

A. Entity responses

As mandated in Section 64 of the *Auditor-General Act 2009*, the Queensland Audit Office gave a copy of the report with a request for comments to:

- Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Integrity
- Legal Aid Queensland

We also provided a copy of the report to the following entities and gave them the option of providing a response:

- Premier
- Director-General, Department of the Premier and Cabinet
- Department of Justice

The appendix contains the responses we received.

The heads of these entities are responsible for the accuracy, fairness and balance of their comments.



Comments received from Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Integrity

The Honourable Deb Frecklington MP
Attorney-General and Minister
for Justice and Minister for Integrity

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Our ref: CAS-04719-LOP1C4

22 JUN 2026

Ms Rachel Vagg
Auditor-General
Queensland Audit Office
QueenslandAuditOffice@qao.qld.gov.au

Dear Ms Vagg

Thank you for your correspondence dated 1 June 2026 enclosing the proposed report regarding Accessing Legal Aid Queensland's representation services.

I note the two recommendations that Legal Aid Queensland (LAQ):

- works more effectively within available resources; and
- supports future access to legal representation services.

In November 2024, I signed the *National Access to Justice Partnership* (NAJP) on behalf of Queensland. The NAJP saw a dedicated uplift for the legal assistance sector of \$142 million, which means there is an increase in federal government funding available to the legal assistance sector, from 2025-30.

Both National Legal Aid and LAQ have raised the issue of declining uptake by preferred suppliers. I am particularly concerned about the impact such a decline could have to regional, rural, and remote services, noting LAQ's preferred supplier model means 70-80% of representation services are provided through preferred suppliers.

Given my concerns, particularly at a national level, I have taken this issue to the Standing Council of Attorneys-General (SCAG) and lobbied for a review of the preferred supplier model. SCAG has noted the issues associated with the preferred supplier model and agreed to undertake a review of the preferred supplier model following the development of the Workforce Strategy under the NAJP. It is expected the review will be completed prior to the next National Partnership Agreement.

LAQ is currently upgrading its technology for grants processing. It is anticipated that this upgrade will remove the risk of end of life legacy systems and help bring some efficiencies in processing grant applications, including for representation.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

DEB FRECKLINGTON MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice
Minister for Integrity

Comments received from Chief Executive Officer, Legal Aid Queensland



Your Ref:
Our Ref: ND: 2026/0865186
Date: 22 June 2026

Telephone:
Facsimile:
Email:

Ms Rachel Vagg
Auditor-General
Queensland Audit Office
Email: QueenslandAuditOffice@qao.qld.gov.au

Dear Ms Vagg

Re: Response to recommendations in the QAO proposed report - Accessing Legal Aid Queensland's representation services

Thank you for your email of 1 June 2026 providing the proposed report for the performance audit *Accessing Legal Aid Queensland's representation services*. Legal Aid Queensland appreciates the opportunity to review the report and respond to the recommendations.

Legal Aid Queensland welcomes the report and is committed to addressing the issues raised in the recommendations. We recognise the importance of ensuring that our services remain accessible, efficient and effective for financially disadvantaged Queenslanders.

There are a number of key projects currently underway which will help to address some of the report's recommendations:

- 1. Modernising core business technology systems**

Legal Aid Queensland acknowledges concerns raised about the quality and timeliness of assessing applications for grants of aid, as well as the need to review our targets for quality and processing times. To address some of these issues, we are undertaking a major project to replace our legacy core business technology systems, which are currently used to assess applications for aid and manage ongoing funding of legal matters. Our existing systems are outdated and limit our ability to innovate. This is an issue experienced by a number of legal aid commissions in Australia. This project, scheduled for completion in 2027, is expected to enhance efficiency, streamline application turnaround times, and improve the quality of decision-making.

- 2. Reviewing the service delivery model**

The report recommends Legal Aid Queensland examines the suitability of our current service delivery model, including the risks related to access to services and the potential impacts of changes to eligibility thresholds. Some of these issues will be addressed through the Standing Council of Attorneys General (SCAG) review of the Legal Aid preferred supplier (private lawyer) model, which is scheduled to take place before the next National Partnership Agreement in 2030.

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This review will provide a comprehensive understanding of the issues impacting the supply of private lawyers to undertake legal aid work and the provision of legal aid services to disadvantaged communities. The 2024 National Legal Aid Private Practitioner Census of more than 1000 private lawyers who represent legal aid clients highlighted that low fees and increasing complexity were the main drivers for practitioners across Australia wishing to stop or reduce their legal aid work. Additional funding to increase fees paid to private practitioners for legal aid work remains a critical issue for the sustainability of legal aid service delivery across Australia.

In addition, Legal Aid Queensland is undertaking a strategy renewal project which will include an analysis of access to services and the potential impact of changes to eligibility criteria on service demand and budget.

3. Developing a demand funding model

Legal Aid Queensland is working with the Queensland Government to develop a demand funding model that takes into account the variables that influence demand and impact service delivery. This model will improve our ability to forecast demand and identify the resources required to ensure that our services remain sustainable and accessible to those who need them most.

As the largest provider of legal assistance services in Queensland, Legal Aid Queensland faces the ongoing challenge of delivering high quality, accessible legal services across a geographically vast state. This challenge is compounded by increasing demand for our services, growing complexity of legal matters and client needs, and the constraints of finite funding.

Legal Aid Queensland remains committed to working collaboratively with our stakeholders to address these challenges and to implement the recommendations outlined in the report.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely



Nicky Davies
A/Chief Executive Officer
Legal Aid Queensland



Responses to recommendations



Legal Aid Queensland

Accessing Legal Aid Queensland's representation services

Response to recommendations provided by Nicky Davies, Acting Chief Executive Officer, Legal Aid Queensland on 22 June 2026.

Recommendation	Agree/ Disagree	Time frame for implementation (Month and financial year)	Additional comments
<p>1. We recommend that Legal Aid Queensland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> investigates and addresses root causes for quality and timeliness issues in assessing applications for grants of aid reviews targets reported internally and externally for quality and application processing timeliness strengthens quality assurance processes by adopting a risk-based approach to reviewing application decisions before they are finalised. 	Agree	<p>Technology replacement Phase 1 project commenced.</p> <p>Root cause analysis (quality and timeliness) commences February 2027.</p> <p>Review of targets commences September 2026.</p> <p>Risk based approach to review processes analysis commences September 2026.</p>	<p>Legal Aid Queensland is currently implementing a major project to replace its legacy technology systems, including the systems used to assess applications and manage grants of aid. The new system is expected to increase efficiency, streamline application turnaround times and improve the quality of decision making.</p>



Recommendation	Agree/ Disagree	Time frame for implementation (Month and financial year)	Additional comments
<p>2. We recommend that Legal Aid Queensland identifies long-term solutions to support sustainable service delivery. This should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the suitability of its current service delivery model, considering any outcomes from national reviews of the legal aid private lawyer model risks relating to access to services and impacts of potential changes to eligibility thresholds. 	Agree	<p>National reviews of the private lawyer model will be led by the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments. Legal Aid Queensland will participate in the process. Dates to be determined.</p> <p>Business Transformation - strategic planning renewal expected by 30 June 2027. Following strategic planning renewal service catalogue work expected to commence (12-18 months).</p> <p>Technology project – Phase 1 expected to be completed by 30 June 2027</p> <p>Demand modelling ongoing.</p>	<p>Legal Aid Queensland has started work on a strategic planning renewal process, which will inform the development of a new strategic plan. The renewal process will include an analysis of options regarding eligibility for aid and service delivery approaches, within the context of updated strategic goals and objectives. (12-24 months).</p> <p>Legal Aid Queensland is working with the Queensland government to develop a funding model which incorporates the variables that influence demand and service delivery. The model will improve demand forecasting and will identify the funding required to ensure services remain sustainable. Work on the demand funding model is ongoing.</p>

