

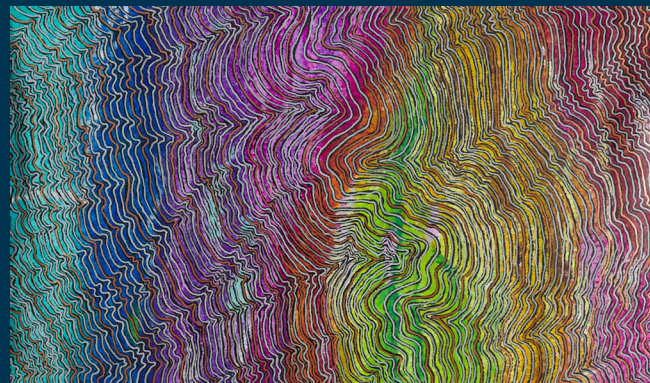


Victorian Legal Services
BOARD + COMMISSIONER

2026–2029

Strategic Plan





Cover artwork: Robby Wirramanda
Wergaia/Wotjobaluk people

Robby Wirramanda's *The Dance of Fire and Wind #5* resonates with us as we seek to shape the legal ecosystem to better meet the needs of all Victorians.

Artist's statement: *'With each stroke of my brush, I attempt to capture the mesmerizing dance between fire and wind as these elemental forces mould the land, making way for new growth to bloom. Deeply rooted in the spiritual fabric of the Wergaia people, I explore the colours that roll out across my Country with seasonal change to portray the harmony and cycles of nature that are integral to our culture.'*

As the journey unfolds, vibrant bursts of colour emerge, symbolizing the emergence of new life and growth. These hues vividly express the resilience and hope that endures amidst adversity.'



We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung People as the Traditional Custodians of Naarm (Melbourne), the land on which our office sits. We pay our respects to their Elders; past and present. We support Treaty for Victoria.

02 Message from the Commissioner
and Board Chair

04 About us

Why we exist

Who we are and what we do

How we do our work

06 About this Strategic Plan

**Adopting an outcomes-based
approach**

**How we will measure our
performance and outcomes**

Strategic Plan overview

10 Strategic pillars

Protect and empower consumers

**Maintain and enhance legal practice
and ethics**

Improve access to justice

16 Our enablers

By combining the corporate and strategic planning process, the Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner has aligned our priorities, actions and ways of working to best respond to the challenges and opportunities presented to modern legal regulators.



In 2018, we launched our strategy ‘A clear direction’ and followed that with a corporate plan released in 2021 during the height of the coronavirus pandemic. That corporate plan has seen us grow significantly in size, ambition and capability. Through hard work and strong leadership, the organisation has achieved its goals and grown its reach and impact. As we look to the future, we will continue with our ambitious agenda, and hold ourselves accountable to this by embedding an outcomes-based approach to our work.

The operating environment for the legal profession has become more complex and we have adapted. We are leading the way by providing meaningful guidance to the profession about pressing issues like cyber security and the proper use of emerging technologies like generative AI and are continuing to grapple with complex challenges like the prevention of sexual harassment and poor wellbeing in the legal profession.

We have also begun the work of understanding, valuing and recognising First Nations cultures, histories and knowledge in the context of the reflection and reckoning set out by the Yoorrook Truth and Justice Commission. Our work to support improved cultural capability in Victorian lawyers, and to provide funding to Aboriginal-led organisations, are key parts of this process. In this new Strategic Plan, we commit to continuing this journey of understanding and reconciliation.

While our plan has been updated, we remain focused on our purpose, *‘To maintain and enhance public trust and confidence in Victorian lawyers and support the rule of law’*, and our strategic pillars remain unchanged. Our commitment to protecting and empowering consumers, maintaining and enhancing legal practice and ethics, and improving access to justice will continue to serve as guiding principles.

By following our new plan, we seek to better meet the needs of consumers and improve their experience with the legal profession. We are acutely aware of the discrepancy in legal knowledge, skills and understanding that consumers and lawyers have in legal decision-making. In this plan, we recognise the need to elevate consumer understanding and improve lawyers’ competence when dealing with consumers.

The important regulatory role of promoting efficient, effective and proportionate regulation of lawyers is reflected in our pillar to maintain and enhance legal practice and ethics. As a regulator, we seek to understand the needs of lawyers, and provide guidance and education, all while overseeing competent, compliant and ethical legal services.

As system shapers in the access to justice space, we work to increase the availability and accessibility of legal services. We do this as an investor, a funder and a regulator.

This new Strategic Plan sets out a clear and considered roadmap for our work over the next 4 years, and articulates a shared set of goals and outcomes. Its successful implementation will rely on the ongoing collaboration and support of our partners across the justice sector. The plan reflects our collective purpose and aspirations, and we look forward to working closely with all our stakeholders to realise its vision.

Fiona McLeay
Victorian Legal Services Board
CEO and Commissioner

Sam Hay KC
Victorian Legal Services
Board Chairperson

Why we exist

To maintain and enhance public trust and confidence in Victorian lawyers and support the rule of law.

Who we are and what we do

We are the independent regulator of the Victorian legal profession.

Our strategic pillars



Protect and empower consumers



Maintain and enhance legal practice and ethics



Improve access to justice

Our key functions

- regulating the legal profession and maintaining its professional standards
- providing an independent, impartial and accessible system for managing complaints about lawyers
- providing stewardship of the Public Purpose and Fidelity Funds and administering those funds to support legal regulation and access to justice.

How we do our work

Our work to deliver on our strategic pillars is supported by our people, our processes and our technology.

We are guided by the Victorian Public Service values and our shared commitments:

- we collaborate
- we lead and inspire
- we are courageous
- we adapt
- we value relationships.

This 4-year Strategic Plan, from financial years 2026–2029, outlines the VLSB+C’s strategic pillars, our priorities under each pillar, and the outcomes we want to see in our priority areas. It enables the Board, Commissioner, leadership and teams to work towards common goals.

To support us in achieving this Strategic Plan, we have developed a standalone Action Plan that commits to key initiatives during the first 2 years. The Action Plan will be refreshed annually.

Adopting an outcomes-based approach

The key elements of our Strategic Plan, depicted below, connect our purpose through to our enablers.

Our new Strategic Plan embeds an outcomes-based approach that aligns with the Victorian Government’s commitment to outcomes and evidence reform in public services. Outcomes are clear and measurable statements about what success looks like and the desired changes we want to see for us and for our stakeholders.

Adopting an explicit focus on outcomes in our strategic planning ensures we focus on what matters and can continually assess the effectiveness of our work.

How we will measure our performance and outcomes

Outcomes and performance are inextricably linked, and an outcomes-based approach means measuring both whether we are seeing our desired outcomes and whether we are delivering our work well. A focus on outcomes does not replace the essential work of measuring what and how much we deliver. Rather it prompts us to go further and assess whether what we did collectively made a difference.

This is why our Strategic Plan includes:

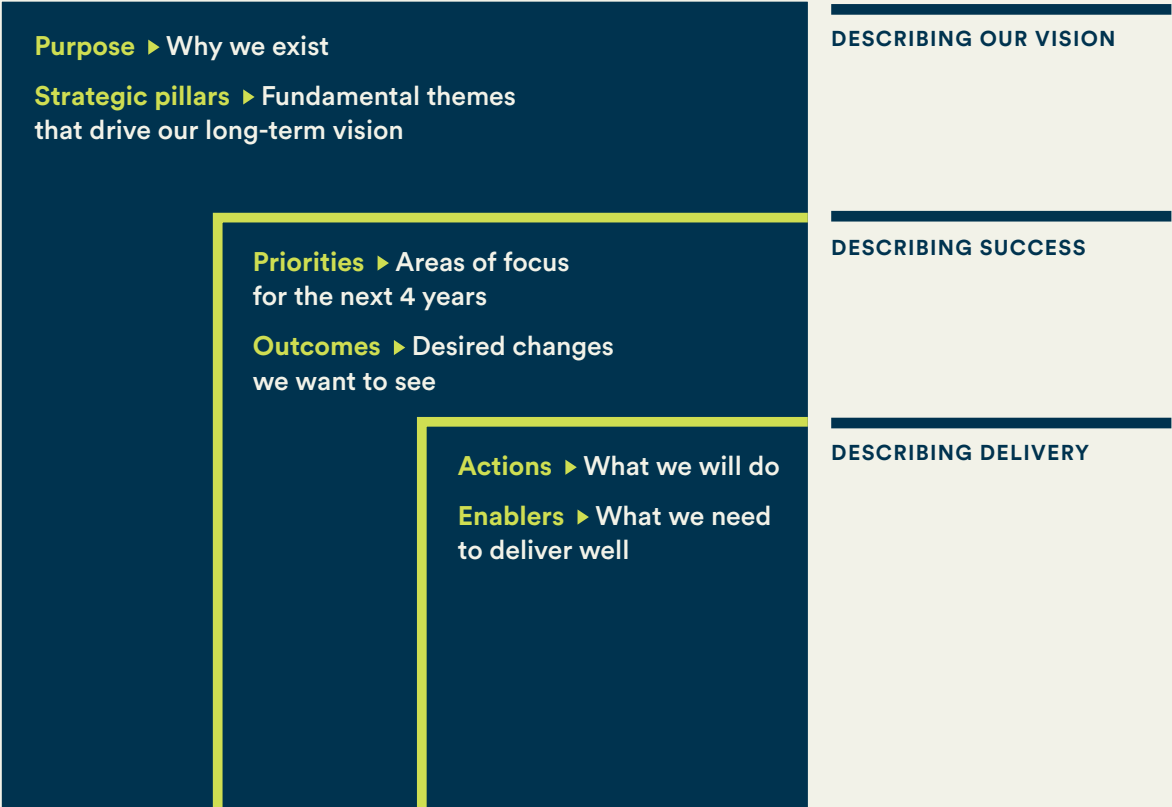
Outcome indicators

These assess progress in the changes we want to see within our sphere of influence. They specify what success looks like and how we will know if we are getting there.

Performance measures

These assess the activities, efficiencies and outputs of the organisation. They measure how well we are delivering our work.

This measurement approach ensures meaningful accountability and enables us to tell a rich, nuanced story about the impact we create and enable through our work.



Strategic Plan overview

	STRATEGIC PILLARS Fundamental themes that drive our long-term vision	STRATEGIC PRIORITIES Areas of focus for the next 4 years	OUTCOMES Desired changes we want to see
Why we exist To maintain and enhance public trust and confidence in Victorian lawyers and support the rule of law How we do our work The work we do to deliver on our strategic pillars is supported by our people, our technology and our processes. We are guided by the Victorian Public Service values and our shared commitments: — we collaborate — we lead and inspire — we are courageous — we adapt — we value relationships Our enablers — People, culture and change — Business partnering and technology — Finance and governance	 Protect and empower consumers	We understand the needs and capabilities of consumers and provide tailored assistance and guidance We help lawyers understand consumer needs and provide guidance to improve their services We identify risky behaviours and practices by lawyers and take action to protect consumers	Consumers understand their rights when engaging a lawyer Lawyers provide legal services that meet consumer needs Consumer harm is identified and acted upon
	 Maintain and enhance legal practice and ethics	We understand the needs and experiences of lawyers and provide tailored guidance and education We oversee the provision of competent, compliant and ethical legal services We assess our regulatory powers in the context of changes in the legal services market	Lawyers conduct themselves ethically and in compliance with the Uniform Law* The legal profession is connected and sustainable, and values wellbeing The regulatory framework for the legal profession is effective and improving *The Uniform Law is contained in Schedule 1 to the <i>Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2014</i> (Vic)
	 Improve access to justice	We target our funding and regulatory initiatives to increase availability and accessibility of legal services We invest responsibly, for impact We expand the body of research regarding access to justice	Our research, funding and grants activities have improved access to justice Our impact investment activities have improved access to justice



Protect and empower consumers

Our strategic pillar

A key objective of the Uniform Law is to provide for consumer protection by helping consumers make informed choices about the services they access and understand the costs involved.

Many consumers may not have the legal knowledge, skills and attributes required to decide whether and how to use the law and legal processes. They may also experience vulnerability.

Vulnerability may be linked to a consumer's specific circumstance, or the legal services being provided. It can be dynamic – and affect anybody.

In this context we protect consumers by managing complaints and monitoring, detecting and responding to harmful conduct by lawyers.

Our strategic priorities

We understand the needs and capabilities of consumers and provide tailored assistance and guidance

We help lawyers understand consumer needs and provide guidance to improve their services

We identify risky behaviours and practices by lawyers and take action to protect consumers

The outcomes we want to see

Consumers understand their rights when engaging a lawyer

Lawyers provide legal services that meet consumer needs

Consumer harm is identified and acted upon

How we will measure these outcomes

Legal capability of Victorians

Satisfaction of Victorians with legal services meeting their needs

Number of regulatory actions taken to avoid or respond to consumer harm

Consumer satisfaction with our decision on their complaint

How we will measure our performance

% of public enquiries finalised within agreed timeframes

Number and outcomes of finalised enquiries

Number, outcomes and timeframes of finalised complaints

Customer engagement with the VLSB+C website



Maintain and enhance legal practice and ethics

Our strategic pillar

An objective of the Uniform Law is to promote efficient, effective, targeted and proportionate regulation of lawyers and legal practice.

We do this by:

- identifying areas of risk to consumers, or to the reputation of the profession
- responding to information we receive through complaints
- monitoring trends and developments in professional standards and practice that may have a negative impact on service delivery.

We then:

- prioritise our regulatory responses accordingly
- provide lawyers with clear information and guidance
- educate them about ethics, wellbeing, and professional skills and standards
- take decisive regulatory action where necessary.

In doing so, we strike a balance between responding to immediate issues and identifying emerging areas of concern and encourage and support an ethical and thriving legal profession.

Our strategic priorities

We understand the needs and experiences of lawyers and provide tailored guidance and education

We oversee the provision of competent, compliant and ethical legal services

We assess our regulatory powers in the context of changes in the legal services market

The outcomes we want to see

Lawyers conduct themselves ethically and in compliance with the Uniform Law

The legal profession is connected and sustainable, and values wellbeing

The regulatory framework for the legal profession is effective and improving

How we will measure these outcomes

Compliance rating for the profession

Public trust and confidence in the legal profession

Lawyer wellbeing index

% of lawyers intending to stay in the profession

Annual review of whether the regulatory framework enables us to achieve our purpose

How we will measure our performance

% of lawyer enquiries finalised within agreed timeframes

Number and outcomes of compliance audits and trust account investigations

Lawyer engagement with VLSB+C website



Improve access to justice

Our strategic pillar

The Uniform Law sets out our role in ensuring the justice system in Victoria is accessible and equitable. This role is unique to Victoria and arises through our statutory responsibilities as independent regulator, funder and investor.

As a regulator, we ensure confidence and trust in lawyers and the legal services consumers receive.

As a funder and investor, we are the trustee of the Public Purpose Fund (PPF) and manage its investments. The PPF is primarily comprised of the interest on, and investment returns from, lawyers' trust accounts.

We are a significant funder of access to justice activities in Victoria. We run an annual grants program and provide important funding to legal organisations, such as Victoria Legal Aid. These organisations assist to reduce unmet legal need and deliver legal services to people who experience vulnerable circumstances.

We are committed to responsible and impact investment principles, which align social impact and financial returns.

Our strategic priorities

We target our funding and regulatory initiatives to increase availability and accessibility of legal services

We invest responsibly, for impact

We expand the body of research regarding access to justice

The outcomes we want to see

Our research, funding and grants activities have improved access to justice

Our impact investment activities have improved access to justice

How we will measure these outcomes

Annual value of funding provided for access to justice

% of our funding, granting and sponsorship activities that meet agreed access to justice outcomes

Annual value of impact investment deployed

Demonstrated examples of increased access to justice from impact investments

How we will measure our performance

Number and outcomes of practising certificate applications

Customer trust in the VLSB+C

Our enablers

Our enabling functions are fundamental to achieving and delivering on our Strategic Plan and work across the organisation.

They include:

- **People, culture and change**
- **Business partnering and technology**
- **Finance and governance.**

Over the past 3 years the VLSB+C has invested significantly in its enabling functions. In the next 4 years, we will embrace the momentum this has created, and the enhancements in our technology to deliver this Strategic Plan.

We will also work collaboratively with our external partners and stakeholders, and enhance our relationships with them.

Our enablers overview

ENABLERS	STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	OUTCOMES
People, culture and change 	We understand, value and recognise First Nations cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation We maintain and enhance our culture of wellbeing, inclusion and diversity We maintain and enhance a service-orientated workforce with a continuous improvement mindset We recognise and celebrate our people's achievements	We are accessible, inclusive and culturally safe Our people are engaged, satisfied and embrace change We are recognised as an employer of choice
Business partnering and technology 	We continue to invest in and improve our digital and process transformation We promote a strong data and evaluation culture across the organisation We engage effectively with our stakeholders to be a trusted regulator	Our systems and technology are fit-for-purpose and meet the needs of lawyers, consumers and our people Our organisation uses evidence to continuously improve and make more informed decisions
Finance and governance 	We manage our long-term financial sustainability We maintain and continuously improve our governance	Our governance is compliant and best practice We are financially sustainable, and our investments create positive social impact
HOW WE WILL MEASURE OUR PERFORMANCE		
Consumer satisfaction with VLSB+C processes Lawyer satisfaction with VLSB+C processes % variance from agreed annual budget % of internal reviews where we overturned the original decision		

To find out more visit:

lsbc.vic.gov.au

or follow us on LinkedIn:

[linkedin.com/company/victorian-legal-services-commissioner](https://www.linkedin.com/company/victorian-legal-services-commissioner)

Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner

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