

**Citizens
Advice Bureau**

**Strategic
Directions 2018**

**citizens
advice
bureau**



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1. Overview

MISSION

To connect people with information and services so they can make independent and informed decisions.

VISION

CAB is accessible across all parts of WA, empowering people to make informed decisions

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

A strong profile and reputation

- Develop a Key Stakeholder Engagement Plan.
- Develop a Brand and Communications Plan.
- Create a CAB Community DataBank to store and share relevant community information and statistics.

Best practice management

- Review and update the Constitution.
- Clearly define roles and review existing contracts.
- Develop an Internal Communications Plan.
- Develop a Volunteer Engagement Plan and Training Program.

High quality services

- Review the service offer in each division.
- Improve electronic access to information and services.
- Review the branch model and network.

Financial sustainability

- Review and update financial reporting systems.
- Investigate new and alternative funding sources.
- Investigate capacity building opportunities.

VALUES

Efficiency • Professionalism • Collaboration

2. Introduction

The Citizens Advice Bureau of WA (Inc.) has created a strategic plan to ensure its future growth and sustainability.

In developing this Plan, CAB adopted the following stakeholder engagement approach:

Benchmarking	<i>Similar organisations were benchmarked to provide insights and guidance on critical success factors for long term sustainability.</i>
Stakeholder Survey	<i>A survey was administered with 256 stakeholders, including staff, volunteers, members, referrers and customers.</i>
Key Stakeholder Interviews	<i>In-depth interviews were conducted with key stakeholders to understand how CAB is currently regarded, and to assess future needs and expectations.</i>
Member- Volunteer World Cafe forum	<i>Over 50 members and volunteers attended a two hour forum to reflect on the current situation and provide recommendations for the future.</i>
CAB Staff Workshop	<i>Staff attended a workshop to complete a SWOT analysis, competitor review and visioning exercise.</i>
Strategic Planning Workshop	<i>Board Members and Senior Management attended a one day workshop to plan CAB's future.</i>

This Plan describes the desired outcomes and strategies to achieve the vision over the next three years.

3. The Current Situation

Established in 1963, CAB is an independent, not for profit organisation providing an information and referral service. Other services include mediation, legal advice, and preparation of legal documents, including wills, powers of attorney and some family court documents.

Core funding comes from the Department of Local Government and Communities, Public Purposes Trust, Legal Contributions Trust, Legal Aid and a number of local governments.

CAB is governed by a board of 10 people elected from the CAB membership. The Board meets monthly and is responsible for setting policy and strategic direction. Head office is located in Perth with 8 full time staff and 2 part time staff. There are nine branches throughout the state. Branches are staffed by a Branch Coordinator and trained volunteers with support from salaried personnel in head office. Branches have independent management committees that send monthly reports to head office.

CAB stands at an important juncture in its history.

A globally recognised brand, CAB has enjoyed a strong presence in WA for over 50 years. Services are highly valued by customers and the strength of the volunteer network is enviable, with many loyal, long-serving members. However, over the past year CAB has experienced instability with the Chair, CEO and a number of Board Members resigning in quick succession, an unsustainable funding model, uncertainty about CAB's purpose and future direction, and misperceptions about CAB that have affected risk and insurance assessments.

Demonstrative of CAB's strong foundations, supporters have rallied together to address current concerns. A new President has been elected and new members have been recruited onto the Board of Management, providing the required depth and breadth of expertise in corporate governance, legal, finance and community development to lead the organisation.

3.1 Financial Performance

Revenue has fallen from \$1.25 million to \$1.24 million over the past four years. While CAB made a small surplus in the 2010/11 financial year, there was a deficit of \$103,802 in 2013/14. Staff members attribute this loss to a reduction in legal revenue, a consequence of legal services being removed from the branches.

KPI's	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Total Revenue	\$1,249,185	\$1,250,561	\$1,141,684	\$1,246,771
Funding (grants & sponsorships)	\$720,717	\$648,155	\$653,869	\$730,702
Sales	\$503,847	\$566,362	\$438,088	\$492,191
Profit (loss)	\$18,421	(\$40,968)	(\$124,578)	(\$103,802)

3.2 Customer Profile

In 2012/13, CAB received over 80,000 enquiries from customers, provided legal advice for over 6,000 clients and delivered mediation services for around 135 clients.

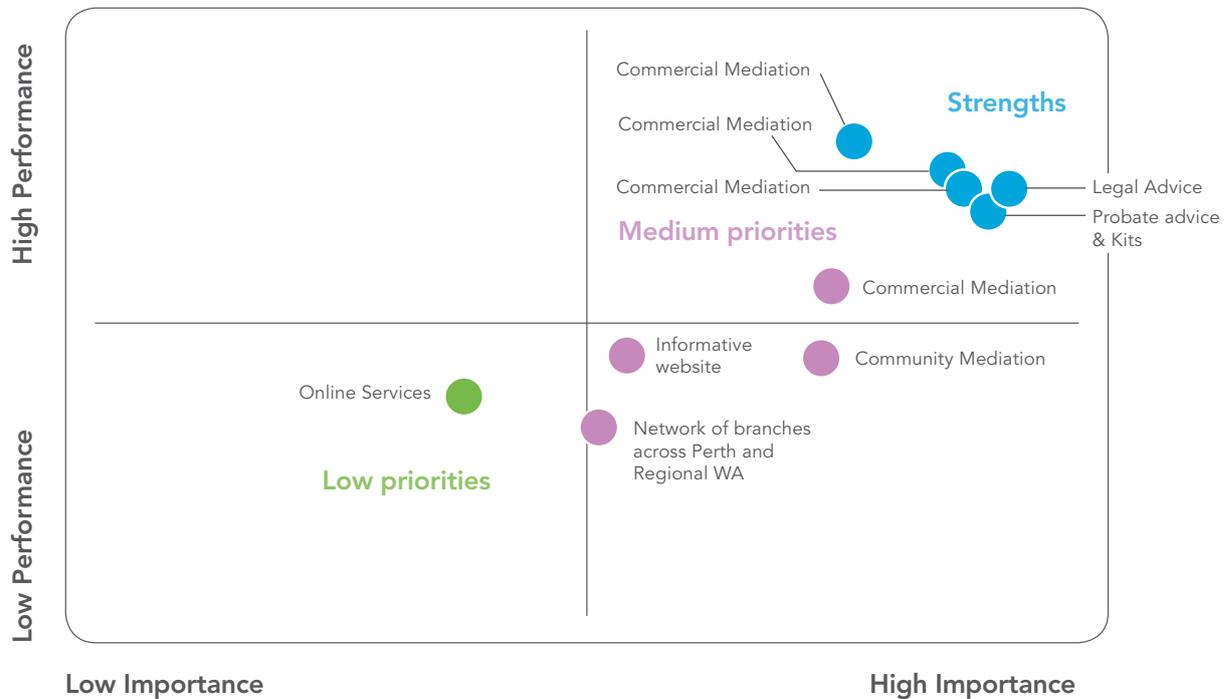
CAB's customers are predominantly older, retired females.

- 67% are female
- 71% are 55+ years old
- 44% are retired

Most customers (74%) are fairly new to CAB with less than three years' involvement.

3.3 Customer Priorities

Results from a customer survey suggest CAB's efforts are aligned with customers' needs. Areas that are higher in importance are performing well. This includes legal advice, assistance to prepare legal documents, probate advice and kits, family and child mediation services, and referral services.



To better meet customers' needs, CAB must enhance commercial and community mediation services, provide a more informative website, and develop a stronger network of branches across Perth and regional WA. While improved online services are a lower priority, this area is considered more important by younger customers.

3.4 Member and Volunteer Profiles

CAB has around 240 volunteers and 130 members. Many are loyal and long-serving. Around 31% have over 10 years involvement with CAB, 44% have 4 to 10 years' experience, and 25% have been involved with CAB for up to 3 years.

In 2012/13, concerns with CAB's direction resulted in a drop in volunteers and an increase in memberships. In 2013/14, volunteer numbers have bounced back and member numbers have returned to expected levels.

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14*
Number of Members	122	201	314	130
Number of Volunteers	c. 250	c. 250	211	240

* as of 27 August, 2014

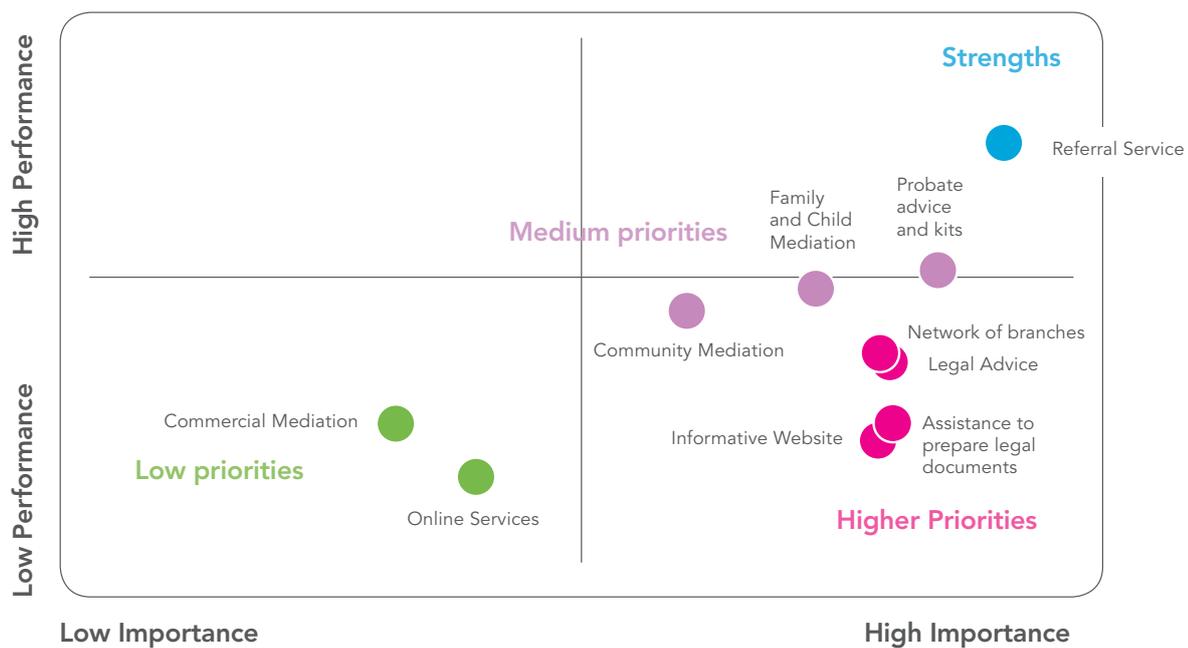
Members and volunteers are predominantly older, retired females.

- 68% of members and 78% of volunteers are female
- 82% of members and 90% of volunteers are 55+ years old
- 62% of members and 64% of volunteers are retired

3.5 Member and Volunteer Priorities

Members and volunteers are aware of challenges that have been facing CAB over the past year. While they believe CAB has continued to perform well with referral services, they are concerned about the threat of closing branches and centralising legal services in head office. They would also like CAB to focus on providing a more informative website. These areas are considered to be high priority.

Secondary priorities include the provision of probate advice and kits, and the provision of family, child and community mediation services. Members and volunteers consider commercial mediation services and online services to be lower priorities.



3.6 Net Promoter Score

The Net Promoter Score (NPS) considers stakeholders' likelihood of recommending CAB to others. The score is calculated by subtracting the proportion of 'detractors', who give a score of 0 to 6 out of 10, from 'promoters' who give a score of 9 or 10.

Around 61% of stakeholders are 'promoters' of CAB, while 19% are 'detractors', giving CAB an overall NPS of 42 out of 100.

As shown below, the NPS score is highest among customers at 52, followed by volunteers (46) and employees (43).

Stakeholder Group	Customer	Referrer	Volunteer	Member	Employee	Total
Sample size	73	14	79	37	7	174
Promoters (9 or 10)	70%	57%	59%	54%	57%	61%
Passives (7 or 8)	12%	21%	28%	30%	29%	20%
Detractors (0 to 6)	18%	21%	13%	16%	14%	19%
NPS	52	36	46	38	43	42

It is concerning that referrers have the lowest score (NPS 36). Moving forward, it will be important to build stronger relationships with professionals and others who are in a position to refer CAB.

3.7 SWOT Summary

The following table summarises stakeholders' views on the Citizen Advice Bureau's strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities. It includes the opinions of the Board, staff, volunteers, members, referrers, customers, funders, and others.

Strengths

- Happy customers
- Consider CAB to be friendly, ethical and value for money
- Strong in referral services, legal advice, probate advice, assistance to provide legal documents and mediation (in the eyes of customers)
- Tackle areas of law that others tend not to (i.e. probate)
- Large number of long serving, loyal volunteers who are driven to 'give back' to the community
- Committed employees
- Part of the CLC Association

Opportunities

- Grow funding, including PPT funding
- Expand range of services / specialise - in areas such as family issues, succession law, property, and neighbour disputes
- Reinstate legal services in the branches (#1 mention by volunteers, members and referrers)
- Employ more lawyers (#1 mention by customers)
- Better use of technology (#1 mention by 18-44 year olds)
- Increase role in advocacy

Weaknesses

- Unstable leadership over recent times
- Governance - lack of separation between Board and volunteers, and poor role clarity between Board and management
- Lack of direction / purpose with no shared goals / KPIs
- Succession planning / documenting systems
- Communication
- Security – electronic storage + physical safety
- Commitment to required change / change management
- Access to legal services in branches
- Volunteer training and quality control
- Volunteers are aging, with few younger recruits (25% are 75+ years; only 6% are 18-44 years)
- Lack of funding and resources
- Website and online services
- Insufficient, low cost accommodation

Threats

- Loss / increased cost of insurance
- Loss of funding
- DLG&C are clear that they do not wish to fund a legal service
- Growing competition from the internet (for referrals) and legal and mediation service providers (for low cost / pro-bono services)
- Loss of accommodation or substantial increases in rent (Head Office + branches)

3.8 Benchmarking Insights

A review of CIS Victoria, CAB New Zealand and Citizens Advice UK provided key insights and guidance on critical success factors for CAB's long term sustainability:

- All operate with an independent branch structure.
- They have a strong focus on training volunteers and accreditation programs.
- While the focus varies across these organisations, being the access point for information is key. They provide empowering advice.
- All work towards having a strong and united culture.
- Influential advocacy is considered to be an important role as it lends credibility, helps build reputation and enables the organisations to be the voice of the community.



4. CAB's Mission, Vision and Strategic Priorities

OUR MISSION | *the Citizens Advice Bureau exists...*

To connect people with information and services so they can make independent and informed decisions.

OUR VISION | *by 2018...*

CAB is accessible across all parts of WA, empowering people to make informed decisions

A strong profile and reputation

Best practice management

High quality services

Financial sustainability

We will achieve our vision by delivering...

5. Strong Profile and Reputation

5.1 Outcomes

CAB is a globally recognised brand with a strong presence in WA. Our role and purpose is clearly defined and promoted. Stakeholder relationships are highly valued. We invest time and effort to develop mutually satisfying relationships.

We care about the community and the people we meet. When people share their concerns with us, we don't just listen and help at the individual level, we develop a collective view of the community's needs and advocate for change on behalf of the whole community.

We are a trusted source. Policy makers, decision makers and the media seek CAB's opinion on current issues, trends and sentiment in the community. We play an important role in improving the quality of life for all Western Australians.

5.2 Strategies

	Responsible	Timing
1. Map key stakeholders (including funding bodies, insurance providers, referrers, partners, suppliers, the media, policy makers, etc) and update contact database.	CEO	By 2015/16
2. Manage stakeholder (mis)perceptions that may have been formed in recent times (due to changes in CAB personnel, with NACLIC, insurance and service delivery).	CEO	On-Going
3. Share the new Strategic Plan with key stakeholders to help them to better understand CAB and buy into the vision.	CEO	Once Completed
4. Develop a Key Stakeholder Engagement Plan to build strong and meaningful relationships with key stakeholders.	Board	By 2015/16
5. Develop a Brand and Communications Plan to raise awareness and strengthen CAB's profile.	Board / CEO	By 2015/16
6. Create a CAB Community DataBank – a system for collecting, storing and sharing relevant and interesting statistics about community needs and concerns.	CEO	By 2015/16
7. Track brand awareness in the general community – investigate opportunities to 'piggyback' on partner's existing surveys or seek support from research companies / online panels.	CEO	By 2015/16

6. Best Practice Management

6.1 Outcomes

CAB's volunteers, members and staff feel respected, valued and supported. CAB's mission and vision have been well communicated, roles are clearly defined, policies and procedures are up to date, and facilities are modern and fit for purpose. Individuals have a strong sense of purpose and belonging, and a shared commitment to achieving CAB's vision. External stakeholders have high levels of confidence in CAB's people and systems.

6.2 Strategies

	Responsible	Timing
1. Appoint a new CEO.	CEO	Immediately
2. Adopt best practice (consider recommendations provided by the Mediator Practice Standards, NACLIC Accreditation Scheme, Department for Local Government and Communities and other relevant bodies).	CEO / Board	On-Going
3. Assess and introduce risk minimisation actions, such as password storage backup (ensuring a second person has access to passwords for key documents) and providing disclaimer 'on hold' phone messages and signage in branches.	CEO	Immediately
4. Review and update the Constitution.	Board	By 2015/16
5. Offer governance training to Board Members.	CEO to seek options	On-Going
6. Redesign Board reports so they are concise and support strategic decision making.	Board / CEO	By 2015/16
7. Ensure policies are up to date, easily accessible and well promoted (including the OH&S and Privacy policies, especially in relation to personal safety in head office and branches, and data security for printed and electronic files)	Board / CEO	By 2015/16
8. Clearly define roles, with job descriptions for all positions (including Board members, staff, volunteers and pro bono service providers) and review existing contracts, ensuring remuneration meets award rates.	Board / CEO	By 2015/16

6.2 Strategies

	Responsible	Timing
9. Review and update Welcome Packs for new Board members, ordinary members, staff and volunteers (including pro bono service providers).	Board / CEO	Immediately
10. Develop and implement an Internal Communications Plan to improve communication between the Board, management, staff, members and volunteers, including regular meetings, e-communications and an intranet site.	Board / CEO	On-Going
11. Develop and implement a Volunteer Engagement Plan to attract and retain a growing and diverse group of volunteers, and acknowledge volunteer contributions (such as pins to honour 5, 10, 15....50 years of service)	Board / CEO	Immediately
12. Develop a Volunteer Training Program to ensure quality and consistency of service delivery, and compliance with legal and insurance requirements.	Board	By 2015/16

7. High Quality Services

7.1 Outcomes

CAB connects people with information and services so they can make independent and informed decisions. Our value added services include mediation, legal advice, and preparation of legal documents, including wills, powers of attorney and some family court documents, and financial advice.

We utilise a combination of traditional and modern service delivery models to ensure CAB is accessible for all people, across all parts of Western Australia.

This results in high satisfaction and willingness to recommend CAB.

7.2 Strategies

	Responsible	Timing
1. Create annual action plans to support the Strategic Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information and Referral Action Plan Legal Services Action Plan Mediation Action Plan 	CEO Unit Heads	Annually
2. Review the service offer in each division, ensuring services meet customer needs and are financially sustainable.	Unit Heads	Immediately
3. Assess IT requirements (including phones, computers and software) to improve communications and service delivery.	CEO	By 2015/16
4. Improve electronic access to information and services with an up to date website and intranet site, and allocate responsibility for content management to ensure the information remains current.	CEO	By 2015/16
5. Review the branch model and network, in partnership with volunteers, to improve physical access to information and services across all parts of Western Australia and to ensure the service is financially sustainable. This will involve piloting a Regional Resource Centre and considering alternative service models to meet customer needs.	CEO	By 2015/16
6. Assess physical facilities to ensure they are fit for purpose and secure office and branch leases /occupancy arrangements.	Board / CEO	On- Going
7. Fill the Principal Solicitor vacancy.	Board / CEO	Immediately
8. Build a panel of pro bono lawyers – attracting new lawyers, strengthening relationships with existing lawyers and identifying ways to recognise their contribution.	CEO	Immediately
9. Survey customers annually to measure CAB's performance and to assess community needs.	CEO	Annually

8. Financial Sustainability

8.1 Outcomes

CAB is a financially sustainable organisation. Recognised as a provider of high value and essential community services, CAB is attracting growing support from funding bodies, corporate sponsors, fee paying customers, pro-bono service providers and volunteers.

The Board reviews progress against strategic financial targets, and empowers management to make operational decisions to achieve a balanced budget. Modern reporting systems provide the Board and management team with quick and easy access to accurate financial data; supporting timely and informed decisions.

8.2 Strategies	Responsible	Timing
1. Board to assess annual priorities and approve the budget required to implement the strategies in the Strategic Plan.	CEO	Annually
2. Review and update financial reporting systems to ensure the Board and managers have access to accurate and timely financial data and reports; to meet ad hoc and monthly reporting requirements. Branches will be required to move to monthly reporting.	Board / CEO	By 2015/16
3. Department heads to work with the Accounts and IT Officer to develop draft budgets and efficiency targets (i.e. number of legal appointments needed to cover salaries) for CEO review and Board approval. Budgets should achieve a balance between funding and fee for service to cover costs. Once budgets are approved, managers to take ownership for managing and balancing department budgets at an operational level.	Board / CEO	Immediately
4. Evaluate suitability of the current accounting platform.	Board / CEO	By 2015/16
5. Appoint a Grants Officer	Board / CEO	By 2015/16
6. Review existing funding arrangements (to ensure compliance with requirements and assess opportunities to renew or extend funding arrangements)	CEO	Immediately
7. Investigate new and alternative funding sources (grants, sponsorships, etc, possibly targeting FIFO opportunities and piloting a Regional Resource Centre).	CEO	Immediately
8. Support the Branches in applying for and securing funding.	CEO	On- Going
9. Assess opportunities to earn fees from Legal Aid referrals.	CEO	Immediately
10. Investigate capacity building opportunities, including sponsorship and pro bono services, university student projects, and the use of volunteers with specialist skills, to assist with a range of tasks (i.e. creating a Brand and Communications Plan, Key Stakeholder Engagement Plan and CAB Community DataBank).	CEO	On- Going

10. Evaluation and Reporting

Success will be measured against the following key performance indicators, with performance scorecards reported to the Board on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis.

Measure	Reporting Frequency		
	Monthly	Quarterly	Annual
Financial			
Sales	•		
Grants and sponsorships	•		
Balanced budget	•		
Reserves	•		
Profile and Reputation			
Brand awareness - general community			•
Website hits		•	
Compliance			
% of volunteers up to date with training		•	
Number of reportable OH&S incidents	•		
Customers			
Number of enquires – total and by branch	•		
Number of fee paying customers		•	
Accessibility - number of enquires by region			•
Net Promoter Score			•
Brand perceptions			•
Customer service quality ratings			•
Staff			
Vacant roles		•	
Retention rate			•
Net Promoter Score			•
Pro-bono Lawyers			
Number of lawyers on pro bono panel		•	
Net Promoter Score			•
Volunteers			
Number and diversity of volunteers		•	
Retention rate			•
Net Promoter Score			•
Members			
Number and diversity of member		•	
Retention rate			•
Net Promoter Score			•

A performance scorecard will be shared with key stakeholders in the Annual Report.

The Strategic Plan is a live document. It will be assessed on an ongoing basis by the Board and Senior Management Group to ensure it remains timely and relevant. A formal review will take place once every three years.



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