

This response to the Access to Justice Review:

- draws the Department's attention to the excellent resource available to the profession in the Law Library of Victoria,
- highlights the ways in which the Law Library enhances access to justice, and
- identifies a significant opportunity for the Department to engage with the Law Library to improve the Library's structure.

1. The availability of easily accessible information on legal assistance services and the Victorian justice system, including advice on resolving common legal problems

The Law Library of Victoria is the pre-eminent legal information resource for the judiciary, the legal profession and all members of the Victorian community. We are renowned for our collection, services and community engagement which together promote access to justice and enhance the administration of justice in Victoria.

Defined by principles of equitable and efficient access to information, the Library builds capability and improves the administration of justice through the provision of legal information resources, reference services and research skills training. We provide information in a range of formats, including videos, designed to increase knowledge of general law concepts and legal research skills.

The Law Library of Victoria physical collections, resources and services are available via the Supreme Court Library whilst the website allows access to the digital collections at all times. Providing these resources to the legal profession enables them to operate with lower overheads, which in turn reduces the cost to clients. The website also provides information on legal assistance services and the Victorian justice system.

7. Whether there is any duplication in services provided by legal assistance providers, and options for reducing that duplication, including the development of legal education material

The Law Library of Victoria has been formed to remove duplication of effort and share resources amongst the Courts and VCAT, and to extend services more fully into the profession and to the public. In doing so, the Library has demonstrated capability to strategically manage collections and expand the reach of legal information and services. The Library is structured so that with the right investment, services can be extended to the profession throughout regional and rural Victoria.

The Library creates general legal education material (refer www.lawlibrary.vic.gov.au) that supports and educates those who are not familiar with the Victorian legal system, for example our guide to legislation.

The Library will be able to continue to develop services and strategic management of collections and resources further through appropriate statutory provision for its operation. Engagement with the Department of Justice and Regulation is required to realize this vision.



THE LAW LIBRARY
OF VICTORIA

Legal Information Service of the Year 2015

Australian Law Librarians Association

9. Options for providing better support to self-represented litigants throughout the Victorian justice system.

Whilst the Law Library of Victoria is primarily a library for the profession, funded by the profession, it is no longer exclusively used by the profession and judiciary. Our doors are open to everyone - we don't discriminate: QCs, self-represented litigants, law students, judges and tourists, The Library provides a path to information and a greater understanding of law in a way that is easy to use, and provides avenues for self-represented litigants to find the relevant information and resources they need.

Our experienced reference librarians support self-represented litigants with their information and research needs by being well placed to:

- help them identify and locate information sources
- provide guides to standard research strategies, such as advising on tools or keywords, as well as external resources and services that are available

Whilst we provide general assistance, we are not a legal research service and are unable to provide legal advice however the support material we create is easily adapted and used by self-represented litigants as well as the agencies that support them, such as Legal Aid and Community Legal Centres.