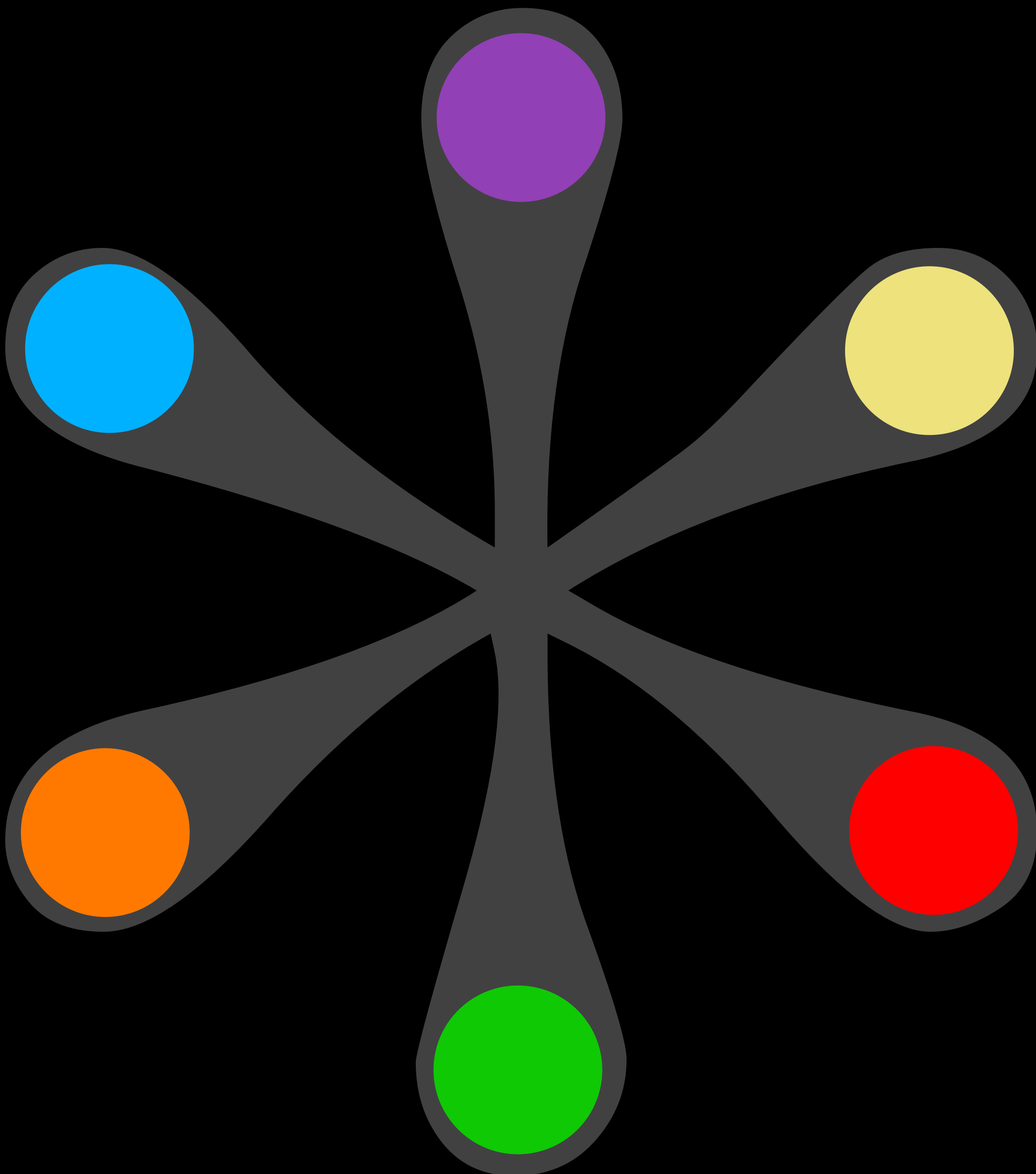
Annual Report 2024/2025

Inclusive
Independent
Innovative

VICTORIAN
LAW
REFORM
COMMISSION



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We Hear You.

Contents

Cover Design
The cover design communicates the diversity of consultation the VLRC undertakes in seeking input as a central part of law reform.

It has been a privilege to serve as Acting Chair during a busy period of research and community consultation for three law reform projects.

From the outset, the Commission has been guided by a commitment to inclusive law reform. Listening is central to how we work. Our inquiries are, by nature, a learning process—one that is rigorous, consultative and responsive. Our approach to consultations and broad community engagement is key to informing, strengthening and lending credibility to our reports and recommendations.

The Hon. Jennifer Coate AO

Acting Chair,
Victorian Law Reform Commission
(January 2024 to March 2025)

Having spent much of my career on the bench, it has been of particular interest to chair an inquiry that will guide the use of Artificial Intelligence in Victoria's Courts and Tribunals.

Rapidly evolving AI technology presents opportunities for efficiencies and innovation in our courts but also poses risks and challenges in preserving the integrity and public trust in the court system.

Following the release of our AI consultation paper in October, we sought input from a broad range of people and organisations working within and alongside the court system, as well as human rights and technology-focused organisations. We held 49 consultations and workshops and engaged the Australian Research Council (ARC) Centre of Excellence for Automated Decision-Making and Society (ADM+S) to form an expert panel to provide technical advice to the Commission.

In keeping with the Commission's practice that the Chair participates actively in consultations, I took part in over 100 hours of in-person consultations with stakeholders from across the courts, legal system and community during the course of the inquiry.

The AI inquiry has generated great interest and invitations to speak at various forums during the year. In November 2024, we co-hosted a seminar at Melbourne University with ADM+S, Melbourne Law School and the Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Digital Ethics (CAIDE). I presented at the Coalition of Australian Tribunals in June 2025, chairing a panel discussion on AI titled *Smart Justice*.

Our report, which will be delivered to the Attorney-General in October 2025, will have relevance beyond the scope of our inquiry as it considers principles common to the use of AI more broadly.

In September, we initiated a new community law reform project, *Examining Aspects of Family Violence Intervention Orders for Children and Young Adults*.

The project was divided into two parts to enable us to deliver recommendations on one key aspect ahead of legislative changes expected in late 2025, as part of broader reform of family violence laws. The Commission works independently but we also acknowledge the need to be responsive and timely to effectively influence law reform.

In March, we published an Issues Paper for *Stage 1–Protection for children who turn 18 while on a Family Violence Intervention Order (FVIO)*. The project considers inconsistent legal responses to the continuation of the protection of an FVIO once a child turns 18 and its impact on young people.

Along with community legal centres, advocacy organisations, the police and the courts and other agencies involved in the FVIO system, we held sensitive consultations with people with lived experience of family violence and FVIOs. The report for this stage of the project will be delivered in August 2025.

A highlight of the year was the publication in February 2025 of our first Spotlight paper, which looked at guardianship and administration confidentiality law, sometimes described as a 'gag law'. Those with lived experience and disability advocates were concerned that the law stops people from talking publicly about their experience of being on a VCAT guardianship or administration order.

Consultations for this Spotlight included a roundtable with key disability advocacy organisations, chaired by disability advocate Uli Cartright, whose lived experience prompted the project.

Spotlight research papers make no recommendations but are intended to encourage community discussion about important issues for reform. We were pleased that key advocacy agencies told us it would be a useful tool for supporting people with lived experience who are impacted by the restrictions.

We are grateful to the many organisations that work in partnership with us across our inquiries. We thank everyone who generously gave their time to attend consultations and make submissions.

It has been a pleasure to work with the Commission's exceptional and dedicated team, and I thank them for the support and guidance they provided during my time as Acting Chair.

I also wish to acknowledge the integral contribution and support of my fellow Commissioners and CEO Merrin Mason, and thank our Chair, the Hon. Tony North KC, for leading such a collegiate and dynamic organisation.

In early 2024, I was asked to become a Commissioner of the Yoorrook Justice Commission for the final year of its inquiry. The establishment of Yoorrook was a bold action by the Victorian Government. As the first truth telling body, it was an historic moment for Victoria and Australia. I was very keen to be involved but most concerned about continuity in the leadership of the Victorian Law Reform Commission (VLRC) in my absence.

The Hon. Anthony North KC

Chair,
Victorian Law Reform Commission

The Hon. Jennifer Coate AO, a VLRC Commissioner since 2020, had experienced five gruelling years as a Commissioner on the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, and then a year presiding over Victoria's COVID-19 Hotel Quarantine Inquiry. She deserved a rest and was enjoying a much quieter life. I thought she would be ideal to lead the VLRC if I went to Yoorrook. She was committed to see the success of Yoorrook and believed that I would make a positive contribution to its work. Her agreement to act as Chair was a most unselfish act and a great personal favour for me. I am grateful to her for the wonderful way she led the Commission while I was away.

Shortly after my return to the Commission, I attended the biennial conference of the Commonwealth Association of Law Reform Agencies (CALRAs) in Malta, which was followed by the Commonwealth Lawyers Association conference. It was very heartening to hear from colleagues at the conferences of the high esteem in which the VLRC is held. Artificial Intelligence (AI) was the subject of many of the conference presentations, and I was very proud to represent the VLRC as the only law reform agency in common law jurisdictions, apart from the Law Commission of Ontario, that was currently conducting an inquiry into AI.

At the end of the CALRAs conference, I was elected as its president and look forward to the international collaboration with other law reform agencies, which is the function of CALRAs.

Shortly before my return to the Commission, the Hon. Sonya Kilkenny MP was appointed Attorney-General. In May 2025, the CEO and I had our first meeting with her. We outlined the two urgent needs of the Commission. First, the need for two references to be underway when the AI reference is completed in October 2025 to avoid a gap in the Commission's work. The second need was to appoint new Commissioners to replace several recent retirements, but also to position the Commission for a smooth transition to an almost entirely new cohort of commissioners, considering further retirements due soon.

Since our meeting with the Attorney-General, the Commissioners have given careful thought to identifying potential appointees, with a focus on strengthening the diversity of the Commission. We have sent the Attorney-General a list of suggested appointees reflecting diversity across gender, cultural background, professional expertise and faith.

The Commissioner structure of the VLRC is unusual among law reform agencies, and it is one of its greatest strengths. It has proved to be a highly effective body because it has operated in a collegiate way focused on robust debate about difficult issues. It is exciting to envision the next group of people with broad perspectives and lived experience continuing that tradition.

Gemma Varley retired as a Commissioner in August 2024, having served since 2016. She came from a background in statutory drafting where she became the Chief Parliamentary Counsel. Her knowledge of government, of legal concepts and the way to translate them into clearly expressed legislation has been invaluable. Her gentle and respectful personality served the Commissioner group perfectly.

In March 2025, Commissioner Liana Buchanan resigned following her appointment as a Deputy Commissioner of the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission. She had been a VLRC Commissioner since February 2015. She brought a particular skill to the group which I often described as a helicopter view. Despite leading an often-frantic pace of life as the Commissioner for Children and Young People, she was able to visualise the flow of a report in a way that revealed any flaws in logic. Her knowledge and experience of the way government works was often highly influential in the way we crafted recommendations. She contributed to debate with great respect to the views of others.

A big thank you is due to both Gemma and Liana.

Nick Gadd, our Communications Manager, left the Commission in December 2024 after 12 years. Nick was truly woven into the fabric of the place. He brought his extensive interests, from typesetting to historic signs, into his work. He taught verbose lawyers about plain English, explained our work to schoolchildren and their teachers, and transformed reports into readable works. He oversaw the change to imaginative graphics which sharpens the presentation of our reports. Nick has left an indelible mark—thank you.

It was such a joy to return to the Commission after my stint at Yoorrook. I saw so clearly the quality of our research teams and their commitment, their skill, and the warmth and humanity they bring to every aspect of their work. Thank you to team leaders Emma Cashen and Kathryn Terry for their stewardship of our current inquiries.

Next year, the Commission turns 25. This year, our CEO Merrin Mason PSM completes 15 of those years. She is the glue which binds the place together. It is impossible in a short space to list her qualities that help make this workplace tick, but in recent years, foremost is her patience and clarity of vision in navigating the difficulty of securing timely references to provide the Commission with an efficient stream of work.

The smooth operation of the Commission is supported by the administrative team, led by Finance and Office Manager, Emma Zanaty, with Executive and HR assistant Monika George and Administrative and Research assistant Srichi Sundram. In her role as my EA, Monika's calm efficiency and welcoming smile are always a positive way to start the working day.

We look forward to celebrating our milestone in 2026 and the next exciting chapter for the Commission.

The Victorian Law Reform Commission is the central agency for law reform in Victoria. It is a statutory authority, established under the *Victorian Law Reform Commission Act 2000*.

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The Commission makes a significant contribution to maintaining and further developing a just, inclusive and accessible legal system for all Victorians.

The Commission is funded by the Victorian Government and the Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner. The Commission's work is independent of the political process.

The Commission is committed to inclusive law reform. It consults with the community and advises the Attorney-General on how to reform Victorian laws.

When the Commission carries out a law reform inquiry, it consults with people who are affected, and especially targets:

> people in regional and remote communities

> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

> people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

> people with disabilities.

The Commission reports to the Attorney-General on completion of an inquiry, making practical, innovative recommendations that aim to make the law fairer, more up-to-date and more accessible to everyone.

The functions of the Commission

Under section 5(1) of the *Victorian Law Reform Commission Act 2000* (Vic), the functions of the Commission are:

(a) to examine, report and make recommendations to the Attorney-General on any proposal or matter relating to law reform in Victoria that is referred to the Commission by the Attorney-General;

(b) to examine, report and make recommendations to the Attorney-General on any matter that the Commission considers raises relatively minor legal issues that are of general community concern if the Commission is satisfied that the examination of that matter will not require a significant deployment of the resources available to the Commission;

(c) to suggest to the Attorney-General that a proposal or matter relating to law reform in Victoria be referred to the Commission by the Attorney-General;

(d) to monitor and coordinate law reform activity in Victoria;

(e) to undertake educational programs on any area of the law relevant to a reference, whether past or current.

PURPOSE

TO MAKE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO A JUST, INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE LEGAL SYSTEM FOR ALL VICTORIANS

PRINCIPLES

- INCLUSIVE
- INDEPENDENT
- INNOVATIVE

VALUES

- INTELLECTUAL RIGOUR
- BALANCED DECISION MAKING
- RECOGNITION OF DIVERSITY
- EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION
- ETHICAL EMPLOYER

OBJECTIVES

QUALITY LAW REFORM REPORTS

Production of high quality, authoritative, and timely law reform reports

PUBLIC AND PROFESSIONAL REPUTATION

An excellent reputation for rigorous and comprehensive research, extensive community and stakeholder consultation, and for providing robust, impartial and independent advice

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND EDUCATION

Enhancing the public's understanding of law reform, educating students, identifying areas for law reform and increasing contributions to the law reform process

ACCESS FOR PEOPLE FROM DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS

Encourage and support people from diverse and/or disadvantaged communities to participate in law reform projects

SHARING LAW REFORM INFORMATION

Maintain relationships with other bodies involved in law reform in Victoria, monitoring and reporting on law reform activities

ETHICAL EMPLOYER

A safe and productive workplace and a fair, respectful, and satisfying work environment

Commissioners

Chair

The Hon. Anthony North KC

With a distinguished career spanning 45 years, the Hon. Anthony North KC is a former judge of the Federal Court and the Supreme Court of the Australian Capital Territory. Admitted to the Victorian Bar in 1976, he was appointed Queen's Counsel in 1989. In 1995, Mr North was made judge of the Federal Court of Australia, where he served until his retirement in 2018. He also served from 2004 as additional judge of the Supreme Court of the ACT. As both a barrister and a Federal Court judge, Mr North has been involved in some of the largest cases in Australian history, including the pilots' strike in the late 1980s, the Australian waterfront dispute, the Tampa Affair and multiple native title cases.

He holds a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Laws with Honours from the University of Melbourne and a Master of Laws from the University of London. He was appointed Chair of the Victorian Law Reform Commission in August 2019. In January 2024 he was appointed a Commissioner of the Yoorrook Justice Commission and took leave from the VLRC to fulfil that role until March 2025. In April 2025 he was elected president of the Commonwealth Association of Law Reform Agencies (CALRAs).

Acting Chair

The Hon. Jennifer Coate AO

The Hon. Jennifer Coate AO has held several judicial appointments including Magistrate, Deputy Chief Magistrate, the inaugural President of the Children's Court of Victoria, Judge of the County Court of Victoria, the first female State Coroner of Victoria, and Judge of the Family Court of Australia. She served for five years on the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, and in 2020 conducted an Inquiry into Hotel Quarantine in Victoria. In January 2019, she was made an Officer of the Order of Australia. She was admitted as a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Law in May 2022, and was awarded Doctor of Laws (honoris causa) by Monash University in September 2023. Ms Coate is the Chair of the Victorian Victims of Crime Consultative Committee. She was appointed to the Victorian Law Reform Commission in June 2020 and reappointed for four years in July 2022. She served as Acting Chair of the Commission from January 2024 to March 2025.

The Commissioners

Liana Buchanan was Victoria's Principal Commissioner for Children and Young People from 2016 to March 2025. She was formerly the Executive Officer of the Federation of Community Legal Centres and was also responsible for monitoring and review of the Victorian corrections system as Director, Office of Correctional Services Review from 2009 to 2013. Ms Buchanan has worked as a community lawyer and in a range of law reform and legal policy roles, including at the Women's Legal Service (SA), the Equal Opportunity Commission, the Victorian Law Reform Commission, and as senior adviser to the Secretary, Department of Justice. She was appointed to the Victorian Law Reform Commission in February 2015 and reappointed in 2019 and 2023. She resigned on March 2025 following her appointment as a Deputy Commissioner of the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC).

Kathleen Foley SC is a barrister with a broad practice spanning public law, commercial law and common law. She also has a significant public interest litigation practice, representing clients in environmental, police tort and human rights cases. In addition to her work as a barrister, Kathleen is a writer and gender equality advocate. Prior to commencing at the Victorian Bar, Kathleen worked as an attorney in New York and as a solicitor in the government sector in Western Australia. She was appointed to the Victorian Law Reform Commission in November 2020. She was reappointed in February 2025 for a one-year term.

Emeritus Professor Bernadette McSherry holds an honorary position in the Melbourne Law School, having served as the Foundation Director of the Melbourne Social Equity Institute at the University of Melbourne from 2013 to mid-2021. She is an internationally recognised legal academic in the fields of criminal law and mental health law and is a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia, as well as a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Law. Professor McSherry served as a Legal Member of the Victorian Mental Health Tribunal for 18 years until mid-2018, and a Commissioner on the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System. She was appointed to the Victorian Law Reform Commission in June 2018 and reappointed in July 2022.

Dan Nicholson is the Deputy Victorian Ombudsman. He was previously Executive Director, Criminal Law at Victoria Legal Aid, responsible for the delivery of legally aided criminal law services across the state. Mr Nicholson worked with VLA from 2012 in a range of roles including as Executive Director, Civil Justice, Access and Equity. Before that he managed the Human Rights Unit at the Victorian Department of Justice, was Associate to Justice Maxwell, President of the Court of Appeal and worked at Fitzroy Legal Service. He has worked on a range of human rights issues and lived in Cambodia and Timor-Leste. He was a Director of the Sentencing Advisory Council from 2021 until 2024. Mr Nicholson was appointed to the Victorian Law Reform Commission in September 2018 and reappointed in September 2022.

Gemma Varley PSM was Chief Parliamentary Counsel for Victoria from 2008 until 2016. She was Second Deputy Chief Parliamentary Counsel from 2004 until 2008 and has more than 37 years' experience as a legislative drafter in the Office of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel. She is in private practice as a consulting legislative drafter. In 2017 she was awarded a Public Service Medal for outstanding public service through the drafting of legislation in Victoria. Mrs Varley was appointed to the Victorian Law Reform Commission in August 2016 and reappointed in 2020. Her second term expired in August 2024.

Dr Vivian Waller is the Director and Managing Partner of law firm Waller Legal. She has more than 28 years' experience representing survivors of institutional child sexual abuse, including litigation in the Supreme Court of Victoria and the High Court of Australia. She has assisted thousands of sexual abuse survivors obtain compensation in claims against religious institutions, public and private schools, orphanages and children's homes. Dr Waller was instrumental in the Royal Commission into the Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse where she represented 20 survivor witnesses in case studies inquiring into the Archdiocese of Melbourne, Victorian State Wards, Yeshiva Bondi and Melbourne, Catholic Church Authorities in Ballarat and the Criminal Justice System. She has written submissions for the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and appeared before the Senate Committee in relation to the establishment of the National Redress Scheme. Dr Waller represented, on a pro bono basis, the complainant 'Witness J' in the criminal prosecution and appeals process in relation to allegations against Cardinal George Pell. Dr Waller was appointed to the Victorian Law Reform Commission in November 2020 and reappointed in 2021.

Details are correct as at 30 June 2025.

Objectives	Results
Produce high-quality, authoritative and timely law reform reports with recommendations that are practical and implementation-focused, and embrace innovative solutions to complex legal and policy issues	With our two current projects still in progress, there were no final reports published during 2024–25. The Commission published its first Spotlight research paper, *'I Want to Tell my Story': The Guardianship and Administration Confidentiality Law*, in February 2025.
Maintain a reputation for rigorous legal research, extensive community and stakeholder consultation, and robust, impartial and independent advice to the government	The Commission undertook extensive research and community consultations for three projects in 2024–25: > 49 consultations for the *Artificial Intelligence in Victoria's Courts and Tribunals* reference > 20 consultations for *Examining Aspects of Family Violence Intervention Orders for Children and Young Adults: Stage 1 Protection for Children Who Turn 18 While on a FVIO* > 13 consultations for the Spotlight on *Guardianship and Administration Confidentiality Law*.
Enhance public understanding of law reform, encouraging informed community debate on key issues, identifying areas of general community concern and increasing contributions to the law reform process	The Commission's work was reported in the media, including radio, print and online. The Commission received 28 community law reform suggestions. We delivered 22 in-person and online presentations to schools, university careers events and conferences to inform the community about law reform. This included 17 presentations to VCE students during the year. Our online resources for students were downloaded 4,266 times.
Encourage and support people from diverse and/or disadvantaged communities to participate in law reform	The Commission consults with people from disadvantaged communities, including regional Victorians, for all projects. The Commission publishes current and recent reports in accessible html format, and as PDF and Word documents. The website provides audio options for people who are blind or have low vision and transcripts for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. We also produced an easy read version of our Spotlight paper.
Maintain relationships with other bodies involved in law reform in Victoria, monitoring and reporting on law reform activities	We regularly work with organisations involved in law reform through our inquiries and our education program. The Commission's website reports on the activities of other law reform agencies and relevant law reform activities within Victoria and interstate.

Current Financial Year in Review

- The Commission's income increased in 2024–25 to $3,699,410 (2023–24: $3,069,434). This movement mainly relates to a substantially increased grant from the Victorian Legal Services Board and an increase in funding from the Department of Justice and Community Safety.
- The Commission's expenditure significantly increased in 2024–25 to $2,868,209 (2023–24: $2,376,941) mainly as a result of increased employee expenses and a slight increase in other operating expenses.
- The overall net result was a gain of $829,245. This has resulted in an increased trust fund balance of $2,316,967 (2023–24: $1,439,957)
- The Commission's Trust Fund and the State Administered Unit (SAU) receivable account balance increased overall from $1,961,942 to $2,843,316 at 30 June 2025.

Performance against output performance measures

The following table shows the performance results against targets by output for the Commission over the full year ending 30 June 2025

Performance measures	Unit of Measure	2024–25 Actual	2024–25 Target	Performance Variation (%)	Result (a)
Quantity					
Consultation sessions conducted by Victorian Law Reform Commission	number	86	60	43%	√
Written submissions made to the VLRC including online surveys	number	42	100	-58%	■
Law reform publications completed by VLRC	number	3	3	0	√
Community education sessions (in person or online) conducted by VLRC	number	17	25	-32%	■
Views of school curriculum related material on VLRC website	number	4266	5000	-14.7%	■
Quality					
Teachers and students who are satisfied with education programs delivered by VLRC and the school curriculum related material provided on the VLRC website	per cent	100	85	17%	√
Timeliness					
NA					
Cost	$				
Total output cost	2,868,209				

Note:

(a) √ Performance target achieved or exceeded

■ Performance target not achieved – exceeds 5 per cent or $50 million (cost measures only) variance.

● Performance target not achieved – within 5 per cent or $50 million (cost measures only) variance.

Performance against output performance measures

Outputs relating to the Commission are included in Budget Paper No. 3 (BP3) under the heading of the Department of Justice and Community Safety's *Justice Policy, Services and Law Reform*. The Commission's outputs contribute to this consolidated total output cost of $2,868,209.

Performance targets for the Commission can be found in the Department Performance Statement. The figures show three performance targets as not met in the reporting year. The Commission's ability to accurately predict targets is significantly constrained by its lack of control over workflow. Our main source of work is references from the Attorney-General. When targets are being set, the number and type of references that will be received during the reporting year are not known. In general, targets are based on an expectation that the Commission will be undertaking two Attorney-General references and one community law project concurrently.

The law reform topic is also relevant to the number of consultations and submissions, with issues which have a wide community interest generating greater engagement.

For the reporting year, the Commission had only one Attorney-General reference. The total number of submissions received was lower than the target but was consistent with expectations for one reference project and the subject matter.

The total number of consultations exceeded the target, largely due to the Commission facilitating a request from DJCS to deliver part of the community law reform FVIO project earlier than planned. As a result, the project was split into two stages with consultations for Stage 1 undertaken earlier than expected, in this financial year rather than the next.

Community education sessions are primarily school presentations for VCE Legal Studies students. Requests for in-person presentations have not returned to pre-COVID levels, as noted in adjusted targets in the previous reporting period. Online resources continue to be used widely, with an increase in overall views of reports and related website content increased.

The views of school curriculum-related material on the website were slightly lower than the target. This is due to overestimating the continued increase in use of online educational material, which had increased significantly the previous two years post-COVID. In this financial year, views have stabilised. Increased promotion is planned to raise awareness of the Commission's education program.

The total output cost for the Commission is an amount derived from the *Appropriation (2024-25) Act 2024*, less required savings and other movements, plus the amount received from the Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner, as directed by the Attorney-General.

Budget portfolio outcomes
A comparison of the budget portfolio outcome statements of the Commission and the actual results for the year can be found in Appendix 2.

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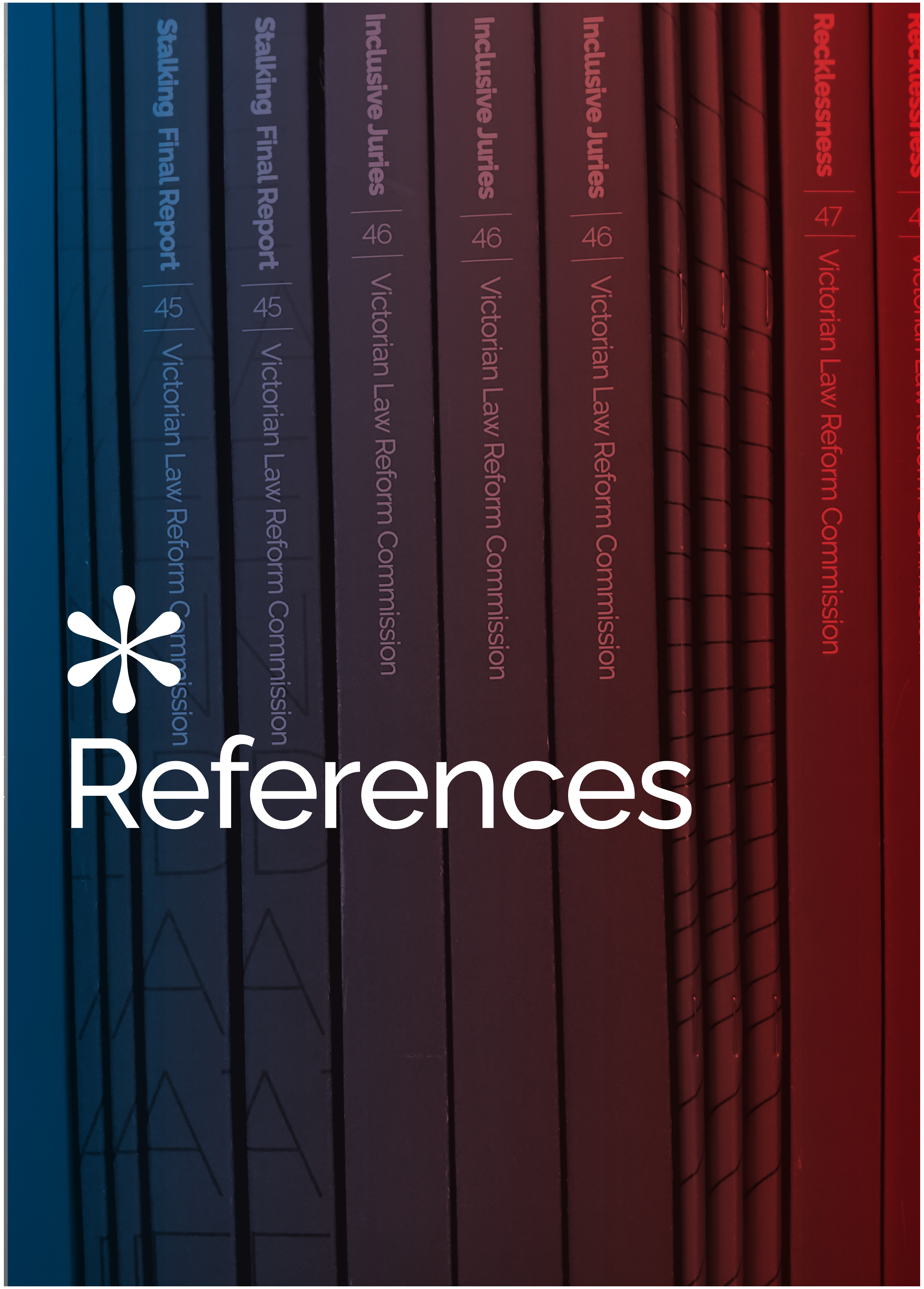


References

Artificial Intelligence in Victoria's Courts and Tribunals

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are rapidly evolving, with their application increasing across society. There is potential for AI to improve user experiences and generate efficiencies in Victoria's courts and tribunals but its use also carries risk.

The Victorian Law Reform Commission was asked to make recommendations on legislative reform opportunities and principles to guide the safe use of AI in Victoria's courts and tribunals. This includes guidelines that can be used in the future to assess the suitability of new AI applications in courts and tribunals.

The inquiry is focusing on opportunities and risks of using AI, in particular the impact on fairness, accountability, transparency, privacy, accessibility and data security. The Commission has been asked to consider the need to maintain public trust in courts and tribunals. Implications of the rapid development of AI technologies will also be considered in developing recommendations.

Referred
8 May 2024

Due Date
31 October 2025

Commissioners and staff
The Acting Chair, the Hon. Jennifer Coate AO formed a Division to work on this reference, which she chaired until March 2025, when the Hon. Anthony North KC returned as Chair. All Commissioners are members of the Division: Liana Buchanan (until March 2025), Jennifer Coate, Kathleen Foley SC, Professor Bernadette McSherry, Dan Nicholson and Dr Vivian Waller.

The reference team comprised team leader Kathryn Terry, senior research and policy officers Emily Clark, Dr Jen Tsen Kwok and Florence Seow.

We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of our Reference Group members from the ARC Centre of Excellence for Automated Decision-Making and Society (ADM+S): Professor Julian Thomas, Professor Christine Parker, Dr Jake Goldenfein, Professor Kimberlee Weatherall, Dr Aaron Snoswell and Will Cesta. We also acknowledge the advice provided by Professor Tania Sourdin and Professor Jeannie Paterson.

Progress of the reference
We released a consultation paper on 17 October 2024 to guide community discussion about potential legislative reform opportunities and principles for the safe use of AI in Victoria's courts and tribunals. We received 29 submissions and held 49 consultations. Extensive consultation was undertaken with the courts, community and key stakeholders. At the close of the reporting period, the Commission was in the final phases of drafting its report and recommendations for delivery to the Attorney-General by 31 October 2025.

The *Victorian Law Reform Commission Act 2000* section 5(1)(b) states that one of the Commission's functions is to make recommendations to the Attorney-General on legal issues of general community concern.

The community law reform program seeks to improve accessibility for people and communities who are not usually involved in law reform but who have ideas about how the law could be improved. Asking community members to identify problems with the law and suggest changes gives the Commission access to the valuable insights of those with first-hand experience of the law's operation.

Community law reform work is also undertaken through education and community engagement activities.

The community law reform team consists of a team leader and two senior research and policy officers. The Commission thanks the Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner (VLSB+C) for their continuing support of our community law reform program, which aligns closely with their access to justice objective. An increase in funding from the VLSB+C in 2024–25 enabled an additional member to join the community law reform team.

Criteria for community law reform suggestions
Law reform suggestions can come from individuals or community groups and can be in relation to any area of Victorian law. Suggestions are assessed against the criteria for community law reform projects. They must relate to a contained problem that, if resolved, could deliver clear community benefits.

Suggestions that fulfil the criteria are researched by the community law reform team and may be developed into a proposal for the approval of the Commission. If a proposal is accepted as a community law reform project, the Commission undertakes a comprehensive process of research and consultation and delivers a report and recommendations to the Attorney-General. This process closely mirrors the process undertaken for references from the Attorney-General.

The Commission generally works on one community law reform project at a time but always welcomes suggestions from the community.

Community law reform suggestions

The Commission received 28 suggestions for law reform from the community during 2024–2025.

They related to a range of legal areas, including:

> laws to make it possible for someone to self-exclude from buying lottery tickets in person

> amendments to family violence laws to create more non-judicial/police responses to family violence, for example men's behaviour change programs and counselling options for victim-survivors without the involvement of police and the courts

> amendments to the *Mental Health and Wellbeing Act 2022* (Vic) to better address situations where a person with a serious, acute presentation needs hospitalisation for their own safety or that of others

> tougher laws to penalise the abuse of parking officers

> review of systemic problems in the handling of family violence cases by the police and/or courts

> review of laws relating to feasibility studies for wind turbine farms and their lack of inclusion of neurodiverse people

> review of discrimination protections for volunteer workers

> review of rules for converting strata to stratum title

> review of bail laws

> review of insolvency laws so that clients can sue negligent lawyers for their conduct of cases in both civil and criminal matters

> review of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic), including whether it should include the power to prosecute and fine agencies for privacy breaches

> amendment to the *Sale of Land Act 1962* (Vic) to require vendors to disclose applications for permits that would impact the property

> law reform to prohibit legal practitioners charging in six-minute increments

> review of laws relating to family law mediation and lawyers' fee caps

> review of laws relating to workplace occupation health and safety

> review of access to the victims of crime compensation scheme for victims of historical child sex abuse

> review of firearm imitation laws to legalise gel blasters

> review of how respondents are treated in personal safety intervention order proceedings

> amendment of laws to enable domestic partners to contest wills

> review of the complaint handling process in the Magistrates' Court

> amendments to the *Owners Corporation Act 2006* (Vic) relating to owners corporations and strata management

> review of control of weapons laws to permit security guards and private citizens to have stab-proof vests

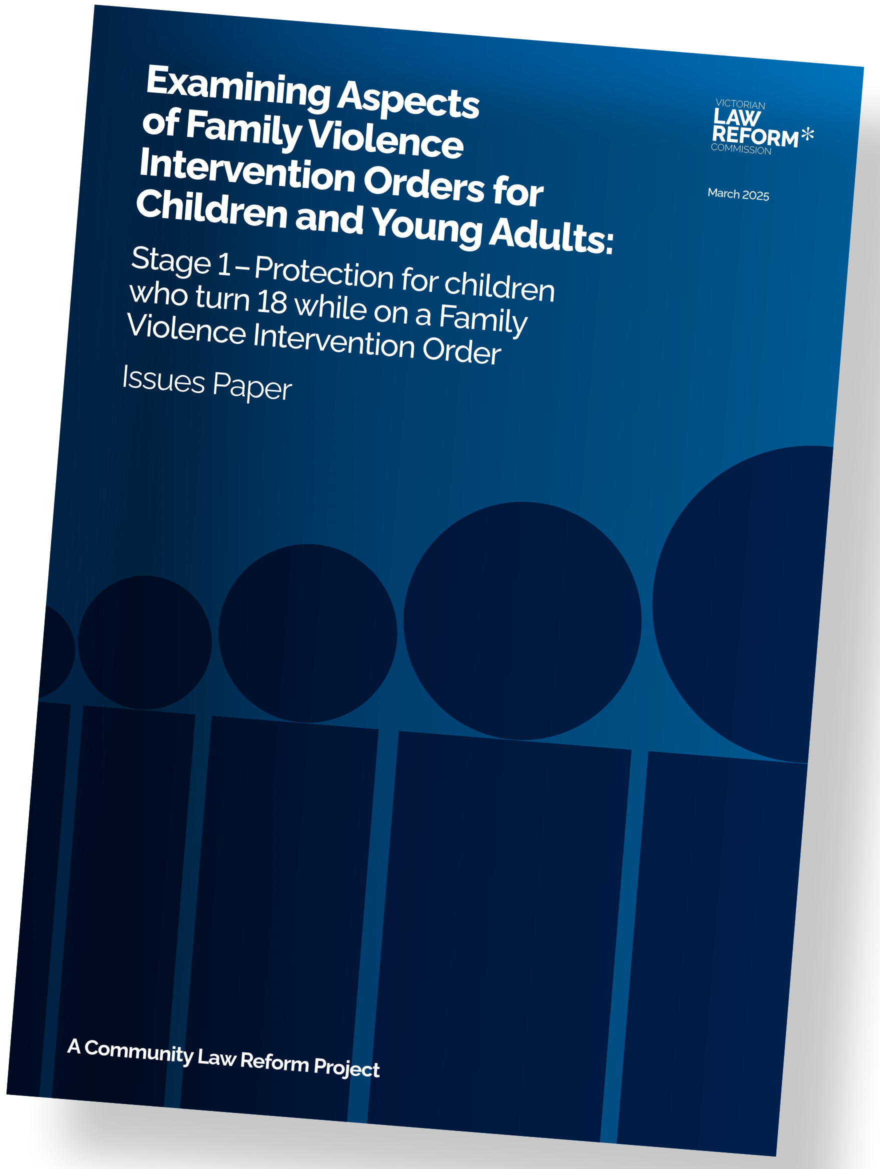
> review of section 68 of the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic) prohibiting the production of X18+ content (explicit adult material) in Victoria

> review of the Emergency Management Days provision in section 58E of the *Corrections Act 1986* (Vic), through which prisoners had time taken off their sentences because of COVID-19 lockdowns

> reform to prevent designers and other creative workers from being required to complete unpaid work tasks as part of employment recruitment processes.

Examining Aspects of Family Violence Intervention Orders for Children and Young Adults

In September 2024, the Commission initiated a community law reform project examining aspects of the law and practice relating to family violence intervention orders for children and young adults affected by family violence (other than as a respondent).



Commenced
September 2024

Due date
Stage 1 – to be delivered mid-2025

This project idea was raised by community members in discussions about family violence reform.

The project is being conducted in two parts, with Stage 1 to be delivered ahead of possible legislative reform in 2025.

Stage 1 focused on one issue raised in the terms of reference, the protection of children who turn 18 while on a Family Violence Protection Order (FVIO). The Commission examined whether family violence laws should be reformed to ensure a child can continue to have the protection of a family violence intervention order (FVIO) when they turn 18. This problem is sometimes referred to as 'ageing out' of an order.

Stage 2 will be a larger project examining the right of children to participate and have their voices heard in the family violence intervention order system, together with the remaining terms of reference.

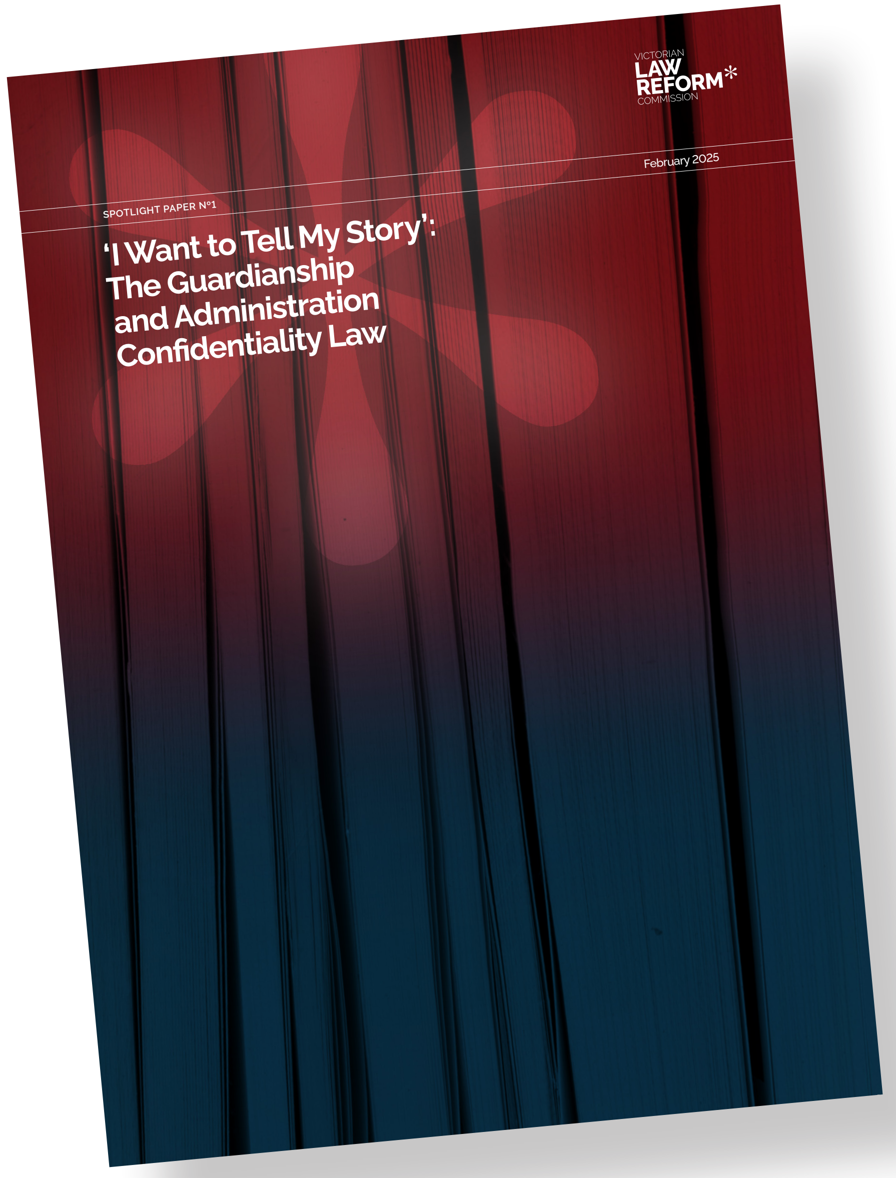
Commissioners and staff
Acting Chair, the Hon. Jennifer Coate AO formed a division to work on this reference, which she chaired until the Hon. Anthony North KC resumed his position as Chair. All Commissioners were part of the Division: Liana Buchanan (until March 2025), Jennifer Coate, Kathleen Foley SC, Professor Bernadette McSherry, Dan Nicholson and Dr Vivian Waller. Project staff comprised team leader Emma Cashen and senior research and policy officers Kate Robb and Hannah Withers.

Progress of the inquiry
We published an Issues Paper in March 2025 for Stage 1—Protection for children who turn 18 while on a Family Violence Protection Order. We received 14 submissions.

We conducted 20 consultations, which included key advocacy and justice organisations who work with victim-survivors of family violence and/or young people, and people with lived experience. The report was expected to be delivered to the Attorney-General in August 2025.

Spotlight

In February 2025, the Commission published its first Spotlight paper, *'I Want to Tell My story': The Guardianship and Administration Confidentiality Law.*



Spotlights are small research papers about issues drawn to our attention by members of the community. They aim to shed light on areas of potential law reform and encourage community debate and discussion. Unlike our other reports, they do not make recommendations.

The idea for our first research paper came from Uli Cartright, a person with disability and disability advocate, and Victorian disability advocacy organisations. They raised concerns about a confidentiality law that prevents people from talking publicly about their experiences of being on a guardianship or administration order.

The paper examined the impact of clause 37 of Schedule 1 of the VCAT Act, which prohibits anyone from publishing any report of a proceeding that identifies a party to a proceeding under the *Guardianship and Administration Act 2019* (Vic) without permission from VCAT.

We conducted 13 consultations for this Spotlight between July and October 2024.

The report was very well received. The disability advocate organisation Life Without Barriers wrote:

> 'the report makes for such compelling reading and … it will undoubtedly be an invaluable tool for us to continue to support … people with disability who are currently impacted by the restrictions. (We) think about Victoria as a starting place for advocacy before ensuring we do everything we can for progressive reform in other states also. This report offers a leading approach for how equitable commissions could consider analysis of this issue.'

We also published an accessible Easy Read summary of the paper.

Media highlights

The Commission's new inquiries attracted positive media coverage in 2024–25, while our law reform recommendations continue to be mentioned in various news reports.

Our inquiry into AI and Victoria's Courts and Tribunals was featured on Radio National's Law Report and ABC online news, while *The Guardian* reported on our inquiry into family violence intervention orders for children and young adults.

Media reports about the introduction of the *Justice Legislation Amendment (Committals) Act 2025*, noted that the reforms implemented recommendations from our Committals report. There was also media coverage relating to our reports on Stalking, Sexual Offences and Neighbourhood Tree Disputes, while Radio National's Law Report interviewed Acting Chair, the Hon. Jennifer Coate AO, about reform of sexual assault laws.

The Law Institute Journal also published articles on our new inquiries and the Spotlight paper.

Website
Website traffic during 2024–25 totalled 312,110 page views, representing a 3 per cent increase compared to 2023–24 (303,203 page views). The number of unique users reached 193,092, representing a 43.7 per cent increase compared to 2023–24 (134,337 users). These figures have been adjusted to exclude anomalous activity caused by automated spam attempts on the Commission's website in September 2024, which resulted in over 117,000 additional page views and approximately 72,500 artificial user sessions across 17 days. These were replaced with the website's average daily traffic to allow for fair year-on-year comparisons. The activity did not compromise any systems or data, and was successfully mitigated through enhanced security measures.

Website traffic is influenced by the number of inquiries conducted by the Commission and the level of public interest in them. The substantial growth in unique users demonstrates increased public engagement with the Commission's work, while the steady growth in page views indicates continued strong interest in our publications and resources.

During 2024-25, the Commission undertook a security upgrade and other website updates to strengthen protection against automated spam attempts and enhance overall website resilience.

Social media
The Commission continued to maintain an active social media presence on LinkedIn, with less emphasis on Facebook. We retired our Twitter account.

Podcasts
The Commission produced one episode of its 'Old Law, New Law' podcast, which focused on our inquiry into the use of AI in Victoria's courts and tribunals.

Education and community engagement

Acting Chair Jennifer Coate at a seminar on AI at Melbourne University; Communications Manager Victoria Kyriakopoulos at a Law Week event at Horsham Town Hall

One of the Commission's functions under section 5(1)(e) of the *Victorian Law Reform Commission Act* is to undertake educational programs on any area of the law relevant to a reference, past or current.

The Commission educates the community about law reform by making presentations at community organisations, universities and schools, both face-to-face and online. We delivered 22 presentations in 2024-25.

Our reports and publications are published on our website, easily accessible and searchable, and we also provide educational resources, including case studies.

We adopt plain language principles for our publications, produce educational videos and podcasts about law reform and we promote our work through the media.

School talks and resources for Legal Studies students
Law reform and the work of the Commission is an essential part of the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) Legal Studies curriculum, included in VCE Legal Studies textbooks.

We delivered 17 presentations to VCE students in schools across Melbourne during 2024–25. We also participated in the Victoria Law Foundation's regional Law Talks events in Horsham in May 2025.

We produce a range of educational resources for teachers and students, including case studies and our *Law Reform in Action* booklet. The booklet is available in hard copy and can be downloaded from our website. During 2024-25 we updated our law reform process poster, which is available in hard copy on request or via download. During the year, our online resources were accessed 4,266 times.

Community presentations
Our staff and Commissioners presented at six conferences and forums during the year. This included the Victorian Commercial Teachers Association annual Comview conference and the Victorian Government's AI Community of Practice.

We also co-hosted a seminar at Melbourne University with the ADM+S, Melbourne Law School and the Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Digital Ethics (CAIDE), chaired by the Hon. Jennifer Coate AO.

The Hon. Anthony North KC presented at the Commonwealth Association of Law Reform Agencies conference in Malta in April 2025.

Communications and information staff
The communications manager is Victoria Kyriakopoulos, and the communications and information officer is Natalie Young. Nick Gadd, the previous communications manager, left in December 2024 after 12 years at the Commission.

The Commission tracks the progress of new legislation and other reforms related to its work, where this information is publicly available. A record of implementation is published on our website at *lawreform.vic.gov.au/all-projects/implementation/*

During 2024-25, notable implementations of the Commission's recommendations included:

Committals
The *Justice Legislation Amendment (Committals) Act 2025*, which received Royal Assent on 25 Feb 2025, implements several key recommendations of our Committals report from 2020. It abolishes the test for committal, allowing magistrates to focus on other essential functions of the pre-trial proceeding and making the process shorter. It strengthens the rules around cross-examination at the committal stage for all witnesses and prohibits altogether cross-examination during committal hearings of victims and witnesses in matters involving sexual offences, family violence and stalking. This will reduce the amount of cross-examination that victims face in those traumatic cases.

Victims of Crime Assistance Act 1996 Review 2018
On 18 November 2024, the Victims of Crime Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS) replaced the courts-based Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal (VOCAT). The new scheme, which responds to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Family Violence and enacts recommendations in our 2018 Victims of Crime Assistance Act 1996 review, will be available online so that victims of crime can access financial assistance and recognition of their trauma without needing to attend court or face perpetrators. It will offer extended application timeframes, expanded eligibility criteria for 'family' to include Aboriginal kinship relations, LGBTQI+ relationships and others that an applicant considers to be close family, and a dedicated Marra Yattakunar Pathway to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims of violent crime. Victims will also be able to request a recognition statement from the State of Victoria, acknowledging the effects of the harm done to them to assist with their healing.

Audit committee membership and roles

The audit committee consists of the following members:

> Matthew Zappulla, Chairperson (Independent Member)
> Anthony Phillips (Independent Member)
> Bruce Gardner PSM (Independent Member)

The main responsibilities of the audit committee are to:

> review and report independently to the Commission on the annual report and all other financial information published by the Commission
> assist the Commission in reviewing the effectiveness of the Commission's internal control environment covering:
  – effectiveness and efficiency of operations
  – reliability of financial reporting
  – compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
> determine the scope of the internal audit function and ensure that its resources are adequate and used effectively, including coordination with the external auditors
> maintain effective communication with external auditors
> consider recommendations made by external auditors and review the implementation of actions to resolve issues raised
> oversee the appropriateness of the risk management framework.

Human resource management and occupational health and safety
The Commission's occupational health and safety (OH&S) strategy is to focus on risk control and maintaining a constant curiosity in relation to health and safety to prevent injury or unintended consequences. The Commission achieves this by ensuring OH&S is part of daily operations for staff working at home and in the office and encompasses not only physical environment but also considers psychosocial risk.

The Commission's focus is prevention and takes this into account when assessing OH&S risk. Office inspections are formally carried out annually however staff are briefed to alert management if any issues arise.

During the 2024–25 financial year, the Commission continued initiatives to improve the health and safety of staff by offering ergonomic assessments, screen-based eye testing and annual influenza vaccinations for those who requested these services.

As part of the strategy to maintain focus on risk control the OH&S Manager prepares a formal report bi-annually for the Audit and Risk Management Committee which is results based and includes initiatives brought about by review and consideration of improvements being made in the health and wellness space.

The Commission had no health and safety incidents during 2024–25.

Three staff continue as fire wardens and attend the appropriate training. Staff participated in the scheduled fire drill held by building management. An in-house fire safety and security training session is held annually.

Staff were encouraged and assisted to gain professional development through participation in relevant conferences and appropriate further study.

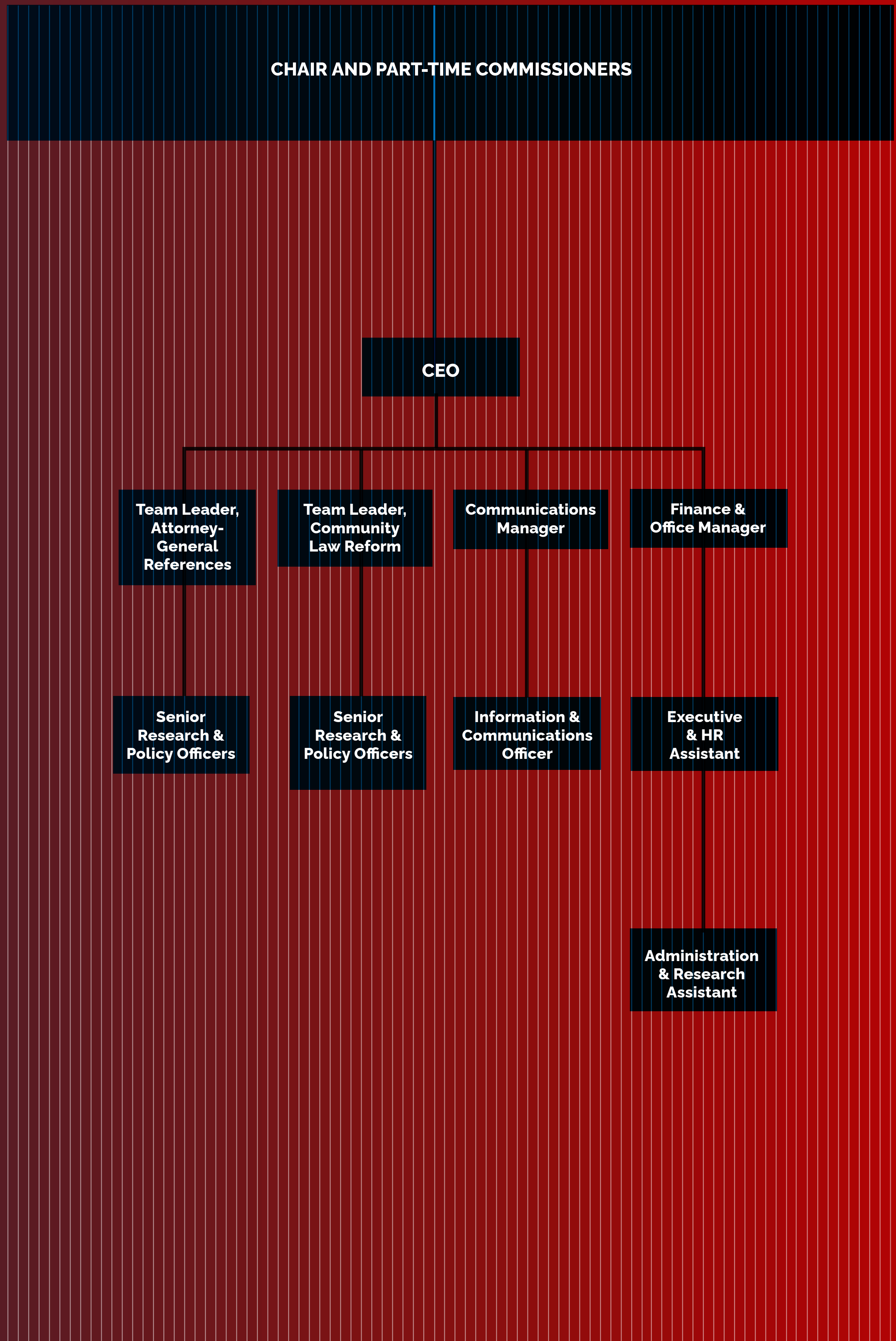
Counselling support is available to all staff through the Employee Assistance Program. Team debrief sessions are held at the conclusion of references to ensure staff wellbeing and to support process improvement.

Agile workforce
The Commission continues to embrace flexible work arrangements, including working from home. As part of our work model, a hybrid work model is available to staff where their work responsibilities allow this. In general, a full-time staff member will work at least three days in the office. Individual circumstances are considered. All staff work at the office on Wednesday to allow the full team to interact on at least one day per week. Most staff are also in the office on Tuesday and Thursday depending on their full-time or part-time status. The office is closed to the public on a Friday to support part-time arrangements and working from home. Staff discuss individual arrangements with their manager for the remaining days. This model continues to work well providing a balance between working at home and in the office.

Management remains committed to creating and encouraging a modern and agile workforce. This approach is endorsed by the Department of Justice and Community Safety.

Employment and conduct principles
The Commission is committed to applying merit and equity principles when appointing staff. The selection processes ensure that applicants are assessed and evaluated fairly and equitably based on the key selection criteria and other accountabilities without discrimination. Employees have been correctly classified in workforce data collections. The Commission is committed to providing a respectful and supportive workplace for every employee.

Organisational Structure 2024–2025



Workforce Data

Public sector values and employment principles

The *Public Administration Act 2004* established the Victorian Public Sector Commission (VPSC). The VPSC's role is to strengthen public sector efficiency, effectiveness and capability, and advocate for public sector professionalism and integrity.

Through a combination of the adoption of policies and practices of the Department of Justice and Community Safety and the development of Commission specific policies and practices where necessary, the Commission, has policies and practices in place that are consistent with the VPSC's employment standards and provide for fair treatment, career opportunities and the early resolution of workplace issues. The Commission advises its employees on how to avoid conflicts of interest, how to respond to offers of gifts and how it deals with misconduct.

Workforce inclusion policy

The Commission continues to support a working environment where equal opportunity and diversity, including non-binary gender identities, are valued. The Commission acknowledges that due to historic and current barriers to disclosure of non-binary gender identities, staff may not disclose this information.

Executive officer data

An Executive Officer (EO) is defined as an executive under Part 3 of the *Public Administration Act 2004* or a person to whom the Victorian Government's Policy on Executive Remuneration in Public entities applies. All figures reflect employment levels at the last full pay period in June of the current and corresponding previous reporting year.

The definition of an EO does not include a statutory office holder or an accountable officer.

Note 8.3 in the financial statements states the remuneration range for the EO over the course of the reporting period.

The Commission employs one full-time SES-1 female executive officer.

	June 2025							June 2024						
	All employees [a]		Ongoing [b]			Fixed term and casual		All employees		Ongoing [b]			Fixed term and casual	
	Number		*Full-time*	*Part-time*		*Number*		*Number*		*Full-time*	*Part-time*		*Number*	
	(head-count)	*FTE [d]*	*(head-count)*	*(head-count)*	*FTE [d]*	*(head-count)*	*FTE [d]*	*(head-count)*	*FTE [d]*	*(head-count)*	*(head-count)*	*FTE [d]*	*(head-count)*	*FTE [d]*
Demographic data														
Gender														
Women	13	10.90	5	6	9.10	2	1.80	7	5.86	2	4	4.86	1	1
Men	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	1	0	1	1	1
Self-described	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
VPS Classification data														
VPS 1-6 grades														
VPS 2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
VPS 3	2	1.80	1	1	1.80	0	0	1	0.66	0	1	0.66	0	0
VPS 4	1	0.60	0	1	0.60	0	0	1	0.60	0	1	0.60	0	0
VPS 5	8	6.70	3	3	4.90	2	1.80	4	3.80	2	1	2.80	1	1
VPS 6	2	1.80	1	1	1.80	0	0	2	1.80	1	1	1.80	0	0
Executives [c]	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1
Total employees	**14**	**11.90**	**5**	**6**	**9.10**	**3**	**2.80**	**9**	**7.86**	**3**	**4**	**5.86**	**2**	**2.00**

Notes:

(a) Excluded are those on leave without pay or absent on secondment, external contractors/consultants and temporary staff employed by employment agencies. Statutory appointees, as defined in the *Public Administration Act 2004* are also excluded.

(b) Ongoing employees includes people engaged on an open-ended contract of employment and executives engaged on a standard executive contract who were active in the last full pay period of June.

(c) Executive is defined as a person employed as a public service body head or other executive under Par 3, Division 5 of the *Public Administration Act 2004*. The definition of an executive officer does not include Governor in Council appointments as statutory office holders.

(d) Full-Time Equivalent.

Other Disclosures

Local Jobs First

The *Local Jobs First Act 2003* introduced in August 2018 brings together the Victorian Industry Participation Policy (VIPP) and Major Project Skills Guarantee (MPSG) policy which were previously administered separately.

Departments and public sector bodies are required to apply the Local Jobs first policy in all projects valued at $3 million or more in Metropolitan Melbourne or for state-wide projects, or $1 million or more for projects in regional Victoria.

The Commission did not enter into any contracts to which the VIPP or Local Jobs First applies for the 12 months ending 30 June 2025.

Government advertising expenditure

The Commission has not paid for any government advertising expenditure (campaigns with a media spend of $100,000 or greater (exclusive of GST)) during the 12 months ending 30 June 2025.

Consultancy expenditure

Details of consultancies (valued at $10,000 or greater)

In 2024-25, there were two consultancies where the total fees payable to the consultants were $10,000 or greater. The total expenditure incurred during 2024-25 in relation to these consultancies is $65,522 (excluding GST). Details of individual consultancies are outlined below.

Details of consultancies under $10,000

In 2024-25, the VLRC engaged no consultants to which the total fee payable was less than $10,000.

Consultant	Purpose of consultancy	Start date	End date	Total approved project fee (excluding GST)	Expenditure 2024–25 (excluding GST)	Future expenditure (excluding GST)
Strathmore Accounting & Audit Services	Accounting quality assurance and CFAO function	1 July 2024	30 June 2025	$35,000	$36,322	$25,000
Victorian Auditor-General's Office	For the audit of financial report 2024–2025	1 July 2024	30 June 2025	$29,200	$29,200	$29,200

Information and Communication Technology expenditure

ICT expenditure refers to the Commission's costs in providing business enabling ICT services within the current reporting period. It comprises Business As Usual (BAU) ICT expenditure and Non-Business As Usual (Non-BAU) ICT expenditure. Non-BAU ICT expenditure relates to extending or enhancing the Commission's current ICT capabilities. BAU ICT expenditure is all remaining ICT expenditure which primarily relates to ongoing activities to operate and maintain the current ICT capability.

Details of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) expenditure
For the 2024–25 reporting period, the Commission had a total ICT expenditure of $86,985 with the details shown below.

($ thousand)

All operational ICT expenditure	*ICT expenditure related to projects to create or enhance ICT capabilities*		
Business As Usual (BAU) ICT expenditure (Total)	Non-Business As Usual (non BAU) ICT expenditure (Total = Operational expenditure and Capital Expenditure)	Operational expenditure	Capital expenditure
$38,197	$48,788	$86,985	0

Disclosure of major contracts
The Commission did not enter into any major contracts (greater than $10 million in value) in the 2024-25 reporting period.

Freedom of information
The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (the Act) allows the public a right of access to documents held by the Commission. The purpose of the Act is to extend, as far as possible, the right of the community to access information held by government departments, local councils, Ministers and other bodies subject to the Act.

An applicant has a right to apply for access to documents held by an entity or department. This comprises documents both created by the Commission or supplied to the Commission by an external organisation or individual, and may also include maps, films, microfiche, photographs, computer printouts, computer discs, tape recordings and videotapes. Information about the type of material produced by the Commission is available on the Commission's website under its Part II Information Statement.

The Act allows the Commission to refuse access, either fully or partially, to certain documents or information. Examples of documents that may not be accessed include cabinet documents; some internal working documents; law enforcement documents; documents covered by legal professional privilege, such as legal advice; personal information about other people; and information provided to the Commission in-confidence and information that is confidential under another Act.

Under the Act, the FOI processing time for requests received is 30 days. However, when external consultation is required under ss29, 29A, 31, 31A, 33, 34 or 35, the processing time is 45 days. Processing time may also be extended by periods of 30 days, in consultation with the applicant.

With the applicant's agreement this may occur any number of times. However, obtaining an applicant's agreement for an extension cannot occur after the expiry of the timeframe for deciding a request.

If an applicant is not satisfied by a decision made by the Commission, under section 49A of the Act, they have the right to seek a review by the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner (OVIC) within 28 days of receiving a decision letter.

Making a request
FOI requests can be lodged online at ovic.vic.gov.au. Access charges may be payable if the document pool is large and the search for material time consuming.

Access to documents can also be obtained through a written request to the Commission's Freedom of Information team, as detailed in s17 of the Act.

When making an FOI request, applicants should ensure requests are in writing, and clearly identify what types of material/documents are being sought.

Requests for documents in the possession of the Victorian Law Reform Commission should be addressed to:

Freedom of Information Manager
Victorian Law Reform Commission
GPO Box 4637
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Enquiries can be made to the Commission's FOI Manager via email at law.reform@lawreform.vic.gov.au

FOI statistics/timeliness
During 2024–25, the Commission received no applications.

Further Information
Further information regarding the operation and scope of FOI can be obtained from the Act, regulations made under the Act and ovic.vic.gov.au.

Compliance with the *Building Act 1993*
The Commission does not own or control any government buildings and consequently is exempt from notifying its compliance with the building and maintenance provisions of the *Building Act 1993*.

Competitive Neutrality Policy
Competitive neutrality requires government businesses to ensure where services compete, or potentially compete with the private sector, any advantage arising solely from their government ownership be removed if it is not in the public interest. Government businesses are required to cost and price these services as if they were privately owned. Competitive neutrality policy supports fair competition between public and private businesses and provides government businesses with a tool to enhance decisions on resource allocation. This policy does not override other policy objectives of government and focuses on efficiency in the provision of service.

Compliance with the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012*
The *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012* encourages and assists people in making disclosures of improper conduct by public officers and public bodies. The Act provides protection to people who make disclosures in accordance with the Act and establishes a system for the matters disclosed to be investigated and rectifying action to be taken.

The Commission does not tolerate improper conduct by its employees, nor the taking of reprisals against those who come forward to disclose such conduct. It is committed to ensuring transparency and accountability in its administrative and management practices and supports the making of disclosures that reveal corrupt conduct, conduct involving a substantial mismanagement of public resources, or conduct involving a substantial risk to public health and safety or the environment.

The Commission will take all reasonable steps to protect people who make such disclosures from any detrimental action in reprisal for making the disclosure. It will also afford natural justice to the person who is the subject of the disclosure to the extent it is legally possible.

Reporting procedures
Disclosures of improper conduct or detrimental action by the Commission or any of its employees may be made to any of the following:

> Chief Executive Officer of the Commission

> manager or supervisor of the discloser

> manager or supervisor of the person who is the subject of the disclosure

> a person acting in any of the above roles.

Alternatively, disclosures may also be made directly to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission:

Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC):
Level 1, North Tower
459 Collins Street
MELBOURNE Vic 3000
Tel: 1300 735 135
www.ibac.vic.gov.au

Compliance with the *Carers Recognition Act 2012*
The Commission staff are made aware of their entitlement to carers leave on commencement. Staff also have access to the Department of Justice and Community Safety induction, training and awareness activities including in relation to carer obligations. An information session on leave entitlements and flexible working arrangements is made to staff at one staff meeting each year.

The Commission has taken practical measures to comply with its obligations under the Act. These include:

> ensuring our staff have an awareness and understanding of the care relationship principles set out in the Act through training and information sessions

> considering the care relationships principles set out in the Act when developing and implementing our hybrid work model

> adopting DJCS policy as set out in the DJCS publication, *Inclusive employment guide - Supporting inclusive recruitment, employment, and retention of employees with disability and carers.*

Compliance with the *Disability Act 2006*
The Disability Act 2006 reaffirms and strengthens the rights of people with a disability and recognises that this requires support across the government sector and within the community.

The Commission complies with its obligations under the Disability Act to prepare a Disability Action Plan by adopting the Department of Justice and Community Safety plan for the purpose of reducing barriers to access goods, services and facilities; reducing barriers to a person with a disability obtaining and maintaining employment; and promoting inclusion and participation in the community and achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices that discriminate against people with a disability as outlined below.

Reducing barriers to accessing goods, services and facilities
The Commission provides a range of ways for people with disabilities to be involved in consultations and education sessions. These include audio described videos, quizzes and surveys to provide information in summary formats, as well as more comprehensive consultation papers. Contributions to the Commission's work can be provided face to face using interpreters if required, by telephone or in writing by post, email or web-based forms. From time to time reports are produced in Braille for targeted audiences.

The Commission recently conducted an accessibility audit of its website to ensure inclusiveness and functionality. Our offices are wheelchair accessible and have wheelchair facilities.

Reducing barriers to persons with a disability obtaining and maintaining employment
The Commission conducts an open recruitment process and makes adjustments for staff where necessary.

Promoting inclusion and participation in the community
The Commission invites submissions from all groups across the community and extends its reach by using Engage Victoria and the National Relay Service.

Achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices that discriminate against people with a disability
Commission staff have access to training provided by the Department of Justice and Community Safety which focuses on access and inclusion and removing any barriers that may potentially discriminate against people with a disability.

Environmental Reporting

The Commission is committed to environmental sustainability in its operations. Sustainability and greenhouse gas emissions reduction form core parts of the Commission's corporate strategy.

The Commission supports the Victorian public sector in adopting new technology that lowers emissions and increases environmental sustainability.

Environmental Management System
DJCS has an Environmental Management System (EMS) which is a structured approach to managing environmental impacts and improving environmental performance. It is based on the national standard AS/NZS ISO 14001:2016: Environmental Management Systems and provides a framework to improve environmental sustainability.

The DJCS EMS objectives include:

> reducing greenhouse gas emissions resulting from operational activities

> reducing the amount of waste and maximising the amount of reused and recycled resources in procurement

> ensuring new capital works incorporate environmentally sustainable principles in design, construction and operation

> encouraging staff to reduce environmental impacts through behaviour change

> communicating environmental performance through regular internal and public reporting.

The Commission embraces the objectives of the EMS and incorporates environmental sustainability values where it can.

Reporting boundary for environmental data
Most of the operations and activities of the Commission are included within the organisational boundary for this reporting period. Select data are included and consolidated into the Commission's financial statements.

Greenhouse gas emissions
DJCS reports its greenhouse gas emissions broken down into emissions 'scopes' consistent with national and international reporting standards. The Commission's capacity to report in this way is limited. Available data are included below.

Electricity production and consumption
In the period from 2023-24 to 2024-25, there has been a stabilising of hybrid modes of work, also stabilising power consumption.

The Commission is mindful of reducing its electricity use and has implemented or plans to take the following actions:

> The building has LED lighting installed throughout.

> All computer equipment is set to hibernate when not in use and staff are encouraged to switch off electrical equipment when not in use.

> Lights and supplementary air-conditioning are turned off when conference rooms are vacant

> Movement sensors control lights in meeting rooms and offices and lights are timed to go off if areas are vacant

> Switching to efficient electric appliances, for example, minimum 7-star energy efficient refrigerators when they are replaced

Indicator	2024–25		2023–24		2022–23	
	Electricity	Green Power	Electricity	Green Power	Electricity	Green Power
Total energy usage segmented by primary source (MJ)	75,706	18,927	79,821	19,955	85,539	21,385
Total greenhouse gas emissions from energy consumption (tonnes CO^2 e)	13	–	13.55	–	12.60	–
Percentage of electricity purchased as Green Power	25%	–	25%	–	25%	–
Units of energy used per FTE (MJ/FTE)	3,380	–	4,625	–	4,710	–
Units of energy used per unit of office area (MJ/m²)	84.40	–	88.99	–	95.36	–

Transportation
The Commission's fleet is comprised of one electric vehicle.

Environmentally Sustainable Design in new buildings and infrastructure
The Commission resides in central Melbourne, its premises are leased and the building holds a 3-star NABERS Energy rating.

Sustainable procurement
The Commission considers sustainable procurement objectives through its implementation of the Social Procurement Framework, which establishes requirements that apply to Victorian Government departments and agencies when they procure goods, services and construction.

Water consumption
From 1 July 2024 the Commission's water accounts were calculated on a Net Annual Valuation basis rather than on the amount of kilolitres consumed. Accordingly, details of the amount of water consumed by the Commission were not available for the 2024-25 year.

There is no data available in relation to recycled water use.

Waste and recycling
Waste management and recycling are a focus for the Commission. The Commission uses a multi-bin system in the office and arranges individual collection for recyclable items including paper, printer cartridges, batteries and soft plastics in an effort to maximise recycling and minimise waste sent to landfill. Waste diverted from landfill for general recycling is not available.

The Commission uses the DJCS e-waste disposal program which supports the repurposing of electronic hardware that can no longer be deployed within regular operations. Once data is cleansed, hardware is either offered to employees at market value or provided to a charity.

Additional information available on request

In compliance with the requirements of the Standing Directions 2018 under the *Financial Management Act 1994*, details in respect of the items listed below have been retained by the Commission and are available on request, subject to the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

(a) a statement that declarations of pecuniary interests have been duly completed by all relevant officers

(b) details of shares held by senior officers as nominee or held beneficially in a statutory authority or subsidiary

(c) details of publications produced by the Commission about the activities of the Commission and how these can be obtained

(d) details of major research and development activities undertaken by the Commission

(e) details of overseas visits undertaken including a summary of the objectives and outcomes of each visit

(f) details of major promotional, public relations and marketing activities undertaken by the Commission to develop community awareness of the services provided by the Commission

(g) details of assessments and measures undertaken to improve the occupational health and safety of employees

(h) a general statement on industrial relations within the Commission and details of time lost through industrial accidents and disputes

(i) details of all consultancies and contractors including:

> consultants/contractors engaged

> services provided

> expenditure committed to for each engagement.

The information is available on request from the:
Finance and Office Manager
Phone: (03) 8608 7820
Email: law.reform@lawreform.vic.gov.au

Asset management accountability
The Commission has met the requirements under the Victorian Government's Asset Management Accountability Framework.

Victorian Law Reform Commission Financial Management Compliance Attestation Statement

I, the Hon. Anthony North KC, on behalf of the Responsible Body, certify that the Victorian Law Reform Commission has no Material Compliance Deficiency with respect to the applicable Standing Directions under the Financial Management Act 1994 and Instructions.

The Hon. Anthony North KC
Chair
Victorian Law Reform Commission
15 September 2025

Disclosure index
An index identifying the Department's compliance with statutory disclosure requirements is contained in Appendix 1.

Financial Report

How this report is structured

The Victorian Law Reform Commission (the Commission) has presented its audited general purpose financial statements for the financial year ended 30 June 2025 in the following structure to provide users with the information about the Commission's stewardship of resources entrusted to it.

Accountable Officer's, Chief Finance and Accounting Officer's and Chairperson's declaration

The attached financial statements for the Victorian Law Reform Commission have been prepared in accordance with Direction 5.2 of the Standing Directions of the Assistant Treasurer under the *Financial Management Act 1994*, applicable Financial Reporting Directions, Australian Accounting Standards including Interpretations, and other mandatory professional reporting requirements.

We further state that, in our opinion, the information set out in the comprehensive operating statement, balance sheet, statement of changes in equity, cash flow statement and accompanying notes, presents fairly the financial transactions during the year ended 30 June 2025 and financial position of the Commission at 30 June 2025.

At the time of signing, we are not aware of any circumstance which would render any particulars included in the financial statements to be misleading or inaccurate.

We authorise the attached financial statements for issue on 15 September 2025.

Merrin Mason
Chief Executive Officer
Victorian Law Reform Commission, Melbourne

Michael Almond
Chief Finance and Accounting Officer
Victorian Law Reform Commission, Melbourne

The Hon. Anthony North KC
Chair
Victorian Law Reform Commission, Melbourne

VAGO
Victorian Auditor-General's Office

Independent Auditor's Report

To the Commissioners of the Victorian Law Reform Commission

Opinion

I have audited the financial report of the Victorian Law Reform Commission (the Commission) which comprises the:

- balance sheet as at 30 June 2025
- comprehensive operating statement for the year then ended
- statement of changes in equity for the year then ended
- cash flow statement for the year then ended
- notes to the financial statements, including material accounting policy information
- declaration by the Accountable Officer, Chief Finance and Accounting Officer and Chairperson.

In my opinion the financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Commission as at 30 June 2025 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of Part 7 of the *Financial Management Act 1994* and applicable Australian Accounting Standards- Simplified Disclosures.

Basis for opinion

I have conducted my audit in accordance with the *Audit Act 1994* which incorporates the Australian Auditing Standards. I further describe my responsibilities under that Act and those standards in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of my report.

My independence is established by the *Constitution Act 1975.* My staff and I are independent of the Commission in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)* (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Victoria. My staff and I have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

The Commissioners' responsibilities for the financial report

The Commissioners are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards- Simplified Disclosures and the *Financial Management Act 1994*, and for such internal control as the Commissioners determine is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the Commissioners are responsible for assessing the Commission's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless it is inappropriate to do so.

Level 31 / 35 Collins Street, Melbourne Vic 3000
T 03 8601 7000 enquiries@audit.vic.gov.au www.audit.vic.gov.au

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial report

As required by the *Audit Act 1994,* my responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on the audit. My objectives for the audit are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control
- obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Commission's internal control
- evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Commissioners
- conclude on the appropriateness of the Commissioners' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Commission's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Commission to cease to continue as a going concern.
- evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the Commissioners regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

MELBOURNE
24 September 2025

Charlotte Jeffries
as delegate for the Auditor-General of Victoria

COMPREHENSIVE OPERATING STATEMENT

FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

	Notes	2025	2024
		$	$
Income from transactions			
Output appropriations – Department of Justice and Community Safety	*2.1*	762,000	720,200
Grants - Victorian Legal Services Board	*2.1*	2,937,410	2,338,234
Other Income		–	11,000
Total income from transactions		**3,699,410**	**3,069,434**
Expenses from transactions			
Employee expenses	*3.1.1*	(2,217,704)	(1,777,199)
Depreciation	*4.1.1*	(125,807)	(125,152)
Interest expense	*6.1*	(12,703)	(16,713)
Other operating expenses	*3.2*	(511,995)	(457,877)
Total expenses from transactions		**(2,868,209)**	**(2,376,941)**
Net result from transactions (net operating balance)		**831,201**	**692,493**
Other economic flows included in net result			
Other gains/(losses) from other economic flows	*8.1*	(1,956)	18,585
Total other economic flows included in net result		**(1,956)**	**18,585**
Net result		**829,245**	**711,078**
Comprehensive result		**829,245**	**711,078**

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 30 JUNE 2025

	Notes	2025	2024
		$	$
Assets			
Financial assets			
Cash and deposits	*6.3*	2,316,967	1,439,957
Receivables	*5.1*	526,349	521,985
Total financial assets		**2,843,316**	**1,961,942**
Non-financial assets			
Property, plant and equipment	*4.1*	211,392	337,199
Other non-financial assets		27,853	93,001
Total non-financial assets		**239,245**	**430,200**
Total assets		**3,082,561**	**2,392,142**
Liabilities			
Payables	*5.2*	75,249	111,906
Borrowings	*6.1*	425,895	661,200
Employee related provisions	*3.1.2*	454,913	321,776
Total liabilities		**956,057**	**1,094,883**
Net assets		**2,126,504**	**1,297,259**
Equity			
Accumulated surplus		1,623,092	793,847
Contributed capital		503,412	503,412
Net worth		**2,126,504**	**1,297,259**

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

CASH FLOW STATEMENT

FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

	Notes	2025	2024
		$	$
Cash flows from operating activities			
Receipts			
Receipts from government		755,680	452,273
Receipts from other entities		2,937,410	2,349,234
Total receipts		**3,693,090**	**2,801,507**
Payments			
Payments to suppliers and employees		(2,568,071)	(2,342,116)
Interest expense		(12,703)	(16,713)
Total payments		**(2,580,774)**	**(2,358,829)**
Net cash flows from/(used in) operating activities		**1,112,315**	**442,679**
Cash flows from/(used in) investing activities			
Proceeds from disposal of non financial assets		–	18,863
Net cash flows from/(used in) investing activities		**–**	**18,863**
Cash flows from/(used in) financing activities			
ROU Liability funded from sub-lease receivable		–	419,273
Owner Contributions by State Government		–	–
Repayment of vehicle lease liability		(9,932)	(16,192)
Repayment of building lease liability		(225,374)	(202,635)
Net cash flows from/(used in) financing activities		**(235,306)**	**200,446**
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		**877,010**	**661,988**
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year		1,439,957	777,969
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	*6.3*	2,316,967	**1,439,957**

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

	Accumulated Surplus	Contributions by owners	Total
	$	$	$
Balance at 1 July 2023	82,769	503,412	586,181
Net result for the year	711,078	-	711,078
Contributed Capital	-	-	-
Balance at 30 June 2024	**793,847**	**503,412**	**1,297,259**
Net result for the year	829,245	-	829,245
Contributed Capital	-	-	-
Balance at 30 June 2025	**1,623,092**	**503,412**	**2,126,504**

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

1. ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Commission is an independent government-funded body established under the *Law Reform Commission Act 2000* (the Act) as a central agency for developing law reform in Victoria. The Commission's main objective is to provide the Attorney-General and Parliament with high quality, timely, responsive and effective advice on law reform that is independent of government agencies and of the political process.

The Commission reports directly to the Attorney-General. The Attorney-General must table a copy of every Commission report on references before each House of Parliament.

Its principal address is:

Victorian Law Reform Commission
3/333 Queen Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

A description of the nature of the Commission's operations and its principal activities is included in the report of operations on page 9, which does not form part of these financial statements.

Basis of preparation

These financial statements are Tier 2 general purpose financial statements prepared in accordance with AASB 1060 *General Purpose Financial Statements – Simplified Disclosures for For-Profit and Not-For-Profit Tier 2 Entities* (AASB 1060) and Financial Reporting Direction 101 *Application of Tiers of Australian Accounting Standards* (FRD 101).

The Commission is a Tier 2 entity in accordance with FRD 101. These financial statements are the first general purpose financial statements prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures. The Commission's prior year financial statements were general purpose financial statements prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards (Tier 1). As the Commission is not a 'significant entity' as defined in FRD 101, it was required to change from Tier 1 to Tier 2 reporting effective from 1 July 2024.

These financial statements are in Australian dollars and the historical cost convention is used unless a different measurement basis is specifically disclosed in the note associated with the item measured on a different basis.

The accrual basis of accounting has been applied in preparing these financial statements, whereby assets, liabilities, equity, income and expenses are recognised in the reporting period to which they relate, regardless of when cash is received or paid.

Consistent with the requirements of AASB 1004 *Contributions*, contributions by owners (that is, contributed capital and its repayment) are treated as equity transactions and, therefore, do not form part of the income and expenses of the Commission.

Additions to net assets which have been designated as contributions by owners are recognised as contributed capital. Other transfers that are in the nature of contributions to or distributions by owners have also been designated as contributions by owners.

Judgements, estimates and assumptions are required to be made about financial information being presented. The significant judgements made in the preparation of these financial statements are disclosed in the notes where amounts affected by those judgements are disclosed. Estimates and associated assumptions are based on professional judgements derived from historical experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised and also in future periods that are affected by the revision. Judgements and assumptions made by management in applying Australian Accounting Standards that have significant effects on the financial statements and estimates are disclosed in the notes under the heading: 'Significant judgement or estimates'.

These financial statements cover the Victorian Law Reform Commission as an individual reporting entity and include all the controlled activities of the Commission.

All amounts in the financial statements have been rounded to the nearest dollar unless otherwise stated.

Compliance information

These general purpose financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the *Financial Management Act 1994* (FMA) and applicable Australian Accounting Standards (AAS) which include Interpretations, issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB). In particular, they are presented in a manner consistent with the requirements of AASB 1049 *Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting*.

Where appropriate, those AAS paragraphs applicable to not-for-profit entities have been applied. Accounting policies selected and applied in these financial statements ensure that the resulting financial information satisfies the concepts of relevance and reliability, thereby ensuring that the substance of the underlying transactions or other events is reported.

2. FUNDING DELIVERY OF OUR SERVICES

Introduction

Income is recognised to the extent that it is probable that the economic benefits will flow to the entity and the income can be reliably measured at fair value.

To enable the Commission to fulfil its objective and provide outputs, it receives income (from accrual-based parliamentary appropriations). The Commission also receives a grant from the Victorian Legal Services Board.

Structure

Revenue Recognition

The Commission has determined that all grant income is recognised as income of not-for-profit entities in accordance with AASB 1058, except for grants that are enforceable and with sufficiently specific performance obligations and accounted for as revenue from contracts with customers in accordance with AASB 15.

Income from grants without any sufficiently specific performance obligations, or that are not enforceable, is recognised when the Commission has an unconditional right to receive cash which usually coincides with receipt of cash. On initial recognition of the asset, the Commission recognises any related contributions by owners, increases in liabilities, decreases in assets, and revenue ('related amounts') in accordance with other Australian Accounting Standards. Related amounts may take the form of:

(a) contributions by owners, in accordance with AASB 1004;

(b) a lease liability in accordance with AASB 16;

(c) a financial instrument, in accordance with AASB 9; or

(d) a provision, in accordance with AASB 137 Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets.

2.1 Summary of income that funds the delivery of our services

	Notes	**2025**	**2024**
		$	$
Output appropriations – Department of Justice and Community Safety	2.2	762,000	720,200
Grants – Victorian Legal Services Board	2.3	2,937,410	2,338,234
Other Income		-	11,000
Total income from transactions		**3,699,410**	**3,069,434**

2.2. Appropriations

Once annual Parliamentary appropriations are applied by the Treasurer, they become controlled by the Commission and are recognised as income when applied for the purposes defined under the relevant Appropriations Act. The appropriation amount includes funding for discretionary items, such as amortisation and depreciation.

Output appropriations: Income from the outputs the Commission provides to the Government is recognised when those outputs have been delivered and the relevant minister has certified delivery of those outputs in accordance with specified performance criteria.

2.3. Grants

The Attorney-General directed funds to be allocated to the Commission from the Victorian Legal Services Board. These amounts are paid to it under Section 144(3) of the *Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2014*.

These non-public monies are held by the Victorian Legal Services Board until they are deposited in the Commission's Trust Account.

The Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF), in establishing the trust account, stipulated "the trust fund amounts and appropriation amounts must be used concurrently to meet the operating and capital expenses of the Commission".

The Department of Justice and Community Safety manages the investment and drawdown of the trust funds and monitors the concurrent and proportionate use of the trust funds and appropriation amounts for operating and capital expenditure of the Commission. Under the Central Banking System arrangements, interest earned from the investment of the Trust Fund balances accrues at the Whole of Government level and is not available to the Commission.

3. THE COST OF DELIVERING SERVICES

Introduction

This section provides an account of the expenses incurred by the Victorian Law Reform Commission in delivering services and outputs. In Section 2, the funds that enable the provision of services were disclosed and, in this note, the cost associated with provision of services are recorded.

Structure

3.1 Expenses incurred in delivery of services

	Notes	2025 $	2024 $
Employee benefit expenses	*3.1.1*	2,217,704	1,777,199
Other operating expenses	*3.2*	511,995	457,877
Total expenses incurred in the delivery of services		**2,729,699**	**2,235,076**

3.1.1 Employee benefits in the comprehensive operating statement

	2025 $	2024 $
Defined contribution superannuation expense	199,371	165,210
Salaries and wages, annual leave and long service leave	2,018,333	1,611,989
Total employee expenses	**2,217,704**	**1,777,199**

Employee expenses include all costs related to employment including wages and salaries, fringe benefits tax, leave entitlements, termination payments and WorkCover premiums.

The amount recognised in the comprehensive operating statement in relation to superannuation is employer contributions for members of defined contribution superannuation plans that are paid or payable during the reporting period.

3.1.2. Employee benefits in the balance sheet

Provision is made for benefits accruing to employees in respect of wages and salaries, annual leave and long service leave (LSL) for services rendered to the reporting date and recorded as an expense during the period the services are delivered.

	2025 $	2024 $
Current provisions:		
Annual leave	123,974	79,503
Long service leave	159,783	151,140
Provisions for on-costs	69,955	48,765
Total current provisions for employee benefits	**353,712**	**279,407**
Non current provisions:		
Employee benefits - Long service leave	83,103	35,335
On-costs	18,098	7,034
Total non current provisions for employee benefits	**101,201**	**42,369**
Total provisions for employee benefits	**454,913**	**321,776**

Wages and salaries, annual leave and sick leave: Liabilities for wages and salaries (including non-monetary benefits, annual leave and on-costs) are recognised as part of the employee benefit provision as current liabilities, because the Commission does not have an unconditional right to defer settlements of these liabilities.

The liability for salaries and wages are recognised in the balance sheet at remuneration rates which are current at the reporting date. As the Commission expects the liabilities to be wholly settled within 12 months of reporting date, they are measured at undiscounted amounts.

The annual leave liability is classified as a current liability and measured at the undiscounted amount expected to be paid, as the Commission does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement of the liability for at least 12 months after the end of the reporting period.

No provision has been made for sick leave as all sick leave is non-vesting and it is not considered probable that the average sick leave taken in the future will be greater than the benefits accrued in the future. As sick leave is non-vesting, an expense is recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income as it is taken.

Employment on-costs such as payroll tax, workers compensation and superannuation are not employee benefits. They are disclosed separately as a component of the provision for employee benefits when the employment to which they relate has occurred.

Unconditional LSL is disclosed as a current liability; even where the Commission does not expect to settle the liability within 12 months because it will not have the unconditional right to defer the settlement of the entitlement should an employee take leave within 12 months.

The components of this current LSL liability are measured at:

> undiscounted value – if the Commission expects to wholly settle within 12 months; or

> present value – if the Commission does not expect to wholly settle within 12 months.

Conditional LSL is disclosed as a non-current liability. There is a conditional right to defer the settlement of the entitlement until the employee has completed the requisite years of service. This non-current LSL is measured at present value.

Any gain or loss following revaluation of the present value of non-current LSL liability is recognised as a transaction, except to the extent that a gain or loss arises due to changes in bond interest rates for which it is then recognised as an 'other economic flow' in the net result.

3.1.3 Superannuation contributions

Employees of the Commission are entitled to receive superannuation benefits and the Commission contributes to defined contribution plans.

	Paid contribution for the year		Contribution outstanding at year end	
	2025 $	2024 $	2025 $	2024 $
Defined contribution plans				
VicSuper	74,100	33,713	–	–
Other	125,271	131,497	–	–
Total	**199,371**	**165,210**	**–**	**–**

3.2 Other operating expenses

Other operating expenses generally represent the day-to-day running costs incurred in normal operations. It also includes bad debts expense from transactions that are mutually agreed. Supplies and services are recognised as an expense in the reporting period in which they are incurred.

	2025 $	2024 $
Supplies and services		
Purchase of supplies and consumables	52,731	91,842
Purchase of services (including remuneration of auditors)	234,904	178,806
Maintenance	5,336	7,032
Rental outgoings and expenses	219,024	180,198
Total other operating expenses	**511,995**	**457,877**

4. KEY ASSETS AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT OUTPUT DELIVERY

Introduction
The Commission controls plant and equipment that are utilised in fulfilling its objectives and conducting its activities. They represent the resources that have been entrusted to the Commission to be utilised for delivery of those outputs.

Fair value measurement
Where the assets included in this section are carried at fair value, additional information is disclosed in Note 7.3 in connection with how those fair values were determined.

Structure

4.1 Total property, plant and equipment[(a)]

	Gross carrying amount		Accumulated Depreciation		Net carrying amount	
	2025 $	2024 $	2025 $	2024 $	2025 $	2024 $
Right of use leased office space	394,581	394,581	(225,463)	(112,732)	169,117	281,849
Computer equipment and video Conferencing	12,490	12,490	(10,148)	(7,026)	2,342	5,464
Motor vehicle at fair value	57,350	57,350	(17,418)	(7,465)	39,932	49,885
Net carrying amount	**464,421**	**464,421**	**(253,029)**	**(127,223)**	**211,392**	**337,198**

(a) See table 4.1.2 for movements.

Initial recognition: Items of property, plant and equipment are measured initially at cost and subsequently revalued at fair value less accumulated depreciation and impairment. Where an asset is acquired for no or nominal cost, the cost is its fair value at the date of acquisition.

The initial cost for non-financial physical assets under a finance lease is measured at amounts equal to the fair value of the leased asset or, if lower, the present value of the minimum lease payments, each determined at the inception of the lease.

Right-of-use asset acquired by lessees – Initial measurement
The Commission recognises a right-of-use asset and a lease liability at the lease commencement date. The right-of-use asset is initially measured at cost which comprises the initial amount of the lease liability adjusted for:

> any lease payments made at or before the commencement date less any lease incentive received; plus

> any initial direct costs incurred; and

> an estimate of costs to dismantle and remove the underlying asset or to restore the underlying asset or the site on which it is located.

Vehicles are valued using the current replacement cost method. The Commission acquires new vehicles and at times disposes of them before the end of their economic life. The process of acquisition, use and disposal in the market is managed by Vic Fleet who set relevant depreciation rates during use to reflect the utilisation of the vehicles.

Subsequent measurement: Property, plant and equipment (PPE) as well as right-of-use assets under leases are subsequently measured at fair value less accumulated depreciation and impairment. Fair value is determined with regard to the asset's highest and best use (considering legal or physical restrictions imposed on the asset, public announcements or commitments made in relation to the intended use of the asset) and is summarised on the following page by asset category. Refer to Note 7.3 for additional information on fair value determination of property, plant and equipment.

Right-of-use asset – Subsequent measurement
The Commission depreciates the right-of-use assets on a straight-line basis from the lease commencement date to the earlier of the end of the useful life of the right-of-use asset or the end of the lease term. The right-of-use assets are also subject to revaluation.

In addition, the right-of-use asset is periodically reduced by impairment losses, if any and adjusted for certain re-measurements of the lease liability.

Impairment of property, plant, equipment and vehicles
The recoverable amount of primarily non-cash generating assets of not-for-profit entities, which are typically specialised in nature and held for continuing use of their service capacity, is expected to be materially the same as fair value determined under AASB 13 *Fair Value Measurement*, with the consequence that AASB 136 *Impairment of Assets*, does not apply to such assets that are regularly revalued.

4.1.1 Depreciation and amortisation

Charge for the period

	2025 $	2024 $
Right of use leased office space	112,732	112,732
Plant, equipment and vehicles	13,075	12,420
Total depreciation and amortisation	**125,807**	**125,152**

Asset	(years) Useful Life
ROU leased asset	3.5
Computer equipment and video conferencing equipment	5
Motor vehicles	5

Depreciation is generally calculated on a straight-line basis, at rates that allocate the asset's value, less any estimated residual value, over its estimated useful life. Typical estimated useful lives for the different asset classes for current and prior years are included in the table on the left.

The estimated useful lives, residual values and depreciation method are reviewed at the end of each annual reporting period, and adjustments made where appropriate.

Right-of-use assets are generally depreciated over the shorter of the asset's useful life and the lease term. Where the Commission obtains ownership of the underlying leased asset or if the cost of the right-of-use asset reflects that the entity will exercise a purchase option, the entity depreciates the right-of-use asset over its useful life.

4.1.2 Reconciliation of movements in carrying amount of property, plant and equipment

	Right of use leased office space at fair value		Vehicles at fair value		Computer equipment & video conferencing at fair value	
	2025 $	2024 $	2025 $	2024 $	2025 $	2024 $
Opening balance 1 July	281,849	394,581	49,885	9,272	5,465	8,587
Additions	–	–	–	57,350	–	–
Disposals	–	–	–	7,439	–	–
Depreciation	(112,732)	(112,732)	(9,953)	(9,298)	(3,122)	(3,122)
Closing balance 30 June	**169,117**	**281,849**	**39,932**	**49,885**	**2,343**	**5,465**

Note: Fair value assessments have been performed for all classes of assets in this purpose group and the decision was made that movements were not material (less than or equal to 10 per cent) for a full revaluation.

5. OTHER ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

Introduction
This section sets out those assets and liabilities that arose from the Commission's operations.

Structure

5.1 Receivables

	2025 $	2024 $
Contractual		
Sub-lease - Sentencing Advisory Council [(a)]	195,528	312,297
Statutory		
Amount owing from Victorian Government	330,821	209,688
Total receivables	**526,349**	**521,985**
Represented by		
Current receivables	356,825	284,088
Non-current receivables	169,524	237,897

(a) The Commission has a sub-lease agreement with the Sentencing Advisory Council for a portion of the office space leased. Refer to note 6.2.

Contractual receivables are classified as financial instruments and categorised as 'financial assets at amortised costs'. They are initially recognised at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction costs. The Commission holds the contractual receivables with the objective to collect the contractual cash flows and therefore subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less any impairment.

Statutory receivables do not arise from contracts and are recognised and measured similarly to contractual receivables (except for impairment) but are not classified as financial instruments for disclosure purposes. The Commission applies *AASB 9 Financial Instruments* for initial measurement of the statutory receivables and as a result statutory receivables are initially recognised at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction cost. Amounts recognised from the Victorian Government represent funding for all commitments incurred and are drawn from the Consolidated Fund as the commitments fall due.

Details about the Commission's impairment policies exposure to credit risk and the calculation of the allowance are in note 7.

5.2 Payables

	2025 $	2024 $
Contractual		
Supplies and services	60,993	105,859
Other payables	12,984	4,031
Statutory		
FBT payable	1,272	2,016
Total payables	**75,249**	**111,906**
Represented by:		
Current payables	75,249	111,906

Payables consist of:

- **contractual payables**, classified as financial instruments and measured at amortised cost. Accounts payable represent liabilities for goods and services provided to the Commission prior to the end of the financial year that are unpaid; and
- **statutory payables**, that are recognised and measured similarly to contractual payables, but are not classified as financial instruments and not included in the category of financial liabilities at amortised cost, because they do not arise from contracts.

Payables for supplies and services have an average credit period of 30 days.

The terms and conditions of amounts payable to the government and agencies vary according to the particular agreements and as they are not legislative payables, they are not classified as financial instruments.

6. FINANCING OUR OPERATIONS

Introduction

This section provides information on the sources of finance utilised by the Commission during its operations, along with interest expenses (the cost of borrowings) and other information related to financing activities of the Commission.

This section includes disclosures of balances that are financial instruments (such as borrowings and cash balances). Notes 7.1 and 7.3 provide additional, specific financial instrument disclosures.

Structure

6.1 Borrowings

	2025 $	2024 $
Current borrowings		
Lease liabilities – Buildings	249,685	225,374
Lease liabilities – Motor Vehicle	10,057	9,932
Total current borrowings	**259,742**	**235,305**
Non current borrowings		
Lease liabilities – Buildings	136,160	385,845
Lease liabilities – Motor Vehicle	29,994	40,050
Total non current borrowings	**166,154**	**425,895**
Total borrowings	**425,895**	**661,200**

Interest Expense

	2025 $	2024 $
Lease liabilities – Buildings	12,135	17,073
Lease liabilities – Motor vehicle	568	(361)
Total interest expense	**12,703**	**16,713**

'Interest expense' includes the interest component of finance lease repayments. Interest expense is recognised in the period in which it is incurred.

'Borrowings' refer to interest bearing liabilities and lease liabilities.

Borrowings are classified as financial instruments. Interest bearing liabilities are classified at amortised cost unless the Commission elects to irrevocably designate them at fair value through profit or loss at initial recognition. The election depends on the nature and purpose of the interest-bearing liabilities.

The Commission has designated lease liabilities at fair value through net result to eliminate or significantly reduce the accounting mismatch that would otherwise arise. All other interest-bearing borrowings are initially recognised at the fair value of the consideration received less directly attributable transaction costs and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

For financial liabilities designated at fair value through net result, all transaction costs are expensed as incurred. And they are subsequently measured at fair value with changes in fair value relating to the Commission's own credit risk recognised in other comprehensive income and the remaining amount of changes in fair value recognised in net result.

Maturity analysis of borrowings

	Carrying amount $	Nominal amount $	Maturity dates: Less than 1 month $	1–3 months $	3 months – 1 year $	1–5 years $
2025						
Lease liabilities – Buildings	385,845	385,845	20,347	61,538	167,800	136,160
Lease liabilities – Motor Vehicle	40,050	40,050	830	2,493	6,734	29,993
Total	**425,895**	**425,895**	**21,177**	**64,031**	**174,534**	**166,153**
2024						
Lease liabilities – Buildings	611,218	611,218	18,366	55,546	151,461	385,845
Lease liabilities – Motor Vehicle	49,982	49,982	823	2,474	6,635	40,050
Total	**661,200**	**661,200**	**19,189**	**58,020**	**158,096**	**425,895**

6.2 Leases

Information about leases for which the Commission is a lessee is presented below.

The Commission's leasing activities

The Commission leases its office space and a motor vehicle. The lease contract for the office space is for a three and a half year period and for the motor vehicle it is a three-year period.

The Commission has a sublease arrangement with the Sentencing Advisory Council which is classified as a finance lease under AASB 16 as the present value of the lease payments amounts to substantially all of the fair value of the underlying asset and the lease terms are for the major part of the economic life of the underlying asset. As an intermediate lessor, the Commission has accounted for the head lease and the sublease as two separate contracts. The period of the agreement is for three and a half years with the remaining term being one and a half years as at 30 June 2025. Refer to receivables note 5.1.

Right-of-use Assets

Right-of-use assets are presented in note 4.1.

Recognition and measurement of leases as a lessee

Lease Liability – initial measurement

The lease liability is initially measured at the present value of the lease payments unpaid at the commencement date, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease if that rate is readily determinable or the Commissions incremental borrowing rate.

Lease payments included in the measurement of the lease liability comprise the following:

> fixed payments (including in-substance fixed payments) less any lease incentive receivable;

> variable payments based on an index or rate, initially measured using the index or rate as at the commencement date;

> amounts expected to be payable under a residual value guarantee; and

> payments arising from purchase and termination options reasonably certain to be exercised.

Lease Liability – subsequent measurement

Subsequent to initial measurement, the liability will be reduced for payments made and increased for interest. It is remeasured to reflect any reassessment or modification, or if there are changes to in-substance fixed payments.

When the lease liability is remeasured, the corresponding adjustment is reflected in the right-of-use asset, or profit and loss if the right-of-use asset is already reduced to zero.

Short-term leases and leases of low-value assets

The Commission has elected to account for short-term leases and leases of low-value assets using the practical expedients. Instead of recognising a right-of-use asset and lease liability, the payments in relation to these are recognised as an expense in profit or loss on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

Presentation of right-of-use assets and lease liabilities

The Commission presents right-of-use assets as 'property plant equipment' in the balance sheet. Lease liabilities are presented as 'borrowings' in the balance sheet.

6.3 Cash equivalents and balances

Cash and deposits, including cash equivalents, comprise cash on hand and cash at bank, deposits at call and those highly liquid investments with an original maturity of three months or less, which are held for the purpose of meeting short-term cash commitments rather than for investment purposes, and which are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and are subject to an insignificant risk of changes in value.

For cash flow statement purposes, cash and cash equivalents are indicated below.

	2025	2024
	$	$
Funds held in trust (a)(b)	2,316,967	1,439,957
Balance as per cash flow statement	**2,316,967**	**1,439,957**

(a) Refer to note 2.3 for details of trust establishment

(b) Refer to note 6.4 for details of trust account balances

6.4 Trust account balances

Trust account balances relating to trust accounts controlled by the Commission

	2025				2024			
Cash and cash equivalents and investments	Opening balance as 1 July 2024	Total receipts	Total payments	Closing balance as 30 June 2025	Opening balance as 1 July 2023	Total receipts	Total payments	Closing balance as 30 June 2024
	$	$	$	$	$	$	$	$
Controlled trusts								
VLRC Trust Fund (a)(b)	1,439,957	2,937,410	2,060,400	2,316,967	777,969	2,338,234	1,676,246	1,439,957
Total controlled trusts	**1,439,957**	**2,937,410**	**2,060,400**	**2,316,967**	**777,969**	**2,338,234**	**1,676,246**	**1,439,957**

(a) The VLRC Trust fund was created to receive non-public monies, Section 144(3) of the *Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2014*, specifically to receive monies paid to VLRC under Section 17(a) *Victorian Law Reform Commission Act 2000*.

(b) Refer to note 2.3 for details of trust establishment

6.5 Commitments for expenditure

Commitments for future expenditure include operating and capital commitments arising from contracts. These commitments are recorded below at their nominal value and inclusive of GST. These future expenditures cease to be disclosed as commitments once the related liabilities are recognised in the balance sheet. There were no outstanding commitments for expenditure as at 30 June 2025 ($Nil–2024).

7. RISKS, CONTINGENCIES AND VALUATION JUDGEMENTS

Introduction

The Victorian Law Reform Commission (the Commission) is exposed to risk from its activities and outside factors. In addition, it is often necessary to make judgements and estimates associated with recognition and measurement of items in the financial statements. This section sets out financial instrument specific information (including exposures to financial risks), as well as those items that are contingent in nature or require a higher level of judgement to be applied.

Structure

7.1 Financial instruments specific disclosures

Introduction

Financial instruments arise out of contractual agreements that give rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity. Due to the nature of the Commission's activities, certain financial assets and financial liabilities arise under statute rather than a contract (for example taxes, fines and penalties). Such assets and liabilities do not meet the definition of financial instruments in *AASB 132 Financial Instruments: Presentation*.

Categories of financial assets

Financial assets at amortised cost

Financial assets are measured at amortised costs if both of the following criteria are met and the assets are not designated as fair value through net result:

> the assets are held by the Commission to collect the contractual cash flows, and

> the assets' contractual terms give rise to cash flows that are solely payments of principal and interest.

These assets are initially recognised at fair value, plus any directly attributable transaction costs, and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method less any impairment.

The Commission recognises the following assets in this category:

> receivables (excluding statutory receivables); and

> term deposits;

Categories of financial liabilities

Financial liabilities at amortised cost are initially recognised on the date they are originated. They are initially measured at fair value minus any directly attributable transaction costs. Subsequent to initial recognition, these financial instruments are measured at amortised cost with any difference between the initial recognised amount and the redemption value being recognised in profit and loss over the period of the interest bearing liability, using the effective interest rate method. The Commission recognises the following liabilities in this category:

> payables (excluding statutory payables); and

> borrowings (including finance lease liabilities).

7.1.1 Financial instruments: Categorisation

2025	Cash and deposits	Financial assets at amortised cost (AC)	Financial liabilities at amortised cost (AC)	Total
	$	$	$	$
Contractual financial assets				
Cash and deposits	2,316,967	-	-	2,316,967
Receivables [b]	-	195,528	-	195,528
Total contractual financial assets	**2,316,967**	**195,528**	**-**	**2,512,495**
Contractual financial liabilities				
Payables [a]				
Supplies and services	-	-	60,993	60,993
Other payables			12,984	12,984
Borrowings				
Lease liabilities	-	-	425,895	425,895
Total contractual financial liabilities	**-**	**-**	**499,872**	**499,872**

(a) The total amounts disclosed here exclude statutory amounts (e.g. amounts owing from Victorian Government and GST input tax credit recoverable and taxes payable).
(b) Refer to note 5.1

2024	Cash and deposits	Contractual financial assets–loans and receivables / held to maturity	Contractual financial liabilities at amortised cost	Total
	$	$	$	$
Contractual financial assets				
Cash and deposits	1,439,957	-	-	1,439,957
Receivables [b]	-	312,297	-	312,297
Total contractual financial assets	**1,439,957**	-	**-**	**1,752,254**
Contractual financial liabilities				
Payables [a]				
Supplies and services	-	-	105,859	105,859
Other payables			4,031	4,031
Borrowings				
Lease liabilities	-	-	661,200	661,200
Total contractual financial liabilities	**-**	**-**	**771,090**	**771,090**

(a) The total amounts disclosed here exclude statutory amounts (e.g. amounts owing from Victorian Government and GST input tax credit recoverable and taxes payable).

7.2. Contingent assets and contingent liabilities

Contingent assets and contingent liabilities are not recognised in the balance sheet but are disclosed and, if quantifiable, are measured at nominal value.

The Commission had no contingent assets or liabilities as at 30 June 2025 (Nil 30 June 2024).

7.3. Fair value determination

This section sets out information on how the Commission determined fair value for financial reporting purposes. Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date.

The following assets and liabilities are carried at fair value:

> financial assets and liabilities at fair value through operating result; and

> property, plant and equipment;

In addition, the fair values of other assets and liabilities that are carried at amortised cost, also need to be determined for disclosure purposes. The Commission determines the policies and procedures for determining fair values for both financial and non-financial assets and liabilities as required.

For those assets and liabilities for which fair values are determined, the following disclosures are provided:

> carrying amount and the fair value (which would be the same for those assets measured at fair value);

> which level of the fair value hierarchy was used to determine the fair value; and

> in respect of those assets and liabilities subject to fair value determination using Level 3 inputs:

– a reconciliation of the movements in fair values from the beginning of the year to the end; and

– details of significant unobservable inputs used in the fair value determination.

Fair value determination of financial assets and liabilities

The Commission currently holds a range of financial instruments that are recorded in the financial statements where the carrying amounts approximate to fair value, due to their short-term nature or with the expectation that they will be paid in full by the end of the 2024-25 reporting period.

These financial instruments include:

Financial assets	Financial liabilities
Cash and deposits **Investments and other contractual financial assets:** > Trust fund deposits	**Payables:** > For supplies and services **Borrowings:** > Lease liabilities

8. OTHER DISCLOSURES

Introduction
This section includes additional material disclosures required by accounting standards or otherwise for the understanding of this financial report.

Structure

8.1 Other economic flows included in net result

Other economic flows are changes in the volume or value of an asset or liability that do not result from transactions. Other gains/(losses) from other economic flows include the gains or losses from:

> the revaluation of the present value of the long service leave liability due to changes in the bond interest rates;

	2025	2024
	$	$
Other gains/(losses) from other economic flows		
Net gain/(loss) arising from revaluation of long service liability [(a)]	(1,956)	7,161
Net gain/(loss) arising from disposal of motor vehicle	–	11,424
Total other gains/(losses) from other economic flows	**(1,956)**	**18,585**

(a) Revaluation gain/(loss) due to changes in bond interest rates.

8.2. Responsible persons

In accordance with the Ministerial Directions issued by the Assistant Treasurer under the *Financial Management Act 1994* (FMA), the following disclosures are made regarding responsible persons for the reporting period.

Names
The persons who held the positions of Ministers and Accountable Officers in the Department of Justice and Community Safety (from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025 unless otherwise stated) are as follows:

The Department of Justice and Community Safety

Attorney-General	The Hon. Jaclyn Symes MP	1 July 2024	to	18 December 2024
Attorney-General	The Hon. Sonya Kilkenny MP	19 December 2024	to	30 June 2025
Acting Attorney-General	The Hon. Enver Erdogan MP	1 November 2024	to	5 November 2024

The Commission

The persons who were Responsible Persons of the Commission as stipulated in Section 7 of the *Victorian Law Reform Commission Act 2000*, for the reporting period are as follows:

Chair	The Hon. Anthony North KC	1 April 2025	to	30 June 2025
Acting Chair	The Hon. Jennifer Coate AO	1 July 2024	to	31 March 2025
Commissioner	Liana Buchanan	1 July 2024	to	21 March 2025
Commissioner	The Hon. Jennifer Coate AO	1 April 2025	to	30 June 2025
Commissioner	Kathleen Foley SC	1 July 2024	to	23 November 2024
		11 February 2025	to	30 June 2025
Commissioner	Bernadette McSherry	1 July 2024	to	30 June 2025
Commissioner	Dan Nicholson	1 July 2024	to	30 June 2025
Commissioner	Gemma Varley PSM	1 July 2024	to	1 August 2024
Commissioner	Dr Vivian Waller	1 July 2024	to	30 June 2025

Accountable Officer

Chief Executive Officer	Merrin Mason PSM	1 July 2024	to	30 June 2025

8.3 Remuneration of Responsible Persons

Total remuneration during the reporting period for statutory office holders and accountable officers amounted to $507,827 (2023–24: $659,245).

Remuneration received or receivable by the Accountable Officer in connection with the management of the Commission during the reporting period was in the range $240,000–$250,000.

8.4. Related parties

The Commission is an independent agency established under the *Victoria Law Reform Commission Act 2000*. It is a wholly owned and controlled entity of the State of Victoria.

Related parties of the Commission include:

> all key management personnel and their close family members and personal business interests (controlled entities, joint ventures and entities they have significant influence over);

> all cabinet ministers and their close family members; and

> all departments and public sector entities that are controlled and consolidated into the whole of state consolidated financial statements.

All related party transactions have been entered into on an arm's length basis.

Significant transactions with government-related entities

The Commission received funding of $3.699 million (2024: $3.069 million) and made payments of $0.254 million (2024: $0.199 million) to government-related entities.

During the year, the Commission had the following government-related entity transactions:

> $94,810 in payroll tax to the State Revenue Office (2024: $86,347).

> $159,706 in other transactions that are collectively, but not individually significant (2024: $112,787).

Key management personnel of the Commission includes the Attorney-Generals, the Hon. Sonya Kilkenny MP; and the Hon. Jaclyn Symes MP; the Acting Attorney-General, the Hon. Enver Erdogan MP and the Chair and Commissioners of the Victorian Law Reform Commission and members of the Senior Executive Team, which includes:

Key Management Personnel	Position Title
The Hon. Anthony North KC	Chair
The Hon. Jennifer Coate AO	Acting Chair
Liana Buchanan	Commissioner
The Hon. Jennifer Coate AO	Commissioner
Kathleen Foley SC	Commissioner
Bernadette McSherry	Commissioner
Dan Nicholson	Commissioner
Gemma Varley PSM	Commissioner
Dr Vivian Waller	Commissioner
Ms Merrin Mason PSM	Chief Executive Officer

The Minister's remuneration and allowances is set by the *Parliamentary Salaries and Superannuation Act 1968* and is reported within the State's Annual Financial Report.

	Total Remuneration	
Remuneration of Key management personnel	**2025** $	**2024** $
Short-term employee benefits	438,219	580,146
Post-employment benefits	54,718	61,739
Other long-term benefits	14,890	17,360
Total remuneration	**507,827**	**659,245**
Total number of key management personnel [(a)]	**9**	**10**
Total annualised employee equivalents [(b)]	**2.2**	**2.8**

(a) Total number of key management personnel includes paid and unpaid Commissioners.
(b)Annualised employee equivalent is based on the time fraction worked over the reporting period.

Transactions and balances with key management personnel and other related parties

Given the breadth and depth of State government activities, related parties transact with the Victorian public sector in a manner consistent with other members of the public e.g. stamp duty and other government fees and charges. Further employment of processes within the Victorian public sector occur on terms and conditions consistent with the *Public Administration Act 2004* and Codes of Conduct and Standards issued by the Victorian Public Sector Commission. Procurement processes occur on terms and conditions consistent with the Victorian Government Purchasing Board requirements.

Outside of normal citizen type transactions with the Commission, there were no related party transactions that involved key management personnel, their close family members and their personal business interests. No provision has been required, nor any expense recognised, for impairment of receivables from related parties.

8.5 Renumeration of auditors

	Total Remuneration	
	2025 $	**2024** $
Victorian Auditor General's Office		
Audit of the financial statements	29,200	26,200
Total renumeration of auditors	**29,200**	**26,200**

8.6. Subsequent events

No other matters or circumstances have arisen since the end of the financial year which significantly affected or may affect the operations of the Commission, the results of its financial operations or the state of affairs of the Commission in the future financial years.

8.7. Glossary of technical terms

The following is a summary of the major technical terms used in this report.

Commitments include those operating, capital and other outsourcing commitments arising from non-cancellable contractual or statutory sources.

Comprehensive result is the amount included in the operating statement representing total change in net worth other than transactions with owners as owners.

Controlled item generally refers to the capacity of the Commission to benefit from that item in the pursuit of the entity's objectives and to deny or regulate the access of others to that benefit.

Current grants are amounts payable or receivable for current purposes for which no economic benefits of equal value are receivable or payable in return.

Depreciation is an expense that arises from the consumption through wear or time of a produced physical or intangible asset. This expense is classified as a 'transaction' and so reduces the 'net result from transaction'.

Effective interest method is the method used to calculate the amortised cost of a financial asset and of allocating interest income over the relevant period. The effective interest rate is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash receipts through the expected life of the financial asset or, where appropriate, a shorter period.

Finance lease is a lease that transfers substantially all the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of an underlying asset.

Financial asset is any asset that is either:

> cash

> an equity instrument of another entity

> a contractual right to receive cash or another financial asset from another entity or to exchange financial assets or financial liabilities with another entity under conditions that are potentially favourable to the entity.

Financial instrument is any contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity.

Financial liability is any liability that is:

> a contractual obligation to deliver cash or another financial asset to another entity or to exchange financial assets or financial liabilities with another entity under conditions that are potentially unfavourable to the entity.

Financial statements in this Report comprises:

> a comprehensive operating statement for the period;

> a balance sheet as at the end of the period;

> a statement of changes in equity for the period;

> a cash flow statement for the period;

> notes, comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information;

> comparative information in respect of the preceding period as specified in paragraph 38 of *AASB 101 Presentation of Financial Statements*.

Leases are rights conveyed in a contract, or part of a contract, the right to use an asset (the underlying asset) for a period of time in exchange for consideration.

Net result is a measure of financial performance of the operations for the period. It is the net result of items of revenue, gains and expenses (including losses) recognised for the period, excluding those classified as 'other non-owner movements in equity'.

Net worth is calculated as assets less liabilities, which is an economic measure of wealth.

Non-financial assets are all assets that are not financial assets. It includes inventories and plant and equipment.

Operating result is a measure of financial performance of the operations for the period. It is the net result of items of revenue, gains and expenses (including losses) recognised for the period, excluding those that are classified as 'other non-owner movements in equity'. Refer also 'net result'.

Other economic flows included in net result are changes in the volume or value of an asset or liability that do not result from transactions. In simple terms, other economic flows are changes arising from market remeasurements. They include gains and losses from disposals, revaluations and impairments of non-current physical and intangible assets and fair value changes of financial instruments.

Payables includes short and long-term trade debt and accounts payable, grants, taxes and interest payable.

Receivables includes amounts owing from government through appropriation receivable, short and long-term trade credit and accounts receivable, accrued investment income, grants, taxes and interest receivable.

Supplies and services generally represent cost of goods sold and the day to day running costs, including maintenance costs, incurred in the normal operations of the Commission.

Transactions are those economic flows that are considered to arise as a result of policy decisions, usually an interaction between two entities by mutual agreement. They also include flows into an entity such as depreciation, where the owner is simultaneously acting as the owner of the depreciating asset and as the consumer of the service provided by the asset. Transactions can be in kind (e.g. assets provided/given free of charge or for nominal consideration) or where the final consideration is cash. In simple terms, transactions arise from the policy decisions of the Government

8.8. Style conventions

Figures in the tables and in the text have been rounded. Discrepancies in tables between totals and sums of components reflect rounding. Percentage variations in all tables are based on the underlying unrounded amounts.

The financial statements and notes are presented based on the illustration for a government agency in the 2024-25 Tier 2 *Model Financial Report for Victorian Public Sector Agencies*. The presentation of other disclosures is generally consistent with the other disclosures made in earlier publications of the Commission's annual reports.

DISCLOSURE INDEX

The annual report of the Commission is prepared in accordance with all relevant Victorian legislations and pronouncements. This index has been prepared to facilitate identification of the Commission's compliance with statutory disclosure requirements.

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Standing Directions & Financial Reporting Directions		
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Note: (a) References to FRDs have been removed from the Disclosure Index if the specific FRDs do not contain requirements that are of the nature of disclosure.

Legislation
Freedom of Information Act 1982
Building Act 1993
Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012
Carers Recognition Act 2012
Disability Act 2006
Local Jobs First Act 2003
Financial Management Act 1994

BUDGET AND ACTUAL OUTCOMES

The Budget Portfolio Outcomes provide comparisons between the actual financial statements of the agency and forecast financial information published in the Budget Papers.

The following table provides information for the current and previous four financial years.

The following Budget Portfolio Outcomes statements are not subject to audit by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office.

Financial review of operations and financial condition

Five year financial summary	2025 $	2024 $	2023 $	2022 $	2021 $
Annual Appropriation Actual	415,000	839,000	824,000	1,226,200	890,000
Output appropriations – Department of Justice and Community Safety	762,000	720,200	778,600	816,200	890,000
Grants - Specific Purpose – Department of Justice and Community Safety	-	-	-	410,000	-
Grants - Legal Services Board	2,937,410	2,338,234	2,040,375	1,893,049	1,836,210
Other Income	-	11,000	-	-	-
Total revenue	**3,699,410**	**3,069,434**	**2,818,975**	**3,119,249**	**2,726,210**
Total expenses	(2,868,209)	(2,376,941)	(2,391,129)	(3,025,387)	(3,168,704)
Net result from continuing operations	829,245	711,078	430,659	110,035	(436,752)
Net cash flow from operating activities	1,112,315	442,679	701,990	456,534	(92,795)
Total assets	**3,082,561**	**2,392,142**	**1,059,346**	**933,260**	**1,106,124**
Total liabilities	**956,057**	**1,094,883**	**473,166**	**790,579**	**1,090,271**

The difference between the annual appropriation and the actual grant from the Department of Justice and Community Safety is mainly as a result of the annual Government Efficiency Dividend, plus the annual adjustment for depreciation funded capital expenditure. The Appropriation amount for 2025 was incorrectly calculated and was subsequently adjusted.

VICTORIAN LAW REFORM COMMISSION

Published by the Victorian Law Reform Commission

The Victorian Law Reform Commission was established under the *Victorian Law Reform Commission Act 2000* as a central agency for developing law reform in Victoria.

This office is located on the land of the Traditional Custodians, the people of the Kulin Nations. We acknowledge their history, culture and Elders both past and present.

ISBN: 978-0-6452813-6-1

Published by order, or under the authority, of the Parliament of Victoria

October 2025

Design: Letterbox

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