ANNUAL REPORT 2006-2007

NORTHERN TERRITORY LEGAL AID COMMISSION

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Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission

5 December 2007

Dr Chris Burns MLA
Minister for Justice and
Attorney General
Parliament House
State Square
DARWIN NT 0800

Dear Attorney General

I am pleased to present the Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission's Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 2007.

On behalf of my fellow Commissioners, the Director and staff of the Commission, I also welcome you to the Justice and Attorney General's portfolios.

A continuing challenge for the Commission is the geographic remoteness and isolation of the Territory's population and how best to give to regional, rural and remote clients the same access to justice as is available in Darwin and Alice Springs.

I am therefore particularly pleased to report that legal education, assistance and referral services to regional, rural and remote areas of the Territory have been greatly increased during the reporting year. The Tennant Creek Legal Resource Centre opened last year and has proven to be a resounding success in delivering services to the Barkly region and will be expanded in the 2007/08 year. We have opened a fully fitted out, self-contained family dispute resolution conferencing facility in Darwin and a new suite of offices in Palmerston, also with family conferencing facilities. The Commission will introduce family conferencing facilities soon to Tennant Creek and Alice Springs, to give the many people with family disputes local access to the dispute resolution services being adopted around Australia.

According to the 2006 census, the median age of Territorians was 31 years, the youngest of any jurisdiction and more than six years younger than the national average of 37 years. It is this younger age group that requires family related legal assistance, advice and representation, particularly in relation to the care of children following family breakdown, and this continues to be a high priority of the Commission.

Approximately 28% of the total Territory's population is indigenous compared with 2.3% nationally. The indigenous population is a very young group within our makeup, comprising about 41% in the 0-24 age group. It is projected that the growth rate of the indigenous population will continue to exceed that of the non-indigenous population. These figures suggest that the demands on the Commission to provide legal and related services to indigenous clients will continue to increase.

During the past year, the Commission's commitment to its "whole of the Territory" service provision has been greatly advanced through the Indigenous Families Outreach program. This delivers legal education programs through workshops and educational materials, in language, for regional, rural and remote aboriginal communities.

The Indigenous Families Outreach program has been a major undertaking for the Commission. It is ground breaking, demanding and of a very different nature to our more traditional work. I congratulate the Director and her staff on their initiative and for delivering such quality results.

On an unhappy note, the desperate level of alcohol abuse and the resultant offending behaviour continues to have a negative impact on all of us living in the Territory. The proportion of domestic violence related assaults increased from 29% to 42% over two years prior to 2003-04. Alcohol was involved in over 50% of assaults recorded in the Territory during that period.

Prisoner rates in the Territory are more than three times the national average, and the number of prisoners continues to grow. The number of young indigenous men in custody remains dangerously and disproportionately high. We cannot afford as a community to forget the lessons of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

The level of serious criminal behaviour, and the community demands for a judicial response, impacts on the criminal justice system which in turn makes it more difficult for the Commission's clients who struggle to access the very limited rehabilitation options available in the Territory.

I must also make a brief comment on the "intervention" in the Territory by the Federal Government. The implications for the Commission in terms of both demands on its existing services and the need to provide additional services throughout the rural and remote regions of the Territory will be significant in the upcoming year. I am pleased to note that as a result of its Indigenous Families Outreach and CLE programs the Commission is well placed to begin this task.

In addition to Territory domestic and criminal matters, providing legal advice and representation to the vast number of "illegal foreign fishers" apprehended in northern waters and held in detention in Darwin has increased demand for the services delivered by the Commission during the reporting year and will be ongoing.

At the policy level, I trust that the constructive comments and insights which the Commission is able to offer you, Attorney, will be of guidance and assistance in the development of legislation and policy during your term of office.

Turning to the people working for the Commission, a peak internal achievement during the 2006-2007 year was the calling together of the entire staff of the Commission in February to take part in the development of the Commission's first fully participative Strategic Plan. I was delighted to open the session and believe that the two day workshop brought the Commission, across its regional offices, much closer together and produced a commitment by all staff and their strategies to achieve the challenging goals they set for themselves for the 2007-2010 period.

Along with my fellow Commissioners I endorse the Vision, Charter and Values to which all staff committed:

VISION:

"to recognise and promote the rights and interests of all by providing equitable access to justice"

CHARTER:

"to ensure that the legal rights and interests of people in the NT are not prejudiced by reason of their ability to access information, advice, representation and remedies"

VALUES:

Justice: Fairness and equity valuing diversity.
Integrity: Performing our functions with respect, dignity, compassion and honesty.
Professionalism: Commitment to the rule of the law, ethical standards and a quality service.
Excellence: Continuous review and improvement.

I support the initiatives the Commission has put in place in the past year and commend the Director and her team on their vision, their enthusiasm and their sheer hard work, in these challenging times.

Yours faithfully,

DAVID FARQUHAR
CHAIRMAN
Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission

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DIRECTOR'S REPORT

I am pleased to present the NT Legal Aid Commission Annual Report for 2006-2007. During this period the Commission's traditional business, of providing legal services to socially and economically disadvantaged Territorians in criminal, family and civil law, has increased.

BETTER SERVICES FOR CLIENTS

- In addition to our traditional business, we have focused our attention this year on community legal education in a number of key areas. The Commission's expanded focus on community legal education, together with our locally produced resources in this area, is an important contribution to ensuring equitable access to legal services by recognising and responding to our diverse and changing client needs.
- The changes to the Family Law Act have resulted in a growth in family dispute resolution conferencing. The reforms, with a focus on mediation instead of litigation, have lead to more clients reaching agreement on family law issues.
- Many of our staff attended the National Legal Aid Best Practice Conference, which focused on improving the quality and delivery of our services to the community.
- Our staff have continued to be involved in new and innovative projects, such as:
  - the Integrated Family Violence Justice Project which enables stakeholders to consider the policy, procedural and legal issues which impact on the high rates of domestic and family violence across the Northern Territory; and
  - the Indigenous Families Outreach Program which is to assist remote community members to develop locally relevant legal education resources.
- Our lawyers have continued to provide a weekly duty/prison solicitor service at Darwin Correctional Centre and regular prison visits to the Alice Springs Correctional Centre. What is particularly disturbing is the huge daily imprisonment rate in the Northern Territory compared to the rest of Australia. This is particularly so for our Indigenous population. The Commission has continued to lobby for policies, resources and law reform to address this disgraceful situation.

INPUT TO THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Commission staff participate in the NT Law Society Council sub-committees, the Community Legal Education Network, the Family Matters Forum and the Top End Family Pathways Network, as well as National Legal Aid (NLA) and all the working groups within the NLA umbrella. We provide policy input at both NT and National levels, on issues such as:

- NT imprisonment rates;
- Bail and Sentencing; and
- Changes to the Family Law Act, Child Support Act, Community Welfare Act, Domestic Violence Act and the Mental Health and Related Services Act.

PARTNERSHIPS

We have continued to build partnerships with legal and related services including Family Relationship Centres and other mediation services, Aboriginal Legal Services, Family Violence Prevention Legal Units, Community Legal Services, Courts, Police and other agencies such as Family and Children's Services.

OUR STAFF

Our work includes the provision of legal advice, representation, information, education and policy input. I wish to thank all the staff who have worked very hard to deliver our services over this last year. Luckily the Commission is a collegiate and supportive workplace as our work is often demanding with our clients' legal problems being inevitably linked to social disadvantage. Our regional staff, in particular, cope with a lack of necessary resources in the areas of rehabilitation programs and alternatives to assist our clients' specific needs.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Significantly, in February of this reporting year, all staff from each of the Commission Offices met for two days and worked together on producing our Strategic Plan. This has now been published and will inform our direction during 2007 to 2010.

THE FUTURE

We have already commenced the process of negotiating with the Commonwealth for our new four year funding agreement. We hope to secure adequate funding to achieve goals identified in our Strategic Plan, including:

- opening a regional office in Palmerston;
- opening a Family Conferencing Centre in Darwin;
- extending our Alice Springs office to meet the increasing needs of the Alice Springs region and enable family conferencing on site;
- opening a new permanent office in Tennant Creek following the success of the pilot office; and
- developing an "education kit" to assist refugees and recent arrivals to understand our legal system.

In the meantime I thank our Commissioners and all our staff in Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine and Tennant Creek. I thank Meredith Harrison, the Deputy Director for her wise counsel. In particular, I would like to thank Jane Large for her financial advice and Peter Vaughan for contributing the regional perspective. Lastly, I thank David Farquhar, the Commission Chair, for his ongoing support and commitment to the work of the Commission.

In my report next year I look forward to measuring our achievements against the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan.

SUZAN COX QC
DIRECTOR
Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission

CHARTER

Our CHARTER is to ensure that the legal rights and interests of people in the Northern Territory are not prejudiced by reason of their ability to access information, advice, representation and remedies.

DUTIES OF COMMISSION

In the performance of its function, the Commission shall:

- ensure that legal assistance is provided in the most effective, efficient and economic manner;
- ensure that its activities are carried on consistently with, and do not prejudice, the independence of the private legal profession;
- liaise and co-operate with, and if the Commission considers it desirable to do so, make reciprocal arrangements with professional bodies representing private legal practitioners and other bodies engaged or interested in the provision of legal assistance in the Territory or elsewhere;
- liaise with professional bodies representing private legal practitioners in order to facilitate the use, in appropriate circumstances, of services provided by private legal practitioners;
- make maximum use of services which private legal practitioners offer to provide on a voluntary basis;
- encourage and permit persons who are not legal practitioners to participate, so far as the Commission considers it practicable and proper to do so, on a voluntary basis, under professional supervision, in the provision of legal assistance by officers;
- provide officers and agencies of the Commonwealth or a State concerned in the provision of legal assistance with such statistical and other information as they reasonably require;
- make its service available to persons eligible for legal assistance by establishing such local offices, and by making such other arrangements, as it considers appropriate;
- determine priorities in the provision of legal assistance as between different classes of persons or classes of matters;
- arrange for the provision of duty lawyer services at sittings in the Territory in such courts as it considers appropriate; and
- endeavour to secure the services of language interpreters, marriage counsellors and other appropriate persons to assist legally assisted persons in connection with matters in respect of which they are provided with legal assistance.

LEGISLATION

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

LEGAL AID AGREEMENTS

The most recent agreement between the Commonwealth of Australia and the Northern Territory, for the provision of funding for Commonwealth matters, was signed in March 2005. The term of the agreement is 1 July 2004 through 31 December 2008.

THE COMMISSIONERS

COMMISSIONERS' ROLE

To ensure that legal assistance is provided in accordance with the *Legal Aid Act 1990.*

DAVID FARQUHAR
Chairman

Graduated ANU with BA., LLB. Commenced practice in the NT in 1977 as Crown Prosecutor; joined Australian Legal Aid Office in 1979; in private practice since 1980. Currently a partner in a Darwin based legal practice. Chairman Public Sector Disciplinary/ Inability Appeals Board. Chairman of Police Appeals Board. Originally appointed to the Commission on 29 June 1990. Originally appointed Chairman by the Northern Territory Attorney-General on 1 August 1996. Appointment expires 31 July 2008.

JANE LARGE

Forty-two years of public service include the British Civil Service, Commonwealth, State and Northern Territory. Agencies include Foreign Office, Police, Attorney-General's, Law, Mines and Energy and Treasury. From 1996 occupied a Senior Director position in the Northern Territory Treasury and retired from the Public Service in November 2001. Member of the Finance Committee, Menzies School of Health Research. Justice of the Peace. Originally appointed 29 June 1990 by the Northern Territory Treasurer. Appointment expires 31 July 2008.

EILEEN TERRILL

Graduated University of Adelaide with LLB in 1977. Commenced practice in the Northern Territory in 1977. From 1977 to 1985 employed as a solicitor in local Darwin firms. From 1985 to 1986 in charge of the Family and Civil Law Section of the Australian Legal Aid Office, Darwin. From 1986 to 1990 Director of the Australian Legal Aid Office, Darwin. From 1991 to present, Principal of a small Darwin based legal practice. Councillor of Law Society from 1993 to 2003. On Executive Committee of the Northern Territory Law Society, 1997 to 2003. Appointed by the Northern Territory Attorney-General, on the nomination of the Law Society. Originally appointed 29 October 1997. Appointment expires 31 July 2008.

HALEY RICHARDSON

Haley has worked in various positions in the public sector since 1990 in Queensland and in the Northern Territory. Haley commenced employment with the Commission in May 1992. She started as a paralegal in the Criminal Section of the Commission and in June 2001 was appointed Assignments Practice Manager. Appointed as the staff representative Commissioner in September 2005. Appointment expires 31 July 2008.

PETER VAUGHAN
Graduated from Sydney Teachers College in 1973 and commenced work as a school teacher in an all boys school in the Western Suburbs of Sydney. Moved to Darwin in 1977 working at St Johns College and later at Taminmin High School as a senior teacher. Completed a further Degree in Educational Administration in 1986 through SA College of Advanced Education which later became the University of South Australia. Moved to Alice Springs in 1989 to take up the position of Assistant Principal at Alice Springs High School and is now the current Principal of this school. Completed post graduate studies in Public Sector Management at Charles Darwin University. Was the chair of the Crime Prevention Committee in Alice Springs from 2000 to 2003. Continues to be a voice for disenfranchised youth in the Central Australian region. Appointment expires 31 July 2008.

KATE HALLIDAY
Kate currently works as a policy solicitor in the Policy Division of the Department of Justice. Graduated with an LLB from the University of Sydney in 1989. She commenced work as a legal practitioner in the Northern Territory in 1990, and has worked for NAALAS (now NAAJA), Darwin Community Legal Service and the Top End Women's Legal Service. Appointment expires 31 July 2008.

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

COMMITTEES

NORTHERN TERRITORY CONTINGENCY LEGAL AID FUND

The Northern Territory Contingency Legal Aid Fund (CLAF) was established on 1 March 1993 with a seeding grant of $200,000 from the Law Society Public Purposes Trust. In June 1997 the Fund received a loan of $200,000 from the Commission's Legal Aid Fund.

CLAF is administered by the Commission's Assignments Practice. The Fund covers disbursements necessarily incurred during the course of litigation such as stamp duty, service fees, expert witnesses' reports, travelling costs and fees associated with expert witnesses. The Fund does not pay for solicitors' or barristers' professional costs or general office expenses such as photocopying, telephone charges or facsimile charges. The financial position of the Fund appears in Note 15 of the Financial Statements.

The Fund is available for all areas of law, which result in a monetary award to the applicant.

CONTINGENCY LEGAL AID FUND COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE ROLE

Established in accordance with s.16 of the *Legal Aid Act 1990*.

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

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

Suzan Cox QC——● Director

Meredith Harrison—● Deputy Director

LAW SOCIETY NOMINEES:

P. Barr QC	C. Spurr	S. Gearin	A. Young
J. Neill	S. Cleveland	D. McConnell	M. Spazzapan
E. Terrill	P. Lazarus	I. Morris	

COMMISSION APPOINTEES:

S. Reddy

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

The demands on the fund have been:

	2006/07	2005/06	2004/05	2003/04	2002/03
Applications Received	**7**	15	17	28	28
Applications Approved	**6**	15	8	16	16
Applications Withdrawn	**1**	0	4	3	3
Applications Refused	**0**	0	4	4	2
Applications to be Decided	**0**	0	1	5	7

Since the fund commenced in March 1993 there have been a total of 301 applications to the fund. The applications for funding largely relate to personal injury actions such as occupiers' liability, medical negligence and work health. Few applications relating to commercial litigation or family law property settlement have been received.

REVIEW COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE'S ROLE

To review decisions referred to the Committee under s.35(3) of the *Legal Aid Act 1990*. Under s.35 of the Act, persons who feel they have been adversely affected by decisions taken on their application for legal aid may seek reconsideration or review of those decisions.

During 2006/07 the Review Committee met on 13 separate occasions to review 11 client requests. The outcome of their deliberations was that 1 decision was varied in favour of the applicant.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

On the 26 March 2006 the following persons were appointed to the Committee for a period of twelve months.

Private Legal Practitioner	T. Prichard	M. Johnson	B. Piper
	E. Hutton	R. Lawford	D. Elliott
	T. Marris	B. O'Loughlin	B. Priestley
	J. Terry	S. Sievers	D. Story
	J. Tippett QC	P. Elliott	
Independent person with relevant experience	A. Beven	B. Cassells	P. Timney
	G. McDonald	N. Hunter	M. Story
	W. Morton	E. Morris	
Officer of the Commission	J. Hardy	M. Harrison	S. Cox QC
	J. Devlin	K. Kensell	J. Franz
	G. Smith	I. Read	H. Blundell
	K. Norrington	G. Francis	D. Dibben
	A. Abayasekara	T. Kaye	F. Hussin
Secretary to Committee	Sue Reddy		

OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS

The provision of legal services by the Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission is governed by the *Legal Aid Act 1990*.

The Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission is independent of the Territory and Commonwealth Governments. In fact, the Act specifically allows the Commission to help disadvantaged persons in cases where they might be in dispute with, or opposed to, either Government or any public authority or organisation.

The legal services provided by the Commission take the form of legal advice, help from one of our duty lawyers or legal assistance.

LEGAL ADVICE

Commission lawyers will give advice on legal matters free of charge to anyone who is unable to obtain advice or information from a private lawyer for any good reason provided that the interview in which that advice is given does not go beyond 20 minutes.

Advice will be given at the Commission offices or at other places, for example, certain Court Houses, prison, during those times as the Director appoints, having regard to the availability of staff.

Unless special circumstances exist, legal advice will not be available for persons who are seeking advice on a matter for which they have previously been refused assistance.

Where, in the opinion of the Director a person has, during their past attendance at advice sessions, behaved in an offensive or abusive manner toward staff members, or repeatedly sought assistance in respect of matters lacking merit, the Director may decline to provide that person with advice.

DUTY LAWYER SERVICES

The Legal Aid Commission provides duty lawyer services either by using its own staff or by funding lawyers in private practice, to such sittings of the Magistrates, Juvenile, Federal Magistrates Court and other Courts in the Northern Territory as the Director considers appropriate.

Duty lawyers are available to advise accused persons and, if necessary, appear for them in bail and adjournment applications and in appropriate cases to represent them on a guilty plea. Duty lawyers do not appear in defended cases unless the circumstances are exceptional.

In cases of particular hardship or urgency they may also provide rudimentary assistance to persons involved in certain types of civil cases.

The Commission provides a family duty lawyer service to sittings of the Federal Magistrates Court. The service provides advice, minor assistance and negotiation assistance to unrepresented parties. This service was tendered and is provided by a private practitioner.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

Legal assistance may be provided under Section 26 of the Act if, and only if:

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

(b) it is reasonable in all the circumstances to provide the legal assistance.

The assistance may be provided free or on condition that the assisted person pays part or all of the cost of providing legal assistance.

Thus the Commission must apply two tests to any application for legal assistance – a means test and a "reasonableness" or merits test.

MERITS TEST

In determining whether to grant legal assistance in relation to any matter, regard is had to all relevant matters including:

(a) the likely cost to the Commission of providing the assistance;
(b) the nature and extent of any benefit that may accrue to the applicant from the provision of the assistance or of any detriment that the applicant may suffer if assistance is not provided;
(c) in the case of assistance in relation to a proceeding – the likelihood of the proceedings terminating in a manner favourable to the applicant;
(d) whether the legal problem or the applicant come within the Commission's or Commonwealth's priorities for the provision of legal assistance;
(e) whether the legal problem is one for which, in accordance with the Commission Guidelines, legal assistance may be provided.

COMMISSION GUIDELINES

The Commission is required by Section 12 of the *Legal Aid Act 1990* to determine, and make known to the public, guidelines to be applied in considering applications for legal assistance and in making decisions as to other specified matters involving the exercise of discretion.

The guidelines were originally published in November 1990 and are revised as necessary from time to time. The Commission, in July 2005, approved the latest revision. They are circulated to interested parties and are available from the Office on request.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND RECOVERY OF COSTS

An important component of the Commission's funding base is the amount recovered from client contributions.

Initial contributions, of at least $55.00, based on the applicant's income and assets are usually imposed. Interim and final contributions may also be imposed, especially where a legally assisted person's financial circumstances have substantially improved during the currency of a grant of aid.

Where an assisted person is successful, the Commission may recover costs either in complete or partial satisfaction of a final contribution. This will depend on the circumstances of the finalisation of the matter.

RECONSIDERATION AND REVIEW OF DECISIONS

An applicant for legal assistance may request that an unfavourable decision be reconsidered.

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

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

LEGAL PRACTICES

Within its overall operations the Commission operates three legal practices, namely:

- Family Law Practice (incorporating Domestic Violence Unit) and Civil Law Practice;
- Criminal Law Practice; and
- Assignments Practice.

LOCATIONS

The Commission maintains offices in Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs, and currently provides services to other major centres by utilising either its own staff or private practitioners. Office locations and contact numbers are detailed on the last page of this annual report.

COMMISSION OFFICES AND PRINCIPAL FUNCTIONS

DARWIN OFFICE

Located within the Darwin office are the following divisions:

- Executive;
- Criminal Law;
- Family Law;
- Domestic Violence;
- Immigration Advice;
- Civil Law;
- Assignments;
- Policy and Community Legal Education; and
- Business and Finance.

Legal services are provided to residents of Darwin, Palmerston and outlying rural areas as well as foreign nationals who have been charged with committing certain offences under Commonwealth legislation, such as illegal fishing and people smuggling. A solicitor visits the Darwin Prison each week.

Assignments, Community Legal Education, financial management, financial and statistical reporting, accounting, information technology, personnel services and the Review and Contingency Fund Committees are centralised in Darwin.

KATHERINE OFFICE

The Katherine Office provides legal services in criminal, family and civil law in the Katherine region of the Northern Territory.

Duty Lawyer services are provided at the Katherine Courthouse as required as well as legal representation. Free legal advice sessions are conducted at the Katherine Office. Where a solicitor is unavailable legal advice is provided to the client via a video conferencing link with the Darwin office.

From time to time the Katherine branch lawyer is required to provide services to the more remote areas of the Katherine region.

TENNANT CREEK LEGAL RESOURCE CENTRE

The Tennant Creek Legal Resource Centre provides a coordination point for people to obtain legal advice and assistance.

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

ALICE SPRINGS OFFICE

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

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

A lawyer also attends Tennant Creek and Yulara to provide legal advice and representation during Court sittings. Solicitors also attend at the Alice Springs gaol/hospital to provide advice and representation as required.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND OBJECTIVES

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S UNIT

OVERALL OBJECTIVES:

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

FAMILY, CRIMINAL, CIVIL AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEGAL PRACTICES

OVERALL OBJECTIVES:

- Provide concise initial advice to members of the public in respect of their rights and obligations under any Commonwealth or Northern Territory legislation;
- Where appropriate, refer members of the public to appropriate providers of non-legal services; and
- Where legal assistance has been granted, provide representation of a high standard in a timely and cost efficient manner to clients of the Commission in order to obtain a just and equitable resolution of their law dispute.

ASSIGNMENTS PRACTICE

OVERALL OBJECTIVES:

- Provide an efficient and effective service in assessing applications for legal aid;
- Ensure that services provided by private legal practitioners to Commission clients are cost effective and efficient;
- Administer the Contingency Legal Aid Fund;
- Provide input into law reform issues; and
- Coordinate family law conferences.

POLICY AND COMMUNITY LEGAL EDUCATION

OVERALL OBJECTIVES:

- Inform the community about the range of services offered by the Commission;
- Develop community legal education projects and publications to meet specific legal needs;
- Respond to policy or law reform issues that are relevant to the Commission's client base; and
- Coordinate the Commission's community legal education and outreach programs.

BUSINESS AND FINANCE

OVERALL OBJECTIVES:

- Provide the infrastructure within the Commission so that legal services are provided to the people of the Northern Territory in an efficient and effective manner; and
- Initiate policies, strategies, advising and reporting (in all matters other than those of a direct legal services nature) to external and internal stakeholders so that the Commission's charter may be achieved.

STAFFING OF THE COMMISSION

As at 30 June 2007 the following persons were employed:

DIRECTOR

- Suzan Cox QC, BA LLB, LLM

Personal Assistant
- Susan Gowler

DARWIN

CRIMINAL LAW PRACTICE

Senior Solicitor
- Ian Read LLB BEc
- Greg Smith BA LLB
- Julie Franz LLB
- Louise Bennett LLB
- Helena Blundell BA LLB
- Ambrith Abayasekara BCom LLB
- Tom Kaye BA LLB
- Fiona Keppert BA LLB (Hon)

Para Legal Secretary
- Gloria Rautamara

Legal Secretary
- Lucia Vorrasi
- Mark Wright

FAMILY (INCORPORATING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE UNIT) AND CIVIL LAW PRACTICE

Senior Solicitor
- Diana Dibden BA(Hons), B Soc.Admin, LLB(Hons)
- Kris Norrington LLB
- Bethany Lohmeyer BA LLB
- Julian Barry LLB
- Kate Kensell LLB

Legal Secretary /Child Support
- Monica Settele

Legal Secretary
- Annette Ross
- Carolyn Robinson

Administrative Support
- Denise Oliver

POLICY AND COMMUNITY LEGAL EDUCATION

Policy Officer
- Fiona Hussin LLB

Community Legal Education Officer
- Melinda Schroeder

Project Officer
- Delphine Dupont-Morris
- Ian Castillion

BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Deputy Director
- Meredith Harrison LLB

ASSIGNMENTS PRACTICE

Manager
- Haley Richardson

Administrative Assistant
- Amanda Bamford
- Tina Baylis

Administrative Officer
- Jessica Payne

BUSINESS SERVICES

- **Finance Manager** — Barbara Lelli BA (Business) ASA
- **Human Resource Manager** — Leeanne Morris
- **Finance Officer/Office Services** — Karen Markos
- Jeanon Cubillo
- **Projects Officer** — Sue Reddy
- **Administration Officer** — Denise Oliver
- Kirstie McKellar
- Sophie Coates
- Chloe Coleman-Harty

KATHERINE

- **Solicitor** — Thomasin Opie BA LLB
- **Legal Secretary** — Jodie Ah Chin
- **Legal Secretary Support** — Cassie Lamb
- Bianca Aloisi

TENNANT CREEK

- **Administrative Officer** — Mathew Wickham
- **Administrative Support** — Candice Walsh

ALICE SPRINGS

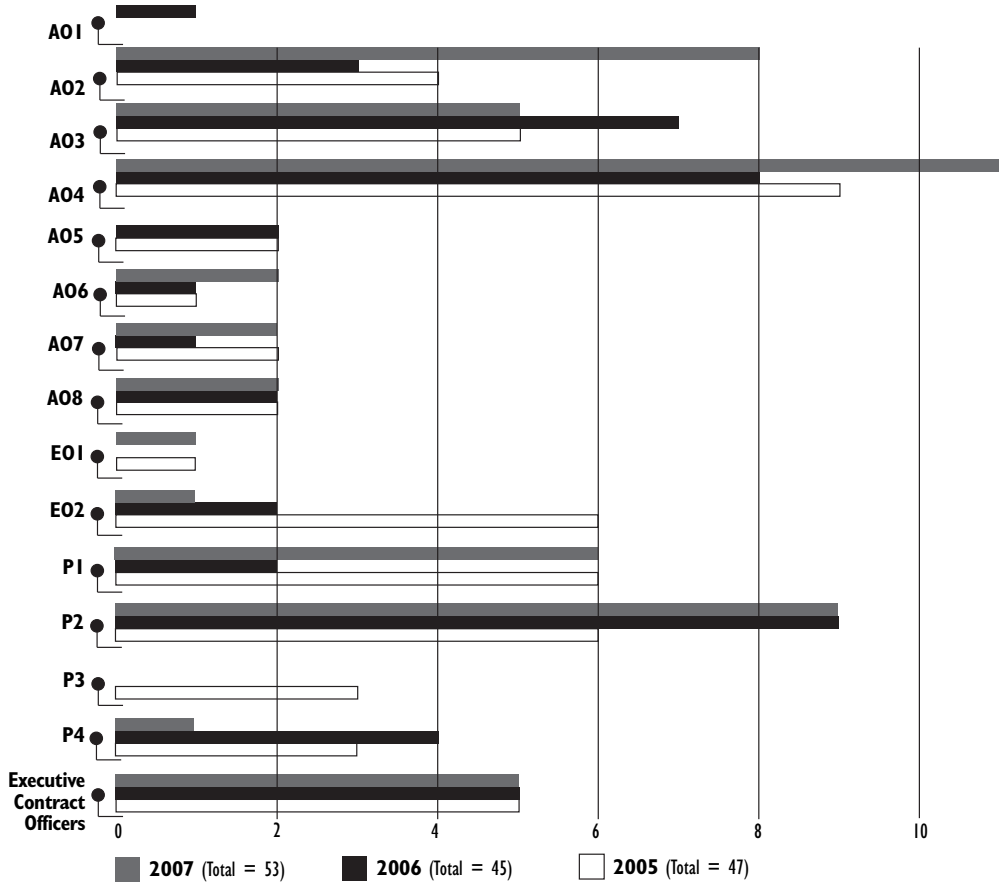
- **Senior Solicitor** — Russell Goldflam BA BLEGS (Hons), Grad Dip Ed
- Julia Munster BA (Hons) LLB
- Tracey Stevens BA LLB (Hons)
- Elizabeth Coroneo LLB
- **Legal Secretary** — Wendy Vismans
- Anne Coleman
- **Librarian** — Elayne Greaves

VOLUNTEERS

Under S.8 of the *Legal Aid Act 1990* the Commission shall encourage persons who are not legal practitioners to participate, as far as is practicable, in a volunteer capacity whilst under professional supervision. During the year the Commission did not "recruit" any volunteers.

STAFFING LEVELS

Staffing levels as at 30th June 2007 were:



AO - Administrative Grades; P - Professional Grades (Legal Officers)
All legal officers are on employment contracts.

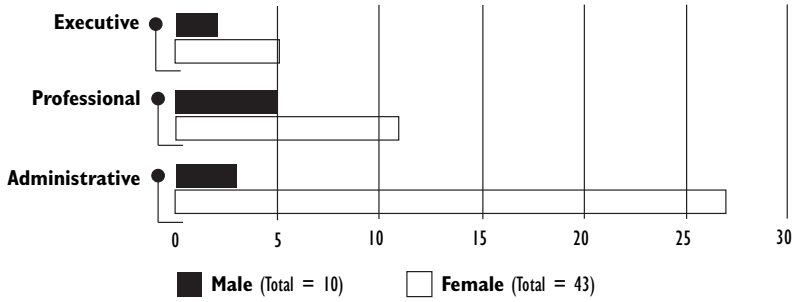
RESIGNATIONS/LEAVE WITHOUT PAY

During the year 13 employees resigned.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Management monitors the internal environment to ensure that equal employment opportunities are present. Because of the nature of the staff who are attracted to the Legal Aid Environment issues of discrimination seldom, if ever, arise.

Distribution of the sexes is as follows:



NORTHERN TERRITORY COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

During the year members of staff, in their own time, contributed to the development of their respective professional associations, as well as:

- Central Australian Women's Legal Service, Vice Chairperson and Secretary
- Pathways Group Alice Springs, member
- Central Australian Art Society, member
- NT Law Society Public Purposes Trust, member
- YWCA of Darwin NT, Board Member
- Darwin Community Legal Service, volunteer
- National Association for the prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, committee member
- NT Young Lawyers Committee, President
- Alternative Law Journal, committee member
- Top End Women's Legal Service, member and volunteer
- NT Women Lawyer's Association, member
- Central Australian Human Research Ethics Committee, legal member

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

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

- National Family Law Conference
- Traditional and Contemporary Mediation and Leadership Training
- Conflict Management
- Cross Cultural Training
- Family Dispute Resolution - Solicitor and Chairperson Training
- 3rd International Conference of Psychology and Law
- Administration Assistants Conference
- Criminal Lawyer's Association Bi-Annual Conference, Bali and the Australian Advocacy Institute course
- Aust Institute of Criminology: Family Violence, Drug & Alcohol Use in Remote Communities
- National Community Legal Centres Conference: Opening Closed Doors
- Victims of Crime NT Conference: Positive Ways, An Indigenous Say
- Managing Emotions & Thriving Under Pressure
- Pathways National Forum: Managing Projects training
- Self Defence Training
- What Women Want: Work Choices Seminar
- Court Diversion Forum
- Managing Multiple Projects, Objectives and Deadlines
- Compulsory Dispute Resolution Information Session
- Conflict Skills for Women
- Sisters Inside Conference
- Darwin Family Pathways Network Indigenous Mediation Showcase
- Integrated Family Violence Justice Project
- National Legal Aid Best Practice Conference

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

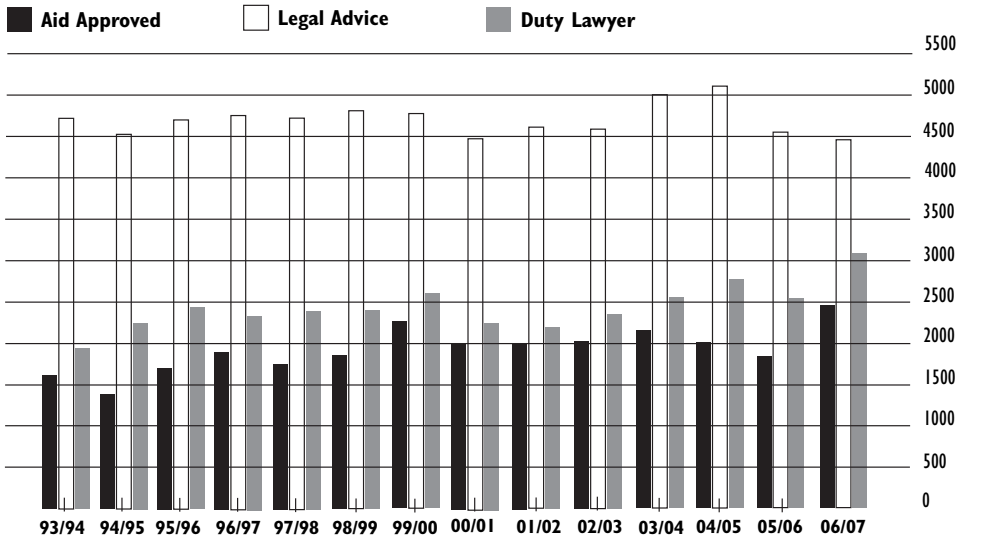
A tobacco free environment exists. Employees are encouraged to adopt safe working practices. The Commission encourages and promotes a healthy work-life balance.

ACHIEVEMENTS

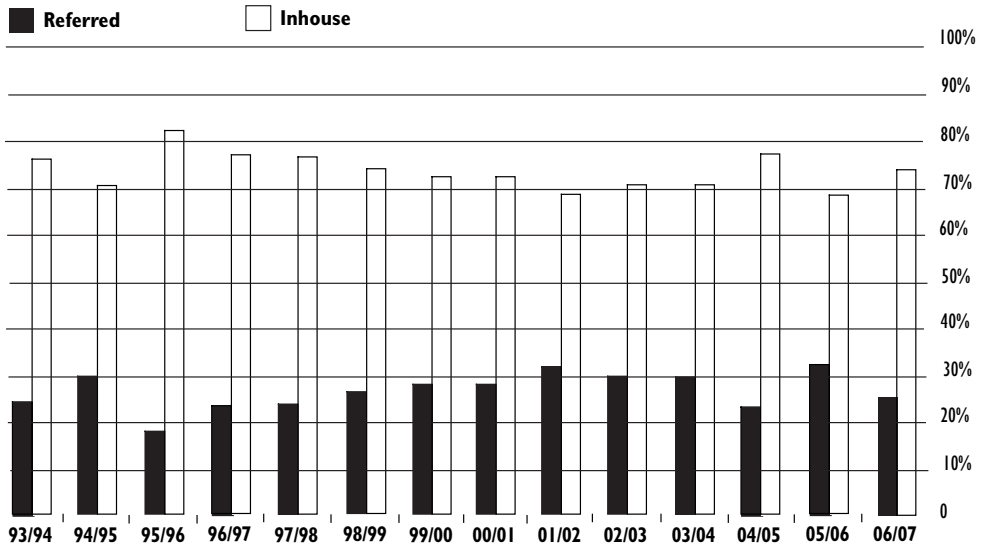
During the year:

- 2,827 applications for aid were received.
- 2,460 applications for aid were approved.
- 641 approved applications for aid were referred to private practitioners.
- 1,119 approved applications for aid were handled by Commission staff.
- 4,849 persons received free legal advice.
- 3,196 persons received advice and/or were represented by Duty Lawyers.
- 2,747 persons accessed the free telephone legal information service.

PRIOR YEARS COMPARATIVE



REFERRED:INHOUSE MATTERS



PERFORMANCE

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2002/03 TO 2006/07

	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	TARGET
Population	197,100	199,200	201,800	205,500	**213,800**	
Estimated No. of Clients	13,037	12,018	12,549	11,482	**12,734**	
PER 1000 HEAD OF POPULATION						
Legal Advice Provided	23.24	24.92	25.20	22.41	**20.79**	**22**
Duty Lawyer Services	11.86	12.73	13.59	12.14	**14.41**	**14**
Applications for Legal Aid						
Received	12.24	12.67	12.22	10.52	**13.22**	
Approved	10.18	10.61	9.68	8.77	**11.51**	**12**
Refused	1.94	1.85	2.39	1.76	**1.49**	
Telephone Legal Information Clients	20.87	12.07	13.72	12.84	**12.85**	**13**
Estimated Clients	66.14	60.33	62.19	56.15	**59.56**	

OUTPUT STATISTICS

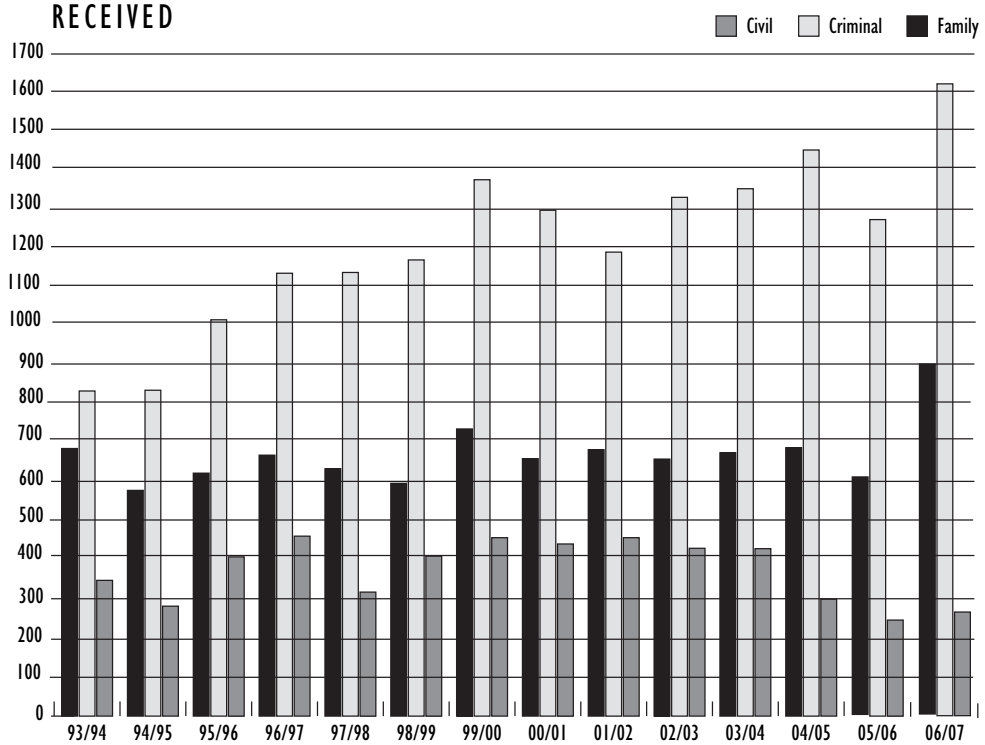
MEASURING THE ATTAINMENT OF THE COMMISSION'S OBJECTIVES

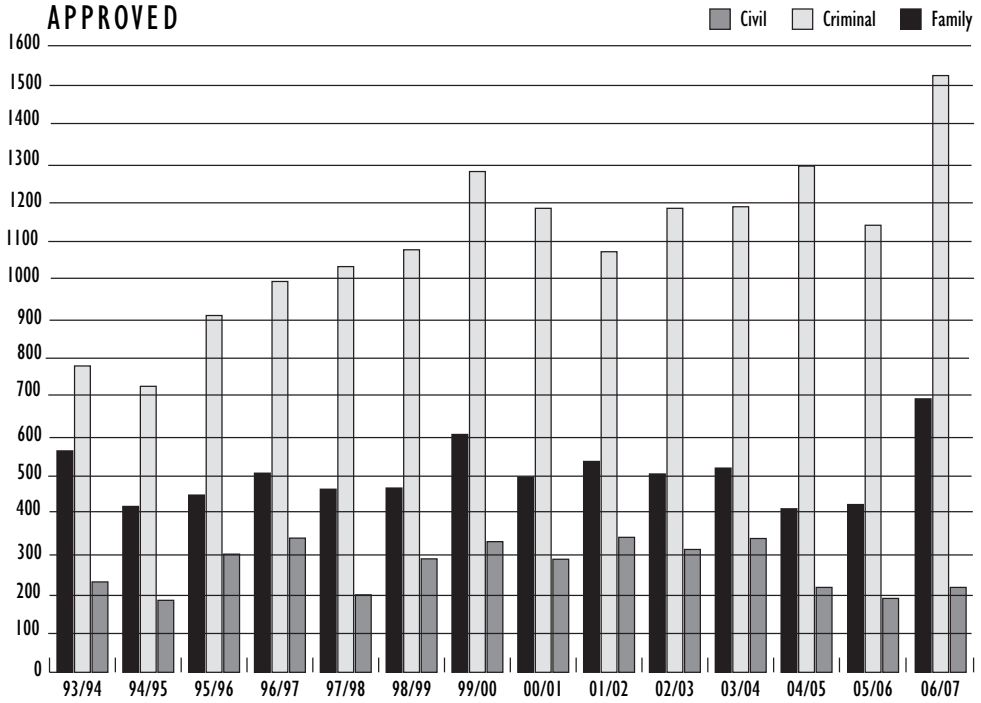
SUMMARY OF MAJOR ACTIVITIES

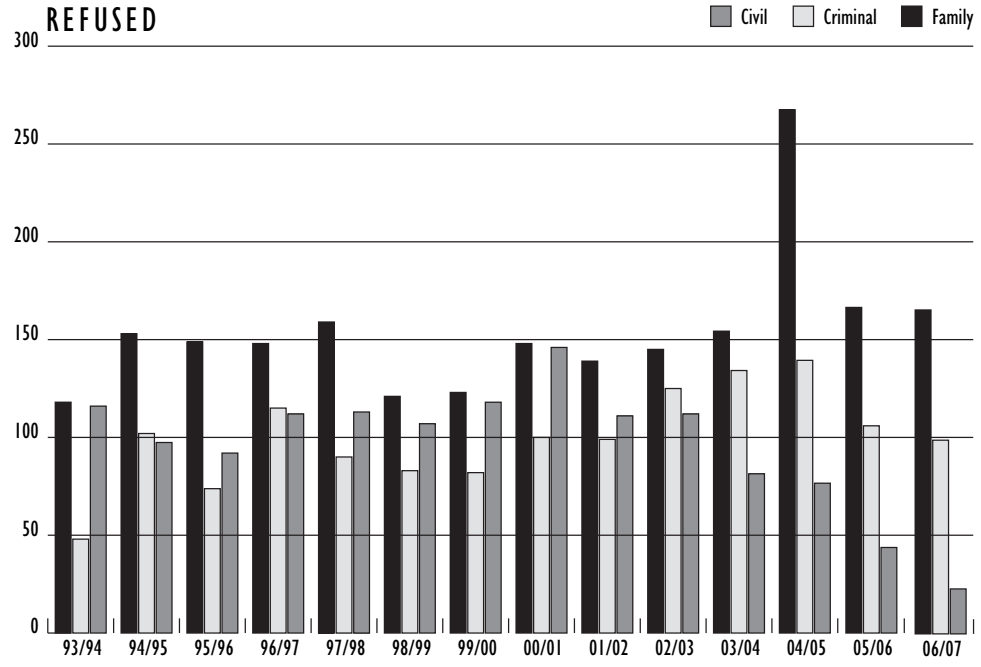
	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07
Legal Aid Service					
Applications for Aid:					
Received	2,412	2,524	2,466	2,152	**2,827**
Approved	2,007	2,114	1,954	1,793	**2,460**
Refused	382	369	482	359	**320**
Free Legal Advice Sessions	4,580	4,964	5,085	4,528	**4,849**
Duty Lawyer Services	2,337	2,536	2,742	2,482	**3,196**
Telephone Information Clients	4,113	2,404	2,768	2,625	**2,747**
PAYMENTS TO PRIVATE PRACTITIONERS (includes disbursements)					
Referred Cases					
Family	868,070	542,245	528,869	575,185	**693,854**
Criminal	232,601	292,848	483,684	434,883	**414,545**
Civil	387,368	359,639	295,215	334,889	**228,495**
Domestic Violence		25,441	30,657	39,545	**49,850**
Duty Solicitor	14,780	27,417	41,120	99,800	**108,798**
Locums	38,853	36,499	40,980	50,585	**53,822**
DISBURSEMENTS ON INHOUSE CASES					
Family	34,306	50,560	29,942	28,972	**48,395**
Criminal	399,492	559,509	968,754	871,357	**717,752**
Civil	28,538	6,442	3,825	9,311	**11,079**
Domestic Violence		516	607	814	**955**
TOTAL	**2,004,008**	**2,147,816**	**2,423,653**	**2,445,341**	**2,237,545**
APPLICATIONS APPROVED AND REFERRED TO PRIVATE PRACTITIONERS					
Family	280	233	185	232	**343**
Criminal	61	61	67	69	**129**
Civil	252	299	186	173	**156**
Domestic Violence		29	10	11	**13**
TOTAL	**617**	**593**	**622**	**448**	**641**
APPLICATIONS APPROVED AND HANDLED BY COMMISSION STAFF					
Family	227	289	233	200	**353**
Criminal	1,125	1,129	1,227	1,075	**1,396**
Civil	62	43	31	22	**61**
Domestic Violence	-	31	15	11	**9**
TOTAL	**1,414**	**1,492**	**1,506**	**1,038**	**1,819**

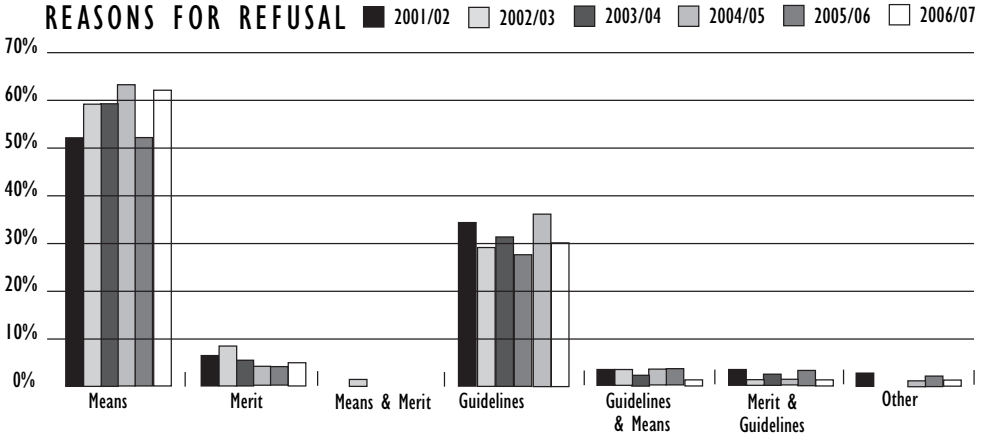
	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07
FREE ADVICE SESSIONS					
Family	1,688	1,697	1,808	1,554	**1,735**
Criminal	1,247	1,338	1,319	1,165	**1,156**
Civil	1,645	1,466	1,482	1,333	**1,556**
Domestic Violence	-	463	476	476	**402**
TOTAL	**4,580**	**4,964**	**5,085**	**4,528**	**4,849**
DUTY LAWYER SERVICES					
Crime					
Advice Only	380	495	228	256	**114**
Advice and Representation	1,936	1,937	1,966	2,125	**2,958**
Other	21	37	391	16	**8**
Dom Violence	0	67	57	85	**116**
TOTAL	**2,337**	**2,536**	**2,742**	**2,482**	**3,196**

APPLICATIONS FOR AID




APPROVED
Civil
Criminal
Family
1600
1500
1400
1300
1200
1100
1000
900
800
700
600
500
400
300
200
100
0
93/94
94/95
95/96
96/97
97/98
98/99
99/00
00/01
01/02
02/03
03/04
04/05
05/06
06/07


REFUSED
Civil
Criminal
Family
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
93/94
94/95
95/96
96/97
97/98
98/99
99/00
00/01
01/02
02/03
03/04
04/05
05/06
06/07


REASONS FOR REFUSAL
2001/02
2002/03
2003/04
2004/05
2005/06
2006/07
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
Means
Merit
Means & Merit
Guidelines
Guidelines & Means
Merit & Guidelines
Other

COMMUNITY LEGAL EDUCATION – 2006/2007

The Community Legal Education profile of the Commission continues to grow with the number of projects underway. Some key features of these projects are listed below. In addition to these projects, we continue to respond to requests for presentations and workshops from a range of groups.

DARWIN FAMILY PATHWAYS NETWORK

INDIGENOUS MEDIATION SHOWCASE

On 17 and 18 April 2007, the Darwin Family Pathways Network hosted the "Indigenous Mediation Showcase" at the George Brown Botanic Gardens. It was an opportunity to bring services together from across the Top End to showcase different mediation models being used, to share best practice principles and to ensure the most effective use of resources in servicing both urban and remote Indigenous communities.

Invited participants were asked to do a presentation, and 3 models developed in Indigenous communities and 4 models developed in urban regions were presented. The presenting agencies were Mawul Rom, Family Court, Tiwi Youth Diversion Unit, Real Justice, Ngali Ngali Mitji Women's Reference Group, Community Justice Centre, Legal Aid Conferencing and Family Relationship Centre.

Tiwi Youth Diversion Unit

NTLAC Conferencing

After seeing two to three presentations, participants divided into groups to discuss common themes and differences in the models and then fed back the results of their discussions to the larger group.

Small working group

The models presented had many common themes, including being an alternative to the court process, fairness, the opportunity for people to be heard and have dialogue, respect and the resolution of conflict. The Indigenous specific models all emphasised the importance of building community and recognising relationships.

Key recommendations from the showcase included the need for Language to be recognised and the use of interpreters, cultural needs to be identified and respected, models need to be flexible and use existing community structures, be sensitive to family violence and child abuse , to research, document and record practices and increase community awareness of the good work that is being done.

Participants in the Indigenous Mediation Showcase

All participants expressed a desire to have another forum, and to focus on story telling about particular situations and to continue collaboration between services.

KATHERINE MEGA SERVICES EXPO

On 29 May 2007 a Mega Services Expo was held in Katherine. The event was loosely based on the Mega Training Day Concept.

A large training room was hired for an afternoon and service providers were invited to display information, brochures and posters. A case scenario was prepared depicting a separating family from the Katherine region. Service providers took it in turns to explain to the audience how their agency could assist various family members, and what services they could provide. It was a great opportunity for Darwin and Katherine service providers to network, and share information.

A vacant shop was then hired for 3 days in the local Woolworths shopping complex, where information from agencies was displayed for the general public. This was again a great opportunity for service providers to share information, but to make it readily available and accessible to the general public.

INTEGRATED FAMILY VIOLENCE JUSTICE PROJECT

The Integrated Family Violence Justice Project was funded by the Australian Government's Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault Initiative through the Office for Women.

The Project bought four people from the ACT's Family Violence Intervention Program to the Northern Territory, to present information about their criminal justice response to domestic violence, to stakeholders in the Northern Territory.

The Project aimed to explore ways that government and non-government agencies from the domestic violence sector could better work together to improve outcomes for people experiencing Family Violence.

Two forums were held, one in Darwin and one in Alice Springs. The Project funded participants from outside those two main regions to attend the forums also. This ensured service providers from all over the Northern Territory were represented and able to contribute their knowledge and expertise.

After a comprehensive overview of the ACT program, including a demonstration of how a case progresses through the FVIP and information on the specialised role of Police and Prosecutions, participants workshopped different aspects of the program and how it could be relevant for the NT. Particular focus was given to Prosecutions, Legal Interventions, Victim Advocacy and Program Development. Information obtained via feedback from the forums formed the basis for a report to the Department of Justice, recommending changes to policy, procedure and legislation aimed at facilitating a more integrated response to domestic violence in the Northern Territory.

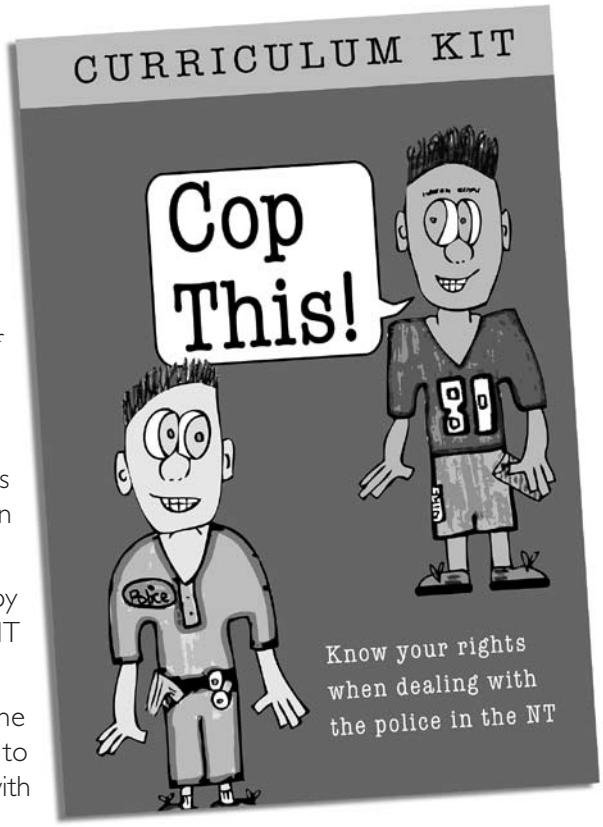
Both forums were very successful. The contributions varied immensely between Darwin and Alice Springs. Many positive recommendations and initiatives were put forward. The Alice Springs region participated enthusiastically and showed a great appreciation for the forum being provided in their region. There was a general feeling in Alice Springs that services work more collaboratively and they are appreciative of any assistance available to do that.

The dominant issues arising from both forums were the under resourcing of service providers, the competition for funding grants between services, the vast geographical area that agencies have to cover to provide services, the lack of knowledge and understanding of other services, resourcing of police and prosecutions to properly respond to violence, the level of violence and substance abuse, the widespread acceptance of violent behaviour, the lack of services in parts of the Territory and the mandatory sentencing provision in the domestic violence legislation.

Participants in both forums were excited about the opportunity to develop a framework of coordinated response to domestic violence that would appropriately meet the needs of their client base and reflect the needs of their particular region. There was consensus that an integrated model of response would benefit the Northern Territory, but that there needed to be more than one model to respond to our diverse needs.

COP THIS! EDUCATION KIT

NT Legal Aid Commission and the Department of Education, Employment and Training have been developing the *Cop This!* Curriculum Kit over 2006-7.



The Kit is intended to minimise the hostility between police and youth which sometimes stems from a lack of understanding or misunderstanding about the roles and responsibilities of youth and police.

The kit includes:

- a booklet which outlines the rights and responsibilities of people when they have contact with police;
- a learning sequence to be used by schools which links into the NT curriculum framework; and
- a DVD which demonstrates the scenarios that people are likely to encounter when having contact with police.

The artwork used in the Curriculum Kit is the winning entry from a Youth Week competition which was won by Tinnesha Assan, a student at Alyangula Area School.

Copies of the kit have been distributed to principals in all middle schools across the NT and Copies of the Kit are available to schools free of charge.

INDIGENOUS FAMILIES PROJECT

The NT Legal Aid Commission commenced projects in August 2006 which were aimed at expanding the services we provide to regional and remote communities. In recognition of the unique geographic, social and cultural demographic of the Territory population, Indigenous individuals, families and communities are the focus of the expansion.

GALIWIN'KU

The main project under stage one was to develop and produce a DVD with Marthakal Homelands Resource Centre on *Families and Law.* While the initial DVD will be in Djambarrpuyngu, it was planned to be a 'template' which can be produced in a format to enable it to be interpreted into 7 other key languages across the NT.

The *Families and Law* DVD was planned to deliver information in a range of ways, including:

- Role plays, including in Court and in the community;
- Locally developed and relevant music and songs;
- Direct presentations from key people, eg Lawyers, Indigenous Family Court Consultant, Federal Court Magistrate, interpreted into Djambarrpuyngu.

On 4 and 5 October 2006, staff from NTLAC traveled to Galiwin'ku on Elcho Island to meet with the Mununukunhamirr Rom Project Team and other Stakeholders on the Island. Further discussions were held with the Team and other community organisations/individuals in relation to the content of the *Families and Law Workshop* and DVD production with a view to holding a workshop later in that month.

As a result of this meeting the workshop date was set for late October. A series of meetings/communications were coordinated by the Commission to plan for the proposed workshops. Discussions were held with:

- North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency ('NAAJA') (Family lawyer in Darwin and Criminal lawyer in Nhulunbuy);
- North Australian Aboriginal Family Violence Legal Service ('NAAFVLS') (Principal Solicitor in Darwin and Community Legal Worker from Nhulunbuy);
- Family Court Counselling Service, including Indigenous Mediators;
- Correctional Services Indigenous Family Violence Offender Program Coordinator;
- Nhulunbuy Police;
- Council for Aboriginal Alcohol Program Services ('CAAPS');
- Family and Children's Services; and
- Family Relationship Centre.

On 25 October representatives of Legal Aid, NAAJA, NAAFVLS, Correctional Services and the Family Court flew to Galiwin'ku. The afternoon was dedicated to discussion and planning with the Marthakal Team for the workshop ahead. In particular, the participants were provided information about the use of interpreters and guidance in appropriate delivery.

The workshops went ahead on 26 and 27 October in the Arnhem Land Progress Association ('ALPA') Training Room, which is the venue where Court usually sits.

The information received from the community meeting was to be the content for our Community Legal Educational DVD's.

The information highlighted the need to focus the DVD on the Australian Legal system.

- where did it come from?
- how it works?
- who makes the law?
- comparing the 2 laws and looking at similarities.
- organisation that make up the legal system.
- where to find help (services available)

A contract with Marthakal Homelands resource centre was agreed upon with Marthakal contracted to produce this Legal Educational DVD.

A script was produced which was filmed and interpreted into Yolngu Matha. It is anticipated that the DVD will be launched in early 2008.

TENNANT CREEK

The same process was also instigated at Tennant Creek; we met with the Council of Elders and Respected Persons in later 2006 and early 2007.

We facilitated a Family and Law education workshop in Tennant on the 13-14 June 2007. Services that attended the workshop are as follows; Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Services, Central Australian Women's Legal Services, Council of Elders and Respected Persons, Central Australian Aboriginal Family Violence Unit, Stronger Families Anyinginyi, Youth Diversion Unit, Family Court, Police, Papulu Apparr Kari.

Papulu Apparr Kari Centre in Tennant Creek where contracted by us to film and produce a half hour DVD of the workshop which is now available. They have also been contracted to produce an education DVD in languages relevant to the Barkley Region in relation to areas of priority needs in legal education.

It is anticipated that a legal education DVD in 3 languages will be completed in early 2008.

TIWI ISLANDS

A number of meetings were held with community stakeholders over 2006 and 2007 to commence the process of developing a Community Mediation Officer position and a legal education DVD project on the Tiwi Islands.

After months of negotiation and planning we facilitated a Community Legal Educational workshop at Nguiu on the 17-18 May 2007. In attendance were representatives of the community as well as legal services, including the North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency and the North Australian Aboriginal Family Violence Legal Service.

From this work shop the major legal issues affecting the Tiwi people were identified as Going to Court and Restraining Orders. This will shape the content of the DVD pertaining to that area.

We are in the early stages of this project and we are hopeful to have the DVD completed by May 2008.

We have also commenced stage two of our Indigenous Families Project at Nguiu with the employment of our first Community Mediation Officer ('CMO'). A Memorandum of Understanding between us and the Tiwi Island Local Government has been signed. This will enable the CMO to work in conjunction with Local Government and other service providers in the region.

The officer in the position will promote, develop initiatives that encourage people with family and law problems to participate in mediation.

INFORMATION ACT 2003 (NT)

The following information is held by the Commission:

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

Publications are available upon request free of charge.

Access to other information, including personal information must be made on the appropriate application form obtainable from and returnable to:

The Information Officer
NT Legal Aid Commission
6th Floor, 9-11 Cavenagh Street, Darwin

Postal: Locked Bag 11, Darwin NT 0801

Telephone: (08) 89993000

Fax: (08) 89993099

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

DARWIN
6th Floor, 9-11 Cavenagh Street

KATHERINE
20 Second Street

ALICE SPRINGS
77 Hartley Street

FEES:

Access to or correction of personal information	No Fee
Access to published information	No fee
Access to information other than personal information or published information	A $30.00 fee and a 60¢ per page charge for photocopying of documents of more than 20 pages may apply

APPLICATIONS:

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
Applications Received	6	1	10	**1**
Applications Approved	5	1	8	**1**
Applications Pending	1	0	0	**0**
Referred to another agency	0	0	2	**0**
Fees Waived	5	1	8	**1**

FINANCIALS 2006-2007

NORTHERN TERRITORY LEGAL AID COMMISSION

COMMENTS
ON FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS, FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

FUNDING OF THE COMMISSION

The Commission's main source of revenue continues to be derived from the Commonwealth and Northern Territory Governments.

Commonwealth funding is attributed to matters that arise from Commonwealth legislation and Northern Territory Government funding is attributed to matters that arise from Northern Territory legislation.

The current funding agreement with the Commonwealth Government will continue until 31 December 2008. The funding arrangement with the Northern Territory Government will cease on 30 June 2009.

The Commission also received separate funding for the Integrated Family Justice Project and continues to receive funding for immigration advice and assistance, and the Domestic Violence Legal Service. These two arrangements end on 30 June 2008.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

This year the Commission's operations resulted in a deficit of $126,850.

The table below shows the percentage distribution of expenditure incurred and revenue earned from 1999/00.

	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07
PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL EXPENDITURE								
Personnel Costs	51.95	49.28	44.72	46.88	47.46	45.14	44.33	**45.61**
Administration Costs	22.81	16.87	21.39	12.65	17.83	19.44	18.90	**19.86**
Legal Costs	21.35	30.78	31.19	36.60	31.71	34.42	33.64	**29.45**
Minor Assets	1.92	1.77	1.81	1.97	1.78	0.11	1.81	**2.24**
Depreciation	1.97	1.30	0.89	1.90	1.22	0.89	1.32	**2.84**
PERCENTAGE OF REVENUE								
Commonwealth	43.28	42.94	41.60	39.65	40.29	43.05	43.99	**44.08**
NT Government	40.53	38.76	34.42	39.85	38.54	33.12	39.85	**40.86**
Commonwealth Other	3.23	7.97	9.84	5.65	8.25	13.00	4.97	**3.52**
NT Government Other					2.72	3.40	3.13	**3.09**
TOTAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING	**87.04**	**89.67**	**85.86**	**85.15**	**89.8**	**92.57**	**91.94**	**91.55**
Contributions and Recovered Costs	9.46	6.93	9.52	8.99	6.52	4.82	5.24	**5.39**
Interest Earned	3.33	3.40	2.56	3.05	2.7	2.36	2.56	**2.88**
Other	0.16	0.00	2.06	2.81	0.98	0.25	0.26	**0.18**
TOTAL SELF-GENERATED	**12.96**	**10.33**	**14.14**	**14.85**	**10.2**	**7.43**	**8.06**	**8.45**

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

EXPENDITURE

In total, expenditure increased by 9%, with depreciation, minor asset purchases and administration costs having the greatest individual increases.

In 2005/06 the Commission considerably upgraded its client database. This became operational in July 2006 therefore the asset was depreciated during the entire financial year. As depreciation is calculated on the diminishing value method a greater amount is recognized earlier in the assets life.

During the financial year eight new employees commenced with the Commission. Together with bracket creep, the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement and more employees becoming entitled to long service leave all these factors have had an impact on increasing personnel expenditure.

Administration expenditure represents costs including training, travel, insurance and other such overheads. Small increases in a number of categories have lead to the total 23% increase.

Minor assets captures purchases of furniture and fittings, plant and equipment that are less than $2,000 and therefore do not qualify as an asset.

REVENUE

Total revenue increased by 1% this financial year. With increasing interest rates the Commission was able to earn a good return on its investments and ordinary deposits. Interest revenue increased by 14%.

Client contributions and recovered costs also increased by 1% and 4% respectfully this financial year. These will fluctuate from year to year.

However, the above increases were offset by a decrease in miscellaneous revenue and Commonwealth grant revenue. The Commission's base funding from the Commonwealth did not decrease but one-off funding was lower than in previous years. Miscellaneous revenue is income that is not part of the Commission's ordinary activities.

ASSETS

The Commission has three main assets: cash, investments and property, plant and equipment. The Commission is able to pay its debts if and when they fall due.

LIABILITIES

This year, total liabilities increased by 23%. A number of employees became entitled to long service leave this financial year. There are also employees who were already entitled to the leave but have yet to take the leave. Employees have three years to utilise their long service leave from the day they become entitled to it.

EQUITY

Total equity decreased as a result of the deficit. The Information Technology Development and Replacement Reserve was reduced to recognize depreciation expenditure incurred in relation to software and hardware incurred during the financial year, this amount was transferred to Retained Earnings.

GENERAL PURPOSE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
AS AT 30 JUNE 2007

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AUDITOR-GENERAL

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL NT LEGAL AID COMMISSION YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2007

I have audited the accompanying financial report of the Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission, which comprises the income statement, balance sheet, cash flow statement and statement of changes in equity and accompanying notes to the financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2007.

The Responsibility of the Director for the Financial Report

The Director of Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards (including the Australian Accounting Interpretations). This responsibility includes designing, implementing and maintaining internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

Auditor's Responsibility

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

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

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

Auditor's Opinion

In my opinion, the financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission as of 30 June 2007, and of its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards (including the Australian Accounting Interpretations).

F McGuiness
Auditor-General for the Northern Territory
Darwin, Northern Territory

21 November 2007

Level 12 Northern Territory House 22 Mitchell Street Darwin NT 0800 Tel: 08 8999 7155 Fax: 08 8999 7144

STATEMENT BY DIRECTORS

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

(a) the accompanying general purpose financial statements of the Commission present fairly the Commission's financial position as at 30 June 2007, and its performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements;

(b) at the date of this statement there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Commission will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable; and

(c) at the time of signing, we are not aware of any circumstances that would render the particulars included in the financial statements misleading or inaccurate.

Signed in Darwin this 20th day of November 2007.

Suzan Cox
DIRECTOR

Meredith Harrison
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

INCOME STATEMENT
YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2007

	NOTES	2007 $	2006 $
Revenue	2	**7,776,112**	7,665,489
Depreciation expense	3	**(224,512)**	(95,700)
Salaries and employee benefits expense		**(3,604,551)**	(3,222,581)
Legal expense		**(2,327,544)**	(2,445,341)
Administration expense		**(1,159,722)**	(940,372)
Other expenses		**(586,633)**	(565,027)
NET (LOSS)/PROFIT FOR THE PERIOD		**(126,850)**	**396,468**

The Income Statement is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements.

BALANCE SHEET
AT 30 JUNE 2007

	NOTES	2007 $	2006 $
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	4	**2,324,363**	2,033,434
Trade receivables	5	**133,901**	127,335
Investments	6	**1,426,942**	1,434,862
Other receivables	7	**96,597**	162,978
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		**3,981,803**	**3,758,609**
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, plant and equipment	8	**975,323**	1,097,671
Other	15	**200,000**	200,000
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		**1,175,323**	1,297,671
TOTAL ASSETS		**5,157,126**	**5,056,280**
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	9	**425,265**	318,691
Provisions	10	**661,863**	562,258
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		**1,087,128**	**845,320**
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Provisions	10	**122,403**	136,515
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		**122,403**	136,515
TOTAL LIABILITIES		**1,209,531**	981,835
NET ASSETS		**3,947,595**	**4,074,445**
EQUITY			
Retained Earnings	17	**1,207,426**	1,190,639
Reserves	16	**2,740,169**	2,883,806
TOTAL EQUITY		**3,947,595**	**4,074,445**

The Balance Sheet is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements.

CASH FLOW STATEMENT
YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2007

	NOTES	2007 $	2006 $
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Cash receipts in the course of operations		**427,309**	47,910
Interest received in the course of operations		**222,868**	185,366
Grants received in the course of operations	2	**7,119,369**	7,047,087
Cash payments in the course of operations		**(7,367,439)**	(7,110,755)
NET CASH FLOWS FROM/(USED IN) OPERATING ACTIVITIES	13	**402,107**	**569,608**
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Payments for plant and equipment		**(119,098)**	(598,810)
Net payments/receipts for investments		**7,920**	(4,549)
NET CASH FLOWS (USED IN)/FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES		**(111,178)**	**(603,359)**
Net (decrease)/increase in cash and cash equivalents		**290,929**	(33,751)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period		**2,033,434**	2,067,185
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT THE END OF THE PERIOD	4	**2,324,363**	**2,033,434**

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

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY
YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2007

	NOTES	RESERVES $	RETAINED EARNINGS $	TOTAL $
STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY				
BALANCE AT 1 JULY 2005		**2,883,806**	**794,171**	**3,677,977**
Profit for the year		0	396,468	396,468
Transfer from Reserves	16	0	0	0
Revaluation Increments	16	0	0	0
BALANCE AT 30 JUNE 2006		**2,883,806**	**1,190,639**	**4,074,445**
Loss for the year		0	(126,850)	(126,850)
Transfer from Reserves		(143,637)	143,637	0
Revaluation Increments		0	0	0
BALANCE AT 30 JUNE 2007		**2,740,169**	**1,207,426**	**3,947,595**

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

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2007

1. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission was established on 11 June 1990 by the *Legal Aid Act 1990*. The function of the Commission is to provide legal assistance in accordance with this Act. The Commission commenced its activities on 1 July 1990.

A) PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS

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

B) NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

The Commission had 53 employees as at 30 June 2007 (2006 – 45 employees).

C) BASIS OF ACCOUNTING

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

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

(i) The accounts have been prepared using the accrual basis of accounting applying the historical cost convention and the going concern assumption.

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

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

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

D) STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

Australian Accounting Standards require a statement of compliance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRSs) to be made where the financial report complies with these standards. Some Australian equivalents to IFRSs and other Australian Accounting Standards contain requirements specific to not-for-profit entities that are inconsistent with IFRS requirements. NT Legal Aid Commission is a not-for-profit entity and has applied these requirements, so while this financial report complies with Australian Accounting Standards including Australian Equivalents to International Financial Reporting Standards (AEIFRSs) it cannot make this statement.

ADOPTION OF NEW AUSTRALIAN ACCOUNTING STANDARD REQUIREMENTS

No accounting standard has been adopted earlier than the effective date in the current period.

OTHER EFFECTIVE REQUIREMENT CHANGES

The following amendments, revised standards or interpretations have become effective but have had no financial impact or do not apply to the operations of NT Legal Aid Commission.

1. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (CONT)

Amendments:

- 2005-1 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards [AASB 139]

Interpretations:

- Interpretation 4 Determining whether an Arrangement contains a Lease
- Interpretation 5 Rights to Interests arising from Decommissioning, Restoration and Environmental Rehabilitation Funds
- Interpretation 7 Applying the Restatement Approach under AASB 129 Financial Reporting in Hyperinflationary Economies
- Interpretation 8 Scope of AASB 2
- Interpretation 9 Reassessment of Embedded Derivatives

Interpretation 4 might have impacts in future periods, subject to existing contracts being renegotiated.

FUTURE AUSTRALIAN ACCOUNTING STANDARD REQUIREMENTS

The following new standards, amendments to standards or interpretations have been issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board but are effective for future reporting periods. It is estimated that the impact of adopting these pronouncements when effective will have no material financial impact on future reporting periods.

AASB7 FINANCIAL INSTRUMENT DISCLOSURE

Effective for reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2007 (the 2007-08 financial year) and amends the disclosure requirements for financial instruments. In general AASB 7 requires greater disclosure than that presently. Associated with the introduction of AASB 7 a number of accounting standards were amended to reference the new standard or remove the present disclosure requirements through 2005-10 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards [AASB 132, AASB 101, AASB 114, AASB 117, AASB 133, AASB 139, AASB 1, AASB 4, AASB 1023 & AASB 1038]. These changes have no financial impact but will effect the disclosure presented in future financial reports.

OTHER

The following standards and interpretations have been issued but are not applicable to the operations of NT Legal Aid Commission.

- AASB 1049 Financial Reporting of General Government Sectors by Governments
- Interpretation 10 Interim Financial Reporting and Impairment.

E) CHANGES IN ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The accounting policies adopted in the current period are consistent with those of the previous year.

F) GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATION AND GRANTS

Government appropriation and grants are recognised in the Income Statement at the time of their receipt.

All revenue is stated net of the amount of Goods and Services Tax (GST).

1. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (CONT)

G) PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

Freehold land and buildings on freehold land are measured on a fair value basis.

All other classes of property, plant and equipment are measured at cost. Cost is determined as the fair value of the asset given as consideration plus incidental costs in getting the asset ready for use.

The carrying amount of property, plant & equipment is reviewed annually to ensure it is not in excess of the recoverable amount of these assets. The recoverable amount is assessed on the basis of the expected net cash flows that will be received from the assets employment and subsequent disposal. The expected net cash flows have been discounted to their present values in determining recoverable amounts.

Property, plant and equipment purchased for less than $2,000 during the year have been expensed.

H) DEPRECIATION AND AMORTISATION OF FIXED ASSETS

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

Assets are first depreciated or amortised in the year of acquisition or, in respect of internally constructed assets, from the time an asset is held ready for use. Major useful lives are:

	2007	2006
Buildings	10 years	10 years
Leasehold Improvements	3 years	3 years
Plant & Equipment	2.5-5 years	2.5-5 years

I) EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

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

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

J) SUPERANNUATION ARRANGEMENTS

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

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

1. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (CONT)

The Commission contributes 9% on behalf of the majority of employees. Any liability for superannuation is met directly by the NT Government and the entity has and will continue to have no other direct superannuation liability.

K) INCOME TAX

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

L) INVESTMENTS

Investments relate to bank bills and are valued at cost.

M) LIABILITY ON CURRENT GRANTS IN AID

The Commission brings to account as a current liability an estimate of the value of the work completed by private practitioners but not invoiced to the Commission as at 30 June. The amount of this liability is shown in Note 10. During the 2006/07 financial year, the Commission analysed the invoices received during that year and calculated the percentage that related to the prior years. This percentage has then been used to calculate the liability for the current year as the Commission expects a similar percentage in the current year.

N) RESERVES

The Commission maintains reserves that are funded by cash and investments.

- The funded reserves are:
- NT Expensive Civil Cases Reserve
- Information Technology Development and Replacement Reserve
- NT Expensive Criminal Cases Reserve
- Premises Replacement & Maintenance Reserve

The asset revaluation reserve is used to record increments and decrements in the value of non-current assets.

O) CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

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

P) TRADE AND OTHER RECEIVABLES

Trade receivables are carried at original invoice amount less a provision for any uncollectible debts. An estimate for doubtful debts is made when collection of the full amount is no longer probable. Bad debts are written-off as incurred.

Receivables from related parties are recognised and carried at the nominal amount due.

Q) TRADE AND OTHER PAYABLES

Liabilities for trade creditors and other amounts are carried at cost which is the fair value of the consideration to be paid in future for goods and services received, whether or not billed to the Commission.

Payables to related parties are carried at the principal amount. Interest, when charged by the lender, is recognised as an expense on an accrual basis.

1. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (CONT)

R) REVENUE RECOGNITION

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

RENDERING OF SERVICES

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

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

INTEREST

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

S) GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

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

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

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

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

T) IMPAIRMENT OF ASSETS

At each reporting date the entity reviews the carrying values of its assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have been impaired. If such an indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the assets fair values less costs to sell and value in use, is compared to the assets carrying value. Any excess of the assets carrying value over its recoverable amount is expensed to the Income Statement.

Where it is not possible to estimate the recoverable amount of an individual asset, the entity estimates the recoverable amount of the cash generating unit to which the asset belongs.

U) FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

RECOGNITION

Financial instruments are initially measured at cost on trade date, which includes transaction costs, when the related contractual rights or obligations exist. Subsequent to initial recognition these instruments are measured as set out below.

I. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (CONT)

FINANCIAL ASSETS AT FAIR VALUE THROUGH PROFIT AND LOSS

A financial asset is classified in this category if acquired principally for the purpose of selling in the short-term or if so designated by management. Realised and unrealised gains and losses arising from changes in the fair value of these assets are included in the income statement in the period in which they arise.

AVAILABLE-FOR-SALE FINANCIAL ASSETS

Available-for-sale financial assets include any financial assets not included in the above categories. Available-for-sale financial assets are reflected at fair value. Unrealised gains and losses arising from changes in fair value are taken directly to equity.

HELD-TO-MATURITY FINANCIAL ASSETS

Non-derivative financial assets with fixed or determinable payments and fixed maturity are classified as held-to-maturity when the Commission has the positive intention and ability to hold to maturity.

FINANCIAL LIABILITIES

Non-derivative financial liabilities are recognised at amortised cost, comprising original debt less principal payments and amortisation.

IMPAIRMENT

At each reporting date, the group assess whether there is objective evidence that a financial instrument has been impaired. In the case of available-for-sale financial instruments, a prolonged decline in the value of the instrument is considered to determine whether an impairment has arisen. Impairment losses are recognised in the income statement.

V) CRITICAL ACCOUNTING ESTIMATES AND JUDGEMENTS

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

W) ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE

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

		2007 $	2006 $
2. REVENUE			
Grant revenue from	- NT	**3,418,000**	3,295,000
	- Commonwealth	**3,701,369**	3,752,087
Rendering of services revenue			
	- Client contributions	**71,308**	66,540
	- Recovered costs	**347,460**	335,273
Other revenue	- Interest	**224,180**	196,432
	- Others	**13,795**	20,157
		7,776,112	**7,665,489**
3. EXPENSES			
Depreciation expense		**224,512**	95,700
Salaries and employee benefits expense		**3,604,551**	3,222,582
Administration costs		**1,159,722**	940,372
Legal costs		**2,327,544**	2,445,341
Other expenses			
- Minor assets		**177,262**	131,803
- Operating lease expenditure		**409,371**	433,223
		7,902,962	**7,269,021**
4. CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS			
Cash on hand		**950**	850
Cash at bank		**2,313,413**	2,022,584
Advance account		**10,000**	10,000
		2,324,363	**2,033,434**
5. TRADE RECEIVABLES			
Current			
Trade debtors		**40,480**	5,226
Less Provision for Doubtful Debts		**0**	0
		40,480	5,226
Recoveries Receivable		**36,072**	57,227
Less Provision for Doubtful Debts		**(3,649)**	(55)
		32,423	57,172
Interest Receivable		**12,377**	11,066
GST Receivable		**46,956**	53,871
Other Receivable		**1,665**	0
		133,901	**127,335**

	2007 $	2006 $
6. INVESTMENTS		
Current		
Westpac Banking Corporation Bills – at cost	**1,426,942**	**1,434,862**
7. OTHER RECEIVABLES		
Prepayments		
- Insurances	**37,858**	138,736
- Rent	**26,767**	0
- Software Licence	**0**	848
- Other	**7,705**	15,348
Accrued revenue	**11,539**	8,046
Sundry Receivables	**12,728**	0
	96,597	**162,978**
8. PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT		
Freehold land at fair value	**280,000**	280,000
	280,000	280,000
Buildings – at fair value	**261,290**	254,171
Less: Accumulated depreciation	**(45,419)**	(21,696)
	215,871	232,475
Leasehold improvements – at cost	**171,042**	136,393
Less: Accumulated depreciation	**(66,740)**	(34,147)
	104,302	102,246
Plant and equipment – at cost	**759,113**	965,079
Less: Accumulated depreciation	**(383,963)**	(482,129)
	375,150	482,950
Total property, plant and equipment – net book value		
Cost	**930,155**	1,101,472
Fair value	**541,290**	534,171
	1,471,445	1,635,643
Less: Accumulated depreciation	**(496,122)**	(537,972)
	975,323	**1,097,671**

8. PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT (CONT)

	2007 $	2006 $
(a) Reconciliations		
Reconciliations of the carrying amounts of each class of property, plant and equipment are set out below:		
Freehold Land		
Carrying amount at beginning of year	**280,000**	280,000
Net amount of revaluation increments	**0**	0
Additions	**0**	0
Disposals	**0**	0
Carrying amount at end of year	**280,000**	**280,000**
Buildings		
Carrying amount at beginning of year	**232,475**	172,689
Net amount of revaluation increments	**0**	0
Additions	**7,118**	84,171
Disposals	**0**	(3,970)
Depreciation	**(23,722)**	(20,415)
Carrying amount at end of year	**215,871**	**232,475**
Leasehold Improvements		
Carrying amount at beginning of year	**102,246**	19,081
Additions	**34,649**	105,968
Disposals	**0**	(3,115)
Depreciation	**(32,593)**	(19,688)
Carrying amount at end of year	**104,302**	**102,246**
Plant and Equipment		
Carrying amount at beginning of year	**482,950**	132,638
Additions	**77,332**	408,672
Disposals	**(16,935)**	(2,764)
Depreciation	**(168,197)**	(55,596)
Carrying amount at end of year	**375,150**	**482,950**

(b) Valuations

The fair values of freehold land and buildings have been determined by reference to direct valuations, based upon independent valuations previously obtained from the Australian Valuation Office dated 23 May 2005. Such valuations are performed on an open market basis, being the amounts for which the assets could be exchanged between a knowledgeable willing buyer and a knowledgeable willing seller in an arm's length transaction at the valuation date.

9. TRADE AND OTHER PAYABLES

	2007 $	2006 $
Current		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	**425,265**	318,691
Total Payables	**425,265**	**318,691**

10. PROVISIONS

Current		
Employee benefits		
- annual leave	**255,079**	214,263
- long service leave	**299,655**	190,962
- leave loading	**39,496**	33,840
	594,230	439,065
Fringe Benefits Tax	**11,061**	16,914
Grants in aid	**56,572**	70,650
	661,863	**526,629**
Non-Current		
Employee benefits		
- annual leave	**43,424**	35,629
- long service leave	**78,979**	100,886
	122,403	**136,515**

11. SUPERANNUATION COMMITMENTS

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

Employee contributions for NTGPASS members are based on an elected rate of 2% to 6% salary. NTSSS benefits are entirely employer funded and do not require employee contributions. As at 30 June 2007 total superannuation expended amounted to $288,325 (at 30 June 2006 - $268,196).

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

12. TRUST ACCOUNTS

The Commission operates a solicitor's trust account and the funds are not used in the achievement of its objectives. Therefore, these monies are not brought to account in the financial reports but are disclosed by way of note. The trust account is maintained for verdict and settlement monies held on behalf of legally aided persons. The Commission may recover some costs upon finalisation of these matters. As at 30 June 2007 the trust account had a balance of $1,100 (2006 - Nil).

	2007 $	2006 $
13. CASH FLOW STATEMENT		
Reconciliation of net cash used in operating activities to operating profit/(loss)		
Operating profit	**(126,850)**	396,468
Depreciation	**224,512**	95,700
Loss on disposal of fixed assets	**16,935**	9,850
Increase/(Decrease) in provisions	**121,121**	(132,565)
Increase/(Decrease) in creditors	**106,574**	158,346
Decrease/(Increase) in receivables	**(5,255)**	25,940
Decrease/(Increase) in prepayments (non-capital)	**65,070**	15,869
Net cash flows from/(used in) operating activities	**402,107**	**569,608**

14. EXPENDITURE COMMITMENTS		
Building lease expenditure commitments		
Operating leases (non-cancellable)		
- not later than one year	**407,452**	407,452
- later than one year but not later than five years	**770,904**	1,178,356
Grants In Aid	**572,995**	646,448
Aggregate lease expenditure and Grants in Aid contracted for at balance date but not provided for	**1,751,351**	**2,232,256**

15. OTHER NON-CURRENT ASSETS

Contingency Legal Aid Fund

Under Section 44 of the *Legal Aid Act 1990* the Contingency Legal Aid Fund was established towards the end of the 1992/93 financial year. The fund is available to provide financial assistance to eligible persons to enable them to bring or defend civil proceedings. It was set up with a seeding grant from the Law Society Public Purpose Trust. The value of the seeding grant was $200,000. In 1997, the Commission contributed a further $200,000 to the Contingency Legal Aid fund which is due and payable on demand to the Commission.

As at the 30 June 2007 the financial position of the fund which is managed by the Commission was as follows:

	2007	**2006**
	$	**$**
Opening balance	**813,200**	635,640
Add: Adjustment for cancelled cheque issued in previous financial year		-
Income:		
Interest earned	**46,880**	28,847
Client contributions	**660**	1,320
Cost recovered	**16,165**	193,963
Contingency fees	**6,812**	70,394
	70,517	**294,524**
Expenditure:		
Disbursements	**55,393**	116,908
Bank charges	**12**	56
Return of Application Fee	**0**	0
	55,405	**116,964**
Cash balance at year end	**828,312**	813,200
Less - Clients/grants approved but not paid at year end	**(144,756)**	(147,513)
Net funds available	**683,556**	**665,687**

16. RESERVES

	2007 $	2006 $
NT Expensive Civil Cases Reserve	**350,000**	350,000
Information Technology Development and Replacement Reserve	**256,363**	400,000
NT Expensive Criminal Cases Reserve	**1,652,720**	1,652,720
Premises Replacement & Maintenance Reserve	**200,000**	200,000
Asset Revaluation	**281,086**	281,086
	2,740,169	**2,883,806**
Movements in reserves:		
(a) NT Expensive Civil Cases Reserve (funded)		
Balance at beginning of year	**350,000**	350,000
Balance at end of year	**350,000**	**350,000**
(b) Information Technology Development and Replacement Reserve (funded)		
Balance at beginning of year	**400,000**	400,000
Transfer from accumulated funds	**(143,637)**	0
Balance at end of year	**256,363**	**400,000**
(c) NT Expensive Criminal Cases Reserve (funded)		
Balance at beginning of year	**1,652,720**	1,652,720
Balance at end of year	**1,652,720**	**1,652,720**
(d) Premises Replacement & Maintenance Reserve (funded)		
Balance at the beginning of the year	**200,000**	200,000
Balance at the end of the year	**200,000**	**200,000**
(e) Asset Revaluation		
Balance at the beginning of the year	**281,086**	281,086
Balance at the end of the year	**281,086**	**281,086**

17. RETAINED EARNINGS

Equity at beginning of year	**1,190,639**	794,171
Net Profit/(Loss)	**(126,850)**	396,468
Transfer from Reserves	**143,637**	0
Equity at end of year	**1,207,426**	**1,190,639**

18. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

a) Terms, conditions and accounting policies

The commission's accounting policies, including the terms and conditions of each class of financial asset and financial liability, both recognised and unrecognised at the balance date, are as follows:

Recognised Financial Instruments	Balance Sheet Notes	Accounting Policies	Terms and Conditions
(i) Financial assets			
Receivables -trade	5	Trade receivables are carried at nominal amounts less any provision for doubtful debts. A provision for doubtful debts is recognised when collection of the full nominal amount is no longer probable.	Fees are on 30 day terms.
Westpac Banking Corporation — Commercial Bills	6	Commercial Bills are carried at nominal amounts.	This amount is invested with Westpac Banking Corporation at a rate between 6.12% - 6.18%pa.
Advances	4	An advance account is set up to cover urgent expenses that are unable to be paid from petty cash. The Advance Account is reimbursed monthly from the Commission's main Operating Account.	Interest earned on this account is deposited into the Operating Account. The interest rate was between 5.51% - 6.10%pa.
Advance to Contingency legal aid fund		Long Term Loan.	Due and payable on demand to the Commission.
(ii) Financial liabilities			
Accounts Payable and accruals	9	Liabilities are recognised for amounts to be paid in the future for goods and services received, whether or not billed to the Commission.	Trade liabilities are normally settled on 30 day terms.

18. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS (CONT)

b) Interest rate risk

The Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission's exposure to interest rate risks and the effective interest rates of the financial assets and financial liabilities, both recognised and unrecognised at the balance date, are as follows:

Financial Instrument	Floating Interest		Non-interest bearing		Total carrying amount as per the balance sheet		Weighted average effective interest rate	
	2007	2006	**2007**	2006	**2007**	2006	**2007**	2006
	$,000	$,000	**$,000**	$,000	**$,000**	$,000	**%**	%
Financial assets								
Cash	**2,324**	2,033	**-**	-	**2,324**	2,033	**5.01**	4.91
Receivables - trade (net)	**-**	-	**134**	127	**134**	127	**-**	-
Westpac Banking Corporation Bills	**1,427**	1,435	**-**	-	**1,427**	1,435	**6.16**	5.54
Prepayments	**-**	-	**96**	163	**96**	163	**-**	-
Advance to Contingency Fund	**-**	-	**200**	200	**200**	200	**-**	-
Total financial assets	**3,751**	**3,468**	**429**	**490**	**4,181**	**3,958**	**-**	-
Financial liabilities								
Accounts payable and accruals	**-**	-	**425**	319	**425**	319	**-**	-
Total financial liabilities	**-**	-	**425**	**319**	**425**	**319**	**-**	-

The Commission has no fixed interest financial instruments.

c) Credit risk

Credit risk represents the loss that would be recognised if counterparties failed to perform as contracted. The credit risk on financial assets of the Commission that have been recognised on the balance sheet is the carrying amount net of any provision for doubtful debts. The Commission has a minimal concentration of credit risk as it undertakes transactions with a large number of customers and counterparties. There are no major concentrations of credit risk on trade debtors due from customers within particular industries.

18. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS (CONT)

d) Net fair values

The aggregate net fair values of financial assets and financial liabilities, both recognised and unrecognised, at balance date, are as follows:

	Total carrying amount as per the balance sheet		Aggregate net fair value	
	2007	2006	**2007**	2006
	$,000	$,000	**$,000**	$,000
Financial assets				
Cash	**2,324**	2,033	**2,324**	2,033
Receivables - trade (net)	**134**	127	**134**	127
Westpac Banking Corporation Bills	**1,427**	1,435	**1,427**	1,435
Prepayments	**96**	163	**96**	163
Advance to Contingency Fund	**200**	200	**200**	200
Total financial assets	**4,181**	**3,958**	**4,181**	**3,958**
Financial liabilities				
Accounts payable and accruals	**425**	319	**425**	319
Total financial liabilities	**425**	**319**	**425**	**319**

The following methods and assumptions are used to determine the net fair values of financial assets and liabilities:

Cash, cash equivalents and short-term investments: The carrying amount approximates fair value because of their short-term to maturity.

Trade receivables and payables: The carrying amount approximates fair value.

19. SEGMENT INFORMATION

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

20. CONTINGENT ASSETS/LIABILITIES

There were no known contingent assets or contingent liabilities of a significant nature at 30 June 2007 (2006 – NIL).

21. ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES

(I) COMMISSIONERS

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

- S Cox QC
- D Farquhar
- J Large
- E Terrill
- K Halliday
- P Vaughan
- H Richardson

(II) TRANSACTIONS WITH COMMISSIONERS

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

22. REMUNERATION OF COMMISSIONERS

The following sitting fees were paid in August 2007 in respect of the year ended 30 June 2006;

- D Farquhar $406
- J Large $406
- E Terrill $420

23. AUDITOR'S REMUNERATION

	2007 $	2006 $
The auditor of the Commission is the Auditor-General for the Northern Territory		
Audit of the financial statements	**22,000**	-
Audit of the acquittal required as part of the Commonwealth funding agreement		
- current year	**4,000**	4,500
- prior year (over)/under accrual	**(623)**	7,556
	25,377	12,056

For 2006/07 onwards the Auditor-General has indicated that he will be charging the Commission for the audit of the financial statements. Previously these audits were provided at no cost to the Commission.

NORTHERN TERRITORY
LEGAL AID COMMISSION OFFICES

LOCATION	POSTAL ADDRESS	TELEPHONE/ FACSIMILE
DARWIN		
6th Floor 9-11 Cavenagh Street DARWIN NT 0800	Locked Bag 11 DARWIN NT 0801	**Ph (08) 8999 3000** Fax (08) 8999 3099
KATHERINE		
20 Second Street KATHERINE NT 0850	PO Box 145 KATHERINE NT 0851	**Ph (08) 8973 8704** Fax (08) 8973 8551
TENNANT CREEK		
61 Patterson Street TENNANT CREEK NT 0860	PO Box 794 TENNANT CREEK NT 0861	**Ph (08) 8962 1985** Fax (08) 8962 1945
ALICE SPRINGS		
77 Hartley Street ALICE SPRINGS NT 0870	PO Box 969 ALICE SPRINGS NT 0871	**Ph (08) 8951 5377** Fax (08) 8951 5378

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8.00 am - 5.00 pm

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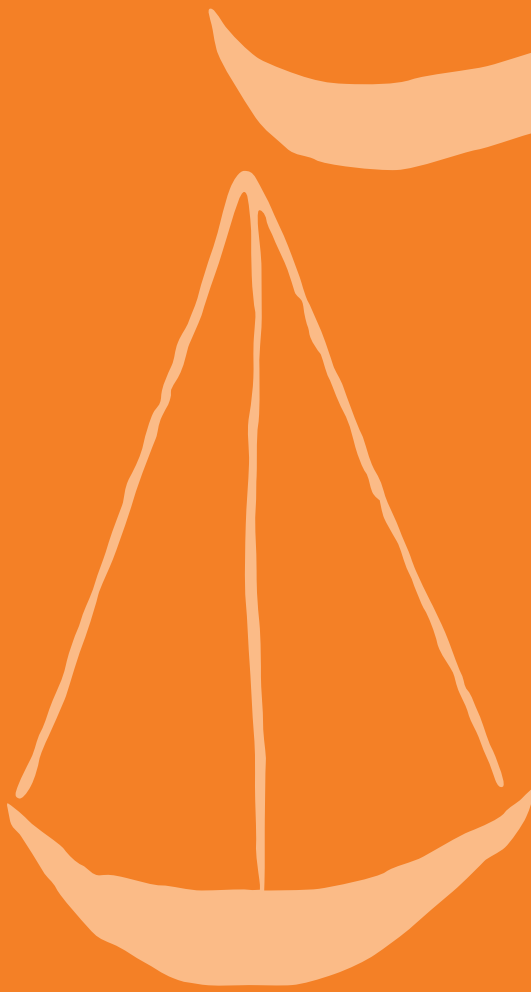

Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission

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