

## What is the Cooperative Legal Service Delivery Program?

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

The CLSD Program is based on the premise that better coordination, cooperation and collaboration in the planning and delivery of legal and related non-legal services will enhance the efficient and effective use of scarce resources and improve access to justice for disadvantaged people in regional, rural and remote areas.

## Why work in partnership?

Research from the Law and Justice Foundation of NSW shows that disadvantaged people are especially vulnerable to multiple legal and related non-legal problems.

The research concludes that a more integrated approach to service delivery that includes legal and non-legal agencies is likely to be beneficial in meeting the diverse legal needs of disadvantaged people. This means that we need to work in partnership to assist our clients overcome the fragmentation across legal, non-legal, government and non-government sectors.

The CLSD Program partnerships adopt an approach designed to get optimal outcomes for our clients. We do this by working collaboratively, using a client-focused framework which provides legal assistance services that are **targeted** to those most at need, **joined up** with other legal and non-legal services, provides **timely** responses to the identified demand and ensures our services are **appropriate** to our clients' needs and current capabilities.

## How does the CLSD Program work?

### Regional justice partnerships

Each of the 12 CLSD Program partnerships is supported by a local Regional Coordination Service with a local CLSD Program Regional Coordinator. Face to face meetings of the CLSD Program participants (known as "partners") are held four times a year in each location.

The work and priorities of each CLSD Program partnership is guided by a locally developed Action Plan based on local regional profiling and analysis of demographic, legal service, crime and other data. Under the Action Plans, partners identify priorities and develop targeted and collaborative initiatives that respond to identified service gaps and emerging and unmet legal needs.

### Central coordination through Legal Aid NSW

Central coordination and state-wide strategic support for the CLSD Program and the 12 partnerships is provided by the Collaborative Legal Service Delivery Unit (the CLSD Unit) at Legal Aid NSW. The CLSD Unit undertakes strategic advocacy and supports the escalation of identified systemic issues to the state level through Legal Aid NSW, the New South Wales Legal Assistance Forum ([www.nlaf.org.au](http://www.nlaf.org.au)) and various forums and Committees. The CLSD Unit also facilitates state-wide agencies to participate in CLSD Program meetings and to join in outreach in regional, rural and remote NSW.

The CLSD Program is guided by a Steering Committee that provides advice to the CEO of Legal Aid NSW on the operation of the Program.

### Improved referrals and coordination

The CLSD Program partnerships provide a forum for better information sharing, coordination and referrals. One of the aims is to get people off the "referral merry-go-round" and encourage more client-focused practices. Research shows that disadvantaged people don't necessarily seek help at first instance from lawyers, so we partner with non-legal organisations who are likely to be

already engaging with our clients.

The partnerships collaborate on the provision of legal assistance in regional and remote NSW, applying the research that shows our clients benefit from a more coordinated, client-focused approach rather than a fragmented and service-focused approach to service delivery.

### Improved access to pro bono services

A distinguishing feature of the CLSD Program is our work with large law firms from capital cities who partner with each region to provide pro bono assistance. This includes taking referrals of matters outside our local partners' expertise or capacity. This work has included providing free wills with Aboriginal communities and planning ahead assistance to parents and carers of people with disability or impaired capacity.

### Evidence-based planning

The CLSD Unit at Legal Aid NSW assists each CLSD Program partnership with regular regional collaborative service planning. The CLSD Unit undertakes detailed regional profiling, and works with each partnership to devise an Action Plan with priorities based on identification of evidence of client need, and service gaps.

### CLSD Program projects

The CLSD Unit at Legal Aid NSW administers a small project fund to support collaborative, place-based projects. CLSD Program partners can apply for funding to support collaborative projects that provide, facilitate or enhance access to legal services in the region, based on evidence of identified need. Projects have included community legal education workshops and resources, training, legal advice clinics and cross-agency roadshows in regional, rural and remote communities.

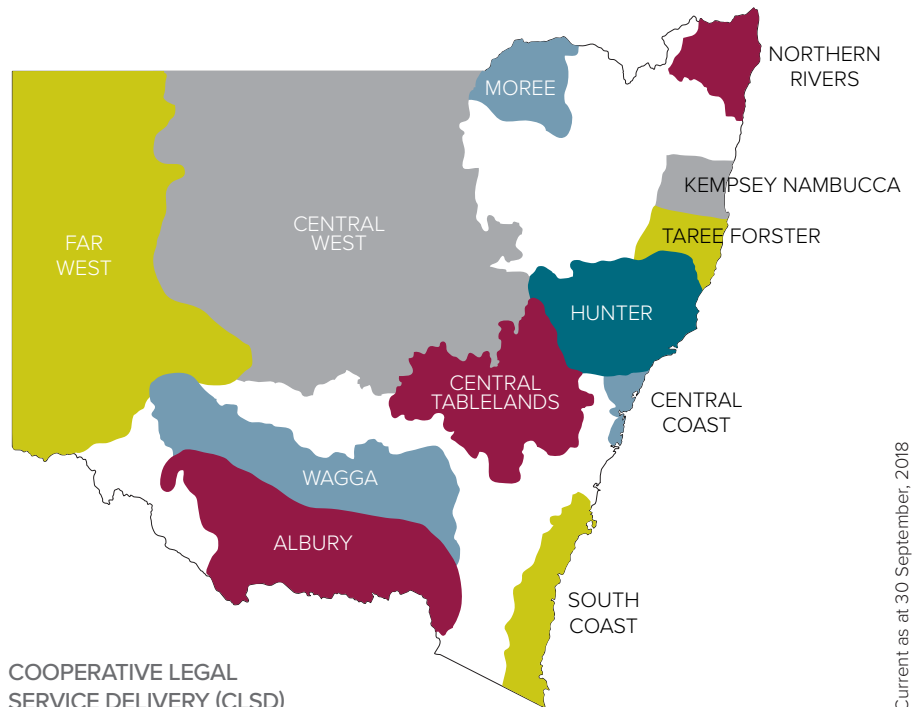
## Who is involved in the CLSD Program partnerships?

Agencies participating in CLSD Program partnerships typically include:

- Legal Aid NSW regional offices and outreach services
- Community Legal Centres
- Aboriginal Legal Services
- Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention Legal Services
- Local private solicitors
- Local Court staff including Aboriginal Client and Community Support Officers
- Domestic and family violence services
- Family support services
- Neighbourhood centres
- Financial and gambling counsellors
- Tenancy and housing support services
- Disability services
- Drug and alcohol services
- Health/mental health services
- Youth services
- Multicultural support workers
- Community transport
- Government agencies assisting economically and socially disadvantaged people including Centrelink, the Anti-Discrimination Board and Community Corrections.

From time to time, and in response to locally identified priorities, the CLSD Program partnerships may invite State-wide, cross-sector and government agencies to participate in meetings and initiatives.

The CLSD Program also partners with large metropolitan law firms with pro bono practices to support pro bono work in regional, rural and remote communities.



COOPERATIVE LEGAL SERVICE DELIVERY (CLSD) PROGRAM PARTNERSHIP REGIONS  
CURRENT AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2018

Current as at 30 September, 2018

## Where are the CLSD Program partnerships?

There are currently 12 CLSD Program partnerships across regional NSW in the following areas:

- Albury
- Central Coast
- Central Tablelands
- Central West
- Far West
- Hunter
- Kempsey/Nambucca
- Moree
- Northern Rivers
- South Coast
- Taree/Forster
- Wagga Wagga

## How can my organisation get involved?

Information about CLSD Program partnership locations, quarterly meetings and the contact details for the 12 local CLSD Program Regional Coordinators can be found on the Legal Aid NSW website at [www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/clsd](http://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/clsd).

Get in touch with your local CLSD Program Regional Coordinator and get on their email list. You can also get on the CLSD Unit email list to receive e-updates on cross-sector initiatives that may assist socially and economically disadvantaged clients, and to read about news, inquiries and reports from across NSW and beyond that may impact on people in regional NSW, by emailing [clsd@legalaid.nsw.gov.au](mailto:clsd@legalaid.nsw.gov.au).

## Contacting the CLSD Unit at Legal Aid NSW

You can contact the CLSD Unit at Legal Aid NSW on (02) 9219 6399 or [clsd@legalaid.nsw.gov.au](mailto:clsd@legalaid.nsw.gov.au)