



Australian Government  
Attorney-General's Department

# National Legal Assistance Partnership

## Legal Assistance Service Data

**Attachment**

# LEGAL ASSISTANCE SERVICE DATA

In the 2019-20 Budget, the Australian Government announced the creation of the *National Legal Assistance Partnership* (NLAP). Under the NLAP, the states and territories are required to provide legal assistance service data in a format outlined by the Commonwealth. This data would be provided as part of the proposed Jurisdictional Performance Report (see **Part 6** of the NLAP Overview Paper). This attachment provides further technical detail on the required provision of legal assistance service data under the NLAP.

## Purpose

Consistent with the findings of the 2018 *Reviews of the National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services* and the *Indigenous Legal Assistance Program*, the Commonwealth will have a greater focus on data collection and analysis. This will include, within available resources, providing more direct guidance and support to the legal assistance sector and the states and territories, facilitating information sharing, guiding national data improvement activities and enhancing frontline service delivery through greater analysis of legal assistance data.

The legal assistance service data required under the NLAP is intended to provide all levels of government and the legal assistance sector with information to support the efficient and effective delivery of legal assistance services. This in turn will help improve and maximise outcomes for clients who receive legal assistance services. This data will also allow the Commonwealth to fulfil its role under the NLAP.

This list of unit level information below has been selected by the Commonwealth to promote the collection of relevant information, allows for accurate analysis and promote insight at a sufficient granularity to reveal a client's experience. The list of selected data items balances granularity while minimising any risks to client privacy.

## Data protection

Although unit-level data<sup>1</sup> is required under the NLAP, in order to maximise the potential of the dataset, no individual or client record data will be publicly reported. Only aggregated data will be reported and other privacy techniques will be adopted to reduce the risk of the inadvertent disclosure of information about clients.

## Data requirements

The states and territories must provide unit-level data for legal assistance services:

- provided to individuals (including organisations and groups); and
- provided to communities.

### Services provided to individuals

For data relating to services provided to individuals, the states and territories must provide unit-level information, containing the following fields (where applicable), disaggregated by relevant financial years and legal assistance provider type:

- funding category and stream;
- service type;

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<sup>1</sup> Unit-level data refers to non-aggregated data containing separate records of services to individuals (including organisations and groups) and communities.

- date of service<sup>2</sup>;
- service location (disaggregated to postcode<sup>3</sup> and suburb<sup>4</sup>);
- service location category and mode of service delivery;
- primary law type;
- problem type;
- estimate of time spent;
- service results (for facilitated resolution processes only);
- activity type (for facilitated resolution processes and duty lawyer services only);
- unique client identifier;
- location of service user (disaggregated to postcode<sup>3</sup> and suburb<sup>4</sup>);
- financial disadvantage indicator;
- year of birth<sup>5</sup>;
- gender;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status;
- family violence indicator;
- disability status;
- interpreter/translator;
- language spoken;
- homelessness status;
- hearing type;
- court/tribunal type;
- referral data (including referral type, service provider category and type, and reasons for referral); and
- non-legal support services.

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<sup>2</sup> For discrete services include month and year, and for ongoing services include service open date and close date (if applicable).

<sup>3</sup> **Postcode** – There are approximately 2,600 postal areas in Australia (which approximate to postcodes). This level of granularity presents a low risk to client privacy. Postcodes are generally well reported by clients but may not represent meaningful functional boundaries for service provision.

<sup>4</sup> **Suburb** – There are over 15,000 state suburbs in Australia, some with very small populations. Suburb based data is of value in planning services at the local level. In areas of low population, however, this level of granularity may increase risks to client privacy but will be addressed with appropriate data protection measures described above.

<sup>5</sup> **Year of birth** – this is the optimal level of detail as it can reveal the experience of specific age cohorts and their experiences over time, allows for analysis relative to Australian Bureau of Statistics datasets and supports analysis relating to the linkages between legal problems and need and other social problems and needs.

## Services provided to communities

For data relating to services provided to communities, the states and territories must provide unit-level information, containing the following fields (where applicable), disaggregated by relevant financial years and legal assistance provider type:

- funding category and stream;
- service type;
- primary law type;
- problem type;
- service location (disaggregated to postcode<sup>3</sup> and suburb<sup>4</sup>);
- target audience of service; and
- interpretation/translation.

## Definitions

- *Funding category* refers to either Commonwealth or state or territory funded services.
- *Funding stream* refers to the specific Commonwealth or state or territory funding stream (for example, baseline funding).
- Other specific terminology used in this attachment is defined in the *National Legal Assistance Data Standards Manual (DSM)*.

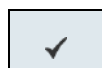
## National Legal Assistance Data Standards Manual changes

To support the legal assistance service data required under the NLAP, the Commonwealth proposes a number of changes to the *National Legal Assistance Data Standards Manual (DSM)*. These changes would be limited to the expansion of the **National Legal Assistance Dataset (NLAD)**, and changes to the definitions of legal assistance data items (see **Table 1** and **2**).

The changes reflected in the Table 1 are representative of the changes required for the purposes of the NLAP. Any omissions of specific definitions or data items does not reflect their removal from the DSM. The changes outlined below are in addition to any proposed changes to the DSM currently being considered by the Data Standards Working Group.

The Advisory Group of the Inter-Governmental Committee for Legal Assistance Services will be responsible for broader changes to the DSM.

### KEY TO TABLES 1 and 2



Current NLAD



Potential NLAD



Current Additional Dataset



Potential Additional Dataset



Potential data item

TABLE 1: POTENTIAL CHANGES TO DATA COLLECTION IN THE DSM – SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS

Data	Information	Referrals	Legal Advice, Non-Legal Support, Legal Task	Facilitated Resolution Processes	Duty Lawyer	Representation services
Service Type	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Service User Basic Data</b>						
Client ID						
Client location						
Age	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Gender						
Indigenous status						
Interpreter/translator required						
<b>Service User Detailed Data</b>						
Country of birth	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Main language at home						
Proficiency in English (spoken, written)						
<b>Basic Service Characteristics</b>						
Family violence indicator						
Disability status						
Financial disadvantage	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Law type						
Service location						
Location category						
Service delivery mode						
<b>Detailed Service Characteristics</b>						
Estimated time spent						
Interpreter/translator used	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Homelessness status						
Employment status						
Centrelink status						
Income						
Service Results			✓	✓		✓
Activity Type				✓	✓	
Other Party Type			✓	✓		✓
Charge Count						✓
Criminal Cases						✓
Problem Type	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Hearing Type					✓	✓
Court/Tribunal Type					✓	✓
<b>Referral Data</b>						
Type						
Service referred to		✓				
Reason						
<a href="#">Referral from</a>						
Non-legal support services			✓			

Data	Information	Referrals	Legal Advice, Non-Legal Support, Legal Task	Facilitated Resolution Processes	Duty Lawyer	Representation services
<u>Priority group status</u> Single parent Low education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<u>Funding category</u>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

**TABLE 2: POTENTIAL CHANGES TO DATA COLLECTION IN THE DSM – SERVICES TO COMMUNITIES**

Data	CLE Resources and Activities	Law and Legal Service Reform	Stakeholder Engagement
Service Type	✓	✓	✓
Primary Law Type	✓	✓	✓
Problem Type	✓	✓	✓
Service location	✓	✓	✓
Target audience for service	✓	✓	✓
Number of persons accessing CLE/CE activities	✓	✓	
Number of CLE/CE activities delivered	✓	✓	
Number of CLE/CE copies of each publication distributed	✓	✓	
Law and Legal Services Reform Activities undertaken	✓	✓	
Nature of Stakeholder Engagement activity	✓		✓
Collaborative arrangement	✓	✓	✓
Interpreter/ translator required	✓	✓	✓
Website access (where applicable)	✓	✓	
Resources applied	✓	✓	✓
Estimate of time spent	✓	✓	✓
<u>Funding category</u>	✓	✓	✓