



New employee information guide



Contents

Working at Legal Aid Queensland	3
Workforce diversity	3
Employee health and wellbeing	3
Flexible working arrangements	4
Career development	5
Study assistance	5
Employment security	5
Union membership.....	6
Employment conditions and benefits.....	6
Probation.....	6
Recognition of prior service in other government organisations	6
Mandatory Disclosures	6
Engaging in other employment	6
Lobbyists.....	7
Declaration of interests	7
Your Salary	8
Remuneration	8
Leave loading.....	8
Superannuation.....	8
Income protection insurance.....	8
Salary packaging	9
Practising certificates	9
Your leave entitlements	9
Leave and travel concessions for remote areas.....	11



Working at Legal Aid Queensland

LAQ strives to ensure our staff are working in a safe and inclusive environment. We respect the people we assist and those with whom we work.

We expect our employees to comply with:

- the [Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service](#)
- relevant professional codes of conduct, and
- workplace health and safety requirements.

All LAQ buildings and surrounds are non-smoking.

Workforce diversity

LAQ is an equal opportunity employer, committed to promoting workforce diversity.

In accordance with the [Anti-Discrimination Act 1991](#) and the [Industrial Relations Act 2016](#); discrimination on the basis of sex; relationship status, pregnancy, parental status, breastfeeding, age, race, impairment, religious belief or religious activity, political belief or activity, trade union activity, lawful sexual activity, gender identity, sexuality, family responsibilities or association with, or in relation to, a person identified on the basis of the above attributes will not be tolerated.

To promote workforce participation, we offer flexible working arrangements and support and facilitate reasonable adjustments.

Facilities can be made available for applicants with disabilities. If you require any reasonable adjustments please advise the contact officer given to you during recruitment as soon as practicable to discuss your requirements.

If you are deaf, hearing or speech impaired, you can contact us through the National Relay Service TTY call **133 677**, or Speak & Listen call **1300 555 727**, or using their Auslan video relay service. For more information go to www.relayservice.gov.au. Ask the service to dial the contact officer given to you during recruitment or alternatively email the People, Culture and Capability team careers@legalaid.qld.gov.au to speak with a member of LAQ's People Culture and Capability Team.

In accordance with the Queensland Government's [commitment to inclusion and diversity](#), LAQ is committed to building an inclusive and diverse workforce that better reflects the community we serve. This means creating an inclusive culture that promotes the skills and insights of our people irrespective of gender, ethnicity, generation, sexual orientation or disability.

We recognise and value the varied skills, knowledge, backgrounds and perspectives people bring to their work and we embrace strategies that accommodate differences in background, perspectives and other factors (such as family responsibilities).

Employee health and wellbeing

LAQ is committed to providing support to staff in managing health and lifestyle issues and, to this end, we offer a number of health and wellbeing programs including:

- Employee assistance program:
 - LAQ has retained the services of three specialist providers to establish and maintain our Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
 - These professional counselling services are provided to LAQ employees and their immediate families
 - Sessions are voluntary, confidential and free of charge



- Counselling is provided on a broad range of topics (personal, financial and career)
- Career prospects of an employee who uses the EAP will not be adversely affected as a result of that employee's participation
- No information shared with an EAP counsellor, including the name of the person attending, is available to any other party without the written consent of the person involved, and
- The program is endorsed by both peak trade union and employer bodies.
- Vaccination programs
 - All employees are offered the opportunity to receive a free influenza (flu) vaccination each year, and
 - Vaccination for Hepatitis B is also available to front line staff.

Flexible working arrangements

At LAQ, we aim to maximize service delivery to the community whilst providing flexibility to our employees. We are committed to helping staff find a balance between work and their lives outside of work.

To support our employees to balance work and life responsibilities, the flexible working arrangements outlined below may be available. These arrangements will be subject to operational convenience and further discussion and agreement with the relevant manager and director. Successful applicants are encouraged to discuss flexible working arrangements with the selection panel.

- Working hours
 - Our full-time staff work a 36.25-hour week
 - Ordinary daily hours are 7 hours 15 minutes
 - Standard hours are between 9:00am - 5.00pm Monday to Friday inclusive; with a lunch break of 45 minutes between 12 noon and 2pm for employees who work 36.25 hours per week
 - Working arrangements shall provide flexible starting and ceasing times for employees within the prescribed spread of hours 7.00am to 7.00pm Monday to Friday inclusive unless such arrangements are not operationally viable
 - The maximum number of ordinary hours to be worked on any one day shall not exceed 9.5 hours exclusive of meal breaks to be worked within the prescribed spread of hours (as defined), and
 - In determining hours of duty, wherever practicable, we will take into account the needs of our workers including those with family responsibilities or disabilities.
- Part-time arrangements
 - A part-time employee works less than the standard fortnightly hours on an ongoing basis (with approval from their manager). They enjoy the same employment entitlements associated with full-time employment but these are reduced proportionally to reflect the reduced hours worked.
- Job sharing
 - Two or more employees make a voluntary agreement (with approval from their manager/s) to share one full-time job, each working part-time on a continuing basis.
- Telecommuting (work from home)
 - Working outside of the central workplace, using telecommunications technology to replace part, or all, of the physical journey to work.
- Discretionary leave without pay
 - With approval in exceptional circumstances employees may take an approved amount of unpaid leave without pay.



- Accrued/accumulated time
 - Accumulated, or 'flex', time provides employees with opportunities for 'banking' any approved, accrued overtime hours with a view to accessing a maximum of five 'flex' days per 28 day work cycle
 - It can be taken in 15-minute multiples to a maximum of 36.25 hours in a 28 day cycle
 - Sufficient credits must be accrued before the requested time is taken, and
 - Employees may automatically carry over a maximum of 36.25 hours credit from one work cycle to the next.
- Aggregated/averaged hours of work
 - Aggregating working hours enables employees to work varied weekly hours, provided that at the end of a stated work cycle (e.g. 3 months) the employee has worked the total ordinary hours. Employees should seek advice from their line manager regarding the work cycle applicable for this purpose.
- Compressed hours
 - Employees perform their full-time weekly hours over a reduced number of days.
- Staggered hours
 - Within the prescribed spread of hours, employees may stagger their start and finish times to come in earlier and so finish earlier or come in later and finish later while still working the required number of weekly hours.
- Purchased leave or extra leave for proportionate salary
 - Employees may purchase up to an additional 6 weeks of annual leave in a 12-month period. Fortnightly salary is proportionally reduced to reflect the additional leave purchased.

Career development

At LAQ, we understand our employees are the organisation's most important resource. We offer challenging and engaging work and we need and expect consistently high standards of performance from our employees so we can achieve our strategic objectives and ensure our clients receive the best possible service we can provide.

LAQ is committed to supporting the personal and professional development of our employees assisting them to develop the skills and abilities that will help them to work toward the achievement of career and strategic objectives.

Study assistance

At LAQ, we are committed to helping our staff develop their skills and further their careers. That's why we offer permanent employees support to help them complete approved courses or research, including leave to:

- attend classes or courses
- attend residential school programs, and/or
- study for and complete exams.

We may also pay some work-related course fees and other costs, depending on the course being studied.

Employment security

LAQ is strongly committed to maximising employment security for permanent public sector employees, in line with the Queensland Government's [Employment Security Policy](#).



Union membership

LAQ acknowledges union delegates and job representatives have a role to play within our workplace, including during the agreement making process. We promote joint union and employer consultation (including through our Agency Consultative Committee) and encourage employees who wish to join and maintain financial membership of an organisation of employees that has the right to represent their industrial interests.

Subject to relevant legislation, LAQ employees are permitted full access to union delegates/officials during working hours to discuss any employment matter or seek union advice, provided that service delivery is not disrupted, and work requirements are not unduly affected. For more information see the Together Queensland website <https://www.together.org.au/> or telephone 1800 177 244. Together is a branch of the Australian Services Union.

Your union delegates provide support in the workplace for members. They liaise with management about issues that are important to members in LAQ and they work with management to ensure LAQ provide the best services and workplace for clients and staff.

Employment conditions and benefits

Probation

Any successful applicant who is not a current, permanent Queensland Public Service employee will initially be appointed to a minimum probationary period of 3 months. In certain circumstances and with employee agreement a probationary period of more than 3 months may apply. The longer period agreed upon must be reasonable having regard to the nature and circumstances of the employment.

Recognition of prior service in other government organisations

You can ask for your sick and long service leave entitlements to be carried over from your previous job to Legal Aid Queensland if you were working for a:

- federal or other state public service organisation
- statutory authority
- public hospital
- local government organisation, or
- tertiary educational institution.

Prior service is also counted for calculating parental leave. You may only transfer entitlements if your break in service between the 2 organisations was less than 12 months.

For temporary employees, recognition of prior service is limited to previous service with a “government entity” as defined in section 24 of the *Public Service Act 2008*.

The recognition of previous casual employment is limited to determining service for long service leave and paid parental leave purposes only.

Mandatory Disclosures

Engaging in other employment

Section 71 of the [Legal Aid Queensland Act 1997](#) provides that a Legal Aid lawyer may practise as a lawyer, or engage in paid employment, other than for LAQ, only with the written approval of the LAQ Board.



LAQ's Engaging in Other Employment Policy requires that all LAQ employees who engage or will be engaging in other employment, whether within the Queensland public sector or elsewhere, declare the other employment if the other employment:

- is, or has the potential to be, a real or apparent conflict of interest in relation to the employee's employment with LAQ (e.g. as a supplier of goods and services to LAQ and a decision-maker in relation to such purchases, or as an employee of a preferred supplier of legal services to LAQ)
- has the potential to impact adversely on the employee's ability, health or well-being to safely and effectively carry out official duties in their LAQ employment (e.g. working nights as a cab driver and being too tired to effectively perform LAQ duties during normal operating hours)
- has the potential to compromise the integrity of or to reflect seriously and adversely on LAQ (e.g. private employment or private practice in a role related to LAQ duties), and/or
- results in, or has the potential to result in, the misuse of information, intellectual property, physical or other LAQ resources (e.g. running an internet-based business from within LAQ).

The LAQ Board or its delegate will assess and may authorise (or decline to authorise) the activity. If it is determined that the other employment breaches the principles outlined in the policy, the employee is required to resolve the concerns in favour of LAQ to the satisfaction of the LAQ Board or its delegate within 14 calendar days.

Existing employees must notify the Board or its delegate of any new or material change in the nature of any other employment in which they are engaged within 14 calendar days, if that new or material change is covered by the principles outlined in the policy.

Failure by an applicant/employee to resolve concerns to the satisfaction of the Board or its delegate may result in a breach of policy and/or the Code of Conduct.

Lobbyists

It is LAQ policy that all new employees are to provide to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), within one month of taking up duty, a disclosure of employment as a lobbyist in the previous two years in accordance with the PSC [Disclosure of Previous Employment as a Lobbyist Policy](#).

LAQ employees are to fully disclose any work they have performed as a lobbyist in the previous two years including any previous lobbying activities that may have the potential to:

- impact on their ability to properly and impartially discharge the duties of their role, and/or
- be a real or perceived conflict of interest in relation to their role.

Should the CEO determine that there is the potential for a real or perceived conflict of interest; the employee is required to resolve the concerns in favour of the public interest to the satisfaction of the CEO within 14 calendar days. Failure by the employee to resolve the concerns to the satisfaction of the CEO may result in a breach of this policy and/or the Code of Conduct.

Any disclosure is maintained in confidence and available only to the employee and the CEO or their delegate.

Declaration of interests

At LAQ, all Senior Executive Service (SES) executives are responsible for fully disclosing their interests that may have a bearing, or be perceived to have a bearing, on their ability to properly and impartially discharge the duties of their office.



Executives are also responsible for disclosing the interests of their partner and/or dependents only if those interests have a bearing, or may be perceived to have a bearing, on their ability to properly and impartially discharge the duties of their office.

A Declaration of Interests is to be provided to the Chief Executive on an annual basis. Responsibility for the recognition of a real or perceived conflict of interest rests solely with the executive concerned.

Newly appointed SES officers must provide a Declaration of Interests within one month of taking up duty.

See the PSC [Declaration of Interests - Senior Executive Service and Equivalent Employees Policy](#) for more information.

Your Salary

Remuneration

The total remuneration value (which would have been on the role description) includes a base salary, employer's superannuation contribution (based on the employee contribution) and leave loading (17.5% paid on four weeks recreation leave per annum).

Applicants for SO and SES vacancies should also refer to the [Senior Executive Service - Employment conditions \(Directive 10/17\)](#) and [Senior Officers – Employment conditions \(Directive 11/17\)](#) available on the Public Service Commission (PSC) website <https://www.forgov.qld.gov.au>.

At LAQ, our employee's salaries (or rates of pay) are paid in accordance with the [Legal Aid Queensland Employees Award](#).

Appointment will normally be at the minimum pay point of the relevant classification level. However, if you are an external applicant (or government employee who has relevant acting in higher duties) and present a case to the selection panel demonstrating a higher level of skills and knowledge, you may be able to negotiate salary within that classification level.

Employees who work in Cairns, Mackay, Mount Isa and Townsville are also paid a locality allowance.

Leave loading

Employees are eligible for loading on annual leave accrued. This is paid once a year, generally in the first pay of December. Pay in advance may only be requested if you are travelling overseas, or to a remote area, or for cases of extreme hardship. Leave loading is paid at 17.5 percent on four weeks annual leave or at 14 percent for employees in remote locations (Cairns, Mackay, Mount Isa or Townsville) who are eligible for five weeks annual leave.

Superannuation

QSuper is LAQ's default superannuation fund, however, employees can choose their superannuation provider.

[Find out more about on superannuation](#) in the Queensland Public Sector.

Income protection insurance

We advise employees to talk to a financial adviser to understand their income protection insurance. You may also wish to speak with your superannuation provider to learn more about your default income protection insurance and options to vary that insurance to more appropriately reflect your financial circumstances.



ASIC's [MoneySmart website](#) is a source for information on income protection insurance through your superannuation.

Salary packaging

Salary packaging (also known as 'salary sacrifice') allows eligible employees to pay for expenses with money from their salary before tax is taken out. Instead of getting their salary paid as cash, an employee may choose a combination of cash and certain non-cash benefits (items or services purchased and paid for from their 'before tax' salary over a period of time).

By reducing pre-tax income an employee may reduce the amount of income tax they pay and may substantially increase take home pay each fortnight. Amongst other items, employees at LAQ may salary package such things as a mortgage or loan payments, rent, rates, insurance, utilities bills (i.e. electricity, phone, gas) HELP or HECS debts, private school or child care fees, private travel and motor vehicle expenses (e.g. bus fares, vehicle lease repayments and running costs such as petrol, registration, servicing), or membership fees (i.e. gyms, clubs).

Salary packaging is Australian Tax Office (ATO) approved. LAQ staff enjoy this benefit because we are classified as a 'charitable benevolent institution', which gives us a 30 percent fringe benefit tax exemption.

[Remserv Remuneration Services](#) and [SmartSalary](#) provide salary packaging services to LAQ.

An employee's personal circumstances will determine whether (and the extent to which) salary packaging will be of benefit to them.

Salary packaging of some items will attract Fringe Benefits Tax and for some employees (e.g. those with a HECS debt or making child support payments) there may be additional tax considerations and so it is very important for employees to review their own financial situation in consultation with a registered financial adviser before they commence salary packaging.

Practising certificates

Full-time staff required to hold Queensland Law Society or Queensland Bar Association practising certificates for the conduct of their employment at LAQ, will have the annual cost of their certificates paid for in full by LAQ.

Part-time and temporary staff will have the cost paid/reimbursed on a pro-rata basis.

Your leave entitlements

Employees of LAQ have access to a range of leave entitlements to assist with balancing work and life responsibilities. Access to some of the leave types below will be subject to operational convenience and negotiation with the relevant manager:

- Recreation leave
 - Permanent and temporary full-time employees receive 4 weeks (20 working days) annual recreation leave on full pay
 - Where staff have worked for less than 12 months, leave credits are pro-rata of the full entitlements
 - Part-time staff receive annual leave on a pro-rata basis, and
 - Approval for annual leave at half pay is discretionary; however, requests will be given reasonable consideration.

- Sick leave

- All full-time employees receive 10 days sick leave on full pay per annum (pro-rata for part-time employees)
- Sick leave days which are not used accumulate for the next year, and
- A further meritorious sick leave credit of 65 working days sick leave on full pay may be added to an employee's sick leave account (on one occasion only) where they have completed 26 years meritorious service within the Queensland Public Sector.
- Carer's leave
 - Employees may access their sick leave for providing care or support to members of their immediate family or household. In the event of sick leave entitlements being exhausted:
 - The employee may take up to an additional 2 days unpaid carer's leave each time the employee needs to take the leave;
 - The employee may take additional unpaid carer's leave with the CEO's agreement.
- Parental leave
 - Parental leave includes maternity, spousal, pre-natal, pre-surrogacy, surrogacy, pre-adoption and adoption leave
 - Eligible employees receive paid parental leave of up to 14 weeks at full pay or 28 weeks at half pay
 - Eligible employees can extend parental leave for up to 2 years using a combination of paid leave and unpaid parental leave up to the child's second birthday
 - Spousal leave can be taken at one-week full pay or two weeks half pay, and
 - Requests for part-time work are supported for primary caregivers (up to the time a youngest child reaches school age).
- Special leave
 - Special discretionary and non-discretionary leave covers many different circumstances. It may be granted on full pay or without pay for up to 5 days per year per reason. Any additional leave must be reasonable and proportionate to the circumstances, and
 - Special leave may be granted in situations including, but not limited to, where an employee is precluded from attending or remaining at work for compassionate reasons (e.g. bereavement, domestic or family violence), due to an emergency situation (e.g. natural disaster), because the employee is on duty as part of a Defence Reserve Force or volunteer emergency service, they are donating blood, undertaking work related study, etc.
- Long service leave
 - Long service leave of 1.3 weeks (pro-rata for part-time employees) per full year of service is generally available after you have worked continuously in the Queensland Public Sector for 10 years. You may access the pro-rata rate after 7 years of continuous service.
- Purchased leave
 - Purchased leave is special leave without salary. It is funded by fortnightly deductions from net salary (i.e. after tax and superannuation contributions have been deducted) that occur over a nominated period. The fortnightly salary deductions are set aside and accessed as "salary" during a period of special leave without pay that is known as a period of "purchased leave", and
 - Eligible employees can access up to 6 weeks purchased leave, within a 12-month period.
- Christmas closure
 - LAQ offices generally close for a period between Christmas and New Year
 - During this time, in addition to the public holidays, full-time staff will also be granted one (1) working day off on full pay (staff not rostered or on leave on this day are excluded). Part-time staff only qualify for any scheduled hours that fall on this day
 - The remaining leave days need to be covered by the employee using accrued leave



- If a staff member has insufficient recreation leave available to apply for recreation leave for one or both remaining closure days, leave will be charged against future accruals. Leave without pay for these days will not be approved, and
- State Government arrangements for senior officers/senior executives will apply on these days.

Leave and travel concessions for remote areas

If you work in an eligible remote or isolated part of Queensland (i.e. LAQ's Mackay, Cairns, Mount Isa or Townsville offices). You will be entitled to an additional 5 days of recreation leave per annum i.e. five weeks as opposed to the standard four weeks (20 days) annual leave. Leave loading will be calculated at 14 percent for 5 weeks leave.