



Animal Defenders Office

Strategic Plan

Introduction

The Animal Defenders Office (ADO) is an incorporated, non-profit community legal centre that specialises in animal law.

The ADO provides a range of legal and community services including:

- Providing free advice and representation for individuals and groups that want to take action for animals;
- Producing information to raise community awareness about animal protection; and
- Working to advance animal interests through law reform.

In December 2013 the ADO was the recipient of a grant from Voiceless: The Animal Protection Institute, as part of Voiceless' 2013 Grants Program. These funds were applied to the establishment costs associated with the centre, as well as costs associated with ADO Community Outreach and Education.

The central office of the ADO is located in Canberra and the association aims to encourage the establishment of similar centres across Australia.

About this plan

This document is the ADO's strategic plan and is updated from time to time as required by the ADO. The mission, goals, and objectives are in accordance with the Constitution of the ADO.

It is intended that this plan will be used to set the direction for the mid-term future of the ADO, and to assist with the continuous improvement of the centre's key business processes. It will be used to guide decision making, and add meaning to each person's work, focusing them and aligning their work to the greater organisational goals. This plan will also be used as a basis for organisational monitoring and reporting.

Since this plan is the first of its kind, it will be reviewed by the ADO Board within 12 months of operation and then at regular intervals.

For an understanding of the governance framework in which this plan operates, it should be read in conjunction with the relevant ADO Policies and the ADO Casework Guidelines in operation at the time of approval of this plan.

Document history

Version	Date	Comments
Strategic plan	2014	First draft by S Landmark.
Strategic plan - STL comments	28/2/15	Edits and comments by S Larkin.
Draft ADO Strat Plan v1 - tw comments	28/2/15	Edits and comments by T Ward.
Draft ADO Strat Plan 2015 v1	15/7/15	Minor updates.
ADO Strategic Plan	14/12/16	Minor updates
ADO Strategic Plan	6/1/18	Review. Minor updates
ADO Strategic Plan	13/12/20	Review. Minor updates

Mission

The mission of the ADO is to use the law to protect animals. This includes assisting individuals and groups to secure animal interests through existing legal mechanisms, increasing public awareness of animal protection matters, and working to advance animal interests through law reform.

Statement of objects

The objects for which the ADO was established are set out below:

1. To empower and encourage the community to protect animals through the law;
2. To promote respect for the environment and the individual animals and species who depend on it for their survival and wellbeing;
3. To raise awareness within the community about legal aspects of the treatment and use of animals by humans;
4. To provide advice on the law affecting animals and those who protect them;
5. To carry out and publish research on animal protection and other related areas of law;
6. To seek appropriate law reform to improve the protection of animals and the ability of humans to make compassionate choices;
7. To promote public interest animal protection litigation and forms of alternative animal protection dispute resolution; and
8. To promote links between the ADO and similar organisations in Australia and overseas.

Values

The core values of the ADO which shape all decisions and actions are based on:

Professionalism

ADO officers aspire and adhere to the highest standards of professionalism. Our lawyers and other volunteers are committed to providing advice and information that is accurate, accessible, and of a high quality.

Respect for the inherent value of all individual sentient creatures

Animal sentience has been acknowledged in ACT animal welfare law. The ADO supports this acknowledgement and adopts it as a statement of the organisation's values:

- (a) animals are sentient beings... able to subjectively feel and perceive the world around them; and
- (b) animals have intrinsic value and deserve to be treated with compassion and have a quality of life that reflects their intrinsic value[.]¹

Respect for other animal protection and environmental groups with similar values to those of the association

The ADO aspires to engage in active and positive networking, dialogue, and cooperation with other animal protection and environmental groups with similar values to those of our Centre.

Respect for each other within our organisation

As a demonstration of our respect for each other within our service, we will act cooperatively and with understanding, and will always act for the good of the organisation and its values.

Confidentiality

All legal advice and case management activities will be subject to strict standards of confidentiality.

¹ *Animal Welfare Act 1992* (ACT), s4A(1).

Key Areas and Objectives

Key Area 1: Organisational Governance and Sustainability

Objective: Provide ongoing delivery of services through securing of recurrent funding, coordinated expansion and retention of volunteers, within an agreed governance structure.

- 1.1 Compliance with relevant legal professional standards, laws, and regulations.
- 1.2 Compliance with all aspects of good governance including best practice management models for community legal centre and associations governance.
- 1.3 Maintain and secure additional funding to ensure an optimum level of service delivery.
- 1.4 Attract and retain volunteers and members.
- 1.5 Provide a positively communicated and shared strategic direction for the organisation.
- 1.6 Implement sustainable and coordinated expansion in response to identified needs and demands.
- 1.7 Rationalise the management of the organisation in order to better service the ACT community.
- 1.8 Enhance the reputation of the organisation within the community.

Key Area 2: Legal Advice and Advocacy

Objective: Provide legal advice, support and advocacy to members of the community in relation to animal law and animal protection

- 2.1 Provide timely, accurate and accessible legal advice to people in the ACT and surrounding areas, in accordance with ADO policies and relevant legislation and professional standards.
- 2.2 Provide legal representation in matters relating to animal law or animal protection, in accordance with ADO policies and relevant legislation and professional standards.
- 2.3 Ensure strict compliance with legal professional standards, including confidentiality.
- 2.4 Increase awareness and capacity of the community to access the ADO's services.

Key Area 3: Law Reform

Objective: Promote law reform and social change

- 3.1 Initiate and promote research and evaluation of existing laws and policies relating to animal law and animal protection.
- 3.2 Actively respond to calls for submissions from relevant organisations in relation to animal law and animal protection matters.
- 3.3 Establish and maintain regular dialogue and communication with government authorities or departments, as well as non-government organisations or bodies, in relation to animal law and protection matters.
- 3.4 Provide commentary and make regular submissions in relation to animal protection matters across various forms of media, including submitting print and electronic articles and contributing to relevant online discussions.

Key Area 4: Education

Objective: Provide accurate and accessible community legal education (CLE)

- 4.1 Provide accurate and culturally appropriate community legal education on animal law and animal protection matters, including the development of general fact sheets.
- 4.2 Establish relationships with relevant bodies and agencies that have a client base who could benefit from CLE.

Organisational Structure

