



# Agency Information Guide

January 2026

Artwork: Luke Penrith

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## AGENCY INFORMATION GUIDE

<i>Item</i>	<i>Description</i>
Policy description	This is the Information Guide of Legal Aid NSW. It is published in accordance with the requirements of Section 20 of the <i>Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009</i> (NSW).
Division	Legal Services
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Contact	Pauline Chau, Principal Manager, In-house Counsel Unit
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## Revision History

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Date of second revision	September 2020	In-house Counsel Unit	Various updates
Date of third revision	December 2023	In-house Counsel Unit	Various updates
Date of fourth revision	January 2026	In-house Counsel Unit	Various updates
Date closed			

# FOREWORD

This is the Information Guide of the Legal Aid Commission of New South Wales (Legal Aid NSW).

It is published in accordance with the requirements of Section 20 of the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (NSW) ("GIPA Act"). The information contained in this document is correct as of January 2026 and will be updated every twelve months.

You may obtain more information from:

The Right to Information Officer, In-house Counsel Unit, Legal Aid NSW

Street Address: 323 Castlereagh Street

SYDNEY NSW 2000

Postal Address: PO Box K847

HAYMARKET NSW 1238

Internet: [www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au](http://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au)

Email: [inhousecounselunit@legalaid.nsw.gov.au](mailto:inhousecounselunit@legalaid.nsw.gov.au)



**Monique Hitter**

**Chief Executive Officer**

# 1. INFORMATION ABOUT LEGAL AID NSW

## 1.1 Structure

### 1.1.1 What is Legal Aid NSW?

Legal Aid NSW is an independent statutory body established under the *Legal Aid Commission Act 1979* (the Act). Legal Aid NSW provides legal representation and assistance in State and Commonwealth matters.

The main function of Legal Aid NSW is to provide legal aid and other legal services to the New South Wales community. Legal Aid NSW provides free legal information and advice on a broad range of legal issues and provides legal representation to people who satisfy eligibility tests.

Legal Aid NSW has a Central Sydney office located at 323 Castlereagh Street, Sydney and over 25 regional offices, in the Sydney metropolitan area and country areas.

### 1.1.2 Who is in charge of Legal Aid NSW?

The principal officer of Legal Aid NSW is the Chief Executive Officer who is responsible for the day-to-day management of the affairs of Legal Aid NSW.

The Legal Aid NSW Board are responsible for establishing the broad policies and strategic plans of Legal Aid NSW. There are nine Board members, consisting of the Chief Executive Officer, Monique Hitter and eight part-time members, namely:

- Craig Smith (Chair)
- Monique Hitter (CEO)
- Andrew William Smith
- Emeritus Professor Richard Leigh Henry
- Sue Gilchrist
- Dr Peggy Dwyer
- Jacqueline Dawson
- Troy Wright
- Elizabeth McEntyre
- Ainslie van Onselen

Legal Aid NSW is part of the NSW Department of Communities and Justice and the Minister responsible for Legal Aid NSW is the Attorney General NSW.

The senior management team consists of:

- Monique Hitter, Chief Executive Officer
- Cherie Pittman, Executive Director, Legal Services
- Robert Hoyles, Executive Director, Criminal Law
- Meredith Osborne, Executive Director, Civil Law
- Katie Kelso, Executive Director, Family Law
- Jane Cipants, Executive Director, Client Service and Public Engagement
- Trent Wilson, Executive Director, Digital Transformation
- Stuart Crawford, Chief Financial Officer, Corporate Services
- Wayne Gale, Director, Information and Communications Technology
- Deanna Ireland, Director, Human Resources
- Kimberley Hamer, Director, Aboriginal Services
- Koshala Nishaharan, Director, Enterprise Project Management
- Melissa Burgess, Deputy Director, Criminal Law
- Bianca Duffy, Deputy Director, Family Law
- Jackie Finlay, Deputy Director, Civil Law

### 1.1.3 Legal Aid NSW Offices

All Offices are open from 9am - 5pm Monday to Friday, except for the Central Sydney office which is open from 8.30 am to 5.30 pm Monday to Friday.

## METROPOLITAN

Office	Address and Contact Details
Bankstown	Level 7, Civic Tower 66-72 Rickard Road, BANKSTOWN NSW 2200 Ph: (02) 9707 4555 Fax: (02) 9708 6505 Email: <a href="mailto:bankstownoffice@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">bankstownoffice@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a>

Office	Address and Contact Details
Blacktown	<p>Suite 36-37 Kildare Road, BLACKTOWN NSW 2148</p> <p>Ph: (02) 9621 4800 Fax: (02) 9831 5597</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:blacktown@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">blacktown@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a></p>
Burwood	<p>Level 4, 74-76 Burwood Road, BURWOOD NSW 2134</p> <p>Ph: (02) 9747 6155 Fax: (02) 9744 6936 TTY: (02) 9747 0214</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:burwoodoffice@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">burwoodoffice@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a></p>
Campbelltown	<p>63 Queen Street, CAMPBELLTOWN 2560</p> <p>Ph: (02) 4628 2922 Fax: (02) 4628 1192</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:campbelltownoffice@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">campbelltownoffice@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a></p>
Central Sydney Office	<p>323 Castlereagh Street SYDNEY NSW 2000</p> <p>Ph: (02) 9219 5000 Fax: (02) 9219 5935 TTY: (02) 9219 5126</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:clientcommunication@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">clientcommunication@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a></p>
Fairfield	<p>Suite 1, Level 2, 25 Smart Street, FAIRFIELD NSW 2165</p> <p>Ph: (02) 9727 3777 Fax: (02) 9724 7605</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:fairfield@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">fairfield@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a></p>
Liverpool	<p>Level 4, Interdell Centre, 47 Scott Street, LIVERPOOL NSW 2170</p>

Office	Address and Contact Details
	Ph: (02) 9601 1200 Fax: (02) 9601 2249 Email: <a href="mailto:liverpooloffice@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">liverpooloffice@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a>
Parramatta – Civil and Family Law	Level 4, 128 Marsden Street, PARRAMATTA NSW 2150 Ph: (02) 9891 1600 Fax: (02) 9689 1082 Email: <a href="mailto:parra.family@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">parra.family@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a>
Parramatta – Crime	Parramatta Justice Precinct, Level 1, 160 Marsden Street PARRAMATTA NSW 2150 Ph: (02) 9066 6000 Fax: (02) 9066 6002 Email: <a href="mailto:pjp@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">pjp@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a>
Penrith	Level 4, 2-6 Station Street, PENRITH NSW 2750 Ph: (02) 4732 3077 Fax: (02) 4725 4655 Email: <a href="mailto:penrith@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">penrith@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a>
Sutherland	Ground Floor, Endeavour House, 3-5 Stapleton Avenue, SUTHERLAND NSW 2232 Ph: (02) 9521 3733 Fax: (02) 9521 8933 Email: <a href="mailto:sutherland@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">sutherland@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a>

## REGIONAL

Office	Address and Contact Details
Albury	Suite 2, Level 1, 530 Swift Street, ALBURY NSW 2650 Ph: (02) 6020 7200 Fax: (02) 6041 1570 Email: <a href="mailto:albury@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">albury@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a>
Burke Satellite Office	41B Mitchell Street, BOURKE NSW 2840 Ph: (02) 6808 2155 Email: <a href="mailto:bourkeoffice@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">bourkeoffice@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a>
Broken Hill	2/32 Sulphide Street, BROKEN HILL NSW 2880 Ph: (02) 6885 4233 Crime Email: <a href="mailto:brokenhillcrime@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">brokenhillcrime@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a> Civil Email: <a href="mailto:brokenhillcivil@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">brokenhillcivil@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a> Family Email: <a href="mailto:familybrokenhill@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">familybrokenhill@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a>
Coffs Harbour	Suite 1, Ground Floor, 27-29 Duke Street, COFFS HARBOUR NSW 2450 Ph: (02) 6651 7899 Fax: (02) 6651 7899 Email: <a href="mailto:coffsharbour@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">coffsharbour@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a>
Dubbo	64 Talbragar Street, DUBBO NSW 2830

Office	Address and Contact Details
	Ph: (02) 6885 4233 Fax: (02) 6885 4240 Email: <a href="mailto:dubbooffice@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">dubbooffice@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a>
Gosford	92-100 Donnison Street, GOSFORD NSW 2250 Ph: (02) 4324 5611 Fax: (02) 4324 3503 Email: <a href="mailto:gosfordoffice@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">gosfordoffice@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a>
Lismore	Level 5, Westlawn Building, 29 Molesworth Street, LISMORE NSW 2480 Ph: (02) 6621 2082 Fax: (02) 6621 9874 Email: <a href="mailto:lismore@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">lismore@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a>
Moree	Unit 3, 25 Auburn Street, MOREE NSW 2400 Ph: (02) 6768 4938 Email: <a href="mailto:moreeoffice@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">moreeoffice@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a>
Newcastle – Civil and Family Law	Level 2, 51-55 Bolton Street, NEWCASTLE NSW 2300 Ph: (02) 4929 5482 Fax: (02) 4929 3347 Email: <a href="mailto:newcastle@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">newcastle@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a>
Newcastle – Crime	Level 3, 400 Hunter Street, NEWCASTLE NSW 2300 Ph: (02) 4929 5482 Fax: (02) 4929 3347 Email: <a href="mailto:newcastlecrime@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">newcastlecrime@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a>

Office	Address and Contact Details
Nowra	<p>Level 2, 59 Berry Street, NOWRA NSW 2541</p> <p>Ph: (02) 4422 4351 Fax: (02) 4422 4340</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:nowra@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">nowra@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a></p>
Orange	<p>Suite 4, 95 Byng Street, ORANGE NSW 2800</p> <p>Ph: (02) 6362 8022 Fax: (02) 6361 3983</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:orangeoffice@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">orangeoffice@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a></p>
Port Macquarie	<p>107 William Street, PORT MACQUARIE NSW 2444</p> <p>Ph: (02) 5525 1600 Fax: (02) 6584 9646</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:portmacquarieadmin@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">portmacquarieadmin@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a></p>
Tamworth	<p>Suite 3, Level 1, 155 Marius Street TAMWORTH NSW 2340</p> <p>Ph: (02) 6766 6322 Fax: (02) 6766 8303</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:tamadmin@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">tamadmin@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a></p>
Wagga Wagga	<p>Ground floor, 74-76 Fitzmaurice Street, WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650</p> <p>Ph: (02) 6921 6588 Fax: (02) 6921 7106</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:wagga@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">wagga@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a></p>
Walgett Satellite Office	<p>44 Fox Street, WALGETT NSW 2832</p> <p>Ph: (02) 6857 8122</p>

Office	Address and Contact Details
	Email: <a href="mailto:walgettoffice@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">walgettoffice@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a>
Wollongong	73 Church Street, WOLLONGONG NSW 2500 Ph: (02) 4228 8299 Fax: (02) 4229 4027 Email: <a href="mailto:wollongongoffice@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">wollongongoffice@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a>

## 1.2 Specialist Services

Legal Aid NSW has a number of Specialist Services. The locations of the main specialist services are set out below;

### 1.2.1 Civil Law Specialist Services

Service	Contact Details
Civil Law Specialist Service for Aboriginal Communities	Freecall 1800 793 017 or (02) 9219 5057
Coronial Inquest Unit	Level 20, 323 Castlereagh Street, SYDNEY NSW 2000 Ph: (02) 9219 5156
Disaster Response Legal Service	Ph: (02) 1800 801 529
Elder Abuse Service	Ph: 1300 888 529 (operated by LawAccess) Email: <a href="mailto:elderservice@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">elderservice@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a>

Service	Contact Details
Mental Health Advocacy Service	Level 4, 74 - 76 Burwood Road, BURWOOD 2134 Ph: (02) 1300 888 529 (operated by LawAccess)
NCAT Housing Appeals Service	Ph: (02) 9219 5800
National Disability Insurance Scheme Service	Ph: 1300 888 529 (operated by LawAccess) Email: <a href="mailto:NDISapplications@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">NDISapplications@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a>
Prisoners Legal Service (Civil)	Prisoners Legal Service, PO Box 695, Parramatta NSW 2124.  Prisoners can contact the Prisoners Legal Service on the gaol CADL phone system as a free call - just press 11# (Legal Aid) and ask for PLS.  Friends and family of prisoners can contact the Prisoners Legal Service on 02 9219 5000 between 9am and 5pm.
Refugee Service	Ph: (02) 8713 6725 Email: <a href="mailto:refugeeservice@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">refugeeservice@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a>
Sexual Assault Communication Privilege Service	Ph: (02) 9219 5888 Email: <a href="mailto:sacps@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">sacps@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a>
Veterans Advocacy Service	Level 3, 323 Castlereagh Street, SYDNEY 2000  Ph: (02) 9219 5790  Email: <a href="mailto:veterans@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">veterans@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a>
Your Story Disability Legal Service	Ph: 1800 77 1800

Legal Aid NSW also accepts internal referrals in specialised areas including;

- Children’s Civil Law Service
- Consumer Law
- Employment Law
- Housing Law
- Human Rights
- Immigration
- Social Security
- Work and Development Order

### 1.2.2 Criminal Law Specialist Services

Service	Contact Details
Children’s Legal Service & Hotline Service	Sydney: (02) 9219 5120 (Surry Hills Children’s Court) Parramatta: (02) 8688 3800 (Parramatta Children’s Court) Campbelltown: (02) 4628 2922 (Campbelltown Children’s Court) Wollongong: (02) 4228 8299 (Sutherland, Port Kembla and Nowra Children’s Courts) Newcastle: (02) 4929 5482 (Broadmeadow, Raymond Terrace, Wyong, Singleton and Woy Woy Children’s Courts) Email: <a href="mailto:clspjp@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">clspjp@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a>
Commonwealth Crimes Unit	Ph: 1800 10 18 10
Drug Court	Sydney or Parramatta: Ph (02) 9685 8020 Toronto or Hunter: Ph (02) 4935 8392

Service	Contact Details
High Risk Offenders Unit	Ph: (02) 9219 5834 to arrange a time for advice or an appointment
Youth Hotline	Ph: 1800 10 18 10. The Hotline provides legal advice and information to young people under 18, and operates 9am to midnight weekdays, with a 24-hour service from Friday 9am to Sunday midnight and also on public holidays. Email: <a href="mailto:clspjp@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">clspjp@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a>

### 1.2.3 Family Law Specialist Services

Service	Contact Details
Child Support Service	Level 4, 128 Marsden Street, PARRAMATTA NSW 2150 Ph:(02) 9633 9916 or 1800 451 784
Domestic Violence Unit (Central Sydney)	323 Castlereagh Street SYDNEY NSW 2000 Ph: (02) 9219 6300
Early Intervention Unit	Parramatta Justice Precinct, Legal Aid NSW Office, Level 1, 160 Marsden Street Ph: 1800 551 589
Family Advocacy and Support Services	Contact through the Early Intervention Unit Ph: 1800 551 589

Service	Contact Details
Family Dispute Resolution Service	Ph: (02) 9219 5118 or (02) 9219 5119 Email: <a href="mailto:FDR.UnitInbox@legalaid.nsw.gov.au">FDR.UnitInbox@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</a>
Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program	Ph: 1800 WDV CAS or 1800 938 227

## 1.3 Functions of Legal Aid NSW

### 1.3.1 What are the functions of Legal Aid NSW?

The Act sets out the functions, duties, powers and obligations of Legal Aid NSW. Section 10 contains a detailed description of the functions of Legal Aid NSW and states that the principal function is to provide legal aid and other legal services in accordance with the Act.

Section 10 provides that Legal Aid NSW, in the exercise of its principal function, may decide who will be eligible for legal aid, the types of matters for which legal aid will be available, the means test to be applied and specifies the circumstances in which an applicant for legal aid should be required to pay a contribution towards the costs of the legal services provided.

### 1.3.2 How does Legal Aid NSW perform those functions?

Legal Aid NSW performs its functions by providing the following services:

- legal information and advice services through both Legal Aid NSW and LawAccess NSW
- legal representation by salaried staff and private practitioners
- provision of alternative dispute resolution services
- funds and assistance to community organisations which provide legal services; and
- community legal education and social work support services.

As the primary function of Legal Aid NSW is to provide legal aid and other legal services in accordance with the Act, one of the most important aspects of its decision-making functions is the determination of applications for legal aid and providing grants of legal aid.

### 1.3.3 Grants of Legal Aid

Most grants of legal aid are subject to eligibility tests, including a means test and merit test. Legal Aid NSW has determined the types of matters for which legal aid is available in criminal, civil and family law matters. Legal Aid NSW policies are available via Policy Online on the Legal Aid NSW website, [www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au](http://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au).

Appeals against decisions relating to legal aid applications and grants of legal aid are determined by the Legal Aid Review Panels (LARP). Further information about the LARP's is available here: [LARP FAQs](#).

### 1.3.4 What are the duties in the provision of legal aid?

Section 12 of the Act sets out the duties to be observed by Legal Aid NSW in the provision of legal aid.

All the duties required of Legal Aid NSW are equally important, but the following duties may be of particular interest to members of the public. Section 12 states that it is the obligation of Legal Aid NSW to:

- ensure that legal aid is provided in the most effective, efficient and economical manner
- have regard to the need for legal aid to be readily available and easily accessible to disadvantaged persons in NSW
- keep under review community needs for legal aid
- where appropriate, use the services of private legal practitioners; and
- ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that a legally assisted person who has been granted legal aid obtains the services of a lawyer (either an in-house employed solicitor, an assigned private legal practitioner or a Public Defender)

### 1.3.5 What are the objectives of Legal Aid NSW?

Copies of the 2023 - 2028 Legal Aid NSW Strategic Plan may be accessed through the Legal Aid website at [Strategic Plan 2023–2028](#). The plan identifies the following strategic outcomes:

- High quality, consistent services tailored to meet client and community needs
- A diverse workforce that is safe, supported and valued
- A fair and effective justice system
- Systems and processes responsive to our needs.

### 1.3.6 How does Legal Aid NSW measure its performance?

Legal Aid NSW sets objectives and key performance indicators against its corporate objectives. It reports specifically and publicly against its corporate objectives in its Annual Report. The 2024-2025 Annual Report can be accessed at: [Annual Report 2024–25](#).

### 1.3.7 Effect of Functions of Legal Aid NSW on Members of the Public

By providing legal information and resources, community legal education and advice services, Legal Aid NSW seeks to address legal problems at an early stage to resolve them quickly and with a minimum amount of stress and financial cost. Legal Aid NSW encourages and provides alternative dispute resolution processes to minimise the need for court proceedings. Where court action is taken, Legal Aid NSW may provide legal representation to persons who satisfy the eligibility tests for a particular type of matter.

Legal Aid NSW works with the private legal profession to ensure legal services are available across the state. Legal Aid NSW also engages in policy and law reform, drawing on the experience of staff and feedback from clients.

Legal Aid NSW liaises with federal bodies and other providers of legal services to ensure the availability of legal aid in NSW is at least comparable with that in other states and territories.

### 1.3.8 Public Participation in Legal Aid NSW Board Meetings

The Board is appointed by the Attorney General NSW and includes nominees of the NSW Bar Association, the Law Society NSW and Unions NSW, as well as members specifically chosen to represent consumer and community welfare interests and Community Legal Centres.

There are eight part-time members, including the Chair, and one full-time member, who is the Chief Executive Officer. The Chair is appointed for a maximum of five years, and the other part-time members are appointed for a maximum of three years. The Board meets six times a year.

## 1.4 Legal Aid NSW Committees

Section 68 of the Act enables Legal Aid NSW to establish standing or special consultative committees for the purpose of advising on the exercise of its functions under the Act.

The current committees are;

### 1.4.1 Governance Committees

COMMITTEE	SUBCOMMITTEES (if applicable)
Client Service and Public Engagement Committee	Communications Strategy Subcommittees

COMMITTEE	SUBCOMMITTEES (if applicable)
People and Wellbeing Committee	Workplace Culture Working Group
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Board	Staff Networks including Disability Network, Legally Queer, Young Professionals Disability and Inclusion Working Group
Legal Practice Committee	Strategic Law Reform Agenda Working Group Domestic and Family Violence and Elder Abuse Steering Committee
Innovation and Procurement Committee	

#### 1.4.2 Project Steering Committees

COMMITTEE	SUBCOMMITTEES (if applicable)
Project Delta Board	Delta Policy Subcommittee Business Transformation Subcommittee
HR Transformation Steering Committee	SAP Implementation Subcommittee
Closing the Gap Project Steering Committee	Closing the Gap Working Group

## 1.5 Legal Aid Review Panels (LARP)

The role of the Legal Aid Review Panels is to determine appeals in relation to the provision of legal aid. Under s 56 of the Act, a person may appeal to the Legal Aid Review Panels against a decision to refuse an application for legal aid, to terminate legal aid, or against a condition of a grant of legal aid.

The Legal Aid Review Panels are independent of Legal Aid NSW. Members must satisfy certain eligibility criteria and are appointed by Legal Aid NSW for a period of three (3) years.

A Legal Aid Review Panel comprises one member. Where an appeal raises a complex question of law or policy, the Panel will comprise at least two (2) members. Appeals are dealt with on the papers. There are no in-person hearings.

The Legal Aid Review Panel Secretariat can be contacted by telephone at 9219 5050 or by email at [larp@legalaid.nsw.gov.au](mailto:larp@legalaid.nsw.gov.au) or by post at:

Legal Aid Review Panel Secretariat  
PO Box K847  
HAYMARKET NSW 1238

## 2. INFORMATION HELD BY LEGAL AID NSW

What types of information are held by Legal Aid NSW?

As a legal practice, Legal Aid NSW holds a large number of legal files and documents. As a public sector agency, Legal Aid NSW also holds a large number of administrative and management documents, including policy documents. Information held by Legal Aid NSW can be divided into three main categories, namely: legal, management, and policy information.

### 2.1 Legal Information

This category includes:

- client files that relate to applications and grants of legal aid and legal representation provided by employed solicitors
- records of the referral of a matter to a private practitioner, where this has occurred
- advices, opinions, research materials, legal precedents and other documents relating to individual clients or for the general information of legal practitioners
- files of Legal Aid NSW relating to debt recovery, offences against the Act, legal action involving Legal Aid NSW and advices sought in that regard; and
- accounts and procedural and organisational memoranda if case-related.

#### 2.1.1 Can anyone have access to this information?

As a legal practice, Legal Aid NSW is obliged to protect the confidentiality of its clients. Applicants for legal aid and legally assisted persons can generally have access to documents on their own files.

Sub-sections 25(1) and (2) of the Act provide that the protection of legal professional privilege applies to applicants for legal aid or persons to whom legal aid is granted. Legal professional privilege also applies to legal advice sought by Legal Aid NSW. A conclusive presumption of an overriding public interest against disclosure exists in relation to documents subject to legal professional privilege pursuant to section 14(1) and Schedule 1 clause 5 of the GIPA Act.

Section 26 of the Act prohibits a person engaged in the administration of the Act from divulging any information or document obtained in connection with the administration of legal aid (including an application for legal aid) except in the circumstances set out in section 25(4) of the Act. These exceptions include:

- the conduct of any matter necessary for the proper administration of the Act
- proceedings for an offence under the Act
- disciplinary proceedings under the *Legal Profession Uniform Law 2014*
- an investigation or inquiry by the Ombudsman

- with the consent of the person providing the information
- limited information to a court or tribunal as to the processing of a legal aid application.

Section 26 is often referred to as the Act's "secrecy provision" and is designed to protect from disclosure confidential information obtained in relation to the provision of legal aid.

Section 11 of the GIPA Act provides that the GIPA Act overrides such secrecy provisions, but the secrecy provision is to be taken into account as one of the considerations against disclosure in determining whether there is an overriding public interest against disclosure under section 14 of the GIPA Act.

Further, in accordance with section 18 of the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*, Legal Aid NSW is generally limited in disclosing personal information to any person other than the individual to whom the information relates, unless we have their authority to do so. This is also a consideration against disclosure in determining whether there is an overriding public interest against disclosure under section 14 of the GIPA Act.

Further information explaining how Legal Aid NSW complies with the privacy legislation is provided in the [Legal Aid NSW Privacy Management Plan](#) and [Privacy Policy](#), which are available on the Legal Aid NSW website.

Legal Aid NSW has Guidelines for Staff in dealing with requests for information. More information about access to Legal Aid NSW documents may be obtained from the Right to Information Officer at [inhousecounselunit@legalaid.nsw.gov.au](mailto:inhousecounselunit@legalaid.nsw.gov.au)

## 2.2 Management Information

Legal Aid NSW as a public sector agency is accountable to the Government for its management. Information relating to recruitment and training procedures, policy and processing, accounting procedures and general administrative procedures all fall under this category.

Any queries about management information may be made to the Right to Information Officer at [inhousecounselunit@legalaid.nsw.gov.au](mailto:inhousecounselunit@legalaid.nsw.gov.au)

## 2.3 Policy Information

Legal Aid NSW policies on eligibility for legal aid are published on Policy Online which can be accessed via the Legal Aid NSW website at [www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au](http://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au).

These policies include the Means test, the Merit test and the types of matters for which legal aid is available. It includes the policies relating to the administration of grants of aid, such as the Contributions Policy. The eligibility policies for Early Resolution Assistance are also available in Policy Online.

Other sources of information in this category include ministerial and executive correspondence, submissions, reports and general correspondence relating to

legislative reforms, statistical information, reports on Legal Aid NSW, and procedural and organisational memoranda.

Further information about legal aid policies may be obtained by contacting:

Manager, Client Eligibility Unit  
Legal Aid NSW  
Email: [inhousecounselunit@legalaid.nsw.gov.au](mailto:inhousecounselunit@legalaid.nsw.gov.au)  
Telephone (02) 9134 9383  
PO Box K847 HAYMARKET NSW 1238.

## 2.4 Requests for Information under the GIPA Act

### 2.4.1 Access to documents

Legal Aid NSW is committed to openness and transparency in line with the spirit of the GIPA Act.

There are four ways in which information may be accessed under the GIPA Act:

1. Open access
2. Proactive release
3. Informal release; and
4. Formal access applications

Mandatory open access information about Legal Aid NSW is available on the Legal Aid NSW website.

Applicants for legal aid or persons to whom legal aid is granted may also contact the solicitor or business area within Legal Aid NSW handling their matter to make initial enquiries for access to information. Such information may be made available by informal release directly to the applicant.

If it appears that the information requested may not be available informally, applicants are encouraged to make a formal application under the GIPA Act. Applicants may contact the Right to Information Officer at [inhousecounselunit@legalaid.nsw.gov.au](mailto:inhousecounselunit@legalaid.nsw.gov.au) for assistance.

### 2.4.2 Amendment of records

Applicants for legal aid and persons to whom aid is granted are required to notify Legal Aid NSW of any relevant change in their circumstances, particularly their financial circumstances. They should inform the solicitor who has the conduct of the matter, whether an in-house solicitor or an assigned private

practitioner, of any changes in personal details.

As most of the information concerning applications for legal aid is usually provided by the applicant, or their solicitor, there is generally no need to separately apply for amendment of Legal Aid NSW records concerning a person's personal details at the time an application for legal aid is made. These details are entered on the Legal Aid NSW client management system and can be readily amended, if required.

#### 2.4.3 Lodging a Formal Access Application under the GIPA Act

To make a formal GIPA application, applicants are encouraged to use [the formal access application form](#). A copy of the form can be downloaded and printed from the Legal Aid NSW website. Applicants can also make an application in writing, by email or letter but must state clearly state:

- that it is an "access application made under the GIPA Act,"
- include the applicant's name and postal or email address
- include payment of the \$30 application fee
- explain in clear terms, the information requested so that the information can be identified.

Details of the process for making a formal application are on the Legal Aid NSW website and processing charges may apply.

#### 2.4.4 All other enquiries concerning Right to Information

All other enquiries concerning the Right to Information at Legal Aid NSW should be directed to:

The Legal Aid NSW Right to Information Officer, In-house Counsel Unit, PO Box K847 HAYMARKET NSW 1238  
Email: [inhousecounselunit@legalaid.nsw.gov.au](mailto:inhousecounselunit@legalaid.nsw.gov.au).

For more information about Right to Information, you may contact the Information and Privacy Commission at <https://www.ipc.nsw.gov.au>

- Email: [ipcinfo@ipc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ipcinfo@ipc.nsw.gov.au)
- Mail: GPO Box 7011, Sydney NSW 2001
- Visit: Level 15, McKell Building, 2-24 Rawson Place, Haymarket NSW 2000
- Call: 1800 472 679 between 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays).

## 2.5 Publications

Legal Aid NSW produces legal publications and resources for the public to help build knowledge in the community about legal rights and responsibilities, to identify issues as legal problems and to prevent legal problems themselves. We also produce information to help people once they are in the legal system and link them with legal assistance services.

The Communications Unit is responsible for a wide range of internal and external print and online resources. This includes:

- legal resources for the public such as brochures, toolkits, fact sheets, postcards, posters, flyers, and booklets
- translated versions of the above resources
- some website content
- social media information campaigns

To view online and order print copies visit the Legal Aid NSW website <https://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/ways-to-get-help/publications-and-resources> or contact [publications@legalaid.nsw.gov.au](mailto:publications@legalaid.nsw.gov.au).

We also develop corporate publications that are relevant, engaging, focused and impactful to reach our target audiences. The primary corporate publications include:

- Legal Aid NSW Annual Reports
- Legal Aid newsletters
- Verbals staff magazine

Annual reports and other reports are on our website here: <https://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/about-us/annual-reports>

Legal Aid News and other newsletters are here: <https://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/about-us/news>

### 2.5.1 Contact Information

Communications Unit, Level 20, 323 Castlereagh St Haymarket NSW 2000

Email: [communications@legalaid.nsw.gov.au](mailto:communications@legalaid.nsw.gov.au)

For information on the website or social media: [digitalcommunications@leglaid.nsw.gov.au](mailto:digitalcommunications@leglaid.nsw.gov.au)



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