



Office of the Public Solicitor

# CORPORATE PLAN

2009-2011







1. The recruitment of 17 new lawyers including 11 females, resulting in an equal gender balance of Public Solicitor Lawyers.
2. Public awareness at Goroka Show.
3. The first cheque issued by the Office under it's PGAS system.
4. The opening of the Legal Year in Wabag.
5. A new office is being opened in Buka.
6. Training young lawyers in Pleadings and Damages to improve Human Rights claims.
7. Lawyers from other agencies were invited to participate in Public Solicitor's Continuing Legal Education Program.
8. Continuing Legal Education raising professional standards remains a priority in the Office.





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# Foreword

This is the first individual Corporate Plan published by the Office of Public Solicitor: previously the Office has been incorporated into the Plans of the Department of Justice.

The Office of Public Solicitor was established in 1958 and its independence confirmed in the Constitution 34 years ago.

Nevertheless, it is only in 2009 that the Office has attained full financial autonomy from the Department of Justice. It is anticipated that delegation to control the full range of powers over personnel will follow. Upon the passing of enabling legislation, the Office will become truly independent, as envisaged by the Constitution.

However, as in all cases, with additional rights come additional responsibilities. The increased authority brings with it the responsibility to properly plan, monitor and report upon the activities of the Office.

This Three Year Plan, 2009-2011 seeks to clearly articulate the services provided by the office, its vision and its values. It seeks not only to set out what the Office intends to achieve over the next three years, but how it intends to achieve those objectives.

Our Vision reflects in a non-pretentious way the hopes of those who drafted our Nation's constitution. Not only do we seek to represent citizens of PNG in Courts in both Civil and Criminal matters, but also to help inform them of their rights and responsibilities in order that they may know where to seek appropriate assistance and also to reduce the incidence of conflict and litigation borne out of ignorance and frustration.

The Office recognizes the many challenges ahead and the fact that changes in personnel, funding and policy may necessitate the review of this document.

This Corporate Plan nevertheless represents the blueprint that provides direction for the Office over the next three years and against which the performance of the Office will be measured.

I am confident that the ideals and objectives aspired to in this document can, by commitment and hard work from our officers be attained and that this Office can play a most important role in delivering justice to the people of Papua New Guinea.



**FRASER S PITPIT**  
**PUBLIC SOLICITOR**





# Vision

To ensure that all the people and minority groups in Papua New Guinea are aware of their rights and have access to quality legal services.

# Mission

To provide independent, accessible and quality legal assistance for socially and economically disadvantaged persons and minority groups.



## Our values

- To demonstrate compassion, understanding, and respect for our clients.
- To ensure equality and fairness in our dealings with clients and equal opportunity for clients and staff.
- To demonstrate independence and courage in the performance of our duties.
- To act with utmost professionalism, integrity, and competence, and to be accountable for our actions.

## What we do

- Appear for clients charged with criminal offences.
- Advise and represent disadvantaged persons and minority groups in human rights and civil cases.
- Deliver legal services to provinces, rural and remote areas.
- Inform the public of their legal rights and responsibilities.
- Effectively manage our business at the head office, branches, circuits and Legal Aid Desks.



# Our goals in 2009-2011

- By 2011, to have an official full-time presence in all provinces.
- Reduce delays in finalising cases through working with stakeholders to increase efficiency in the criminal justice system, and through efficient, and effective processes to complete civil cases.
- Increase public awareness and understanding of legal rights and obligations and the processes by which these may be realised.
- Increase the professional skills and competence of lawyers and support staff.
- Improve administration systems and processes and the facilities available to staff, including housing, in order to provide efficient, effective and accountable services.



# Key result areas

## Legal representation for defendants before courts in criminal matters

The Office of the Public Solicitor has a constitutional obligation to represent persons charged with serious criminal offences. The Office seeks to expand that representation into the Magistrates' Court Grade 5 and Juvenile Justice matters. In 2008, the Office commenced the Magistrates' Court and Juvenile Justice Initiative with the view to reducing the delays in bringing matters to a just conclusion and to explore responsible alternatives in sentencing.

### Priorities for 2009-2011

- Establish an effective group of lawyers to undertake Magistrate Court and Grade 5 and Juvenile matters in Port Moresby and selected provinces.
- Improve the efficiency of attendance on circuit by lawyers.
- Reduce the delays in bringing matters to trial.
- Strengthen the Office's representation in relation to Supreme Court appeals and reviews.

## Legal representation for disadvantaged persons in civil cases

In 2008, the Office of the Public Solicitor was restructured and it recruited a significant number of lawyers to strengthen the civil section of the Office. This will enable greater priority to be given to representing disadvantaged people and minority groups in appropriate cases.

### Priorities for 2009-2011

- Increase the number of cases being brought on behalf of victims of human rights violations.
- Improve access to justice for women and children.
- Reduce the delay in bringing matters to a satisfactory conclusion.
- Explore alternative means of resolving disputes.
- Extend legal aid in civil matters to additional provinces.

## Extend the range of legal services in areas of law available for assistance

The Public Solicitor currently has seven branch offices and one legal aid desk serviced by a paralegal officer at Bulolo. Following upon the success of the legal aid extension pilot program in Bulolo, the Public Solicitor intends to extend this concept to other provinces and, where appropriate, open new branch offices.

### Priorities for 2009-2011

- Introduce paralegals at legal aid desks in each of the provinces where the Office does not have full-time representation. The target is to have 12 legal aid desks opened by 2010.
- Open full branch offices in Bougainville (Buka) and Wewak.
- Facilitate cooperation between civil society organisations, sector agencies and the Public Solicitor in order to improve delivery of, and access to, legal services to provinces.



## Public awareness and cross-cutting issues

The Public Solicitor wishes to ensure that members of the public are aware of their legal rights and obligations and also of the services available through his Office. In 2008 the Public Solicitor launched an Awareness Strategy and Implementation Plan.

The Office is also of the view that raising the level of understanding of cross-cutting issues will reduce the incidence of offences being committed. The issues to be addressed include fraud and corruption, gender, HIV/AIDS, and domestic violence.

### Priorities for 2009-2011

- Implement the Public Solicitor's awareness strategy.
- Inform the public of their rights and responsibilities under the law.
- Increase participation of branch offices in provincial law and justice committees.
- Develop a strategy to raise awareness of the distinctions between government/public solicitor offices, and to measure community awareness of the Public Solicitor.
- Ensure that the Public Solicitor incorporates cross-cutting issues (e.g. gender, HIV/AIDS, fraud and corruption) into office policies and procedures as appropriate.

## Corporate Services

Since the establishment of the Public Solicitor Office in 1958, its administrative functions have in the main been conducted by the Department of Justice. As the Office moves towards full independence it becomes increasingly responsible for delivering its own corporate services. The Office has four corporate service functions: office management, finance, human resources, and information technology and case management.

### Priorities for 2009-2011

- Implement the Concept payroll system by December 2009.
- Implement training and continuing legal education programs for lawyers and support staff.
- Develop an office procedural manual by end 2009.
- Complete the review of the Public Solicitor's trust account and trust deed by end 2009.
- Over 2009-2010, review and update office structure and support services in the light of ongoing expansion and demand for services.
- Review and strengthen information systems, records management and reporting systems.
- Devise a Public Solicitor Housing Policy appropriate to the needs of the Office, to be fully implemented by 2011.
- Effect complete independence of the Office of the Public Solicitor.

## Forecast of resources

With semi-autonomy has come the responsibility for the Public Solicitor's Office to control funding for salaries and wages and its own expenditure in relation to goods and services and to control the hiring, firing and discipline of officers. 2009 represents the first year of responsibility for all these functions.

In late 2007 a major restructure of the Office was approved which established a staff ceiling of 101. It is expected that this staff ceiling will be maintained over the life of the Corporate Plan.

The existing and additional legal services of the Public Solicitor envisioned in this Corporate Plan will require appropriate budgetary support. The Public Solicitor's medium term aim is for all Legal Aid Desks to be fully operational by 2015. In the longer term, by 2020, our aim is for Legal Aid Desks to be upgraded to full branch status.

Our forecast of resource requirements over 2009 to 2011 is represented below.

	2009	2010	2011
Total budget	K8.4m	K16.5m	K16.5m
Total staff numbers	101	101	101

*Figures include all recurrent and development costs.*



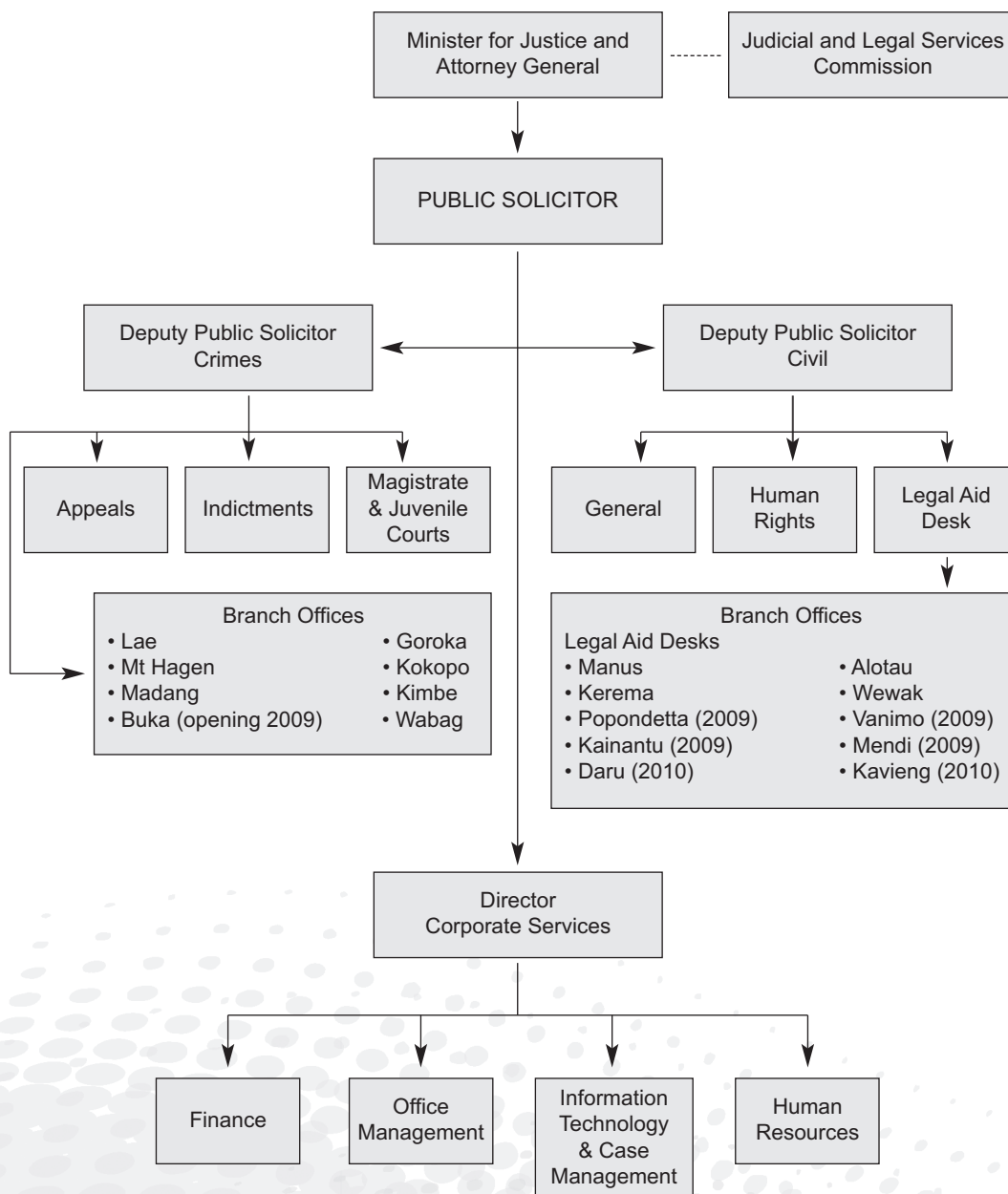
# Performance measures

As a result of the investment in our case management system over the life of the Corporate Plan, the Public Solicitor expects to be able to better measure and report on key performance indicators and service standards. A reliable baseline for the first year of the Corporate Plan (2009) will be established through ensuring that relevant data can be extracted from the case management system.

Until the development of a revised performance measurement framework, the Office will monitor volumes and trends against the following indicators of individual lawyer, branch, and jurisdictional output:

- Number of applications made.
- Number of applications granted.
- Branch client attendance records.
- Full-time presence of Public Solicitor Office in provinces.
- Rankings of lawyers and support staff in annual performance appraisals.
- Implementation of recommendations of integrity review arising out of Barnett Report.

# Organisation chart







9. Dr. Miriam O'Connor helps increase lawyers knowledge to act in matters relating to Family and Sexual Violence.
10. The Public Solicitor presents 2007 Annual Report to the Governor General.
11. The Office will extend services to provinces including Wewak and open Legal Aid Desks throughout the country.
12. In 2008, the office underwent a major restructure and doubled the number of lawyers employed.
13. LJSS Sports Day with Public Prosecutors staff.
14. 50th Anniversary Dinner with present and former Public Solicitors.



15. Training Lawyers in Fraud & Corruption and other cross cutting issues.
16. Offices in the Provinces will be improved and expanded and new offices added.

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