



# Annual Report 2022–23

Access to justice for Victorians

 Victoria Legal Aid

# Service snapshot

## Our clients

**86,321** unique clients ▲7%

**70%**

Metropolitan  
Melbourne

**30%**

Regional  
Victoria

## Assistance with a case

**41,320<sup>1</sup>** grants of legal assistance ▲1%

**15%**

In-house

**83%**

Private  
practitioners

**2%**

Community  
legal  
centres

## Duty lawyer services

**111,236<sup>2</sup>** duty lawyer services ▲54%

**71%**

In-house

**12%**

Private  
practitioners

**17%**

Community  
legal  
centres

Percentage increases and decreases are in comparison to 2021-22 data.

<sup>1</sup> This total figure includes grants for community legal centres (which aren't included in our Budget Paper 3 reporting) and family violence services.

<sup>2</sup> Adjusted by +7,438 duty lawyer services. The total figure includes services provided by community legal centres (which aren't included in our Budget Paper 3 reporting) and family violence services.

## Early intervention and early engagement and resolution

### Legal Help

**138,969** requests for help responded to **▲16%**, **73%** of total incoming requests

Average wait time of **8:54 minutes** (phone line and webchat) **▼22%**

**112,198**<sup>1</sup> information sessions **▲17%**  
**14,280**<sup>2</sup> advice sessions **▲9%**

### Help Before Court

**9,545** services **▼8%**

### Early Resolution Service

**11,758** services **▲31%**

### Family Dispute Resolution Service

**839** conferences **▼24%**

**80%** settlement rate **▼2%**

### Independent Family Advocacy Service

**2,011** information and referral sessions **▲10%**

**2,327** advocacy and self-advocacy sessions **▼1%**

### Independent Mental Health Advocacy

**25,658** information and referral sessions **▲2%**

**18,280** advocacy and self-advocacy sessions **▲38%**

### Community legal education and information

**213** education sessions **▲84%**

**162,038** publications distributed **▲107%**

Percentage increases and decreases are in comparison to 2021–22 data.

ⓘ Due to identified underreporting in our data, some figures have been adjusted to better reflect the number of services delivered. See Note on data reporting (page 11) for more information.

1 Adjusted by +4,033 information sessions.

2 Adjusted by +741 advice sessions.

## Chairperson's declaration

In accordance with section 12N of the *Legal Aid Act 1978 (Vic)* and provisions of the *Financial Management Act 1994 (Vic)*, I am pleased to present the Victoria Legal Aid Annual Report for the year ending 30 June 2023.

*Bill Jaboor*

**Bill Jaboor**  
Chairperson

13 September 2023

# Contents

O1 About us	1
Foreword	2
O2 Our clients	5
O3 Our impact	9
Access to justice for clients	10
Improving community legal understanding	18
Collaborative legal assistance sector	20
Fairer laws and systems	23
Effective and sustainable Victoria Legal Aid	27
O4 Our governance	29
O5 Our finances	43
O6 Appendices	107

## Acknowledgement of Country

This report was written on the land of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands across Victoria and pay respect to Elders past and present.

We recognise the continuing connection to country, culture and identity and the importance of self-determination for creating better futures for First Nations people.

# About us

## Our vision

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

## Our purpose

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

## Our values

### Fairness

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

### Courage

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

### Care

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

### Inclusion

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

## Our strategy

In June 2022, we launched our Strategic Plan 2022–26, or 'Strategy 26'. It's founded on our Outcomes Framework, an eight-year view of the difference we want to make through our work.

This annual report reflects our progress in delivering our strategy and outcomes, as well as our Corporate Plan 2022–23.

## Our functions

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

Our objectives are to:

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

More detail about our functions is available on our website and in the *Legal Aid Act 1978 (Vic)*.

# Foreword

On behalf of our Board and Executive Management Group, we're pleased to present our Annual Report 2022–23. The report outlines our collaboration across the legal assistance sector to make a difference for our clients and the Victorian community.

We've seen increased demand for our services this year in the context of cost-of-living pressures and the housing crisis. By engaging clients early and addressing their civil and family law matters, we aim to help alleviate socio-economic difficulty and keep people out of the criminal justice system.

## Serving our clients and community

In 2022–23, we served 86,321 clients and reduced the pandemic-related backlog of cases with our practice partners, providing more grants for panel practitioners to achieve this.

Our Family Advocacy and Support Services now available outside of greater Melbourne and our services for people experiencing sexual harassment in the workplace have been expanded. We also launched online tools to support people experiencing domestic, family or sexual violence and National Disability Insurance Scheme users.

We're pleased to be supporting the new Children's Court Weekend Online Remand Court, which benefits our child clients by providing after-hours bail hearings. This complements our ongoing work with partners to reduce the numbers of children held in custody, particularly on remand.

Much of our work is delivered in collaboration with our partners. This includes the new Victims Legal Service, which provides victims of crime with free legal advice and support to obtain financial assistance or compensation, and legal assistance projects for communities in Melbourne's west. We also worked with partners through Disaster Legal Help Victoria to provide people legal support in response to the Victorian floods in late 2022.

## Improving outcomes for First Nations people

We're committed to reconciliation and self-determination and support First Nations-led solutions to improving outcomes for First Nations people in the legal system.

In our evidence to the Yoorrook Justice Commission, we highlighted the need for urgent change in Victoria's criminal justice and child protection systems to address the profound harms they cause First Nations people. Following the coronial findings into the death in custody of Veronica Nelson, we reiterated the need for a bail system that appropriately responds to risk and supports people to stay connected to their family, communities and vital services.

We've elevated the head of our First Nations Services program to a director role to drive much needed reform. This role will lead the way as we improve legal assistance services to First Nations communities so that they are culturally appropriate, responsive and self-determined.

We've also improved our collaboration with First Nations stakeholder organisations, including the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS) through joint advocacy on law reform, service co-design and delivery, project collaboration and meetings between our boards. We were pleased to see additional investment in VALS to expand their services across Victoria in the latest State Budget.

## Advocating for fairer laws and systems

The courage and lived experience of our clients and consumers continues to drive systemic change.

We appeared at the Royal Commission into the Robodebt Scheme with our former clients, Madeleine Masterton and Deanna Amato. Their Federal Court cases were recognised as having played a crucial role, together with the broader community campaign, in bringing an end to the scheme. Our submission included the stories of seven clients and identified four key areas for reform to ensure the mistakes of Robodebt are never repeated.

We welcomed the *Mental Health and Wellbeing Act 2022* (Vic) – a first step to centring Victoria’s mental health system on consumer rights and lived experience. It introduced an opt-out non-legal advocacy model to be delivered by the Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA) service, ensuring all consumers subject to compulsory treatment are connected to non-legal advocacy.

We’re also proud to have worked with National Legal Aid (NLA) on a submission to the Disability Royal Commission. Informed by clients’ lived experience, the report included recommendations to promote the rights of people with disability to live free from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

As part of NLA, we joined Women’s Legal Services Australia to support the federal Family Law Amendment Bill, which puts the best interests of children at the heart of care arrangements for families post separation. We also welcomed changes to the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth) that introduced a positive duty on employers to eliminate sexual harassment and sex discrimination, and other reforms to create safer and more respectful workplaces.

In April, the Victorian Government announced its decision to raise the age of criminal responsibility to 12 in 2024, and 14 in 2027 for most offending. While acknowledging this, we’ll continue to advocate for it to be immediately lifted to 14, in line with international standards and evidence and our practice experience, alongside partners like the Commission for Children and Young People.

## Promoting diversity and inclusion

When people from different backgrounds and life experiences work together, we create the most value for our clients, staff and community.

We are gradually increasing the diversity of our staff, but know there’s more to do to improve inclusion in our recruitment and career pathways.

All our staff undergo respectful workplace behaviour training, and we have systems that enable staff to speak up and seek support anonymously if they experience or witness inappropriate behaviours. We’ve also been working to reduce barriers to people with disability by continually improving the accessibility of our information, services, offices and recruitment processes.

To help achieve gender equality in our sector, we’re continuing to reduce our gender pay gap while building our capability to complete gender impact assessments and encouraging equitable briefing. These are areas of ongoing improvement and we have much more to do to become truly inclusive.

## Financial sustainability

We continue to advocate for a demand-based funding model to address the volatility in our current funding arrangements and meet increasing demand for our services that exceeds our core funding.

Existing service demand resulted in an operating deficit in 2022–23. However, our cash balance is unusually high due to reduced court activity during the pandemic. In the short term, we’ll use these funds to meet demand and our deferred grant commitments, though reserves need to be carefully managed to ensure we can continue to meet our ongoing commitments.

In 2023–24, court activity is expected to continue to rise, resulting in a projected financial deficit. Our short-term revenue outlook has improved due to higher interest rates leading to reversed funding cuts from the Public Purpose Fund. While this has allowed us to defer service reductions, we face significant uncertainties. A weaker economic outlook and possible interest rate changes create volatility in our funding sources and potential revenue reductions.

We welcome the additional funding for specific service areas announced in federal and state budgets. These include IMHA, Drug Court support, Help Before Court, Early Resolution Service and Specialist Family Violence Court help. However, this doesn't increase our core funding.

Longer term projections continue to show insufficient core funding to meet projected demand. Without additional funding, we'll need to consider service reductions while carefully managing our cash reserves. Those reductions would be of court-based services, following consultation with sector partners. We continue to work with the Department of Justice and Community Safety to resolve these financial sustainability challenges.

## The year ahead

Looking ahead, we need to address growth pressures facing our Legal Help service as the main gateway to our services and respond to the increasing complexity and specialisation required of it.

Enhancing our digital and data capabilities to deliver better services will be a continued focus. We'll uplift our case management and data systems to ensure we have more sophisticated understanding of our services and clients, while enhancing our cybersecurity.

We look forward to the National Legal Assistance Partnership Review ahead of the 2024 Federal Budget. It'll give us opportunities to identify additional investments needed in our sector and the systems in which we work.

Our advocacy priorities will continue to include bail, raising the age of criminal responsibility, other summary crime reform, child protection, mental health reform, strengthening rights and accountability across federal systems, and police and institutional accountability – particularly concerning the impacts on First Nations people. We look forward to working closely with government on these areas and the outcomes from the Yoorrook Justice Commission.

Our forthcoming Reconciliation Action Plan will continue our reconciliation journey and help keep us accountable to making reconciliation everyday business for our organisation. As part of the plan, we look forward to expanding our Aboriginal Community Engagement Officer (ACEO) Program to more locations. ACEOs are key to ensuring we deliver culturally sensitive services for First Nations people, and this expansion will help build our capacity to have self-determination inform our work.

## Special thanks

We'd like to thank all our staff for their work and recognise their efforts to build a diverse and inclusive organisation.

We also thank private practitioners, community legal centres and sector partners, as well as First Nations-controlled organisations VALS and Djirra, for their commitment. We're continually inspired by their passion to make a difference.

We sincerely thank our Board and Executive Management Group for their ongoing commitment to Victoria Legal Aid.

Thank you for reading our report.

*Bill Jaboor*

**Bill Jaboor**  
Chairperson

*Louise Glanville*

**Louise Glanville**  
Chief Executive Officer



# Our clients

Our clients include a diverse range of people across Victoria. Many face complex legal problems and experience cultural barriers, discrimination, disability, mental health issues or social and geographic isolation.

These issues or experiences are often intersectional, and more than one descriptor may be appropriate for many of our clients.

## Who our clients are



8% identify as First Nations people

32% with no income<sup>1</sup>

53% receiving some form of government benefit

8% at risk of homelessness

34% disclosed having a disability or mental illness

3% required the assistance of an interpreter

13% in custody, detention or psychiatric care

30% living in regional Victoria

12% under 19 years of age

28% from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds<sup>2</sup>

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

- 1 Examples include children and young people, people experiencing homelessness, people in custody and immigration detention, and psychiatric patients.
- 2 Based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics definition of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Includes people who speak a language other than English at home and people who were born in a non-English speaking country.

## What clients said about us

We ask our clients for feedback about our service in our annual client experience survey to help us better understand their experience and expectations.

We received responses from 926 clients who are broadly representative across our service areas and programs.

### Key findings

81%

found it **easy to contact us** when they first needed help

67%

said that the help they got **improved their overall wellbeing**

81%

were **satisfied with the outcome** of their legal problem

76%

felt more **confident to seek legal help** in future

62%

were **satisfied overall with the service** they received

76%

said they **would recommend us** to other people

# Our clients

Clients felt supported to **understand and address their legal problems**, with 76 per cent saying their legal problem had been fully or partially resolved and 76 per cent of those whose legal problem had been resolved saying our service had a positive impact on that resolution.



*I found that I didn't know what I was getting myself involved in and I found that having the solicitor I had made the experience much better. I am glad I went through the process.*



In general, satisfaction with our service was lower when legal problems were not resolved.

Many felt that our legal support also **helped their wellbeing**. Fifty-nine per cent said they were less stressed after talking to their lawyer and 65 per cent said speaking to their lawyer helped them feel safe.



*I feel blessed that my experience was as good as it was and that my mental health has improved.*



Most clients found our services to be **accessible and respectful**. Eighty per cent felt they were treated with respect by their lawyer, 77 per cent found it easy to understand what their lawyer said and 70 per cent said their lawyer took their unique circumstances into account.



*My lawyer has been easy to contact and always willing to help me deal with my problems when I bring them to them. I feel confident each time we go to court and have felt like we have worked as a team towards my case.*



However, some noted the **challenges of accessing our services** due to limited availability, timely access to support and clear and targeted communication.



*Not enough help available. Not enough funding or personnel available. Not enough appointments available.*



*System is overloaded feels a bit rushed.*



Just over one-third of clients indicated they had **support needs or considerations**. While most clients saw these needs either fully or partially met, some noted the need for us to take more time to understand their unique challenges when supporting them.



*Learn about the additional challenges and vulnerabilities involved in when caring for a child with a disability.*



*Get to know the client and their situation a lot better so you can represent them fairly and speak with terms they can understand.*



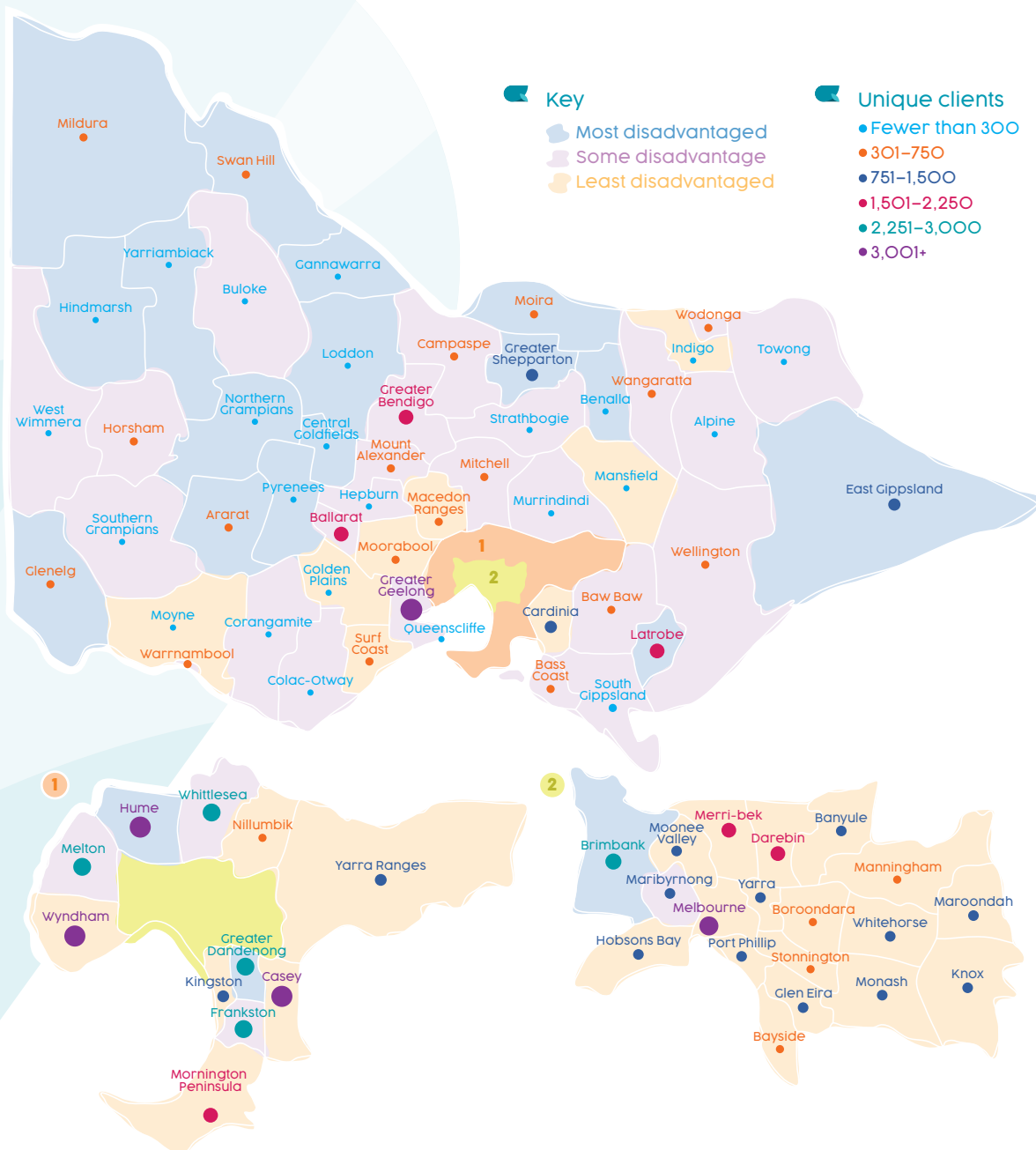
We will use this feedback to continue tailoring and improving our services and respond to clients' experiences.

# Where our clients are across Victoria

This map shows the number of unique clients we helped in each local government area during 2022–23. Client locations are based on the primary address they nominate. This may include prisons, hospitals, remand centres and temporary accommodation facilities.

The top 10 local government areas, in order of number of clients, were:

Melbourne, Casey, Greater Geelong, Hume, Wyndham, Brimbank, Greater Dandenong, Whittlesea, Frankston and Melton.



Clients assisted by a private practitioner duty lawyer are not included in this map. Level of disadvantage of a local government area is based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage.

# Our impact

This section outlines **our impact in our five strategic outcome areas:**

## Strategic outcome 01



Access to justice  
for clients

## Strategic outcome 02



Improving  
community legal  
understanding

## Strategic outcome 03



Collaborative legal  
assistance sector

## Strategic outcome 04



Fairer laws  
and systems

## Strategic outcome 05



An effective  
and sustainable  
Victoria Legal Aid



## Access to justice for clients

Strategic outcome 01

We serve the Victorian community by providing information, legal advice and education with a focus on the prevention and early intervention of legal problems.

We prioritise more intensive services, such as legal representation, non-legal advocacy and family dispute resolution, for those who need it most. We recognise the intersections between legal and social issues in how we do our work and advocacy.

Intensity of service >.....

Assistance with a case

Grants of legal assistance and chambers' services

Duty lawyer services

Legal advice and representation in courts and tribunals

Early intervention and early engagement and resolution

Services to help people understand, minimise or prevent legal issues from escalating

Eligibility >.....

## Service delivery performance

The rapidly changing operating environment due to COVID-19 has made forecasting difficult in recent years. Many contributing factors, including new operating models like pre-court services, working in new digital ways and external demand drivers, have impacted our performance.

Due to this, and in discussion with the Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS), our service delivery targets have been consecutively rolled over and are based on pre-pandemic levels of performance. We will review the adequacy of current measures and targets with DJCS.

In 2022-23, we delivered more services in most areas and saw more clients than in 2021-22 as courts increased their capacity. This is most noticeable in Legal Help, where changes in our operating systems saw a marked increase in the number of information services delivered, as well as duty lawyer services, aligned with increased court activity. We also saw an increase in family violence related services and well exceeded the 2022-23 target. There were 35,627<sup>1</sup> family violence related duty lawyer services, 12,604 grants of assistance and 11,309<sup>2</sup> legal advice and minor work services delivered. A higher proportion of cases are falling into family violence services; this has contributed to non-family violence measures being below target.

Due to identified underreporting in our data, these figures have been adjusted to better reflect the number of services delivered. See Note on data reporting (page 11) for more information.

1 Adjusted by +5,084 family violence related duty lawyer services.

2 Adjusted by +225 legal advice and minor work services.

## Budget Paper 3 performance targets

Measure	2022-23 target	2022-23 actual	2021-22 actual
Unique clients	105,000	86,321	80,547
Community legal education and information services (excluding family violence)	102,000	97,418 <sup>1</sup>	84,100
Community legal education and information services (family violence)	27,000	21,675 <sup>2</sup>	19,373
Duty lawyer services (excluding family violence)	70,853	58,044 <sup>3</sup>	36,200
Grants of legal assistance (excluding family violence)	32,900	28,716	29,305
Legal advice and minor assistance (excluding family violence)	41,347	25,978	23,531
Family violence legal services	46,000	59,540 <sup>4</sup>	47,433
Client satisfaction with services	80%	62%	67%
Average wait time to Legal Help (phone line and webchat)	<15:00 min	8:54 min	11:23 min

1 Adjusted by +3,299 information services.

2 Adjusted by +734 information services.

3 Adjusted by +2,354 duty lawyer services.

4 Adjusted by +5,084 duty lawyer services and +225 legal advice and minor work services.

### ⚠ Note on data reporting

In 2022-23, we identified some inconsistencies with how we collect our data that contributed to some underreporting of our services for this year. We engaged a consultant to undertake a review. They recommended improvements to our data management practices, which we'll begin implementing in 2023-24.

In the interim, we've made conservative adjustments to the 2022-23 actuals, as recommended in the review, to reflect the projected underreported services. Instances where an adjustment is made in this report are clearly identified.

## Early intervention and early engagement and resolution services

We're pleased to be seeing growth in our early intervention and early engagement and resolution services, which prevent the escalation of legal problems and connect our clients with allied services.

## Legal Help

In 2022-23, our Legal Help phonenumber and webchat remained our key entry points for Victorians seeking legal assistance. We answered 67 per cent of phone calls, and 99 per cent of webchats.

We continued to operate the Lotjpa Independent Legal Service with the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service. Established in 2022, the helpline provides independent legal assistance to support First Nations people and their families participate in the Yoorrook Justice Commission.

The service has mostly included helping clients with the preparation of submissions – a key means for the commission to get evidence from the community.

## Number of legal information and advice sessions delivered

Service	Number	% change on 2021–22
Legal Help information sessions (phone line) <sup>1</sup>	77,230	+24%
Legal Help information sessions (webchat) <sup>2</sup>	34,968	+4%
Other information sessions <sup>3</sup>	6,680	-13%
Legal Help advice sessions (phone line) <sup>4</sup>	14,280	+9%
Other legal advice sessions <sup>5</sup>	19,588	+25%

Due to identified underreporting in our data, some figures have been adjusted to better reflect the number of services delivered. See Note on data reporting (page 11) for more information.

- 1 Adjusted by +2,776 information sessions.
- 2 Adjusted by +1,257 information sessions.
- 3 Primarily provided face-to-face at our offices or through Help Before Court. Help Before Court information sessions (3,488 of total) weren't included in previous years; with this excluded, the change on 2021–22 was -58 per cent.
- 4 Adjusted by +741 advice sessions.
- 5 Primarily provided face-to-face at one of our offices.

### Help Before Court

Help Before Court provides people with support or advice ahead of their court hearing rather than on the day for criminal matters in the Magistrates' Court or Children's Court. Help Before Court clients receive information to help them prepare for Court and may also receive legal advice and representation in Court based on the charges the person is facing and their particular needs.

In 2022–23, we delivered 9,545 legal information, support and advice services through Help Before Court, leading to better engagement with the justice system and better client outcomes and experience. A survey of clients told us of the value clients placed on this early engagement.

This figure was eight per cent lower than in 2021–22, as Help Before Court was the main way clients could access summary crime services in that year; clients had no access to our in-court duty lawyer service while courts were closed for over eight months due to the pandemic. Although our duty lawyer service at court has returned, there is still strong demand for pre-court advice and support.

### Early Resolution Service

Our Early Resolution Service provides legal advice and support for people with family violence intervention order matters up to two weeks before a court hearing date. We deliver the service with community legal centres in seven Magistrates' Court locations.

In 2022–23, we delivered 11,758 pre-court legal services, including legal advice, negotiations, and in some cases, resolution prior to the court hearing date. This was 31 per cent more than in 2021–22. 625 matters were resolved before court.

### Family Dispute Resolution Service

Our Family Dispute Resolution Service (FDRS) helps parents, children and others involved in family separation resolve their family law disputes by providing a forum for decision making with the help of an independent mediator. FDRS also resolves cases after court proceedings have commenced.

In 2022–23, FDRS mediated 839 conferences (24 per cent fewer than in 2021–22) and continued to achieve a high settlement rate of 80 per cent (down from 82 per cent in 2021–22).

The decline in conferences was mainly due to there being fewer grants of aid for family law cases than in 2021–22. In addition, almost half of conferences (49 per cent) were for complex court-referred cases, impacting staff capacity. There was also an end to one-off state government funding linked to a pandemic-related peak in demand for cases involving family violence risk.

See the Services at the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia section (page 20) to read about increased capacity for FDRS to support court-referred matters.

### Independent Family Advocacy and Support

Independent Family Advocacy and Support (IFAS) provides non-legal advocacy to parents and primary carers navigating the child protection system, helping divert families from court.

In 2022–23, IFAS delivered 2,011 information and referral sessions (10 per cent more than in 2021–22) and 2,327 advocacy and self-advocacy sessions (1 per cent fewer than in 2021–22).

See the Dandenong Children's Court services section (page 14) to read about our expansion of IFAS to work alongside our new children's law team in Dandenong.

### Independent Mental Health Advocacy

Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA) provides non-legal advocacy to people at risk of and subject to compulsory treatment so they can have as much say as possible about their assessment, care and personal recovery.

In 2022–23, IMHA delivered 25,658 information and referral sessions (2 per cent more than in 2021–22) and 18,280 advocacy and self-advocacy sessions (38 per cent more than in 2021–22).

See the Online support and advocacy tools section (page 18) to read about IMHA's NDIS Mental Health Toolkit.





## Simona's story

### **Simona recounts her trauma with the mental health system and how IMHA helped her stand up for her rights.**

The first time I was hospitalised, two strangers took me away. At first I thought it was a hotel but later it felt more like a prison. There was no privacy, I couldn't make phone calls to my family without permission and multiple times a night, every night, I'd be woken up by a flashlight in my face.

I was given medication with no information. Non-compliance was answered with force and a trip to a seclusion room no bigger than two bathtubs, with a glorified gym mat for a bed and a cardboard contraption for a toilet.

 *They were always there, they gave me information, **they told me I had rights and I felt empowered by that.** Instead of feeling captive, I had the tools that ensured my voice was heard.* 

In that room, I had five grown men hold me down because I didn't want to take the nameless pills they were giving me. I struggled while they pulled my pants down and injected me with a sedative. That I was trying to fight back was seen as evidence of my mental disorder...

My family was told they had no say in my treatment as I was on a compulsory order. Personally, I didn't even realise I was on a compulsory order until years later... In the end, I had to give up my voice.

I was discharged only after agreeing to the medicine and their traumatic, not therapeutic treatment.

The effects of those months were devastating. I suffered from side-effects from the drugs, like feeling sedated and trapped in my body. I gained 30 kilograms and had frequent night terrors.

I rebuilt my life. Ten years later, my trauma revisited... I was taken to a different mental health hospital this time, but it felt strangely familiar. The flashlights were back, along with the lack of communication, the random assortments of pills, and the confusion.

I saw a poster on the wall that read: 'Know your rights'. It confused me more – I wasn't aware I had any. I called the number, which was for a non-legal advocacy service.

They were always there, they gave me information, they told me I had rights and I felt empowered by that. Instead of feeling captive, I had the tools that ensured my voice was heard.

I ended up discharged within a week... If I didn't know about my rights, I might've been judged as still not having 'capacity'. They were going to discharge me on a compulsory treatment basis, but another phone call to IMHA and I was able to leave with only a voluntary order.

As a survivor, I feel for others who have had another layer of trauma added onto their experience by the very system that is meant to help them.

## Duty lawyer services

We support clients on the day of their hearing through duty lawyer services, prioritising serious cases. This includes people in or at risk of going into custody, people at court for the first time for a family violence intervention order or child protection matter, and people who need intensive support.

In 2022–23, we delivered 111,236<sup>1</sup> duty lawyer services (54 per cent more than in 2021–22). Private practitioners delivered 12 per cent and community legal centres delivered 17 per cent of these services.

## Dandenong Children's Court services

We've set up a new team at our Dandenong office to serve child protection and youth crime clients at the new Dandenong Children's Court. The team includes child protection and youth crime lawyers, administrative staff and an IFAS advocate. In the first two weeks of the court's opening on 19 June 2023, we received 48 referrals for duty lawyer assistance.

We've also made changes to our child protection private practitioner duty lawyer schemes, ensuring sufficient service provision to meet need across all metropolitan Children's Courts.

## Weekend Online Remand Court

The Children's Court Weekend Online Remand Court (WORC) – a remand court for children arrested after hours – began in September 2022. We work in partnership with the Children's Court, Youth Justice and Victoria Police to support the court's operation.

This important initiative provides child clients with after-hour access to the court for bail hearings. Its establishment complements our ongoing work with partners to reduce the numbers of children held in custody, particularly on remand.

Since WORC's establishment, 173 hearings were held in which all young people were represented by us or one of our panel firms. Following this advocacy, 49 per cent of young people were released from custody or had charges withdrawn.

## Assistance with a case

### Grants of legal assistance

We provide grants of legal assistance to clients, who can be helped by an in-house lawyer, private practitioners, community legal centres or Aboriginal legal services.

In 2022–23, we provided 41,320 grants of legal assistance (one per cent more than in 2021–22). Most legal assistance services were delivered by private practitioners (83 per cent), while 15 per cent were by in-house lawyers and two per cent by community legal centres.

### Chambers services

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

In 2022–2023, they appeared in 1,760 court and tribunal matters, provided formal advice 290 times and provided formal staff training 109 times.

Following the recommendations from an external review, we conducted manual data collection to help us better measure and understand the impact of Chambers' work. This data highlighted the significant contribution Chambers makes to our clients, staff and organisational capability. We've also developed a three-year plan for Chambers' future improvements and growth.

<sup>1</sup> Due to identified underreporting in our data, this figure has been adjusted by +7,438 to better reflect the number of services delivered. See Note on data reporting (page 11) for more information.

## Phil's story

**We gave legal assistance to Phil, who was facing a three-month jail term. His life turned around after 12 months of support through the Assessment and Referral Court (ARC), showing how therapeutic justice responses to crime can break the cycle of reoffending.**

Phil grew up in a violent home, leading to drug use and unsupported mental health difficulties, including post-traumatic stress disorder and symptoms of ADHD.

Following his charges, he spent eight days in prison before being eligible for ARC, a therapeutic court that helps people with mental illness or cognitive impairment by addressing underlying factors that contribute to offending behaviours.

 **Life is going very well for me right now.** *I'm living in a good suburb, I have a nice car, I have my licence back, I've completed my program, of course.* 

He started attending weekly sessions with his ARC case worker.

'Instead of putting you in jail and leaving you in there for the purpose of serving out your sentence ... they basically treat you as an individual and individually go through your case,' Phil said on ABC Radio.

'Once I started with my social worker ... I was just asked blatantly: "What is it that we can do or that you need, or what do we have to do to help you to fix things and get your life on track and going in a positive direction?"

'Having weekly contact with my social worker was actually quite good because ... you constantly go over some things to do for that week ... or try and work towards achieving those goals.

'I like my social worker and everything she did for me. She helped me to get a birth certificate, she helped me to get on top of all my fines, she helped me with counselling.'

Phil now lives drug-free in safe and sustainable housing, has taken up work in cabinetmaking and cares for his dog.

'Life is going very well for me right now. I'm living in a good suburb, I have a nice car, I have my licence back, I've completed my program, of course.

'Twelve months ago, I was sort of living in my car, when I was like basically homeless, and sort of driving around without a licence.'

We're pleased to see ARC's expansion announced in the State Budget given the program's proven results in getting people's lives on track.

## Equitable briefing

In 2022–23, 31 per cent of all briefs from our in-house lawyers and private practitioners went to female barristers. However, the rate for only our in-house lawyers was higher (39.5 per cent). We provide staff with tools to guide fairer practices in the way we brief counsel. However, there’s a long way to go to reach the targets set out in our Equitable Briefing Strategy.

Equitable briefing	Number	% change on 2021–22
Payments for barristers in legally aided matters	\$29 million	+12%
Payments to female barristers at the private Bar (not including payments to firms or where gender hasn’t been identified)	\$9 million	+13%
Proportion of Victoria Legal Aid Chambers advocates who identify as female	56%	+17%

## First Nations services

Our Aboriginal community engagement officers (ACEOs) make a significant contribution to improving access for First Nations people to culturally safe and responsive legal assistance. The ACEO program now operates in six of our regional offices and is set to expand to more locations.

Work is underway for ACEOs to support the Bail and Remand Court and Weekend Online Remand Court in partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS). We expect this collaborative service delivery model to increase reach and impact for First Nations clients on remand.

In 2022–23, we worked on developing our third Reconciliation Action Plan with input from VALS and Djirra. The plan is set to be launched later in 2023 and will include actions to improve the accessibility, cultural safety and responsiveness of legally aided services for First Nations people and embed their lived experience and expertise in our service design and performance.

## Partnering with a First Nations co-operative in regional Victoria

**Our partnership with the Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative is creating stronger connections to community and delivering great outcomes for First Nations people.**

The co-operative provides health, family, community and cultural services to First Nations people in the Geelong, Bellarine and Colac region.

“*This partnership is unique because our community can engage with an Aboriginal lawyer and [ACEO], who both grew up on Country.*”

Victoria Legal Aid senior lawyer

Our senior lawyer and ACEO at our Geelong office on Wadawurrung country regularly receive referrals through the co-operative. They provide early support to prevent escalating legal issues and a culturally sensitive service that responds to their individual needs. They've served more than 100 clients in under 12 months.

'This partnership is unique because our community can engage with an Aboriginal lawyer and [ACEO], who both grew up on Country,' said our senior lawyer.

One client referred from Wathaurong had a number of matters listed on various dates and was struggling with a range of issues. She had disengaged with all services and was homeless. She had ongoing alcohol and drug issues, Centrelink payments ceased and no contact with her children, who were living in out-of-home care.

The lawyer took care of the legal matter while the ACEO addressed the non-legal issues and was able to connect the mother with services.

The matter was booked into the Koori Court. Subsequently, the client took ownership of her actions and the magistrate deferred sentence, pending further goals being achieved. The ACEO helped her achieve those goals, including working with Child Protection so she could reengage with her child.

Following this support, the client hasn't reoffended, has reengaged with all services and is seeing her child again.



## Improving community legal understanding

Strategic outcome **02**

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

### Community legal education and information

In 2022–23, we continued to work with sector partners to get the right information to people when, where and how they needed it.

Some of the highlights included:

- restarting in-person education programs for people in prison and young people in flexible learning centres
- joining a coalition of peak services to provide legal messaging and training for 12 agencies delivering affirmative consent education across Victoria
- revamping our help cards and poster and expanding them to 36 languages, helping people identify legal problems and seek help
- supporting young people of culturally diverse backgrounds in Melbourne’s west to access the benefits of citizenship.

Delivery type	Number	% change on 2021–22
Community legal education sessions	213	+84%
Community legal education session participants	6,447	+37%
Community legal education publications distributed	162,038	+107%
Unique views of legal information website pages	2,190,267	+18%

### Online support and advocacy tools

In 2022–23, we developed new online tools together with clients and lived experience consultants to support people as they navigate difficult times in their lives.

#### NDIS Mental Health Toolkit

We launched the NDIS Mental Health Toolkit to help people with experience of the mental health system advocate for themselves under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The toolkit has information and worksheets to help people know and speak up for their rights.

Independent Mental Health Advocacy co-designed it with people with experience of the NDIS and mental health system. It was launched in November 2022 and had 4,299 unique visits in 2022–23.

“As an NDIS participant living with a psychosocial disability I hope that this online tool can support people like me to access the NDIS, know their rights, and be supported in making equitable decisions knowing what their true options and choices could be.”

Lived experience consultant, researcher, artist and a co-designer of the toolkit

### My Safety: options before and after separation

Our new online tool – My Safety: options before and after separation – helps people experiencing domestic, family or sexual violence to plan for their safety and separation. It guides them to options for next steps and support services tailored to their circumstances and links to resources.

We worked with women from diverse backgrounds and experiences to shape the content in the tool. It was launched in May 2023 and had 576 unique visits in 2022–23.

## Most common legal issues

Providing legal information is our largest service and is available to everyone through our website and Legal Help phonenumber and webchat. The most common issues addressed with legal information provide a picture of general community issues of concern.

### Most visited legal information website pages

- 1 Age of consent** – laws on the age young people can have sex
- 2 Writing a character reference** – writing a character reference for someone going to court
- 3 Powers of attorney** – choosing who will make decisions about your life if you cannot
- 4 Drug possession** – laws on the using, possessing, cultivating and trafficking drugs
- 5 Driving and accidents** – reporting driving accidents to police and insurance matters

### Most ordered legal information publications

- 1 Take control of your future decision-making: an introduction**
- 2 Am I old enough? Common legal issues for young people**
- 3 Age of consent** (wallet card)
- 4 Sexting, selfies and nudies** (wallet card)
- 5 Cyberbullying** (wallet card)

### Top issues – Legal Help phone line

- 1 Family violence – respondent**
- 2 Family violence – applicant**
- 3 Parenting plan** (family law)
- 4 Property settlement** (family law)
- 5 Spending time with a child** (family law)

### Top issues – Legal Help webchat

- 1 Property settlement** (family law)
- 2 Parenting plan** (family law)
- 3 Family violence – applicant**
- 4 Wills and estates**
- 5 Family violence – respondent**





## Collaborative legal assistance sector

Strategic outcome 03

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

### A national approach to NDIS legal assistance

We've worked with National Legal Aid (NLA) to develop a national legal service response to support the National Disability Insurance Agency's (NDIA) Independent Expert Review program.

In 2022, the service received short-term funding of \$1.13 million to support the NDIA in providing access to earlier and better outcomes for National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) appeal matters until June 2023.

We continue to work with NLA, the Department of Social Services, the NDIA, disability advocates and people with disability to inform reforms to NDIS decision-making and appeals with a focus on early resolution. We've advocated with NLA on the proposed federal administrative review body reforms, Disability Royal Commission and potential continuation of the Your Story Disability Legal Support service. This reform environment supports NLA's strategy for nationally consistent NDIS legal assistance and paves the way to consider more national service models.

### Services at the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia

The Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia has changed how it manages cases, including family violence risk screening and a specialist list for high-risk cases.

We're working with the court to support these changes, including by increasing our capacity to deliver family law services through new lawyer roles. We've also allocated funding to our Family Dispute Resolution Service to manage increased demand arising from court-referred matters.

Our Family Advocacy and Support Services (FASS) program works with community legal centres to deliver duty lawyer services, family violence support and mental health support at the court. We partnered with several organisations to establish it in all seven of the court's circuit locations in regional Victoria, assisting around 30 per cent more clients through the program than in 2021-22.

### Services at the new Bendigo Law Courts

In 2022-23, we increased our legal services in the Loddon Mallee region through the new Bendigo Law Courts.

With State Budget funding, we recruited key positions to deliver services to the Koori Court, Specialist Family Violence Courts and Assessment and Referral Court.

We worked closely with our legal assistance service providers in the region – including private practitioners, ARC Justice, Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre and the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS) – in establishing new ways of working in delivering services to the new court.

### Legal assistance in Melbourne's west

In 2022-23, we worked with partners on legal assistance projects for communities in Melbourne's western suburbs – a region with areas of significant disadvantage, high population growth and a large population of refugees and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The projects relate to built environment, workforce planning, community legal education and service design and coordination.


We worked with partners, including VALS, Djirra, WEstjustice and Brimbank Melton Community Legal Centre, to understand their role in the region and how we can work together effectively.



## Youth Citizenship in the West

**We're working with WESTjustice and community partners to provide free legal and non-legal assistance to young people in Melbourne's west to apply for Australian citizenship.**

The Youth Citizenship in the West project reaches out to young people of refugee backgrounds through schools and community groups so they can access free legal support to make a citizenship application. It aims to prevent them from coming into contact with the criminal justice system by enhancing their sense of connection and belonging, contributing to their recovery goals and completing their resettlement journey.

 **Many people who have not acquired citizenship do not realise how this may limit them in the future.**

Victoria Legal Aid project coordinator



'Over the eight years of running our School Lawyer Program across a number of schools in the west, we have had countless young people seeking help in applying for citizenship,' said Youth Law Program Manager at WESTjustice.

'This was not something we were able to assist with, but it was identified as an unmet legal need. With limited referral pathways and even more limited expertise in this area, young people were often left in limbo. This project is a welcome initiative.'

'Many people who have not acquired citizenship do not realise how this may limit them in the future,' said our project coordinator.

'They may miss the opportunity to visit family overseas and they will not be able to vote and be fully active citizens. Ultimately, the permanent visa holds them in a more precarious position.'

The project provides training to settlement workers, the community legal sector and school lawyers in the citizenship application process. Legal assistance and promotion directly to communities began in April 2023, leveraging WESTjustice's extensive network in the west.

'A few years ago, being on a visa, I lost the opportunity to access grants to study as a nurse,' said a participant of a session at Wyndham Central College. 'But I am here today because I think that my younger sister deserves a chance and I want to help her and myself to become citizens.'

On 30 June 2023, we were assisting 192 clients through 59 family-based applications.

## Victims Legal Service

In March 2023, we launched the Victims Legal Service (VLS) – Victoria's first dedicated legal service for victims of crime. Designed with input from victim-survivors, the service provides free legal advice and assistance to people who have suffered injury or loss because of a violent crime.

The VLS is a collaboration between Victoria Legal Aid, VALS, Djirra, Women's Legal Service Victoria and generalist community legal centres in metropolitan and regional Victoria. Together, we assist victims to obtain financial assistance through the Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal and the Financial Assistance Scheme when it starts. A small part of the service assists with Restitution and Compensation Order applications to obtain compensation.

The state-wide helpline is the primary entry point for victims, with warm referrals made to VLS partners, including our Equality Law Program, where casework is needed. Up until 30 June 2023, we responded to 682 enquiries through the helpline and made 162 referrals to VLS partners.

## Supporting the mixed model

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

### Private practitioners

We're committed to improving the experience of private practitioners who do legally aided work. In our satisfaction survey and review of regional participation, we identified common issues related to:

- fees and fee structures
- processes to join panels and administrative requirements
- a need to improve engagement with private practitioners
- challenges associated with assisting clients with complex needs.

In response to this, we're implementing several initiatives to support private practitioners and improve processes and communication. More information about these initiatives is on our website.

### Barristers

On 30 June 2023, there were 208 barristers from the Victorian Bar and 11 public defenders from our chambers on our Criminal Trial Preferred Barristers List. We liaise with the Criminal Bar Association and the Indictable Crime Certificate Committee at the Victorian Bar in administering the list.

## Community legal centres

Community legal centres (CLCs) are a critical part of the mixed model. In 2022–23, we supported pilot programs that strengthen the capacity of CLCs and increase access to legal help, establishing vital partnerships and processes to improve service coordination and collaboration. We also facilitated regular workshops with CLCs on building people-centred services.

Funding administration under the Community Legal Services Program continued to increase. We administered \$58,372,063 to 38 CLCs, the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service, Djirra and the Federation of Community Legal Centres.

This included core and special purpose funding for:

- increased legal assistance for vulnerable women
- supporting people with mental health conditions to access the justice system
- frontline support to address workplace sexual harassment
- domestic violence units/health justice partnerships
- supporting victims of crime.

## Collaborative Planning Committee

The Collaborative Planning Committee (CPC) provides advice and recommendations to our Board about legal needs and the legal assistance sector. It includes representatives from the legal sector.

The CPC met six times in 2022–23. It discussed several sector priorities, including the Victorian Legal Assistance Strategy 2022–25, the Victorian CLC sector's 10-year plan and workforce reports, our Strategy 26 and diversity and inclusion plans, and outcomes-based planning and reporting. It also discussed the preparedness of Disaster Legal Help Victoria.

The CPC's effectiveness was reviewed, with an independent evaluation finding that:

- it contributed to improved relationships and greater collaboration among partners
- members gained more awareness and understanding of each other's work and perspectives
- information sharing informed service development and government policy
- further work is needed to clarify the CPC's purpose and identify common priorities.



## Fairer laws and systems

### Strategic outcome 04

In 2022–23, we pursued improvements in law and policy in a range of criminal, civil, family and children's law areas and elevated clients' stories and voices through this advocacy.

For all submissions we made during 2022–23, visit the [Victoria Legal Aid Library website](#).

## Truth and justice for First Nations people

We believe the Yoorrook Justice Commission and the First Nations treaty process in Victoria present an opportunity to achieve long-lasting change, founded on principles of self-determination. We acknowledge First Nations communities' expertise and leadership in this area.

We gave evidence to the commission, setting out the need for urgent and transformative change in Victoria's criminal justice and child protection systems to address the profound harms caused to First Nations people.

Some of the criminal justice reforms we recommended included:

- raising the age of criminal responsibility to 14 years
- fairer bail laws
- a health-based response to public intoxication
- improving police accountability and oversight
- creating an Aboriginal social justice commissioner to oversee reform implementation.

We also recommended enhancing fairness in child protection and supporting families to stay together by:

- reinstating the Children's Court's ability to make orders in the best interests of children without time-limits on reunification
- establishing specialist Children's Courts state-wide
- expanding state-wide access to independent non-legal advocacy for families
- enhancing government accountability to reduce the criminalisation of children in residential care.

## Mikala's story

**Mikala (not her real name) is a Gunditjmara woman who was taken away from her mother at 18 months old because of drug use. She has had child protection involvement with her own children.**

We supported Mikala to provide evidence to the Yoorrook Justice Commission, an experience she described as 'the start of a healing journey'.

I never knew the details about my Aboriginality because I didn't know my Dad or his family until he died when I was 24 years old.

Being part of the Stolen [Generations], I think it leads to more attention on you and every time you go to have a child you get paranoid that they'll want to take that baby away.

I was in a violent relationship in the past and my son was removed at birth. I was led to believe by Child Protection that I was the issue and that everything was my problem, so I needed to fix it.

So stupid me decided that I would continually go back to him. But that would make them say I was a bad mother. In the end I snapped, I lost it, I lost control of myself, and I lost my sense of belonging again.

And I was incarcerated for breaching the Intervention Order. I was in jail for four days. ... Child Protection really treated me like a statistic after I went to jail. They wouldn't speak to me, they didn't want to have a bar of me because I was classified as a criminal.

They say they support people, but they don't! ... They are worried about their reputation and what their reputation is going to look like inside court and outside.

I had to prove myself, which I did. I reduced off cannabis, I got clean, I was engaging with supports... I was proactively trying to gain my way back from where I'd been.

I'm so passionate about giving back to the community and breaking cycles when it comes to the Child Protection system and children being in out of home care because I felt that myself.

**“** Being part of the Stolen [Generations], I think it leads to more attention on you and every time you go to have a child you get paranoid that they'll want to take that baby away. **”**

I want my children to grow up with a sense of belonging, I want my children to grow up with their identity being known to them.

## Accountability and reform beyond Robodebt

Our evidence to the Royal Commission into the Robodebt Scheme outlined the impact on our clients of the failed scheme and the need for social security reform.

We appeared with our former clients, Madeleine Masterton and Deanna Amato. Their Federal Court cases were recognised as having played a crucial role, together with the broader community campaign, in bringing and end to the scheme.

We identified four key areas of reform, including:

- co-designing social security processes with service users and key stakeholders
- strengthening rights for social security users
- ensuring fair and appropriate debt determination and recovery practices
- ensuring appropriate safeguards and protections for future decision-making and action.

These recommendations were informed by our practice, client experience and test case litigation, as well as our work with advocates and sector partners.

Given the immeasurable harm caused to thousands of Australians, we were pleased to see some accountability in the royal commission's final report and its 57 recommendations.

*It's gratifying to see the failures laid out clearly and the horror of having targeted people with the least capacity to navigate a complex system.*

*The amount of work I had to do to answer the debt notice was incomprehensible and I cannot imagine what it was like for those who speak another language, or those with disability.*

Madeleine Masterton, Victoria Legal Aid client

*One could have no clearer illustration of the value of legal aid services. The work Victoria Legal Aid did was not only in its clients' interests, it was for the public good.*

*The Robodebt experience convincingly demonstrates the importance, in the public interest, of properly funded legal aid commissions.*

Commissioner Catherine Holmes AC SC, final report of the Royal Commission into the Robodebt Scheme

## Putting children's best interests first

In our submission on the Family Law Amendment Bill 2023 exposure draft, we conveyed our support for the proposed changes to the *Family Law Act 1975* (Cth), which aim to ensure the best interests of children are prioritised and placed at the centre of the family law system.

In our work, we see opportunities to improve how the law operates to help separating families and support the best interests of children. Based on this experience, we broadly agreed with the policy intent of the amendments and expressed support for:

- repealing the presumption of 'equal shared parental responsibility'
- simplifying the factors for determining what is in a child's best interests
- expanding the definitions of 'member of the family' and 'relative'
- the policy intent of ensuring the voices of children are heard
- changes that prevent improper use or abuse of the family law system.

## Consumer rights in the mental health system

Following years of advocacy, we welcomed the passing of the new *Mental Health and Wellbeing Act 2022* (Vic) – a first step to centring Victoria's mental health system on consumer rights and lived experience.

In line with the recommendation of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, the Act introduced an opt-out non-legal advocacy model. This will ensure all consumers subject to compulsory treatment are connected to non-legal advocacy that keeps them informed of their rights and that they get as much say as possible in their assessment, treatment, care and personal recovery.

We also made a submission to the Independent Review of Victoria's Compulsory Treatment Criteria and Decision-making Laws on the future of mental health assessment and treatment. We outlined our vision for a system that prioritises the rights and preferences of consumers, reduces reliance on crisis-based responses, and works towards an end goal of eliminating compulsory treatment in Victoria's mental health system.

## Strategic litigation

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

## Hanson v Director of Housing

### **This significant case provides important protections against eviction for Victorian renters.**

Mr Hanson is a public housing renter in a regional town who has lived in his property for over 20 years, has significant health issues and previously experienced homelessness. He was being evicted from his home by Homes Victoria based on their assertion that he had failed to keep the rented premises in a reasonably clean condition.

Mr Hanson sought our assistance with an appeal to the Supreme Court of Victoria following a decision by the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) to grant a possession order. We submitted that VCAT had not properly applied the new test for evictions, which requires it to consider if the eviction is 'reasonable and proportionate'.

The Supreme Court found that VCAT had not properly applied the new test as it did not consider the impact on Mr Hanson of eviction, including assessing the likelihood of him being homeless, and having regard to his medical, financial and personal circumstances. As a result, Mr Hanson was able to remain safely housed and avoid homelessness.

This case provides important guidance on evictions under the new rental laws, and strengthens renters' rights at a critical time given the current housing affordability crisis.



## An effective and sustainable Victoria Legal Aid

### Strategic outcome 05

We aim to build an effective organisation by investing in our people, technology and data systems and working towards improving the sustainability of our operations.

## Diversity, equity, inclusion and respect

We're determined to build supportive and inclusive workplaces that reflect our diverse community – an area in which we must continue to learn and improve.

In 2022–23, we put systems in place to enable staff to speak up anonymously and seek support if they experience or witness inappropriate behaviour at work, such as bullying, sexual harassment, discrimination and racism. We refreshed our respectful workplace behaviour training for staff and continued to prioritise diversity and inclusion leadership training for our Board and senior leadership.

However, we must continue to build trust and safety in our reporting processes and find ways to measure behaviour change to ensure training drives meaningful change. We must also report on our progress and communicate regularly with staff networks about findings from reports and surveys.

While we're gradually becoming more culturally diverse, we recognise the need to improve our recruitment, retention and career pathways to increase our diversity at all organisational levels. This includes employment of First Nations people; our forthcoming Reconciliation Action Plan commits us to growing the proportion of First Nations staff to five per cent (from the current three per cent).

On 30 June 2023, 75 per cent of our staff were women and at least 0.4 per cent trans and gender diverse (although we expect there to be more trans and gender diverse staff not captured in our data). However, the proportion of women is higher at lower employment classification levels.

While there's clearly more to do, we're pleased to have continued reducing our gender pay gap to 11 per cent, down from 12 per cent in the previous year and below the national average of 13 per cent.<sup>1</sup>

In 2022–23, we provided staff with disability awareness training and continued to improve the accessibility of our buildings, information, training materials and events. We've also been working with the Australian Disability Network to ensure our systems and processes equitably recruit and include people with disability, including by updating our workplace adjustments policy.

## Technology and digital systems

We're continuing to enhance our digital capability to support more flexible and innovative ways of delivering client services.

In 2022–23, we rolled out a new case management system that gives staff a single and consistent client view. This reduces the need for clients to retell their story and makes it easier for staff to assess client need and provide more tailored advice.

Through our website, we've invested in creating new digital self-help tools that empower clients to support and advocate for themselves, such as our NDIS Mental Health Toolkit and My Safety tool. This has given us the technological capability to develop new tools for different client groups in future. See the Online support and advocacy tools section (page 18) to read more about these tools.

Protecting our systems and information from cyberattack has become imperative. We've developed a multi-faceted strategy that will uplift our cyber capabilities. It includes programs to increase awareness and measures to enhance our detection, protection and response to malicious activity, and is supported by industry leading protective technologies.

<sup>1</sup> The gender pay gap is the difference between women's and men's average weekly full-time base salary earnings, expressed as a percentage of men's earnings. This is used by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency to calculate the national gender pay gap; the agency does not report the national pay gap for trans and gender diverse people. Data was sourced from our payroll system on 19 January 2023 and is a snapshot of our workforce on that day.



## Environmental sustainability

We're committed to reducing our greenhouse gas emissions and improving the environmental sustainability of our operations, in line with the Victorian Government's target of net zero by 2050.

As of 1 July 2023, we're using 100 per cent GreenPower electricity across all our offices. This means we've achieved net zero on greenhouse gas emissions generated from the electricity we purchase – the first step on our journey to becoming carbon neutral.

We'll soon launch our first climate change strategy with the aim of becoming carbon neutral by 2026 by reducing and offsetting our carbon emissions, responsibly managing our environmental impacts and better representing and advocating for our clients and communities.

For more information, see the Environmental reporting section (page 40).

## Regional management sustainability

We've reviewed our regional management structures and introduced 12 additional management roles in our 14 offices across outer metropolitan and regional Victoria.

This has helped to ensure we provide more sustainable support for our clients in regional communities.



# Our governance

## Governance structure

Our governance structure consists of three elements: the Board of Directors, Executive Management Group and Senior Leadership Team.

### Board

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

It consists of the Chairperson and six directors nominated by the Victorian Attorney-General and appointed by the Governor-in-Council. One Board position became vacant following the departure of John O'Donoghue in February 2022. Andrew Jackomos, our inaugural First Nations member, was appointed to the role in July 2023.

The Board met eight times in 2022–23. It also met with the boards of the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service, Federation of Community Legal Centres and Law Institute of Victoria. The meetings were good opportunities for the boards to discuss areas of shared concern and interest. The Board plans to continue meeting with these boards on a regular basis.

See public records of our Board meetings in our Library Catalogue to read meeting minutes.

## Board members

The Board members in 2022–23 were:

**Bill Jaboor** Non-executive Director and Chairperson (on leave from 1 July to 1 October 2022)

**Robbie Campo** Non-executive Director (Acting Chairperson from 1 July to 1 October 2022)

**George Habib** Non-executive Director

**Tal Karp** Non-executive Director

**Clare Morton** Non-executive Director

**Andrew Saunders** Non-executive Director

### Diversity

All Board members have shared diversity information to reflect their commitment to ensuring the diversity among Board and staff members reflects the community. This data reflects the current Board, as of Andrew Jackomos' appointment in July 2023.

3 Female

4 Male

0 LGBTIQ+

1 First Nations

3 Culturally and linguistically diverse

6 Lived experience<sup>1</sup>

### Age

0 Under 35

1 35–44

2 45–54

4 55 and over

<sup>1</sup> Relevant to our priority clients, including a mental or physical disability and/or caregiving.

## Sub-committees

### Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee

The Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee (ARCC) provides oversight of financial performance, internal audit, risk management and compliance with legal, regulatory and policy obligations. It met four times in 2022-23.

### Workplace Wellbeing, Health and Safety Committee

The Workplace Wellbeing, Health and Safety Committee assists the Board to fulfil its oversight responsibilities relating to health, safety and wellbeing governance, risk management and compliance with legal, regulatory and policy requirements. It met three times in 2022-23.

### Data and Digital Advisory Group

The Data and Digital Advisory Group supports our Digital Legal Aid program and Data and Digital Information Strategy. It comprises two Board members and management representatives and assists the Board by providing oversight on program progress and direction, and a forum for consultation and advice. The group acts on behalf of the Board but does not assume any of the Board's responsibilities. It met five times in 2022-23.

### Performance Committee

The Performance Committee approves, discusses and reviews the key performance indicators for the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and discusses any other issues associated with remuneration and performance of the CEO and other executive directors, as required. It met twice in 2022-23.

## Executive Management Group

**Louise Glanville** Chief Executive Officer

**Joanna Fletcher** Executive Director, Family, Youth and Children's Law

**Cameron Hume** Chief Operating Officer

**Rowan McRae** Executive Director, Legal Practice, Civil Justice, Access and Equity

**Dan Nicholson** Executive Director, Criminal Law

**Peter Noble** Executive Director, Regions and Service Delivery

## Senior Leadership Team

**Lucy Adams** Director, Civil Justice

**Kate Bundrock** Director, Summary Crime and Therapeutic Justice<sup>1</sup>

**John Byrne** Director, People and Workplace Services (1 July 2022 to 30 April 2023)

**Daniella Calkoen** Director, People and Workplace Services (1 May to 30 June 2023)

**Matthew Dale** Chief Financial Officer

**Dianna Gleeson** Director, Legal Practice

**Lawrence Moser** Acting Director, First Nations Services<sup>2</sup>

**Julia Munster** Chief Counsel

**Eila Pourasgheri** Director, Families<sup>1</sup>

**Zione Walker-Nthenda** Director, Client Services and Sector Engagement

All members of the Executive Management Group are also members of the Senior Leadership Team.

<sup>1</sup> New appointment

<sup>2</sup> Associate Director, First Nations Services role was elevated to executive position in May 2023 with Lawrence Moser appointed on an acting basis.

## Staff and employment

### Employment and conduct principles

Our staff are bound by the values and employment principles in the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees and the *Public Administration Act 2004 (Vic)*.

Our Recruitment and Selection Policy also sets out a best practice approach to recruitment and selection that ensures employment decisions are based on merit and support the code of conduct values of impartiality, integrity, accountability and respect.

Employment levels in June 2023 and June 2022															
	2023						2022								
	All employees		Ongoing			Fixed term and casual		All employees		Ongoing			Fixed term and casual		
	No.	FTE	F/T	P/T	FTE	No.	FTE	No.	FTE	F/T	P/T	FTE	No.	FTE	
<b>Gender</b>															
Female	833	741.9	431	265	622.8	137	119.1	746	652.1	378	253	554.7	115	97.4	
Male	273	260	182	29	202.9	62	57.1	245	234.8	169	25	186.9	51	47.9	
Self-desc	4	3.8	3	0	3	1	0.8	3	3	3	0	3	0	0	
<b>Age</b>															
15-24	77	64.3	31	20	44.7	26	19.6	48	40.8	20	5	22.8	23	18	
25-34	361	341.7	219	56	261.1	86	80.6	314	294.6	195	49	228.5	70	66.1	
35-44	309	276.5	169	95	237.2	45	39.3	299	260.8	153	99	222.7	47	38.2	
45-54	212	191.4	119	68	169.4	25	22	187	167.3	105	65	151.9	17	15.4	
55-64	121	107.2	64	41	93.3	16	13.9	115	100.6	63	43	92.9	9	7.7	
65+	30	24.6	14	14	23.1	2	1.5	31	25.9	14	17	25.9	0	0	
<b>VLA grade</b>															
VLA1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
VLA2	227	194	91	78	146.2	58	47.8	215	183.3	94	67	140	54	43.3	
VLA3	434	397.2	243	100	313.6	91	83.6	390	352.7	226	93	289.2	71	63.5	
VLA4	301	274.6	183	80	241.6	38	33	255	229.4	143	82	201.3	30	28.1	
VLA5	95	90.3	62	21	78.3	12	12	88	81.4	55	23	72	10	9.4	
VLA6	39	36.1	27	11	35.6	1	0.5	34	31.5	23	10	30.5	1	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,096</b>	<b>992.2</b>	<b>606</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>815.2</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>982</b>	<b>878.3</b>	<b>541</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>733</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>145.3</b>	
<b>Exec.</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,110</b>	<b>1,005.7</b>	<b>616</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>828.7</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>994</b>	<b>889.9</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>744.6</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>145.3</b>	

## Senior Executive Service officers at 30 June 2023

We have one CEO and thirteen Senior Executive Service (SES) officers. The workforce data tables below include SES officers active in the final full pay period of the 2022–23 financial year. 'Var' denotes the variations between the current and previous reporting period.

Number of ongoing executive officers, by gender						
Class	All (No.)	All (Var.)	Male (No.)	Male (Var.)	Female (No.)	Female (No.)
SES-3	1	0	0	0	1	0
SES-2	5	0	3	0	2	0
SES-1	8	2	1	-1	7	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>

Reconciliation of executive numbers		
Role	2023	2022
Executives (Financial Statement note 9.5)	15	12
Accountable officer	0	0
(Less) separations	1	0
<b>Total executive numbers at 30 June</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>12</b>

The following table discloses the annualised total salary for senior employees. The salary amount is reported as the full-time annualised salary.

### Annualised total salary for executives and other senior non-executive staff

The salaries reported below are for the full financial year, at a 1-FTE rate, and exclude superannuation.

Income band (salary)	Executives	STS	PS	SMA	SRA	Other
< \$160,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
\$160,000–\$179,999	-	-	-	-	-	-
\$180,000–\$199,999	2	-	-	-	-	-
\$200,000–\$219,999	6	-	-	-	-	1 <sup>1</sup>
\$220,000–\$239,999	1	-	-	-	-	-
\$240,000–\$259,999	1	-	-	-	-	-
\$260,000–\$279,999	3	-	-	-	-	-
\$280,000–\$299,999	-	-	-	-	-	-
\$300,000–\$319,999	-	-	-	-	-	-
\$320,000–\$339,999	-	-	-	-	-	-
\$340,000–\$359,999	-	-	-	-	-	-
\$360,000–\$379,999	-	-	-	-	-	-
\$380,000–\$399,999	-	-	-	-	-	-
\$400,000–\$419,999	-	-	-	-	-	-
\$420,000–\$439,999	1	-	-	-	-	-
\$440,000–\$459,999	-	-	-	-	-	-
\$460,000–\$479,999	-	-	-	-	-	-
\$480,000–\$499,999	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1</b>

<sup>1</sup> These are non-executive staff paid above the maximum of a VLA Grade 6 – \$177,425.

## Risk management

### Organisational risk profile

Our organisational risk profile sets out the risks that pose the greatest threat to achieving our strategic objectives. It is reviewed and approved annually by the ARCC and managed in accordance with our risk management policy.

The organisational risk profile monitors treatments and controls in place for these risks:

- insufficient level of funding to meet demand for services and achieve our strategy
- failure to influence government policy that affects our clients and the community
- failure to maintain ICT and cyber resilience
- failure to enhance and sustain our digital platforms and capability to improve service delivery
- failure to optimise and govern data
- failure to deliver sufficient state-wide services to respond to unmet need using an appropriate mixed model
- failure to deliver services and evolve service design in alignment with client needs
- failure to provide staff with a safe, supportive and inclusive workplace
- ineffective organisational resilience during business disruption events.

Quarterly reports against the risk profile are provided to the ARCC and Board.

### Health, safety and wellbeing risk profile

We maintain a health, safety and wellbeing risk profile that sets out the most significant health, safety and wellbeing risks to our staff and contractors, including private practitioners, students and volunteers.

The Workplace Wellbeing, Health and Safety Committee reviews and approves this risk profile. Quarterly reports against the risk profile are provided to the committee and our Board.

### Internal audit

Our internal audit activities and practices align with the Standing Directions issued under the *Financial Management Act 1994 (Vic)*.

They support the ARCC by determining whether our control and risk management practices are effective, efficient and economical in helping us to achieve our objectives. Where necessary, improvements in procedures and systems are recommended.

In 2022–23, the ARCC was regularly presented with reports on audit activities, advisory services and audit support. Protiviti provides our internal audit services.

## Occupational health and safety performance

Incidents			
Performance indicator	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21
Number of incidents	209	176	91
Rate per 100 FTE <sup>1</sup>	20.78	19.78	11.05

<sup>1</sup> Using 1005.7 as the FTE figure for end of 2022-23.

Claims			
Performance indicator	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21
Total new WorkCover claims	4	0	2
Number of new standard claims	4	0	2
Rate per 100 FTE	0.40	0	0.24
Number of new lost time claims	4	0	1
Rate per 100 FTE	0.40	0	0.12
Number of new claims exceeding 13 weeks	2	0	0
Rate per 100 FTE	0.20	0	0

Other measures			
Performance indicator	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21
Fatality claims	0	0	0
Average cost per standard claim <sup>1</sup>	\$24,024	\$31,473	\$9,234
Average incurred per standard claim <sup>2</sup>	\$153,517	\$123,403	\$47,644
Percentage of claims with return-to-work plan less than 30 days	0%	N/A	100%

Data sourced from WorkSafe Victoria's authorised agent.

<sup>1</sup> Actual cost spent per premium impacting claim during the financial year, averaged over each standard premium impacting claim.

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

## Legislative compliance

This report has been prepared in accordance with all relevant legislation. See the disclosure index (pages 107-109) that identifies our compliance with statutory disclosure requirements.

### Complaints

Complaints give information about our clients' experience and inform how we can improve our services. We use complaints data to detect issues early and direct our quality assurance processes.

We are committed to providing an easy to use and responsive complaints process and aim to resolve complaints at the point of service. We also have review and evaluation processes in place.

Anyone can make a complaint about our staff, services or about private practitioners representing clients under a grant of legal assistance. We also invite and confidentially investigate complaints about people receiving legal aid services.

Information about how to make a complaint is available on our website.

In 2022-23, we received 551 complaints and enquiries compared to 821 in 2021-22, which is down by 33 per cent.

# Our governance

## What people complained about

Nature of complaint	2022-23	2021-22	% change
Our services and staff	194	275	-30%
Services provided by private practitioners	201	195	3%
Enquiries	156	351	-56%
<b>Total</b>	<b>551</b>	<b>821</b>	<b>-33%</b>

## Our targets

Complaints resolved within 28 days	2022-23	2021-22
Our services and staff	28%	48%
Services provided by private practitioners	16.5%	35%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>42%</b>

### Complaints about our services and staff

We received 194 complaints about our services and staff (down by 30 per cent).

Complaints were most commonly about:

- delay/failure to progress case (11 per cent)
- lack of communication (14 per cent)
- failure to provide quality legal advice (seven per cent).

Complaints that proceeded to an investigation were most commonly resolved by:

- explanation/information provided (24 per cent)
- apology (13 per cent)
- complaint abandoned (12 per cent).

### Complaints about services provided by private practitioners

We received 201 complaints about services provided by private practitioners (up by three per cent). Overall, the number of complaints about private practitioners remains low at approximately one complaint per 129 grants of legal assistance.

Complaints were most commonly about:

- lack of communication (11 per cent)
- failure to follow instructions (nine per cent)
- independent children's lawyer failed to act in best interest of child (seven per cent).

Complaints were most commonly resolved by:

- complaint abandoned (28 per cent)
- apology (eight per cent).
- complaint withdrawn (seven per cent).

We had 22 per cent of complaints still under investigation as of 30 June 2023.

Private practitioners are required to have an internal complaint handling policy, and complaints resolved under those policies are not captured in our data.

### Enquiries

We received 156 enquiries in 2022-23 about a range of issues including queries about another person's eligibility for a grant of legal assistance or seeking information about our services.

## Government advertising

The disclosure threshold for government advertising expenditure (campaigns with a media spend) is \$100,000 (exclusive of GST). Our total advertising expenditure during 2022–23 was not more than \$100,000 (exclusive of GST).

## Consultancies

Consultancies valued at \$10,000 or greater				
Consultant	Purpose	Total approved project fee (\$ (excl. GST))	Expenditure (\$ (excl. GST))	Future expenditure (\$ (excl. GST))
Bendelta	Optimising hybrid work	298,708	229,044	69,664
BizData	Power BI model mentoring	18,112	18,112	0
BSI E-learning	Client safety framework	102,556	79,931	22,625
Cube Group Management Consulting	Legal Help organisational and job design	150,000	150,000	0
Deloitte Consulting	Digital Legal Aid benefits review work	33,532	29,880	3,652
Deloitte Consulting	Legal aid services online reflection, report and recommendation	70,800	70,800	0
Ernst & Young	Climate change advisory services	40,000	40,000	0
Finity Consulting	Review of outstanding debtors	61,054	49,457	11,597
Flanagan Brown	Psychosocial risk assessment	53,950	53,950	0
Genesys Cloud Services	Consulting services – strategic staffing	141,108	13,000	128,108
K Murray Consulting	Collaborative Planning Committee evaluation project	28,800	28,800	0
Karen Milward Consulting Services	Reconciliation Action Plan project consultancy	27,900	27,900	0
KPMG	Secure data collection and disposal project	155,719	148,305	0
KPMG	Service output review	191,158	191,158	0
Legal Aid NSW	Independent evaluation of Your Story Disability Legal Service	36,363	36,363	0
McGrathNicol Advisory Partnership	Payroll function review	45,000	45,000	0
Mcphee Andrewartha	Coaching support for leaders	14,175	14,175	0
Mercer Consulting	Corporate modernisation review	209,284	66,539	142,745
Orima Research	Client Experience Survey 2023	92,288	73,829	18,459
Portable	Digital ways of working	14,857	14,857	0
Portable	Review of duty lawyer and in-court work	52,410	52,410	0
RMIT University	Remand services review	100,000	90,870	9,130
RMIT University	Specialist family violence courts evaluation	115,506	39,175	76,341
Ryley Lawson	Disability Action Plan journey mapping project	11,200	11,200	0



# Our governance

## Consultancies valued at \$10,000 or greater

Consultant	Purpose	Total approved project fee (\$ (excl. GST)	Expenditure (\$ (excl. GST)	Future expenditure (\$ (excl. GST)
SenateSHJ	Review and simulation	85,363	16,363	69,000
Social Impact Hub	Disability Action Plan journey mapping project	53,211	28,800	24,411
Social Security Rights Victoria	Future directions project – stage 2	50,000	50,000	0
Terra Firma	Review of business continuity – Shepparton floods	41,790	21,000	20,790
The Incus Group	Consulting for outcomes report	20,000	20,000	0
Trusted Impact	High-level security assessment	28,420	28,420	0
Trusted Impact	Professional fees – security advisory agreement	52,200	52,200	0
White Sapphire	Microsoft technology support	12,000	12,000	0
Women's Legal Service Victoria	Development of specialist family violence courts e-learning modules	123,700	58,905	64,795
Women's Legal Service Victoria	Safer families training	10,000	10,000	0

## Consultancies valued under \$10,000

In 2022–23, we engaged 38 consultancies where the total fees payable to the individual consultancies were less than \$10,000. The total expenditure was \$229,244 (excluding GST).

## Information and communication technology

In 2022–23, we had a total information and communication technology (ICT) expenditure of \$7.3 million with capital investment of \$2.1 million relating to the Digital Legal Aid (DLA) project.

The increase in business-as-usual ICT expenses is due to more digital tools coming online and support for staff growth through service expansion.

Business as usual ICT expenditure	Non-business as usual ICT expenditure (DLA)	Total capital expenditure
\$5,081,481	\$2,143,019	\$2,252,062

## Contracts

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

## Local Jobs First

In accordance with the *Local Jobs First Act 2003* (Vic), departments and public sector bodies are required to apply the Local Jobs First policy in all projects valued at \$3 million or more in metropolitan Melbourne or for state-wide projects, or \$1 million or more for projects in regional Victoria. We had no projects during the financial year that require specific disclosure.

## Competitive neutrality policy

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

## Information and records management

Our staff must create and maintain full and accurate records of the business they conduct while representing our clients.

As a public office, we must comply with relevant legislative and regulatory obligations including:

- *Public Records Act 1973* (Vic)
- Public Record Office Victoria (PROV) standards and specifications
- *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic)
- Victorian Protective Data Security Framework.

In 2022–23, we improved information and records management by:

- commencing the implementation of the PROV approved retention and disposal authority standard (PROS 22/05) to reduce business risk by identifying and disposing of obsolete information
- appointing a new external commercial storage provider and completing the transfer of physical holdings
- improving accessibility of archived records through significant cataloguing descriptions and updates
- continuing to support staff to access information digitally while fostering an environment of shared responsibility for data governance
- continuing to streamline mailroom handling and digitisation processes
- conducting quality assurance on digitised client files migrated to the Digital Files Portal to above industry standard ratios
- enhancing our data access monitoring to strengthen our ability to prevent, detect and respond to unauthorised access and maintain strict adherence to data privacy regulations
- participating in a data community of practice to increase understanding in our organisation of our data sharing and governance policies.

## Information privacy

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

In 2022–23, the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner (OVIC) referred one complaint to us about an alleged privacy breach. We investigated the matter and advised OVIC that we were not involved in the disclosure.

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

## Freedom of information

*The Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Vic) provides a public right of access to certain information and documents that we hold. This is an important way of promoting openness and accountability.

Applicants can apply to access documents created by us or supplied to us by an external organisation or individual. They may also include maps, films, microfiche, photographs, computer printouts, computer discs, tape recordings and videotapes.

We also share a number of categories of documents outside of freedom of information (FOI), including client files to our clients, policies, frameworks, processes, procedures and any documents we determine we can provide outside of the Act.

The Act allows us to refuse access, either fully or partially, to certain documents or information. Examples include: some internal working documents, law enforcement documents, documents covered by legal professional privilege (such as legal advice), personal information about other people, and information provided to a department in-confidence and information that is confidential under another Act.

Requests must be in writing and clearly identify the types of materials requested. More information about how to make a request is on the FOI page on our website.

The application fee is \$31.90 but can be waived due to hardship. There may also be access charges if the document pool is large and the search for material is time consuming.

# Our governance

In 2022–23, we received 25 applications (38 per cent more than in 2021–22):

- two resulted in full release of documents
- two resulted in partial release of documents
- eight resulted in release of documents outside of the Act
- two were withdrawn
- three were refused
- four were not processed (FOI fee not paid)
- one resulted in no documents
- three were abandoned.

According to section 21 of the Act, the processing time is 30 days, or 45 days when external consultation is required under sections 29, 29A, 31, 31A, 33, 34 or 35.

Processing time may also be extended any number of times by periods of 30 days, in consultation with the applicant. However, getting an applicant's agreement for extension cannot occur after the timeframe for deciding a request expires.

In 2022–23:

- six decisions were made within the section 21 requirements
- one decision was made outside the section 21 requirements due to the request not being valid and further clarification being required.

If an applicant is not satisfied by a decision, they have the right (under section 49A) to seek a review by OVIC within 28 days of receiving a decision letter.

In 2022–23, OVIC notified us of three review requests. One was withdrawn. The second was reviewed by OVIC, who agreed with our decision to refuse access.

The third related to an FOI matter we refused pursuant to section 25A(5), as the documents requested were exempt and there was no obligation under section 25 to grant access to an edited copy. The documents were exempt pursuant to section 38. OVIC conducted a review and was satisfied the section 25A(5) requirements were met and agreed with our decision.

## Victorian Ombudsman

The Victorian Ombudsman can investigate complaints about administrative actions we take where the complaint cannot be resolved with us directly.

In 2022–23, the Ombudsman notified us of 16 complaints made to them. Eight were resolved by providing the Ombudsman with further information, six were resolved by responding to the complainant and providing clarification, and two are pending.

## Compliance with the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012* (Vic)

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

## Compliance with the *Building Act 1993* (Vic)

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

We continue to refurbish or relocate ageing fit outs to ensure we provide a safe and professional environment that enables mobility for all staff. Our functional design processes allow for an adaptable built environment to enable flexible work practices.

## Compliance with the *Disability Act 2006* (Vic)

We have completed the first year of implementing our Disability Action Plan 2022–25, which was launched in December 2021 and co-designed with people with disability. A legislative requirement of the *Disability Act 2006* (Vic), the plan is one part of our diversity, equity and inclusion framework that aims to increase overall accessibility to Victoria Legal Aid for staff, clients and the community.

For more information about the implementation of the plan, see the section on Diversity, equity, inclusion and respect (page 27).

## Compliance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020* (Vic)

Our Gender Equality Action Plan 2021–25 and workplace gender audit data, both legislative requirements of the *Gender Equality Act 2020* (Vic), have been approved by the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector and published on its Insights Portal.

The action plan is designed to address systemic causes of gender inequality, recognising that gender inequality may be compounded by other forms of discrimination, to ensure staff of all genders are included and feel safe in our workplace.

For more information about the implementation of the plan, see the section on Diversity, equity, inclusion and respect (page 27).

## Compliance with the *Carers Recognition Act 2012 (Vic)*

We are exempt from reporting on our compliance under the *Carers Recognition Act 2012 (Vic)* because we are not a public service care agency or a funded care agency. As such, the Act does not apply.

## Disclosure of emergency procurement

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

## Environmental reporting

This is our first year of reporting through the mandatory environmental data reporting for government entities.

We are categorised a Tier 3b organisation – estimated to attribute less than five per cent of the public sector’s emissions. This means we’re not subject to the full environmental data requirements. However, as part of our forthcoming climate change strategy, we plan to increase our capacity to voluntarily report on more environmental indicators in future years.

Data is captured from consumption reports on our 14 offices and our car fleet. We’re using the fringe benefit tax year (1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023) to allow for data to cover a full reporting year and provide greater accuracy.

Indicator	2022–23	2021–22
Total full-time equivalent (FTE) employees	981 <sup>1</sup>	878.3
Total office area (m2)	16,925 <sup>2</sup>	16,925
Number of offices	14	14
Number of co-working desk spaces	1 <sup>3</sup>	1

- This figure is for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 and may be different to other FTE totals appearing in this report.
- Total floor space excludes the Mildura co-working desk space as this data is not available.
- The reportable site list excludes the Mildura site (FTE 9). The Mildura service is co-located at Mildura’s Sunraysia Community Health Services and falls within their reporting boundary. We do not have operational control over this co-working space and do not receive utility bills.

## Greenhouse gas emissions

Using an online tool we purchased, we calculated the greenhouse gas emissions generated by our operations for the 2021–22 fringe benefit tax year to create a baseline year. This helped us test our capability and capacity to report against the new requirements.

In 2022–23, our scope 1 (direct) emissions increased by 34 per cent from 2021–22, driven by increased vehicle use as travel resumed after extended periods of pandemic-related remote working. While we plan for our long-term transition to electric vehicles, we’ll be purchasing Australian offsets from local reforestation and biodiversity projects.

Our scope 2 emissions decreased by three per cent due to changes to the emissions calculation model used in the online tool we purchased. As of 1 July 2023, we are purchasing 100 per cent GreenPower, which will reduce our scope 2 emissions to zero.

Our reportable scope 3 results were from commercial air travel only. This data was not collected in 2021–22. As we mature our data collection, we hope to broaden this category to include other emission sources, such as those associated with working from home. We expect reported emissions to increase as we collect more data and staff attend more national conferences and events.

Indicator	2022–23	2021–22
Total scope 1 greenhouse gas emissions (tonnes CO2-e) <sup>1</sup>	21.18	15.83
Total scope 2 greenhouse gas emissions (tonnes CO2-e)	655.20	673.02
Total scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions from commercial air travel (tonnes CO2-e)	10.02	-

- The fugitive greenhouse gas emissions that result from kitchen fridges and car air conditioning were estimated and have been excluded as they are less than one per cent of our total emissions and therefore do not meet materiality.

# Our governance

## Electricity production and consumption

There was an eight per cent increase in electricity used as staff moved to hybrid work arrangements and spent more time in the office. All our sites are leased and do not currently have any renewable on-site generation.

As part of our forthcoming climate change strategy, we'll establish a staff network to use our environmental data to identify, plan and implement actions to increase our offices' energy efficiency.

Indicator	2022-23	2021-22
Total electricity consumption – purchased electricity (office buildings) (MWh)	842.92 <sup>1</sup>	783.13
On-site electricity generated (MWh)	0	0
On-site installed generation capacity (MW)	0	0
Total electricity offsets (MWh)	0	0
GreenPower	0	0

<sup>1</sup> At the time of reporting, three electricity invoices were not available. Consumption for these invoices was estimated by using the average daily consumption from the previous year's invoices, multiplied by the number of days missing from the reporting period.

## Stationary fuel use

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

## Transportation

Our car fleet has 30 passenger vehicles, primarily used to support staff to access regional and rural courts and tribunals. All are petrol engine cars, although 97 per cent are Toyota hybrids. Our fleet has an average fuel efficiency of 4.45l/100km.

There was a 57 per cent increase in the energy used in transport fuels from 2021-22. As pandemic-related restrictions lifted, there was a return to in-person operations at courts and courts have increased their capacity to hear matters. This resulted in an increase in vehicle use.

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

Indicator	2022-23	2021-22
Number of vehicles – road, passenger, internal combustion engine (petrol)	30	30
Total energy used in transportation – vehicles (MJ)	216,276	138,174
Greenhouse gas emissions from vehicle fleet (tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> -e)	21.18	15.83
Total distance travelled by commercial air travel (passenger km)	61,867	0

## Total energy use

Total energy use increased by three percent from 2021-22 due to more transportation and electricity use. Our units of energy per FTE decreased by 30 per cent due to increased staffing levels primarily related to the expansion of our Independent Mental Health Advocacy services.

Indicator	2022-23	2021-22
Total energy from fuels (stationery and transportation) (MJ)	216,276	138,174
Total energy used from electricity (MJ)	3,034,518	2,819,275
Total energy used from non-renewable sources (MJ)	5,314,518	5,138,983
Units of energy used normalised by FTE	3.67	5.29

## Environmentally sustainable design in new buildings and infrastructure

We lease five floors of the 5.5 NABERS Energy rated building at 570 Bourke Street, Melbourne.

## Additional information on request

In compliance with the Standing Directions of the Minister for Finance under the *Financial Management Act 1994* (Vic), information relating to the 2022-23 reporting period is to be made available to ministers, members of parliament and the public on request and subject to the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Vic).

## Financial Management Compliance Attestation Statement

I, Bill Jaboor, on behalf of the Victoria Legal Aid Board, certify that Victoria Legal Aid has complied with the applicable Standing Directions of the Minister for Finance under the *Financial Management Act 1994* (Vic) and Instructions.

*Bill Jaboor*

**Bill Jaboor**  
Chairperson

13 September 2023

# our finances

We continue to advocate for a demand-based funding model to address the volatility in our current funding arrangements and meet the increasing demand for our services that exceed our core funding.

In 2022–23, existing demand on services resulted in an operating deficit of \$5.3 million. However, our cash balance is unusually high (\$95 million as of 30 June 2023) due to reduced court activity during the pandemic. In the short term, we will use these funds to meet demand and our deferred grant commitments.

The cash reserves are not all discretionary and need to be carefully managed to ensure we can continue to meet our existing commitments. This includes grants of legal assistance of up to \$72 million which have already been approved and committed to but where the work has not been completed. This balance is also required for the replacement of assets to ensure we can continue to meet service demands and protect the safety and wellbeing of staff.

In 2023–24, demand for our services is expected to continue to increase, aligned with projected court activity, resulting in a projected financial deficit. Our short-term revenue outlook has improved due to an increase in interest rates leading to the reversal of funding cuts from the Public Purpose Fund.

This has allowed us to defer service reductions, although we continue to face significant uncertainties. A weaker economic outlook and possible interest rate movements create volatility in our funding sources, leading to potential revenue reductions.

Additional funding announced in previous federal and state budgets are welcomed to expand and continue service delivery in specific areas including:

- Independent Mental Health Advocacy services
- Drug Court related support
- assistance for people through Help Before Court and Early Resolution Service to receive early criminal and family violence related advice
- Specialist Family Violence Court related help in new locations across Victoria.

This funding supports those specific programs and does not increase our core funding.

Longer term projections continue to highlight that core funding is insufficient to meet the projected demand. Without additional funding, we will need to consider service reductions, while carefully managing our cash reserves. Any service reductions would be for court-based services, following consultation with sector partners. We continue to work with the Department of Justice and Community Safety to resolve these financial sustainability challenges.



Financial summary	2022-23 (\$'000s)	2021-22 (\$'000s)	2020-21 (\$'000s)	2019-20 (\$'000s)	2018-19 (\$'000s)
Total income from transactions	284,447	276,148	272,639	255,787	230,670
Total expenses from transactions	(291,289)	(268,447)	(247,943)	(238,065)	(226,895)
Net result from transactions	6,842	7,701	24,696	17,722	3,775
Net result for the period	(5,267)	3,795	24,933	16,270	3,017
Net cash from (used in) operating activities	12,671	24,076	43,113	16,374	8,402
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>170,446</b>	<b>175,192</b>	<b>176,670</b>	<b>160,556</b>	<b>83,881</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>97,738</b>	<b>97,216</b>	<b>102,489</b>	<b>111,490</b>	<b>51,534</b>
<b>Total equity</b>	<b>72,709</b>	<b>77,976</b>	<b>74,181</b>	<b>49,066</b>	<b>32,347</b>

## Financial performance

### Income

Almost 98 per cent of our operating income is provided by the State and Commonwealth governments and the Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner-administered Public Purpose Fund. The total income of \$284.4 million in 2022-23 was \$8.2 million higher than in 2021-22.

The Commonwealth, through the Council of Australian Governments' National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services, provided \$55.3 million in funding, an increase of \$0.6 million compared to in 2021-22. The Commonwealth also contributed specific funding of \$16.7 million (\$6.6 million in 2021-22).

This increase of funding was primarily to support:

- enhancing Family Advocacy and Support Service delivery
- legal representation in the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia as part of the government's enhanced case management arrangements for family law proceedings
- meeting Expensive Commonwealth Criminal Cases Fund commitments.

We pass community legal centre operating grants from the Commonwealth directly to the centres. Accordingly, these are not recognised as income in our financial statements.

The State government provided \$130.7 million in base funding (\$146.5 million in 2021-22). The decrease against the previous year was primarily due to one-off COVID-19 support funding to address the delays in the justice system which expired in 2021-22.

The State's one-off initiative funding was \$12.8 million (\$5.3 million in 2021-22); the increase was primarily due to the extension of our early intervention and early resolution programs, including Help Before Court and the Early Resolution Service.

Funding from the Victoria Legal Services Board and Commissioner was \$24.3 million (\$23 million in 2021-22). This included one-off project funding of \$0.7 million (\$3.6 million in 2021-22).

The remaining operating income was \$7.7 million (\$8.2 million in 2021-22), the majority of which was from client contributions towards legal assistance and interest on investments.

### Expenses

Total expenditure was \$291.3 million, an increase of \$22.9 million from the 2021-22 expenditure of \$268.4 million.

Case-related payments totalled \$119.5 million, an increase of \$4.1 million from 2021-22, reflecting increased court activity. These funds are paid to private practitioners, barristers, medical experts and interpreters, as well as to third parties for services rendered on in-house cases.

The other major expenses were staffing-related costs of \$106.4 million, an increase of \$12.4 million from 2021-22. The increase in salaries and overtime primarily related to expanded service delivery for Family Advocacy and Support Services, new Dandenong and Bendigo courts and annual wage growth in line with our enterprise agreement.

Other operating expenditure increased by \$4.1 million to \$18.4 million, reflecting the gradual return to the office of staff as part of hybrid working arrangements and one-off expenditure for implementing corporate plan priorities.



# Our finances

## Financial position – balance sheet

Total assets decreased by \$4.8 million compared to in 2021–22.

This was primarily due to the reduction in property, plant and equipment in line with lease amortisation during the year and one-off adjustments related to outgoings and lease incentives reflected in the building lease asset value to better align with the lease schedules. This is partly offset by the increase in financial assets due to income received in advance, for which the expenditure will be incurred in 2023–24.

Total liabilities decreased by \$0.5 million from 2021–22, primarily due to impacts of lease payments reducing the lease liability during the year.

## Responsible body's declaration

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

We further state that, in our opinion, the information set out in the comprehensive operating statement, balance sheet, statement of changes in equity, cash flow statement and accompanying notes, presents fairly the financial transactions during the year ended 30 June 2023 and financial position of Victoria Legal Aid at 30 June 2023.

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

We authorise the attached financial statements for issue on 13 September 2023.

*Bill Jaboor*

**Bill Jaboor**  
Chairperson

13 September 2023

*Louise Glanville*

**Louise Glanville**  
Chief Executive Officer

13 September 2023

*Matthew Dale*

**Matthew Dale**  
Chief Financial Officer

13 September 2023



## Independent Auditor's Report

### To the Board of Victoria Legal Aid

<b>Opinion</b>	<p>I have audited the financial report of Victoria Legal Aid (the Authority) which comprises the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• balance sheet as at 30 June 2023</li> <li>• comprehensive operating statement for the year then ended</li> <li>• statement of changes in equity for the year then ended</li> <li>• cash flow statement for the year then ended</li> <li>• notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies</li> <li>• Responsible Body's declaration.</li> </ul> <p>In my opinion the financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Authority as at 30 June 2023 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of Part 7 of the <i>Financial Management Act 1994</i> and Division 60 of the <i>Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012</i>, and complies with applicable Australian Accounting Standards and Division 60 of the <i>Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulations 2022</i>.</p>
<b>Basis for opinion</b>	<p>I have conducted my audit in accordance with the <i>Audit Act 1994</i> which incorporates the Australian Auditing Standards. I further describe my responsibilities under that Act and those standards in the <i>Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report</i> section of my report.</p> <p>My independence is established by the <i>Constitution Act 1975</i>. My staff and I are independent of the Authority in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the <i>Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012</i> and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 <i>Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants</i> (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Victoria. My staff and I have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.</p> <p>I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.</p>
<b>The Board's responsibilities for the financial report</b>	<p>The Board of the Authority is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards, the <i>Financial Management Act 1994</i> and the <i>Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012</i>, and for such internal control as the Board determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.</p> <p>In preparing the financial report, the Board is responsible for assessing the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless it is inappropriate to do so.</p>

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

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

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

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

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

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

MELBOURNE  
20 September 2023



Timothy Maxfield  
*as delegate for the Auditor-General of Victoria*



## Auditor-General's Independence Declaration

### To the Board, Victoria Legal Aid

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

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

### *Independence Declaration*

As auditor for Victoria Legal Aid for the year ended 30 June 2023, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been:

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

MELBOURNE  
20 September 2023

  
Timothy Maxfield  
*as delegate for the Auditor-General of Victoria*

# Comprehensive operating statement<sup>(i)</sup>

For the financial year ended 30 June 2023

	Notes	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
<b>CONTINUING OPERATIONS</b>			
<b>Revenue and income from transactions</b>			
<b>Grants from Government</b>			
Grants received from the Commonwealth Government	2.2	71,974	61,339
Grants received from the State Government	2.2	180,453	183,640
Grants received from the Public Purpose Fund	2.3	24,273	22,994
<b>Total - Grants from Government</b>		<b>276,700</b>	<b>267,973</b>
<b>Other Income</b>			
Client contributions towards legal assistance	2.4	839	4,351
Costs recovered and costs awarded from the Appeal Costs Fund	2.5	2,840	3,421
Interest on investments	2.6	3,985	375
Other income	2.7	83	28
<b>Total - Other Income</b>		<b>7,747</b>	<b>8,175</b>
<b>Total revenue and income from transactions</b>		<b>284,447</b>	<b>276,148</b>
<b>Expenses from transactions</b>			
Case-related professional payments	3.2	(119,526)	(115,352)
Community legal centre payment - State Government grant funded	3.3	(36,477)	(31,334)
Employee expenses	3.4	(106,399)	(93,942)
Depreciation and amortisation	5.1.2	(8,658)	(11,557)
Interest expense	7.1.1	(1,820)	(2,017)
Other operating expenses	3.5	(18,409)	(14,245)
<b>Total expenses from transactions</b>		<b>(291,289)</b>	<b>(268,447)</b>
<b>Net result from transactions (net operating balance)</b>		<b>(6,842)</b>	<b>7,701</b>
<b>Other economic flows included in net result</b>			
Net gain/(loss) on non-financial assets <sup>(ii)</sup>	9.2	1,575	(3,906)
<b>Total other economic flows included in net result</b>		<b>1,575</b>	<b>(3,906)</b>
<b>Net result from continuing operations</b>		<b>(5,267)</b>	<b>3,795</b>
<b>Net result</b>		<b>(5,267)</b>	<b>3,795</b>

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

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

**The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.**

## Balance sheet<sup>(i)</sup>

As at 30 June 2023

	Notes	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
<b>Assets</b>			
<b>Financial assets</b>			
Cash and deposits	7.2.1	96,770	92,875
Accrued income	6.1	4	827
Receivables	6.2	20,411	16,573
Other assets	6.4	1,671	1,843
<b>Total financial assets</b>		<b>118,856</b>	<b>112,118</b>
<b>Non-financial assets</b>			
Property, plant and equipment	5.1	42,592	56,953
Intangible assets	5.2	8,998	6,121
<b>Total non-financial assets</b>		<b>51,590</b>	<b>63,074</b>
<b>Total assets</b>		<b>170,446</b>	<b>175,192</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
Payables	6.3	32,419	20,482
Leases	7.1	40,847	54,031
Employee related provisions	3.4.2	22,394	20,651
Other provisions	6.5	2,078	2,052
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<b>97,738</b>	<b>97,216</b>
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>72,709</b>	<b>77,976</b>
<b>Equity</b>			
Contributed capital		43,576	43,576
Accumulated surplus		29,133	34,400
<b>Net worth</b>		<b>72,709</b>	<b>77,976</b>

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

**The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.**

# Cash flow statement<sup>(i)</sup>

For the financial year ended 30 June 2023

	Notes	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
<b>Receipts from Government Grants</b>			
Receipts from Commonwealth Government		73,110	64,255
Receipts from State Government		181,640	183,922
Receipts from Public Purpose Fund		24,273	22,889
<b>Total receipts from Government</b>		<b>279,023</b>	<b>271,066</b>
<b>Receipts of other income</b>			
Client contributions received		1,764	2,558
Costs recovered and costs awarded from the Appeal Costs Fund		3,046	2,061
Interest on investments		3,981	373
Goods and services tax recovered from the ATO <sup>(ii)</sup>		19,438	22,821
Other receipts		12	27
<b>Total receipts of other income</b>		<b>28,241</b>	<b>27,840</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>		<b>307,264</b>	<b>298,906</b>
<b>Payments to suppliers and employees</b>			
Case-related professional payments		(119,034)	(113,682)
Payments to employees		(109,432)	(97,122)
Interest payments		(1,820)	(2,017)
Community legal centre payment - State Government Grant funded		(32,156)	(33,237)
Other payments <sup>(v)</sup>		(32,151)	(28,772)
		<b>(294,593)</b>	<b>(274,830)</b>
<b>Net cash flows from/(used in) operating activities<sup>(v)</sup></b>	7.2.2	<b>12,671</b>	<b>24,076</b>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Payments for non-financial assets		(2,977)	(3,001)
Proceeds from sale of non-financial assets		28	174
<b>Net cash from/(used in) investing activities</b>		<b>(2,949)</b>	<b>(2,827)</b>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>			
Repayment of principal portion of lease liabilities <sup>(iii)</sup>		(5,867)	(7,562)
<b>Net cash flows from/(used in) financing activities</b>		<b>(5,867)</b>	<b>(7,562)</b>
<b>Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents</b>		3,855	13,687
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year		91,860	78,173
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year<sup>(iv)(v)</sup></b>	7.2.1	<b>95,714</b>	<b>91,860</b>

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

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

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

(iv) Excludes funds on deposit for IBAC matters. Refer note 7.2.1

(v) Prior year comparatives have been restated.

**The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.**



## Statement of changes in equity<sup>(i)</sup>

For the financial year ended 30 June 2023

	Accumulated Surplus \$'000	Contributed Capital \$'000	Total \$'000
<b>Balance at 1 July 2021</b>	30,605	43,576	74,181
Net result for the year	3,795	-	3,795
<b>Balance at 30 June 2022</b>	<b>34,400</b>	<b>43,576</b>	<b>77,976</b>
Net result for the year	(5,267)	-	(5,267)
<b>Balance as 30 June 2023</b>	<b>29,133</b>	<b>43,576</b>	<b>72,709</b>

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

***The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.***

# 1 About this report

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

Its principal address is:

Victoria Legal Aid  
570 Bourke Street  
Melbourne VIC 3000

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

## Basis of preparation

These financial statements are in Australian dollars and the historical cost convention is used unless a different measurement basis is specifically disclosed in the note associated with the item measured on a different basis.

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

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

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

Transfers of net assets arising from administrative restructurings are treated as distributions to or contributions by owners. Transfers of net liabilities arising from administrative restructurings are treated as distributions to owners.

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

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

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

## Compliance information

These general-purpose financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the *Financial Management Act 1994*, the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission Act 2012*, the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulations 2022* and the applicable AASs, which includes interpretations issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB). In particular, they are presented in a manner consistent with the requirements of AASB 1049 Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting.

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

## Going concern

The financial report has been prepared on a going-concern basis. Victoria Legal Aid is funded predominantly by regular grants from the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments. The Commonwealth funding is provided under the National Legal Partnership Agreement, which has been signed up to 2025. The Department of Justice and Community Safety Victoria provides continued support through the annual Victorian State Budget Papers. Ongoing discussions are continuing with the Victorian Government to seek additional funding to meet the long-term challenges of increasing demand for legal assistance.

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

## 2. Funding delivery of our services

### Introduction

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

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

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

Revenue from transactions 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 at fair value.

### Structure

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

### Overview

Victoria Legal Aid is funded predominantly by grants from the Government (Commonwealth and State) and from the Public Purpose Fund.

#### Commonwealth Government funding

The Commonwealth Government funding is provided through the National Legal Partnership Agreement 2020-25 (NLAP). The Commonwealth and the Victorian State Government entered into this agreement on 1 July 2020 and it will expire on 30 June 2025. The agreement specifies arrangements for the delivery of Commonwealth-funded services by the State. Funding flows through the Victorian Government to Victoria Legal Aid and is reported as National Legal Partnership Agreement based funding, 2023: \$55.3 million (2022: \$54.7 million).

The Commonwealth also provides funding to community legal centres on a quarterly basis which Victoria Legal Aid receives on their behalf and then distributes as per the funding schedule provided by the Commonwealth. Victoria Legal Aid does not control the allocation of grants received from the Commonwealth Government and consequently does not account for these funds in its financial statements as income or expenditure. The total amount received from the Commonwealth for community legal centres to 30 June 2023 was \$26.1 million (2022: \$24.3 million) and is disclosed in note 4.1 Administered items.

### State Government funding

The State Government provided \$184.9 million of grant funding in 2023 (2022: \$183.7 million).

Each year Victoria Legal Aid allocates a portion of its State funding and provides certain administration assistance to community legal centres in Victoria. For the year ended 30 June 2023, Victoria Legal Aid allocated \$30.1 million of direct funds (2022: \$26.3 million) and \$6.7 million of project funds (2022: \$5.4 million). Victoria Legal Aid has accounted for these grants as revenue in its financial statements as the Board of Victoria Legal Aid has discretionary funding choices over the allocation of state grants.

### Public Purpose Fund

Funds are also provided from the Public Purpose Fund. The amount of base funding distributed each year can vary depending on the performance of the fund and when calls on the fund are made. VLA has also received additional funds approved by the Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner for specific sponsored projects. Refer to note 2.3.

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

	Notes	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Government grants	2.2	252,427	244,979
Public Purpose Fund Grants	2.3	24,273	22,994
Client contributions towards legal assistance	2.4	839	4,351
Costs recovered and costs awarded from the Appeal Costs Fund	2.5	2,840	3,421
Interest on investments	2.6	3,985	375
Other income	2.7	83	28
<b>Total revenue and income from transactions</b>		<b>284,447</b>	<b>276,148</b>

Revenue and income that fund delivery of Victoria Legal Aid's services are accounted for consistently with the requirements of the relevant accounting standards disclosed in the following notes. All amounts of income over which Victoria Legal Aid does not have control are not included in the totals above and are disclosed as administered income (see Note 4.1.2).

## 2.2 Government grants

### Grants recognised under AASB 1058

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

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

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

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

# Our finances

## Grants recognised under AASB 15

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

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

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
<b>Income recognised under AASB 1058:</b>		
<b>Commonwealth grants</b>		
National Legal Aid Partnership Agreement base funding	55,302	54,726
Expensive Commonwealth Criminal Cases <sup>(i)</sup>	1,867	-
Specific project grants	14,805	6,613
<b>Total Commonwealth Grants</b>	<b>71,974</b>	<b>61,339</b>
<b>Revenue recognised under AASB 15:</b>		
<b>State grants</b>		
<b>Ongoing base funding</b>		
Base funding	81,309	82,628
Discrete demand funding <sup>(ii)</sup>	49,410	63,910
<b>Total Ongoing Funding</b>	<b>130,719</b>	<b>146,538</b>
One-off Initiatives	12,838	5,341
<b>Total One-Off Initiative Funding</b>	<b>12,838</b>	<b>5,341</b>
<b>Community legal centre funding</b>		
Community legal centre base funding	26,711	26,317
Community legal centre projects	10,184	5,444
<b>Total Funding Community Legal Centre Funding</b>	<b>36,895</b>	<b>31,761</b>
<b>Total State Grants</b>	<b>180,453</b>	<b>183,640</b>
<b>Total Grants</b>	<b>252,427</b>	<b>244,979</b>

(i) \$1.8 million of cash was received in 2022 for Expensive Commonwealth Criminal Cases to fund 2022-23 case expenditure.

(ii) 2021-22 included consequential funding of \$17.5m to meet ongoing demand within the courts, including the backlog of matters resulting from pandemic restrictions.

## 2.3 Public Purpose Fund grants

Base funding grants from the Public Purpose Fund are distributed to the Legal Aid Fund pursuant to section 6.7.9 of the Legal Profession Act 2004 and are recognised as revenue when received. The Public Purpose Fund comprises interest and investment earnings on clients' funds held in solicitors' trust accounts. The amount of any distribution from the Public Purpose Fund to Victoria Legal Aid can vary from year to year depending on its investment performance and any other calls that may be made on the fund, as set out in the Legal Profession Act 2004.

The Public Purpose Fund project grant represents additional funds provided by the Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner for specific sponsored projects. This has included funding for the implementation of the Digital Legal Aid Strategy, enhancement to our webchat service for people experiencing family violence and improved training to assist culturally diverse young people in the West navigate citizenship.

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Public Purpose Fund - base funding	23,575	19,389
Public Purpose Fund - project funding	698	3,605
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,273</b>	<b>22,994</b>

## 2.4 Client contributions towards legal assistance

### *Granting of legal assistance*

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

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

In accordance with Victoria Legal Aid's means test and asset guidelines, a client may or may not be required to make a contribution towards the cost of their legal assistance and an assessment is made to determine the amount. Revenue from the provision of legal services to clients is recognised at its recoverable amount. Contributions for services are only recognised when the recoverable amount can be reliably determined. Annually this amount is reviewed for impairment and a provision for impairment raised for estimated irrecoverable amounts and presented as a receivable in note 6.2. Where contributions are deemed to be irrecoverable they are written off as bad debts when identified. There are two types of contributions that can be imposed, secured and unsecured:

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

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Client contributions - secured	1,046	2,520
Client contributions - unsecured	(207)	1,831
<b>Total<sup>(i)</sup></b>	<b>839</b>	<b>4,351</b>

(i) Decrease in client contributions in 2022-23 due to 1) less new clients assessed as required to make a contribution to their aid based on the means test and asset guidelines and 2) a reassessment of existing contributions payable based on the final costs of the matters.

## 2.5 Costs recovered and costs awarded from Appeal Costs Fund

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

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

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

	<b>2023</b> <b>\$'000</b>	<b>2022</b> <b>\$'000</b>
Costs recovered	1,276	1,690
Costs awarded	1,564	1,731
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,840</b>	<b>3,421</b>

## 2.6 Interest on investments

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

	<b>2023</b> <b>\$'000</b>	<b>2022</b> <b>\$'000</b>
Interest on investments *	3,985	375
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,985</b>	<b>375</b>

\* Attributed to change in increase in interest rate refer to note 8.1.3. for more details.

## 2.7 Other income

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

	<b>2023</b> <b>\$'000</b>	<b>2022</b> <b>\$'000</b>
Other income	83	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>28</b>

## 3. The cost of delivering services

### Introduction

This section provides an account of the expenses incurred by Victoria Legal Aid in delivering our services. In section 2, the funds that enable the provision of services were disclosed and in this note the costs associated with provision of services are recorded.

### Structure

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

### 3.1 Expenses incurred in delivery of services

	Notes	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Case-related professional payments	3.2	119,526	115,352
Community legal centre payments	3.3	36,477	31,334
Employee benefit expenses	3.4	106,399	93,942
Other operating expenditure	3.5	18,409	14,245
<b>Total expenses incurred in delivery of services</b>		<b>280,811</b>	<b>254,873</b>

### 3.2 Case-related professional payments

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

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Case-related legal expenditure	108,161	107,582
Duty lawyer expenses	6,323	5,299
Other case-related expenditure	5,042	2,471
<b>Total case-related professional payments</b>	<b>119,526</b>	<b>115,352</b>

### 3.3 Community legal centre payment

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

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Base funds to community legal centres	33,800	26,477
Project funds to community legal centres	2,677	4,857
<b>Total community legal centre payments<sup>(i)</sup></b>	<b>36,477</b>	<b>31,334</b>

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

Funding is provided from the State Government to Victoria Legal Aid for the benefit of Community Legal Centres. Victoria Legal Aid also receives and administers funding to community legal centres on behalf of the Commonwealth Government which is not included in this summary of payments.



## 3.4 Employee benefit expenses

### 3.4.1 Employee benefit expenses in the comprehensive operating statement

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

	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	<b>\$'000</b>	<b>\$'000</b>
<b>Employee benefit expenses</b>		
Salaries and overtime <sup>(i)</sup>	84,515	75,081
Annual leave and long service leave	11,375	10,024
Superannuation	10,141	8,588
WorkCover	368	249
<b>Total employee benefit expenses</b>	<b>106,399</b>	<b>93,942</b>

(i) The increase in salaries and overtime primarily relates to expanded service delivery for Family Advocacy and Support Services, new Dandenong and Bendigo Courts and annual wage growth in line with our Enterprise Bargaining Agreement.

The amount recognised in the comprehensive operating statement in relation to superannuation is employer contributions for members of both defined benefit and defined contribution superannuation plans that are paid or payable during the reporting period. Victoria Legal Aid does not recognise any defined benefit liabilities because it has no legal or constructive obligation to pay future benefits relating to its employees. Instead, the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) discloses in its annual financial statements the net defined benefit cost related to the members of these plans as an administered liability (on behalf of the State as the sponsoring employer).

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

### 3.4.2 Employee benefits in the balance sheet

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

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
<b>Current provisions:</b>		
<b>Annual leave</b>		
Unconditional and expected to settle within 12 months	7,169	6,899
<b>Long Service Leave</b>		
Unconditional and expected to settle within 12 months	835	835
Unconditional and expected to settle after 12 months	8,563	7,966
<b>Provision for on costs</b>		
Unconditional and expected to settle within 12 months	867	824
Unconditional and expected to settle after 12 months	942	868
<b>Total current provision for employee benefits</b>	<b>18,376</b>	<b>17,392</b>
<b>Non-current provisions:</b>		
Employee benefits	3,623	2,941
On-costs	395	318
<b>Total non-current provisions for employee benefits</b>	<b>4,018</b>	<b>3,259</b>
<b>Total provision for employee benefits</b>	<b>22,394</b>	<b>20,651</b>
	<b>2023 \$'000</b>	<b>2022 \$'000</b>
<b>Reconciliation of movement in on-cost provision</b>		
<b>Opening balance for the period</b>	2,010	1,772
Net additional provisions recognised	194	238
<b>Closing balance for the period</b>	<b>2,204</b>	<b>2,010</b>

#### Wages, salaries, sick leave and annual leave

Liabilities for wages and salaries including non-monetary benefits and annual leave and on-cost expected to be wholly settled within 12 months of the reporting date, are recognised in the provision for employee benefits in respect of employee services up to the reporting date, classified as current liabilities and measured at their nominal values. Victoria Legal Aid does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement of these liabilities.

Those liabilities that are not expected to be settled within 12 months are recognised in the provision for employee benefits as non-current liabilities, measured at present value of the amounts expected to be paid when the liabilities are settled using the remuneration rate expected to apply at the time of settlement.

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

Employment on-costs such as workers compensation and superannuation are not employee benefits.

They are disclosed separately as a component of the provision for employee benefits when the employment to which they relate has occurred.

## Long service leave

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

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

The components of this current LSL liability are measured at:

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

Non-current liability—conditional LSL (representing less than seven years of continuous service) is disclosed as a non-current liability. There is a conditional right to defer the settlement of the entitlement until the employee has completed the requisite years of service.

This non-current liability is measured at present value. Any gain or loss following revaluation of the present value of non-current LSL liability is recognised as a transaction except to the extent that a gain or loss arises due to changes in bond interest rates which is recognised as “other economic flows” in the Comprehensive Operating Statement.

### 3.4.3 Superannuation contributions

Employees of Victoria Legal Aid are entitled to receive superannuation benefits and Victoria Legal Aid contributes to both defined benefit and defined contribution plans. The defined benefit plan(s) provides benefits based on years of service and final average salary.

	Paid contributions for the year		Contribution outstanding at year end <sup>(i)</sup>		Total	
	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
<b>Defined Benefit Scheme</b>						
ESS Super	35	47	-	-	35	47
<b>Defined contribution plans</b>						
Aware Super (previously VicSuper Pty Ltd)	3,924	4,093	-	(15)	3,924	4,078
Other	6,182	4,482	-	(19)	6,182	4,463
	<b>10,141</b>	<b>8,622</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(34)</b>	<b>10,141</b>	<b>8,588</b>

(i) The final employee payment in 2022-23 does not contain prepayment and consequently there were no outstanding contributions at the end of the financial year end.

## 3.5 Other operating expenditure

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
<b>Other expenditure from ordinary activities</b>		
Contractors and consultants	3,266	2,312
Supplies and Services	3,157	3,354
Occupancy expenses	3,321	1,691
Information Technology expenses	4,282	3,804
Bad debts	357	403
Other Operating Expenses	4,025	2,682
<b>Total other expenditure from ordinary activities</b>	<b>18,409</b>	<b>14,245</b>

Other operating expenditures generally represent the day-to-day running costs incurred in normal operations. It also includes bad debts expense from transactions that are mutually agreed. They are recognised as an expense in the reporting period in which they are incurred.

### Occupancy and asset related expenses and short term leases

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

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

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

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

### Information technology expenses

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

### Bad debts

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

## 4. Administered (non-controlled items)

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

### Structure

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

### 4.1 Community legal centre payments - Commonwealth Government grant funded

The Commonwealth and the Victorian Government entered into the National Legal Partnership Agreement 2020-25 (NLAP) on 1 July 2020 and it will expire on 30 June 2025. The agreement specifies arrangements for the delivery of Commonwealth-funded services by the state. Under this agreement the Commonwealth Government provides funding to community legal centres on a quarterly basis which Victoria Legal Aid receives on their behalf and distributes as per the State's accountability under the NLAP. Victoria Legal Aid does not control the allocation of grants received from the Commonwealth Government in this instance and consequently does not include these funds in its financial statements as income or expenditure. The total amount received from the Commonwealth for community legal centres to 30 June 2023 was \$26.1 million (2022: \$24.3 million).

## 4.2 Trust account

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

In 2022, approval was granted by the Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner to maintain the trust account within the Legal Aid fund, thereby removing the requirement to maintain a separate bank account. As function of the account remain unchanged and Victoria Legal Aid have no control over the funds held, these are considered Administered Funds. Transactions recorded below reflect those that occurred following the transition to the Legal Aid Fund from February 2022 onwards.

### Administered (non-controlled) items

For the financial year ended 30 June 2023

	Community Legal Centres		Trust Account			Total
	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
<b>Administered income from transactions</b>						
Income received from the Commonwealth	26,085	24,352	-	-	26,085	24,352
Trust account receipts	-	-	87	18	87	18
<b>Total administered income from transactions</b>	<b>26,085</b>	<b>24,352</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>26,172</b>	<b>24,370</b>
<b>Administered expenditure from transactions</b>						
Payments made on behalf of the Commonwealth Government	(26,085)	(24,352)	-	-	(26,085)	(24,352)
Trust account payments	-	-	(159)	(236)	(159)	(236)
<b>Total administered expenditure from transactions</b>	<b>(26,085)</b>	<b>(24,352)</b>	<b>(159)</b>	<b>(236)</b>	<b>(26,244)</b>	<b>(24,588)</b>
<b>Total administered net result from transactions</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(72)</b>	<b>(218)</b>	<b>(72)</b>	<b>(218)</b>
<b>Assets</b>						
Financial assets	-	-	179	251	179	251
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>251</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>						
Income in advance	-	-	(179)	(251)	(179)	(251)
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(179)</b>	<b>(251)</b>	<b>(179)</b>	<b>(251)</b>
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

## 5. Key Assets available to support delivery of our services

### Introduction

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

### Fair value measurement

Where the assets included in this section are carried at fair value, additional information is disclosed in note 8.3 in connection with how those fair values were determined.

### Structure

- 5.1 Property, plant and equipment
- 5.2 Intangibles

### 5.1 Property, plant and equipment

	Gross carrying amount		Accumulated depreciation		Net carrying amount	
	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Information technology leases and equipment at fair value <sup>(i)</sup>	3,034	3,372	(1,005)	(2,443)	2,029	929
Building leases and leasehold improvement at fair value <sup>(ii)</sup>	70,532	81,697	(34,316)	(31,662)	36,216	50,035
Furniture, fixtures and fittings at fair value	273	199	(111)	(87)	162	112
Leasehold improvements at fair value						
Motor Vehicle leases at fair value	372	681	(269)	(358)	103	323
Office machines and equipment at fair value	281	303	(270)	(291)	11	12
Cultural assets at fair value	180	180	-	-	180	180
Assets under construction at cost <sup>(iii)</sup>	3,891	5,362	-	-	3,891	5,362
<b>Net carrying amount</b>	<b>78,563</b>	<b>91,794</b>	<b>(35,971)</b>	<b>(34,841)</b>	<b>42,592</b>	<b>56,953</b>

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

(ii) Lease schedules were re-aligned and some components were excluded from Right-of-use assets and recognised in the operating statement.

(iii) The assets under construction balance is due to the Digital Legal Aid program, primarily funded through the Public Purpose Fund. This will be transferred to intangible assets on completion.

The following tables are subsets of right-of-use assets classified between buildings and plant and equipment.

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

	Gross carrying amount	Accumulated depreciation	Net carrying amount	Gross carrying amount	Accumulated depreciation	Net carrying amount
	2023	2023	2023	2022	2022	2022
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Building leases	57,529	(24,675)	32,854	68,897	(22,784)	46,113
Motor Vehicles leases	370	(269)	101	656	(358)	298
Information Technology Equipment leases	2,470	(453)	2,017	1,116	(385)	731
<b>Net carrying amount</b>	<b>60,369</b>	<b>(25,397)</b>	<b>34,972</b>	<b>70,669</b>	<b>(23,527)</b>	<b>47,142</b>

	Building leases <sup>(i)</sup>	Motor Vehicle leases	Information Technology Equipment leases
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
<b>Opening balance - 1 July 2022</b>	46,113	298	731
Adjustment	(11,367)	(44)	-
Additions	-	31	2,470
Disposals	-	-	(1,116)
Amortisation	(1,892)	(184)	(68)
<b>Closing balance - 30 June 2023</b>	<b>32,854</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>2,017</b>
<b>Opening balance - 1 July 2021</b>	55,516	278	650
Additions	-	217	397
Disposals	-	-	-
Amortisation	(9,403)	(197)	(316)
<b>Closing balance - 30 June 2022</b>	<b>46,113</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>731</b>

(i) Following a review of building leases an adjustment was made to remove cleaning and outgoing costs and the lease incentive from the asset value to better align with the lease schedules. The cleaning and outgoing costs are now shown in the operating statement.

### Initial recognition

Items of property, plant and equipment are measured initially at cost and subsequently revalued at fair value less accumulated depreciation and impairment. Where an asset is acquired for no or nominal cost, the cost is its fair value at the date of acquisition. Refer to note 8.3 for additional information on fair value determination of property, plant and equipment.

The cost of constructed non-financial physical assets includes the cost of all materials used in construction, overhead and labour on the asset. Property, plant and equipment while under construction are not recognised as fixed assets until they are ready and available for use.



## Right-of-use assets acquired by lessee - Initial measurement

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

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

## Subsequent measurement

The right-of-use assets under leases are subsequently measured at fair value less accumulated depreciation and impairment. For right-of-use assets the net present value of the remaining lease payments is often the appropriate proxy for fair value of relevant right-of-use assets.

Victoria Legal Aid depreciates the right-of-use assets on a straight line basis from the lease commencement date to the earlier of the end of the useful life of the right-of-use asset or the end of the lease term. The right-of-use assets are also subject to revaluation as required by FRD 103.

In addition, the right-of-use asset is periodically reduced by impairment losses, if any and adjusted for certain remeasurements of the lease liability.

## Leasehold improvements

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

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

## Cultural assets

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

## Vehicles

Victoria Legal Aid lease vehicles. Vehicles under the leasing model are recognised as right-of-use assets as per AASB 16. The process of acquisition, use and disposal in the market is managed by experienced fleet managers in Victoria Legal Aid who set relevant depreciation rates to reflect the utilisation of the vehicles.

## 5.1.2 Depreciation and amortisation

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
<b>Charge for the period</b>		
Information technology equipment	138	168
Furniture, fixtures and fittings	24	19
Leasehold improvements	764	762
Motor vehicles	-	17
Motor vehicles - write-back of depreciation due to revaluation	-	(19)
Office machines and equipment	1	-
<b>Total depreciation</b>	<b>927</b>	<b>947</b>
Amortisation	7,731	10,610
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,658</b>	<b>11,557</b>

## Depreciation

All infrastructure assets, buildings, plant and equipment and other non-financial physical assets (except cultural assets) that have finite useful lives, are depreciated.

Depreciation is calculated on a straight-line basis to write off the net cost of each item over its expected useful life to its estimated residual value. Estimates of useful lives, residual values and depreciation method are reviewed on a regular basis.

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

Leased Buildings	3–13 years
Furniture, fixtures and fittings	10 years
Information technology equipment	3 years
Leasehold improvements	3–13 years
Motor vehicles (leased)	3 years
Office machines and equipment	6–10 years

Cultural assets are considered to have an indefinite life and are not depreciated because their service potential has not, in any material sense, been consumed during the reporting period.

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

## Impairment

Non-financial assets are assessed annually for indications of impairment.

If there is an indication of impairment, the assets concerned are tested as to whether their carrying value exceeds their recoverable amount.

No impairments were recognised in the financial year ended 30 June 2023.

The recoverable amount for most assets is measured at the higher of depreciated replacement cost and fair value less costs to sell. It is deemed that, in the event of the loss of an asset, the future economic benefits arising from the use of the asset will be replaced unless a specific decision to the contrary has been made.

## 5.1.3 Reconciliation of movements in carrying amount of property, plant and equipment

	Information technology	Furniture, fixtures and fittings	Building leases and leasehold improvement	Motor vehicles	Office machines and equipment	Cultural assets	Assets under construction	Total
	At fair value	At fair value	At fair value	At fair value	At fair value	At fair value	At cost	
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
<b>2023</b>								
<b>Carrying amount at start of year</b>	929	112	50,035	323	12	180	5,362	56,953
Adjustment <sup>(i)</sup>	-	9	(7,244)	(33)	-	-	-	(7,268)
Additions	2,477	65	246	31	-	-	2,659	5,478
Revaluations	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Disposals	(786)	-	-	(34)	-	-	-	(820)
Transfers	-	-	-	-	-	-	(4,130)	(4,130)
Depreciation and Amortisation	(591)	(24)	(6,821)	(184)	(1)	-	-	(7,621)
<b>Carrying amount at end of year</b>	<b>2,029</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>36,216</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>3,891</b>	<b>42,592</b>
<b>2022</b>								
<b>Carrying amount at start of year</b>	950	101	61,223	320	-	180	8,286	71,060
Adjustment	-	-	(1,022)	-	-	-	-	(1,022)
Additions	463	30	-	216	12	-	2,894	3,615
Revaluations	-	-	-	26	-	-	-	26
Disposals	-	-	-	(45)	-	-	-	(45)
Transfers	-	-	-	-	-	-	(5,818)	(5,818)
Depreciation and Amortisation	(484)	(19)	(10,166)	(194)	-	-	-	(10,863)
<b>Carrying amount at end of year</b>	<b>929</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>50,035</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>5,362</b>	<b>56,953</b>

(i) Following a review of right of use assets and lease liabilities an adjustment was made to remove cleaning and outgoing cost and lease incentives from the right of use assets.

## 5.2 Intangible assets

### Reconciliation

Reconciliations of the carrying amounts of intangible assets at the beginning and end of the current and previous financial year are set out below. Victoria Legal Aid intangible assets consist of software.

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
<b>Gross Carrying Amount</b>		
Opening balance	15,337	9,519
Additions	3,914	5,818
Disposals	-	-
<b>Closing Balance</b>	<b>19,251</b>	<b>15,337</b>
<b>Accumulated depreciation, amortisation and impairment</b>		
Opening balance	(9,216)	(8,522)
Amortisation	(1,038)	(694)
<b>Closing Balance</b>	<b>(10,254)</b>	<b>(9,216)</b>
<b>Net Balance</b>	<b>8,998</b>	<b>6,121</b>

### Initial recognition

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

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

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

If the above cannot be demonstrated, the development cost is recognised as an expense in the period incurred.

Until internally generated intangible assets are ready and available for use they are recorded as assets under construction.

### Subsequent measurement

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

### Impairment of intangible assets

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

### Significant intangible assets

Victoria Legal Aid has capitalised software development expenditure for the development of software from the Digital Legal Aid program. The carrying amount of the Digital Legal Aid capitalised software development expenditure is \$3.9 million (2022: \$4.9 million). Its useful life is 9 years in line with the supporting platform.

## 6. Other assets and liabilities

### Introduction

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

### Structure

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

### 6.1 Accrued income

	<b>2023</b> <b>\$'000</b>	<b>2022</b> <b>\$'000</b>
Grants from the State Government	-	827
Accrued Interest	4	-
	<b>4</b>	<b>827</b>

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

## 6.2 Receivables

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
<b>Contractual</b>		
<b>Secured</b>		
Secured client contributions receivable	20,447	20,613
Provision for secured client contributions	(10,381)	(9,761)
<b>Total secured client contributions receivable at net present value</b>	<b>10,066</b>	<b>10,852</b>
<b>Unsecured</b>		
Unsecured client contributions receivable	5,649	6,157
Provision for unsecured client contributions	(2,658)	(3,546)
<b>Total unsecured client contributions receivable at net present value</b>	<b>2,991</b>	<b>2,611</b>
Secured client contributions receivable on unfinalised matters	733	1,024
Total client contributions	<b>13,790</b>	<b>14,487</b>
Other receivables <sup>(1)</sup>	4,350	97
<b>Total contractual receivables</b>	<b>18,140</b>	<b>14,584</b>
<b>Statutory</b>		
GST receivable	2,271	1,989
<b>Total statutory receivables</b>	<b>2,271</b>	<b>1,989</b>
<b>Total receivables</b>	<b>20,411</b>	<b>16,573</b>
<i>Represented by:</i>		
Current receivables	7,691	3,910
Non-current receivables	12,720	12,663
	<b>20,411</b>	<b>16,573</b>

(1) This balance includes an outstanding payment due from the Department Health and Human Services in relation to the Royal commission into Victoria's Health System.

### Receivables

Include client contributions, Net GST receivables and other receivables.

#### Contractual receivables

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

#### Statutory receivables

Statutory receivables do not arise from contracts and are recognised and measured similarly to contractual receivables (except for impairment), but are not classified as financial instruments for disclosure purposes. Victoria Legal Aid applies AASB 9 for initial measurement of the statutory receivables and as a result statutory receivables are initially recognised at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction cost. Amounts recognised from the Victorian Government represent funding for all commitments incurred and are drawn from the Consolidated Fund as the commitments fall due.

## Client contributions

Measurement of receivables for client contributions is based on an actuarial assessment completed by Finity Consulting Pty Limited actuaries who perform an annual independent assessment of the net present value of receivables. The analysis undertaken reviews the receivable portfolio, recovery history and the current and forecast financial environment to determine a recoupment pattern. This payment pattern was discounted by 4.35% (2022: 3.83%) for secured receivables, which is the forecast earnings rate of Victoria Legal Aid's investment portfolio to determine the net present value. The average repayment time for unsecured receivables is significantly less than that for secured, and therefore a different discount rate of 4.25% was used for 2023 (2022: 3.44%).

### 6.2.1 Movement in the provision for client contributions receivable

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
<b>Provision for secured client contributions</b>		
<b>Balance at 1 July</b>	9,761	6,528
Movements in actuarial assessment of secured client contributions receivable	620	3,233
<b>Balance at 30 June</b>	<b>10,381</b>	<b>9,761</b>
<b>Provision for unsecured client contributions</b>		
<b>Balance at 1 July</b>	3,546	2,630
Increase/(decrease) in provision for re-assessments and bad debt write-downs	252	403
Movements in actuarial assessment of unsecured client contributions receivable	(1,140)	513
<b>Balance at 30 June</b>	<b>2,658</b>	<b>3,546</b>
<b>Total provision for client contributions</b>	<b>13,039</b>	<b>13,307</b>

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

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

## 6.3 Payables

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
<b>Contractual</b>		
Case-related professional payable	15,101	13,502
Supplies and services payable <sup>(i)</sup>	16,239	6,704
Funds on deposit for IBAC matters	1,235	1,266
<b>Statutory</b>		
GST payable	(156)	(990)
<b>Total payables</b>	<b>32,419</b>	<b>20,482</b>
<i>Represented by:</i>		
Current payables	32,419	20,482
Non-current payables	-	-
	<b>32,419</b>	<b>20,482</b>

(i) Includes payment of \$4.2 million to Community Legal Centre for 2022 Flood Recovery Package Disaster Legal Aid and income received in advance \$2.4 million to support Family Violence Cross Examination project, \$1.3 million to provide support for people with disability and cares, \$3.9 million for Independent Mental Health Advocacy and \$1.5 million for Mental Health Drug and Alcohol expansion.

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

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

#### **Case-related professional payables**

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

- amounts certified but not paid; and
- amounts incurred but not yet invoiced at balance date.

This amount does not reflect the total expected expenditure related to all approved grants of legal assistance. An estimate of this amount is included in note 7.4.

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

An assessment was undertaken by Victoria Legal Aid to identify amounts owing to legal creditors for work performed prior to 30 June 2023 but not yet invoiced. The assessment is based on an analysis of all historical files. These were examined to determine an average cost per file, the average period for finalisation and typical payment profile. We have estimated the value of work in progress by comparing the payments made on each file at balance date with the expected average payment for the file, and made an adjustment to our legal creditors balance for the difference.

No interest charge is applicable.

#### **Supplies and services payable**

Accounts payable represent liabilities for goods and services provided to Victoria Legal Aid prior to the end of the financial year that are unpaid. Payables for supplies and services have an average credit period of 30 days.

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

#### **Funds on deposit for IBAC matters**

Victoria Legal Aid receives funding from the Department of Justice and Community Safety to provide legal assistance for witnesses examined by the Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption (IBAC) Commission. The money is held on deposit and drawn down when expenditure is incurred. The maturity profile of financial liabilities held by Victoria Legal Aid is detailed below.

	Carrying amount \$'000	Nominal amount \$'000	Maturity dates			
			Less than 1 month \$'000	1-3 months \$'000	3 months-1 year \$'000	1 - 5 years \$'000
<b>2023</b>						
Case-related professional creditors	15,101	15,101	9,043	6,058	-	-
Supplies and services payable <sup>(i)</sup>	16,239	16,239	16,226	13	-	-
	<b>31,340</b>	<b>31,340</b>	<b>25,269</b>	<b>6,071</b>	-	-
<b>2022</b>						
Case-related professional creditors	13,502	13,502	8,996	4,506	-	-
Supplies and services payable <sup>(i)</sup>	6,704	6,704	6,468	236	-	-
	<b>20,206</b>	<b>20,206</b>	<b>15,464</b>	<b>4,742</b>	-	-

Note: (i) The carrying amounts disclosed here exclude statutory amounts (e.g. amounts owing to Victorian government and GST recoverable/payable).



## 6.4 Other assets

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
<b>Current other assets</b>		
Prepayments	1,671	1,370
Other assets	-	473
<b>Total current other assets</b>	<b>1,671</b>	<b>1,843</b>
<b>Total other assets</b>	<b>1,671</b>	<b>1,843</b>

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

## 6.5 Other provisions

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
<b>Current provisions</b>		
Decommissioning	190	-
<b>Total current provisions</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Non-current provisions</b>		
Decommissioning	1,888	2,052
<b>Total non-current provisions</b>	<b>1,888</b>	<b>2,052</b>
<b>Total provisions</b>	<b>2,078</b>	<b>2,052</b>

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

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

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

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

## 7. How we financed our operations

### Introduction

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

This section includes disclosures of balances that are financial instruments (such as cash balances). Note 8.1 and 8.3 provides additional, specific financial instrument disclosures.

### Structure

- 7.1 Leases
- 7.2 Cash flow information and balances
- 7.3 Commitments

### 7.1 Leases

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
<b>Current Leases</b>		
Lease liabilities <sup>(i)</sup>	7,680	7,264
<b>Total current leases</b>	<b>7,680</b>	<b>7,264</b>
<b>Non-Current Leases</b>		
Lease liabilities <sup>(i)</sup>	33,167	46,767
<b>Total non-current leases</b>	<b>33,167</b>	<b>46,767</b>
<b>Total leases</b>	<b>40,847</b>	<b>54,031</b>

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

### Maturity analysis of leases

	Carrying amount \$'000	Nominal amount \$'000	Maturity dates				
			Less than 1 month \$'000	1-3 months \$'000	3 months- 1 year \$'000	1 - 5 years \$'000	> 5 years \$'000
<b>2023</b>							
Lease liabilities	40,847	46,180	-	2,003	6,041	30,818	7,318
<b>Total</b>	<b>40,847</b>	<b>46,180</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,003</b>	<b>6,041</b>	<b>30,818</b>	<b>7,318</b>
<b>2022</b>							
Lease liabilities	54,031	61,570	-	2,400	6,857	36,793	15,520
<b>Total</b>	<b>54,031</b>	<b>61,570</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,400</b>	<b>6,857</b>	<b>36,793</b>	<b>15,520</b>

### Interest expense

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Interest on lease liability	1,820	2,017
<b>Total interest expense</b>	<b>1,820</b>	<b>2,017</b>

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

## 7.1.1 Right-of-use assets

Right-of-use assets are presented in note 5.1(a).

## 7.1.2 Amounts recognised in the Comprehensive Operating Statement

The following amounts are recognised in the Comprehensive Operating Statement relating to leases:

	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	<b>\$'000</b>	<b>\$'000</b>
Interest expense on lease liabilities	1,820	2,017
Expenses relating to short term leases	-	95
<b>Total amount recognised in the Comprehensive Operating Statement</b>	<b>1,820</b>	<b>2,112</b>

## 7.1.3 Amounts recognised in the Statement of Cashflows

The following amounts are recognised in the Statement of Cashflows for the year ending 30 June 2023 relating to leases:

	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	<b>\$'000</b>	<b>\$'000</b>
Interest expense on lease liabilities	1,820	2,017
Other payments relating to short term leases	-	95
Repayment of principal portion of lease liabilities	5,867	7,562
<b>Total cash outflow for leases</b>	<b>7,687</b>	<b>9,674</b>

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

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

This policy is applied to contracts entered into, or changed, on or after 1 July 2019.

### Separation of lease and non-lease components

At inception or on reassessment of a contract that contains a lease component, the lessee is required to separate out and account separately for non-lease components within a lease contract and exclude these amounts when determining the lease liability and right-of-use asset amount.

## Recognition and measurement of leases as a lessee

### Lease liability – initial measurement

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

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

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

### Lease liability – subsequent measurement

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

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

### Short-term leases and leases of low value assets

Victoria Legal Aid has elected to account for short-term leases and leases of low value assets using the practical expedients. Instead of recognising a right-of-use asset and lease liability, the payments in relation to these are recognised as an expense in profit or loss on a straight line basis over the lease term.

Victoria Legal Aid presents right-of-use assets as 'property plant equipment' unless they meet the definition of investment property, in which case they are disclosed as 'investment property' in the balance sheet. Lease liabilities are presented as lease in the balance sheet.

	Minimum future lease payments <sup>(i)</sup>		Present value of minimum future lease payments	
	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
<b>Other finance lease liabilities payable<sup>(ii)</sup></b>				
Not longer than 1 year	8,044	9,257	6,427	7,264
Longer than 1 year but not longer than 5 years	30,818	36,793	27,292	31,808
Longer than 5 years	7,318	15,520	7,128	14,959
<b>Minimum future lease payments<sup>(i)</sup></b>	<b>46,180</b>	<b>61,570</b>	<b>40,847</b>	<b>54,031</b>
Less future finance charges	5,333	7,539	-	-
<b>Present value of minimum lease payments</b>	<b>40,847</b>	<b>54,031</b>	<b>40,847</b>	<b>54,031</b>
Included in the financial statements as:				
Current lease liabilities (Note 7.1)			(7,680)	(7,264)
Non-current lease liabilities (Note 7.1)			(33,167)	(46,767)
<b>Total</b>			<b>(40,847)</b>	<b>(54,031)</b>

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

(ii) Other finance lease liabilities include obligations that are recognised on the balance sheet; the future payments related to operating and lease commitments are disclosed in Note 7.4.

## 7.2 Cash flow information and balances

### 7.2.1 Cash and cash deposits

Cash and deposits, including cash equivalents, comprise cash on hand, cash in banks and deposits at call, and highly liquid investments with an original maturity of three months or less, that are readily convertible to cash and are subject to an insignificant risk of changes in value.

The cash reserves are not all discretionary and need to be carefully managed to ensure we meet our existing commitments. This includes grants of legal assistance of up to \$77 million which have already been approved and committed to but where the work has not been completed, reflected in Note 7.3. In addition, this balance is also required for the replacement of assets to ensure we can continue to meet service demands and protect the safety and wellbeing of staff.

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

	<b>2023</b> <b>\$'000</b>	<b>2022</b> <b>\$'000</b>
Cash at bank <sup>(i)</sup>	95,714	91,860
Funds on deposit for IBAC matters	1,235	1,266
Administered funds <sup>(i)</sup>	(179)	(251)
<b>Cash at bank and cash deposit<sup>(i)</sup></b>	<b>96,770</b>	<b>92,875</b>

(i) Prior year comparatives have been restated.

### Funds on deposit for IBAC matters

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

### Administered funds

Victoria Legal Aid maintains a trust account. The funds held in trust account are considered Administered Funds as Victoria Legal Aid has no control over it more information is provided in note 4.

The above figures are reconciled to cash at the end of the financial year as shown in the cash flow statement as follows:

	<b>2023</b> <b>\$'000</b>	<b>2022</b> <b>\$'000</b>
Cash at bank and cash deposit	96,770	92,875
Less Funds on deposit for IBAC matters	(1,235)	(1,266)
Administered funds	179	251
<b>Balance as per statement of cash flows</b>	<b>95,714</b>	<b>91,860</b>

## 7.2.2 Reconciliation of net results from continuing operations to net cash inflow from operating activities

	<b>2023</b> <b>\$'000</b>	<b>2022</b> <b>\$'000</b>
Net result from continuing operations	(5,267)	3,795
<i>Non-cash movements</i>		
Depreciation and amortisation	8,658	11,557
Net (gain) loss on disposal of non-current assets	(47)	(163)
Bad debts from transactions	357	403
Right of use assets and lease liability realignment <sup>(i)</sup>	(1,508)	-
Other adjustments <sup>(ii)</sup>	(28)	251
<i>Movements in assets and liabilities</i>		
(Increase) decrease in accrued income	823	(43)
Decrease (increase) in receivables	(4,195)	6,086
Decrease (increase) in prepayments	172	(229)
Increase (decrease) in trade creditors	10,338	(1,429)
Increase (decrease) in case-related professional creditors	1,599	2,252
Increase (decrease) in employee related provisions	1,743	1,596
Increase (decrease) in other provisions	26	-
<b>Net cash inflow/(outflow) from operating activities</b>	<b>12,671</b>	<b>24,076</b>

(i) Following a review of right of use assets and lease liabilities an adjustment was made to remove cleaning and outgoing cost and lease incentives from the right of use assets.

(ii) Prior year comparatives have been restated.

## 7.3 Commitments

Commitments include those operating, capital and other outsourcing commitments arising from non-cancellable contractual or statutory sources and are disclosed at their nominal value and inclusive of GST payable. These future expenditures cease to be disclosed as commitments once the related liabilities are recognised in the Balance Sheet.

### Total commitments payable

Nominal amounts	Less than 1	1 - 5 years	> 5 years	Total
	year			
2023	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	
Capital expenditure and new lease commitments payable	375	2,305	561	3,241
Intangible assets commitments payable	408	390	-	798
Other commitments payable	3,918	4,773	40	8,731
Approved grants of legal assistance <sup>(i)</sup>	54,457	17,416	-	71,873
<b>Total commitments (inclusive of GST)</b>	<b>59,158</b>	<b>24,884</b>	<b>601</b>	<b>84,643</b>
Less GST recoverable	5,378	2,262	55	7,695
<b>Total commitments (exclusive of GST)</b>	<b>53,780</b>	<b>22,622</b>	<b>546</b>	<b>76,948</b>
2022	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	
Capital expenditure commitments payable	360	796	-	1,156
Intangible assets commitments payable	29	-	-	29
Other commitments payable	771	171	-	942
Approved grants of legal assistance <sup>(i)</sup>	36,099	3,496	-	39,595
<b>Total commitments (inclusive of GST)</b>	<b>37,259</b>	<b>4,463</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>41,722</b>
Less GST recoverable	3,387	406	-	3,793
<b>Total commitments (exclusive of GST)</b>	<b>33,872</b>	<b>4,057</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>37,929</b>

(i) The approved grant of legal assistance reflects the estimated cost to provide the remaining legal services for grants committed in current and previous financial years. The final cost may be more or less than the amount disclosed due to the nature and progress of the matter. The reduction from the prior financial year resulted from improved analytical work completed based on actual outstanding grant data and historical trends of costs to fulfil a grant of legal aid.

## 8. Risks, contingents and valuation judgements

### Introduction

Victoria Legal Aid is exposed to risk from its activities and outside factors. In addition, it is often necessary to make judgements and estimates associated with recognition and measurement of items in the financial statements. This section sets out financial instrument specific information, (including exposures to financial risks) as well as those items that are contingent in nature or require a higher level of judgement to be applied, which for Victoria Legal Aid related mainly to fair value determination.

### Structure

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

## 8.1 Financial instruments specific disclosures

### Introduction

Financial instruments arise out of contractual agreements that give rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity.

### Categories of financial assets

#### Financial assets at amortised cost

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

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

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

Victoria Legal Aid recognises the following assets in this category:

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

#### Financial assets at fair value through net result

Equity instruments that are held for trading as well as derivative instruments are classified as fair value through net result. Other financial assets are required to be measured at fair value through net result unless they are measured at amortised cost or fair value through other comprehensive income as explained above. However, as an exception to those rules above, Victoria Legal Aid may, at initial recognition, irrevocably designate financial assets as measured at fair value through net result if doing so eliminates or significantly reduces a measurement or recognition inconsistency ('accounting mismatch') that would otherwise arise from measuring assets or liabilities or recognising the gains and losses on them on different bases. Victoria Legal Aid recognises listed equity securities as mandatorily measured at fair value through net result and designated all of its managed investment schemes as well as certain 5-year government bonds as fair value through net result.

Funds deposit for IBAC matters are not recognised in the comprehensive operating statement, but are offset by related expenditures when incurred.

### Categories of financial liabilities

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

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



**Financial liabilities at fair value through net result** are categorised as such at trade date, or if they are classified as held for trading or designated as such upon initial recognition. Financial instruments at fair value through net result are initially measured at fair value; attributable transaction costs are expensed as incurred. Subsequently, any changes in fair value are recognised in the net result as other economic flows, unless the changes in fair value relate to changes in the Victoria Legal Aid's own credit risk. In this case, the portion of the change attributable to changes in Victoria Legal Aid's own credit risk is recognised in other comprehensive income with no subsequent recycling to net result when the financial liability is derecognised

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

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

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

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

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

**Reclassification of financial instruments:** Subsequent to initial recognition reclassification of financial liabilities is not permitted. Financial assets are required to be reclassified between fair value through net result, fair value through other comprehensive income and amortised cost when and if Victoria Legal Aid's business model for managing its financial assets has changed such that its previous model would no longer apply.

If under rare circumstances an asset is reclassified, the reclassification is applied prospectively from the reclassification date and previously recognised gains, losses or interest should not be restated. If the asset is reclassified to fair value, the fair value should be determined at the reclassification date and any gain or loss arising from a difference between the previous carrying amount and fair value is recognised in net result.

## 8.1.1 Financial instruments: Categorisation

	Cash and deposits \$'000	Financial assets at amortised cost \$'000	Financial liabilities at amortised cost \$'000	Total \$'000
<b>2023</b>				
<b>Contractual financial assets</b>				
Cash at bank	95,714	-	-	95,714
Funds on deposit for IBAC matters	1,235	-	-	1,235
Administered funds	(179)	-	-	(179)
<b>Receivables</b>				
Client contribution receivable	-	13,790	-	13,790
Accrued income	-	-	-	-
Other receivables <sup>(i)</sup>	-	4,350	-	4,350
<b>Total contractual financial assets</b>	<b>96,770</b>	<b>18,140</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>114,910</b>
<b>Contractual financial liabilities</b>				
Case-related professional creditors	-	-	15,101	15,101
Funds on deposit for IBAC matters	-	-	1,235	1,235
Other payables <sup>(i)</sup>	-	-	16,239	16,239
Lease liabilities	-	-	40,847	40,847
<b>Total contractual financial liabilities</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>73,422</b>	<b>73,422</b>
<b>2022</b>				
<b>Contractual financial assets</b>				
Cash at bank	91,860	-	-	91,860
Funds on deposit for IBAC matters	1,266	-	-	1,266
Administered funds	(251)	-	-	(251)
<b>Receivables</b>				
Client contribution receivable	-	14,487	-	14,487
Accrued income	-	-	-	-
Other receivables <sup>(i)</sup>	-	97	-	97
<b>Total contractual financial assets</b>	<b>92,875</b>	<b>14,584</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>107,459</b>
<b>Contractual financial liabilities</b>				
Case-related professional creditors	-	-	13,502	13,502
Funds on deposit for IBAC matters	-	-	1,266	1,266
Other payables <sup>(i)</sup>	-	-	6,704	6,704
Lease liabilities	-	-	54,031	54,031
<b>Total contractual financial liabilities</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>75,503</b>	<b>75,503</b>

(i) The carrying amounts disclosed here exclude statutory amounts (e.g. GST recoverable/payable).

## 8.1.2 Financial instruments: Net holding gain/(loss) on financial instruments by category

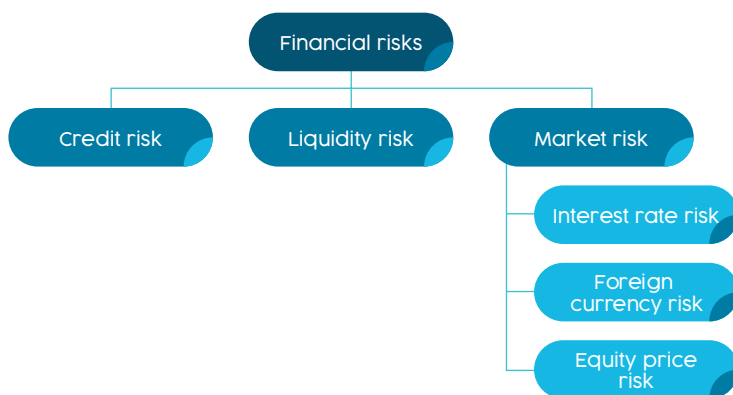
	Net holding gain/(loss) \$'000	Total interest income/ (expense) \$'000	Impairment loss \$'000	Total \$'000
<b>2023</b>				
<b>Contractual financial assets</b>				
Financial assets at amortised cost – other than on derecognition	3,556		-	3,556
<b>Total contractual financial assets</b>	<b>3,556</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>3,556</b>
<b>Contractual financial liabilities</b>				
Financial liabilities at amortised cost – other than on derecognition	11,134		-	11,134
<b>Total contractual financial liabilities</b>	<b>11,134</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>11,134</b>
<b>2022</b>				
<b>Contractual financial assets</b>				
Financial assets at amortised cost – other than on derecognition	(2,624)		-	(2,624)
<b>Total contractual financial assets</b>	<b>(2,624)</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>(2,624)</b>
<b>Contractual financial liabilities</b>				
Financial liabilities at amortised cost – other than on derecognition	1,653		-	1,653
<b>Total contractual financial liabilities</b>	<b>1,653</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>1,653</b>

Note: Amounts disclosed in this table exclude holding gains and losses related to statutory financial assets and liabilities.

The net holding gains or losses disclosed above are determined as follows:

- for cash and cash equivalents, financial assets at amortised cost and debt instruments that are classified as financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income gains or losses arising from revaluation of the financial assets, and minus any impairment recognised in the net result;
- for financial liabilities measured at amortised cost, the net gain or loss arising from the revaluation of financial liabilities measured at amortised cost; and
- for financial asset and liabilities that are mandatorily measured at or designated at fair value through net result, the net gain or loss is calculated by taking the movement in the fair value of the financial asset or liability.

### 8.1.3 Financial risk management objectives and policies



As a whole, Victoria Legal Aid’s financial risk management program seeks to manage these risks and the associated volatility of its financial performance.

Details of the significant accounting policies and methods adopted, including the criteria for recognition, the basis of measurement, and the basis on which income and expenses are recognised, with respect to each class of financial asset, financial liability and equity instrument above are disclosed in note 8.3 to the financial statements.

The main purpose in holding financial instruments is to prudentially manage Victoria Legal Aid’s financial risks within the government policy parameters.

Victoria Legal Aid’s main financial risks include credit risk, liquidity risk, and interest rate risk. Victoria Legal Aid manages these financial risks in accordance with its Cash and Investments policy.

Victoria Legal Aid uses different methods to measure and manage the different risks to which it is exposed. Primary responsibility for the identification and management of financial risks rests with the Accountable Officer of Victoria Legal Aid.

Victoria Legal Aid’s activities do not expose it to any significant financial risks other than interest rates held on deposit. Victoria Legal Aid does not enter into derivative financial instruments to manage its exposure to interest rate risk.

With respect to each class of financial asset and financial liability, details of the significant accounting policies and methods adopted, including the criteria for recognition, the basis of measurement, and the basis on which income and expenses, are recognised.

#### Financial instruments: Credit risk

Credit risk refers to the possibility that a borrower will default on its financial obligations as and when they fall due. Victoria Legal Aid’s exposure to credit risk arises from the potential default of a counter party on their contractual obligations resulting in financial loss to Victoria Legal Aid. Credit risk is measured at fair value and is monitored on a regular basis.

Victoria Legal Aid has a significant credit risk exposure associated with its client contributions receivable balance. These receivables are established on the basis of representation provided to clients and their ability to pay for such services following an assessment of their disposable income and net assets held. Services are provided where individuals do not have sufficient funds to afford privately funded legal representation. In this respect, the likelihood and timing of recovery may vary significantly between individual debtors. The services of a qualified actuary are utilised to establish the recoverable amount of these receivables.

There has been no material change in Victoria Legal Aid’s credit risk profile in 2022-23.

The credit risk on liquid funds is limited because the counterparties are banks with high credit ratings assigned by international credit-rating agencies.

The carrying amount of the financial assets recorded in the financial statements, net of any allowances for losses, represents Victoria Legal Aid’s maximum exposure to credit risk without taking account of the value of any collateral obtained.

# Our finances

## Credit quality of financial assets

2023	Financial institution (double-A credit rating) \$'000	Government agencies (triple-A credit rating) \$'000	Rating not applicable \$'000	Total \$'000
<b>Financial assets</b>				
<b>Financial assets with loss allowance measured at 12-month expected credit loss</b>				
Cash at bank and cash deposit	96,770	-	-	96,770
<b>Financial assets with loss allowance measured at lifetime expected credit loss:</b>				
Contractual receivables applying the simplified approach for impairment	-	-	18,140	18,140
<b>Total financial assets</b>	<b>96,770</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>18,140</b>	<b>114,910</b>

## Credit quality of financial assets

2022	Financial institution (triple-A credit rating) \$'000	Government agencies (triple-A credit rating) \$'000	Rating not applicable \$'000	Total \$'000
<b>Financial assets</b>				
<b>Financial assets with loss allowance measured at 12-month expected credit loss:</b>				
Cash at bank and cash deposit	92,875	-	-	92,875
<b>Financial assets with loss allowance measured at lifetime expected credit loss:</b>				
Contractual receivables applying the simplified approach for impairment	-	-	14,584	14,584
Investment and other financial assets	-	-	-	-
<b>Total financial assets</b>	<b>92,875</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>14,584</b>	<b>107,459</b>

Notes: The total amounts disclosed here exclude statutory amounts (e.g. GST input tax credit recoverable).

## Impairment of financial assets under AASB 9

Victoria Legal Aid records the allowance for expected credit loss for the relevant financial instruments. Financial assets subject to AASB 9 impairment assessment include Victoria Legal Aid's contractual receivables, and statutory receivables.

Equity instruments are not subject to impairment under AASB 9. Other financial assets mandatorily measured or designated at fair value through net result are not subject to impairment assessment under AASB 9. While cash and cash equivalents are also subject to the impairment requirements of AASB 9, the identified impairment loss was immaterial.

## Contractual receivables at amortised cost

Victoria Legal Aid applies AASB 9 simplified approach for all contractual receivables to measure expected credit losses using a lifetime expected loss allowance based on the assumptions about risk of default and expected loss rates. Victoria Legal Aid has grouped contractual receivables on shared credit risk characteristics and days past due and select the expected credit loss rate based on Victoria Legal Aid's past history, existing market conditions, as well as forward-looking estimates at the end of the financial year.

On this basis, Victoria Legal Aid determines the opening loss allowance on initial application date of AASB 9 and the closing loss allowance at end of the financial year as follows:

<b>30 June 2023</b>	<b>Current</b>	<b>Less than 1 month</b>	<b>1-3 months</b>	<b>3 months - 1 year</b>	<b>1- 5 years</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Expected loss rate</b>	0%	0%	0%	8.0%	52.9%	
Gross carrying amount of contractual receivables	-	-	-	7,691	23,488	31,179
<b>Loss allowance</b>	-	-	-	<b>615</b>	<b>12,424</b>	<b>13,039</b>

<b>30 June 2022</b>	<b>Current</b>	<b>Less than 1 month</b>	<b>1-3 months</b>	<b>3 months - 1 year</b>	<b>1-5 years</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Expected loss rate</b>	0%	0%	0%	8.0%	54.2%	
Gross carrying amount of contractual receivables	-	-	-	3,910	23,981	27,891
<b>Loss allowance</b>	-	-	-	<b>313</b>	<b>12,994</b>	<b>13,307</b>

Credit loss allowance is classified as other economic flows in the net result. Contractual receivables are written off when there is no reasonable expectation of recovery and impairment losses are classified as a transaction expense. Subsequent recoveries of amounts previously written off are credited against the same line item.

In prior years, a provision for doubtful debts is recognised when there is objective evidence that the debts may not be collected and bad debts are written off when identified. A provision is made for estimated irrecoverable amounts from when there is objective evidence that an individual receivable is impaired. Bad debts are considered as written off by mutual consent with client.

#### Statutory receivables and debt investments at amortised cost

Victoria Legal Aid's non-contractual receivables arising from statutory requirements are not financial instruments. However, they are nevertheless recognised and measured in accordance with AASB 9 requirements as if those receivables are financial instruments.

The statutory receivables are considered to have low credit risk, taking into account the counterparty's credit rating, risk of default and capacity to meet contractual cash flow obligations in the near term. As a result, the loss on allowance recognised for these financial assets during the period was limited to 12 months of expected losses. No loss allowance has been recognised.

#### Financial instruments: Liquidity risk

Liquidity risk is the risk that Victoria Legal Aid will be unable to meet its payment obligations when they fall due. Victoria Legal Aid operates under a commitment to making supplier payments within 10 days of invoice and in the event of a dispute, making payments also within 10 days from the date of resolution.

Victoria Legal Aid is exposed to liquidity risk mainly through the financial liabilities as disclosed in the face of the balance sheet and the amounts related to financial guarantees. Victoria Legal Aid manages its liquidity risk by:

- maintaining an adequate level of uncommitted funds that can be drawn at short notice to meet its short-term obligations;
- holding funds in at call accounts in line with the Centralised Banking System arrangements;
- detailed forecasting to assess future cash commitments; and
- a high credit rating for the State of Victoria (Moody's Investor Services and Standard & Poor's double-A).

Responsibility for liquidity risk management rests with the Board, who have built an appropriate liquidity risk management framework for the management of Victoria Legal Aid's short, medium and long-term funding and liquidity. This framework takes into consideration that Victoria Legal Aid is prohibited by the Legal Aid Act 1978 from incurring borrowing costs and, consequently, borrowing funds. Victoria Legal Aid manages its liquidity risk by maintaining adequate cash reserves, seeking to align expenditure to funding levels, by continuously monitoring forecasts and actual cash flows while matching the maturity profiles of financial assets and liabilities and an expectation of continuation of funding by the State and Commonwealth Governments.

# Our finances

## Financial instruments: Market risk

Victoria Legal Aid's exposures to market risk are primarily through interest rate risk. Objectives, policies and processes used to manage each of these risks are disclosed below.

## Sensitivity disclosure analysis and assumptions

Victoria Legal Aid's sensitivity to market risk is determined based on the observed range of actual historical data for the preceding five-year period, with all variables other than the primary risk variable held constant. Sensitivity analysis shown are for illustrative purposes only.

A movement of 100 basis points up and down in market interest rates (AUD) is reasonably possible over the next 12 months. The table that follow show the impact on Victoria Legal Aid's net result and equity for each category of financial instrument held by it at the end of the reporting period, if the above movement was to occur.

## Financial instruments: Interest rate risk

Fair value interest rate risk is the risk that fair value of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market interest rates. Victoria Legal Aid does not hold any interest bearing financial instruments that are measured at fair value, and therefore has no exposure to fair value interest rate risk.

Cash flow interest rate risk is the risk that the future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market interest rates. Victoria Legal Aid has minimal exposure to cash flow interest rate risks through cash and deposits that are at floating rate through the use of the Centralised Banking System.

The carrying amounts of financial assets and financial liabilities that are exposed to interest rates and Victoria Legal Aid's sensitivity to interest rate risk are set out in the table that follows.

### Interest rate exposure of financial instruments

2023	Notes	Weighted average interest rate %	Carrying amount \$'000	Fixed interest rate \$'000	Variable interest rate \$'000	Non-interest bearing \$'000
<b>Financial assets</b>						
Cash at bank	7.2	3.13%	95,535	-	95,535	-
Funds on deposit for IBAC matters	7.2	2.93%	1,235	-	1,235	-
Accrued investment income			-	-	-	-
Receivables <sup>(i)</sup>	6.2		18,140	-	-	18,140
<b>Total financial assets</b>			<b>114,910</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>96,770</b>	<b>18,140</b>
<b>Financial liabilities</b>						
Case-related professional creditors	6.3		15,101	-	-	15,101
Funds on deposit for IBAC matters	6.3		1,235	-	-	1,235
Leases	7.1	3.99%	40,847	-	-	40,847
Sundry payables <sup>(i)</sup>	6.3		16,239	-	-	16,239
<b>Total financial liabilities</b>			<b>73,422</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>73,422</b>

Note: (i) The carrying amounts disclosed here exclude statutory amounts (e.g. amounts owing from Victorian government and GST recoverable/payable).

2022	Notes	Weighted average interest rate %	Carrying amount \$'000	Fixed interest rate \$'000	Variable interest rate \$'000	Non-interest bearing \$'000
<b>Financial assets</b>						
Cash at bank	7.2	0.33%	91,609	-	91,609	-
Funds on deposit for IBAC matters	7.2	0.13%	1,266	-	1,266	-
Receivables <sup>(i)</sup>	6.2		14,584	-	-	14,584
<b>Total financial assets</b>			<b>107,459</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>92,875</b>	<b>14,584</b>
<b>Financial liabilities</b>						
Case-related professional creditors	6.3		13,502	-	-	13,502
Funds on deposit for IBAC matters	6.3		1,266	-	-	1,266
Leases	7.1	3.99%	54,031	-	-	54,031
Sundry payables <sup>(i)</sup>	6.3		6,704	-	-	6,704
<b>Total financial liabilities</b>			<b>75,503</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>75,503</b>

Note: (i) The carrying amounts disclosed here exclude statutory amounts (e.g. amounts owing from Victorian government and GST recoverable/payable).



## Interest rate risk sensitivity

	2023			2022		
	Carrying amount	-50 basis points Net result	+ 50 basis points Net result	Carrying amount	-100 basis points Net result	+ 100 basis points Net result
<b>Contractual financial assets</b>						
Cash at bank	95,535	(478)	478	91,609	(916)	916
Fund on Deposit for IBAC matters	1,235	(6)	6	1,266	(13)	13

Interest rate analysis is based upon the investment term of financial assets not exceeding one year. Investments are all on fixed interest rates. Minimum and maximum exposures are calculated at shifts of 50 basis points (2022: 100 basis points). A net decrease in interest translates into a fall in revenue as investment income is reduced.

## 8.2 Contingent assets and contingent liabilities

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

### Contingent assets

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

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

### Contingent liabilities

Contingent liabilities are:

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

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

### Non-quantifiable contingent liabilities

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

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

Victoria Legal Aid does not have any contingent assets, contingent liabilities or claims of a material nature at 30 June 2023 which have not already been disclosed in these financial statements (2022:Nil).

## 8.3 Fair value determination

*Significant judgement: Fair value measurements of assets and liabilities*

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

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

The following assets and liabilities are carried at fair value:

- financial assets and liabilities at fair value through operating result.
- property, plant and equipment
- intangible assets

In addition, the fair values of other assets and liabilities that are carried at amortised cost, also need to be determined for disclosure purposes.

Victoria Legal Aid determines the policies and procedures for determining fair values for both financial and non-financial assets and liabilities as required.

### Fair value hierarchy

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

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

For the purpose of fair value disclosures, Victoria Legal Aid has determined classes of assets and liabilities on the basis of the nature, characteristics and risks of the asset or liability and the level of the fair value hierarchy as explained above.

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

### How this section is structured

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

- carrying amount and the fair value (which would be the same for those assets measured at fair value); and
- which level of the fair value hierarchy was used to determine the fair value.

This section is divided between disclosures in connection with fair value determination for financial assets and liabilities (refer to note 8.3.1) and non-financial physical assets (refer to note 8.3.2).

### 8.3.1 Fair value determination of financial assets and liabilities

The fair values and net fair values of financial instrument assets and liabilities are determined as follows:

- Level 1 – the fair value of financial instrument with standard terms and conditions and traded in active liquid markets are determined with reference to quoted market prices
- Level 2 – the fair value is determined using inputs other than quoted prices that are observable for the financial asset or liability, either directly or indirectly
- Level 3 – the fair value is determined in accordance with generally accepted pricing models based on discounted cash flow analysis using unobservable market inputs.

The net fair value of other monetary financial assets and financial liabilities is based upon market prices where a market exists or by discounting the expected future cash flows by the current interest rates for assets and liabilities with similar risk profiles.

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

These financial instruments include:

Financial Assets	Financial Liabilities
Cash and deposits	Payables:
	- For supplies and services
	- Case related professional payables
	- Leases
	- Other payables
Receivables:	
- Client contribution receivables	
- Other receivables	

Where the fair value of the financial instruments is different from the carrying amounts, the following information has been included to disclose the difference.

#### Fair value of financial instruments measured at amortised cost

	Carrying amount \$'000	2023			Carrying amount \$'000	2022		
		Fair value at end of period using:				Fair value at end of period using:		
		Level 1 \$'000	Level 2 \$'000	Level 3 \$'000		Level 1 \$'000	Level 2 \$'000	Level 3 \$'000
<b>Financial assets</b>								
Cash at bank	95,535	95,535	-	-	91,609	91,609	-	-
Funds on deposit for IBAC matters	1,235	1,235	-	-	1,266	1,266	-	-
Receivables <sup>(i)</sup>	18,140	-	18,140	-	14,584	-	14,584	-
	<b>114,910</b>	<b>96,770</b>	<b>18,140</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>107,459</b>	<b>92,875</b>	<b>14,584</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Financial liabilities</b>								
Case-related professional creditors	15,101	-	-	15,101	13,502	-	13,502	-
Funds on deposit for IBAC matters	1,235	1,235	-	-	1,266	1,266	-	-
Leases	40,847	-	-	40,847	54,031	-	54,031	-
Payables <sup>(i)</sup>	16,239	-	-	16,239	6,704	-	6,704	-
	<b>73,422</b>	<b>1,235</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>72,187</b>	<b>75,503</b>	<b>1,266</b>	<b>74,237</b>	<b>-</b>

Note: (i) The carrying amounts disclosed here exclude statutory amounts (e.g. amounts owing to/from Victorian government and GST recoverable/payable)

### 8.3.2 Fair value determination of non-financial physical assets

	2023				2022			
	Carrying amount \$'000	Fair value at end of period using:			Carrying amount \$'000	Fair value at end of period using:		
		Level 1 <sup>(i)</sup> \$'000	Level 2 <sup>(i)</sup> \$'000	Level 3 <sup>(i)</sup> \$'000		Level 1 <sup>(i)</sup> \$'000	Level 2 <sup>(i)</sup> \$'000	Level 3 <sup>(i)</sup> \$'000
Information technology equipment	2,029	-	-	2,029	929	-	-	929
Building leases and leasehold improvement	36,216	-	-	36,216	50,035	-	-	50,035
Furniture, fixtures and fittings	162	-	-	162	112	-	-	112
Motor Vehicle - leased <sup>(ii)</sup>	103	-	-	103	323	-	-	323
Office machines and equipment	11	-	-	11	12	-	-	12
Cultural assets	180	-	180	-	180	-	180	-
	<b>38,701</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>38,521</b>	<b>51,591</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>51,411</b>

(i) Classified in accordance with the fair value hierarchy.

(ii) Vehicles are categorised to Level 3 assets if as the current replacement cost is used in estimating the fair value. Victoria Legal Aid does not own vehicles.

There were no transfers between levels during the period for non-financial physical assets.

The artwork classified under the cultural assets do not contain significant, unobservable adjustments, these are classified as Level 2 under the market approach.

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

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

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

#### Motor vehicles leases

Victoria Legal Aid has completed transition to a leasing model. Vehicles under lease are reported in line with AASB 16 Leases.

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

**Cultural assets** refer to artwork that is valued using the market approach, whereby assets are compared to recent comparable sales or sales of comparable assets that are considered to have nominal value. A valuation of the cultural assets was conducted during the 2021 financial year by the Valuer-General Victoria, which resulted in an increase in value of \$0.03 million.

There were no changes in valuation techniques throughout the period to 30 June 2023.

For all assets measured at fair value, the current use is considered the highest and best use.

#### Description of significant unobservable inputs to Level 3 valuations

Asset	Valuation techniques	Significant unobservable inputs
Information technology and equipment	Current replacement cost	Useful life of equipment
Furniture, fixtures and fittings	Current replacement cost	Useful life of equipment
Buildings leases and leasehold improvements	Current replacement cost	Lease term
Motor vehicles - leased	Current replacement cost	Lease term
Office machines and equipment	Current replacement cost	Useful life of equipment

Significant unobservable inputs have remained unchanged during the year.

## 9 Other disclosures

### Introduction

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

### Structure

- 9.1 Ex-gratia expenses
- 9.2 Other economic flows included in net result
- 9.3 Responsible persons
- 9.4 Remuneration of executives
- 9.5 Related parties
- 9.6 Remuneration of auditors
- 9.7 Subsequent events
- 9.8 Other accounting policies
- 9.9 Australian Accounting Standards issued that are not yet effective
- 9.10 Glossary of technical terms
- 9.11 Style conventions

### 9.1 Ex-gratia expenses

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

Victoria Legal Aid made total ex-gratia payments of \$0.13 million during the period upon termination of employment (2022: \$0.02 million).

## 9.2 Other economic flows

Other economic flows are changes in the volume or value of an asset or liability that do not result from transactions. Other gains/(losses) from other economic flows include the gains or losses from the revaluation of the present value of the long service leave liability due to changes in the bond interest rates.

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
<b>Other economic flows</b>		
<b>Net gains/(losses) on non-financial assets:</b>		
Net gains/(losses) on disposal property, plant and equipment	(47)	162
<b>Net actuarial gains/(losses) on receivable amounts:</b>		
Net actuarial gains/(losses) of secured client contributions receivables- net present value <sup>(i)</sup>	(620)	(3,233)
Net actuarial gains/(losses) on impairment of unsecured client contribution receivables <sup>(i)</sup>	888	(916)
<b>Total net actuarial gains/(losses) on recoverable amounts</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>(4,149)</b>
<b>Net gains/(losses) arising from other economic flows:</b>		
Net gains/(losses) arising from revaluation of long service leave liability due to changes in discount bond rates and staff retention	(299)	81
Net gain/(losses) on ROUA and lease liability re-alignment	1,652	-
<b>Total other economic flows</b>	<b>1,575</b>	<b>(3,906)</b>

(i) Including increase/(decrease) in provision for doubtful debts and bad debts from other economic flows - refer to note 6.2.

Net gains/(losses) on non-financial assets and liabilities includes realised and unrealised gains and losses from revaluations, impairments, disposals of all non-financial assets and intangible assets.

Any gain or loss on the sale of non-financial assets is recognised at the date that control of the asset is passed to the buyer and is determined after deducting from the proceeds the carrying value of the asset at that time.

Intangible assets are tested annually for impairment and whenever there is an indication that the asset may be impaired. All other assets are assessed annually for indications of impairment, excluding financial assets (refer to note 5.1).

**Net gains/(losses) on financial instruments and statutory receivables/payables** includes realised and unrealised gains and losses from revaluations by actuarial assessment of legal payables and receivables.

**Net gains/(losses) arising from other economic flows** include the gains or losses from reclassification of amounts from reserves and/or accumulated surplus to net result, and from the revaluation of the present value of the long service leave liability due to changes in the bond interest rates.

## 9.3 Responsible persons

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

The persons who held the above positions in Victoria Legal Aid are as follows:

### *Responsible ministers*

Victorian Attorney-General	The Hon. Jaclyn Symes, MP	1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023
Acting Victorian Attorney-General	The Hon. Anthony Richard Carbines, MP	23 September 2022 to 2 October 2022
	The Hon. Anthony Richard Carbines, MP	28 December 2022 to 14 January 2023
	The Hon. Anthony Richard Carbines, MP	29 April 2023 to 20 April 2023

### *Responsible Body and Board*

Chairperson	Mr Bill Jaboor	1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023
Director*	Ms Robbie Campo	1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023
Director	Mr George Habib	1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023
Director	Mr Andrew Saunders	1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023
Director	Ms Clare Morton	1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023
Director	Ms Tal Karp	1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023

### *Accountable Officer*

Chief Executive Officer (current)	Ms Louise Glanville	1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023
Acting Chief Executive Officer	Ms Rowan McRae	16 February 2023 to 20 March 2023
	Mr Peter Noble	31 May 2023 to 29 June 2023

\* Acting Chairperson from 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022.

## Remuneration

Amounts relating to the Minister are excluded. The Minister's remuneration and allowances are set by the Parliamentary Salaries and Superannuation Act 1968 and is reported within the State's Annual Financial Report.

Remuneration received or receivable by the Accountable Officer in connection with the management of Victoria Legal Aid during the reporting period was in the range: \$450,000 - \$460,000 (\$440,000 - \$450,000 in 2021-22).

## 9.4 Remuneration of executives

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

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

**Short-term employee benefits** include amounts such as wages, salaries, annual leave or sick leave that are usually paid or payable on a regular basis, as well as non-monetary benefits such as allowances and free or subsidised goods or services.

**Post-employment benefits:** superannuation entitlements.

**Other long-term benefits** include long service leave, other long service benefits or deferred compensation.

**Termination benefits** include termination of employment payments, such as severance packages.

	<b>Total remuneration</b>	
	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	<b>\$'000</b>	<b>\$'000</b>
Short-term employee benefits <sup>(i)</sup>	2,632	2,180
Post-employment benefits	282	222
Other long-term benefits	68	53
<b>Total remuneration</b>	<b>2,982</b>	<b>2,455</b>
<b>Total number of executives<sup>(ii)</sup></b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Total annualised employee equivalents<sup>(iii)</sup></b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>9.2</b>

(i) Comparatives restated to align with the reporting requirements

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

(iii) Annualised employee equivalent is based on the time fraction worked over the reporting period.

## 9.5 Related parties

Victoria Legal Aid is a statutory authority and a controlled entity of the State of Victoria.

Related parties of Victoria Legal Aid include:

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

### Key management personnel

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

<b>Key management personnel</b>	<b>Position title</b>
Mr Bill Jaboor	Chairperson
Ms Robbie Campo	Director
Mr George Habib	Director
Ms Clare Morton	Director
Ms Tal Karp	Director
Mr Andrew Saunders	Director
Ms Louise Glanville	Chief Executive Officer and Accountable Officer
Mr Cameron Hume	Chief Operating Officer
Mr Dan Nicholson	Executive Director - Criminal Law Services
Mr Peter Noble	Executive Director - Regions and Service Delivery
Ms Rowan McRae	Executive Director - Legal Practice, Civil Justice, Access and Equity
Ms Joanna Fletcher	Executive Director - Family, Youth and Children's Law



## Remuneration of key management personnel

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

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Short-term employee benefits	1,811	1,758
Post-employment benefits	177	163
Other long-term benefits	42	40
<b>Total<sup>(i)</sup></b>	<b>2,030</b>	<b>1,961</b>

(i) Note that KMPs are also reported in the disclosure of remuneration of Senior Executive Service officers (Refer to note 9.4) and responsible persons (Refer to note 9.3).

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

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000 <sup>(ii)</sup>
<b>Receipts</b>		
<b>Commonwealth Grants</b>		
National Legal Aid Partnership Agreement	55,302	54,726
Attorney General Department	1,867	-
Project Grants	14,805	6,613
<b>Total Commonwealth Grants</b>	<b>71,974</b>	<b>61,339</b>
<b>State Grants</b>		
Base Funding	130,719	146,538
Department of Justice and Community Safety - Community Legal Centres	26,711	26,317
Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner	23,575	19,389
<b>Total State Grants</b>	<b>181,005</b>	<b>192,244</b>
<b>Specific Project Grants<sup>(ii)</sup></b>		
Department of Justice and Community Safety	12,149	4,991
Department of Justice and Community Safety - Community Legal Centres	9,657	4,644
Department of Jobs, Precincts & Regions - Community Legal Centres	527	800
Department of Jobs, Precincts & Regions	48	-
Department of Health and Human Services	405	350
Department of Premier and Cabinet	237	-
Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner	698	3,605
<b>Total Specific Project Grants</b>	<b>23,721</b>	<b>14,390</b>
<b>Total State Grants and Specific Project Grants</b>	<b>204,726</b>	<b>206,634</b>
<b>Total receipts from government-related entities</b>	<b>276,700</b>	<b>267,973</b>
<b>Payments</b>		
Community Legal Centres <sup>(i)</sup>	36,477	31,334

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

(ii) Comparatives figures have been restated to correctly classify receipt from other entities.

## Transactions and balances with key management personnel and other related parties

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

Outside of normal citizen type transactions, there were no related party transactions that involved key management personnel, their close family members and their personal business interests.

## 9.6 Remuneration of auditors

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
<b>Victorian Auditor General's Office</b>		
Audit of financial reports	62	62
	<b>62</b>	<b>62</b>

## 9.7 Subsequent events

There are no other matters or circumstances that have arisen since 30 June 2023 that have significantly affected or may significantly affect the operations, or results, or state of affairs of Victoria Legal Aid.

## 9.8 Other accounting policies

### Contribution by owners

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

## 9.9 Australian Accounting Standards issued that are not yet effective

Certain new and revised accounting standards have been issued but are not effective for the 2022-23 reporting period. These accounting standards have not been applied to the Model Financial Statements.

### **AASB 2022-10 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Fair Value Measurement of Non-Financial Assets of Not-for-Profit Public Sector Entities.**

AASB 2022-10 amends AASB 13 Fair Value Measurement by adding authoritative implementation guidance and illustrative examples for fair value measurements of non-financial assets of not-for-profit public sector entities not held primarily for their ability to generate net cash inflows.

Among other things, the Standard:

- specifies that an entity needs to consider whether an asset's highest and best use differs from its current use only when it is held for sale or held for distributions to owners under AASB 5 Non-current Assets Held for Sale and Discontinued Operations or if it is highly probable that it will be used for an alternative purpose;
- clarifies that an asset's use is 'financially feasible' if market participants would be willing to invest in the asset's service capacity, considering both the capacity to provide needed goods or services and the resulting costs of those goods and services;
- specifies that if both market selling price and some market participant data required to fair value the asset are not observable, an entity needs to start with its own assumptions and adjust them to the extent that reasonably available information indicates that other market participants would use different data; and
- provides guidance on the application of the cost approach to fair value, including the nature of costs to be included in a reference asset and identification of economic obsolescence.

This Standard applies prospectively to annual periods beginning on or after 1 January 2024, with earlier application permitted. Victoria Legal Aid will not early adopt the standard.

Several other amending standards and AASB interpretations have been issued that apply to future reporting periods, but are considered to have limited impact on the Victoria Legal Aid's reporting.

## **AASB 17 Insurance Contracts, AASB 2022-8 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Insurance Contracts: Consequential Amendments and AASB 2022-9 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Insurance Contracts in the Public Sector**

AASB 17 replaces AASB 4 Insurance Contracts, AASB 1023 General Insurance Contracts and AASB 1038 Life Insurance Contracts for not-for-profit public sector entities for annual reporting periods beginning on or after 1 July 2026.

AASB 2022-9 amends AASB 17 to make public sector-related modifications (for example, it specifies the pre-requisites, indicators and other considerations in identifying arrangements that fall within the scope of AASB 17 in a public sector context). This Standard applies for annual reporting periods beginning on or after 1 July 2026.

AASB 2022-8 makes consequential amendments to other Australian Accounting Standards so that public sector entities are permitted to continue to apply AASB 4 and AASB 1023 to annual periods before 1 July 2026. This Standard applies for annual reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2023.

## **AASB 2020-1 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards - Classification of Liabilities as Current or Non-Current and AASB 2022-6 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards - Non-current Liabilities with Covenants**

AASB 2020-1 amended AASB 101 *Presentation of Financial Statements* to clarify requirements for the presentation of liabilities in the statement of financial position as current or non-current and was applicable to annual reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2022.

AASB 2020-6 subsequently amended AASB 2020-1, deferring the mandatory effective date of AASB 2020-1 from 1 January 2022 to 1 January 2023. AASB 2022-6 was applicable for annual reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2022. AASB 2022-6 amends and clarifies the requirements contained in AASB 2020-1. Among other things, it:

- clarifies that only those covenants that an entity must comply with at or before the reporting date affect a liability's classification as current or non-current; and
- requires additional disclosures for non-current liabilities that are subject to an entity complying with covenants within twelve months after the reporting date.

AASB 2022-6 applies to annual reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2023.

## 9.10 Glossary of technical terms

The following is a summary of the major technical terms used in this report.

**Administered item** generally refers to an organisation lacking the capacity to benefit from that item in the pursuit of the entity's objectives and to deny or regulate the access of others to that benefit.

**Amortisation** is the expense that results from the consumption, extraction or use over time of a non-produced physical or intangible asset. This expense is classified as an 'other economic flow'.

**Borrowings** refers to interest bearing liabilities mainly raised from public borrowings raised through the Treasury Corporation of Victoria, lease liabilities, service concession arrangements and other interest bearing arrangements. Borrowings also include non-interest bearing advances from government that are acquired for policy purposes.

**Commitments** include those operating, capital and other outsourcing commitments arising from non-cancellable contractual or statutory sources. Commitments also include the estimated cost to provide the remaining legal services for grants committed in current and previous financial years. The final cost may be more or less than the amount disclosed due to the nature and progress of the matter.

**Comprehensive result** is the amount included in the operating statement representing total change in net worth other than transactions with owners as owners.

**Depreciation** is an expense that arises from the consumption through wear or time of a produced physical or intangible asset. This expense is classified as a 'transaction' and so reduces the 'net result from transaction'.

**Effective interest method** is the method used to calculate 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.

**Employee benefits expenses** include all costs related to employment including wages and salaries, fringe benefits tax, leave entitlements, redundancy payments, defined benefits superannuation plans, and defined contribution superannuation plans.

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

**Financial asset** is any asset that is:

- (a) cash
- (b) an equity instrument of another entity;
- (c) a contractual right:
  - to receive cash or another financial asset from another entity; or
  - to exchange financial assets or financial liabilities with another entity under conditions that are potentially favourable to the entity; or
- (d) a contract that will or may be settled in the entity's own equity instruments and is:
  - a contract that will or may be settled in the entity's own equity instruments and is:
    - a non-derivative for which the entity is or may be obliged to receive a variable number of the entity's own equity instruments; or
    - a derivative that will or may be settled other than by the exchange of a fixed amount of cash or another financial asset for a fixed number of the entity's own equity instruments.

**Financial instrument** is any contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity.

**Financial liability** is any liability that is a contractual obligations to:

- deliver cash or another financial asset to another entity; or
- exchange financial assets or financial liabilities with another entity under conditions that are potentially unfavourable to the entity.

**Financial statements** comprise of:

- (a) a balance sheet as at the end of the period;
- (b) a comprehensive operating statement for the period;
- (c) a statement of changes in equity for the period;
- (d) a cash flow statement for the period;
- (e) notes, comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information;
- (f) comparative information in respect of the preceding period as specified in paragraph 38 of AASB 101 Presentation of Financial Statements; and
- (g) a statement of financial position as at the beginning of the preceding period when an entity applies an accounting policy retrospectively or makes a retrospective restatement of items in its financial statements, or when it reclassifies items in its financial statements in accordance with paragraphs 41 of AASB 101.

**General government sector** comprises all government departments, offices and other bodies engaged in providing services free of charge or at prices significantly below their cost of production. General government services include those that are mainly non-market in nature, those that are largely for collective consumption by the community and those that involve the transfer or redistribution of income. These services are financed mainly through taxes, or other compulsory levies and user charges.

**Grants for on-passing** are grants paid to one institutional sector (e.g. a State general government entity) to be passed on to another institutional sector (e.g. local government or a private non-profit institution).

**Interest expense** represents costs incurred in connection with borrowings. It includes interest on advances, loans, overdrafts, bonds and bills, deposits, interest components of lease repayments, service concession financial liabilities and amortisation of discounts or premiums in relation to borrowings.

**Interest income** includes unwinding over time of discounts on financial assets and interest received on bank term deposits and other investments.

**Leases** are rights conveyed in a contract, or part of a contract, the right to use an asset (the underlying asset) for a period of time in exchange for consideration.

**Net operating balance or net result from transactions** is a key fiscal aggregate and is revenue from transactions minus expenses from transactions. It is a summary measure of the ongoing sustainability of operations. It excludes gains and losses resulting from changes in price levels and other changes in the volume of assets. It is the component of the change in net worth that is due to transactions and can be attributed directly to government policies.

**Net result** is a measure of financial performance of the operations for the period. It is the net result of items of revenue, gains and expenses (including losses) recognised for the period, excluding those classified as 'other nonowner movements in equity'.

**Net worth** is equal to financial assets minus liabilities. It is a broader measure than net debt as it incorporates provisions made (such as superannuation, but excluding depreciation and bad debts) as well as holdings of equity. Net financial worth includes all classes of financial assets and liabilities, only some of which are included in net debt.

**Non-financial assets** are all assets that are not financial assets. It includes plant and equipment, information technology, cultural assets and intangibles.

**Non-produced assets** are assets needed for production that have not themselves been produced. They include land, subsoil assets, and certain intangible assets. Non-produced intangibles are intangible assets needed for production that have not themselves been produced. They include constructs of society such as patents.

**Operating result** is a measure of financial performance of the operations for the period. It is the net result of items of revenue, gains and expenses (including losses) recognised for the period, excluding those that are classified as 'other non-owner movements in equity'. Refer also 'net result'.

**Other economic flows included in net result** are changes in the volume or value of an asset or liability that do not result from transactions. In simple terms, other economic flows are changes arising from market remeasurements. They include gains and losses from disposals, revaluations and impairments of non-current physical and intangible assets; fair value changes of financial instruments and agricultural assets; and depletion of natural assets (non-produced) from their use or removal.

**Payables** includes short and long-term trade debt and accounts payable, grants, taxes and interest payable.

**Produced assets** include buildings, plant and equipment, inventories, cultivated assets and certain intangible assets. Intangible produced assets may include computer software, motion picture films and research and development costs (which does not include the start-up costs associated with capital projects).

**Receivables** include amounts owing from government through appropriation receivable, short and long-term trade credit and accounts receivable, accrued investment income, grants, taxes and interest receivable.

**Supplies and services** generally represent cost of goods and services sold and the day to day running costs, including maintenance costs, incurred in the normal operations of Victoria Legal Aid.

**Transactions** are those economic flows that are considered to arise as a result of policy decisions, usually an interaction between two entities by mutual agreement. They also include flows into an entity such as depreciation, where the owner is simultaneously acting as the owner of the depreciating asset and as the consumer of the service provided by the asset. Taxation is regarded as mutually agreed interactions between the government and taxpayers. Transactions can be in kind (e.g. assets provided/given free of charge or for nominal consideration) or where the final consideration is cash. In simple terms, transactions arise from the policy decisions of the Government.

## 9.11 Style conventions

Figures in the tables and in the text have been rounded. Discrepancies in tables between totals and sums of components reflect rounding. Percentage variations in all tables are based on the underlying unrounded amounts.

The notation used in the tables is as follows:

- zero, or rounded to zero
- (xxx.x) negative numbers
- 20xx year period
- 20xx xx year period

The financial statements and notes are presented based on the illustration for a government department in the 2022-32 Model Report for Victorian Government Departments. The presentation of other disclosures is generally consistent with the other disclosures made in earlier publications of Victoria legal Aid's annual reports.

# Appendices

## Disclosure index

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

### Ministerial directions

#### Operations report – FRDs and guidance

##### Charter and purpose

Legislation	Requirement	Page
FRD 22	Manner of establishment and the relevant Ministers	99
FRD 22	Purpose, functions, powers and duties	1
FRD 8	Departmental objectives, indicators and outputs	5–26
FRD 22	Key initiatives and projects	9–28
FRD 22	Nature and range of services provided	10–19

##### Management and structure

Legislation	Requirement	Page
FRD 22	Organisational structure	29–30

## Financial and other information

Legislation	Requirement	Page
FRD 8	Performance against output performance measures	10–11
FRD 8	Budget portfolio outcomes	5–28
FRD 10	Disclosure index	107–109
FRD 12	Disclosure of major contracts	37
FRD 15	Executive disclosures	32
FRD 22	Employment and conduct principles	31
FRD 22	Occupational health and safety policy	34
FRD 22	Summary of the financial results for the year	43–45
FRD 22	Significant changes in financial position during the year	43–45
FRD 22	Major changes or factors affecting performance	43–45
FRD 22	Subsequent events	102
FRD 22	Application and operation of <i>Freedom of Information Act 1982</i> (Vic)	38–39
FRD 22	Compliance with building and maintenance provisions of <i>Building Act 1993</i> (Vic)	39
FRD 22	Statement on National Competition Policy	37
FRD 22	Application and operation of the <i>Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012</i> (Vic)	39
FRD 22	Application and operation of the <i>Carers Recognition Act 2012</i> (Vic)	40
FRD 22	Details of consultancies over \$10,000	36–37
FRD 22	Details of consultancies under \$10,000	37
FRD 22	Disclosure of government advertising expenditure	36
FRD 22	Disclosure of ICT expenditure	37
FRD 22	Statement of availability of other information	42
FRD 22	Asset Management Accountability Framework maturity assessment	N/A
FRD 22	Disclosure of emergency procurement	40
FRD 24	Environmental reporting	40–41
FRD 25	Local Jobs First	37
FRD 29	Workforce data disclosures	31
SD 5.2	Specific requirements under Standing Direction 5.2	31–42

## Compliance attestation and declaration

Legislation	Requirement	Page
SD 5.4.1	Attestation for compliance with Ministerial Standing Direction	42
SD 5.2.3	Declaration in report of operations	iii



## Financial statements

Declaration		
Legislation	Requirement	Page
SD 5.2.2	Declaration in financial statements	46

Other requirements under Standing Directions 5.2		
Legislation	Requirement	Page
SD 5.2.1(a)	Compliance with Australian accounting standards and other authoritative pronouncements	46–49
SD 5.2.1(a)	Compliance with Standing Directions	iii, 46
SD 5.2.1(b)	Compliance with Model Financial Report	N/A

Other disclosures as required by FRDs in notes to the financial statements		
Legislation	Requirement	Page
FRD 9	Departmental disclosure of administered assets and liabilities by activity	N/A
FRD 11	Disclosure of ex gratia expenses	97
FRD 13	Disclosure of parliamentary appropriations	N/A
FRD 21	Disclosures of responsible persons, executive officers and other personnel (contractors with significant management responsibilities) in the financial report	32, 99–100
FRD 103	Non-financial physical assets	51
FRD 110	Cash flow statements	52
FRD 112	Defined benefit superannuation obligations	63
FRD 114	Financial instruments – general government entities and public non-financial corporations	84–93

Legislation	
Act	Page
<i>Building Act 1993</i> (Vic)	39
<i>Carers Recognition Act 2012</i> (Vic)	40
<i>Disability Act 2006</i> (Vic)	39
<i>Financial Management Act 1994</i> (Vic)	iii, 42, 46
<i>Freedom of Information Act 1982</i> (Vic)	38–39
<i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i> (Vic)	39
<i>Local Jobs First Act 2003</i> (Vic)	37
<i>Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014</i> (Vic)	38
<i>Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012</i> (Vic)	39
<i>Public Records Act 1973</i> (Vic)	38

## Contact details

### Main reception

#### Wurundjeri Country

Level 9, 570 Bourke Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

Postal: GPO Box 4380, Melbourne Vic 3001

Telephone: (03) 9269 0234

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

Monday to Friday 8.45 am to 5.15 pm

### Legal Help

Telephone: 1300 792 387

Monday to Friday 8 am to 6 pm

### Disaster Legal Help Victoria

We have a dedicated telephone line for legal help after disasters such as a bushfires or floods.

Telephone: 1800 113 432

Monday to Friday 8 am to 6 pm

### For hearing impaired (TTY)

Contact the **National Relay Service** and ask to be put through to Victoria Legal Aid.

**TTY/voice – 133 677 or 1800 555 677 (country callers)**

**SSR/speak and listen – 1300 555 727 or 1800 555 727 (country callers)**

### In different languages

Arabic	(03) 9269 0127
Bosnian	(03) 9269 0164
Cantonese	(03) 9269 0161
Croatian	(03) 9269 0164
Greek	(03) 9269 0167
Hindi	(03) 9269 0487
Hokkien	Ring main Legal Help line and request
Malay	Ring main Legal Help line and request
Mandarin	(03) 9269 0212
Polish	(03) 9269 0228
Samoan	Ring main Legal Help line and request
Serbian	(03) 9269 0332
Spanish	(03) 9269 0384
Turkish	(03) 9269 0386
Ukrainian	(03) 9269 0390
Urdu	(03) 9269 0389
Vietnamese	(03) 9269 0391



For **all other languages**, call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450 and ask to be put through to Victoria Legal Aid.

### Feedback

Feedback on this report is welcome. Please write to:

**Victoria Legal Aid, Community Legal Information and Corporate Services**

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