Northern Territory
Legal Aid Commission

Annual Report 2010 - 2011

Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission

The Hon. Daniel Robert Knight 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 2011.

The Commission members and I are very proud of the work that NTLAC has done this year. Under the guidance of Director Suzan Cox QC, the staff have continued to maintain the Commission's excellent reputation, despite budgetary constraints and uncertainty. This reputation not only relies on their legal and administrative competence, but their dedication and commitment to the values of the organisation. In 2011, during the development of its next strategic plan, the values of justice, integrity, professionalism and sustainability were identified as integral to the future of NTLAC. It is clear that these values, identified by staff, are ones that form part of the day to day operation of NTLAC.

This has been the first year of operations under the National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services between the States and Territories and the Commonwealth. I can report that the Commission has put in place infrastructure and training to deliver a comprehensive legal information and referral service in the coming year. It has also increased collaboration and cooperation between legal assistance and other providers to ensure seamless referrals. This should mean better addressing the communities legal needs and other related problems.

Both the Commonwealth and Territory governments have jointly commissioned a Review of the funding and operations of the Commission which is expected to report in the first quarter of the next financial year. The Commission welcomes the Review and will be responding to its recommendations.

The Commission values the hard work and dedication of its staff and I take this opportunity to commend the Director, Suzan Cox QC, and her staff on their exceptional contribution to the socially disadvantaged of the Northern Territory community and through their community legal education, policy and outreach programs, to the community at large.

Yours faithfully

ELIZABETH MORRIS
CHAIR
Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission

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Vision and Values

Vision:

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

Charter:

"To ensure that people in the NT, particularly those who are disadvantaged, understand and have access to help to protect and enforce their legal rights and interests".

Values:

Justice:	Fairness and equity valuing diversity.
Integrity:	Performing our functions with respect, dignity, compassion and honesty.
Professionalism:	Committed to the rule of law, ethical standards and continuous review and improvement to ensure quality service.
Sustainability:	Working sustainably to ensure the well being of our staff and clients.

Commission Offices

DARWIN

9-11 Cavenagh Street, DARWIN NT 0800
Locked Bag 11, DARWIN NT 0801
Ph (08) 8999 3000
Fax (08) 8999 3099

PALMERSTON

Shop 6, Goyder Centre, 25 Chung Wah Terrace , PALMERSTON NT 0830
Ph (08) 8999 4750
Fax (08) 8999 4747

KATHERINE

20 Second Street, KATHERINE NT 0850
PO Box 145, KATHERINE NT 0851
Ph (08) 8973 8704
Fax (08) 8973 8551

TENNANT CREEK

Shop 3, 163 Paterson Street, TENNANT CREEK NT 0860
PO Box 794, TENNANT CREEK NT 0861
Ph (08) 8962 4362
Fax (08) 8962 2439

ALICE SPRINGS

77 Hartley Street, ALICE SPRINGS NT 0870
PO Box 969, ALICE SPRINGS NT 0871
Ph (08) 8951 5377
Fax (08) 8951 5378

Office hours:
Monday - Friday 8.00 am - 5.00 pm

Free call telephone legal information:
1800 019 343

Website address:
www.ntlac.nt.gov.au

Email address:
info@ntlac.nt.gov.au

Director's Report

The Commission welcomed the signing of the National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services ('the Agreement') by the Prime Minister of Australia and Chief Minister of the Northern Territory during the year. The objective of the Agreement is the delivery of a national system of legal assistance that is integrated, efficient, cost-effective, and focussed on providing services for disadvantaged Australians in accordance with access to justice principles of accessibility, appropriateness, equity, efficiency and effectiveness. The Agreement has provided the Commission with an opportunity to consider and explore the role that the provision of early intervention and preventative legal services can have in the early resolution of legal problems.

The Commission has embraced the exciting opportunities presented by the Agreement and developed a Legal Information and Referral Strategy. As part of the implementation of this strategy, the Commission has worked towards the establishment of a dedicated Call Centre from which we will operate the Legal Information Helpline in the coming year. This will provide a comprehensive legal information service and seamless referral for preventative and early intervention legal assistance services to people in the Northern Territory.

The Commission has also revised and updated data capturing mechanisms to ensure consistency with the requirements of the Agreement and to maximize the opportunities available to the Commission and clients under the Agreement.

The Agreement has marked a shift in service delivery focus for the Commission and it was, therefore, timely that the Commission developed a new strategic plan for the term of the Agreement, 2011 - 2014.

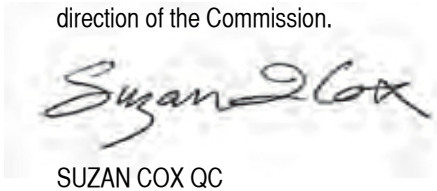
I have reported for a number of years that the level of funding available to the Commission is inadequate to maintain the level of legal aid services required in order for the Northern Territory citizens in need to have access to the justice system. Ongoing funding negotiations with the Northern Territory Government have required significant resources throughout the year. One consequence of the funding limitations was the cessation of the provision of legal aid in relation to all matters where there is no Legal Aid office. This decision in turn caused hardship for many people in regional and remote NT and service providers, such as the Aboriginal Legal Services. We are pleased to say that this service has since resumed .

The Commission welcomed the announcement of a review of the Commission by the Northern Territory and Australian Governments during the year. The review report will include the extent to which financial and service provision arrangements meet Northern Territory Government objectives for legal assistance and the objectives in the Agreement. Commission staff have been assisting the reviewers and we look forward to the finalisation of the review in September 2011. We anticipate that the review report will be of great assistance to our efforts to secure adequate and appropriate levels of funding for the Commission on an ongoing basis.

Despite the challenges of this year, I am pleased that we have built on our existing partnerships with other legal and related service providers, such as Community Legal Centres, Aboriginal Legal Services, the Family Relationships Centre, the Anti-Discrimination Commission, and Consumer and Credit Regulators.

Private practitioners are integral to the delivery of legal aid services. I regretfully acknowledge that, due to the restrictions on legal aid funding, private lawyers often heavily subsidise the assistance that is provided. I note that during the year a number of private practitioners have advised that for financial reasons they will cease the provision of services to clients in receipt of a grant of legal aid. This trend is of concern to the Commission and has the potential to disrupt other agencies such as the courts, child protection and prosecutions. I am hopeful that this situation can be rectified when the Commission's funding negotiations are concluded.

Commission staff assist people in crisis on a day to day basis. Clients present to the Commission at a most difficult time in their lives. They often have a range of complex legal and non-legal concerns converging in their lives. They may be stressed, challenging, demanding and have special needs. I thank all staff of the Commission for their hard work and commitment, empathy and compassion in providing assistance to our clients during the last year. Lastly, I thank our Chair, Elizabeth Morris SM and the Commissioners for their valuable contribution in steering the direction of the Commission.



SUZAN COX QC
DIRECTOR
Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission

Our Charter

Our charter is to ensure that people in the NT, particularly those who are disadvantaged, understand and have access to help to protect and enforce their legal rights and interests.

We do this by providing a range of services including:

- community legal education
- information and referral
- legal advice, assistance and advocacy
- dispute resolution
- duty lawyer and
- legal representation

We also provide policy and law reform advice to government to ensure that the interests of disadvantaged people are taken into account in the framing of laws that affect them.

We work co-operatively with the community and with other service providers to ensure that people know about and have access to appropriate services, including our services and other services that can assist them to resolve underlying problems that contribute to their legal problems.

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 services available to persons eligible for legal assistance by establishing such local offices, and by making such other arrangements, as it considers appropriate within funding limitations;
- 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 as funding may permit;
- endeavour to secure the services of language interpreters, marriage counsellors and other appropriate persons to help persons in connection with matters in respect of which they are provided with legal assistance: and
- engage in early intervention and prevention strategies particularly in areas of acute disadvantage and (social) exclusion.

Legislation

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

Legal aid agreements

In July 2010 Commonwealth funding for the period 2010/11 to 2013/14 financial years was established and is set out in the National Partnership Agreement between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories. This varies from previous agreements which have been between the Commonwealth and the Commission direct.

The Commission is still in funding negotiations with the Northern Territory Government. It is anticipated that the outcome of these negotiations will be known in May 2012.

The Commissioners

Commissioners' Role

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

ELIZABETH MORRIS
CHAIRPERSON

Appointed as a Magistrate in April 2010, formerly being the Deputy CEO of the Department of Justice. Her previous positions include the Executive Director of Racing, Gaming and Licensing, and the Deputy Coroner for the Northern Territory. Her earlier legal career included nine years at the Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission. Elizabeth first came to the Territory in 1990 to work as an Associate to then Chief Justice. Bachelor of Arts (with honours), a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Sydney, and a Graduate Certificate in Public Sector Management.

JANE LARGE

Forty-two years of public service including 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. Currently a member of the Northern Territory Licensing Commission, Chairman of the NT Government Employees Superannuation Review Board, and a Justice of the Peace. Originally appointed 29 June 1990 by the Northern Territory Treasurer.

EILEEN TERRILL

Graduated University of Adelaide with LLB in 1976. 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.

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, retired in 2008 and now runs a small consultancy focussing on supporting teachers and parents of students identified with extreme behaviour. 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 2008. Continues to be a voice for disenfranchised youth in the Central Australian region. Peter is the community interests representative.

HALEY RICHARDSON

Worked in various positions in the public sector since 1990 in Queensland and in the Northern Territory. 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. In November 2009 she was appointed as the Senior Administrative Officer in the Criminal Law Section. Appointed as the staff representative Commissioner in September 2005.

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.

Our 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. The loan was repaid in May 2010.

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 could potentially result in a monetary award to the applicant.

Contingency Legal Aid Fund Committee

Committee Role

Established in accordance with Section16 of the *Legal Aid Act (NT) 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:

S. Gearin	A. Young
D. McConnell	M. Spazzapan
E. Terrill	G. McMaster
P. Cheong	J. Stirk
C. Spurr	

COMMISSION APPOINTEES:

S. Reddy

Statistical Information

The demands on the fund have been:

Applications	10/11	09/10	08/09	07/08	06/07	05/06	04/05
Received	21	9	13	11	7	15	17
Approved	17	6	11	6	6	15	8
Withdrawn	1	1	2	3	1	0	4
Refused	2	2	0	0	0	0	4
To be Decided	1	0	0	2	0	0	1

Since the fund commenced in March 1993 there have been a total of 355 applications to the fund. The applications for funding largely relate to personal injury actions. 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 Section 35(3) of the *Legal Aid Act (NT) 1990*. Under Section 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 2010-2011 the Review Committee met on 13 separate occasions to review 13 client requests. The outcome of their deliberations was that 1 decision was varied in favour of the applicant, and 2 decisions are pending.

Membership of the Committee

Private Legal Practitioner	T. Pritchard	M. Johnson
	B. Piper	E. Hutton
	R. Lawford	T. Marris
	B. O'Loughlin	S. Sievers
	D. Story	J. Tippett QC
	P. Elliott	B. Cassells
Independent person with relevant experience	A. Beven	P.Timney
	G. McDonald	N. Hunter
	M. Story	W. Morton
	E. Morris	
Officer of the Commission	M. Harrison	S. Cox QC
	J. Franz	M. Hubber
	I. Read	H. Blundell
	A. Abayasekara	J. Palavra
	F. Hussin	A. Snell
	F. Kepert	R. Sharkey
	C. McConnel	L. Bennett
Secretary to Committee	S. Reddy	

Overview of Operations

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

The Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission is independent of the Territory and Commonwealth Governments. In fact, the *Legal Aid Act (NT) 1990* 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 lawyer services, or legal representation and assistance.

Legal Advice

Commission lawyers give advice on legal matters free of charge in legal advice clinics.

Advice is given at the Commission offices or at other places, as required, during those times as the Director appoints, having regard to the availability of staff.

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 Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission provides duty lawyer services either by using its own staff or by funding lawyers in private practice, to such sittings of those Courts and Tribunals 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. A duty lawyer service is also provided to the Mental Health Review Tribunal and Child in Need of Care matters.

The independent Domestic Violence Legal Service also provides a duty lawyer service in Domestic Violence Matters.

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

Legal Assistance

Legal assistance may be provided under Section 26 of the *Legal Aid Act (NT) 1990* 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. The majority of clients are required to pay a contribution.

Thus the Commission must apply two tests to any application for legal assistance – a means test and a "reasonableness" or 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; and
(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 (NT) 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 guidelines are circulated to interested parties and are available on the Commission's website.

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 $110.00, 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 some or all of the costs incurred in representing the client. 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

The Commission conducts legal practices which include family law, mental health, immigration, childrens matters, criminal law, policy and community legal education. It also auspices an independent Domestic Violence Legal Service and operates early intervention, advice and assistance services particularly focussed on the remote and socially excluded.

Locations

The Commission maintains offices in Darwin, Palmerston, 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 at the beginning of this annual report. It conducts a remote outreach program to address, in particular, the needs of those affected by the Northern Territory Emergency Response travelling extensively throughout the Centre and the Top End of the Territory.

Our Offices and Principal Functions

Darwin Office

Located within the Darwin office are the following divisions:

- Executive;
- Criminal Law (including a duty lawyer service);
- Family and Civil Law (including several duty lawyer services)
- Family Dispute Resolution Program;
- Immigration;
- Assignments;
- Information, Advice and Early Intervention;
- Policy, Community Legal Education and Aboriginal Outreach
- Corporate Services.

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.

The Darwin office auspices the Domestic Violence Legal Service which operates as an independent unit.

Palmerston Office

The Palmerston office provides a convenient shop front service for people who live in the town and surrounding rural areas.

The office provides a referral service and legal assistance in family, criminal and civil law.

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 Office

The Tennant Creek office provides a coordination point for people of the Barkley Region 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 and participates in Aboriginal outreach and early intervention programs. In conjunction with the legal staff of the Alice Springs office, Tennant Creek provides legal advice and representation to the people of the region in criminal, family and civil law.

Alice Springs Office

The Alice Springs office provides legal services in criminal, family and civil law in the central 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.

Criminal and family lawyers provide advice and representation during court sittings in the Barkley Region.

An Aboriginal outreach and early Intervention team travels extensively throughout the region. Solicitors also attend at the Alice Springs gaol/hospital to provide advice and representation as required.

Organisational Structure and Objectives

Director

Overall Objectives:

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

Family and Civil Legal Practices

Overall Objectives:

- Provide assistance in relation to family law, immigration, children's matters, Mental Health Review Tribunal and Child Support Agency matters by way of:
  - concise initial advice to members of the public in respect of their rights and obligations under any Commonwealth or Northern Territory legislation;
  - duty lawyer services; and
  - where legal assistance has been granted, 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.
- Where appropriate, refer members of the public to appropriate private solicitors or providers of non-legal services.

Criminal Legal Practice

Overall Objectives:

- Provide assistance in relation to criminal matters under Northern Territory and Commonwealth legislation by way of:
  - concise initial advice to members of the public in respect of their rights and obligations at all offices and weekly prison visits;
  - duty lawyer services at all offices and monthly trip to Nhulunbuy;
  - where legal aid has been granted, 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; and
  - the largest appellate practice in the Northern Territory.
- Assistance is also provided to clients that are referred to the Commission by the Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander Legal Services.

Assignments Unit

Overall Objectives:

- Provide grants of aid to the in-house legal practice.
- Provide grants of aid to clients with private solicitors where:
  - applications are received directly from private practitioners;
  - the Commission is conflicted; or
  - the Commission does not have capacity in-house.
- Provide grants of aid to clients referred from the Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander Legal Services.
- Administer review and reconsideration process where grants are refused and applicants appeal decision.
- Administer the Family Dispute Resolution conferencing program.

Policy Unit

Overall objectives:

- Identify the gap between need and services.
- Review the impact of new legislation and infrastructure such as the increases in courts, magistrates and prosecution resources on services' ability to cope with growing demand.
- Lead and participate in networks which provide a resource for policy and law reform input.
- Identify priority areas of policy or law reform issues that are relevant to the Commission's client base.
- Coordinate the Commission's community legal education and outreach and early intervention programs.

Community Legal Education Unit

Overall Objectives:

- Fill the gap between need and services.
- Provide information to clients who would otherwise not access legal services.
- Collaborate with other legal services.
- Network with sector agencies and government.
- Inform the community about the range of services offered by the Commission.
- Develop community legal education projects and publications to meet specific legal needs to maximise the reach and impact on communities in need.

Aboriginal Outreach and Early Intervention Unit

Overall Objectives:

- Provide legal education, information, advice and assistance to those affected by the Northern Territory Emergency Response and to remote and socially excluded communities.

Corporate Services Unit

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.
- 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

Director

As at 30 June 2011 the following persons were employed:

Director	Suzan Cox QC, BA LLB, LLM
Personal Assistant	Jodie Bawden
Deputy Director	Meredith Harrison LLB

Darwin

Criminal Law Practice

Senior Solicitor	Ian Read LLB BEc
Managing Solicitor	Helena Blundell BA LLB
Solicitors	Louise Bennett LLB
	Ambrith Abayasekara BCom LLB
	Fiona Kepert BA LLB (Hon)
	Chrissy McConnel LLB
	Julia Lever-Davidson LLB
	Matthew Hubber LLB
Crime Section Supervisor	Haley Richardson
Legal Secretary	Mark Wright

Family and Civil Law Practice

Managing Solicitor	Jaquie Palavra Dip of law (SAB)
Solicitors	Anthony Snell LLB
	Rebecca Sharkey BA LLB (Hons)
	Annie Morgan LLB
	Gregg Stagg BA LLB
	Claire Wyatt BA LLB
Immigration Solicitors	Natalie Scattini LLB (on maternity leave)
	Alison Hanley BA LLB
	Tom Kaye BA LLB
Legal Secretaries	Georgina Kokkinidis
	Laura Sullivan
Administrative Support	MacGregor Cookson

Policy, Community Legal Education and Aboriginal Outreach

Policy Solicitor	Fiona Hussin LLB
Indigenous Community Liaison	Michael Petterson
Outreach Solicitor	Lauren Walker BA LLB, Grad Dip LP
Multicultural Educator	John Jablonka BA

Assignments Practice

Supervisor Grants & Assignments	Julie Franz LLB
Grants Manager	Tina Baylis
Administrative Assistant	Chloe Coleman-Harty
Administrative Support	Lucia Vorrasi
	Amy Dargan
Family Dispute Resolution Manager	Shirley Rutter LLB, GDLP, FDRP

Corporate Services

BUSINESS SERVICES

Finance Manager	Barbara Lelli CPA
Human Resource Manager	Leeanne Morris
Finance & Corporate Support Services	Karen Markos
	Jeanon Cubillo
	Amanda Bamford
IT Engineer	Robert Goldsmith Dip IT
Projects	Sue Reddy
Administration Support	Ashton Sealy
	Martina Siewert
	Michelle Espinoza

LIBRARY SERVICES

Library and Information Coordinator	Helen Edney
Library and Information Assistant	Monica Settele

Palmerston

Community Legal Education	Melinda Schroeder
Legal Secretary	Melissa Kirstenfeldt

Katherine

Solicitors	Philippa Jones LLB (Hons)
	Thomasin Opie BA LLB
Legal Secretaries	Cassie Lamb
	Bianca Aloisi

Tennant Creek

Manager	Wendy Vismans
Administrative Assistant	Kobie Dickson

Alice Springs

Managing Solicitor	Russell Goldflam BA BLEGS (Hons), Grad Dip E
Solicitors	Sally Bolton BA LLB (Hons)
	Carly Ingles LLB
	Rennie Anderson BA LLB
	Clement Ng BA LLB, Grad Dip LP
Legal Secretaries	Anne Coleman
	Julie Branson (on maternity leave)
	Tegan Garoni
Administrative Support	Teodora Yaneva
Indigenous Community Liaison	Digby Horwood
Outreach Solicitor	Kevin Banbury BDip LLBG

Domestic Violence Legal Service

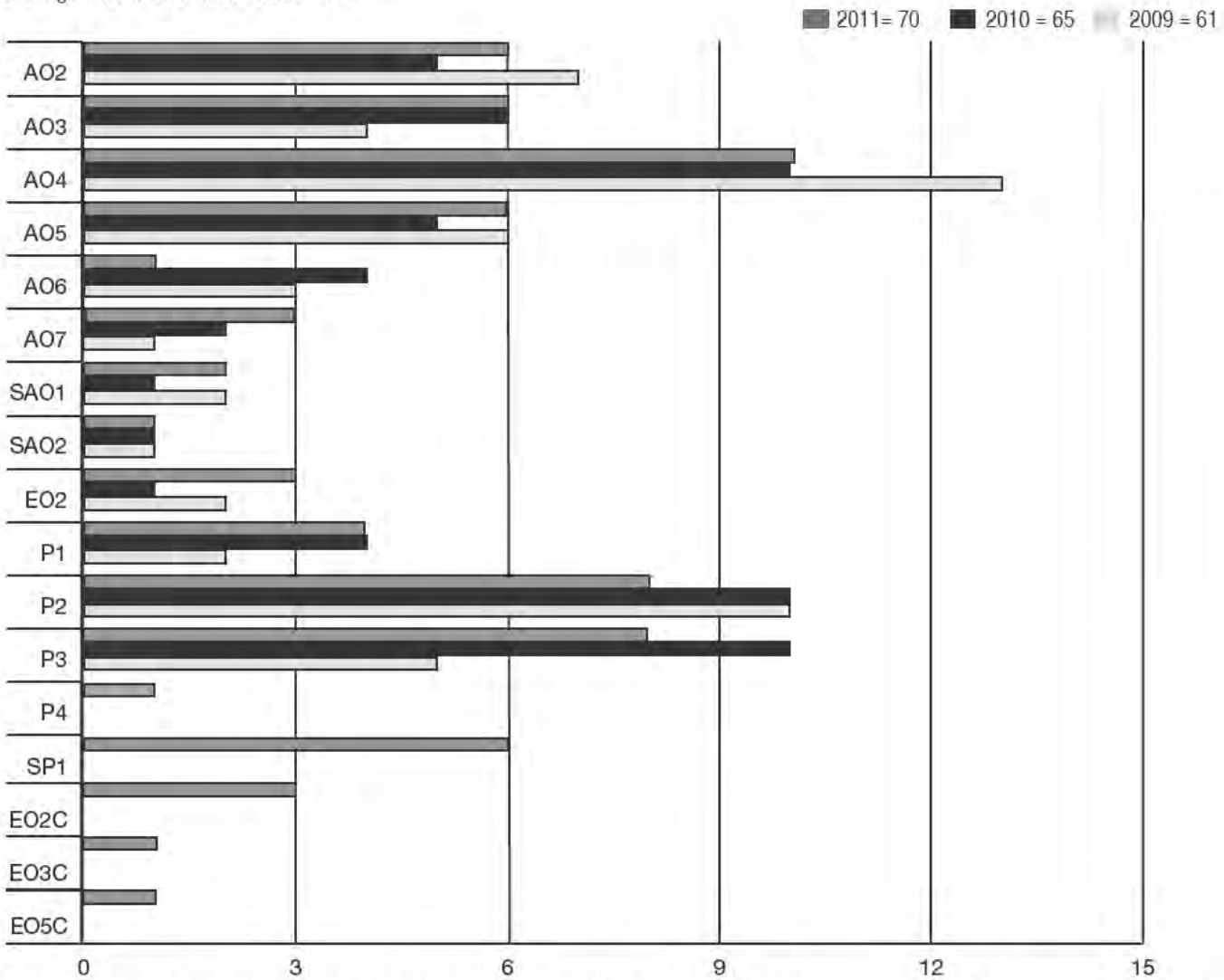
Managing Solicitor	Sue Phoo LLB BSc
Solicitor	Rachel Klesch LLB
Legal Secretary	Denise Oliver

Volunteers

Under Section 8 of the *Legal Aid Act (NT) 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 "recruited" 2 volunteers.

Staffing Levels

Staffing levels as at 30th June 2011 were



AO - Administrative Grades; **SAO** - Senior Administrative Grades, **EO** - Executive Grades; **P** - Professional Grades, **SP** - Senior Professional Grades (Legal Officers). All legal officers are on employment contracts.

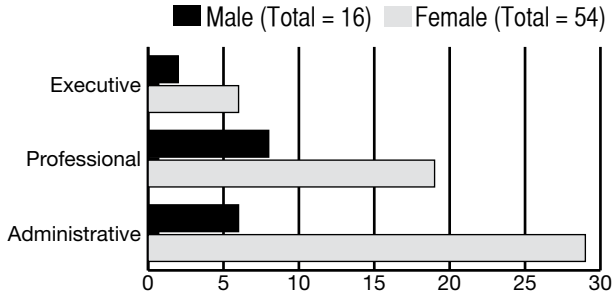
Resignations/Leave Without Pay

During the year 16 people left the Commission's employment.

Equal Employment Opportunity

Management monitors the internal environment to ensure that equal employment opportunities are present.

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:

- Alice Springs Alcohol Reference Panel
- Alice Springs People's Alcohol Action Coalition, Member
- Arid Lands Environment Centre
- Central Australian Human Research Ethics Committee, Legal Member
- Central Australian Youth Justice
- Classification Review Board, Review Board Member
- Darwin Community Legal Service, management committee member
- Darwin Gymnastic Club, President
- FORWAARD Aboriginal Corporation, Board Member
- Gray Primary School, School Council President
- Ilpurla Aboriginal Corporation, Board Member
- Law Society NT, Councillor
- LSNT Criminal Justice Committee
- Nightcliff Cricket Club, Committee Secretary and Public Officer
- North Australian Aboriginal Family Violence Family Legal
- Service (NAAFVLS), Board Member
- QUOTA, Secretary
- Top End Women's Legal Service, Management Committee
- Top End Women's Legal Service, Member and Volunteer
- Watch this Space, Secretary
- White Ribbon Day, Ambassador
- Youth Justice Advisory Committee, Member
- YWCA Darwin, Board Member
- YWCA Darwin, President

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:

- CJC Mediation Workshop
- CPA - Performance Management Workshops
- CPA Congress 2010
- CPD - Addressing a jury on behalf of the accused
- CPD - Advocacy Workshop
- CPD - Alcohol Reform
- CPD - An Aust Lawyer in Court of Timor Leste
- CPD - Appellate Advocacy
- CPD - Barrister wants from Lawyer
- CPD - Comparative Law
- CPD - Criminal Property Forfeiture
- CPD - Criminal Property Forfeiture - Tackling
- CPD - Damming the Rivers of Grog
- CPD - Discussion of examiniation & cross examin
- CPD - Electronic Document Management made easy
- CPD - Goal Setting Revisited
- CPD - Good Wods
- CPD - Legal Services Award
- CPD - Lost in the Court of Criminal Appeal
- CPD - New Committal Reforms
- CPD - New Income Management
- CPD - Peeling Carrot
- CPD - Refugee Task Force
- CPD - Refugees & Judicial Review
- CPD - The Ethics of Defence Advocacy
- CPD - Trust Accounts
- CPD - Uniform Evidence Act
- CPD - Victim-Offender Mediation Conference
- Criminal Lawyers Association of the NT - Extremes in Justice
- Cross Cultural Training
- DBE - HR Forum
- Effective Supervision
- Family Law Seminar - Law Council
- Family Law Working Group
- FDR - Family Conferencing Training
- First Aid Course
- Forum on Shared Care Arrangements after Separation
- Graduate Diploma of Family Dispute Resolution
- Grants Working Group
- Hour of Power - Business & Professional Women
- Info Line Training

- International Criminal Law Congress
- Intro to working with torture & trauma survivors
- Justice & Pro Bono Conference
- Masterclass - Board Governance
- Mental health first aid service
- NACLA Conference
- National CLC Conference
- National Family Law Conference
- National Rural Regional Law & Justice Conference
- National Youth Law & Jurvenile Justice
- NT Law Society - Advocacy Workshop
- Preventing Harrassement & Bullying for Managers
- Prevention of Violence Against Immigrant & Refug Wom
- Towards a just NT - Designing the future together
- Why Warriors - Bridging the Gap
- Working with Interpreters
- Family Relations Services Australia National Conference
- Grants Working Group
- How to coach your staff & achieve team accountability
- Independent Children's Lawyer Training Program
- Info Line Training
- International Children & Law Conference
- Judicial Review
- LAWA - Conferencing Program
- MIA - Character Provisions
- MIA - Citizenship
- MIA - Ethics and Professional Practice
- MIA - Parent Visas
- MIA - Unlawful Persons
- National CLC Conference
- National Indigenous Legal Conference
- News Ways to Respond to angry Clients
- NTER Future Directions Workshop
- QLAC & NTLAC Library - DB Textworks & WebPublisher
- Responding to Family Violence
- Skillpath - The Women's Conference
- Time & Stress Management
- Word Intermediate

Occupational Health and Safety

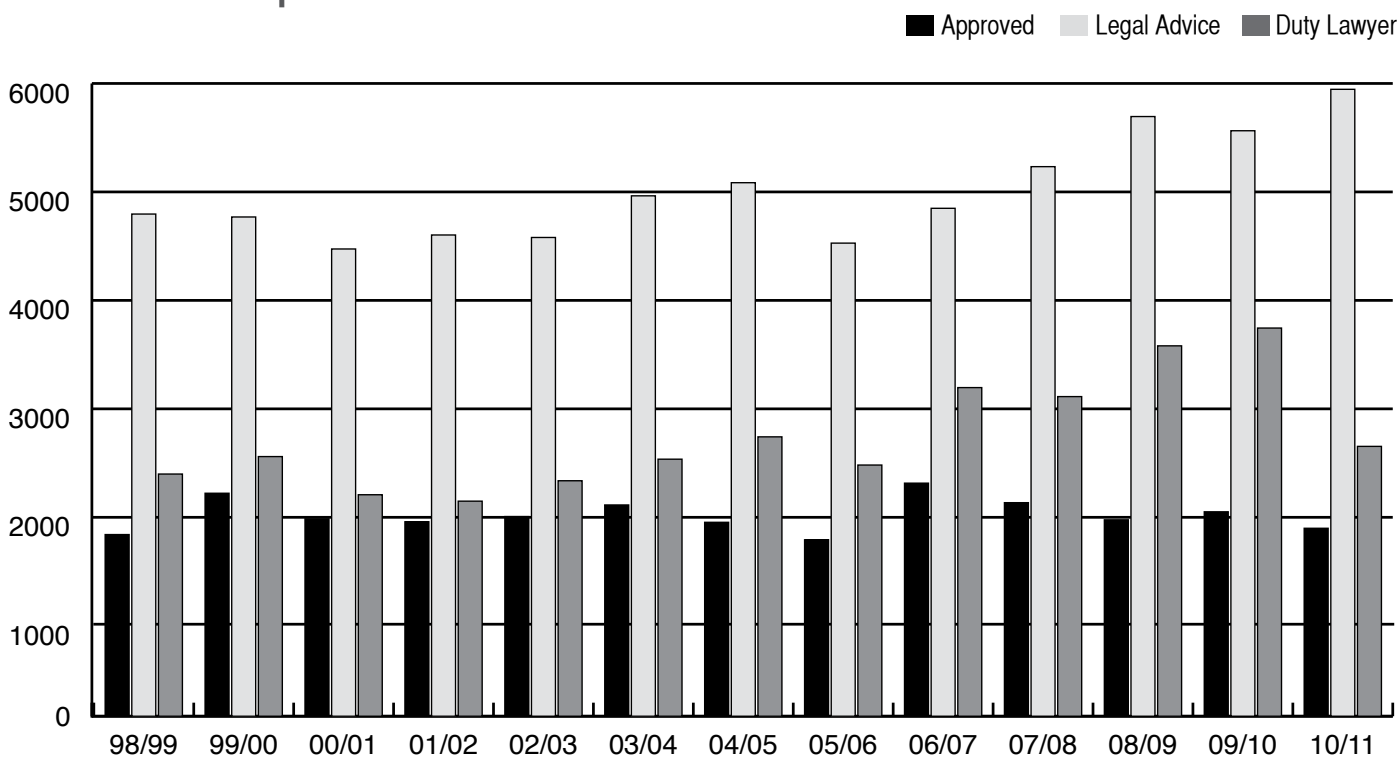
A tobacco free environment exists. Employees are encouraged to adopt safe working practices. The Commission encourages and promotes a healthy work-life balance.

Achievements

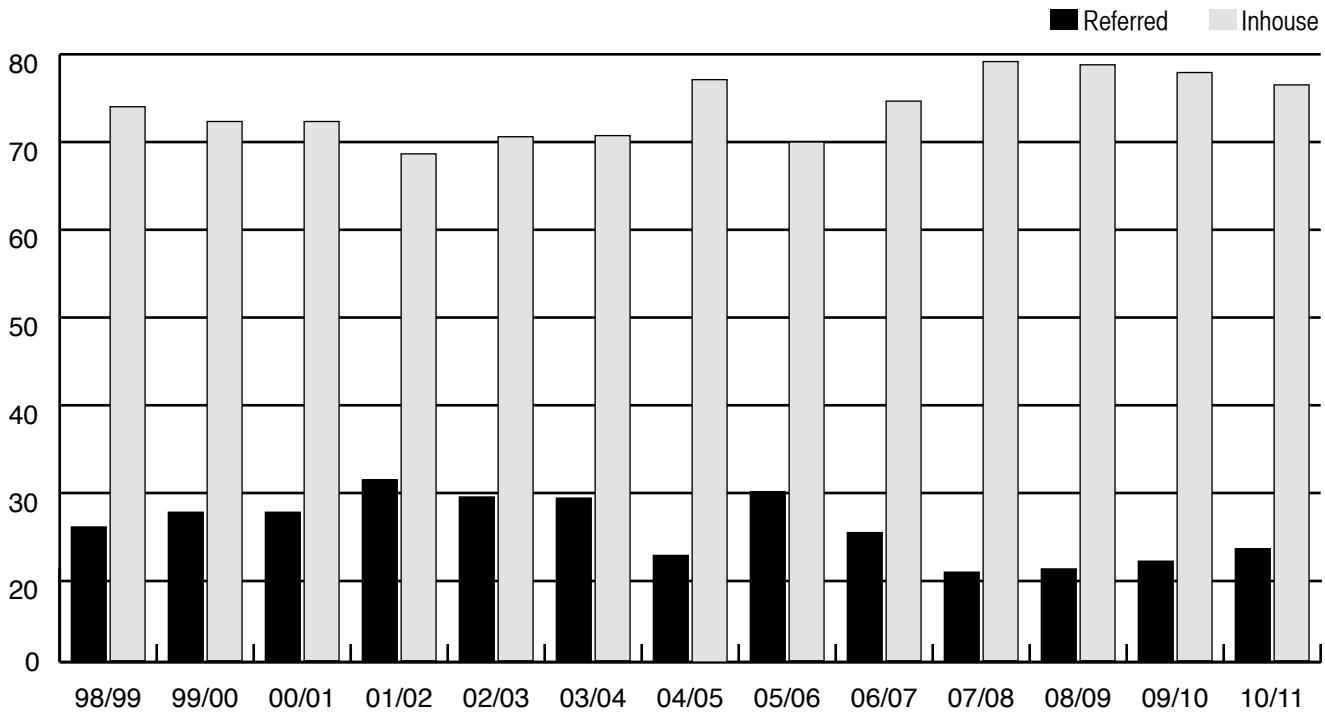
During the year:

- 2,142 applications for aid were received.
- 1,899 applications for aid were approved.
- 449 approved applications for aid were referred to private practitioners.
- 1,450 approved applications for aid were handled by Commission staff.
- 5,946 persons received free legal advice.
- 2,654 persons received advice and/or were represented by Duty Lawyers.
- 2,538 persons accessed the free telephone legal information service.

Prior Years Comparative



Referred: In-house Matters



Performance

Performance Indicators 2006-2007 to 2010-2011

	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11
Population	213,800	218,400	223,100	228,500	229, 200
Estimated No. of Clients	13,107	13,716	15,204	14,201	13,037
Per 1000 head of population					
Legal Advice Provided	22.68	23.96	25.53	24.35	25.94
Duty Lawyer Services	14.95	14.25	16.05	16.39	11.58
Applications for Legal Aid					
Received	12.54	11.29	10.33	10.22	9.35
Approved	10.83	9.78	8.86	8.98	8.29
Refused	1.50	1.28	1.26	1.02	1.04
Telephone Legal Information Clients	12.85	14.81	17.71	12.43	11.07
Estimated Clients	61.30	62.80	68.15	62.15	56.88

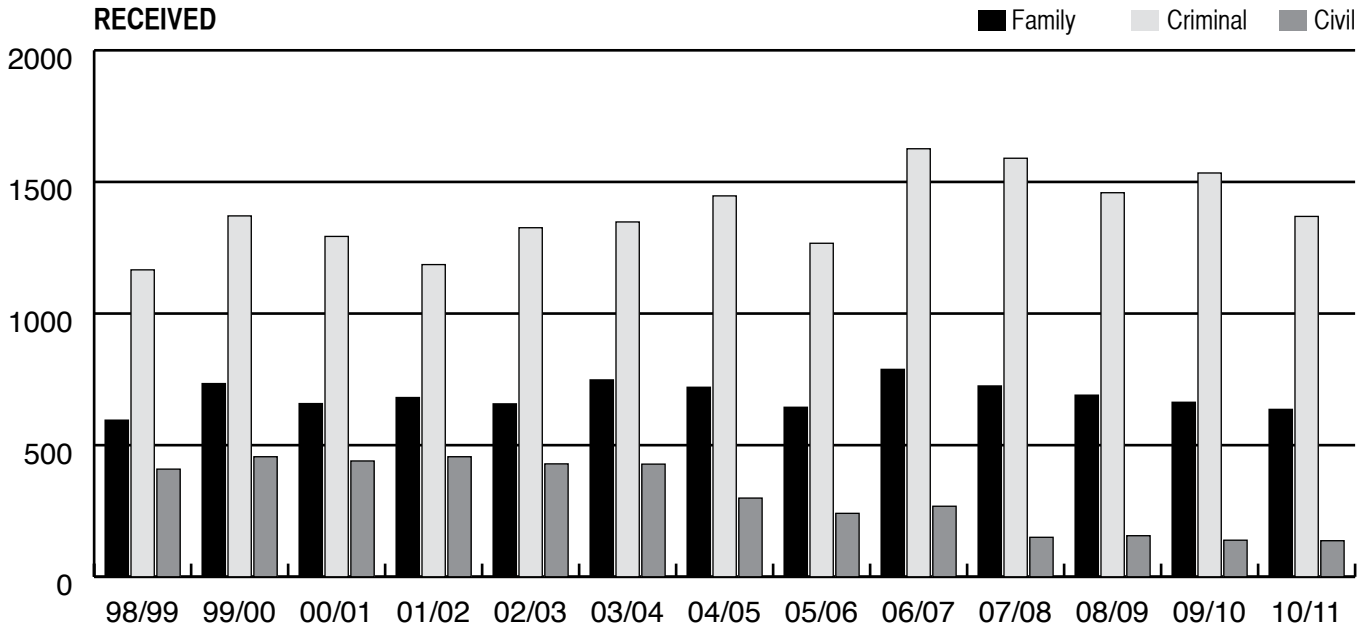
Output Statistics

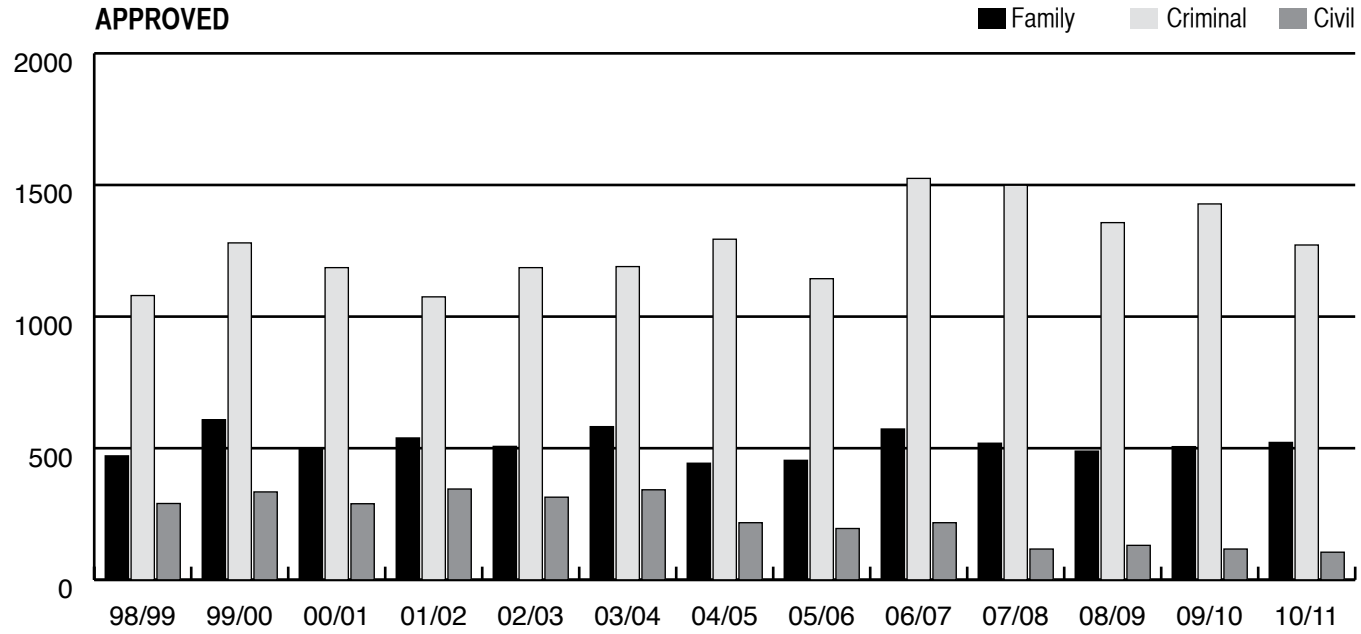
Summary of Major Activities

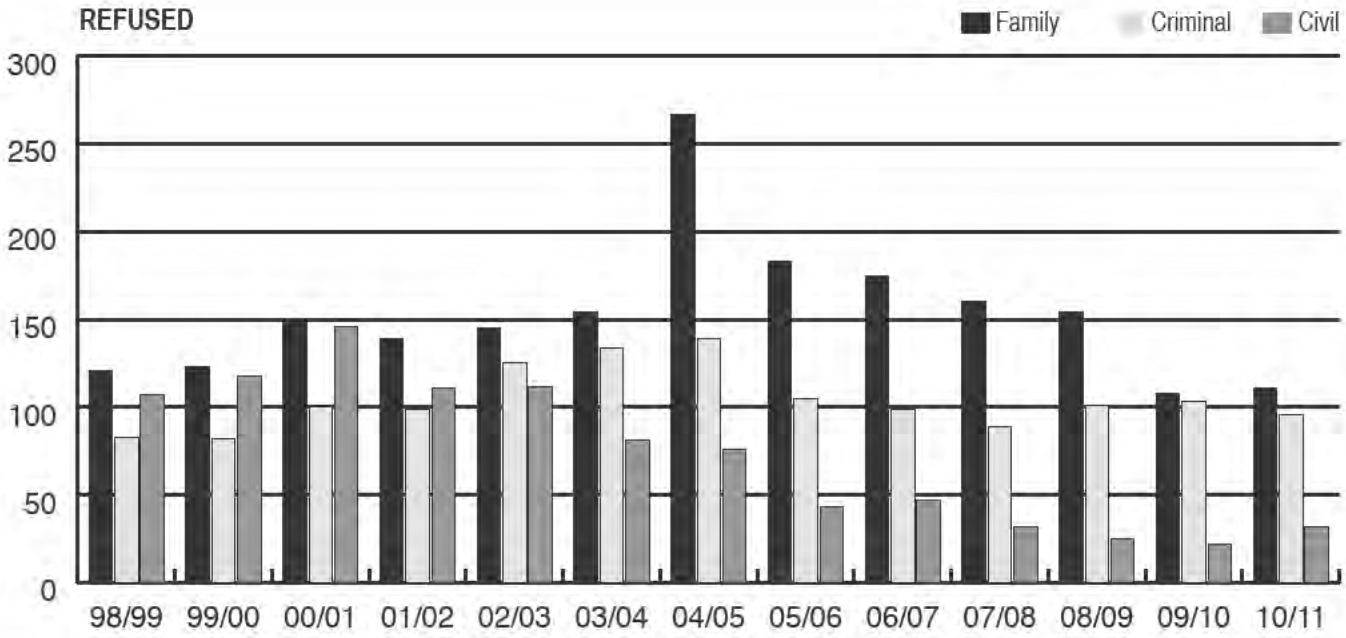
	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11
Legal aid service					
Applications for Aid:					
Received	2,682	2,465	2,305	2,336	2,142
Approved	2,315	2,135	1,977	2,051	1,899
Refused	321	280	280	233	239
Free Legal Advice Sessions	4,849	5,233	5,695	5,564	5,946
Duty Lawyer Services	3,196	3,113	3,581	3,745	2,654
Telephone Information Clients	2,747	3,235	3,951	2,841	2,538
Payments to private practitioners (includes disbursements)					
Referred Cases					
Family	693,854	631,103	475,652	558,228	477,985
Criminal	414,545	500,666	475,317	419,353	124,815
Civil	228,495	200,431	174,918	161,156	218,107
Domestic Violence	49,850	49,292	32,017	10,390	0
Duty Solicitor	108,798	115,125	113,900	112,341	143,000
Locums	53,822	51,681	61,963	93,811	127,681
Conflict Advice (previously paid as referrals)		44,745	39,850	36,290	38,848
Disbursements on inhouse cases					
Family	48,395	58,581	46,008	49,055	48,768
Criminal	717,752	580,552	445,823	434,329	219,791
Civil	11,079	3,630	6,600	23,026	44,095
Domestic Violence	955	3,757	1,213	0	0
TOTAL	**2,327,545**	**2,239,563**	**1,873,261**	**1,897,979**	**1,443,090**

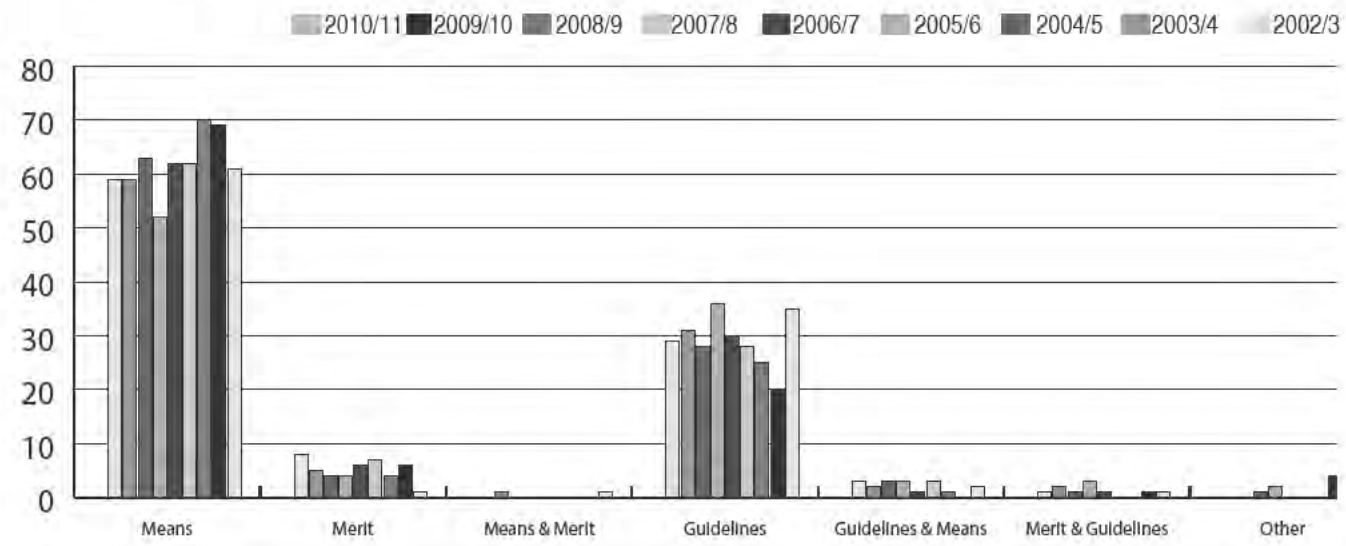
	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11
Applications approved and referred to private practitioners					
Family	292	235	237	273	302
Criminal	129	132	99	118	98
Civil	156	66	70	65	49
Domestic Violence	13	15	16	0	0
TOTAL	**590**	**448**	**422**	**456**	**449**
Applications approved and handled by commission staff					
Family	259	256	223	233	220
Criminal	1,396	1,367	1,258	1,310	1,174
Civil	61	51	61	52	56
Domestic Violence	9	13	13	0	0
TOTAL	**1,725**	**1,687**	**1,555**	**1,595**	**1,450**
Free advice sessions					
Family	1,735	1,931	1,905	1,954	1,174
Criminal	1,156	1,268	1,520	1,611	2,319
Civil	1,556	1,606	1,949	1,999	1,903
Domestic Violence	402	428	321	0	0
TOTAL	**4,849**	**5,233**	**5,695**	**5,564**	**5,946**
Duty lawyer services					
Family					
Advice Only	13	24	35	36	8
Advice and Representation	94	172	332	387	200
Other	1	1	3	4	1
Criminal					
Advice Only	94	176	257	344	109
Advice and Representation	2,616	2,339	2,486	2,721	2,277
Other	6	7	14	14	14
Domestic Violence	116	208	203	0	0
Civil					
Advice Only	7	4	8	3	1
Advice and Representation	248	181	243	235	44
Other	1	1	0	1	0
TOTAL	**3,196**	**3,113**	**3,581**	**3,745**	**2,654**

Applications for Aid






REFUSED
Family
Criminal
Civil
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
98/99
99/00
00/01
01/02
02/03
03/04
04/05
05/06
06/07
07/08
08/09
09/10
10/11


REASONS FOR REFUSAL
2010/11
2009/10
2008/9
2007/8
2006/7
2005/6
2004/5
2003/4
2002/3
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
Means
Merit
Means & Merit
Guidelines
Guidelines & Means
Merit & Guidelines
Other

Early Intervention and Prevention

National Partnership Agreement

The National Partnership Agreement (NPA) on Legal Services commenced in July 2010 and has the objective of:

A national system of legal assistance that is integrated, efficient and cost-effective, and focussed on providing services for disadvantaged Australians in accordance with access to justice principles of accessibility, appropriateness, equity, efficiency and effectiveness.

The outcomes are specified in the NPA at clause 16:

The Agreement will contribute to the following reforms across the legal assistance sector and to successful outcomes to be achieved by legal aid commissions providing efficient and cost-effective legal aid services for disadvantaged Australians in accordance with Commonwealth legal aid services priorities:

a) *Earlier resolution of legal problems for disadvantaged Australians that, when appropriate, avoids the need for litigation*
b) *More appropriate targeting of legal assistance services to people who experience, or are at risk of experiencing, social exclusion*
c) *Increased collaboration and cooperation between legal assistance providers themselves and with other service providers to ensure clients receive 'joined up' service provision to address legal and other problems, and*
d) *Strategic national response to critical challenges and pressures affecting the legal assistance sector.*

Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission commissioned a report which was completed in January 2011 and made recommendations for the Commission on the adaptation of its services as required under the NPA to enhance early intervention and prevention services. The Report has been of assistance to the Commission in both acknowledging the work that the Commission is already doing in relation to early intervention and prevention work and also in guiding the Commission in the revision and adaptation of it service to increase and capture the provision of preventative and early intervention services.

Measures the Commission has undertaken include:

- Enhancement of data capturing mechanisms in relation to Preventative and Early Intervention Services, including Community Legal Education ('CLE') and Referrals.
- Development of a specialist legal information 'Helpline'.
- Develop of an Information and Referral Strategy for the Commission.

The Commission's Strategic Plan, which was finalised in April 2011 identified a focus on data capture in relation to early intervention activities. Strategies are being put in place to maximise this, in particular the consideration of IT software and hardware required for capture by frontline staff.

The Commission has a new CLE officer position to develop and promote early intervention and prevention opportunities using emerging technologies.

The Commission is involved in a number of collaborative exercises including:

- Family Law Pathways Networks
- CLE Networks
- Indigenous consumer networks
- Housing and Legal Services Forum
- Refugee and Migrant Networks
- Financial counsellors Networks

- General Community Sector Networks
- Youth Networks
- Shelter and Homeless support networks

The Commission continues to revise and consider opportunities to collaborate with other relevant agencies and looks forward to involvement in the upcoming biannual Jurisdictional Forums established under the National Partnership Agreement.

Community Legal Education

The Commission was involved in a range of CLE activities during the year including:

- NAIDOC information booth as part of the Family Day
- Information Booth at Garma Festival Expo
- Presentation to classes as Sanderson Middle School
- Presentation to students at Centralian College
- Stall at the Darwin City Council's Happiness & Wellbeing Market
- Presentation to staff at St Vincent de Paul.
- Law Week and Youth Week activities
- Presentation to classes at Taminmin High School
- Stall at Raintree Park for Law Week
- Stall at Homeless Connect Expo
- Stall at the Barunga Festival
- Stall at Katherine Community Expo

The Commission continued to coordinate the NT CLE Network which brings together agency representatives working in the area of Community Legal Education. A major focus of the network during the year was mandatory reporting for domestic violence and child abuse and concerns about how to ensure there was access to information about these new laws. During the year a Central Australian Network was established with the support and encouragement of the NT Network.

The Commission was represented at the National Legal Aid Community Legal Education Working Group meeting held in Adelaide on 12 & 13 May 2011. The meeting discussed current national projects being developed and identified projects that could possibly be expanded to be national projects for all Commissions.

Indigenous Outreach Project

The Commission conducts an outreach project from our offices in Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs, which provides information sessions, referrals, education workshops, legal advice and minor assistance to people in prescribed communities.
Networking and liaison with other agencies is an important part of the Outreach activities, as it is vital to be up to date on the operations, scope and guidelines of related program areas. We have also arranged and participated in many inter-agency visits to communities where particular areas of needs have been identified.

CLE and Outreach workers from offices across the Commission met to discuss the CLE program on 30 March 2011. The meeting aimed to draw commonalities and links between diverse work areas, discuss evaluation mechanisms and, where possible, establish practices and procedures.

Whilst maintaining advice and minor assistance work, the Outreach team continue to advocate to address systemic issues. Priorities identified include:

- Transport to court and increasing remote court sittings;
- Facilitating repayment of fines; and
- Remote housing.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities CLE Project

This is a small project which is comprised of a part time Solicitor and a part-time Multi-Cultural Educator. The project commenced with the development of the CALD CLE Kit and then the implementation of the CALD CLE Project.

Community Engagement
The community reference group met and informal input from members guides CALD service delivery, along collaboration between networks among legal and CALD service providers especially TEWLS, DCLS, Anglicare, Melaleuca, MCNT and Red Cross.

Outreach
Weekly outreach sessions take place from 1-4 pm Fridays at the Multicultural Council at Malak. This service has continued to promote legal aid services to CALD communities, gather ideas for activities, and provide information and referrals in an accessible community setting.

The project had a presence in partnership with other services at a range of events including:
- Adult Migrant English Program Expo
- Harmony Day
- World Refugee Day

Commission Development
A Harmony Day lunch was organised for all staff at the Darwin office and training has been provided for Infoline staff on working with CALD clients and identifying the need for an interpreter. During the past year the CALD project has raised its profile within the Commission.

Community Legal Education and Training
Sessions were provided to the Families in Cultural Transition (FICT) program at Melaleuca, for Bhutanese and Congolese communities on Family law issues including Domestic Violence and Child protection.

Burmese and Bhutanese groups arranged their own CLE sessions using NTLAC's 'My Family and the Law' package.

Training was delivered using the CALD Kit to 40 interpreters from Interpreter Service of the NT in April / May. This highlighted the importance of staying in contact with established migrant communities. Even established migrants still have many legal issues that may be unmet due to lack of access to information and services. This led to a spike in attendance at Malak outreach sessions on Friday afternoon.

Discussions during outreach service delivery sessions led to a partnership with the Multicultural Youth Association of the NT to deliver a peer education project for members of the Sudanese, Congolese and Liberian youth associations on their rights with police and rights in the family. A Crime lawyer assisted in designing and delivering the session on police and a Family lawyer developed the session on Family. The presentation also included a session on peer education tools and strategies.

A CLE session on 'Access to Legal Services in Australia' was delivered to a group of Timorese Soldiers studying at CDU.

Resources
A great deal of time has been spent on the National Legal Aid Project 'Getting to know the Law in My Country' (subsequently 'What's the Law?'). The resources developed from this project will be of great value.

" Me and my rights" Photo-story activity, World refugee day 18 June.

Top End Family Pathways Network

The Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission received funding as the Auspice Organisation for the Top End Family Law Pathways Network, and the Commission employs the Project Officer of the Network. The Network operated under the guidance of a Steering Committee for the first time. The Network facilitated regular meetings of service providers in the family law sector throughout the year. Guest speakers and presentations by service providers were conducted at meetings along with information sharing by Network members. The Network produced a quarterly Calendar of Programs for Families and information was regularly distributed by the Project Officer to members via the email network. The Network held several major events throughout the year, including:

Mandatory Reporting Hypothetical

This event was held on 12 October 2010 to educate service providers and workers on their mandatory reporting obligations in regard to domestic violence and child protection. Two separate panels of experts were guided by a facilitator through a case study in each area of law, and attendees were able to ask a range of questions relevant to their work. Answers and information was then provided by the relevant expert on the panel.

Mega Training Day III

The third Mega Training Day was held in Darwin on 18 November 2010. The event involved service providers setting up expo style information stalls. A case study was used to set the scene of a family in crisis or need of assistance. Trainees registered to undertake the training and were divided into groups. Each group visited the information booths to gather information from service providers about how they could assist the family depicted in the case study. Trainees were able to take information from service providers back to their workplace to share with colleagues.

Access to Justice in the Family Law System: Taking a Broader View
This Family Law training day was held in Darwin on 27 June 2011 for legal practitioners and family dispute resolution practitioners. Simon Curran from Relationships Australia Victoria and Shirley Rutter, from the Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission conducted the training. The training focused on issues such as The Strategic Framework for Access to Justice; impacts of separation and conflict on children; role of the Independent Children's Lawyer; developmental stages of children; child focused & child inclusive practice; high conflict clients; client behaviour; a panel discussion on compulsory mediation and discussion of a case regarding privilege and admissibility.

Welcome Reception for New Federal Magistrate
The Territory welcomed Federal Magistrate Leanne Turner in 2010 and a welcome reception was hosted by the Network to welcome her and introduce her to practitioners and service providers on 9 September 2010. The event was held in the Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission's family dispute resolution conferencing suites and was well attended by the sector.

Legal Information Line

This service was expanded to include staff in regional offices as operators. Fortnightly training sessions are provided and regional offices are linked in by telephone and/or web to participate in the training. The Commission plans to restructure this service in the coming year to more closely align it with the NPA.

Policy and Law Reform
The Commission continued to engage in policy activities and law reform issues as relevant to the legal service sector in the NT. Some of the key areas of involvement include:

- The development of an MOU between NTLAC and the North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency to clarify referral procedures.
- The development of an MOU between NTLAC and the Family Relationships Centre.
- The reinstatement of the MOU between NTLAC and CAALAS.
- Collaboration on a proposal for a Tenancy law service which has been submitted to the NTG on behalf of relevant NT Legal Services.
- Submissions on legal and legal policy reform proposals, including:
    - The review of the *Residential Tenancies Act*
    - Development of 'Secure Care' facilities in the NT
    - Child Protection Inquiry
    - Objection to additional liquor licenses in Alice Springs
    - Alcohol reforms, including SMART Court
    - Exclusions to the SMART Court
    - Criminal Code Amendment (Criminal Damage) Bill
    - Youth Justice initiatives in Central Australia
    - Vulnerable Witnesses legislation
    - Stakeholder and community participation in law reform
    - Proposed Public Housing Safety Officers
    - Review of the NT Youth Justice System

Review
A review of the Commission is to be undertaken by an independent team commissioned by the Commonwealth and Northern Territory Governments. The Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission staff have been assisting the review team by providing them with information.

Emerging Legal Need
The Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission staff have participated in a series of meetings with the Law Society of the NT, NT Housing, Department of Justice and FaHCSIA representatives in relation to

the need for an NT Tenancy law service to assist tenants who live in remote locations in the Northern Territory. This need remains unmet.

A significant emerging area of work is the judicial review of adverse decisions on behalf of offshore asylum seekers. The Commission has had ongoing communications and discussions with the Darwin Asylum Support Seekers Support and Advocacy Network and the Law Society of the NT in relation to legal and non-legal support services and unmet need.

Information Act 2003 (NT)

The following information is held by the Commission:

Publications information	Personal information	Other information
NTLAC Guidelines and Scale of Costs	Client	Financial
NTCLAF Guidelines	Personnel	Statistical
Community Legal Education		Policies
Booklets (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

Northern Territory 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

PALMERSTON
Shop 6, Goyder Centre, 25 Chung Wah Terrace

KATHERINE
20 Second Street

TENNANT CREEK
Shop 3, 163 Paterson 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	A $30.00 fee and a 60¢ per page charge for photocopying of documents of more than 20 pages may apply

Applications

	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11
Applications Received	1	2	14	20	27
Applications Approved	1	2	13	19	26
Applications Pending	0	0	0	0	0
Referred to another agency	0	0	1	0	1
Fees Waived	1	2	11	14	19

Domestic Violence Legal Service

Overall Objectives:

Effective from April 2009

The Territory now funds the Commission to operate, outside of its family law practice, a separate independent domestic violence legal service. This enables the Commission to offer a greater range of family law services to clients inhouse. The managing solicitor of the Service is provided with guidance, support and supervision by the Deputy Director of the Commission as required. To avoid conflicts the Service maintains its own client database independent of the Commission's client database.

The Service provides information, referrals, advice clinics, a duty lawyer service and legal representation. The Service also participates in relevant forums, community legal education and policy input.

Output Statistics

	08/09	09/10	10/11
Summary of major activities			
Total services provided			
Applications for Aid:			
Received	19	172	124
Approved	19	172	124
Refused	0	0	0
Free Legal Advice Sessions	49	465	515
Duty Lawyer Services	33	388	398

Northern Territory
Legal Aid Commission

Financials 2010 - 2011

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

This year the Commission's operations resulted in a deficit of $767,344
The table below shows the percentage distribution of expenditure incurred and revenue earned from 2003-2011.

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
EXPENDITURE								
PERSONNEL COSTS	47.46	45.14	44.33	45.61	47.41	52.53	54.51	56.71
ADMINISTRATION COSTS	17.83	19.44	18.90	19.86	22.13	22.19	22.24	22.52
LEGAL COSTS	31.71	34.42	33.64	29.45	25.12	20.91	19.26	17.39
MINOR ASSETS	1.78	0.11	1.81	2.24	2.66	1.47	1.40	1.23
DEPRECIATION	1.22	0.89	1.32	2.84	2.68	2.90	2.59	2.15
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	**100.00**	**100.00**	**100.00**	**100.00**	**100.00**	**100.00**	**100.00**	**100.00**
REVENUE								
COMMONWEALTH	40.29	43.05	43.99	44.08	40.00	41.17	41.34	42.74
NT GOVERNMENT	38.54	33.12	39.85	40.86	37.47	39.27	39.41	39.28
COMMONWEALTH OTHER	8.25	13.00	4.97	3.52	13.85	11.13	10.03	9.52
NT GOVERNMENT OTHER	2.72	3.40	3.13	3.09	2.72	3.77	4.50	4.48
TOTAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING	**89.80**	**92.57**	**91.94**	**91.55**	**94.04**	**95.34**	**95.28**	**96.02**
CONTRIBUTIONS AND RECOVERED COSTS	6.52	4.82	5.24	5.39	2.82	2.26	3.31	2.00
INTEREST EARNED	2.70	2.36	2.56	2.88	2.85	2.09	1.21	1.33
OTHER	0.98	0.25	0.26	0.18	0.29	0.31	0.20	0.65
TOTAL SELF-GENERATED	**10.20**	**7.43**	**8.06**	**8.45**	**5.96**	**4.66**	**4.72**	**3.98**

GENERAL PURPOSE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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Auditor-General

Independent Auditor's Report to the Attorney-General

Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission

Year Ended 30 June 2011

I have audited the accompanying financial report of Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission, which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2011, statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flow for the year then ended, accompanying notes to the financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2011.

The Director's Responsibility 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 and for such internal controls as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

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

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation 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 Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission as at 30 June 2011, and of its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards.

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

7 December 2011

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

STATEMENT BY DIRECTORS

In the opinion of the Directors 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 2011, 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.

Dated this 24th day of November 2011.

Suzan Cox QC
Director

Meredith Harrison
Deputy Director

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2011

	Notes	2011	2010
		$	$
Revenue	2	**9,034,053**	9,004,803
Depreciation expense	3	**(210,241)**	(254,697)
Salaries and employee benefits expense		**(5,558,230)**	(5,371,781)
Legal Expense		**(1,704,712)**	(1,898,380)
Administration Expense		**(1,304,977)**	(1,390,552)
Other expenses		**(1,023,237)**	(939,259)
Total Expenses		**(9,801,397)**	(9,854,669)
Net loss for the period		**(767,344)**	(849,866)
Other comprehensive income and equipment		**0**	0
Total comprehensive income (loss) for the period		**(767,344)**	(849,866)

Total comprehensive income (loss) for the period is attributable to the owner.

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

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AT 30 JUNE 2011

	Notes	2011 $	2010 $
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	4	**777,768**	1,507,027
Trade receivables	5	**151,632**	68,177
Investments	6	**1,430,720**	1,433,679
Other receivables	7	**179,265**	142,496
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		**2,539,385**	3,151,379
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, plant and equipment	8	**1,082,610**	1,185,534
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		**1,082,610**	1,185,534
TOTAL ASSETS		**3,621,995**	4,336,913
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	9	**293,527**	333,567
Provisions	10	**918,350**	857,505
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		**1,211,877**	1,191,072
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Provisions	10	**221,081**	189,460
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		**221,081**	189,460
TOTAL LIABILITIES		**1,432,958**	1,380,532
NET ASSETS		**2,189,037**	2,956,381
EQUITY			
Retained Earnings	17	**(244,520)**	2,044,571
Reserves	16	**2,433,557**	911,810
TOTAL EQUITY		**2,189,037**	2,956,381

The Statement of Financial Position is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements.

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOW
YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2011

	Notes	2011 $	2010 $
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Cash Receipts in the course of operations		**156,376**	342,330
Interest received in the course of operations		**120,518**	109,231
Grants received in the course of operations		**8,636,934**	8,624,918
Cash Payments in the course of operations		**(9,538,729)**	(9,378,839)
NET CASH FLOWS FROM/(USED IN) OPERATING ACTIVITIES	13	**(624,901)**	(302,360)
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Net (Payments)/Proceeds for property, plant and equipment		**(107,317)**	(23,280)
Net (Payments)/Receipts for investments		**2,959**	205,282
NET CASH FLOWS (USED IN)/FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES		**(104,358)**	182,002
Net (decrease)/increase in cash and cash equivalents		**(729,259)**	(120,358)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period		**1,507,027**	1,627,385
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT THE END OF THE PERIOD	4	**777,768**	1,507,027

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

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY
YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2011

	Notes	Reserves	Retained Earnings	Total
		$	$	$
Balance at 30 June 2009		**2,472,257**	**1,333,990**	**3,806,247**
Loss for the year		0	(849,866)	(849,866)
Other comprehensive income		0	0	0
Total comprehensive income		0	(849,866)	(849,866)
Transaction with owners in their capacity as owners:				
Transfer from reserves		(1,560,447)	1,560,447	0
Balance at 30 June 2010	16 & 17	**911,810**	**2,044,571**	**2,956,381**
Loss for the year		0	(767,344)	(767,344)
Other comprehensive income		0	0	0
Total comprehensive income		0	1,277,227	2,189,037
Transaction with owners in their capacity as owners:		0	0	0
Transfer from Reserves		1,521,747	(1,521,747)	0
Balance at 30 June 2011		**2,433,557**	**(244,520)**	**2,189,037**

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 2011

1. Summary of significant accounting policies

The Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission (the "Commission") was established on 11 June 1990 by the *Legal Aid Act (NT) 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 9-11 Cavenagh Street, Darwin.

b) Number of Employees

The Commission had 70 employees as at 30 June 2011 (2010 – 65 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.

The following new and revised Standards and Interpretations have not resulted in significant changes to the financial statements.

Amendments	Title
AASB 2009-5	Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards - Annual Improvements Process
AASB 2009-8	Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards - Group Cash-Settled Share-based Payment Transactions
AASB 2009-9	Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Additional Exemptions for First-time Adopters
AASB 2009-10	Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards - Classification of Rights Issues
Interpretation 19 AASB 2009-13	Amendment to Australian Accounting Standards - Extinguishing Financial Liabilities with Equity Instruments
AASB 2010-1	Limited Exemption from Comparative AASB 7 Disclosures for First-time Adopters - Amendment to AASB 1
AASB 2010-3	Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards arising from the Annual Improvements Project

The following new and revised Standards and Interpretations have recently been issued or amended but are not yet effective; however, are available for early adoption. The Commission has elected early adoption for the reporting period ended 30 June 2011. There is no financial impact from the early adoption as the standard relates purely to disclosure.

Amendments	Title	Effective on or after
AASB 124 (revised) AASB 2009-12	Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards - Related Party Disclosures	1 January 2011
AASB 8 (as amended) and AASB 2009-12	Operating Segments as amended and the consequential amendments to other standards resulting from its issue.	1 January 2011

Other new and revised Standards and Interpretations that have been issued or amended but are not yet effective, have not been adopted for the reporting period ended 30 June 2011. The Commission will apply these standards for the annual reporting periods beginning on or after the effective dates. It is expected that there will be no material financial impact from the application of these standards as they are primarily disclosure related.

d) 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).

e) Cash

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.

f) Financial Assets

The Commission classifies its financial assets in the following categories:

- 'financial assets at fair value through profit or loss',
- 'held-to-maturity investments', and
- 'loans and receivables'.

The classification depends on the nature and purpose of the financial assets and is determined at the time of initial recognition. Financial assets are recognised and derecognised upon 'trade date'.

Effective interest method

The effective interest method is a method of calculating the amortised cost of a financial asset and of allocating interest income over the relevant period. The effective interest rate is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash receipts through the expected life of the financial asset, or, where appropriate, a shorter period. Income is recognised on an effective interest rate basis.

Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss

Financial assets classified as held for trading are included in the category "financial assets at fair value through profit or loss". These are classified as held for trading if they are acquired for the purpose of selling in the near term with the intention of making a profit. Gains or losses on financial assets held for trading are recognised in profit or loss and the related assets are classified as current assets in the balance sheet.

Held-to-maturity investments

Non-derivative financial assets with fixed or determinable payments and fixed maturity dates that the Commission has the positive intent and ability to hold to maturity are classified as held-to-maturity investments. Held-to-maturity investments are recorded at amortised cost using the effective interest method less impairment, with revenue recognised on an effective yield basis.

Loans and receivables

Trade receivables, loans and other receivables that have fixed or determinable payments that are not quoted in an active market are classified as 'loans and receivables'. They are included in current assets, except for maturities greater than 12 months after the balance sheet date. These are classified as non current assets. Loans and receivables are measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method less impairment. Interest is recognised by applying the effective interest rate to the relevant balances.

Impairment of financial assets

Financial assets are assessed for impairment at each balance date.

Financial assets held at amortised cost - If there is objective evidence that an impairment loss has been incurred for loans and receivables or held to maturity investments held at amortised cost, the amount of the loss is measured as the difference between the asset's carrying amount and the present value of estimated future cash flows discounted at the asset's original effective interest rate. The carrying amount is reduced by way of an allowance account. The loss is recognised in the Income Statement.

g) Financial Liabilities

Financial liabilities are classified as either financial liabilities 'at fair value through profit or loss' or 'other financial liabilities.' Financial liabilities are recognised and derecognised upon 'trade date'.

Financial liabilities at fair value through profit or loss

Financial liabilities at fair value through profit or loss are initially measured at fair value. Subsequent fair value adjustments are recognised in profit or loss. The net gain or loss recognised in profit or loss incorporates any interest paid on the financial liability.

Other financial liabilities

Other financial liabilities are initially measured at fair value, net of transaction costs.

Other financial liabilities are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, with interest expense recognised on an effective yield basis.

The effective interest method is a method of calculating the amortised cost of a financial liability and of allocating interest expense over the relevant period. The effective interest rate is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash payments through the expected life of the financial liability, or, where appropriate, a shorter period.

Supplier and other payables

Supplier and other payables are recognised at amortised cost. Liabilities are recognised to the extent that the goods or services have been received (and irrespective of having been invoiced).

h) Contingent Assets and Liabilities

Contingent Assets and Contingent Liabilities are not recognised in the Balance Sheet but are reported in the relevant schedules and notes. They may arise from uncertainty as to the existence of an asset or liability or represent an asset or liability in respect of which the amount cannot be reliably measured. Contingent assets are disclosed when settlement is probable but not virtually certain and contingent liabilities are disclosed when settlement is greater than remote.

i) Acquisition of Assets

Assets are recorded at cost on acquisition except as stated below. The cost of acquisition includes the fair value of assets transferred in exchange and liabilities undertaken.

j) 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.

k) 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:

Fixed Assets	2011	2010
Buildings	**10 %**	10 %
Leasehold Improvements	**30 %**	30 %
Plant & Equipment	**20 % - 33 %**	20 % - 33 %

l) 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 expected 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.

m) 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.

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.

n) 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.

o) 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.

p) 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.

q) 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 Cash Flow Statement 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.

r) 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.

s) 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.

2. Revenue

		2011 $	2010 $
Grant revenue from	- NT	**3,954,000**	3,954,000
	- Commonwealth	**4,510,000**	4,546,899
	- Others	**209,703**	79,178
Rendering of services revenue			
	- Client contributions	**78,813**	112,155
	- Recovered costs	**102,016**	185,339
Other revenue	- Interest	**120,518**	109,231
	- Others	**59,002**	18,001
		9,034,052	9,004,803

3. Expenses

Depreciation expense		**210,241**	254,697
Salaries and employee benefits expense		**5,558,230**	5,371,781
Administration costs		**1,304,977**	1,389,140
Legal costs		**1,704,712**	1,898,380
Other expenses	- Minor assets	**120,897**	138,298
	- Operating lease expenditure	**902,340**	802,373
		9,801,397	9,854,669

4. Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash on hand	**1,450**	1,450
Cash at bank	**766,318**	1,495,577
Advance account	**10,000**	10,000
	777,768	1,507,027

5. Trade Receivables

	2011	2010
	$	$
Current		
Trade debtors	**102,687**	3,452
Less Provision for Doubtful Debts	**(22,407)**	0
	80,280	3,452
Recoveries Receivable	**54,236**	49,052
Less Provision for Doubtful Debts	**(55)**	0
	54,181	49,052
Interest Receivable	**4,656**	0
GST Receivable	**12,515**	15,673
Other Receivable	**0**	0
	151,632	68,177
The aging of the receivables are as follows:		
- up to 3 months	**140,030**	55,804
- 3 to 12 months	**18,556**	10,870
- 1 to 2 years	**15,393**	400
- 2 to 4 years	**115**	1,103
- more than 4 years	**0**	0
	174,094	68,177
The aging of provision for doubtful debts are as follows:		
- 3 months to 2 years	**22,462**	
- 2 to 4 years	**0**	0
- more than 4 years	**0**	0
	22,462	0

6. Investments

Current		
Westpac Banking Commission Bills – at cost	**1,430,720**	1,433,679

7. Other Receivables

		2011	2010
		$	$
Prepayments-	- Insurances	**55,692**	26,843
	- Rent	**69,335**	57,993
	- Salaries	**8,049**	12,166
	- Other	**36,985**	36,358
Accrued revenue		**9,204**	9,136
		179,265	142,496

8. Property, plant and equipment

Freehold land at fair value	**290,000**	290,000
	290,000	290,000
Buildings – at fair value	**674,545**	674,545
Less: Accumulated depreciation	**(280,314)**	(236,578)
	394,231	437,967
Leasehold improvements – at cost	**725,125**	683,528
Less: Accumulated depreciation	**(466,461)**	(385,028)
	258,664	298,500
Plant and equipment – at cost	**793,964**	756,348
Less: Accumulated depreciation	**(654,249)**	(597,280)
	139,715	159,068
Total property, plant and equipment – net book value		
Cost	**1,519,089**	1,439,875
Fair value	**964,545**	964,545
	2,483,634	2,404,420
Accumulated depreciation	**(1,401,024)**	(1,218,886)
	1,082,610	1,185,534

8. Property, Plant and Equipment (continued)

	2011	2010
	$	$
(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	**290,000**	290,000
Net amount of revaluation increments	**0**	0
Carrying amount at end of year	**290,000**	290,000
Buildings		
Carrying amount at beginning of year	**437,469**	477,480
Net amount of revaluation decrements	**0**	0
Additions	**0**	9,360
Depreciation	**(43,736)**	-48,873
Carrying amount at end of year	**394,231**	437,967
Leasehold Improvements		
Carrying amount at beginning of year	**298,500**	430,293
Additions	**62,602**	0
Disposals	**(4,109)**	-3,381
Depreciation	**(98,329)**	-128,412
Carrying amount at end of year	**258,664**	298,500
Plant and Equipment		
Carrying amount at beginning of year	**159,067**	219,177
Additions	**49,742**	18,345
Disposals	**(919)**	-1,043
Depreciation	**(68,175)**	-77,412
Carrying amount at end of year	**139,715**	159,067

(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 29 May 2008. 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

	2011	2010
	$	$
Current		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	**293,527**	333,567
Total Payables	**293,527**	333,567

10. Provisions

Current			
Employee benefits			
	- Annual Leave	**375,279**	371,059
	- Long Service Leave	**434,786**	375,840
	- Leave Loading	**65,335**	61,597
		875,400	808,496
Fringe Benefits Tax		**7,165**	14,591
Super contribution		**35,785**	34,418
		918,350	857,505
Non-Current			
Employee benefits			
	- Annual Leave	**84,887**	104,713
	- Long Service Leave	**136,194**	84,747
		221,081	189,460

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 2011 total superannuation expended amounted to $428,572 (at 30 June 2010 - $427,242).

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 2011 the trust account had a balance of $180 (2010 - $nil).

13. Cash Flow Statement

	2011	2010
	$	$
Reconciliation of net cash used in operating activities		
to operating profit Operating profit/(loss)	**(767,344)**	(849,866)
Depreciation	**210,241**	254,697
Donated assets	**22,462**	0
Increase/(Decrease) in provisions	**92,466**	104,312
Increase/(Decrease) in creditors	**(40,040)**	116,821
Decrease/(Increase) in receivables	**(105,917)**	26,835
Decrease/(Increase) in prepayments (non-capital)	**(36,769)**	44,841
Net cash flows from/(used in) operating activities	**(624,901)**	(302,360)

14. Expenditure Commitments

Building lease expenditure commitments		
Operating leases (non-cancellable)		
- not later than one year	**820,907**	762,275
- later than one year but not later than five years	**2,345,537**	2,959,615
Grants In Aid	**550,424**	516,160
Aggregate lease expenditure and Grants in Aid contracted for at balance date but not provided for	**3,716,868**	4,238,050

15. Other Non-Current Assets - Contingency Legal Aid Fund

Under Section 44 of the *Northern Territory of Australia 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. 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. The amount was repaid to the Commission during the 2009/10 financial year.

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

		2011	2010
		$	$
Opening balance		**839,496**	932,321
Income:			
	Interest earned	**35,119**	67,017
	Client contributions	**880**	1,100
	Cost recovered	**13,052**	74,873
	Contingency fees	**0**	8,401
		49,051	151,391
Expenditure:			
	Disbursements	**31,829**	244,206
	Bank charges	**12**	10
		31,841	244,216
Cash balance at year end		**856,706**	839,496
Less - Clients/grants approved but not paid at year end		**(112,544)**	(36,789)
Net funds available		**744,162**	802,707

16. Reserves

	2011	2010
	$	$
NT Expensive Civil Cases Reserve	**0**	350,000
Information Technology Development and Replacement Reserve	**0**	200,616
NT Expensive Criminal Cases Reserve	**0**	0
Premises Replacement & Maintenance Reserve	**200,000**	200,000
Asset Revaluation	**161,194**	161,194
Commonwealth Reserves	**2,072,363**	0
	2,433,557	911,810
Movements in reserves:		
(a) NT Expensive Civil Cases Reserve (funded)		
Balance at beginning of year	**350,000**	350,000
Redistribution to NT Expensive Criminal Cases Reserve	**(350,000)**	0
Balance at end of year	**0**	350,000
(b) Information Technology Development and Replacement Reserve (funded)		
Balance at beginning of year	**200,616**	200,616
Transfer from accumulated funds	**(200,616)**	0
Balance at end of year	**0**	200,616
(c) NT Expensive Criminal Cases Reserve (funded)		
Balance at beginning of year	**0**	1,560,448
Transfer to accumulated funds	**0**	(1,560,448)
Balance at end of year	**0**	0
(d) Premises Replacement & Maintenance Reserve (funded)		
Balance at the beginning of the year	**200,000**	200,000
Transfer from accumulated funds	**0**	0
Balance at the end of the year	**200,000**	200,000
(e) Asset Revaluation		
Balance at the beginning of the year	**161,194**	**161,194**
Revaluation increments on revaluation of:		
- land	**0**	**0**
- buildings	**0**	**0**
Balance at the end of the year	**161,194**	**161,194**

16. Reserves (cont'd)

Movements in reserves (cont'd):	2011	2010
	$	$
(f) Commonwealth Reserve		
Balance at the beginning of the year	**0**	0
Redistribution from Accumulated funds	**1,521,747**	0
Redistribution from Information Technology Development		0
and Replacement Reserve	**200,616**	
Redistribution from NT Expensive Civil Cases Reserve	**350,000**	0
Balance at the end of the year	**2,072,363**	0

17. Retained Earnings

Equity at beginning of year	**2,044,571**	1,333,989
Net Loss	**(767,344)**	(849,866)
Transfer from Reserves	**(1,521,747)**	1,560,448
Equity at end of year	**(244,520)**	2,044,571

18. Financial Instruments

A financial instrument is a contract that gives rise to financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity. Financial instruments held by the Commission include cash and short-term monetary investments, receivables and payables. The Commission has limited exposure to financial risk as describe below.

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. In respect of any dealings with organisations external to Government, the Commission has adopted a policy of dealing with credit worthy organisations and obtaining sufficient collateral or other security where appropriate, as a means of mitigating the risk of financial loss from defaults.

Net Fair Value

The carrying amount of the financial assets and financial liabilities recorded in the financial statements approximates their net fair values. Where differences exist, these are not material.

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	
	2011	2010	**2011**	2010
	$'000	$'000	**$'000**	$'000
Financial assets				
Cash	**778**	1,507	**778**	1,507
Receivables - trade (net)	**152**	68	**152**	68
Westpac Banking Corporation Bills	**1,431**	1,434	**1,431**	1,434
Prepayments	**179**	142	**179**	142
Advance to Contingency Fund	**0**	0	**0**	0
TOTAL FINANCIAL ASSETS	**2,540**	3,151	**2,540**	3,151
Financial liabilities				
Accounts payable and accruals	**294**	334	**294**	334
TOTAL FINANCIAL LIABILITIES	**294**	334	**294**	334

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.

Liquidity Risk

Liquidity risk is the risk that the Commission will not be able to meet its financial obligations as they fall due. The Commission's approach to managing liquidity is to ensure that it will always have sufficient liquidity to meet liabilities when they fall due.

The maturity profiles of undiscounted financial liabilities are as follows:

	1 year or less $'000	**> 1 year and < 5 years $'000**	**> 5 years $'000**	**No term $'000**	**Total $'000**
30 June 2011					
Trade and other payables	294	-	-	-	294
30 June 2009					
Trade and other payables	334	-	-	-	334

Interest Rate Risk

Interest rate risk is the risk of financial loss and/or increased cost due to adverse movements in the values of financial assets and liabilities as a result of changes in interest rates. 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	
	2011	2010	**2011**	2010	**2011**	2010	**2011**	2010
	$,000	$'000	**$'000**	$'000	**$,000**	$'000	**%**	%
Financial assets								
Cash	**1,507**	778	**-**	-	**778**	1,507	**4.61**	3.46
Receivables - trade (net)	**-**	-	**152**	68	**152**	68	**-**	-
Westpac Banking Corporation Bills	**1,434**	1,431	**-**	-	**1,431**	1,434	**4.41**	3.68
Prepayments	**-**	-	**179**	142	**179**	142	**-**	-
Advance to Contingency Fund	**-**	-	**-**	-	**-**	0	**-**	-
TOTAL FINANCIAL ASSETS	**2,941**	2,209	**331**	210	**2,540**	3,151	**-**	-
Financial liabilities								
Accounts payable and accruals	**-**	-	**294**	334	**294**	334	**-**	-
TOTAL FINANCIAL LIABILITIES	**-**	-	**294**	334	**294**	334	**-**	-

The Commission has no fixed interest financial instruments.

Interest Rate Risk Sensitivity Analysis

The following table demonstrates the Commission's sensitivity to movement in interest rates in relation to the value of interest bearing financial assets and liabilities.

	Profit or Loss and Equity	
	100 Basis Points Increase $'000	100 Basis Points Decrease $'000
30 June 2011		
Financial Assets - Cash and cash equivalents	8	(8)
Financial Assets – Short-term investments	14	(14)
Net sensitivity	22	(22)
30 June 2010		
Financial Assets - Cash and cash equivalents	15	(15)
Financial Assets – Short-term investments	14	(14)
Net sensitivity	29	(29)

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 2011 (2010 – $nil).

21. Additional Disclosures

(i) Commissioners

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

- S Cox QC
- J Large
- E Terrill
- E Morris
- P Vaughan
- H Richardson
- H Bradford

(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 in respect of the year ended 30 June 2011:

- J Large $201
- E Terrill $140
- P. Vaughan $201

23. Auditor's Remuneration

The auditor of the Commission is the Auditor-General for the Northern Territory.

	2011	2010
	$	$
Amounts paid, or due and payable to the NT Government for services provided by the Northern Territory Auditor-General for:		
• Audit of the Commission financial statements	**23,693**	22,705
• Other services in relation to the Commission		
-Acquittal	**0**	8,418
	23,693	31,123

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