

1. INTRODUCTION

The intent of the QLAF Strategic Plan is to provide high level direction for the three year period ending 2021. In doing so, clarification of QLAF's purpose, value and environment is provided before specifying the primary objectives and success measures.

2. OUR PURPOSE

QLAF's purpose is to coordinate and maximise the reach of legal assistance services and provide feedback to the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments and other relevant bodies on legal assistance strategies.

In fulfilling this purpose, the QLAF will play a central role in driving collaborative service planning under the Queensland framework (the project plan).

Practically, the QLAF will:

- implement and oversee collaborative service planning
- endorse Queensland's evidence base
- facilitate best practice and continuous improvement in service design and delivery by coordinating working groups, forums and other legal and non-legal services including oversight of the Regional Legal Assistance Forums (RLAFS)

3. OUR OBLIGATIONS

Formulation and delivery of the QLAF Strategic Plan, though not restricted by, is informed by two key documents.

3.1. The National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services (NPA) 2015-20

The NPA seeks to facilitate a national legal assistance sector that is integrated, efficient and effective, focused on improving access to justice for disadvantaged people and maximising service delivery within available resources.

A key element of the NPA is collaborative service planning to be undertaken by the State and Commonwealth Governments with the legal assistance sector to coordinate and maximise the reach of services and to ensure that services are directed where they are most needed

It is noted that the NPA expires on 30 June 2020. It is expected that the NPA or a legal assistance mechanism resembling it will be renewed in 2020, with only minimal changes expected.

3.2. Guiding Principles

In meeting NPA commitments, the QLAF follows five key principles established under the National Strategic Framework for Legal Assistance 2015-20 to deliver relevant outcomes:

Focus Service Delivery On People Facing Disadvantage: Legal assistance services focus on, and are accessible to, people facing disadvantage.

Appropriateness of Service: Legal assistance services are appropriate, proportionate and tailored to people’s legal needs and capabilities.

Collaboration: Legal assistance services, government services and other services collaborate to provide joined-up services to address people’s legal and other problems.

Timely Intervention: Legal problems are identified and resolved in a timely manner before they escalate.

Empowerment and Resilience: People are empowered to understand and assert their legal rights and responsibilities and to address, or prevent, legal problems.

4. HOW WE ADD VALUE

The QLAF represents all service providers in the legal assistance sector. As a voluntary forum of sector leaders, the QLAF performs a value adding role by collaboratively undertaking a variety of core activities.

Although not operating under a business model per se, the QLAF is positioned to contribute to the legal assistance sector in delivering value as shown in the customer value model below.

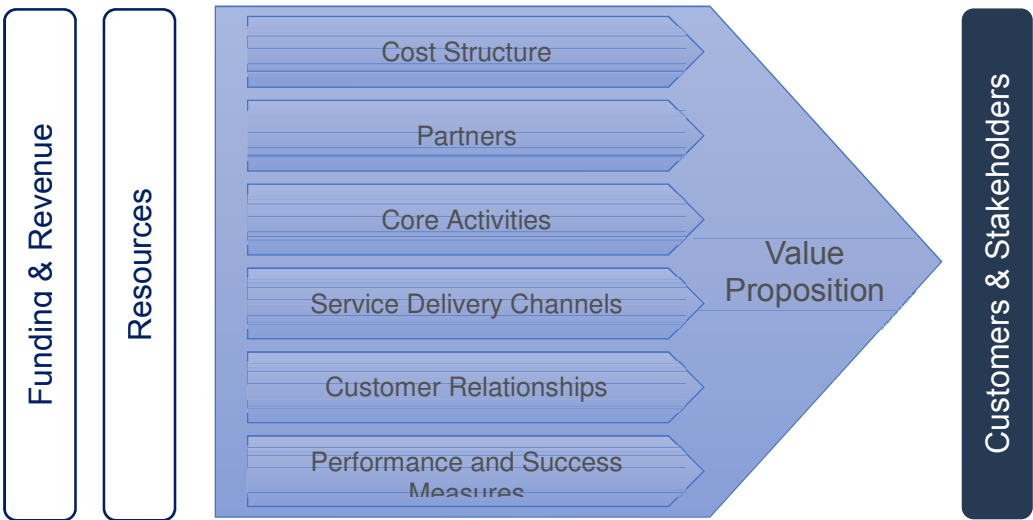


Figure 1: Sector Customer Value Model

The model shown takes a systems approach where funding, revenue and resources are inputs to a variety of systems, processes, activities and structures which work together to deliver value for customers and stakeholders (note Appendix A). The key to successful value delivery is the efficient management of all activities. Each of the elements therefore, becomes a focus for strategic management and decision making.

In having a value adding impact, the QLAF undertakes such activities as:

- Effectually passing on feedback to Government and key stakeholders
- Establishing working groups and specialist legal assistance forums to inform best practice service delivery for priority client groups
- Ensuring that new and existing services are developed in a collaborative manner with other legal and non-legal services
- Continuing to promote the role, purpose and activities of QLAF
- Driving continuous improvement by:
 - progressing current initiatives, including through assigning tasks to working groups and specialist legal assistance forums
 - identifying new initiatives as current initiatives are implemented
 - supporting service providers to identify and adopt methodologies to better understand and measure the effectiveness of their services
 - overseeing and enhancing the roles of state-wide, regional and specialist legal assistance forums in service system design
 - providing feedback to the Queensland Government and other relevant bodies on legal assistance strategies (for example funding strategies, emerging demand and streamlining processes) based on evidence and best practice in service design
 - considering regular updates from working groups and specialist legal assistance forums on the progress of initiatives
 - providing regular updates and making information available to all organisations that are represented on the QLAF
 - promoting collaboration within legal services and with other non-legal services

5. THE ENVIRONMENT

Consideration of the internal and external environments is critical in determining strategic objectives and priorities. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are considered below and a detailed SWOT Analysis shown in Appendix B.

5.1. Strengths

A key to the QLAF's success is its membership and collaborative nature. Members bring with them a wealth of sector experience and knowledge which has facilitated pragmatic review and feedback to government.

5.2. Weaknesses

Resourcing of the QLAF is a significant constraint as is access to member resources. Funding for member organisations is limited and impacted by government policy.

To be most effective and deliver benefit across the state the QLAF must work further with Regional Legal Assistance Forums (RLAF's) to build stronger relationships and allow greater oversight of initiatives.

5.3. Opportunities

Opportunities are plentiful for the QLAF, though common themes exist around communication, influencing and relationship building with stakeholders in the sector and other relevant sectors.

Leveraging technology also provides an opportunity to better service clients and provides valuable sector data to influence services and funding.

5.4. Threats

In considering threats, much is driven by the unknown. Generally however, threats which result in narrowed thinking, poor decision making and which impact the QLAF membership will need to be addressed.

NPA changes, funding decisions and the processes which lead these may have a significant impact on the QLAF and must be proactively influenced.

5.5. Challenges We Face

Whilst weaknesses and threats were previously identified, it is also important to understand the challenges the QLAF faces in executing its strategic plan.

Three key challenges exist:

- Funding
- Collaborative service planning
- Resource constraints

These are by no means new but have an ongoing impact on the QLAF's direction. A short discussion of each appears in Appendix C.

6. OUR OBJECTIVES 2019-2021

Aligned to the QLAF's purpose and cognisant of the environment in which it operates, a number of strategic objectives have been set. These are shown in the table below.

Each objective will have a respective action plan and task list developed, progress will be tracked and measured with relevant key performance indicators. At a more general and strategic level, the QLAF will measure its success by way of the indicators shown for each objective.

QLAF OBJECTIVES

	Objective	Timeframe	Success Indicator
1	Become better engaged, informed and connected with the RLAFs and working groups by seeking feedback on the best way to communicate with the members.	Immediate and ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standing QLAF agenda item to consider the RLAF and working group reports. RLAF and Working Group feedback on improved collaboration/communication.
2	Actively review the RLAFs' Regional Plans and support the RLAFs without a plan to develop a plan.	Immediate and ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RLAFs' plans reviewed, discussed and feedback provided by QLAF annually. Continue to pursue/support development of plans for remaining RLAFs.
3	Facilitate opportunities for information sharing between the legal services and social services sectors by leveraging the QCOSS/legal connection through, for example, community legal education and by fostering formal referral pathways.	Late 2019-2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> QLAF members continue to deliver community legal education to the human services sector.
4	Understand, influence and contribute to the practical implementation and application of the <i>Human Rights Act</i> (and the United Nation Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) with a particular focus on ATSILS and other highly vulnerable cohorts.	Project plan proposed 2019-2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form a Human Rights Working Group with membership including CLCs, ATSILS, LAQ, QCOSS and the Human Rights Commission.
5	Seek funding to map the legal needs of, and legal assistance services for, marginalised and vulnerable people across Queensland. If successful utilise the work and knowledge of the RLAF members.	2019-2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding requested to undertake a mapping of legal need.

Appendix A – Stakeholder Analysis

Who are they	What do they want and expect
Community / Clients who need our services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We provide advice and support across criminal, legal and civil matters Not to have to go through a lot of red tape – things just work
Social (community) services sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information and education – make it easy to access this
Staff and members of state-wide peak bodies (both frontline services or member based)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No expectations. Probably don't know QLAF or much about QLAF May know RLAF Need to promote QLAF and its role
RLAF (and other LAF's)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for change Challenge at State level Share information and training – regarding technology, opportunities and issues Encourage and support
Community Legal Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well informed decisions being made (by QLAF)
Funders – State & Federal Government (inc DATSIP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Input to decisions Discussion, noting, communication Exchange information QLAF to identify trends (for input to decisions)
Private legal profession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To see what they are doing is making a difference Promote services to the private profession/improve referral pathways with the private profession
Commissioners for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mental health Anti-discrimination and Human rights Public Advocate Ombudsman Public Guardian Public Trustee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accurate and objective opinion Support for aggrieved Innovative solutions to sector problems Input to decisions Discussion, noting, communication Exchange information QLAF to identify trends (for input to decisions)

Appendix B – SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good membership – right people (knowledge & position) at the table • Committed and goodwill • Goodwill & buy-in from DJAG & Commonwealth Government • Good reach through working groups • Government support for existence / purpose • Coordinated secretariat support (Gold star for LAQ) • Produce tangible outcomes through projects • Regular meetings – timely information sharing • Build relationships outside meeting processes • Consistency of membership • Single voice • Advice to government has been tested • Respectful relationships – know business but not competitive • Supported by the NPA • Sub Committee -> QLAF • Expertise in sector • Knowing client need on the ground • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative v's quantitative • Limited information / evidence of legal need (sometimes just anecdotal) – lack of evidence in developing good evidence • QLAF resourcing • Communication governance between QLAF and RLAF • RLAF resourcing – cup of tea might be ok . . . – RLAF needs to be more regular – understanding their relationship with QLAF • Support for working groups and connection / representation • Difficult to measure outcomes for QLAF • Constrained by resources and Government policy (influence v's driving) • Have we got the right size / type / scope of membership • Narrowly focussed on legal service membership • Limited strategic reflection
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage existing networks • Tell good news stories / promote • To influence public policy – legal • Monitoring technical advances to improve service delivery outcomes – mobile apps, video conference • Community organisations – tech solutions • Emergence of system thinking / appreciating downstream impacts / need for holistic approach • Ability to influence other sectors (understand needs of) • Opportunity for relationship building by decision makers (relevant to) in sector [think this is sector relevant relationship building] • Encourage best practice through resources / service design • Strengthen consensus thinking • New NPA and new funding round with evidence base work • Evaluating outcomes / SROI of legal assistance services • Change in the Government • Promote and build evidence base 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So focused a mentality that = Hunger Games compared with going broad / losing focus • Change personnel / priority @ AGD, DJAG LASF • Political change – Federal, State • Not having decision makers as the delegate of the member sit on Forum • Lack of adequate funding for members • Changes to government policy and public servants • Leadership changes in membership • Not thinking outside legal assistance sector • NPA changes (lack of formal recognition in contracts) • Personnel changes in organisations (difficulty in future proofing) • Government decision making that hasn't been through a process

Appendix C – Challenges facing the QLAF

Funding

QLAF members receive funding from both State and Commonwealth authorities. The QLAF can influence funding decisions by providing feedback and sector data, but is unable to influence the broader government driven decisions and fiscal constraints.

Collaborative Service Planning

The approach taken to Collaborative Service Planning will also heavily influence future funding decisions made by the Commonwealth Government. The QLAF will need to work with current and future initiatives including:

- Redefining and clarifying the scope of collaborative service planning
- Implementing a tiered system of collaborative service planning
- Development of collaborative service planning roadmaps
- Greater Commonwealth involvement to support collaborative service planning
- The availability of dedicated resources to support collaborative service planning

Resource constraints

Related to the above funding challenge is the constraint on resources. The QLAF relies on the goodwill of its member organisations to provide resources for working groups and dedicate staff to work on sector wide projects.



QLAF Strategic Plan 2019 - 2021

Our Purpose

To coordinate and maximise the reach of legal assistance services and to provide feedback to the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments and other relevant bodies on legal assistance strategies.

Our Activities

- Effectually passing on feedback to Government and key stakeholders
- Establishing working groups and specialist legal assistance forums to inform best practice service delivery
- Ensuring that new and existing services are developed in a collaborative manner with other legal and non-legal services
- Continuing to promote the role, purpose and activities of QLAF
- Driving continuous improvement

Who We Represent - QLAF members represent the following services throughout the sector

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|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Legal Service • Attorney-General's Department (C'wealth Gov't) • Bar Association of Queensland | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Legal Centres Queensland • Department of Justice (Qld Gov't) • LawRight • Legal Aid Queensland | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Queensland Council of Social Service • Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service • Queensland Law Society |
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Our Objectives

Become better engaged, informed and connected with the RLAFs and working groups by seeking feedback on the best way to communicate with the members.

Actively review regional plans and support RLAFs without a plan to develop a plan.

Facilitate opportunities for information sharing between the legal services and social services sectors by leveraging the QCOSS/legal connection through e.g. CLE and by fostering formal referral pathways

Understand, influence and contribute to the practical implementation and application of the Human Rights Act (and Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples) with a particular focus on ATSILS and other highly vulnerable cohorts

Seek funding to map the legal needs of, and legal assistance services for, marginalised and vulnerable people across Queensland. If successful utilise the work and knowledge of the RLAF members

Time Frame

Immediate and ongoing	Immediate and ongoing	Late 2019-20	Project plan proposed 2019-20	2019 – 2020
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Success Measures

Standing QLAF agenda item to consider the RLAF and working group reports. RLAF and Working Group feedback on improved collaboration/communication.

RLAFs' plans reviewed, discussed and feedback provided by QLAF annually. Continue to pursue/support development of plans for remaining RLAFS.

QLAF members continue to deliver community legal education to the human services sector.

Form a Human Rights Working Group with membership including CLCs and the Human Rights commission.

Funding requested to undertake a mapping of legal need.

NPA Principles - Our decision making follows the principles set out under the NPA.

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|--|---|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus service delivery on people facing disadvantage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriateness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely intervention | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowerment and resilience |
|--|---|---|---|--|