



ALS

Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) Limited

GETTING TO KNOW THE THE ALS

- An overview of Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ACT -

Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) Limited assists Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men, women and children through legal advice and representation in court, prisoner support when people are leaving prison, and information and referral to further support services.

We have 23 offices and 185 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff across NSW and ACT working towards achieving justice for Aboriginal people and the community.

ALS is an **Aboriginal** organisation giving **FREE legal** advice and court assistance.

We aim for **justice**.

Criminal Law ALS assists Aboriginal men and women, young adults and children who have come into contact with Police or the courts, detention or incarceration. Our solicitors speak up in court to get people out on bail and keep them out of gaol.

Family Law ALS helps Aboriginal people who are having family issues. This might include failing relationships, divorce, and parenting orders for spending time with children.

Care and Protection Law ALS helps Aboriginal people who have child protection issues. This can include when FaCS (DoCS) contact you, or when children are taken away. We also assist families get in contact with children in out-of-home care.

Field Officers ALS Field Officers provide people with immediate access to advice and assistance with extra-legal problems. Field Officers arrange for referral in appropriate cases to service providers, and they provide legal education in the community.

Prisoner ThroughCare ALS aims to reduce the rate of recidivism among Aboriginal offenders. Prisoner ThroughCare provides support to people who are leaving prison through case management to assist in a prisoner's rehabilitation and their return to families and communities.

Custody Notification Service Under NSW law, police must phone the ALS whenever they take an Aboriginal person into police custody, using our 24-hour Custody Notification Service or CNS. An ALS solicitor gives early legal advice to the arrested person and checks they are OK.

Community Legal Education The ALS develops, produces and delivers community legal education to families, communities and organisations.

Law Reform ALS staff respond to key government inquiries and law reform initiatives in the areas of care and protection, coronial, bail and sentencing law.

Other areas of law ALS can provide legal referral for family and civil law issues. We also assist people with fine debt to access Work and Development Orders.

Student Volunteer Program ALS assists university students or graduates who are completing their Diploma or Degree in Law.

how we pull together

ALS is an Aboriginal community-run non-government organisation. We opened our doors in 1970 as a shopfront in Redfern staffed by volunteers, and since then have been providing information and referral, legal advice and court representation to Aboriginal people in NSW and ACT.

Structure

The ALS Executive comprises the senior management team of the ALS and includes the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Legal Officer and Chief Financial Officer.

The ALS operates through four regions covering all of NSW and ACT. The regions are called northern, western, central south eastern, and specialist services covering the whole of the state and territory. Each region is managed by a Regional Manager reporting directly to the Chief Executive Officer.

Company Members

Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) Ltd is a public company, limited by guarantee.

The company consists of thirty Aboriginal people from NSW and ACT who are called company members. There are ten company members from each of the three regions the ALS operates through.

Company members represent their community to the ALS. Any Aboriginal adult of good standing in their community can apply to become a member of the ALS company. If there is more than one applicant for a vacant position, an election is held.

Company members meet at least once per year. A company member's term is three years. There is no limit to the number of three-year terms a company member can seek membership for.

Board of Directors

The ALS Board of Directors is a body of members who jointly oversee the activities of the ALS company.

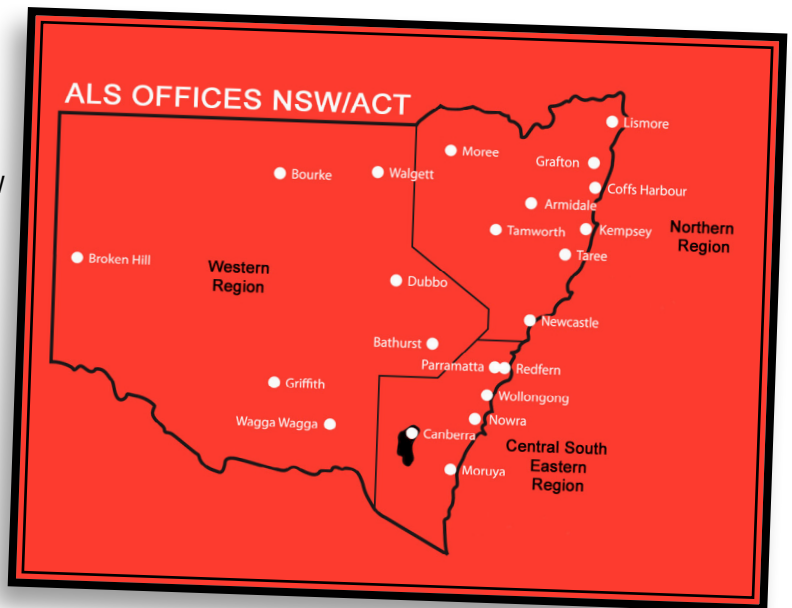
There are fifteen members of the ALS Board of Directors:

- twelve Directors have voting power and are elected by company members (four Directors from each region)
- two Honorary Directors have no voting power and are non-elected positions
- one Executive Director has voting power and is the Chief Executive Officer of the ALS.

To be elected as a member of the Board of Directors, the applicant must first be an ALS Company Member.

Once elected, a Director serves a term of three years. There is no limit to the number of further terms a Director can seek election for. Elections for the position of Director occur every three years. The next election will be held in June 2015.

ALS Honorary Directors are not elected but have been invited by Company Members because of their significant contribution to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal justice and advocacy for many years. An Honorary Director has no voting



power at Board meetings but attends and participates in discussion.

The Company Secretary is the Research and Policy Officer of the ALS.

The Chairperson of the Board of Directors is elected on a rotational basis by a majority vote of Directors for a three-year period. Chairperson Ms Iris White was elected on 2 September 2011. The next election will be held in 2014.

Directors attend Board meetings at least four times per year.

Directors play an active role in giving direction to the ALS Executive, including:

- governing the organisation by assisting in establishing broad policies and objectives through membership of Committees
- selecting, appointing and reviewing the performance of the Chief Executive Officer
- approving annual budgets
- ensuring the availability of adequate financial resources
- participating in strategic plan development and progress against key outcomes
- accounting to stakeholders for the organisation's performance
- participating on interview panels for full-time permanent positions within the ALS.

Alternate Directors

Each Director of the Board of Directors can have an Alternate Director, as approved by the Board of Directors.

To learn more about the ALS, please visit our website at www.alsnswact.org.au