



Australian Government

Australian Law Reform Commission

Corporate Plan 2024-28





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President's Foreword

On behalf of the Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) and as the accountable authority of the ALRC, I present the Corporate Plan for the period 1 July 2024 to 30 July 2028.

The ALRC is an independent statutory agency that deals with law reform. It sits within the Attorney-General's portfolio and supports the Attorney-General and the Australian Government by providing evidence-based research to inform government decisions about the development, reform and harmonisation of Australian laws and related processes.

The ALRC's Corporate Plan is designed to inform the Attorney-General, government, stakeholders, and the Australian community of the ALRC's strategies and programs that will allow it to deliver the outcomes it agrees to provide.

Signed

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Bromberg', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

The Hon Justice Mordecai Bromberg

Dated: 16 December 2024

Introduction

As required by section 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*, the ALRC's Corporate plan for the period 1 July 2024 to 30 July 2028 is hereby presented.

Purpose

Our vision

A fair, modern, and accessible Australian legal system that contributes to a just and secure society.

Our Outcome

The intended outcome of the ALRC's activities is to inform government decisions about the development, reform and harmonisation of Australian laws and related processes through research, analysis, reports and community consultation and education.

Our Function

In accordance with the *Australian Law Reform Commission Act 1996* (Cth) (ALRC Act), the ALRC receives inquiries from the Attorney-General and undertakes best-practice consultation, research, and comparative analysis, concluding with the provision of evidence-based law reform recommendations to the Australian Government and Parliament. The ALRC's remit includes all Commonwealth laws. Pursuant to the ALRC Act, ALRC recommendations seek to:

- bring the law into line with current conditions and needs;
- remove defects in the law;
- simplify the law;
- adopt new or more effective methods for administering the law and dispensing justice;
- promote uniformity between states and territories; and
- provide improved access to justice.

Environment

The ALRC is a law reform agency at the leading edge of internationally recognised best practice. The ALRC maintains an average staffing level of 13 and is funded through an annual appropriation to undertake one inquiry per year, however, has the capacity to deliver additional inquiries when sufficient additional resources are made available.

By the end of 2024, the ALRC will have almost completed the inquiry into Justice Responses to Sexual Violence, due to the Attorney-General on 22 January 2025, and will be part way through an inquiry into the future acts regime under the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth), due to the Attorney-General on 8 December 2025. The Inquiry into Human Tissue Laws was announced in 2024 and will commence in early 2025.

Capability

Conducting Inquiries

The ALRC has one program to achieve its outcome – conducting inquiries into aspects of Australian law and related processes for the purpose of law reform. It is through the inquiry process that the ALRC undertakes rigorous research and analysis that underpins recommendations for law reform.

In conducting its inquiries, the ALRC will:

- comprehensively research and analyse the law and the legal policy issues raised during the course of an inquiry;
- undertake community consultation nationally with stakeholders and experts relevant to each area of law under review and report on the consultation process;
- ensure that it has appropriate external advice throughout the inquiry from an advisory committee or expert panel(s) and; produce consultation documents, as appropriate, for each inquiry;
- call for submissions that will, along with its own research and findings, inform the formulation of recommendations contained in a Final Report;

- provide web-based consultation and communication strategies to effectively and efficiently broaden access to the ALRC's activities by the community;
- produce a Final Report containing recommendations for law reform for each inquiry for consideration by Government and Parliament;
- where feasible, present at public conferences, seminars, and Parliamentary inquiries, ensuring that the work of the ALRC is publicly debated and discussed and contributes to the community's knowledge about the Government's law reform agenda.

Supporting law reform

The President, Commissioners, and staff of the ALRC will speak at conferences, seminars, and meetings of professional and community groups about the work of the ALRC and law reform processes generally and will engage in other consultative and educational activities relating to the ALRC's current and past inquiries. ALRC staff will contribute journal articles and commentary pieces to academic and professional journals.

The ALRC also engages with other law reform and expert bodies internationally to share information and ideas, and to benchmark ALRC practices and procedures.

Performance

The ALRC measures its success through the following key performance indicators:

- the number of consultation papers and the number of reports to government;
- the percentage of inquiries completed on time in accordance with the terms of reference set by the Attorney-General;
- the number of citations or references to ALRC consultation documents, reports and recommendations in Parliamentary debates and committee reports, in court and tribunal decisions, and in academic and other publications;
- the number of submissions received for each inquiry;
- the number of consultations held for each inquiry;
- the breadth of community engagement in the work of the ALRC through the number of subscribers to the ALRC's E-news, visitors to the website, and public attendees at ALRC seminars; and
- the number of publications, presentations, and speaking engagements of ALRC staff.

Performance Measure	2024-25 targets	2023–24 actual
Number of reports	4	6
Timeliness of reports	100%	100%
Citations or references	100	187
Submissions received per inquiry	50	98 (FSL) 428 (ADL) 213 (JRSV) Inquiry ongoing
Consultations held per inquiry	25	200+ (FSL) 131 (ADL) 78 (JRSV) Inquiry ongoing
Presentations, articles and speaking engagements	25	40
Broader community engagement:		
E-news subscribers	1350	7874
Visitors to website	500,000	1,158,094
Public attendance at ALRC seminars	250	453

The core outputs of the ALRC are consultation papers and reports to Government with recommendations for law reform. The ALRC recognises, however, that the production of consultation papers and reports relies on the referral of an inquiry by the Government. The timeliness of reports is an indicator of the effectiveness and efficiency of the ALRC in meeting the terms of reference for inquiries established by the Attorney-General, which include a reporting date.

The number of citations of the ALRC's work provides an indication of:

- Parliament's engagement with the ALRC's work and the esteem in which it is held;
- legal and academic expert engagement with the ALRC's work; and
- the relevance of the ALRC's work to legal proceedings.

The number of submissions received, and consultations held are indicators of the breadth of the evidence base that underpins the ALRC's recommendations and of community engagement with the law reform process implemented by the ALRC.

The breadth of community engagement can be measured in three ways:

- through subscriptions to the E-news, which reflect sustained engagement with a specific inquiry or the ALRC;
- website views, which reflect interest in the current work of the ALRC or the ALRC's work on previous inquiries; and
- attendance at ALRC seminars, which tracks active engagement with ALRC's inquiries.

This engagement underpins informed government decision-making.

Presenting at public conferences, seminars and Parliamentary inquiries ensures that the work of the ALRC is publicly debated and discussed.

As noted above, under the heading ‘Environment,’ the ALRC’s success, as measured by these indicators, will be influenced by factors outside the control of the ALRC. Additional factors outside the control of the ALRC include the nature of the inquiry, the prescribed timeframe and the resources available to the ALRC.

Risk Oversight and Management

The ALRC is committed to an active risk management program extending to all aspects of its operations that recognises the ALRC’s micro size and low risk operating environment. In accordance with the PGPA Act requirements, the ALRC has:

- a. an appropriate system of risk oversight and management for the entity; and
- b. an appropriate system of internal control for the entity.

Oversight and Reporting

The President is responsible for oversight of risk including reviewing the framework and the risk review process. The diagram below details the Risk Management Framework at the ALRC.



Strategic Level Risks

Review of the ALRC’s key functions and strategic environment has developed two strategic level risks facing the agency, as follows:

- Failure to secure a funding increase to the ALRC’s annual budget could impact PGPA Act compliance and the ability to conduct complex law reform inquiries; and
- Failure to retain staff and associated knowledge due to lack of funding and inability to offer ongoing employment.

Risk Management Plan

The ALRC's Risk Management Plan identifies a number of existing controls required to reduce and mitigate these risks. The risk plan is overseen by the ALRC's Audit and Risk Committee and updated annually to ensure the ALRC's strategies reduce the ALRC's exposure to strategic risks. However, as the ALRC is entirely reliant on Government for resources, there are limits to which the ALRC can manage its strategic risks.

Operational and Fraud Risks

The ALRC Risk Management Plan has identified operational and fraud risks and appropriate controls, and the ALRC Fraud and Corruption Control Plan strengthens the ALRC's commitment to identify and manage such risks.

Business Continuity & Security Plan

The ALRC has a Protective Security Policy and reports annually against the Government's Protective Security mandatory requirements.

The ALRC has a Business Continuity Plan that is tested biennially and updated annually.

