



Community Legal Centres NSW

ANNUAL REPORT 2019/2020



Community
Legal Centres
NSW

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Community Legal Centres NSW acknowledges the Traditional Owners, Custodians and Elders of the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation, past, present and emerging, on whose traditional land we work. Community Legal Centres NSW also acknowledges the Traditional Owners, Custodians and Elders of the lands on which our members centres work across NSW.

About this report

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*Cover Image (top): NSW Attorney General, Mark Speakman, and Shadow Attorney General, Paul Lynch with representatives from community legal centres at the Community Legal Centre Roadshow to NSW Parliament in February 2020.
(Bottom) Community Legal Centres NSW Chair, Arlia Fleming, presents to members of the NSW Parliament at the Community Legal Centres Roadshow in February 2020*

From the Chair and Executive Director

In a year that has been so defined by crises, it is important to look back and acknowledge the sector's achievements amidst all of the challenges we've had to confront. We should all be proud of these achievements, and Community Legal Centres NSW can be – and is – proud of the role we have played.

We've driven a rethink of the way we measure our efforts, **focussing on the impact of our work**. Following a strategic review of priorities, our advocacy for **progressive law reform** has been reoriented to have **a much greater focus on justice for First Nations peoples**. Moving **our quarterlies online has enabled many more sector workers to attend**, and we are using them ever more effectively to explore the social justice issues that shape our organisation's work. Our **financial service is delivering excellent at-cost financial management services** for a growing number of members, enabling access to a quality of service these centres could not achieve alone. **Our member accreditation scheme continues to serve as a guarantor of quality**, providing centres with a supportive framework to foster continuous improvement.

This year we took **our clients' stories and our calls for change right into the**

offices of our elected representatives. We facilitated a massive roadshow event at Parliament house, including **meetings between 17 centres and 27 MPs**, and a showcase of some of our specialist centres with the Attorney and Shadow Attorney.

Our centres in the worst bushfire-impacted areas did an incredible job responding to the emergency needs of their local communities. When other services were shutting down, our centre workers cut short their Christmas leave so that people with disaster-related legal problems could get help from trusted locals. No sooner were the fires out than COVID-19 hit. **Centres were at the forefront of a massive community sector response to pandemic-related need**. We convened weekly online meetings, where centres were able to share resources and support each other, document emerging legal need and deliver a coordinated response to demand.

Internally, **we effectively managed the rapid shift to remote operation and supported many other centres to do the same**. We continued to deliver the services our members expect, and a few more as well. We concluded a new Enterprise Agreement that affirms our commitment to CLCNSW being **a safe**

and supportive workplace that values the contributions of its workers.

The sector has been well served by an **engaged and energetic board**. We benefited enormously from the contributions of Kat Ironside as Chair to November 2019. After many years of service, Kat was entitled to take a break. We have been fortunate to have, in Mark Speakman, **an Attorney General who understands and supports the work we do**. We have also appreciated the good work of Legal Aid NSW's Community Legal Centres Program team. **Our staff team has well and truly delivered for our membership**, continuing to punch above its weight.

In a difficult year, where **we have all had to learn to live more locally, we have been reminded of the power of communities looking after each other**. 2019-20 has shown us, yet again, that community organisations deliver urgently needed and appropriately tailored supports to people in need. Congratulations to every community legal centre on big achievements in a very big year. **We've stuck together and shown yet again what a united and committed sector can deliver**.



Arlia Fleming (Chair)



Tim Leach (Executive Director)

COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES AT A GLANCE

Community legal centres provide free legal support to people going through tough times, mostly those experiencing financial hardship, social disadvantage, domestic or family violence or discrimination.

I realized I was not going to jail. I believed in myself. I wanted to live for the first time in many months.

– Client feedback from NSW Community Legal Centre Impact Evaluation Survey



TOP 5 LEGAL ISSUES

- Credit and debt
- Housing
- Parenting arrangements
- Consumer
- Immigration



40,106

people in financial hardship



53,757

Total people supported



GENDER

Female: 28,375

Male: 23,135

Non-Binary/Gender Diverse: 236

Note: 2,011 clients' gender was unknown



11,336

culturally and linguistically diverse people



3,880

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people



11,501

people experiencing family violence



AGES

under 18: 709 35-64: 27,940
18-34: 17,380 65+: 5,459

OUR MEMBERS

Community Legal Centres NSW is the peak representative body for **40 community legal centres across NSW**. Twenty-one specialist centres give expert legal advice on specific legal issues (like social security or tenancy) or to particular groups (like First Nations people or women). Nineteen generalist centres support people within geographic catchments with a range of everyday legal problems – from Albury to the Tweed, from Broken Hill to the Sydney CBD.



OUR IMPACT

We advocate for progressive law reform and social justice

Our strategic policy and law reform raised awareness about key access to justice issues for people and communities experiencing financial hardship, social disadvantage and discrimination.

A strategic review of our law reform priorities – based on consultation with our members – ensured our work reflected our sector's priorities for justice reform and was targeted to key areas of need. Priority law reform areas included First Nations justice and addressing sexual, domestic and family violence. Advocacy priorities included securing adequate, sustainable funding to ensure legal assistance services can meet rising demand over the long term.

Our **submissions to state and federal inquiries** ensured that decision makers considered barriers to justice for our constituencies in key areas such as family law and violence, sexual assault and consent, disaster and pandemic response, and the needs of children with a parent in prison. Our **State Budget Submission** called on the NSW Government to inject \$22.4 million each year over the next three years to expand justice initiatives in child protection, domestic violence and sexual assault, and housing and homelessness.

Our monthly **Law Reform Bulletin**, written by experts from the community

law sector, provided in-depth analysis of law reform and access to justice issues. The sector's expertise on a wide range of topics had a broad audience of politicians, public servants, academics, and not-for-profit sector professionals.

Our online amplification of **open letters to the NSW Attorney General and Commissioner of Victims' Rights** coordinated by the Community Legal Centres NSW Domestic Violence and Victims Compensation Network helped ensure decision makers heard the concerns of victims-survivors of domestic, family and sexual violence over changes to the NSW Victims Support Scheme.

Statewide law reform, policy and practice networks we facilitated brought together those in the legal assistance sector, enabling collaborative, strategic responses to access to justice issues and unmet legal need. Our refresh of the quarterly **Law Reform and Policy Network meetings** increased members' participation and satisfaction, as well as opportunities for collaboration.

I found the format of this particular Law Reform and Policy Network session excellent, was really good to hear from the different centres - lots of practical, relevant information.

— Law Reform & Policy Network meeting participant (May 2020)

We **collaborated with people across** the legal assistance and community sectors to **support broader social justice issues and campaigns**. This included areas such as reducing the over-incarceration and deaths in custody of First Nations people, justice reinvestment, raising the age of criminal responsibility, adequate social security, gambling reform, abortion law reform, and tenancy rights.

Our **online legal referral directory** helped thousands of people access legal assistance by connecting them with the appropriate community legal centre. At the onset of COVID-19, online traffic to the directory increased 34% from the previous year.

Our members featured in **over 400 media stories**, including national, regional, and local media, increasing social awareness of community legal centres and the sector's law reform concerns. We **amplified the services and law reform advocacy of community legal centres** in NSW across our social media channels, which saw a general overall growth in reach and engagement.

Community legal centres across the state fear some of the most vulnerable members of the community could be placed at risk due to funding cuts to a program designed to help them. ... In its case to Government to continue the service, Community Legal Centres NSW said it would fight the decision. It said services were needed more than ever — with just 7 per cent of the NSW Government's \$2 billion in funding for child protection allocated for early intervention.

— ABC News Online (30 August 2019) on funding cuts to community-based child protection legal services.

In our view, the best way to reduce the harms caused by imprisonment is to sharply reduce imprisonment rates in NSW. Imprisonment must be an option of last resort, imposed only for violent offences. The government must also work to swiftly reduce the number of people being held in prison on remand, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers. The savings gained from a significant reduction in imprisonment rates should be reinvested into community-led, place-based initiatives to strengthen communities and address the underlying socio-economic factors that drive crime.

— CLCNSW submission to the Inquiry into Supports for Children of Imprisoned Parents in NSW

Community legal centres in NSW outraged by funding cuts to early intervention programs

By Philippa McDonald and Sue Daniel
Posted Fri 30 Aug 2019 at 5:54am



Community legal centres Delivering access to justice

All in this together? The impact of COVID-19 on refugees and people seeking asylum.

Article by Sarah Dale (Centre Director & Principal Solicitor, Refugee Advice and Casework Service)



Put your hand up for victims-survivors rights!

Proposed changes to the NSW Victims Support Scheme will deny victims-survivors of violence access to the supports they have a right to and need.

Add your name to the open letter calling on the government to scrap these regressive reforms.



6 law reform submissions (consent, family law and family violence, bushfires, COVID, prisons)



Cross-sector campaigns supported

- Alliance for Gambling Reform
- Change the Record / Raise the Age (of criminal responsibility)
- Climate Justice Alliance
- NSW Pro-Choice Alliance/abortion law reform
- NSW Women's Safe State Alliance
- NSW Legal Assistance Forum



Law Reform

- Participation in Law Reform & Policy Network meetings increased from 15 attendees (average over the previous three quarterlies) to 46 participants (online May quarterly) - a 300% increase in participation
- 10 editions of the Law Reform Bulletin, with 12,411 editions delivered
- Victims Services open letter signed by 90 organisations and almost 550 individuals



Online Impact

- Website visited by 56,907 people, with pages viewed 130,791 times
- 132,659 people on Facebook reached, with 11,591 page engagements
- Twitter following grown by 3,920 people, with 158,799 Tweet impressions
- 34% increase in traffic to our Legal Referral Directory in March 2020 (compared to March 2019)

OUR IMPACT

We provide high quality services to our members

We strengthened members' capacity to deliver high-quality services to their communities.

Our Quarterly networking events enabled valuable peer collaboration so sector workers and volunteers could share expertise and develop joint strategies for improving clients' experiences of the justice system.

We **introduced opening and closing plenaries at each quarterly**. Thought-provoking presentations encouraged the sector to reflect on and debate the critical issues facing us, including what it means to be a community-based organisation, using scarce resources to deliver service innovation, and the role of community legal centres in delivering police accountability.

Our Legal Training and Management Training sessions were designed for the community legal centre context with pro bono, professional and peer presenters sharing their knowledge and expertise. We supported staff and board members to build their financial management skills, and managers to develop skills in face-to-face coaching conversations.

Our quick and efficient transition to online delivery of networking

and training events meant members experienced uninterrupted access to opportunities for learning, reflection, connection and evaluation throughout the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Record numbers participated in these events online, especially people working in regional, remote and rural areas. We **strengthened members' digital literacy and capacity to deliver online and remote services** in response to COVID-19. We delivered training sessions on digital platforms including Microsoft Office 365, Zoom, and online presentation and facilitation skills.

We continued to grow the **CLCNSW Financial Service**, delivering high-quality financial management and book-keeping services to 10 permanent organisational subscribers. The team strengthened financial management practices across the sector, providing short-term support to two members and delivering three online training sessions.

We rolled out **Phase 3 of the National Accreditation Scheme**. The NSW Regional Accreditation Coordinator supported eight centres to achieve (or work towards) full

accreditation and thirty-three centres to deliver progress reports, keeping them on track to meet the Phase 3 requirements.

Evaluation and governance assistance supported members to strengthen their capabilities in these areas. Our **impact evaluation project and framework** increased members' understanding of outcomes-based reporting and evaluation methods and how to demonstrate the positive impacts of their services. In consultation with Legal Aid NSW, we made optional questions available in the biennial Client Satisfaction Questionnaire to capture the qualitative client data required to measure services' impact.

Our **online governance benchmarking tool** assisted community legal centre boards to review and evaluate their governance practice. Our tailored governance support for individual members helped strengthen governance practices and arrangements for centres in need.

Coaching conversations on Thursday was great – very practical and exactly relevant to community legal centre practice.

– Feedback on management training days

This [financial management training webinar] was incredibly helpful for me as a new community legal centre board member. It filled in some gaps in my knowledge and provided a great overview of the sector.

– Participant feedback on Financial Management Webinar, May 2020

The work that has gone into making the Quarterlies work, be useful and focussed is much appreciated. It reflects the very effective leadership that Community Legal Centres NSW is providing the sector.

– Feedback from Quarterlies



Community legal centre coordinators and directors meet at the November 2019 quarterlies



Karen Cox (Financial Rights Legal Centre), Katherine Boyle (Welfare Rights Centre) and Grant Arbuthnot (Tenants' Union NSW) at the February 2020 Quarterly



John Rule (National Association of People with HIV Australia), Jenny Lovric (Just Reinvest NSW) and Helen Campbell (Women's Legal Service NSW) headline a quarterly opening plenary session on what it means to be community-led in 2020



Training

- 14 legal training and management training sessions delivered, with 140 participants.
- 5 online training sessions delivered to support members to transition to remote working arrangements in response to COVID-19 with 227 participants



Financial Service

- 10 permanent subscribers
- 3 online financial management webinars
- Over 200 payrolls processed

Quarterlies

- 86 training and networking sessions held across 4 conferences
- 53% increase in participation for May 2020 Quarterly (up to 237 from an average of 155 for the September, November and February events)
- 100% increase in participation from people working in rural, regional and remote centers: up from an average of 38 people for preceding quarterlies, to 77 people for May quarterly



Accreditation

- 33 progress reports received and reviewed
- 40 accreditation interviews conducted
- 8 feedback sessions delivered
- 8 centres assessed and accredited, 8 accreditation reports written

OUR IMPACT

We support local communities in times of crisis: bushfire response

Our participation in statewide legal assistance planning in response to the summer bushfires ensured our sector's expertise was recognised and used to support local communities on the ground.

Community legal centres across NSW were at the forefront of local responses to the state's bushfire emergency. We worked with specialist and generalist member centres, Legal Aid NSW and other legal assistance services, to coordinate legal help for people in the worst affected areas, from Eden and Moruya to the south, Bathurst and Lithgow to the west and Port Macquarie, Coffs Harbour and Lismore to the north.

Centres in fire-impacted zones responded immediately to community need. Staff returned early from Christmas leave and centres did their best to increase advice and support services for people with fire-related legal issues. **In many regions, community legal centres were up and running, providing services to communities, when government services were shut down, or had not yet been set up.**

Community legal centres' willingness and capacity to return to work immediately after the fires demonstrated the benefits of getting emergency services into communities via local service providers. **The effectiveness of local legal responses was recognised at all levels of government** with the Attorney General making a welcome visit to Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre, where he acknowledged the centre's critical contribution to the legal assistance response.

Community Legal Centres NSW's **participation in statewide legal assistance planning** ensured the justice response to the bushfires acknowledged the important role of local service delivery in times of crisis. Our efforts ensured the response facilitated local service delivery to bushfire affected communities and effectively leveraged the sector's

significant existing expertise, particularly in insurance law, tenancy, credit and debt, employment, social security and family violence.

Through this process, we secured **additional one-off funding injections for the nine community legal centres** most impacted by the fires. These included five in the communities hardest hit by the disaster and four statewide services with the expertise most sought by people with fire-related legal issues.

Our **coordination of offers of pro-bono legal support** connected lawyers and law firms with bushfire impacted centres and delivered additional legal resources to those centres (until the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic).

It was a very sobering experience travelling down south. The destruction is massive – not just to the individuals' properties but to the whole economy... Community legal centres need to be ready for an increase in enquiries from bushfire affected clients regarding insurance law, debt, employment and tenancy. We particularly need to increase our knowledge of insurance law, and to collaborate with Legal Aid and pro bono solicitors. I also encourage everyone to think about visiting the far South Coast to support local businesses.

– Justine O'Reilly, Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre, writing for Off The Record

Embedded in communities, community legal centres can mobilise quickly, deliver flexible grassroots responses and fill service gaps. They have a deep understanding of the complex interplay between disadvantage, trauma and legal need within their communities, including those likely to emerge in disaster contexts. However, they continue to be constrained by funding limits, which significantly restrict their capacity to meet demand for legal assistance both pre-disaster (in preparedness) and post-disaster (in recovery).

– CLCNSW Submission to Cth Inquiry

A big shout out to all the #CLCs across NSW helping fire victims including, in fire-ravaged areas, Shoalcoast (Nowra with outreach services to Eden and Ulladulla), Illawarra (with office at Moruya), Mid North Coast (Port Macquarie and Coffs Harbour, and Elizabeth Evatt (Blue Mountains).

– Attorney General, Mark Speakman - January 2020



Attorney General Mark Speakman visits the team at Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre after the summer bushfires



Financial Rights Legal Centre senior solicitor Jen Lewis (second from left) and solicitor Naomi Delaney (far right) with two members of the local St Albans Rural Fire Service



The view from Mid-North Coast Community Legal Centre's front door during the height of the summer bushfires

\$ 1.5 million

additional funding secured for community legal centres in NSW to respond to bushfires



After the fires, community legal centres:

- delivered free legal advice and assistance to impacted communities, including at Disaster Recovery Centres
- developed resources to support key disaster response agencies to identify local legal issues and ensure appropriate referral pathways
- delivered specialist legal advice on insurance-related matters, through the Financial Rights Insurance Law Service
- delivered urgent specialist insurance law training to community lawyers and other frontline service providers
- participated in community meetings, briefings and events coordinated by local Councils to deliver information to impacted communities about available local supports and services

Demand snapshot

- Between January and March 2020, the Insurance Law Service run by Financial Rights Legal Centre provided:
 - Training on bushfires & insurance to 135 financial counsellors and community lawyers
 - Over 85 legal & financial counselling services to bushfire victims
 - Over 450 services to consumers with disaster-related insurance disputes (including bushfires, hail, storms, flood and the COVID-19 pandemic.)
- 85% of Financial Rights Legal Centre's bushfire services were delivered into NSW

OUR IMPACT

We support and build the communities we are part of

Our events, services, communications and advocacy raised awareness about the sector's significant contribution to communities across NSW, secured additional funding for members and strengthened their professional and organisational practices.

Information about generalist community legal centre services, tailored for every NSW electorate, was delivered to every member of the NSW Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council.

Parliamentarians learnt more about the community legal centre sector during our **Community Legal Centre Roadshow to NSW Parliament**. We coordinated meetings between generalist community legal centres and their local members of parliament. This raised MPs' awareness of key access to justice issues for their constituents, strengthened service referral pathways, and improved relationships with elected representatives. MPs found out more about the important role statewide specialist community legal centres play in ensuring access to justice for the people of NSW at our lunchtime briefing.

Our Aboriginal Legal Access Coordinator **delivered culturally appropriate support to Aboriginal workers across the sector**. Quarterly 'Yarn Up' sessions

we facilitated provided a culturally safe space for Aboriginal workers to discuss issues affecting them, their work and the work of the sector more generally.

Our half-day **Aboriginal cultural awareness training** enabled Aboriginal workers in the sector to educate their non-Aboriginal peers about Aboriginal culture and how to build culturally safe environments and services. Non-Aboriginal attendees increased their knowledge of Aboriginal cultures, the impacts of colonialism, and systemic injustice in the legal system, and we supported participants to reflect on ways they and their organisations can implement culturally safe practices. We also coordinated **member participation in events recognising and celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture**, including the Yabun Festival, NAIDOC and Reconciliation Week.

Our **inaugural Aboriginal Employment survey** collected information from members about their efforts to promote access to justice for Aboriginal people in

This [Aboriginal cultural awareness training] was a fantastic session, very eye-opening and relatable through the presenters sharing their own experience. The best Quarterlies presentation I've ever been to!

– feedback from half-day cultural awareness training – February 2020

NSW, including through service delivery, community development, employment opportunities, and action to promote reconciliation. This data, which will be collected annually, informs the support and training we deliver to Aboriginal workers and to our members to build their cultural competence.

We launched the **Reconciliation Action Plan Development Program**, which is supporting four state-wide community legal centres to develop Reconciliation Action Plans.

Our participation in NSW consultations on the **National Legal Assistance Partnership** agreement ensured decision-makers considered the perspectives of NSW-based community legal centres. Our involvement helped the national peak, Community Legal Centres Australia, to secure additional Commonwealth funding for community legal centres through the Partnership.

Community legal centres do incredibly important work. They often deal with the marginalised and most disadvantaged members of our community. They have a capacity to provide what can be best described as 'wrap around' services because they have much greater flexibility than other institutions. They are an important part of meeting the very considerable amount of unmet legal need in our society. And they perform all their roles with remarkably limited funding.

– Paul Lynch - Community Recognition Statement re Roadshow – 5 March 2020

The purpose was clearly articulated, and I think it worked well in both increasing awareness of our work and relevance, but also increasing our exposure to parliamentarians who might not otherwise have any understanding or connection with our work. I thought the tone was constructive and professional.

– Roadshow feedback debrief – 27 February 2020



Executive Director, Tim Leach and Chair, Arlia Fleming with the NSW Attorney General and Shadow Attorney General at the Community Legal Centre Roadshow to NSW Parliament in February 2020



Tim Leach with presenters Latoya Smith and Mark Holden at our half-day cultural awareness training for community sector workers



Bronwyn Ambrogetti and Julie Vitnell (Hunter Community Legal Centre) with Riley Brooke (CLCNSW) and Michael Johnsen MP at NSW Parliament House



41

attendees at our virtual screening of the documentary '88' for National Reconciliation Week 2020 CLCNSW



Roadshow to Parliament

- Representatives from 17 community legal centres supported to build relationships with local MPs
- Meetings with 27 MPs coordinated
- 20 MPs or staffers attended a lunchtime briefing profiling statewide, specialist services
- 3 sector briefings and training sessions on meeting with MPs delivered in the leadup to the event



48

participants in half-day cultural awareness training designed and delivered by Aboriginal workers in the CLC sector



Post-election communications

- Tailored information about community legal centres, referral information and specialist services sent to all 135 Members of the NSW Parliament following the 2019 election

OUR IMPACT

We support local communities in times of crisis: COVID-19 response

Our early coordination of sector COVID-19 meetings meant we were quick to gather evidence of rising levels of legal need and able to inform government responses to the pandemic.

Community legal centres across NSW formed a **vital part of the safety net that helped protect already marginalised people and communities from the social and economic impacts** caused by governments' responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Community Legal Centres NSW responded immediately to the full range of service delivery, IT and law reform challenges the pandemic and public health responses generated for our members.

Our **weekly online coordinators and directors meeting** provided a space for centres to discuss and document demand and service trends, coordinate and compare service responses, share resources and boost morale.

Our **early analysis of changes to demand for services caused by the pandemic shaped national thinking about its immediate and projected impact on**

unmet legal need. Meeting early and often enabled us to analyse data from multiple sources and develop a wholistic picture of service delivery and demand across the sector. This data informed a national funding campaign, which **resulted in a one-off injection of funding from the Commonwealth to community legal centres.**

Through the height of the NSW lockdown, **our website consolidated critical information about the availability of community-based legal assistance services across NSW for referral agencies.**

Our sector-wide submission to the Commonwealth Senate Select Committee on COVID-19, coordinated in collaboration with Kingsford Legal Centre and the HIV/AIDS Legal Centre, **highlighted access to justice concerns triggered by the government's response to the pandemic.**

Our Aboriginal Legal Access Program Coordinator provided targeted, **culturally appropriate support to Aboriginal workers across the sector throughout the pandemic.**

Across NSW, centres have shown great agility and flexibility in maintaining the continuity of vital services for the community while undergoing a rapid digital transformation. These changes have been made more complex by the fact centres have experienced a loss of service multipliers (like volunteers and pro bono partners) and non-government sources of funding (like donations).

– Commonwealth submission – sector funding?

Community legal centres in NSW welcomed the National Cabinet's announcement on 6 May 2020 of \$63.3 million in funding for the legal assistance sector across Australia to address increased demand due to COVID-19. However, once divided between jurisdictions and different legal assistance providers (including Legal Aid Commissions and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services), it is nowhere near adequate to meet actual legal need in the community, now and into the future. It is vital the Federal Government increase its funding contribution to community legal centres and maintain these funding increases over the long term. State and Territory governments must also follow Victoria's lead and immediately inject additional funding to support front-line legal assistance services in their jurisdictions.

– Joint sector submission to Cth inquiry into COVID-19 response



Community legal centres' advocacy and law reform expertise was in high demand during the pandemic



The Community Legal Centres NSW team meets via Zoom during the pandemic



Staff were supported to maintain proper work-life balance while working from home. Senior bookkeeper Julie Robson got her gardening shoes on and tended her veggies.

\$ 1.09m

Funding secured to enable NSW centres to procure the ICT necessary to deliver remote servicing in the context of COVID-19

Demand for services

- 10% increase in assistance with domestic violence protection orders across the community legal centre sector in first quarter 2020 (compared to 2019)
- 26.9% increase in domestic and family violence services delivered by the sector in first quarter 2020 (compared to 2019)
- 15% increase in number of calls to Welfare Rights Centre's general advice line in first quarter 2020 (compared to last 2 quarters 2019)
- 631% increase in traffic to Tenants Union NSW website in 1st week March 2020
- 34% increase in traffic to Community Legal Centres NSW legal service finder app in March 2020 compared to March 2019
- 30% increase in services delivered by Women's Legal Service NSW in March 2020, compared to March 2019

\$ 4.34m

Funding secured to help NSW community legal centres deliver frontline assistance in response to COVID-19

OUR IMPACT

We are a strong, principled and community-led organisation

By listening to our members, nurturing our relationships, and implementing our values through our policies and practices, we are building a well-connected, safe, and supportive organisation.

We started the journey to develop a new **Reconciliation Action Plan**. The process engaged all staff members and the board and reinvigorated the organisation's commitment to reconciliation and First Nations justice. We **co-chaired the national Legal Profession Reconciliation Network**, supporting collaboration and engagement on reconciliation and First Nations justice across the broader legal sector.

We **increased representation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on our board**, creating two permanent positions appointed by our Aboriginal Advisory Group. We **supported staff members to develop and deepen Aboriginal cultural awareness** through participation in regular training opportunities, including at regular staff meetings and a full-day session provided by Yarn Australia.

We **developed holistic, staff-centred organisational policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic**. These supported staff to work flexibly through the height of the pandemic, including through remote working arrangements and additional leave provisions for staff members directly affected by COVID-19 or with caring responsibilities.

We finalised our **Enterprise Agreement for 2020 to 2022**, providing staff with above award pay and conditions over the life of the agreement.

Nurturing **relationships with our pro bono supporters** extended our ability to provide operational, research and law reform support to community legal centres.

Our **volunteer law student program** provided meaningful opportunities for students to gain real-world experience in developing and communicating law reform and access to justice initiatives.

We reviewed and updated our **governance policy**, and consulted our members on our law reform priorities, using their feedback to identify three **strategic policy and advocacy priorities to guide our work in 2020-22**.

Developing cultural safety is the responsibility of all community legal centre leaders. It is about training, introspection, meeting quality assurance standards, and creating relationships. It is also about developing a deep appreciation for one of the oldest living cultures on earth, taking responsibility for one's inheritance, understanding systemic barriers, growing professional relationships and making friends

– Community Legal Centres NSW Aboriginal Cultural Safety Workbook

I've been really pleased to see Community Legal Centres NSW reflect the sector's broad values of social justice in its activities. I've also been pleased to see Community Legal Centres NSW demonstrate leadership in the law reform space – for example by amplifying the Black Lives Matter movement and the climate justice movement. Many centres would like to do more law reform, but [have] limited ... capacity. I appreciate the heavy lifting Community Legal Centres NSW does in this area.

– Member feedback, Community Legal Centres NSW Member Satisfaction Survey



Tim Leach (CLCNSW) with Christine Robinson and a volunteer (Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Legal Service) at Yabun 2020



Laurel Draffen (CLCNSW), Mark Patrick (Disability Law Australia), Robyn Ayres (Arts Law), Nassim Arrage (CLCs Australia) and Charlotte Maung (CLCNSW) at Yabun 2020



2

cultural awareness training sessions for staff and the sector



Pro bono partnerships and volunteers

- 4 pro bono supporters: Allens, Ashurst, Gilbert & Tobin, Herbert Smith Freehills
- 7 research projects conducted by university research teams on behalf of community legal centres
- 13 interns supported to develop applied research, law reform and communications skills



3

strategic law reform priorities identified through sector consultation

- Sustainable funding
- First Nations justice
- Consent, sexual, domestic and family violence

OUR PEOPLE

STAFF

Tim Leach	Executive Director
Mark Riboldi	Advocacy & Communications Manager (on secondment from October 2019 – June 2020)
Charlotte Maung	Financial Service Manager
Zachary Armytage	Aboriginal Legal Access Program Coordinator
Laurel Draffen	Capacity Building Coordinator
Emily Hamilton	Senior Policy Officer (until October 2019) Acting Advocacy & Communications Manager (from November 2019)
Darren Smith	Communications Officer (until May 2020)
Riley Brooke	Communications & Research Officer (on secondment until November 2019)
Ingrid Rikkert	Regional Accreditation Coordinator
Vijhai Utheyan	Office Manager
Imogen Brackin	Office Manager
Julie Robson	Financial Service Senior Bookkeeper
Katharine Cooke	Financial Service Bookkeeper
Lucy Lee	Financial Service Bookkeeper
Rafael Mazzoldi	Web & CRM Developer
Judy An	Communication Locum (2019)

BOARD

Katrina Ironside	Chairperson (to November 2019)
Arlia Fleming	Chairperson (from November 2019)
Kim Ly	Treasurer
Robert Pelletier	Deputy-Chairperson (from November 2019)
Daniel Turner	
Savi Mani	
Deborah Macmillan	
Jilly Field	
Nicole Jenkins	Aboriginal Advisory Group appointed representative
Brian Attard	Aboriginal Advisory Group appointed representative (from January 2020)

VOLUNTEERS

Semester 2, 2019

Abinaja Yogarajah
Kira Barker
Reneta Labio
Sara Evison-Rose

Semester 1, 2020

Alice Batchelor
Georgia Berriman
Rachael Farrell
Shuai Sun
Talia Chalita

Summer Break, 2019/20

Akira Singh
Carly Lake
Chloe Wyatt
Juliette Napper

NETWORKS

Employment & Discrimination

Law Network

Domestic Violence & Victims

Compensation Network

Coordinators & Directors Network

PII Committee

Prisoners' Rights Working Group

Admin / Finance Group

Communications Network

Care & Protection Network

CLEW Network

Law Reform & Policy Network

RRR Network

Justin Pen (Marrickville Legal Centre)

Sharmilla Bargon (Redfern Legal Centre)

Stanley Tao (North & Northwest Community Legal Centre)

Karen Mifsud (Womens Legal Service NSW)

Kathy Keat (Central Tablelands & Blue Mountains
Community Legal Centre)

Arlia Fleming (Central Tablelands & Blue Mountains
Community Legal Centre)

Robert Pelletier (Macarthur Legal Centre)

Ali Mojtahedi (Immigration Advice and Rights Centre)
Hilary Kincaid (Inner City Legal Centre)

Carolyn Jones (Womens Legal Service NSW)
Corinne Kew (Western Sydney Community Legal Centre)

Kerrith Sowden (Refugee Advice and Casework Service)

Finn O'Keefe (Redfern Legal Centre)

Kenn Clift (Intellectual Disability Rights Service)
Sym'mon Andrews (Central Coast Community Legal Centre)

Duhita Lewis (Hunter Community Legal Centre),
Nalika Padmasena (Seniors Rights Service)

Leo Patterson-Ross (Tenants' Union of NSW) (to February
2020)

Alastair Lawrie (Public Interest Advocacy Centre (from
February 2020)

Niamh Joyce (HIV/AIDS Legal Centre) (from May 2020)

Sean Bowes (Kingsford Legal Centre (from May 2020)

Arlia Fleming (Central Tablelands & Blue Mountains
Community Legal Centre)

Hannah Robinson (Western NSW Community Legal Centre)
(from November 2019)

OUR SUPPORTERS

PRO BONO SUPPORTERS

Allens

Ashurst

Gilbert & Tobin

Herbert Smith Freehills

QUARTERLIES AND TRAINING DAY GUEST SPEAKERS

Aideen McCarrigle (Legal Aid NSW)

Sally McAtee (Legal Aid NSW)

John Rule (National Association of People living
with HIV Australia)

Dr Anna Boucher (Department of Government
and International Relations)

Natalie Lang (Secretary, Australian Services
Union)

Ben Fogarty (Denton Chambers Law)

Professor Rosalind Croucher AM (Human
Rights Commission)

Dr Mindy Sotiri (Community Restorative
Centre)

Dr. Louis Schetzer (Australian Lawyers
Alliance)

Professor Simon Rice, OAM (Director,
Professional and Community Engagement,
University of Sydney Law School and Solicitor,
Supreme Court of NSW)

Felicity Graham (Black Chambers)

Geoff Mulherin (Law and Justice Foundation
of NSW)

Jenny Lovric (former Legal Aid [CLSD]; now
Just Reinvest NSW)

Umeya Chaudhuri (University of Sydney
School of Law and Department of Government
and International Relations)

Joanna Quilty (NCOSS)

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020

	2020 \$	2019 \$
Revenue and other income		
Revenue	977,659	1,095,549
Interest income	1,491	3,568
Other income	416,897	368,386
	1,396,047	1,467,503
Less: expenses		
Depreciation and amortisation expense	(42,987)	(28,557)
Employee benefits expense	(999,368)	(961,140)
Advertising expense	(3,071)	(3,853)
CLCNSW expense	(25,874)	(122,194)
Program and planning expenses	(64,770)	(68,200)
Office overhead expense	(83,081)	(114,938)
Rental expense premises	(39,581)	(36,540)
Other employees expense	(10,432)	(7,109)
Consultants and contractors expense	(36,191)	(107,429)
Other expenses	(2,480)	(1,465)
	(1,307,835)	(1,451,425)
Surplus for the year	88,212	16,078
Other comprehensive income for the year	-	-
Total comprehensive income	88,212	16,078

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT 30 JUNE 2020**

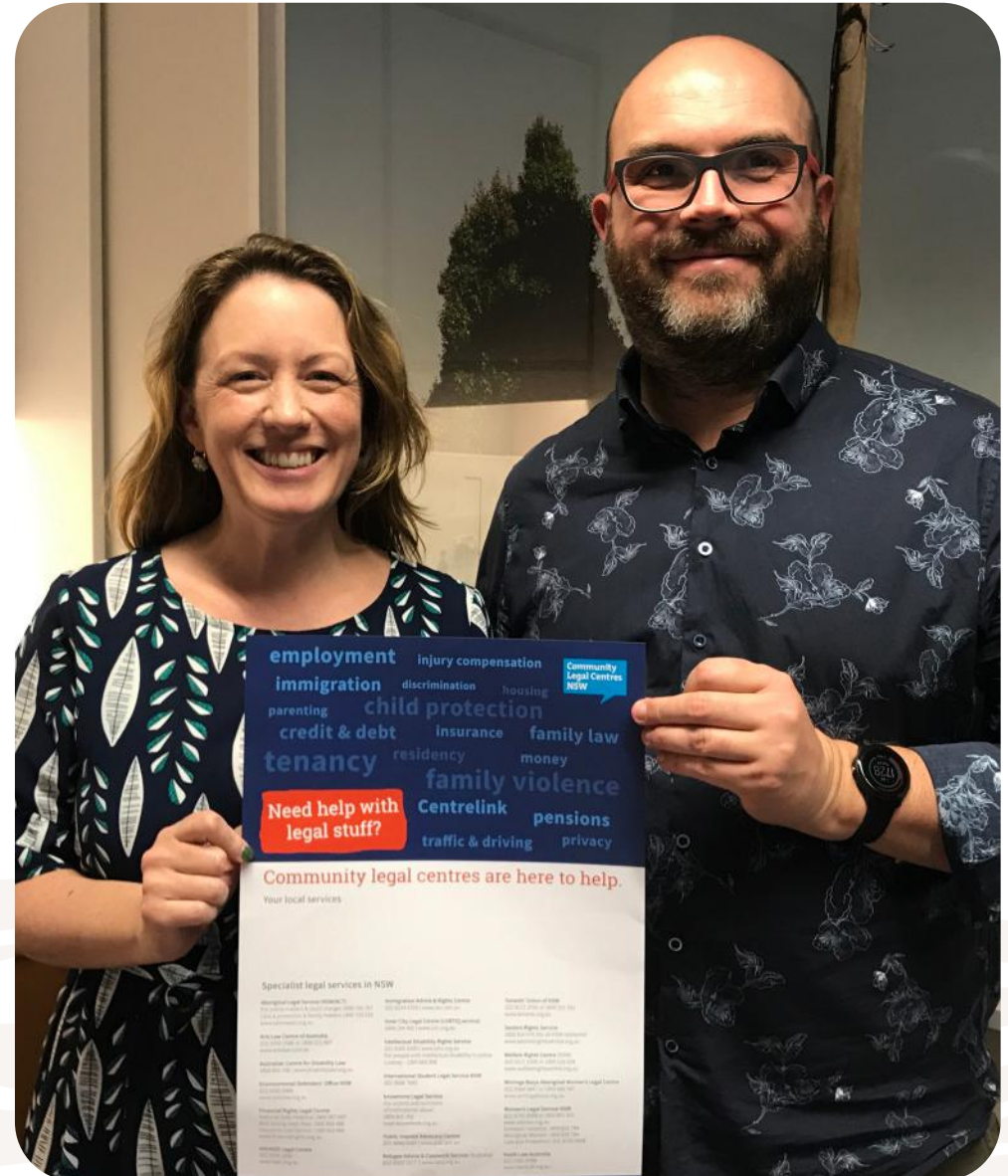
	2020 \$	2019 \$
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	454,962	418,795
Receivables	29,731	22,721
Other financial assets	125,779	124,957
Other assets	4,692	5,054
Total current assets	615,164	571,527
Non-current assets		
Intangible assets	75,140	97,556
Property, plant and equipment	37,204	51,568
Other assets	3,397	3,355
Total non-current assets	115,741	152,479
Total assets	730,905	724,006
Current liabilities		
Payables	68,736	99,718
Provisions	71,447	50,219
Other liabilities	80,269	165,013
Total current liabilities	220,452	314,950
Non-current liabilities		
Provisions	53,338	40,153
Total non-current liabilities	53,338	40,153
Total liabilities	273,790	355,103
Net assets	457,115	368,903
Members funds		
Reserves	79,910	79,910
Accumulated surplus	377,205	288,993
Total members funds	457,115	368,903



Emma Gollege (Kingsford Legal Centre), Charlotte Maung (CLCNSW) and Matt Keeley (Youth Law Australia) with Michael Daley MP at the Community Legal Centres Roadshow to Parliament, 27 February 2020



Tim Leach (CLCNSW) and Truda Gray (Illawarra Legal Centre) with Paul Scully MP at the Community Legal Centres Roadshow to Parliament, 27 February 2020.



Mark Riboldi presents tailored information about community legal centres in NSW to new Greens MLC Abigail Boyd, August 2019.



The Community Legal Centres NSW team: (back row) Tim Leach, Laurel Draffen, Alice Jones-Rabbitt, Vijhai Utheyan, Darren Smith, (front row) Mark Riboldi, Imogen Brackin, Emily Hamilton, Ingrid Rikkert.



The Community Legal Centres NSW Board meets: Arlia Fleming (Central Tablelands and Blue Mountains Community Legal Centre), Deborah MacMillan (Central Coast Community Legal Centre), Nicole Jenkins (Northern Rivers Community Legal Centre), Tim Leach (CLCNSW), Kim Ly (Women's Legal Service NSW) and Daniel Turner (Welfare Rights Centre).



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