

Call for Written Submissions

National Legal Assistance Partnership: Strategy and Action Plan Project

Open:	Monday 1 November 2021
Deadline:	Tuesday 30 November 2021
Issued by:	Grant Thornton Australia Limited on behalf of the Queensland Government Department of Justice and Attorney-General
Purpose:	To inform the development of Queensland's Legal Assistance Strategy and Action Plan

The Commonwealth Government provides funding to States and Territories to administer on its behalf for the delivery of legal assistance services by legal aid commissions, Community Legal Centres (CLCs) and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (ATSILS). The National Legal Assistance Partnership (NLAP) is the mechanism through which this funding is provided and sets out arrangements for the delivery of Commonwealth Government funded legal assistance services.

Under Schedule C of the NLAP, all jurisdictions are required to develop a publically available Strategy and Action Plan for submission to the Commonwealth as part of the NLAP reporting requirements.

Considering the scope of work involved and the level of sector consultation required, the Queensland Department of Justice and Attorney-General has engaged Grant Thornton Australia Limited (Grant Thornton) to undertake the development of the Strategy and Action Plan for Queensland. This will enable the sector and the Queensland Government to work together and contribute to the development of the Strategy and Action Plan collaboratively.

Grant Thornton invites interested organisations and individuals, including experts and organisations affected, practitioners and academics, to provide input for the preparation of the Strategy and Action Plan, which will be delivered to the Department of Justice and Attorney-General by **29 April 2022** and **8 July 2022** respectively.

How to send your written submission to Grant Thornton

Email address:	nlap.submissions@au.gt.com
Email subject line:	"Input for the NLAP Strategy and Action Plan Project"
Postal address:	Attn: NLAP Strategy and Action Plan Project GPO Box 1008, BRISBANE QLD 4001

Respondents are requested to limit their comments to around 2,000 words. Additional supporting materials, such as reports, academic studies, and other background materials may be annexed to the submission.

Submission content may be used in the Strategy and/or Action Plan, as well as other deliverables throughout the project. Should you wish to maintain confidentiality of your submission, please kindly indicate it at the moment of submission.

Background

The Strategy and Action Plans must be informed by the National Strategic Framework for Legal Assistance ("the Framework"). The objective of the Framework is "to further a national, integrated system of legal assistance that is focused on keeping the justice system within reach, maintaining the rule of law, and maximizing service delivery within available resources. Within this system, legal assistance services should be delivered in a high quality and culturally appropriate manner."

More information regarding the NLAP and Framework can be found here:

[National Legal Assistance Partnership Agreement | Attorney-General's Department](#)

As per the requirements set out under Schedule C of the NLAP,

The **NLAP Strategy** will:

- indicate the estimated level and nature of legal need in Queensland, including sub-jurisdictional regions where appropriate;
- indicate the priorities and areas of focus for the delivery of mainstream, specialist, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific legal assistance services;
- include aggregated planned or forecast levels of Commonwealth and State funding for legal assistance services;
- include information on the nature and extent of the roles and responsibilities the State has delegated to legal assistance providers;
- outline if there are any specific priority client groups relevant to Queensland;
- detail how Queensland will meet the objectives and outcomes of the NLAP in supporting the delivery of mainstream, specialist and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal assistance services in addressing the legal needs of national priority client groups; and
- outline approaches the State will undertake to ensure that mainstream, specialist and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific legal assistance services are delivered in a manner consistent with the Framework.

The **NLAP Action Plans** will:

- reflect the strategic direction established by Queensland's legal assistance strategy;
- outline specific activities, projects, initiatives and reforms to implement Queensland's strategy and meet the objectives and outcomes of the NLAP;
- incorporate the outcomes of jurisdictional and local collaborative service planning;
- identify a specific plan of action to address the priorities identified in the State's Strategy, that includes a range of strategies such as:
 - ensuring an appropriate mix of legal assistance services are delivered which seek to address or prevent legal problems;
 - the development of new, or alteration of existing, referral pathways, networks and links;
 - training and development of legal assistance sector staff; and
 - scoping of new services or activities within available resources.
- establish reasonable, relevant, specific and measurable targets for Queensland that are consistent with and support Queensland's Strategy.

The Strategy and Action Plan are intended to be practical, flexible and proactive. They will act as vehicles for accountability, continuous growth of the legal assistance sector and improved outcomes for the community. Development of the Strategy and Action Plan will support the improvement of equitable access to justice for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals in our community.

Key Themes to be addressed

The Strategy and Action Plan will build upon desktop research and consultation with the legal assistance sector across Queensland, specifically through the engagement of the Queensland Legal Assistance Forum, Regional Legal Assistance Forums and Specialist Legal Assistance Forums and Working Groups. While all submissions are welcome, we particularly invite comments and information that address one or more of the following suggested themes:

1 The level and nature of legal need in Queensland

Example questions you may wish to respond to:

- *What are some of the factors that contribute to the level and nature of legal need in your region/community?*
- *Have you identified any emerging trends with regard to the level and nature of legal need in your region/community?*
- *Have you identified any areas of unmet or unidentified legal need in your region/community, including for clients presenting with a legal issue but with underlying, unrecognised legal needs?*

2 Access to legal assistance in Queensland

Example questions you may wish to respond to:

- *What are some of the barriers or enablers for priority client groups that contribute to a person's ability to access legal assistance in Queensland and its regions?*
- *Are you aware of any gaps in coverage for legal assistance in your region/community?*
- *Are you aware of any effective referral networks or collaborations between legal assistance and other services that you wish to highlight?*
- *Are you aware of any existing mechanisms or innovations that may assist in enhancing access to legal assistance in your region/community?*

3 Legal assistance services in Queensland

Example questions you may wish to respond to:

- *What are some of the key challenges or issues legal assistance services face in your region/community?*
- *Are you aware of any effective training or professional development programs for legal assistance sector staff that you wish to highlight?*
- *Are you aware of any existing mechanisms or innovations that may assist in enhancing legal assistance services in your region/community?*

4 Government impact on legal assistance

Example questions you may wish to respond to:

- *How can the Queensland Government better improve systems and processes to support the legal assistance sector and positively impact service delivery?*