

Chairperson's Letter 2017-18

The Honourable Vickie Chapman 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 2018, pursuant to section 33 of the *Legal Services Commission Act 1977*.

In compliance with its mandate, the Commission continues to provide high quality, efficient and effective legal assistance services, with expenditure in line with budget.

The *Legal Services Commission (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act 2016* inserted section 11A into the *Legal Services Commission Act 1977*. Section 11A requires the Commission to establish a Legal Profession Reference Committee to advise the Commission on matters arising from any of the Commission's functions under the Act. The Committee's membership includes representatives from the Law Society of South Australia and the South Australian Bar Association. The Committee met for the first time this year and discussed new initiatives under the criminal law cost scale.

This year the Commission affirmed its commitment to providing regional services by holding Commission meetings outside the CBD at the Elizabeth and Noarlunga offices, the first ever meetings at these locations. These meetings provide Commissioners with an opportunity for greater insight into the concerns of the staff and clients living and working in suburban centres. I thank my fellow Commissioners for their ongoing commitment to the good governance of the Commission.

I acknowledge the work of the Director and staff of the Commission and thank them for their ongoing expertise and commitment to access to justice and to increasing efficiencies in their work. The successful implementation of the Commission's new Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) is the result of their tireless efforts.

I also thank those 630 plus members of the legal profession who constitute the Commission's legal practitioner panels and provide legal assistance through grants of aid. 560 of these practitioners are in private legal practice and 73 are employed in-house at the Commission. This year, these practitioners acted in 15 805 grants of legal aid in State and Commonwealth courts and tribunals across South Australia.

I thank you Deputy Premier for your continued support both personally and in your role as Attorney-General. I would also like to acknowledge the support of the Hon. John Rau MP as Deputy Premier and Attorney-General in the first part of the year.



Michael Abbott, AO QC **Chairman**