



Attorney-General's Department

STRATEGIC PLAN

2025–2029

Acknowledgement

The Attorney-General's Department acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work and where we provide services to the people of the Northern Territory.

We honour the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships with the land and waters.

We recognise the rich histories, languages and customs of the Traditional Custodians and pay respect to Elders past, present and future and affirm the department's commitment to ensure access to justice for Aboriginal people and all Territorians.

Chief Executive Officer's message

As we embark on our four-year strategic plan, I want to acknowledge the immense pressures the department is experiencing. The backbone of our department is the dedication and resilience of our workforce, and I am deeply grateful for the unwavering commitment and support of our employees.

Justice is a system

The Attorney-General's Department is a crucial part of the justice system. It plays a significant role in creating a safe and stable community, upholding the rule of law, and ensuring access to justice for all.

This strategic plan aims for improvement but recognises that improvements cannot be made in isolation.

Over the next four years, my primary focus will be on building strong relationships with the Government, other NTPS departments, and key justice stakeholders. By working together, we can create a more efficient, effective and fair justice system for all Territorians.

Our purpose

The rule of law ensures that Territorians are governed by laws made by their elected representatives and administered justly, including fair and prompt trials. It protects human rights and provides a safe, stable community. However, access to justice is not always equal, especially for the vulnerable.

Our department exists to uphold the rule of law and ensure everyone has equal access to the justice system. Through courageous advice and innovative practices, we aim to eliminate barriers, support the vulnerable, and enhance community well-being.

Meeting challenges and finding opportunities

We face significant challenges, including record high numbers of new matters before the court.

This surge places significant demand on our employees, judges, the court system, the prosecution, community legal services, as well as our policing and corrections partners. Additionally, ageing infrastructure and technology, along with a stretched workforce, add to these pressures.



However, within these challenges also lie opportunities.

By focusing on law reform, early resolution of matters, modernising technology and expanding infrastructure to meet demand, we can better meet demand and improve outcomes.

We're also focused on long-term impact by leading collaboration across the sector to drive initiatives that change behaviour, reduce crime, and alleviate pressure on the system.

Our vision for the future

This plan seeks to move us towards our vision of a safe Territory, supported by an accessible and fair justice system. We aim to do this by focusing on initiatives that address immediate demand pressures while also looking for ways to address the root causes of crime. Furthermore, we recognise that we cannot do any of this without supporting our workforce in these demanding times.

I am honoured to be the CEO of this department, championing our vision and purpose in service to all Territorians. Together, we will work towards this vision over the next four years.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Gemma'.

Gemma Lake
CEO, Attorney-General's Department

Our vision for the future

Our vision is a safe Territory, supported by an accessible and fair justice system.

We recognise that communities are safe and stable when Territorians have their rights protected and have trust in and equal access to the justice system.

Our purpose

We exist to support community safety, enhance access to justice and uphold the rule of law.

Support Community Safety

We support a safe, stable and inclusive community. We do this by protecting individual, worker and consumer rights, reducing crime, supporting victims, and fostering trust in the justice system.

Enhance Access to Justice

We ensure all Territorians have equal and fair access to the justice system. We do this by providing legal and policy support, protecting the vulnerable and through support to the courts and administration of the justice system.

Uphold the Rule of Law

We strive to uphold, protect, and promote the rule of law. This includes maintaining a fair and impartial justice system providing trusted and courageous advice and supporting government to make strong laws.

Our approach

We achieve our goals using a combination of committed service delivery, courageous advice, legal services and representation, policy and legislative solutions and strategic partnerships.

Committed Service Delivery

We are committed to deliver our core and frontline services across the Territory with the resources available to support the community we serve.

Courageous Advice

We are experts in legal policy and justice frameworks. We support the Attorney-General and NT Government entities with courageous, timely, and evidence-based advice.

Quality Legal Services and Representation

We provide legal services to government entities and act as the model litigant. We offer independent prosecution services, supporting victims and the vulnerable.

Targeted Policy and Legislative Solutions

We conduct analysis, consultation and research to develop policy solutions and to change laws to advance a fair and just Territory.

Strategic Partnerships

We develop effective and strong partnerships for improved outcomes across the whole justice continuum. We respect the independence of the Courts and the statutory office holders we support.

Our values

Our work is guided by the NT public sector values and the additional value of being courageous in our approach to the work we do.

Impartiality

We are apolitical and provide the Government with advice that is objective, timely and based on the best available evidence.



Courage

We are trusted advisors and provide expert, frank and fearless advice and take action to protect rights and ensure fair access to justice for all Territorians.



Commitment to Service

We are professional, hardworking, effective, innovative and efficient, working collaboratively to achieve the best results for the Northern Territory.



Ethical Practice

We uphold the highest standards of practice and act with integrity in all that we do.



Accountability

We are transparent and accountable in all our actions.



Respect

We respect all people, and in particular their rights as individuals.



Diversity

We value the diversity of our workforce, as well as the Northern Territory population we serve.

Our organisation

The Attorney-General's Department provides strategic law and legal policy services to government, strategic policy support across the justice continuum, support to courts and tribunals, prosecutions, regulatory, registration and board secretariat services, advocacy, guardianship, trusts, estates and will services, and mediation and complaint resolution services.

We deliver services across all of the NT. Our core service and delivery teams are:

Legal Services

- Solicitor-General
- Solicitor for the Northern Territory Commercial and Litigation
- Crime Victims Services Unit

Justice Services

- Higher and Lower Courts and Tribunals administration and court support services
- Community Justice Centre
- Land Titles Office
- Births, Deaths and Marriages
- Parole Board

Strategic Policy Coordination

- Strategic Policy Unit
- Aboriginal Justice Unit
- Legislation and Legal Policy Unit
- Criminal Justice Research, Evaluation and Statistics
- Secretariat Unit

Business and Enabling Services

- Finance and Budgets
- Business Services
- Workforce Governance

Strategy and Performance

- Strategy and Performance
- Audit, Risk and Integrity

Director of Public Prosecutions

- Crown Prosecutions
- Summary Prosecutions
- Witness Assistance Services

NT WorkSafe

- NT WorkSafe

Independent Offices

- NT Consumer Affairs
- Public Guardian and Public Trustee
- Liquor Commission
- Anti-Discrimination Commission
- Children's Commission
- Health and Community Services Complaints Commission

Our Strategic Goals 2025-2029

Our strategic goals for the next four years consider our current operational challenges and focus on opportunities that will have the greatest impact to the community we serve and our workforce delivering critical frontline services.

These goals are connected and cannot be worked on in isolation. Success in one area will boost successes in other areas.





Goal 1: Improving the system

We will focus on initiatives to ensure an efficient and effective justice system that enhances access to justice and meets demand for the department's services.

Why this is a priority

The demand on the department's services has outpaced the current systems' ability to manage it effectively. This places undue pressure on all parts of the justice system including our employees who are committed to delivering quality core services.

Focusing on ways to improve the system means finding ways to support the court system to operate more efficiently through improved law reform, policy and practice changes. It includes appropriately resourcing the judiciary, court support staff and legal representatives to meet the demand. It also means doing everything we can to assert our needs for improved technology and infrastructure to continue to carry out the important work that is required in an efficient and modern way.

Our focus

- 1.1 Reduce time to justice through early resolution of cases
- 1.2 Streamline policy and practice to support swift justice
- 1.3 Advance efforts to address our need for improved infrastructure and technology
- 1.4 Progress law reform
- 1.5 Support our service providers in the valued work they perform

Our outcomes

If we are successful in achieving this goal we will have:

- A higher rate of resolving cases early meaning more cases move through the system in an efficient manner, reducing time on remand.
- Implemented legislative amendments and procedural changes to streamline processes in the justice system and administratively across the department.
- Exhausted all available avenues to obtain resources to progress much needed infrastructure and technology upgrades.
- Quality services are provided to our community with prudence and accountability to ensure access to justice for Territorians.

Performance measures by 2029

Headline measure

- Increase case finalisation rates

Supporting measures

- Reduction in the average time spent on remand
- Reduction in the numbers of criminal listings



Goal 2: Strengthening the system

We will work with communities and key partners to tackle the root causes of crime which in turn will reduce pressure on the justice system and support safe communities.

Why this is a priority

The significant increase in the demand on the department's services is complex and reflective of a shift in the broader social fabric observed through an increase in criminal behaviour. This goal seeks to address the drivers of crime by leading work across the whole justice system and by placing victims' needs at the centre. To do this we recognise that strengthening partnerships with key stakeholders is critical.

We also recognise that taking proactive steps to empower communities and focusing on initiatives that support behaviour change. In addition, through the department and our independent offices we also seek to protect rights by advocating as well as providing community and individual education on rights and responsibilities.

Our outcomes

If we are successful in achieving this goal we will have:

- Led cross-sector coordination to tackle the root causes of crime.
- Improved supports for victims of crime as they navigate the justice system.
- Supported our regulatory bodies and independent offices to deliver critical education and awareness campaigns, leading to outcomes such as reduced workplace injuries.

Our focus

- 2.1 Foster collaboration with key partners to reduce crime
- 2.2 Support victims and enhance community justice outcomes
- 2.3 Protect individual rights through education and advocacy
- 2.4 Empower communities to be accountable

Performance measures by 2029

Headline measure

- Reduction in the numbers of criminal lodgements

Supporting measures

- An increase in the number of victims of crime assistance applications finalised
- Number of education events conducted, promoting rights and education of obligations
- A reduction of the incident rate of workplace serious injury and disease claims per 1,000 workers in the Territory



Goal 3: Boosting our resilience

We will improve the way we work to increase employee wellbeing, capacity and organisational impact.

Why this is a priority

We cannot achieve our goals without the support, dedication and goodwill of our employees. This goal supports our strategic workforce plan by boosting our employee and organisational resilience through a positive culture for health and wellbeing.

It recognises that to best serve the community and our clients we need the right people in the right roles performing at their best. We aim to support and grow our workforce through targeted development and improving retention of our skilled people.

This goal also seeks to build connections across the department, fostering teamwork and leveraging internal expertise for maximum impact.

Our outcomes

If we are successful in achieving this goal we will have:

- Implemented evidence-based initiatives that support mental health and wellbeing in our department and created an inclusive workplace where employees can thrive and fulfill their work potential.
- Identified critical roles to inform recruitment activities and succession planning.
- Reinvigorated regular performance, development and career planning conversations, driving a performance culture.
- Improved coordination of key projects across the department and increasing internal connections and networking.

Our focus

- 3.1 Support a positive culture for the health and wellbeing of our employees
- 3.2 Ensure we have the right people to respond to the department's current and emerging needs
- 3.3 Grow our capability and performance
- 3.4 Improve connections within the department for greater impact

Performance measures by 2029

Headline measure

- Improve employee-satisfaction and engagement survey results

Supporting measures

- A reduction in average time lost from workers' compensation claims
- Decrease vacancy rates in critical roles
- Increase the percentage of employees with performance and development plans (myPerformance plans) in place

Ensuring success

The Executive Leadership Team will provide strategic oversight for implementation of this plan.

The plan will be implemented through a series of annual Strategic Action Plans developed by each division in the department. These Strategic Action Plans will detail the key priorities for each division and the necessary actions for each year, over and above our ongoing core business.

These divisional action plans can then be distilled to team priorities and individual performance tasks.



Our performance and success in implementing this plan will be monitored and reported regularly through:

- Quarterly progress updates against the Strategic Action Plans.
- Annual Performance reporting against baseline data.
- Mid-point evaluation looking at progress and performance reporting, delivered in June 2027.
- Final evaluation looking at progress and performance reporting and lessons learned, delivered by May 2029.

Reporting against both the measures and progress updates should provide a comprehensive view of our achievements against the objectives in the strategic plan.

Assessment of these achievements will also inform annual reviews of the department's strategic risks to ensure we are addressing any risks to pursuing our strategic goals and objectives as a department.

