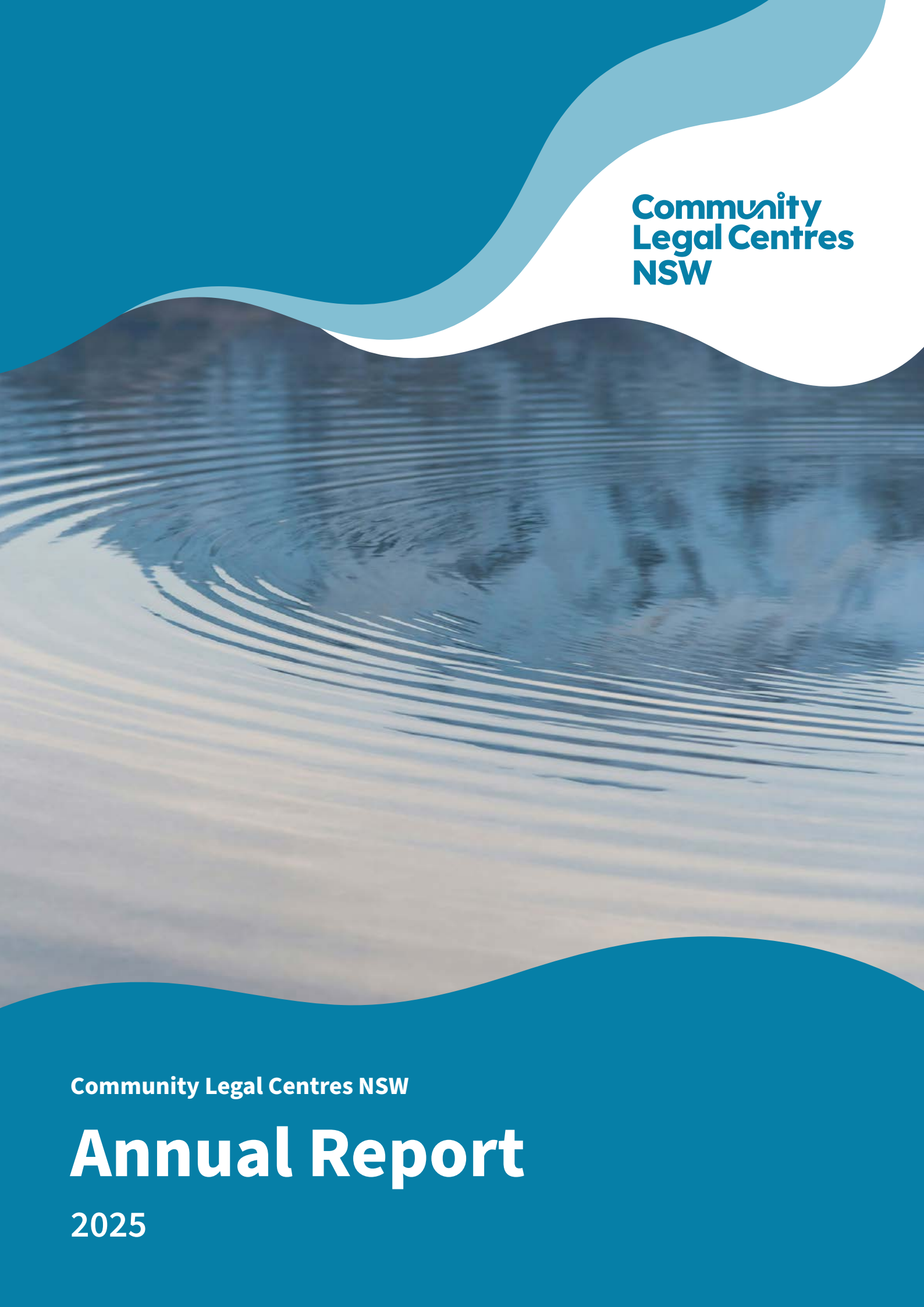




**Community
Legal Centres
NSW**

Community Legal Centres NSW

Annual Report

2025

Acknowledgement of Country

Community Legal Centres NSW acknowledges the Gadigal People as the Traditional Owners on whose Country our office is located. We pay our respects to Elders past and present. We recognise that the roots of our legal system stem from the legal fiction of 'terra nullius' and the denial of Aboriginal sovereignty.

We commit to challenging colonialism and standing in solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in their self-determination and fight for justice, across all aspects of our work.

Sovereignty was never ceded. Always was, always will be, Aboriginal land.

Contact Information

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This report is published by Community Legal Centres NSW.

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Letter from the Executive Director

Dear colleagues and friends,

It's with great pride and gratitude that I present the 2025 Annual Report for Community Legal Centres NSW. This year has been one of both challenge and achievement, and I am continually inspired by the dedication, resilience, and expertise of community legal centres in this state.

In 2024–25 alone, our sector supported over 51,000 clients and provided more than 57,000 services. The impact of this sector's work is huge.

At Community Legal Centres NSW, our focus remains on building a strong, collaborative, and sustainable sector. Over the 2024–25 year, we facilitated 21 networks that met each quarter, provided 19 varied training sessions to sector workers, and multiple forums to bring staff together, share knowledge, and strengthen leadership across the sector.

A defining achievement this year was the culmination of five years of coordinated advocacy and campaigning for sustainable sector funding. Through collective effort, driven by centre leaders, advocates, and our staff, we secured a significant outcome: the establishment of the new National Access to Justice Partnership (NAJP). This agreement provides a long-overdue uplift in core funding and a five-year commitment to greater certainty for community legal centres. It stands as a testament to what sustained, strategic advocacy can achieve when we speak with one voice.

Through our First Nations Cadetship Program and the new Rural, Regional, and Remote Internship Program, eight First Nations students gained hands-on experience in community legal centres and deepened their understanding of law and

justice through study visits to the National Parliamentary Library and the High Court of Australia.

The Aboriginal Legal Access Program (ALAP) continued to provide essential support to First Nations staff, delivering 44 one-to-one meetings alongside network and debrief sessions to foster culturally safe practices and build leadership pathways across the sector.

We have also strengthened the sector's data capability, supporting centres through the transition to new client management systems, building technical expertise, and enhancing evidence-based advocacy. This work ensures community legal centres can respond to emerging trends, measure impact, and make informed decisions to better serve their communities.

These achievements, and many others throughout this report, reflect the tireless commitment of the people in this sector. Your dedication is the backbone of this sector, and it is a privilege to work alongside you. Together, we continue to advocate for justice, equity, and access to the law for all people in New South Wales.

Sarah Marland
Executive Director
Community Legal Centres NSW



Impact in Numbers

Community Legal Centres NSW data on our organisation



In 2024-25, Community Legal Centres NSW **represented 41 community legal centres** across New South Wales.



34,125 searches were completed on our 'Find a legal service' online directory this financial year. This is about 94 searches per day and represents a **29% increase** on searches from the previous year.

We now facilitate **19 sector-wide networks** and **2 communities of practice** for CLC workers in NSW. These groups meet every quarter to share knowledge, skills and resources, and to undertake training on particular topics.



In 2024-25, we held **79 network meetings**.



302 people attended our network meetings in May alone, with **548 attendances** recorded. Many people are part of more than one network.

In 2024-25, we held **19 training sessions** on various subjects for CLC workers in NSW.



824 attendances were recorded across these sessions

Over the year, **44 one-on-one support sessions** were held with Aboriginal workers in the sector, providing guidance, debriefing, and advocacy pathways.

Community Legal Centres Australia data on CLCs in NSW

51,182 people were supported by community legal centres in NSW in 2024-25

38,835

people experiencing financial disadvantage

14,000

people experiencing, or at risk of, family violence

11,312

people with disability or mental illness

9,613

people whose main language spoken at home is not English

5,373

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

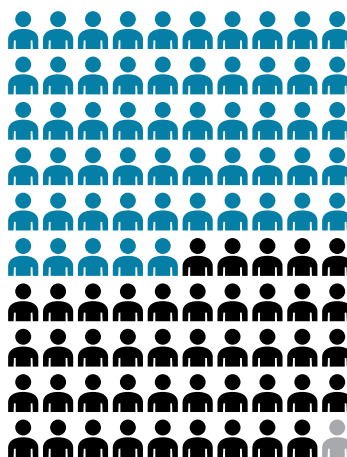
4,685

outer regional and remote clients

57,719

services provided

Gender breakdown (where gender is known):



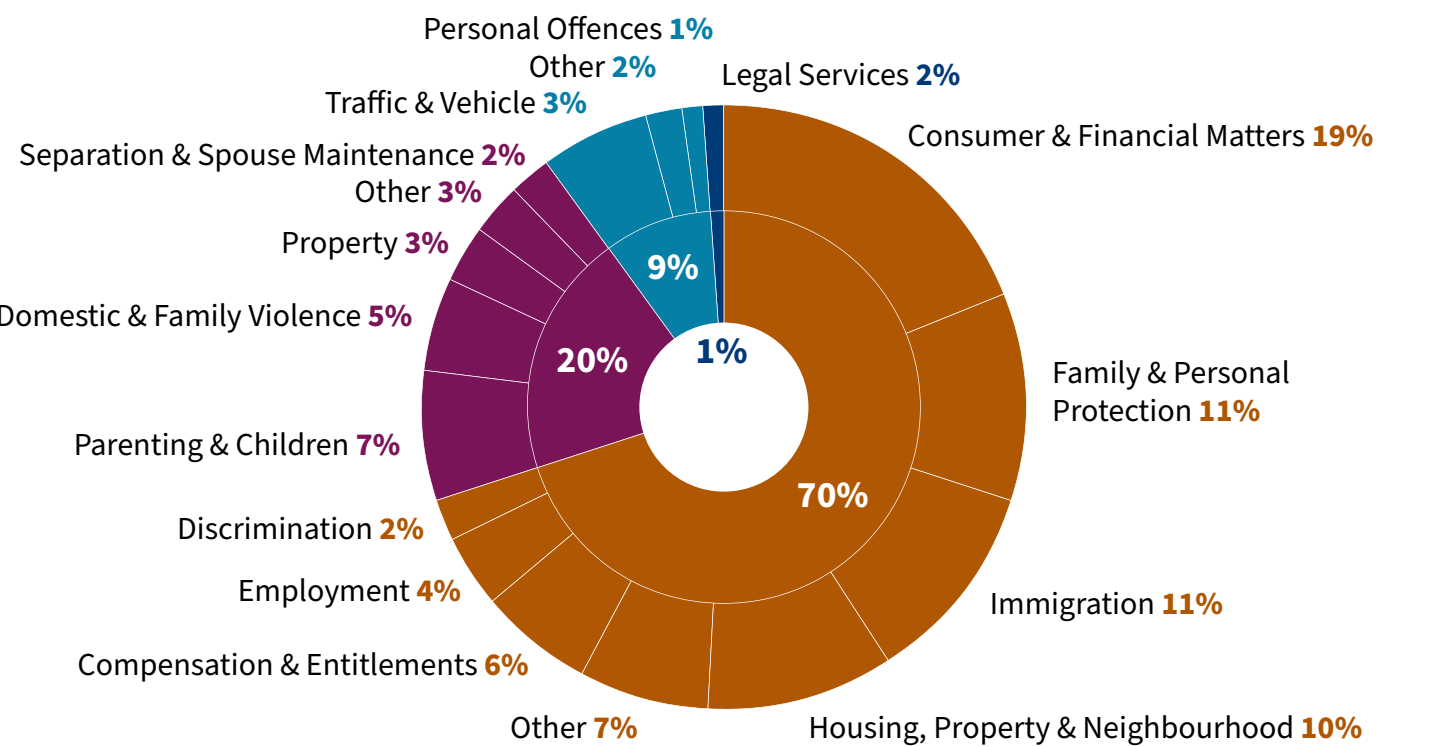
Female:
27,996 (53%)

Male:
21,862 (42%)

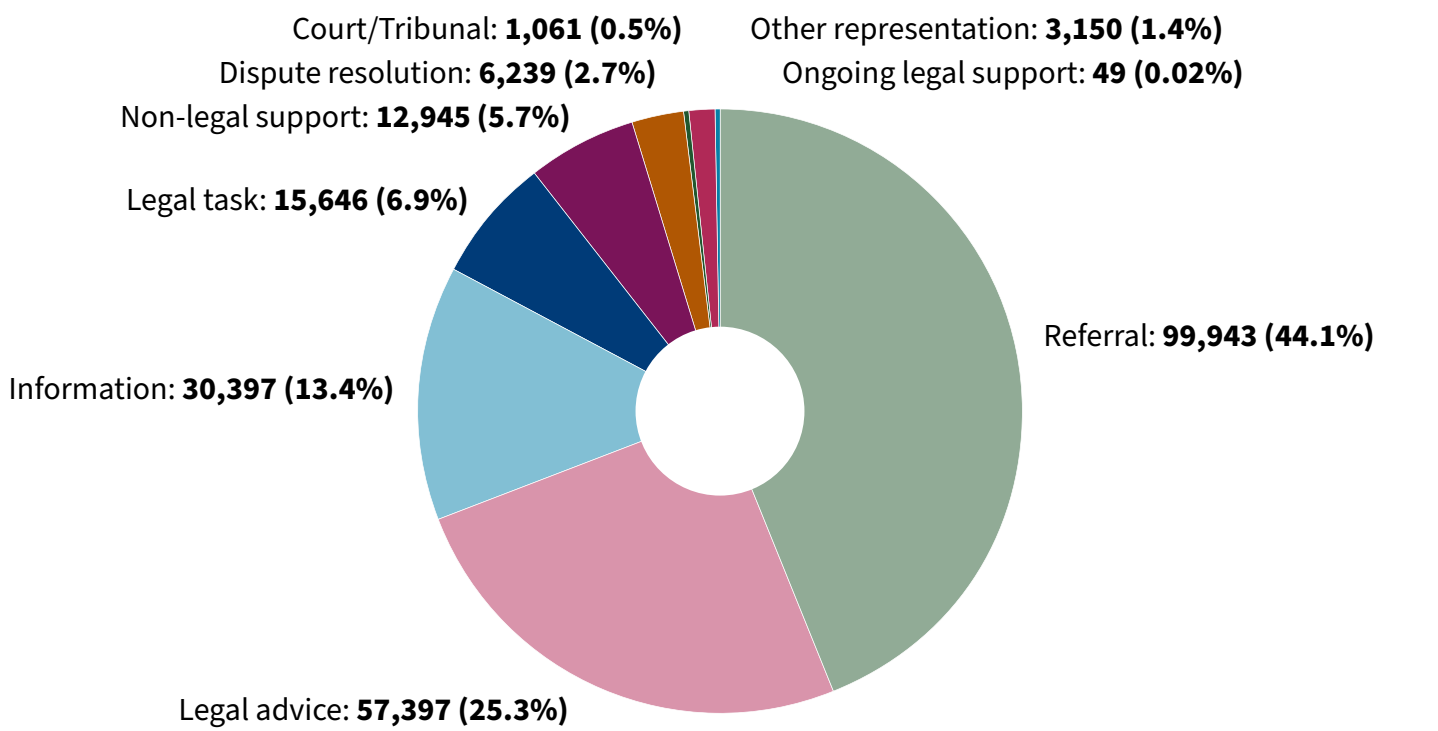
Other gender:
330 (1%)

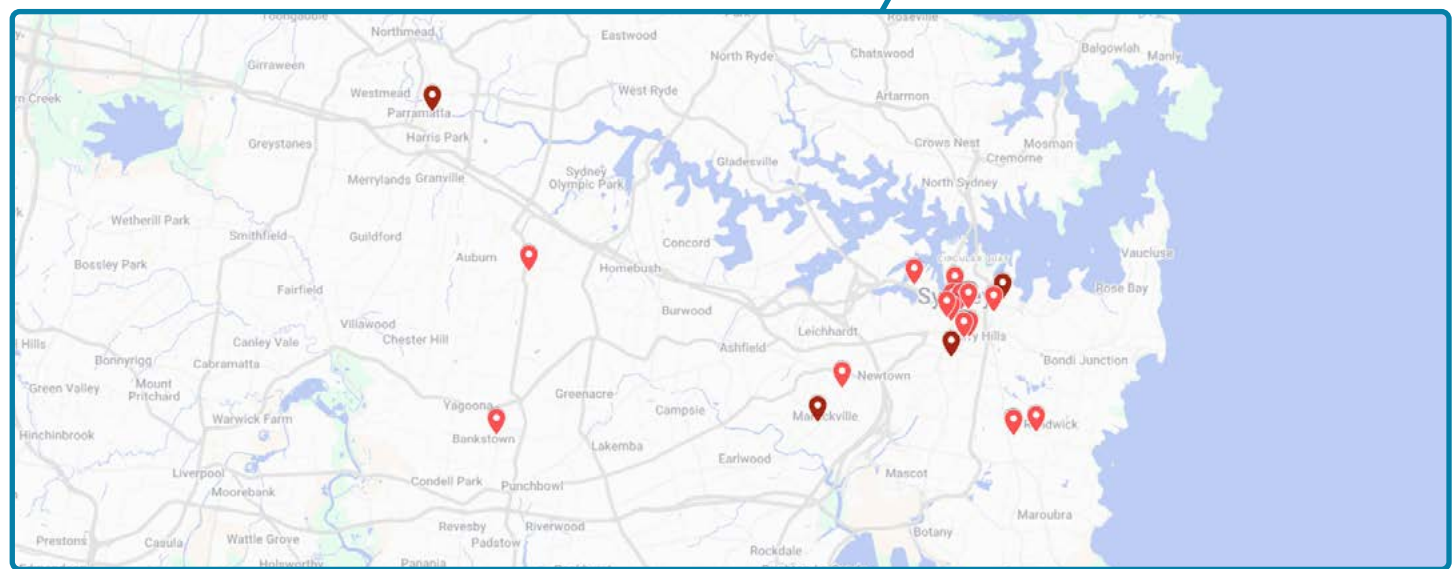
CLC services by legal area

- Civil Law
- Family Law
- Criminal Law
- Legal System



CLC services by service type





Generalist Community Legal Centres

Generalist community legal centres provide free legal help to people within a geographic area.

[Central Coast Community Legal Centre](#)

[Central Tablelands and Blue Mountains Community Legal Centre](#)

[Hume Riverina Community Legal Service](#)

[Hunter Community Legal Centre](#)

[Illawarra Legal Centre](#)

[Inner City Legal Centre](#)

[Justice Support Centre](#)

[Kingsford Legal Centre](#)

[Macarthur Legal Centre](#)

[Mallee Family Care](#)

[Marrickville Legal Centre](#)

[Mid North Coast Legal Centre](#)

[North and North West Community Legal Service](#)

[Northern Rivers Community Legal Centre](#)

[Redfern Legal Centre](#)

[South Coast and Country Community Law \(formerly Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre\)](#)

[University of Newcastle Legal Centre](#)

[Western NSW Community Legal Centre](#)

[Western Sydney Community Legal Centre](#)

Specialist Community Legal Centres

Specialist community legal centres provide free specialist services on specific issues (for example, welfare, tenancy or immigration), or for specific groups (for example, women, people with disability, or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people).

[Animal Defenders Office \(ADO\)](#)

[Arts Law Centre of Australia](#)

[Australian Centre for Disability Law](#)

[Binaal Billa Family Violence Prevention Legal Service](#)

[Environmental Defenders Office NSW \(EDO\)](#)

[Financial Rights Legal Centre](#)

[HIV/AIDS Legal Centre \(NSW\) \(HALC\)](#)

[Human Rights Law Centre](#)

[Immigration Advice and Rights Centre \(IARC\)](#)

[Intellectual Disability Rights Service \(IDRS\)](#)

[International Social Service Australia](#)

[Justice and Equity Centre \(formerly the Public Interest and Advocacy Centre\)](#)

[Justice Connect](#)

[Knowmore](#)

[Refugee Advice and Casework Service \(RACS\)](#)

[Seniors Rights Service \(SRS\)](#)

[Tenants' Union of NSW](#)

[Thiyama-Li Family Violence Service](#)

[Welfare Rights Centre](#)

[Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre](#)

[Women's Legal Service NSW](#)

[Youth Law Australia](#)

Community Legal Centres NSW Strategic Priority Areas

Focus Area #1

Bringing a strong and unified voice to advocacy for all our members, their communities and the CLC sector



Focus Area #2

Supporting our members to build sustainable organisations that are accessible and responsive



Focus Area #3

Bringing the collective voice of our members to policy and law reform



Focus Area #4

Championing First Nations justice, cultural safety and inclusion within the CLC sector



Funding advocacy

Advocacy to government

Funding security for the community legal sector in New South Wales was central to the work of Community Legal Centres NSW as the peak body in 2024-25.

In June 2025, the period of the five-year National Legal Assistance Partnership (NLAP) between the federal and state governments and community legal centres ended, and on 1 July, the new agreement, the National Access to Justice Partnership (NAJP) began.

In the 12 months leading up to the NAJP starting, Community Legal Centres NSW led sector-wide representation in negotiations around the new agreement, including conducting a sector-wide survey on community legal centre needs, and reporting these to the Attorney General of NSW.

We travelled to Canberra in August 2024 to advocate for a stronger and more sustainable funding agreement, meeting with nine Members of Parliament and conducting three media interviews to raise public and political awareness of the sector's impact and funding needs.

In total, we engaged over 20 Members of Parliament with tailored advocacy and electorate-level data in our funding advocacy during the year. This included Ministers, backbenchers, and crossbenchers.

We participated in legal assistance sector meetings hosted by the NSW Department of Communities and Justice and contributed to consultations on various elements of the new funding agreement.

The new agreement reflects a modest uplift in funding for community legal centres in NSW for the next five-year period, 2025 to 2030.

National Legal Assistance Partnership period: 2020–2025

The five-year National Legal Assistance Partnership (NLAP) period was marked by overlapping crises that reshaped demand for community legal centre services. The onset of Covid-19 and multiple lockdowns in 2020 and 2021 created sudden surges in legal need around employment, income support, tenancy, and family law, while also forcing services to pivot quickly to remote delivery. As public health measures eased, new pressures emerged. A sustained cost-of-living and housing crisis escalated financial stress and insecurity for many clients, increasing demand for assistance with debt, tenancy, and homelessness-related issues.

At the same time, the rise in the rate and complexity of domestic and family violence (DFV) matters put extraordinary strain on already stretched services. Communities also faced repeated natural disasters (fires, floods, storms), each triggering spikes in legal issues around insurance, housing, and access to relief. For First Nations people, rising incarceration and remand rates compounded systemic disadvantage, driving demand for culturally safe, community-based legal supports. These intersecting pressures meant that community legal centres were managing higher volumes of more complex cases with finite resources, requiring constant adaptation in service delivery models.

Start of the National Access to Justice Partnership period

As the new National Access to Justice Partnership (NAJP) agreement commenced, services required sustained, predictable funding to meet rising demand, recruit and retain a skilled workforce, and embed culturally safe, trauma-informed practice across all areas. Investment in digital infrastructure and flexible service models remained critical after Covid-19 lockdowns ended and many people returned to public life, as many clients continued to face barriers to in-person access. Strengthening responses to DFV and housing insecurity are immediate priorities, alongside tackling systemic drivers of incarceration and ensuring reforms are aligned with First Nations priorities under the Priority Reforms.

NSW Budget advocacy

As part of the NSW Budget process, Community Legal Centres NSW submitted a detailed pre-budget submission calling for increased funding to community legal centres in the state.

In addition to the Attorney General, the submission was sent to key Ministers with tailored funding requests, to crossbench MP Alex Greenwich, who is leading advocacy on the sector's behalf, and to backbenchers with electorate-specific data and a clear call to advocate directly to the Premier and Treasurer.

We also coordinated the sector's response to the NSW Budget, including analysis in partnership with NCOSS; continued advocacy to government, Coalition and crossbench MPs; and responding to questions, mainly from crossbench staff.



Policy and law reform

Community Legal Centres NSW advocated for a fairer and more responsive legal system through strategic law reform and systemic advocacy in 2024–25.

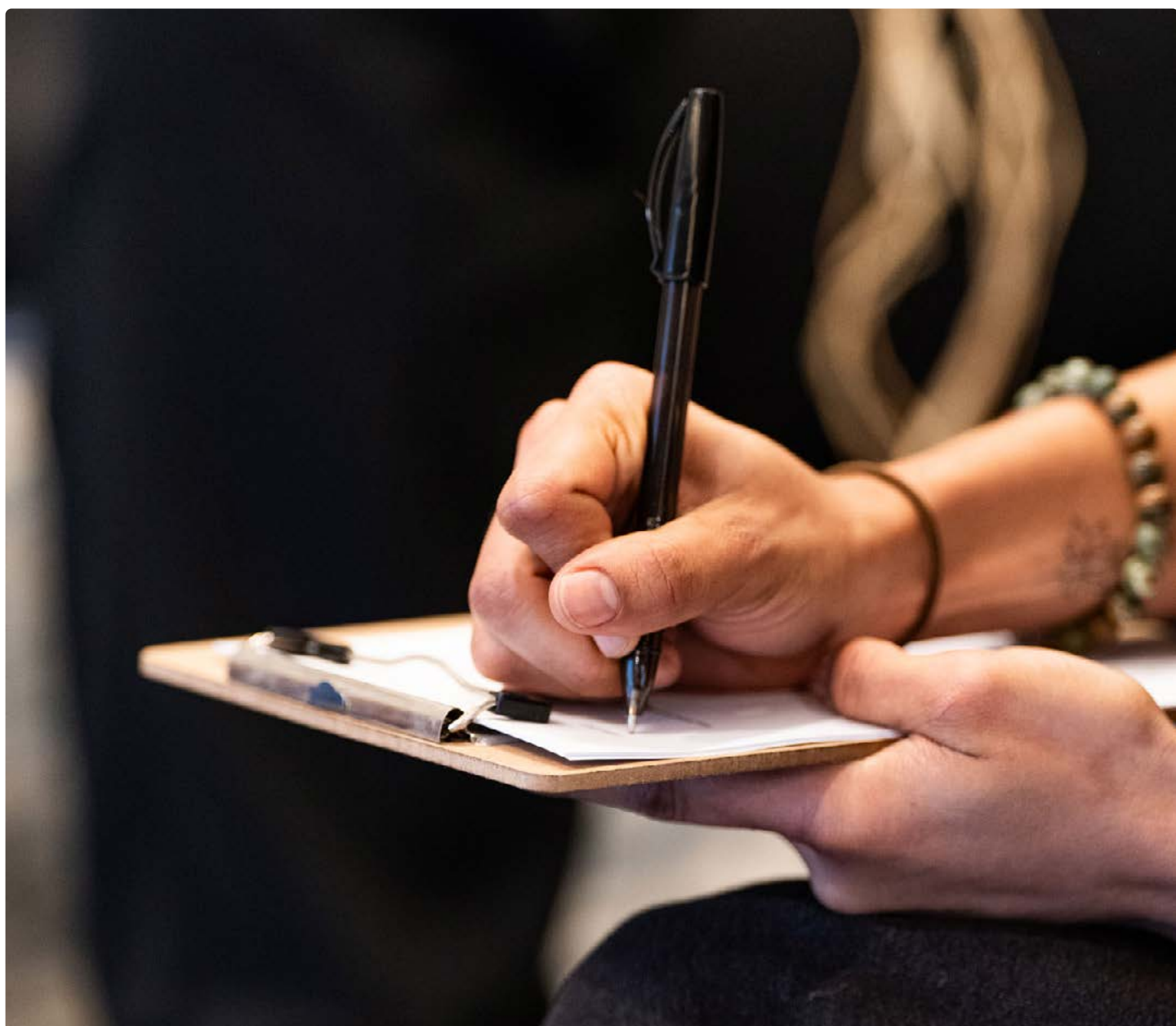
We strengthened our law reform capacity with the appointment of an Advocacy and Policy Manager in August 2024.

Throughout the year, we represented the community legal centres sector in high-level forums and government negotiations, ensuring the sector had a coordinated and influential voice in reform processes.

Policy and law reform activities included:

- As part of the NSW Budget process, advocated for NSW Government investment to address systemic issues – including support for services in rural, regional and remote areas, culturally safe legal assistance for refugees and LGBTQ+ communities, and natural disaster responsiveness.
- Coordinated a sector-wide legal response to disaster events, improving preparedness and client referral processes.
- Supported sector leadership in key campaigns, including Raise the Age, Human Rights Act, and housing reform (Everybody's Home).
- Coordinated a joint statement with Community Legal Centres Australia and Economic Justice Australia calling for the suspension of mutual obligations, highlighting systemic unlawfulness in their application.
- Advanced justice reform through active participation in the NSW Legal Assistance Forum (NLAF), including the Fines Forum and Prisoners Forum.
- Secured sector input in major law reform processes, including the SCHADS Award review, the Anti-Discrimination Act review, and practical legal training reforms.
- Convened sector experts and engaged directly with government on fines reform legislation and draft regulations, at the request of the NSW Finance Minister and Revenue NSW.

- Organised sector participation in a Department of Communities and Justice roundtable on restrictive practices against people with disability.
- Made a submission on the NSW Performance and Wellbeing Framework and gave evidence at a Public Accounts Committee hearing to ensure the Framework reflects community legal needs.
- Advocated against the closure of Community Justice Centres through sector-wide advocacy and engagement with Parliamentarians and local councillors.
- Facilitated a Children's Court visit to the Barang Regional Alliance to discuss implementing 'active efforts' under the Family is Culture reforms.



Data

In 2024–25, Community Legal Centres NSW expanded the sector’s data capability and collaboration, embedding a dedicated Data and Implementation Analyst, strengthening cross-jurisdictional training, and ensuring NSW was represented in national forums.

A key achievement this year was the compilation of our report ‘Insights from the 2023–24 State of the Sector Survey: Achievements and Challenges across CLCs in NSW’. Compiled by the Data and Implementation Analyst, this report analysed responses from 33 community legal centres (32 full and one partial) to provide a vital snapshot of the sector’s contributions and challenges in 2023–24. The findings strengthen evidence-based advocacy and sector planning. The final report will be released at the end of 2025.

Another major focus was supporting centres through the sector-wide transition between client management systems, from CLASS to ActionStep. The Data and Implementation Analyst has provided strategic oversight, debugging assistance, and reporting support to more than 30 centres since December 2024. This work has reduced risk and disruption, improved efficiency and accuracy in reporting, and ensured centres are well supported. The ActionStep Community of Practice has continued to provide a collaborative space for peer learning, knowledge-sharing, and problem-solving, helping centres navigate this significant change.

Community Legal Centres NSW has also been at the forefront of preparing the sector for emerging technologies. In partnership with Gilbert + Tobin and a sector advisory group, we developed guidelines for using artificial intelligence and delivered training sessions on their practical application. An AI and Technology Community of Practice was also established in May 2025, now meeting quarterly alongside the sector’s other network meetings. This network continues to build collective understanding and readiness for new technologies in the sector.

Beyond this, Community Legal Centres NSW contributed to national data and reporting discussions, supporting centres with reporting requirements, liaising with other state peaks, and participating in the CLCA Data Group. We also provided input into the data components of the National Agreement on Justice Policy (NAJP) negotiations, ensuring NSW perspectives informed national policy.

Through this work, Community Legal Centres NSW has strengthened sector-wide collaboration, built technical expertise, and positioned community legal centres in NSW to manage both ongoing data system transitions and the challenges and opportunities presented by new technologies.



First Nations Cadetship and RRR Internships

In 2024–25, Community Legal Centres NSW expanded opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through the First Nations Cadetship Program and the introduction of a Rural, Regional, and Remote (RRR) Internship stream. These programs strengthened representation of First Nations people in the legal sector and supported the next generation of community legal practitioners with practical experience, cultural mentoring, and professional development.

This year, five cadets - four law students and one social work student - gained hands-on experience across the community legal sector. For the first time, two students were also able to complete placements in regional and remote community legal centres.

Beyond their placements, students in the First Nations Cadetship Program participated in a range of learning opportunities. These included a two-week internship with law firm Wotton + Kearney, a Canberra study visit with training at the Parliamentary Library and a tour of the High Court, and attendance at a national legal conference in Melbourne. These experiences built practical legal skills, deepened understanding of the sector, and boosted confidence in pursuing legal careers.

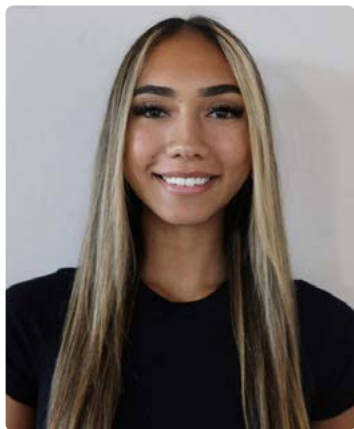
Cadets also shared their reflections in written pieces published on CLCNSW's website and in our Off the Record newsletter. Their stories highlight both personal growth and the broader impact of the cadetship program, demonstrating the value of continued investment in First Nations leadership within the community legal sector.

“

“Being part of the First Nations Cadetship Program has been the most incredible experience. It’s meant the ability for me to grow not only my understanding of legal roles and practice areas, but also my confidence in my abilities and in my voice, in being able to speak up when I’m uncomfortable, unsure or need help. I’ve had the ability to grow in so many different areas while only working in a few centres.”

- **Aimee Lawson**, First Nations Cadet and Administration Assistant

Meet CLCNSW First Nations Cadets



Maikiira Barber, Criminology and Laws student in First Nations Cadetship Program



Hannah Fernie, Law student in First Nations Cadetship Program



Xander Mains, Law and Criminology student in First Nations Cadetship Program

Sally O'Bryan, Psychology student in RRR Internship program



Jai McGaw, Law and Communications student in First Nations Cadetship Program



Aimee Lawson, Law and International Studies student in First Nations Cadetship Program



Emma McMahon, Social Work student in First Nations Cadetship Program

Bethany Sherry, Criminology and Law student in RRR Internship program



Pictured: Sally O'Bryan and Arlia Fleming at Central Tablelands and Blue Mountains Community Legal Centre placement



Pictured: Emma McMahon and Hannah Fernie at the High Court of Australia, Nov 2024



Pictured: Cadets at the High Court of Australia, Nov 2024



Pictured: Maikiira Barber with her Ngalaya Award for First Nations Junior Law Student of the Year



Pictured: Hannah Fernie and Emma McMahon outside AIATSIS, Nov 2024



Pictured: Jai McGaw at Yerin Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Health Centre



Pictured: Aimee Lawson at Justice Support Centre placement

Networks and Communities of Practice

In 2024–25, Community Legal Centres NSW continued to strengthen collaboration and knowledge-sharing through our networks and communities of practice.

We supported 21 sector-wide networks and communities of practice, including the new AI and Technology Network, launched in May 2025 in response to demand for guidance on best practice and resource-sharing in the use of artificial intelligence.

We also reintroduced our quarterly induction sessions for new sector workers in May 2025, providing an accessible introduction to the sector. This reintroduction received an enthusiastic response from the sector.

Across the year, we held 79 network meetings, with strong and consistent participation across the sector. Many CLC workers attended meetings for more than one network:

In May 2025, 302 people attended our network meetings.

In addition to general sessions, we continued to convene leadership-focused meetings, with an average of 28 Coordinators and Centre Directors and 37 Principal Solicitors attending their respective forums. These gatherings remain a cornerstone for building collaboration, leadership capacity, and strategic alignment across the sector.

“

“Community Legal Centres NSW is integral to us. Being a small regional CLC, it’s really important to have an organisation who looks out for us, who sits above us, who hears our concerns as a CLC and assists us to make changes.” - **Alison Maher**, Senior Solicitor Law Reform, Hume Riverina Community Legal Service

Training

In 2024–25, Community Legal Centres NSW delivered a balanced program of legal updates, workforce development, cultural safety, and innovation. Across the year, we hosted 19 training sessions with a total of 824 attendances from community legal centre workers across NSW.

We strengthened leadership and governance capacity through tailored sessions for Coordinators and Directors, and embedded cultural safety and inclusivity in workforce development through First Nations-focused and LGBTQA+ practice sessions. We positioned the sector at the forefront of legal technology and innovation, with dedicated training on AI and digital tools.

Our program also enhanced staff preparedness for significant policy and law reform changes, including the Privacy Act, Family Law Amendments, and the Portable Long Service Leave scheme. We built momentum for the upcoming Rural, Regional and Remote (RRR) Summit in July 2025, with strong centre engagement in program design and dedicated leadership to elevate First Nations voices.

Training and events in 2024–25 included:

- Community Legal Education Masterclass
- Birth Certificate Clinics and Referrals (with DLA Piper)
- AI in Legal Practice (with Gilbert + Tobin)
- Hear Me Out (online complaints tool)
- Employment Law Reform: Closing Loopholes Acts
- Understanding Employment Restrictions for Non-Lawyers (Section 121)
- Understanding Media
- Legal Ethics Panel
- Understanding the Privacy Act
- Portable Long Service Leave Briefing (with Michela Beal)
- Copilot Training (Microsoft team)
- Family Law Amendments Act Update
- Community Legal Sector Induction Session
- Coordinators and Directors Face-to-Face Training (including disability, leadership in crisis, and strategy development)
- Health Justice Partnerships and ACCHOs Panel
- Mabo Day Documentary Screening
- Portable Long Service Leave Briefing (second session)
- Practice Knowledge for Working with LGBTQA+ Clients
- Elder Abuse and Legal Safeguards: Practical guidance for CLCs



Aboriginal Legal Access Program

In 2024–25, CLCNSW’s Aboriginal Legal Access Program (ALAP) provided dedicated support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, strengthened cultural safety across centres, and contributed to law reform, training, and communications for the sector. The program remained fundamental to the wellbeing of First Nations workers, underpinning the sector’s ability to deliver culturally safe and effective services.

We worked with sector colleagues to update the Cultural Safety Guidebook and Workbook for community legal centres. These resources support centres to learn about the Aboriginal history of their local area, reflect on implications for practice and workplace safety, and strengthen engagement with Aboriginal communities. An Aboriginal learning professional, editor, and graphic designer contributed to the redevelopment, with the new editions to be launched in late 2025.

A core focus of the program continued to be building trusted relationships and safe spaces for Aboriginal staff. CLCNSW delivered four Quarterly Yarn Up network meetings and nine monthly debrief sessions throughout the year. These gatherings provided connection, peer support, and opportunities for professional learning, with guest speakers sharing insights on Aboriginal leadership, wellbeing, and sector development.

Alongside providing ad hoc support to First Nations workers across the sector, we conducted 44 one-to-one sessions through the First Nations Individual Meetings Project. These meetings offered guidance, cultural supervision, space for debriefing, and advocacy pathways. This work also informed anti-racism advocacy that led to a new national requirement for all community legal centres to include an anti-racism policy under the National Accreditation Scheme.

Community Legal Centres NSW supported Community Legal Centres Australia’s review of the Cultural Safety Standard by contributing to the Terms of Reference, participating in the review, and successfully advocating for stronger requirements on anti-racism. In 2024–25, 13 of around 80 First Nations CLC staff left their organisations—a turnover rate of 16.25%, compared to a national rate of 7.7%—highlighting the importance of ongoing support and retention initiatives.

A major highlight of the year was our involvement in the Big Yarn Up advisory group, which brought together most First Nations staff from across NSW. We managed relationships with Traditional Owners, engaged respected Aboriginal leaders, and ensured First Nations voices were central to Community Legal Centres NSW’s strategic planning for Aboriginal staff. Community Legal Centres NSW’s Aboriginal Legal Access Program also contributed to

broader sector leadership through membership in the NSW Law Society Indigenous Issues Committee, co-chairing the Legal Profession Reconciliation Network, convening the First Nations Rights Working Group, and participating in the Tenants' Union Aboriginal Advisory Committee.

Advocacy work also extended to Section 121 of the Legal Profession Uniform Law. We collaborated with the Law Society and Redfern Legal Centre to highlight Section 121's impact on employment opportunities. This led to sector training on Understanding Employment Restrictions for Non-Lawyers.

Finally, CLCNSW delivered training on health justice partnerships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, hosted a NAIDOC Week screening of *Rebel with a Cause*, celebrating Pat O'Shane, and contributed to training on Guardianship in NCAT, restrictive practices, and supported decision-making.



Accreditation Scheme support

Community Legal Centres NSW is responsible for assessing and accrediting member centres to ensure they operate to the highest standard. Accreditation through our program is a key requirement for community legal centres under the National Agreement on Justice Policy (NAJP). It's vital that this process is robust, relevant and developed for the sector, by the sector.

Our accreditation framework ensures that community legal centres continue to deliver high-quality, accountable and client-centred services. By maintaining strong standards designed around the realities of community legal practice, we help ensure that clients across NSW receive safe, effective and consistent supports, deliver high-quality legal services, and continuously improve their practices in line with sector best practice.

In 2024–25, we strengthened our accreditation program through significant system and process improvements. Key achievements included:

- Appointing a new Regional Accreditation Coordinator and building internal capacity through training and shadowing.
- Redeveloping all accreditation systems, modernising the approach and introducing automation across multiple processes.
- Establishing a forward calendar for accreditation, providing centres with clear notice and timelines.
- Supporting centres through tailored timelines and extensions to meet compliance requirements.
- Maintaining high sector standards and accountability, ensuring member centres continued to deliver safe, high-quality services aligned with best practice.

These improvements enhanced efficiency, transparency, and sector compliance, enabling centres to focus on delivering excellent legal services while benefiting from a more streamlined accreditation process.

Off the Record newsletter

In 2024–25, Community Legal Centres NSW’s communications team kept the sector connected and informed through Off the Record, our fortnightly sector newsletter. Over the year, we produced 22 editions, reaching more than 800 community legal centre workers across the state each fortnight. Engagement was strong, with open and click-through rates consistently performing above industry benchmarks for similar electronic direct mailings (EDMs).

Off the Record provided regular updates on Community Legal Centres NSW’s internal work, policy and law reform efforts from our members and civil society partners, and a wide range of professional development and capacity-building opportunities within and beyond the sector. Notably, in 2024-25, the newsletter played a key role in keeping the sector informed about CLCNSW’s funding advocacy and developments under the new National Access to Justice Partnership.

Each edition featured curated resources such as legal research, government reports, and community legal education materials, spotlighting those created by community legal centres in New South Wales. It was also a vehicle for celebrating the achievements of the sector, amplifying stories from centres that achieved major law reform as well as those small but mighty wins that embody the spirit of community legal work.

Every issue included a snapshot of that week’s First Nations justice news, ensuring that stories and updates relevant to the work of community legal centres were shared regularly and prominently.

Through Off the Record, CLCNSW continued to strengthen communication across the community legal sector this year, building connection, visibility, and a shared sense of purpose.

“

“Community Legal Centres NSW helps community legal centres do their work better by bringing them together. They’re the support network; the glue that facilitates conversations. I might be working on a project and I don’t know that there are three other community legal centres working on the same project. Community Legal Centres NSW does, and they bring us together so that we can work on it together.” - Ken Bielby, CLCNSW Chair of the Board and Principal Solicitor at Seniors Rights Service

Joanna Knight Scholarship inaugural recipients

The Joanna Knight Scholarship supports women and First Nations law students and barristers experiencing financial disadvantage, making a career at the NSW Bar more accessible. Established through a partnership between Joanna Knight's family, barristers, the Australian Communities Foundation and Community Legal Centres NSW, the Scholarship honours barrister Joanna Knight's values of public service and commitment to justice.

In 2024–25, two inaugural recipients undertook the Scholarship, Madeleine Causbrook and Alex Burkitt. Both highlighted that the Scholarship not only provided critical financial relief in the expensive early months at the Bar, but also created meaningful pathways to contribute to the community legal sector through pro bono work, research, and continuing professional development.

Madeleine Causbrook contributed her time and expertise to the community legal sector while commencing practice at the Bar. She prepared a detailed legal opinion and follow-up advice for the Human Rights Law Centre's Whistleblower Project, working alongside senior counsel on complex public, employment and criminal law issues. She also delivered a seminar for the CLCNSW Employment and Discrimination Law Network on a High Court decision with significant implications for employment law practitioners. Financially, the Scholarship enabled her to cover essential start-up costs at the Bar, including the Bar Practice Course, practising certificate, chambers set-up, court attire and floor fees. Madeleine described the Scholarship as both professionally and personally rewarding, providing opportunities to deepen her expertise, strengthen connections with CLCs, and give back to the sector where she began her legal career.

Alex Burkitt also began practice at the Bar in September 2024. She said the Scholarship was instrumental in easing the heavy financial burden of this transition, particularly following maternity leave and unpaid study time. The Scholarship supported essential costs such as robes, the Bar Practice Course, insurance and floor fees, giving Alex stability and confidence in her first year. Through the pro bono component, Alex was connected with Western Sydney Community Legal Centre to act in a Victims Services appeal at the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) on behalf of a client injured in a serious assault. She drafted submissions, prepared evidence and ran the case, which she described as a complex and meaningful matter that strengthened her advocacy skills and reaffirmed her commitment to pro bono work.

Disaster response case study: Cyclone Alfred

In 2024–25, Community Legal Centres NSW coordinated a sector-wide response to flooding caused by Cyclone Alfred and mid-north coast storms. Working closely with the Disaster Network, we developed triage processes for incoming calls and established a roster of referral pathways across different areas of law. This ensured that clients affected by the disasters received timely, coordinated legal assistance during the recovery period.

“

“I find Community Legal Centres NSW like the backbone of the sector. They support us by being that voice when we need mentoring. Someone we can go to for guidance, and when we’re looking for resources. They’re our go-to ... They can hear your pressure points, understand what you’re dealing with, listen to your needs and provide help.” - **Kris Ramien**, Community Engagement Worker, Western Sydney Community Legal Centre



Our People

Staff

Name	Role	Dates (start or end in FY)
Zachary Armytage	Aboriginal Legal Access Coordinator	
Mouna Bertal	Data and Implementation Analyst	From 4 December 2024
Damiya Hayden	Policy and Advocacy Manager	From August 2024
Paloma Jackson-Vaughan	Communications and Operations Officer, formerly Administration Assistant	
Sarah Marland	Executive Director	
Rafael Mazzoldi	Web Developer and ICT Project Officer	
Indre McGlinn	Media and Communications Manager	
Bobbi Murray	First Nations Cadetship Administrator	
Brooke Scobie	Regional Accreditation Coordinator	From November 2024
Chloe Wyatt	General Manager, Engagement	From February 2025

First Nations Cadetship and RRR Internship programs

Name	Role	Dates (start or end in FY)
Maikiira Barber	First Nations Cadet	From 1 August 2024
Hannah Fernie	First Nations Cadet	Up to 7 February 2025
Aimee Lawson	First Nations Cadet, Administration Officer	
Xander Mains	First Nations Cadet	Up to 14 January 2025
Jai McGaw	First Nations Cadet	Up to 14 August 2024
Emma McMahon	First Nations Cadet	
Sally O'Bryan	RRR Intern	January 2025
Bethany Sherry	RRR Intern	February 2025

Board

Name	Role	Dates
Brian Attard		Jul 2020 - Current
Ken Beilby		Sep 2023 - Current
Jilly Field		Nov 2018 - Aug 2024
Jonathon Hunyor	Up to Jan 2025	Nov 2022 - Jan 2025
Deborah McMillan	Chair up to Aug 2024	Nov 2018 - Aug 2024
Melanie Noden		Mar 2024 - Current
Patrick O'Callahan		Mar 2024 - Current
Denise Ranby		Nov 2023 - Current
Kip Werren		Nov 2020 - Current

Financial Statements

Statement of Profit or Loss

Community Legal Centres NSW Incorporated
Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income
For the year ended 30 June 2025



	Note	2025 \$	2024 \$
Revenue			
	3	1,404,636	1,411,931
Total revenue		<u>1,404,636</u>	<u>1,411,931</u>
Expenses			
Administration and office overhead expense		(123,610)	(74,272)
Consultants and contractors expense		(36,962)	(93,779)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	4	(41,353)	(46,395)
Employee benefits expense		(1,050,358)	(1,195,055)
Finance costs	4	(7,194)	(2,310)
Insurance expenses		(13,757)	(80,789)
Member support services		(26,856)	(22,368)
Other employees expense		(30,368)	(25,948)
Total expenses		<u>(1,330,458)</u>	<u>(1,540,916)</u>
Surplus/(deficit) for the year		74,178	(128,985)
Other comprehensive income for the year		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total comprehensive income for the year		<u><u>74,178</u></u>	<u><u>(128,985)</u></u>

Statement of Financial Position

Community Legal Centres NSW Incorporated
Statement of financial position
As at 30 June 2025



	Note	2025 \$	2024 \$
Assets			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	5	1,289,853	1,253,675
Trade and other receivables	6	23,448	39,158
Other financial assets - Term deposits		3,458	3,453
Other assets	7	70,436	11,313
Total current assets		<u>1,387,195</u>	<u>1,307,599</u>
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment		187	547
Right-of-use assets	8	<u>99,455</u>	<u>12,577</u>
Total non-current assets		<u>99,642</u>	<u>13,124</u>
Total assets		<u>1,486,837</u>	<u>1,320,723</u>
Liabilities			
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	9	108,839	109,288
Contract liabilities	10	759,438	766,238
Lease liabilities	11	41,496	14,020
Employee benefits	12	<u>84,208</u>	<u>80,101</u>
Total current liabilities		<u>993,981</u>	<u>969,647</u>
Non-current liabilities			
Lease liabilities	11	60,279	-
Employee benefits	12	13,472	6,149
Provisions		5,000	5,000
Total non-current liabilities		<u>78,751</u>	<u>11,149</u>
Total liabilities		<u>1,072,732</u>	<u>980,796</u>
Net assets		<u>414,105</u>	<u>339,927</u>
Equity			
Reserves	13	61,462	61,462
Retained surpluses		<u>352,643</u>	<u>278,465</u>
Total equity		<u>414,105</u>	<u>339,927</u>

Report Design

Design by Shiplee Studio

Lara is the founder of Shiplee Studio, a design studio dedicated to creating thoughtful, impactful visual identities for businesses and organisations. As a proud descendant of the Wiradjuri people, living and creating on Wonnarua land, Lara brings a unique perspective to her work, blending her deep respect for culture with contemporary design principles. She collaborated closely with the team at Community Legal Centres NSW to design the layout of this Annual Report, ensuring it reflects both clarity and purpose.

Lara Shipard

Graphic Designer & Illustrator
Shiplee Studio



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**Community
Legal Centres
NSW**