

## Legal Aid helping those most in need

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Legal Aid NSW lawyers last year helped more than 570 people every day with free advice with their legal issues, Attorney General Gabrielle Upton today announced.

The 2014/15 Annual Report was tabled in NSW Parliament which shows Legal Aid NSW performing strongly in a number of key areas, including the number of free legal advice and minor assistance services provided.

Ms Upton said evidence and experience tells us that the most vulnerable members of our community are in the most need of legal assistance.

"Targeted, timely legal assistance can make all the difference. It can help stop people from spiraling into vicious cycles of disadvantage and access the justice," Ms Upton said. "I welcome the 2014/15 Annual Report which shows that Legal Aid NSW provided more legal advice and assistance services and improved its accessibility to those most in need. "Importantly, the NSW Government continues to back their work by boosting funding by 5.01% to more than \$150 million in 2015/16." Key highlights for Legal Aid NSW in 2014/15 include:

- The number of free legal advice or minor assistance services provided increased to 150,396 in 2014/15 – an increase of 21,677 from 2013/14;

- Improved accessibility with the means test income limit as a percentage of the minimum wage increased to 60.1% - an increase of 8.9% from 2013/14;
- Opened a new Legal Aid NSW office in Port Macquarie in December 2014;
- Expanded the Best for Kids website which gives children and young people information to help them understand their legal problems;
- Expanded the number of locations with regular outreach from 200 in 2013/14 to 210; and
- Specialist legal service helping people in remote Aboriginal communities with everyday legal issues including debt, fines, consumer law and housing, increasing from six to 16 locations. Legal Aid NSW is the largest legal aid agency in Australia with offices in 22 locations. It provides free legal advice and information, as well as court duty services and representation in civil, criminal and family law to eligible clients. Legal advice and assistance is available free of charge to everyone in over 200 locations across NSW. Often this legal advice can be enough to help people resolve their issue without having to go to court.

For more information about Legal Aid NSW services and locations, go to [www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au](http://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au)