

2015 - A year in review

A Message from the Director

As 2015 draws to an end I would like to thank you, our stakeholders and colleagues, for your ongoing support of LawAccess NSW. Like everyone else in the sector, we have had to review our service in order to move forward under a more financially constrained operating environment.

Despite a savings plan which saw a small reduction in staffing across our organisation, we have continued to deliver high quality information, referral and advice services to people who have a legal problem in NSW.

I would like to thank our staff for their strength and resilience during this time, and for remaining committed to providing a high level of customer service and assisting the most vulnerable in our community.

In this bulletin we provide some highlights from 2015, and we outline what we are planning to undertake in the year ahead to ensure that our customers can access our service and continue to receive high quality assistance from us.

Janet Wagstaff - Director

Data Snapshot

2014-2015

Breakdown of calls by area of law



■ Civil Law (48%) ■ Criminal Law (36%) ■ Family Law (17%)

Legal information sessions **132,071**

Average wait time **7.5 mins**

Legal advice sessions **16,570**

% of customer receiving legal advice from Regional NSW **58%**

% of customer identified as Aboriginal receiving legal advice **7.56%**

Visitors to our website **830,862**

Our staff

2015 has been a busy year for the staff at LawAccess NSW. Our staff have risen to the challenge of providing a quality legal information and advice service and have proven that they can answer the need for legal information from the community and consistently work to improve that service in the face of economic constraints.

Our information and legal advice staff have participated in the quarterly visits by Legal Aid NSW, CLC and Department of Justice staff, presenting a popular session 'A day in the life of...' giving participants insight into the work performed by our staff.

Our legal officers continued to support our information officers, by providing training and guidance as well as maintaining and developing online resources for our website.



Our new Aboriginal Legal Information staff

LawAccess recently inducted two Aboriginal Legal Information staff to assist our Aboriginal customers, one of our priority groups.

We ask every person who calls our service 'Are you Aboriginal?' This helps us to identify Aboriginal customers, so that we can ask them if they would like to speak to an Aboriginal Information Officer.

Our Aboriginal Information Officers can also support our Aboriginal customers during an advice session.

Staff wellbeing

Staff wellbeing has been a focus for LawAccess NSW. A staff working party was established to look at the challenges for staff working in a contact centre.

A recommendation report was developed and endorsed in September that has seen management and staff look at ways to implement these recommendations, including encouraging and educating staff about taking opportunities for movement and the benefits of using desks at a standing height.

Our staff participated in a number of events organised by our Fun Committee to promote their health and wellbeing including RU Okay Day.

This focus will continue into 2016.

Technology and the delivery of our service

LawAccess NSW website

In June, the redesigned LawAccess website www.lawaccess.nsw.gov.au was launched as the **new** starting point for legal information online. The redesign was done in collaboration with stakeholders and staff. The new LawAccess website features three websites into one - making it easier for people to find legal information in the one location.

Legal information can be found in the different sections of the website:

- My legal problem is about
- Representing yourself
- LawPrompt

Check out the new look LawAccess NSW website at www.lawaccess.nsw.gov.au

Our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system

In 2015 LawAccess NSW undertook a major upgrade of our CRM. This application is used to enter all data captured in a call. The upgrade improved the performance of the system, making the application more responsive and quicker to use when managing telephone calls.

Our Intranet

LawAccess NSW has also relaunched its Intranet this year. Our new look Intranet, Refresh, has been developed following feedback from staff. Refresh has been developed as a key communication and information tool to keep our staff up to date and engaged with what is happening in the organisation.

Community Engagement

Our Community Outreach Coordinator continued to implement our Communication Strategies aimed at raising awareness of our service and other free legal assistance services with people with disability, their families and carers and in Aboriginal communities.

2015 also saw the start of our NSW Police Force Engagement Plan, aimed at increasing awareness of our service within the NSW Police as a referral pathway to LawAccess NSW.

As part of that plan a special poster was distributed to all NSW Police Stations along with our Need Legal Help? wallet cards.



The Coordinator visited Bega, Wallaga Lake, Eden, Broken Hill, Menindee, Wilcannia, Cooma and Queanbeyan meeting with community members, stakeholders and services on the ground. She also participated in a number of events and delivered presentations including:

- Muru Mittigar Apology Day
- Mid North Coast Correctional Centre Services Expo
- Auburn Law Week Expo
- Cobham Juvenile Justice Services Expo
- Legal Aid NSW Corporate Induction
- Sydney Chinese Services Network
- Centrelink Multicultural Service Officers Team
- Ability Links

LawAccess NSW is currently developing its new Communication Strategy that will guide our community engagement activities over the next three years.

Looking ahead

At LawAccess NSW we are looking ahead to maintaining and developing our high quality service through a number of exciting initiatives.

Customers calling from a Correctional Centre

Prisoners are one of our priority customer groups for assistance by our service.

We have been working with Legal Aid NSW, Corrective Services and the NLAFF Prisoners Working Party to more effectively manage those calls.

In 2016 we will be trialling the use of a dedicated team to answer calls from Correctional Centres. It is hoped that this will improve the service for prisoners and also for the wider community by making more legal information staff available to take calls from people calling our 1300 888 529 number.

Directing customers to our online service

Our 2014 Customer Satisfaction Survey showed that 89% of our customers had access to the Internet and that 61% of those customers had used the Internet to try and find information about their legal problem before calling our service.

In 2016 LawAccess NSW will actively promote the online service as an alternative to the telephone service for those customers who can self-help through updated telephone messaging and new messages played during peak times.

The messages will also assist us to manage the expectations of our customers including those calling our service on a mobile phone.

Expanding access to our telephone service

We are committed to increasing access to our telephone service. In 2016 we will be trialling the opening of our telephone service at 8.30am instead of 9am. This will give our customers greater flexibility in contacting our service and alleviate the heavy demand for our service at 9am.

Staff development

In 2016 staff development will be a key focus, as we review staff training and development.

We will be revamping our induction program with a focus on ensuring staff can be brought on-board quickly while gaining all the skills and knowledge needed to provide a high quality service from their first call.

We will also be continuing our commitment to staff development and working with our staff to enhance their knowledge and skills across a number of areas including: customer service, call control, stress management, legal knowledge and increasing awareness and understanding of services in the sector to make effective and relevant referrals.

Building the confidence of Agencies to refer to LawAccess NSW

We have developed an eLearning module for all NSW Courts and Tribunal staff aimed at increasing the awareness of our service and building the confidence of those staff to appropriately refer their clients to LawAccess NSW.

We will be looking at developing similar eLearning modules for other agencies that provide a referral pathway to our service.



From all of us at
LawAccess NSW
we wish you and
your team a happy
and safe festive
season

If you would like to contact
LawAccess NSW to see how we
can work together or you would
like to review your Assistance
Service Record please email:

lawaccess@agd.nsw.gov.au

For more information about how we work
visit the website at
www.lawaccess.nsw.gov.au

Our opening times over the Christmas and New Year period are:

Open between 9am and 5pm, Monday to
Friday except on the following public
holidays:

25 December 2015

28 December 2015

1 January 2016