

Chairman's Letter 2015-16

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The Honourable John Rau, MP
Deputy Premier
Attorney-General
Attorney-General's Department
Level 11, 45 Pirie Street
ADELAIDE SA 5000

Dear Deputy Premier,

I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the Legal Services Commission for the financial year ending 30 June 2016, pursuant to section 33 of the *Legal Services Commission Act 1977*.

This has been a challenging year for the Commission with funding cuts from both the State and Commonwealth governments.

I am pleased to report that we have risen to the challenges set by reduced funding, introducing operational efficiencies, innovative service delivery methods and reducing staff numbers.

The value of the work of legal aid in providing access to justice to the most disadvantaged in our society should not be underestimated. Demand for services continues to rise as does the complexity of legal issues faced by our lawyers.

I would like to acknowledge the Director, Deputy Director and all staff at the Commission for their tireless commitment to our clients during a period of considerable change. I also acknowledge the board of Commissioners who have provided wise governance and the almost 700 private legal practitioners who now provide legal services through grants of aid. It is clear that it takes a commitment from all these individuals to ensure the legal system works in South Australia.

This year we were unable to adjust fees payable to legal practitioners acting on grants of legal aid, as has been our past practice. I live in hope that in future years we will be in a financial position to keep fees in line with CPI increases and to expand our services to the South Australian public.

Thank you for your continued support as Attorney-General over the previous year.

Michael Abbott, AO QC
Chairman