688
Receivables	9	1,286	1,185
Other current assets	10	499	1,141
Total current assets		31,687	29,014
Non current assets			
Receivables	9	632	729
Property, plant and equipment	11	20,104	19,734
Intangible assets	12	1,765	807
Total non current assets		22,501	21,270
Total assets		54,188	50,284
Current liabilities			
Payables	13	2,683	1,299
Accrued employee benefits	14	3,332	3,021
Provision for grants of aid	15	13,518	14,684
Grants payable to community legal centres	23	67	141
Total current liabilities		19,600	19,145
Non current liabilities			
Accrued employee benefits	14	992	930
Provision for grants of aid	15	4,403	4,041
Total non current liabilities		5,395	4,971
Total liabilities		24,995	24,116
Net assets		29,193	26,168
Equity			
Accumulated surpluses		18,893	15,868
Asset revaluation surplus	17	10,300	10,300
Total equity		29,193	26,168

The accompanying notes form part of these statements.

Statement of Changes in Equity for the year ended 30 June 2012

	Accumulated surpluses		Asset revaluation surplus (Note 17)		Total	
	2012 \$'000	2011 \$'000	2012 \$'000	2011 \$'000	2012 \$'000	2011 \$'000
Balance as at 1 July	15,868	6,258	10,300	10,300	26,168	16,558
Operating result from continuing operations	3,025	9,610	–	–	3,025	9,610
<i>Total other comprehensive income</i>						
Increase/(decrease) in asset revaluation reserve	–	–	–	–	–	–
Balance as at 30 June	18,893	15,868	10,300	10,300	29,193	26,168

The accompanying notes form part of these statements.

Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended 30 June 2012

	Note	2012 \$'000	2011 \$'000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Inflows			
Grants and other contributions		108,815	108,147
Service charges		3,594	3,165
GST input tax credit received from ATO		8,487	8,203
Other		1,877	1,835
		122,773	121,350
Outflows			
Supplies and services		(73,787)	(75,288)
Employee expenses		(40,246)	(36,406)
Grants to legal centres		(145)	(471)
GST remitted to ATO		(368)	(426)
Other		(2,143)	(1,786)
		(116,689)	(114,377)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	16	6,084	6,973
Cash flows from investing activities			
Inflows			
Proceeds from sale of plant and equipment		24	268
		24	268
Outflows			
Payments for plant and equipment		(1,578)	(808)
Payments for intangibles		(1,316)	(293)
		(2,894)	(1,101)
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		(2,870)	(833)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		3,214	6,140
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year		26,688	20,548
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	8	29,902	26,688

The accompanying notes form part of these statements.



Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2012

Legal Aid Queensland is a statutory body funded by the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments through agreements, to enhance access to justice by providing legal assistance to Queensland residents who are financially disadvantaged.

1. Significant accounting policies

(a) Statement of compliance

Legal Aid Queensland has prepared these financial statements in compliance with section 43 of the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009*.

These financial statements are general purpose financial statements, and have been prepared on an accrual basis in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations. In addition, the financial statements are prepared having regard to Treasury's Minimum Reporting Requirements for the year ended 30 June 2012, and other authoritative pronouncements.

With respect to compliance with Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations, Legal Aid Queensland has applied those requirements applicable to not-for-profit entities, as Legal Aid Queensland is a not-for-profit statutory body. The historical cost convention has been applied except for assets listed at valuation in Note 11.

Accounting policies

Unless otherwise stated, all accounting policies applied are consistent with those of the prior year.

Rounding and comparatives

Amounts included in the financial statements are in Australian dollars and have been rounded to the nearest \$1,000 or, where that amount is \$500 or less, to zero, unless disclosure of the full amount is specifically required. Sub-totals and totals may not add due to rounding, but the overall discrepancy is no greater than two.

(b) Revenue recognition

Service charges are recognised when services are delivered and invoiced. Government grants and other contributions that are non-reciprocal in nature are recognised as operating revenue in the year in which the organisation obtains control over them.

(c) Cash and cash equivalents

For the purposes of the Statement of Financial Position and the Statement of Cash Flows, cash assets include all cash and cheques receipted but not banked at 30 June. It also includes liquid investment deposits on call with Queensland Investment Corporation Cash Fund and with Queensland Treasury Corporation Cash Fund that are convertible readily to cash on hand at Legal Aid Queensland's option and are subject to a low risk of changes in value.

(d) Receivables

Trade debtors are recognised at the nominal amounts due at the time of service delivery. Settlement due date is within 30 days from invoice date. However, they are often negotiated with each customer, having regard to the individual's financial circumstances and the security held by Legal Aid Queensland. Ability to collect receivables is assessed periodically with allowance being made for impairment. All known bad debts were written-off as at 30 June.

Other debtors generally arise from transactions outside the usual operating activities of the organisation. No interest is charged and no security is obtained for these debts.

(e) Acquisition of assets

Actual cost is used for the initial recording of all non-current physical and intangible asset acquisitions. Cost is determined as the value given as consideration plus costs incidental to the acquisition including architect fees, engineering design fees and other costs incurred in getting the asset ready for use.

(f) Property, plant and equipment

Items of property, plant and equipment with a cost or other value equal to or in excess of the following thresholds are recognised for financial reporting purposes in the year of acquisition:

Land	\$1
Plant and equipment	\$5,000
Buildings	\$10,000

Items with a lesser value are expensed in the year of acquisition.

(g) Revaluations of non-current physical and intangible assets

Land and buildings are measured at fair value in accordance with AASB 116 *Property, Plant and Equipment* and Queensland Treasury's *Non-Current Asset Policies for the Queensland Public Sector*.

All other non-current assets, principally plant and equipment and intangibles are measured at cost in accordance with Treasury's *Non-Current Asset Policies*. The carrying amounts for plant and equipment at cost should not materially differ from their fair value.

Non-current physical assets measured at fair value are comprehensively revalued at least once every five years with interim valuations being performed on an annual basis using an appropriate index, where there has been a material change in the index. Independent revaluation of the building is undertaken on the basis of ongoing owner occupancy.

Any revaluation increment arising on the revaluation of an asset is recognised in other comprehensive income and credited to the asset revaluation reserve of the appropriate class, except to the extent it reverses a revaluation decrement for the class previously recognised as an expense. A decrease in the carrying amount on revaluation is charged as an expense, to the extent it exceeds the balance, if any, in the revaluation reserve relating to that class. On revaluation, accumulated depreciation is restated proportionately with the change in the carrying amount of the asset and any change in the estimate of remaining useful life.

Separately identified components of assets are measured on the same basis as the assets to which they relate.

(h) Intangibles

Intangible assets with a cost or other value greater than \$100,000 are recognised in the financial statements, with items of lesser value being expensed. Each intangible asset is amortised over its estimated useful life to Legal Aid Queensland, less any anticipated residual value.

It has been determined that there is not an active market for any of the organisation's intangible assets. As such, the assets are recognised and carried at cost less accumulated amortisation and accumulated impairment losses.

Purchased software

Costs associated with the purchase of computer software is capitalised and is amortised on a straight-line basis over the period of expected benefit to Legal Aid Queensland.

(i) Amortisation and depreciation of intangibles, property, plant and equipment

Land is not depreciated as it has an unlimited useful life.

Depreciation on the office building, plant and equipment and amortisation on leasehold improvements is calculated on a straight-line basis to uniformly allocate the net cost or revaluation amount of each asset, less its estimated residual value, progressively during its estimated useful life at Legal Aid Queensland.

Assets under construction (work-in-progress) are not depreciated until they reach service delivery capacity.

Where assets have separately identifiable components that are subject to regular replacement, these components are assigned useful lives distinct from the asset to which they relate and are depreciated accordingly.

Any expenditure that increases the originally assessed capacity or service potential of an asset is capitalised and the new depreciable amount is depreciated over the asset's remaining useful life.

Improvements to leasehold property are amortised progressively over their estimated useful lives to Legal Aid Queensland or the unexpired period of the lease, whichever is the shorter. The unexpired period of a lease includes any option period where exercise of the option is probable.

For each class of asset the following useful life parameters and rates were applied in depreciation and/or amortisation calculations:

Asset class	2012		2011	
Building at fair value/cost	10-50 years	2-10%	50 years	2%
Plant and equipment:				
- Leasehold improvements	1-12 years	8.3-100%	1-11 years	9.1-100%
- Computer equipment and copiers	3-5 years	20-33.3%	3-9 years	11.1-33.3%
- Motor vehicles	2-4 years	25-50%	2-3 years	33.3 - 50%
- Other equipment	2-5 years	20-50%	2-15 years	6.7-50%
Intangibles:				
- Software purchased	3-7 years	14.3-33.3%	3-15 years	6.7-33.3%

(j) Impairment of non-current assets

All non-current physical and intangible assets are assessed for indicators of impairment on an annual basis. If an indicator of possible impairment exists, the organisation determines the asset's recoverable amount. Any amount by which the asset's carrying amount exceeds the recoverable amount is recorded as an impairment loss.

The asset's recoverable amount is determined as the higher of the asset's fair value less costs to sell and the depreciated replacement cost.

An impairment loss is recognised immediately in the Statement of Comprehensive Income unless the asset is carried at a revalued amount. When the asset is measured at a revalued amount, the impairment loss is offset against the asset revaluation reserve of the relevant class to the extent available.

Where an impairment loss subsequently reverses, the carrying amount of the asset is increased to the revised estimate of its recoverable amount, but so that the increased carrying amount does not exceed the carrying amount that would have been determined had no impairment loss been recognised for the asset in prior years. A reversal of an impairment loss is recognised as income, unless the asset is carried at a revalued amount, in which case the reversal of the impairment loss is treated as a revaluation increase. Refer also to Note 1(g).

(k) Operating leases

Operating lease payments are representative of the pattern of benefits derived from the leased assets and are expensed in the periods in which they are incurred.

(l) Payables

Amounts payable for supplies received are accrued whether or not the respective invoices have been received at reporting date. Creditor bills are unsecured, not subject to interest charges and are generally settled within thirty days of invoice receipt.

(m) Financial instruments

Recognition

Financial assets and financial liabilities are recognised in the Statement of Financial Position when the organisation becomes party to the contractual provisions of the financial instrument.

Classification

Financial instruments are classified and measured as follows:

- Cash and cash equivalents - held at fair value through profit and loss
- Receivables - held at amortised cost
- Payables - held at amortised cost

Legal Aid Queensland does not enter into transactions for speculative purposes, nor for hedging. Apart from cash and cash equivalents, the organisation holds no financial assets classified at fair value through profit and loss.

All other disclosures relating to the measurement basis and financial risk management of financial instruments held by the organisation are included in Note 21.

(n) Provision for grants of aid

Provisions are recorded when the authority has a present obligation, either legal or constructive as a result of a past event. They are recognised at the amount expected at reporting date for which the obligation will be settled in a future period. Where the settlement of the obligation is expected after twelve or more months, the obligation is discounted to the present value using an appropriate discount rate.

Provision is made for the supply of legal services. Expenditure accrues as the provision increases, when applications for legal services are approved. The provision decreases as practitioners' tax invoices are rendered for services provided. The provision for grants of aid represents anticipated payments, net of cost of recoveries, on current legal matters assigned to private legal practices. Monthly adjustments to the provision are based on historical grant cancellation and utilisation data.

(o) Employee benefits

Wages, salaries, recreation leave and sick leave

Wages, salaries and recreation leave due but unpaid at reporting date are recognised in the Statement of Financial Position at the remuneration rates expected to apply at the time of settlement. Payroll tax and workers' compensation insurance are a consequence of employing employees but are not counted in an employee's total remuneration package. They are not employee benefits and are recognised separately as employee related expenses. Employer superannuation contributions and long service levies are regarded as employee benefits.

For unpaid entitlements expected to be paid within twelve months, the liabilities are recognised at their undiscounted values. For those entitlements not expected to be paid within twelve months, the liabilities are recognised at their present value, calculated using yields on Fixed Rate Commonwealth Government bonds of similar maturity.

Prior history indicates that on average, sick leave taken each reporting period is less than the entitlement accrued. This is expected to continue in future periods. Accordingly, it is unlikely that existing accumulated entitlements will be used by employees and no liability for unused sick leave entitlements is recognised.

As sick leave is non-vesting, an expense is recognised for this leave as it is taken.

Long service leave

Under the Queensland Government's long service leave scheme, a levy is made on Legal Aid Queensland to cover this cost. Levies are expensed in the period in which they are paid or payable. Amounts paid to employees for long service leave are claimed from the scheme as and when leave is taken.

No provision for long service leave is recognised in the financial statements because the liability is held on a whole-of-Government basis and reported in the financial report prepared pursuant to AASB 1049 *Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting*.



Superannuation

Employer superannuation contributions are paid to QSuper, the superannuation plan for Queensland Government employees at rates determined by the State Actuary. Contributions are expensed in the period in which they are paid or payable. The organisation's obligation is limited to its contribution to QSuper.

No liability is recognised for accruing superannuation benefits in these financial statements because the liability is held on a whole-of-Government basis and reported in the financial report prepared pursuant to AASB 1049 *Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting*.

Key executive management personnel and remuneration

Key executive management personnel and remuneration disclosures are made in accordance with section 5 of the *Financial Reporting Requirements for Queensland Government Agencies* issued by Queensland Treasury. Refer to Note 19 for the disclosures on key executive management personnel and remuneration.

(p) Trust transactions and balances

Trust monies represent amounts obtained by Legal Aid Queensland and held on behalf of clients until the finalisation of a legal matter. As Legal Aid Queensland acts only in a custodial role in respect of these transactions and balances, they are not recognised in the financial statements but are disclosed in Note 22.

(q) Taxation

The activities of Legal Aid Queensland are exempt from Commonwealth taxation except for Goods and Services Tax (GST) and Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT). Input tax credits receivable and GST payable from/to the Australian Taxation Office are recognised and accrued (refer to Note 9).

(r) Issuance of financial statements

The financial statements are authorised for issue by the board chair and chief finance officer at the date of signing the Management Certificate.

(s) Judgements

The preparation of financial statements necessarily requires the determination and use of certain critical accounting estimates, assumptions and management judgements that have the potential to cause a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year. Such estimates, judgements and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised and in future periods as relevant.

Estimates and assumptions that have a potential significant effect are outlined in the following financial statement notes:


Property, plant and equipment – Note 11

Provision for grants of aid – Note 15

(t) New and revised accounting standards

The organisation did not voluntarily change any of its accounting policies during 2011-12. Australian accounting standard changes applicable for the first time for 2011-12 have had minimal effect on Legal Aid Queensland's financial statements as explained below.

AASB 2010-4 *Further Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards arising from the Annual Improvements Project* [AASB 1, AASB 7, AASB 101 & AASB 134 and Interpretation 13] became effective from reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2011. Given the organisation's existing financial statements, there was only a minor impact on the financial instruments note (note 21), in relation to disclosures about credit risk. That note no longer needs to disclose amounts that best represent the maximum exposure to credit risk where the carrying amount of the instruments already reflects this. As this was the case with all the organisation's receivables as at 30 June 2012 (and as at 30 June 2011), receivables are not included in the credit risk disclosure in this year's financial statements.



As collateral in the form of mortgages representing charges over real property are held by Legal Aid Queensland, the organisation's financial instruments note has been amended to include the financial effect of the collateral in accordance with amendments to AASB 7 *Financial Instruments: Disclosures*.

AASB 1054 *Australian Additional Disclosures* became effective from reporting periods beginning on or after 1 July 2011. Given Legal Aid Queensland's previous disclosure practices, AASB 1054 had minimal impact on the organisation. One of the footnotes to note 7 Other Expenses, regarding audit fees, has been slightly amended to identify the organisation's auditor and clarify the nature of the work performed by the auditor.

AASB 2011-1 *Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards arising from the Trans-Tasman Convergence Project* [AASB 1, AASB 5, AASB 101, AASB 107, AASB 108, AASB 121, AASB 128, AASB 132 & AASB 134 and Interpretations 2, 112 & 113] also became effective from reporting periods beginning on or after 1 July 2011. The only potential implication for the organisation from this amending standard was the deletion from AASB 101 *Presentation of Financial Statements* of the requirement for disclosure of commitments. However, the Treasury Department's Financial Reporting Requirements require continuation of commitments disclosures, so this deletion from AASB 101 has no impact on the Legal Aid Queensland's commitments note (note 20).

The organisation is not permitted to early adopt a new accounting standard ahead of the specified commencement date unless approval is obtained from the Treasury Department.

Consequently, Legal Aid Queensland has not applied any Australian accounting standards and interpretations that have been issued but are not yet effective. The organisation will apply these standards and interpretations in accordance with their respective commencement dates.

At the date of authorisation of the financial report, the expected impacts of new or amended Australian accounting standards with future commencement dates are as set out below.

AASB 2009-11 *Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards - Presentation of Items of Other Comprehensive Income* [AASB 1, 5, 7, 101, 112, 120, 121, 132, 133, 134, 1039 & 1049] applies as from reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2012. The only impact for Legal Aid Queensland will be that, in the Statement of Comprehensive Income, items within the 'Other Comprehensive Income' section will need to be presented in different sub-sections, according to whether or not they are subsequently re-classifiable to the operating result. Whether subsequent re-classification is possible depends on the requirements or criteria in the accounting standard/interpretation that relates to the item concerned.

AASB 13 *Fair Value Measurement* applies from reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2013. AASB 13 sets out a new definition of 'fair value' as well as new principles to be applied when determining the fair value of assets and liabilities. The new requirements will apply to Legal Aid Queensland's land and building as they are measured in fair value. No significant changes are anticipated based on the fair value methodologies presently used. Therefore, at this stage, no consequential material impacts are expected for the organisation's property, plant and equipment as from 2013-14.

AASB 9 *Financial Instrument* (December 2010) and AASB 2010-7 *Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards arising from AASB 9* (December 2010) [AASB 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 101, 102, 108, 112, 118, 121, 127, 128, 131, 132, 136, 137, 139, 1023 & 1038 and Interpretations 2, 5, 10, 12, 19 & 127] become effective from reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2013. The main impacts of these standards are that they will change the requirements for the classification, measurement and disclosures associated with financial assets. Under the new requirements, financial assets will be more simply classified according to whether they are measured at either amortised cost or fair value. Pursuant to AASB 9, financial assets can only be measured at amortised cost if two conditions are met. One of these conditions is that the asset must be held within a business model whose objective is to hold assets in order to collect contractual cash flows. The other condition is that the contractual terms of the asset give rise on specified dates to cash flows that are solely payments of principal and interest on the principal amount outstanding.



On initial application of AASB 9, Legal Aid Queensland will need to reassess the measurement of its financial assets against the new classification and measurement requirements, based on the facts and circumstances that exist at that date. Assuming no change in the types of transactions the organisation enters into, it is not expected that any of the organisation's financial assets will meet the criteria in AASB 9 to be measured at amortised cost. Therefore, as from the 2013-14 financial statements, all of the organisation's financial assets are expected to be required to be measured at fair value, instead of the measurement classifications presently used in notes 1(m) and 21. In the case of the organisation's current receivables, as they are short-term in nature, the carrying amount is expected to be as a reasonable approximation of fair value.

The following new and revised standards apply as from the reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2013:

- AASB 10 *Consolidated Financial Statements*
- AASB 11 *Joint Arrangements*
- AASB 12 *Disclosure of Interests in Other Entities*
- AASB 127 (revised) *Separate Financial Statements*
- AASB 128 (revised) *Investments in Associates and Joint Ventures*; and
- AASB 2011- 7 *Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards arising from the Consolidation and Joint Arrangements Standards* [AASB 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 2009-11, 101, 107, 112, 118, 121, 124, 132, 133, 136, 138, 139, 1023 & 1038 and Interpretations 5, 9, 16 & 17].

These standards cannot be applied by not-for-profit entities prior to their effective date, as the AASB is presently considering modifying them for application by not-for-profit entities in an Australian context. Any such modifications are likely to clarify how the IASB's principles should be applied by not-for-profit entities. Hence, Legal Aid Queensland is not yet in a position to reliably determine the future implications of these new and revised standards for the organisation's financial statements.

A revised version of AASB 119 *Employee Benefits* applies from reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2013. The revised AASB 119 is generally to be applied retrospectively. Given Legal Aid Queensland's circumstances, the only implications for the organisation are that the revised standard clarifies the concept of 'termination benefits', and the recognition criteria for liabilities for termination benefits will be different. If termination benefits meet the timeframe criterion for 'short-term employee benefits', they will be measured according to the AASB 119 requirements for 'short-term employee benefits'. Otherwise, termination benefits will need to be measured according to the AASB 119 requirements for 'other long-term employee benefits'. Under the revised standard, the recognition and measurement of employer obligations for 'other long-term employee benefits' will need to be accounted for according to most of the requirements for defined benefit plans.

The revised AASB 119 includes changed criteria for accounting for employee benefits as 'short-term employee benefits'. However, Legal Aid Queensland is a member of the Queensland Government central schemes for long service leave, this change in criterion has no impact on the organisation's financial statements, as the employer liability is held by the central scheme. The revised AASB 119 also includes changed requirements for the measurement of employer liabilities/assets arising from defined benefit plans, and the measurement and presentation of changes in such liabilities/assets. Legal Aid Queensland only contributes to the QSuper defined benefit plan and the corresponding QSuper employer benefit obligation is held by the State. Therefore, those changes to AASB 119 will have no impact on the organisation.

AASB 1053 *Application of Tiers of Australian Accounting Standards* applies as from reporting periods beginning on or after 1 July 2013. AASB 1053 establishes a differential reporting framework for those entities that prepare general purpose financial statements, consisting of two tiers of reporting requirements - Australian Accounting Standards (commonly referred to as "tier 1"), and Australian Accounting Standards - Reduced Disclosure Requirements (commonly referred to as "tier 2"). Tier 1 requirements comprise the full range of AASB recognition, measurement, presentation and disclosure requirements that are currently applicable to reporting entities in Australia. The only difference between the tier 1 and tier 2 requirements is that tier 2 requires fewer disclosures than tier 1. AASB 2010-2 sets out the details of which disclosures in standards and interpretations are not required under tier 2 reporting.

Pursuant to AASB 1053, public sector entities like Legal Aid Queensland may adopt tier 2 requirements for its general purpose financial statements. However, AASB 1053 acknowledges the power of a regulator to require application of the tier 1 requirements. In the case of Legal Aid Queensland, the Treasury Department is the regulator. Treasury Department has advised that its policy decision is to require all agencies to adopt tier 1 by all Queensland Government departments and statutory bodies that are consolidated into the whole-of-Government financial statements. Treasury's policy also prohibits the early adoption of the arrangements outlined in AASB 1053 and its accompanying amending standards. Therefore, the release of AASB 1053 and associated amending standards will have no impact on Legal Aid Queensland.

All other Australian accounting standards and interpretations with future commencement dates are either not applicable to Legal Aid Queensland, or have no material impact on the organisation.

2 Grants and other contributions

	2012 \$'000	2011 \$'000
Commonwealth government grants		
Legal services	40,738	40,017
Community legal centres [^]	103	102
Commonwealth expensive cases reimbursement	2,771	621
Regional solicitor program	–	293
Commonwealth flood money	–	200
	43,612	41,233
State Government appropriations		
Legal services	44,279	37,814
Other projects	746	662
	45,025	38,476
Other contributions		
Department of Justice and Attorney-General grant*	19,992	29,003
Insurance Council of Australia grant [#]	–	250
	19,992	29,253
Total grants and other contributions	108,629	108,962

[^] This represents funding for the Community Legal Centre program manager.

* Department of Justice and Attorney-General grant:

Distributions to Legal Aid Queensland can only be made from the Legal Practitioner Interest on Trust Accounts Fund established under that *Legal Profession Act 2004*, with the authority of the Minister upon the recommendation of the Chief Executive.

[#] Included in revenue from grants for 2011 is \$250,000 from the Insurance Council of Australia. The money was for Legal Aid Queensland to provide appropriate assistance to policyholders affected by the flooding in Queensland.

3 Supplies and services

	2012 \$'000	2011 \$'000
Outsourced services		
Legal representation	55,753	54,311
Other	2,136	1,959
	57,889	56,270
Corporate overheads		
Communications and transport	1,413	1,220
Information technology	2,111	1,543
Office premises and requisites	2,641	2,166
Other	1,612	1,921
	7,777	6,850
Total	65,666	63,120

4 Employee expenses

	2012 \$'000	2011 \$'000
Employee benefits		
Wages and salaries	33,686	30,716
Employer superannuation contributions	4,024	3,649
Long service leave levy	693	628
Other employee benefits	168	–
Employee related expenses		
Payroll tax	2,051	1,811
Workers' compensation premium	175	142
Total	40,797	36,946

The number of employees including both full-time and part-time employees measured on a full-time equivalent basis is:

	2012	2011
Number of employees	446	440

5 Depreciation and amortisation

	2012 \$'000	2011 \$'000
Depreciation and amortisation were incurred in respect of:		
Buildings	211	209
Plant and equipment	953	1,008
Software purchased	359	359
Total	1,523	1,576

6 Impairment losses

	2012 \$'000	2011 \$'000
Impairment losses on trade receivables	321	192
Total	321	192

7 Other expenses

	2012 \$'000	2011 \$'000
Insurance premiums - professional	58	52
Insurance premiums - other	65	75
External audit fees*	59	84
Operating leases rentals	1,939	1,649
Loss on asset disposals	20	60
Special payments:		
Out of court settlements	49	28
Total	2,190	1,948

* The Queensland Audit Office contracted Prosperity Advisers Group to audit the organisation. Total external audit fees relating to the 2011-12 financial year are estimated to be \$59,000 (2011: \$74,400). There are no non-audit services included in this amount.



8 Cash and cash equivalents

	2012 \$'000	2011 \$'000
Imprest accounts	5	5
Cash at bank and on hand	84	81
Queensland Investment Corporation Cash Enhanced Fund	21,496	20,481
Queensland Treasury Corporation Cash Fund	8,317	6,121
Total	29,902	26,688

9 Receivables

	2012 \$'000	2011 \$'000
Current		
Trade debtors	746	554
GST receivable	592	668
GST payable	(52)	(37)
	540	631
Total	1,286	1,185
Non-current		
Trade debtors	880	1,001
Less: Allowance for impairment loss	(248)	(272)
Total	632	729
Movements in the allowance for impairment loss		
Balance at the beginning of the year	272	200
Amounts written off during the year	(345)	(121)
Increase in allowance recognised in the operating result	321	193
Balance at the end of the year	248	272

Of the client service fees imposed on persons who are beneficiaries of legal aid, \$367,895 (2011: \$337,994) is secured by mortgages representing charges over real property. Secured amounts are realised upon the sale of the respective real properties.

10 Other current assets

	2012 \$'000	2011 \$'000
Prepayments	499	675
Grants receivable	–	466
Total	499	1,141

11 Property, plant and equipment

	2012 \$'000	2011 \$'000
Land		
At fair value	11,600	11,600
Building		
At cost	469	422
At fair value	8,387	8,387
	8,856	8,809
Less accumulated depreciation	(2,962)	(2,751)
Less accumulated impairment losses	(1,038)	(1,038)
	4,856	5,020
Plant and equipment		
At cost	9,357	8,451
Less accumulated depreciation	(5,797)	(5,062)
Less accumulated impairment losses	(328)	(328)
	3,232	3,061
Work in progress	416	53
Total at cost	20,104	19,734

Land and building were last comprehensively revalued as at 30 June 2009 by the Department of Environment and Resource Management (State Valuation Services) using 'fair value' principles, based on current market values. The values for these asset classes have since been indexed annually to ensure such values materially reflect fair value at each reporting date. The land valuation index was obtained from State Valuation Services while the building index was obtained from The Economic Statistics Section, Office of Economic and Statistical Research (OESR) website. In respect of these asset classes, the cost of items acquired during the financial year has been judged by management to materially represent their fair value at the end of the reporting period.

Plant and equipment is valued at cost in accordance with Queensland Treasury's *Non-Current Asset Accounting Policies for the Queensland Public Sector*.

Property, plant and equipment reconciliation

	Land		Building		Plant and equipment		Work in progress		Total	
	2012 \$'000	2011 \$'000	2012 \$'000	2011 \$'000	2012 \$'000	2011 \$'000	2012 \$'000	2011 \$'000	2012 \$'000	2011 \$'000
Carrying amount at 1 July	11,600	11,600	5,020	5,230	3,061	3,642	53	–	19,734	20,472
Acquisitions	–	–	47	–	1,124	754	407	53	1,578	807
Disposals	–	–	–	–	(44)	(327)	–	–	(44)	(327)
Transfers between classes	–	–	–	–	44	–	(44)	–	–	–
Depreciation	–	–	(211)	(210)	(953)	(1,008)	–	–	(1,164)	(1,218)
Carrying amount at 30 June	11,600	11,600	4,856	5,020	3,232	3,061	416	53	20,104	19,734

Legal Aid Queensland has plant and equipment with an original cost of \$1,464,620 and a written down value of zero still being used in the provision of services.

The organisation also has plant and equipment with an original cost of \$2,297,881 and a written down value of \$1,070 still being used in the provision of services.

12 Intangible assets

	2012 \$'000	2011 \$'000
Software purchased:		
At cost	3,083	3,083
Less: Accumulated amortisation	(2,927)	(2,568)
	156	515
Software WIP:		
At cost	1,609	293
Total	1,765	808

Intangibles reconciliation

	Software purchased		Software WIP		Total	
	2012 \$'000	2011 \$'000	2012 \$'000	2011 \$'000	2012 \$'000	2011 \$'000
Carrying amount at 1 July	515	872	293	–	808	872
Acquisitions through internal development	–	–	1,316	293	1,316	293
Amortisation	(359)	(357)	–	–	(359)	(357)
Carrying amount at 30 June	156	515	1,609	293	1,765	808

Amortisation of intangibles is included in the line item “Depreciation and amortisation” in the Statement of Comprehensive Income.

All intangible assets of the organisation have finite useful lives and are amortised on a straight line basis. Refer to Note 1 (i).

No intangible assets have been classified as held for sale or form part of a disposal group held for sale.

Legal Aid Queensland has intangibles with an original cost of \$572,312 and a written down value of \$24 still being used in the provision of services.

13 Payables

	2012 \$'000	2011 \$'000
Trade creditors	2,683	1,299

14 Accrued employee benefits

	2012 \$'000	2011 \$'000
Current		
Annual recreation leave	2,907	2,649
Long service leave levy payable	182	180
Wages outstanding	243	192
Total	3,332	3,021
Non-current		
Annual recreation leave	992	930
Total	992	930

The discount rate used to calculate the present value of non-current annual leave is 2.46% (2011: 4.7%).

15 Provision for grants of aid

	2012 \$'000	2011 \$'000
Current		
Grants of aid outstanding	13,518	14,684
Non-current		
Grants of aid outstanding	4,403	4,041
Movements in provision		
Grants of aid outstanding		
Balance at 1 July	18,725	21,445
Additional provision recognised	68,824	65,643
Discount on estimated utilisation of grants of aid	(4,106)	(4,366)
Discount on estimated cancellation of grants of aid	(7,620)	(6,445)
Discount on present value	(295)	(519)
Reduction in provision as a result of payments	(57,607)	(57,033)
Balance at 30 June	17,921	18,725

Discount relating to estimated utilisation of grants of aid is based on prior year history of actual payments to preferred suppliers compared to the maximum grant of aid approved.

Discount relating to cancellation of grants of aid is based on prior year history of actual grants of aid cancelled, taking into account the age of the grant of aid before being cancelled. Refer to Note 1 (n) for further explanation of the accounting policy for the provision for grants of aid.

The average discount rate used to calculate the present value of non-current provision is 2.44% (2011: 4.76%).

16 Reconciliation of operating surplus to net cash from operating activities

	2012 \$'000	2011 \$'000
Operating surplus	3,025	9,610
Depreciation and amortisation expense	1,523	1,576
Loss on sale of property, plant and equipment	20	60
Changes in assets and liabilities:		
(Increase)/decrease in receivables	370	(578)
(Increase)/decrease in GST input tax credits receivable	79	(27)
(Increase)/decrease in long service leave advances receivable	178	94
(Increase)/decrease in prepayments other	(3)	29
Increase/(decrease) in payables	1,121	(1,144)
Increase/(decrease) in GST payable	15	(24)
Increase/(decrease) in accrued employee benefits	373	446
Increase/(decrease) in provision for grants of aid	(806)	(2,720)
Increase/(decrease) in other current liabilities	189	(349)
Net cash from operating activities	6,084	6,973

17 Asset revaluation surplus by class

	2012		2011	
	Land \$'000	Total \$'000	Land \$'000	Total \$'000
Balance 1 July	10,300	10,300	10,300	10,300
Balance 30 June	10,300	10,300	10,300	10,300

The asset revaluation surplus represents the net effect of upwards and downwards revaluations of assets to fair value.

18 Contingent liabilities

There were no known contingent liabilities of a material nature as at 30 June 2012.

19 Key executive management personnel and remuneration

(a) Key executive management personnel

The following details for key executive management personnel include those positions that had authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the organisation during 2011-12. Further information on these positions can be found in the body of the Annual Report under the section relating to Executive Management.

Position	Responsibilities	Current incumbents*	
		Contract classification and appointment authority	Date appointed to position (Date resigned from position)
Chief Executive Officer	Lead the functions and strategic direction of Legal Aid Queensland to achieve efficiency, sustainability and the delivery of high quality legal services.	SES4.2	16 November 2009
Deputy Chief Executive Officer	Manage Legal Aid Queensland's day to day operations including state-wide regional legal services and preferred supplier strategy to achieve Legal Aid Queensland's strategic and operational objectives.	SES3.2	19 April 2010
Public Defender Counsel	Manage Counsel to achieve Legal Aid Queensland's strategic and operational objectives and particularly to deliver the highest quality of legal assistance services to clients.	SES2.5	19 January 2011
Director Family Law, Civil Justice and Advice Services	Lead and manage the Family Law, Civil Justice and Advice Services areas to deliver high quality legal assistance services to clients.	SES2.5	11 March 2010
Director Criminal Law Services	Lead and manage the Criminal Law Services division to achieve Legal Aid Queensland's strategic and operational objectives, and particularly to deliver high quality legal assistance services to clients.	SES2.4	29 November 2010
Director Corporate Services	Lead and manage a significant range of corporate services and direct service delivery functions, including finance, facilities, human resources, right to information and privacy, information technology, library, business analysis, compliance and review, records management and state-wide legal information call centre.	SES2.4	18 January 2010

Director Grants	Lead and manage a significant range of functions associated with managing external and in-house legal service procurement.	SES2.2	7 December 2010
Director Policy, Communication and Community Legal Education	Lead and manage strategic policy, law reform, communications, community legal education and special projects.	SO.2	9 November 2009

* The classification of the current incumbents is at 30 June 2012. During the year, there may be other personnel who have acted in the positions above.

(b) Remuneration

Remuneration policy for the organisation's key executive management personnel is set by the Queensland Public Service Commission as provided for under the *Public Service Act 2008*. The remuneration and other terms of employment for the key executive management personnel are specified in employment contracts. The contracts provide for benefits such as motor vehicles.

For the 2011-12 year, remuneration of key executive management personnel increased by 2.5% in accordance with government policy.

Remuneration packages for key executive management personnel comprise the following components:

- Short term employee benefits which include:
 - *base* - consisting of base salary, allowances and leave entitlements paid and provided for the entire year or for that part of the year during which the employee occupied the specified position. Amounts disclosed equal the amount expensed in the Statement of Comprehensive Income
 - *non-monetary benefits* - consisting of provision of vehicles together with fringe benefits tax applicable to the benefit
- long term employee benefits include long service leave accrued
- post employment benefits include superannuation contributions
- redundancy payments are not provided for within individual contracts of employment. Contracts of employment provide only for notice periods or payment in lieu of notice on termination, regardless of the reason for termination
- performance bonuses are not paid under the contracts in place.

Total fixed remuneration is calculated on a 'total cost' basis and includes the base and non-monetary benefits, long term employee benefits and post employment benefits.

1 July 2011 - 30 June 2012

Position	Short term employee benefits		Long term employee benefits	Post employee benefits	Total remuneration
	Base \$'000	Non-monetary benefits \$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Chief Executive Officer	201	23	4	23	251
Deputy Chief Executive Officer	170	23	3	20	216
Public Defender Counsel	146	25	3	17	191
Director Family Law, Civil Justice and Advice Services	152	25	3	19	199
Director Criminal Law Services	168	–	3	17	188
Director Corporate Services	161	18	3	18	200
Director Grants	137	18	3	17	175
Director Policy, Communication and Community Legal Education	89	–	2	12	103
Total remuneration	1,224	132	24	143	1,523

1 July 2010 - 30 June 2011

Position	Short term employee benefits		Long term employee benefits	Post employee benefits	Total remuneration
	Base \$'000	Non-monetary benefits \$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Chief Executive Officer	178	27	4	23	232
Deputy Chief Executive Officer	153	27	3	20	203
Public Defender Counsel	146	26	3	19	193
Director Family Law, Civil Justice and Advice Services	145	26	3	19	193
Director Criminal Law Services	133	26	2	17	178
Director Corporate Services	138	26	3	18	185
Director Grants	128	26	2	16	172
Director Policy, Communication and Community Legal Education	91	–	2	11	104
Total remuneration	1,112	184	22	143	1,460

20 Commitments for expenditure

(a) Capital commitments

Capital expenditure commitment for technology refurbishments and buildings inclusive of anticipated GST, contracted for at reporting date but not recognised in the accounts is payable as follows:

	2012 \$'000	2011 \$'000
Payments due within one year	75	386

(b) Operating lease commitments

Commitments under operating leases at reporting date are inclusive of anticipated GST and are payable as follows:

	2012 \$'000	2011 \$'000
– not later than one year	2,003	1,961
– later than one year but not later than five years	5,730	5,095
– later than five years	126	495
Total	7,859	7,551

Operating leases are entered into as a means of acquiring access to office accommodation. Lease payments are generally fixed but with inflation escalation clauses on which rental commitments are determined.

No purchase options exist in relation to operating leases and no operating leases contain restrictions on financing or other leasing activities.

(c) Grants commitments

Grants commitments inclusive of anticipated GST, committed to provide at reporting date, but not recognised in the accounts are payable as follows:

	2012 \$'000	2011 \$'000
– not later than one year	40	115
– later than one year but not later than five years	–	50
Total	40	165

21 Financial instruments

(a) Categorisation of financial instruments

Legal Aid Queensland has the following categories of financial assets and financial liabilities:

Category	Note	2012 \$'000	2011 \$'000
Financial assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	8	29,902	26,688
Receivables	9	1,918	1,914
Total		31,820	28,602
Financial liabilities			
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost:			
Payables	13	2,683	1,299

(b) Financial risk management

Legal Aid Queensland's operational activities are not exposed to substantial financial risk. The investment of cash is exposed to a degree of interest rate risk and market risk.

The board reviews risk and return of cash investments. Financial risk management is currently undertaken by the Finance and Facilities team, with guidance from Queensland Treasury Corporation and Queensland Investment Corporation.

(c) Credit risk exposure

Credit risk exposure refers to the situation where the organisation may incur financial loss as a result of another party to a financial instrument failing to discharge their obligation.

The maximum exposure to credit risk at balance date in relation to each class of recognised financial assets is the carrying amount of those assets inclusive of any provisions for impairment.

Financial assets

Collateral in the form of mortgages representing charges over real property are held by Legal Aid Queensland. Of the \$1,918,000 recorded in receivables, \$367,000 are secured by mortgages and caveat, reducing the credit risk the organisation is exposed to. No credit enhancements relate to the financial assets held by Legal Aid Queensland.

No significant concentration of credit risks have been identified, as exposure is spread over a large number of counterparties and customers. Exposure to credit risk is monitored on a regular basis. The method for calculating any provisional impairment for risk is based on past experience and current and expected changes in economic conditions.

The recognised impairment loss is \$321,000 for the current year, an increase of \$129,000 from 2011. All figures for credit risk referred to do not take into account the value of any collateral or other security.

No financial assets and financial liabilities have been offset and presented net in the Statement of Financial Position.

Aging of past due but not impaired as well as impaired financial assets are disclosed in the following tables:

2012 financial assets past due but not impaired

	Overdue					Total
	Not overdue	Less than 1 year	1-2 years	2-3 years	More than 3 years	
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Financial assets						
Receivables	1,028	474	109	69	238	1,918

2011 financial assets past due but not impaired

	Overdue					Total
	Not overdue	Less than 1 year	1-2 years	2-3 years	More than 3 years	
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Financial assets						
Receivables	966	418	245	48	237	1,914

2012 impaired financial assets

	Overdue					Total
	Not overdue	Less than 1 year	1-2 years	2-3 years	More than 3 years	
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Financial assets						
Receivables	1	15	120	42	70	248

2011 impaired financial assets

	Overdue					Total
	Not overdue	Less than 1 year	1-2 years	2-3 years	More than 3 years	
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Financial assets						
Receivables	1	15	50	179	27	272

The interest earned by the impaired financial assets was \$24,800 (2011: \$15,540).

(d) Liquidity risk

Liquidity risk refers to the situation where the organisation may encounter difficulty in meeting obligations associated with financial liabilities that are settled by delivering cash or another financial asset.

There is a surplus of \$12,087,000 in current assets to meet the obligations of current liabilities. Accordingly the liquidity risk is considered to be low.

All of the organisation's financial liabilities have maturity of less than one year and therefore they are not presented in a table.

(e) Market risk

Legal Aid Queensland does not trade in foreign currency and is not materially exposed to commodity price changes. It is exposed to interest rate risk through its cash deposited in interest bearing accounts but it does not undertake any hedging in relation to the risk.

Interest rate sensitivity analysis

The following interest rate sensitivity analysis is based on a report similar to that which would be provided to management, depicting the outcome to the statement of comprehensive income if interest rates would change by +/-1% from the year-end rates applicable to the organisation's financial assets and liabilities. With all other variables held constant, the organisation would have a surplus and equity increase/(decrease) of \$299,000 (2011: \$267,000). This is attributable to the organisation's exposure to variable interest rates on its deposit with Queensland Investment Corporation and Queensland Treasury Corporation.

Financial instruments	Carrying amount \$'000	2012 interest rate risk			
		-1%		+1%	
		Profit	Equity	Profit	Equity
Cash	29,902	(299)	(299)	299	299

Financial instruments	Carrying amount \$'000	2011 interest rate risk			
		-1%		+1%	
		Profit	Equity	Profit	Equity
Cash	26,688	(267)	(267)	267	267

Fair value

Legal Aid Queensland does not recognise any financial assets or financial liabilities at fair value. The fair value of trade receivables and payables is assumed to approximate the value of the original transaction, less any allowance for impairment.



22 Monies held in trust

Legal Aid Queensland received monies from clients and held them in trust until the finalisation of their legal matters. The monies are held in a separate bank account in accordance with Section 45 of the *Legal Aid Queensland Act 1997*.

	2012 \$'000	2011 \$'000
Summary of cash flows:		
Balance at 1 July	450	597
Receipts	5,800	3,266
Payments	(5,639)	(3,413)
Balance at 30 June	611	450

23 Grants payable to community legal centres

During the year Legal Aid Queensland received monies from both state and federal governments that are on passed to the community legal centres. As the organisation performs only a custodial role in respect of these transactions and balances, they are not recognised in the statement of comprehensive income but are disclosed in these notes for the information of users. The balance as at 30 June represents the grants payable to community legal centres and the portion of Emergency Grants Fund which was unspent during the year and to be carried forward. The Emergency Grants Fund is distributed from the Legal Practitioner Interest on Trust Accounts Fund and is to be used for agreed purposes for the community legal centres.

	2012 \$'000	2011 \$'000
Balance at 1 July	141	490
Receipts	13,264	12,582
Payments	(13,338)	(12,931)
Balance at 30 June	67	141

Excluded in the receipts and payments above is funding to Western Queensland Justice Network which is a 100 percent owned community legal centre by Legal Aid Queensland.



24 Remuneration of board members

The remuneration received, or due and receivable by Board Members from Legal Aid Queensland is in connection with the management of the organisation. Remuneration includes sitting fees, contributions to members' superannuation and other benefits received by Board Members.

	2012 \$	2011 \$
Rachel Hunter	6,308	3,599
Iyla Davies	6,276	5,725
Allan Welsh	10,410	6,899
Dan Toombs	4,828	4,552
Terry Browne	4,898	380
Marg O'Donnell	–	5,155
Peter Callaghan	–	3,862
Total	32,720	30,172

Certificate of Legal Aid Queensland


These general purpose financial statements have been prepared pursuant to section 62(1) of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* (the Act), relevant sections of the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009* and other prescribed requirements. In accordance with section 62(1)(b) of the Act we certify that in our opinion:

- (a) the prescribed requirements for establishing and keeping the accounts have been complied with in all material respects; and
- (b) the statements have been drawn up to present a true and fair view, in accordance with prescribed accounting standards, of the transactions of Legal Aid Queensland for the year ended 30 June 2012 and of the financial position of Legal Aid Queensland at the end of that year.



R. Patel CA
A/Chief Finance Officer

17 August 2012



R. Hunter
Board Chair

17 August 2012

Independent auditor's report

To the Board of Legal Aid Queensland

Report on the Financial Report

I have audited the accompanying financial report of Legal Aid Queensland, which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2012, the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and certificates given by the *Acting Chief Financial Officer and Chair*.

The Board's Responsibility for the Financial Report

The Board is responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with prescribed accounting requirements identified in the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* and the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009*, including compliance with Australian Accounting Standards. The Board's responsibility also includes such internal control as the Board determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

My responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on the audit. The audit was conducted in accordance with the *Auditor-General of Queensland Auditing Standards*, which incorporate the Australian Auditing Standards. Those standards require compliance with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and that the audit is planned and performed to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control, other than in expressing an opinion on compliance with prescribed requirements. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and

the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the Board, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report including any mandatory financial reporting requirements approved by the Treasurer for application in Queensland.

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

Independence

The *Auditor-General Act 2009* promotes the independence of the Auditor-General and all authorised auditors. The Auditor-General is the auditor of all Queensland public sector entities and can be removed only by Parliament.

The Auditor-General may conduct an audit in any way considered appropriate and is not subject to direction by any person about the way in which audit powers are to be exercised. The Auditor-General has for the purposes of conducting an audit, access to all documents and property and can report to Parliament matters which in the Auditor-General's opinion are significant.

Opinion

In accordance with s.40 of the *Auditor-General Act 2009* –

- (a) I have received all the information and explanations which I have required; and
- (b) in my opinion –
 - (i) the prescribed requirements in relation to the establishment and keeping of accounts have been complied with in all material respects; and
 - (ii) the financial report presents a true and fair view, in accordance with the prescribed accounting standards, of the transactions of Legal Aid Queensland for the financial year 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012 and of the financial position as at the end of that year.



Luke Malone, Partner
as Delegate of the Auditor-General of Queensland
Queensland Audit Office, Brisbane

Dated, Brisbane, 17 August 2012

Acronyms and abbreviations

AASB	Australian Accounting Standards Board	GST	Goods and Services Tax
ATO	Australian Taxation Office	HP	Hewlett Packard
ATSILS	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service	IDRO	Intensive drug rehabilitation order
CALD	Culturally and linguistically diverse	IRO	Internal review officer
CAP	Community access point	IT	Information technology
CEO	Chief executive officer	LAQ	Legal Aid Queensland
CLC	Community legal centre	LPITAF	Legal Practitioner Interest on Trust Accounts Fund
CLE	Community legal education	NESB	Non-English-speaking background
CPD	Continuing professional development	NPA	National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services
eDRMS	Electronic document and records management system	NQ	North Queensland
EEO	Equal employment opportunity	OESR	Office of Economic and Statistical Research
ERO	External review officer	QCAT	Queensland Civil Administration Tribunal
FACT	First Advice Contact Team	QLAF	Queensland Legal Assistance Forum
FBT	Fringe Benefit Tax	QPILCH	Queensland Public Interest Law Clearing House
FTE	Full-time equivalent	RLAF	Regional Legal Assistance Forum
GMSM	Grants Management System Modernisation	SC	Senior Counsel

Feedback

We value your opinion and welcome your feedback so we can meet our stakeholders' needs and expectations in future reports. Please fax to (07) 3238 3340 or seal and return via reply-paid.

Your main interest in the report is as a:

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Client | <input type="checkbox"/> Preferred supplier | <input type="checkbox"/> Interested community member | <input type="checkbox"/> Contractor/supplier |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employee | <input type="checkbox"/> Community legal centre | <input type="checkbox"/> Community group/organisation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student | <input type="checkbox"/> Government stakeholder | <input type="checkbox"/> Legal/justice system stakeholder | |

How do you rate the report?

- | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------|
| Content | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Very good | <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor | FOLD 1 |
| Easy to read | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Very good | <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor | |
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How can we improve the report?

Why did you read or refer to the report?

Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

If you would like future annual reports, please give us your details:

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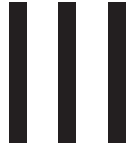
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Communications and Community Legal Education
Legal Aid Queensland
Reply Paid 2449
BRISBANE QLD 4001

YOUR LOCAL LEGAL AID OFFICE:

44 Herschel St, 4000

BUNDABERG

2nd Floor, WIN Tower,
Cnr Quay & Barolin Sts, 4670

CABOOLTURE

Ground Floor, Kingsgate
42 King St, 4510

CAIRNS

Level 2, Cairns Square
42-52 Abbott St, 4870

INALA

Level 1, Inala Commonwealth
Offices, 20 Wirraway Pde, 4077

IPSWICH

97 Brisbane St, 4305

MACKAY

Ground Floor,
17 Brisbane St, 4740

MAROOCHYDORE

Ground Floor, M1 Building
1 Duporth Ave, 4558

MOUNT ISA

6 Miles St, 4825

ROCKHAMPTON

Ground Floor, 35 Fitzroy St, 4700

SOUTHPORT

1st Floor, 100 Scarborough St, 4215

TOOWOOMBA

1st Floor, 154 Hume St, 4350

TOWNSVILLE

3rd Floor, Northtown
280 Flinders St Mall, 4810

WOODRIDGE

1st Floor, Woodridge Place,
Cnr Ewing Rd & Carmody St, 4114



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