

SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

BETWEEN

The Public Defenders

AND

**The Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT)
Limited**

FOR THE PERIOD 1 JULY 2025 to 30 JUNE 2026

This agreement is made on 16/10/25 2025 between the Public Defenders and the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) Limited.

1. PREAMBLE

- 1.1 The role of the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) Limited (hereinafter referred to as the ALS) is to provide legal aid services to Aboriginal people (including people of Torres Strait Island descent, hereinafter referred to collectively as Aboriginal people), in the most effective, efficient and economical manner.
- 1.2 The role of Public Defenders is to advise and appear in criminal proceedings on behalf of legally assisted persons.
- 1.3 Public Defenders are a scarce and valuable resource. Demand for the services of Public Defenders outstrips available resources. The purpose of this service level agreement is to provide for the efficient and effective use of limited Public Defender's resources and to make best use of limited funds available to the ALS. The parties commit themselves, as far as possible, to providing equitable access to the services of Public Defenders in metropolitan, regional and rural New South Wales.
- 1.4 Both parties acknowledge the special need for Aboriginal people within New South Wales to have access to the services of Public Defenders.
- 1.5 In recognition of the above, it is agreed between the parties that:

2. DURATION OF AGREEMENT AND CONSULTATION PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 This service level agreement covers the period 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026.
- 2.2 This agreement will be reviewed by no later than 31 May 2026 with a commitment to enter a further service level agreement covering the period 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027 by that date. Should the agreement for this further period not be entered by this date, then the present agreement shall continue in force in the present terms and pending notice by either party to terminate the agreement, such notice to be not less than three months prior to the date of termination to be nominated by the terminating party in writing.

2.3 The Senior Public Defender or their nominee and an officer nominated by the ALS shall consult on a regular basis, to review the implementation of this agreement, including allocations of Public Defenders. Priorities of work and allocations are only to be changed following agreement by both parties.

2.4 The parties agree to exchange such information as each may regard as necessary for the full consultation and implementation of this agreement.

2.5 Any formal consultation about this agreement shall be minuted.

3. PRIORITY OF WORK AND ALLOCATION OF PUBLIC DEFENDERS

3.1 It is acknowledged that it is within the discretion of the ALS to brief and retain Public Defenders in such matters as it may determine from time to time.

3.2 In the period 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026 work will be briefed as follows in priority order:

- Provision of services at District Court locations serviced by the Public Defenders at the direction of the Senior Public Defender
- Circuit work at the direction of the Senior Public Defender
- Supreme Court trials and related matters
- Appellate work (including Supreme Court, NSWCCA, NSWCA, HCA)
- Inquests as agreed between the parties
- High Risk Offender and Child Protection Offender Prohibition Order applications

3.3 The provision of advice in appellate matters may be undertaken by any Public Defender

3.4 It is acknowledged that in providing advice on merit in appellate matters, a Public Defender is providing advice to the ALS and not providing legal services to a legally assisted person. Public Defenders, consistent with their ethical obligations, may provide advice on merit for more than one co-accused in a matter. The usual rules relating to conflict of interest however may prevent a Public Defender representing more than one party where aid is granted in an appellate matter.

3.5 It is agreed that the solicitors and staff of the ALS will make their best endeavours to provide briefs and other relevant material to the Public Defenders at the earliest opportunity to ensure the most efficient and effective use of the Public Defenders' time. Such briefs as are provided shall be in the proper form.

3.6 The parties acknowledge that in matters where clients are likely to be committed for trial and sentence, early involvement of Public Defenders may result in early and favourable resolution of matters. The ALS agrees that its solicitors will attempt to identify such matters and brief Public Defenders at an early stage and in accordance with the EAGP procedures.

3.7 The Public Defenders agree to provide advance notice to the Principal Legal Officer ALS of the details of any allocations of Public Defenders to appear at regional District Courts in addition to those sittings set out in the **Court Annexure** to enable the ALS to brief such Public Defenders in matters for those sittings, if available and to notify unavailability of Public Defenders for any of the District Courts in the Court Annexure should deployment of Public Defenders by the Senior Public Defender change during the year. Nevertheless, the Public Defenders will attempt to provide services to ALS clients in all regional District Courts whenever possible.

3.8 Attached hereto, marked as **Guidelines Annexure**, are agreed guidelines which together with this agreement comprise the arrangement between the parties for the term of this agreement.

4. OTHER ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT

4.1 It is acknowledged and agreed that the Public Defenders will continue to assist and support the ALS in the provision of legal services by:

- The provision of ad hoc advice to ALS staff either by telephone or other means;
- The provision of research materials and access to Public Defender's research officers, and provision of other legal material;
- The provision of speakers and materials for continuing legal education for ALS staff and private solicitors undertaking ALS matters if available;

- The provision of mentors for ALS trial advocates in accordance with guidelines agreed between the parties; and
- Advice in the preparation of law reform submissions made by the ALS (if requested and where reasonably possible, noting that ALS has dedicated policy lawyers and the views of the Public Defenders and the ALS will not always align).

4.2 It is further agreed that the provision of continuing legal education by Public Defenders to ALS staff shall either be without charge or provided at cost where the Public Defenders are required to pay a fee or other amount to another body to conduct this training. The number of ALS staff permitted to attend continuing legal education at cost or without charge is solely at the discretion of the Public Defenders.

5. FURTHER WORK TO BE UNDERTAKEN

5.1 The parties agree to undertake further work during the currency of this agreement, if necessary, to develop and refine quantifiable measures of workload, efficiency and cost with a view to including these in any subsequent agreements.

6. CONSIDERATION

6.1 In consideration of the performance of this service level agreement the Public Defenders shall be paid the sum of \$203,422 (plus GST). This shall be the agreed consideration for the period of this agreement whether or not, during the course of the financial year, the salaries of Public Defenders are increased as a result of a determination by the Statutory and Other Officers Remuneration Tribunal.

6.2 The Public Defenders will invoice the ALS on 15 October 2025 and 15 April 2026, or as soon after as is practicable, for an amount equivalent to half the agreed payment, (plus GST).

6.3 In default of the ALS or the Public Defenders executing written renewal of this Agreement, the agreement between the ALS and the Public Defenders shall continue unless the ALS or the Public Defenders gives notice in writing of

repudiation of the Agreement, such notice to have effect not less than 21 days after the date of service of such notice upon the other party.

7. TERMINATION OF AGREEMENT

- 7.1 Notwithstanding the preceding terms of this agreement, the Public Defenders reserves the right to terminate this agreement should the current funding arrangements for ALS be altered in any substantial manner. Termination shall not occur until all parties to this agreement are consulted.

8. CONTRACT NOT TRANSFERABLE

- 8.1 The terms and conditions of this agreement are not transferable to any other entity (either currently existing or coming into existence during the currency of this agreement) providing legal services to Aboriginal people as a franchisee.

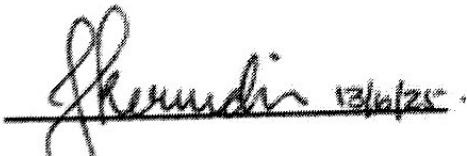
Signed by:



Richard J Wilson SC

Senior Public Defender

who certifies he is duly authorised to sign on behalf of the Public Defenders in the presence of:



Signature:

IRENA KERNICK
CHAMBERS MANAGER.

Signed by:

Karly Warner

Chief Executive Officer
Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT)
Limited who certifies she is duly
authorised to sign on behalf of the ALS
(NSW/ACT) Limited in the presence of:



Signature:

Witness: 

LAUREN STEFANON
PRINCIPAL SOLICITOR.