

### What is the Cooperative Legal Service Delivery Program?

The Cooperative Legal Service Delivery (CLSD) Program is a regionally-based approach to legal service delivery in NSW that aims to improve outcomes for economically and socially disadvantaged people by building cooperative and strategic networks of key legal services and community organisations.

CLSD is based on the theory that better coordination and cooperation in the planning and delivery of legal services will enhance the efficient and effective use of scarce resources and improve access to justice for disadvantaged people.

### CLSD Program objectives

CLSD aims for continuous improvements to service delivery through better alignment of planning, program design and service delivery within and across the various legal and related sectors covered by the Program.



The Program's three main objectives are to ensure that:

- economically and socially disadvantaged people are able to efficiently and effectively access legal services which can help them to understand, protect and enforce their legal rights and interests;
- consideration is given to legal need and equity in the provision of legal services and resources; and
- planning and delivery of legal services is approached in a coordinated and cooperative manner between service providers.

### Features of CLSD

The CLSD Program is centred around the following elements:

#### Regional coalitions of legal service providers and community organisations

Potential CLSD locations are identified on the basis of socio-demographic indicators of high disadvantage, availability, location and accessibility of legal services and transport considerations

Each region establishes a regional coalition or partnership made up of representatives from key legal services and community organisations in the area—see Participants panel on back page.

Regional coalitions meet face-to-face quarterly to exchange information, identify service delivery priorities for their region and to develop and implement strategic plans and projects including outreach clinics, community legal education and training to address priorities and unmet need.

While the CLSD Program Unit provides central coordination, each CLSD region is largely autonomous and outputs are responsive to locally identified issues. Part-time Regional Coordinators are appointed to each region to facilitate coordination at the local level.

#### Mechanisms to improve referrals to and between key legal service providers

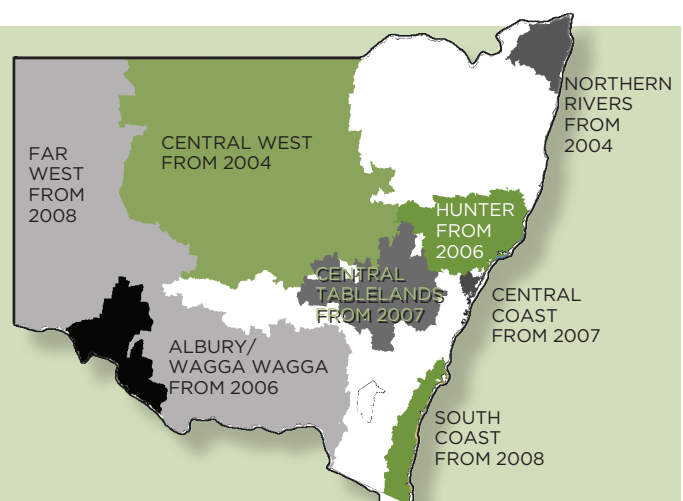
One of CLSD's aims is to get disadvantaged people off the "referral merry-go-round". It does this by increasing awareness and exchange of information about services and by developing mechanisms and strategies to improve referrals.

CLSD is also working with other justice agencies to improve referrals from non-legal service providers to the most appropriate legal service provider.

### Where does the CLSD Program operate?

The CLSD Program was initially piloted in 2004.

An independent evaluation endorsed the model and CLSD partnerships now operate in the Northern Rivers and Central West (since 2004), Albury/Wagga Wagga and Hunter (since 2006), the Central Tablelands and Central Coast (since 2007), Far West and the South Coast (since 2008).





## Cooperative Legal Service Delivery (CLSD) Program

A partnership in legal service delivery

### Improved access to pro bono legal services

One of the aims of CLSD is to facilitate better access to pro bono assistance –through Sydney-based firms with established pro bono practices, better coordination with pro bono referral schemes or harnessing closer relationships with local law firms and regional law societies. Apart from taking referrals, firms may also provide administrative support, training and community legal education.

### The use of evidence-based planning of legal services

CLSD partners adopt an evidence-based approach to developing projects and services that meet local emerging legal needs. Partners aim to coordinate more effective and collaborative outreach services, improve client referrals between agencies, develop new client resources and CLE based on the identified needs of their communities.

The CLSD Program Unit works closely with LawAccess NSW and the Law & Justice Foundation of NSW to analyse data on service usage and explore and implement service planning and delivery strategies.

### Central coordination through Legal Aid NSW

The CLSD Program is centrally managed and coordinated by the CLSD Program Unit. The Unit assists regional coalitions to develop and monitor projects and strategic plans

Through the partnerships, the Unit is able to give a voice to local regional issues by raising them at a broader level: information on identified gaps in services and emerging and systemic issues are fed back to Legal Aid NSW Head Office, the NSW Legal Assistance Forum, the Law & Justice Foundation and LawAccess NSW. The CLSD Program Unit also manages funding for CLSD projects and liaises with justice agencies to facilitate outreach to CLSD regions.

### Outcomes

Through working together, CLSD partners have attracted additional resources, enabling agencies to extend services to meet emerging legal needs. Partners have developed targeted community legal education sessions, improved client referrals between agencies, developed new resources, provided training and capacity-building initiatives.

CLSD partners are working together on cooperative projects such as legal advice and information “road-shows” and joint outreach advice clinics to less well-served regional areas. CLSD is also well-placed to report on unmet needs in regional NSW and identify systemic legal issues for consideration at a peak level.

Further, government agencies such as ombudsman and complaints services are increasingly leveraging the CLSD networks to promote awareness of and access to their services across regional NSW.

## PARTICIPANTS

CLSD is guided by a Steering Committee which provides advice on the Program and is made up of key agencies in the legal assistance sector in NSW. CLSD participants include:

**Legal Aid NSW**  
**Community Legal Centres in NSW**  
**Local Courts**  
**LawAccess NSW**  
**Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) Ltd**  
**Aboriginal Community Justice Groups**  
**Law & Justice Foundation of NSW**  
**NSW Legal Assistance Forum**  
**Community Justice Centres**  
**Regional Law Societies**

**Tenancy Services**  
**Women’s Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services**  
**Disability advocacy agencies**  
**Youth services**  
**Migrant community groups/ resource centres**  
**Legal Information Access Centres -through Regional public libraries**  
**Financial Counselling agencies**  
**Family Relationship Centres**  
**Neighbourhood Centres**

**Blake Dawson**  
**Henry Davis York**  
**DLA Phillips Fox**  
**Gilbert + Tobin**  
**Clayton Utz**  
**Sparke Helmore**  
**Law Society of NSW Pro Bono Scheme**  
**Public Interest Law Clearing House**  
**Government agencies including Housing NSW, Child Support Agency**

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