

Access to legal aid services affected by Covid-19.

Date: 24/02/2020

Legal Services aimed at assisting disadvantaged people have been adversely affected by the spread of Covid 19. The following is a summary of the current status of Legal Aid services in each state. Further information, including updates available from the relevant legalaid office website.

Legal Aid NSW

Legal Aid NSW closed its doors to the public on 24 March and will no longer provide face-to-face advice or representation to defendants who are not in jail. Legal Aid NSW will be available for telephone enquiries on 1300 888 529. In addition, Legal Aid NSW will be providing advice by either phone or email, which can be arranged through the local Legal Aid office, which can be found [here](#).

Victoria Legal Aid

Victoria Legal Aid is only providing advice by phone. This can be accessed through the Legal Help Chat [here](#). In addition, Victoria Legal Aid can be contacted Monday to Friday from 9 am to 5 pm on 1300 792 387. As they are currently operating at reduced capacity, Victoria Legal Aid has requested that non-urgent calls be delayed.

Legal Aid Queensland

Legal Aid Queensland is currently still operating office front counters. In the event legal assistance is required, the first port of call is to telephone the contact centre on 1300 65 11 88 or the local office number, available [here](#). Initial inquiries and most advice will be over the phone, however face to face appointments can be made if necessary..

Legal Aid Queensland is also still operating the following hotlines for specific issues:

- Adults needing legal advice about a court appearance, can call 1300 004 924.
- Children and Young persons under 18 years old can call the Youth Legal Advice Hotline on 1300 527 527
- Self-represented individuals with a family law issue can call 1300 650 143.

Legal Services Commission of South Australia

All offices of the Legal Services Commission of South Australia are closed; however online and telephone legal services continue to be available.

The current clients lawyers employed by the Legal Services Commission can arrange appointments via telephone or video. This includes duty lawyer client interviews in criminal law, family law and care & protection interviews. Family Dispute Resolution Conferences will be conducted by telephone.

General legal enquires can be made on the free Legal Help Line on 1300 366 424 on workdays between 9am and 4.30pm. A Legal Chat service is also available, and this can be accessed [here](#)

The Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission

NT Legal Aid are currently transitioning to all advice services being delivered by telephone only. They can be contacted on the Helpline on 1800 019 343. Further information, including any changes to practices and legal services can be found [here](#).

Legal Aid Western Australia

Legal Aid WA have implemented new cleaning protocols and have implemented a policy of social distancing; however, at this stage Legal Aid WA continue to provide services as usual. Further information, including any changes to practices and legal services can be found [here](#).

Legal Aid Tasmania

From Wednesday 25 March 2020 Legal Aid Tasmania will not be accepting clients and visitors to office reception areas. Legal Assistance can be obtained by calling the Legal Advice Line on 1300 366 611. More information, including any changes to practices and legal services can be found [here](#)

Legal Aid ACT

Legal Aid ACT is currently implementing procedures which are designed to:

- Have telephone rather than face to face meetings between lawyers and clients;
- Limit face to face conferences with lawyers and other staff;
- In the event face to face conferences are required limiting the number of people who can be present.

Further information can be obtained by phoning the Helpline on 1300 654 314 or emailing Legal Aid ACT on Legalaid@legalaidact.org.au. More information, including any changes to practices and legal services can be found [here](#).