



Legal Issues. Legal Advice

Matters often arise which require a legal opinion. Brief, free and low cost assistance is available from a range of services.

Community legal services help South Australians to access legal advice and assistance when they can't afford to hire a lawyer. These services are offered through the Legal Services Commission, Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement and Community Legal Centres. Specialist state-wide community legal services are offered for women, regarding welfare rights and social security issues and mediation.

Legal Services Commission of SA

The Commission offers free advice to the general public on most legal matters at any of its offices. It is also the first point of contact for people seeking community legal services. Ring the Legal Helpline on 1300 366 424 for information and referral, or make an appointment with any of these offices Monday to Friday 9am-4:30pm:

- Adelaide city, tel. 8111 5555
- Elizabeth, tel. 81115400
- Noarlunga, tel. 8111 5340
- Port Adelaide, tel. 8111 5460
- Port Augusta, tel. 8686 2200
- Mount Barker, tel. 8111 5320
- Whyalla, tel. 8620 8500

Legal representation is subject to certain restrictions and to means and merit tests. Interpreters are available on request.

Basic legal information is available on line at www.lsc.sa.gov.au.

The Commission also provides a Duty Solicitor at all Magistrates Courts and Youth Courts. Duty Lawyers are also available at the Family Law Courts. The service Duty Solicitors can provide is limited and may involve applications for bail for persons in custody, obtaining adjournments/remands and conducting simple guilty pleas where there is usually no prospect of imprisonment such as for traffic offences and minor criminal offending.

Community legal centres

These centres provide free legal assistance to people who

have a significant legal issue but aren't eligible for legal aid and can't afford a private lawyer.

- Adelaide Central & Hills – Uniting Communities Law Centre (Medindie Gardens), tel. 8342 1800, 1300 886 220; www.unitingcommunities.org
- Adelaide South, Riverland and South East – Southern Community Justice Centre (Christies Beach office and outreach services), tel. 8384 5222, 1300 850 650; www.scjc.com.au
- Adelaide North – Northern Community Legal Centre (Salisbury), tel. 8281 6911, 1300 558 555
- Adelaide West – WestSide Lawyers Inc. (Hindmarsh), tel. 8340 9009; www.westsidelawyers.net
- SA Mid North – WestSide Lawyers (Port Pirie), tel. 8633 3600; www.westsidelawyers.net

Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement Inc.

Provides a legal service to Aboriginal people and their communities. There is a 24-hour service for emergencies, legal advice and help with preparing documents among other services. Offices are located in Adelaide, Murray Bridge, Port Augusta and Ceduna. Tel. 8113 3777, 1800 643 222; www.alm.org.au

Women's Legal Service SA Inc.

Provides free legal information, advice, referral, assistance and representation.

Also includes the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' Program and Rural Women's Outreach Program.

Tel. 8221 5553, 1800 816 349; www.wlssa.org.au.

Mediation

Many problems with neighbours, clubs or associations or within families or households can be resolved or avoided by maintaining clear communication. Legal action may make relations worse and should only be taken as a last resort. It is generally advisable to come to an agreement or compromise with the other party personally or with the help of an impartial mediator. The mediation service provided by Uniting Communities Law Centre can help the parties to a dispute to come to a resolution without causing

Catalyst Foundation is supported by the Australian Government Department of Health. Visit the website <https://agedcare.health.gov.au/> for more information. Although funding for this publication has been provided by the Australian Government, the material contained herein does not necessarily represent the views or policies of the Australian Government.



Legal Issues. Legal Advice

unnecessary stress, without the costs of going to court and without taking sides. Mediation services are free. Tel. 8342 1800, 1300 886 220; www.unitingcommunities.org

Social security (welfare rights) issues

Operating across South Australia, Uniting Communities Law Centre can support you with social security matters by providing advice and assistance when dealing with Centrelink and in appeals to the Administrative Appeal Tribunal.

The service is available to people on a government benefit, living in South Australia, aged 15 and over. Tel. 8342 1800; www.unitingcommunities.org

Magistrates Court Legal Advice Service (MCLAS)

Free service run by final year law students supervised by qualified legal practitioners at the Adelaide Magistrates Court. The MCLAS only deals with disputes that fall within the minor civil claims jurisdiction (civil dispute with a value of up to \$12,000). The types of matters dealt with include: fencing disputes, building disputes, claims in negligence, contractual disputes, and other types of matters.

The service does NOT deal with criminal matters, civil matters in excess of \$6,000, family law or personal injury claims. Tel. 8204 2444, law.adelaide.edu.au/free-legal-clinics/magistrates-court-legal-advice/

Consumer Credit Law Centre SA

The Consumer Credit Law Centre SA help people to resolve consumer credit problems including debt, hardship, credit law issues involving disputes with creditors, bankruptcy, mortgage stress, inability to negotiate payment plans and conduct by creditors.

It is a free service and provides access to specialist legal advice, financial counselling and legal representation in areas of credit, banking and finance.

Tel. 8342 1800; <http://consumercreditsa.org/>

Ombudsman services

As a general rule these services advise people to first try to resolve their issues directly with the organisation, documenting all steps taken, including contacts made and copies of any letters sent. If no satisfactory resolution is achieved contact the relevant complaint service.

Commonwealth Ombudsman investigates complaints from people who believe they have been treated unfairly or unreasonably by an Australian Government department / agency or prescribed private sector organisation, including

Australia Post, Centrelink, Child Support (DHS), and Department of Immigration and Border Protection. Complaints can be made in writing, by phone, by post, in person or by using the online complaint form. Tel. 1300 362 072; www.ombudsman.gov.au

State Ombudsman investigates complaints about South Australian government and local government agencies. Complaints can be about any action or inaction by an agency within the Ombudsman's jurisdiction. Ombudsman SA may conduct investigations to determine whether the process was reasonable and fair, and that the decision is not unreasonable or unlawful.

Tel. 8226 8699, 1800 182 150 (SA country callers); www.ombudsman.sa.gov.au. It is possible to lodge a complaint using the online form.

Superannuation Complaints Tribunal – Complaints can be made in writing, by phone or by using our online complaint form. The Tribunal is located in Melbourne.

Inquiry Line 1300 884 114; www.sct.gov.au

Office of the Health & Community Services Complaints Commissioner (HCSCC) provides assistance with resolution of complaints about public, private, non-government health and community services in South Australia. For enquiries, tel. 8226 8666, 1800 232 007 (SA country callers); www.hcsc.sa.gov.au. It is also possible to lodge a complaint on line.

Advocacy services

Aged Rights Advocacy Service Inc.

Free, confidential and independent service assisting older people who are receiving community-based care services, living in a residential aged care facility or in a retirement village. It also assists people aged 65 years and over who are at risk of, or are, experiencing abuse.

Provides information about rights and responsibilities, support to help resolve concerns and advocate on behalf of the aged. Tel. 8232 5377, 1800 700 600, www.sa.agedrights.asn.au

Other services

JusticeNet SA

Independent, not-for-profit legal service that provides free legal help through referral service for low-income and disadvantaged South Australians experiencing civil law issues and the Self-Representation Services, which provide direct legal advice and assistance to people representing themselves in court.

Catalyst Foundation is supported by the Australian Government Department of Health. Visit the website <https://agedcare.health.gov.au/> for more information. Although funding for this publication has been provided by the Australian Government, the material contained herein does not necessarily represent the views or policies of the Australian Government.



Legal Issues. Legal Advice

Tel. 8313 5005 (referral); 8410 2280 or 1800 283 661
(Self-Representation Service; www.justicenet.org.au)

The Law Society of SA

Offers Legal Advisory Service at a small fee on Mondays and Wednesdays 5.30pm – 7pm at level 10, 178 North Tce, Adelaide. Single 20-minute appointments can be made by ringing 8229 0200.

The free Referral Service provides referrals to solicitors according to specific areas of law, geographic locations, languages, the First Interview Scheme, home or hospital visits, etc. The service's database is also available for searching on the organisation's website:

www.lawsocietysa.asn.au

COTA South Australia

A solicitor is available to provide brief free advice on general legal matters, simple wills and powers of attorney. Fees are charged for preparation of wills and other services.

Tel. 8232 0422, 1800 182 324 (SA country callers) or visit www.cotasa.org.au

Legal Brokers

This website allows users to find private lawyers by category (e.g. family law, property law, intervention orders) and location. Users are then given a list of practitioners and their profiles. It is possible to select some or all lawyers listed and request them to provide you with a quote.

www.legalbrokers.com.au/?idev_id=106

Catalyst Foundation

We can help you to identify and locate the organisations that might be able to help with your specific complaint or legal issues. We can also provide access to the relevant application forms where applicable.

It is outside our organisation's role to recommend specific private practitioners.

Tel. 8168 8776, 1800 63 63 68 (SA country); email

information@catalystfoundation.com.au;

www.catalystfoundation.com.au

The information contained here is general in nature and is not intended as legal advice.