



# 2020 Annual Report

# 2020



# 5,739

requests for help



# 540

clients of  
Community &  
Health Justice  
Partnerships



# 56

clients  
represented at  
mental health  
hearings

# 2,137

clients helped



## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land and waters throughout Australia and pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

We benefit from the gifts of First Nations peoples, acknowledge the historical and ongoing injustices they bear and support their call for power over their destiny.

111

people and NFPs  
connected to pro  
bono representation



778

litigants helped  
by our Court &  
Tribunal Services



33,383  
pro bono hours





“The 2019/2020 reporting year began unmemorably, but the start of 2020 and the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic threw up problems for the delivery of legal services that no one had ever contemplated.

Remarkably, LawRight has weathered that disruption in fine style, delivering even more pro bono hours than last year and, wonder of wonders, breaking fundraising records for the 2020 Queensland Legal Walk. The success of the Walk, although it could not be the usual en masse event, demonstrates that community is much more than physical togetherness.

These are triumphs over adversity, achieved through the great work of LawRight’s staff and volunteers, of which LawRight can be very proud indeed.”

**The Honourable  
Catherine Holmes,  
Chief Justice of  
Queensland**

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## President

What a year it has been! We have all heard the interview or career planning question: where do you see yourself in 5 years' time? I doubt that anyone in 2015 answered with a correct prediction: sitting at home juggling work and family responsibilities, meeting everyone remotely and walking around the neighbourhood rather than commuting; and here we are having survived it and in many cases thriving; with innovation forced upon us and a whole new way of looking at and organising our professional and personal lives.

The amazing thing is that LawRight has continued to be able to provide quality pro bono services to even more people and law firms and individuals lawyers have responded in the best possible way to the increased need for legal services for our clients, normally vulnerable, but made more so by an unruly pandemic.

I have spent most of the last 12 months hearing stories of resilience and unnecessary suffering at the Disability Royal Commission. It is therefore especially heart-warming for me to be part of an organisation that shows lawyers at their professional and personal best.

The strength of LawRight comes from the confluence of many factors: structural and personal. The structure of encouraging law firms and individual lawyers to contribute their considerable skills to those who have the most need for advice and guidance means that the profession has been able to meet that need in an organised and not haphazard way. No longer does pro bono assistance come because you happen to have a friend or relative who is or knows a lawyer who might help. Rather LawRight provides a clearinghouse model where those in most need of assistance and advice are linked with those most able to give it.

This brings me to what is the enduring strength of LawRight: that is the people who contribute to LawRight's work. May I start with all of the lawyers who contribute their valuable time

to assist the clients of LawRight as well as contributing to law reform proposals. You are the fundamental strength of the organisation. Your selfless commitment to making the legal system a just system for the homeless, mentally ill, and impecunious is what makes us all proud to be part of a profession with a commitment to just outcomes for all. In these days of social and economic uncertainty that is needed more than ever and our members have responded with enthusiasm and care. Thank you to all of you!

I would also like to thank all of the staff who have responded to the need to work differently this year with optimism and efficiency. They are so well led by our joint directors, Sue Garlick and Linda Macpherson, who represent the very best of what our profession can offer: they and all of our staff are committed, patient, approachable, proactive and concerned always for the welfare of our clients and members. They provide the core strength of this organisation.

I have been fortunate to be supported by a wonderful Management Committee with a diverse, involved and intelligent membership. I would like to express particular gratitude to Matthew Jones, a past president of LawRight who has unfortunately reached the limit of time on the Management Committee allowed under our Constitution. He has been an enormous

help to me in my first year as President. We will miss him but know that he continues in many practical ways his commitment to justice for those might otherwise miss out. Unfortunately we are also losing Damien O'Brien who has served with diligence and distinction as our Treasurer. He has been elected Vice-President of the Bar Association and while we acknowledge the Bar's good fortune, we will miss him. His report notes our strong financial position. Thank you Damien and Matthew and all of the team.

2021 will, we hope, be different. We will have our Law Walk in person rather than virtually! And our services will be provided in the more usual way. But I think we have all been changed by 2020 and the possibilities that adversity has forced upon us. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to making this year another successful year for LawRight.

**Roslyn Atkinson AO**



## Joint Directors

As we write this overview, we are mindful of the impact of bushfires and COVID restrictions faced nationally. The need for national systemic responses to climate change and inequity is even more apparent.

We are privileged to report that the strength and agility of LawRight's strategy to increase access to justice was demonstrated in local COVID disruptions. Although almost every facet of our operations had to be reviewed and adjusted, our strong partnerships at 21 locations moderated the logistical challenge.

This blockbuster of a report is a “directory” of the profession's pro bono impact at each of these locations. Our court, health and community partners helped us stay connected to existing and new clients. Our pro bono partners helped us transition to virtual service delivery, attend rostered appointments remotely and offered additional support.

Together we delivered 130% more legal services than our core government targets. Pro bono hours contributed by the legal profession through LawRight increased to an impressive 33,383 hours – thank you!

Amidst these adjustments, LawRight's staff of 34 transitioned to working from home and developed new casework and communication systems, including supervising secondees and students remotely. Their thoughtful law and systemic reform initiatives continued. They are remarkable as practitioners and as people.

The profession's generous, record-breaking support for the first virtual Queensland Legal Walk and LawRight Gala (cancelled but still raising over \$30,000) encouraged us in the midst of all these changes. Our commitment to self-funded innovation is unabated.

We welcomed secure, increased funding for five years from the State and Commonwealth, together with five years further funding for the Federal Court Self Representation Service; three years of continued support from The Charles and Sylvia Viertel Foundation for our Mental Health Law Practice and Health Advocacy Legal Clinic at the Mater; and the ongoing support of donors and Friends of LawRight. Additional funded projects — to create Law Yarn video training, embed a financial counsellor in our outreach practice, and explore the governance structures of our Health Justice Partnership with Wuchopperen Health Service — will strengthen strategic service delivery.

LawRight's Management Committee continues to guide us on behalf of the whole profession. Matthew Jones finished his term as president, and we farewelled former president Lucy Bretherton, Peter Smith and Robyn Wilkinson. We welcomed The Honourable Roslyn Atkinson AO as our new President and new committee members, Andrew Crowe QC, Tony Denholder, Jacqueline Wootton and Tania Boal.

We are grateful for the active support of our Patron, The Honourable Catherine Holmes, Chief Justice of Queensland, especially at the Walk, Street Soccer and hosting our debate at the Banco Court.

Together with our partners, members, and the wider legal profession, we are well-positioned to face the ongoing social and economic impacts of COVID and whatever challenges 20/21 brings.

**Sue Garlick & Linda Macpherson**



**Thank you  
#QldLegalWalk 2020**



Level 27 Chambers

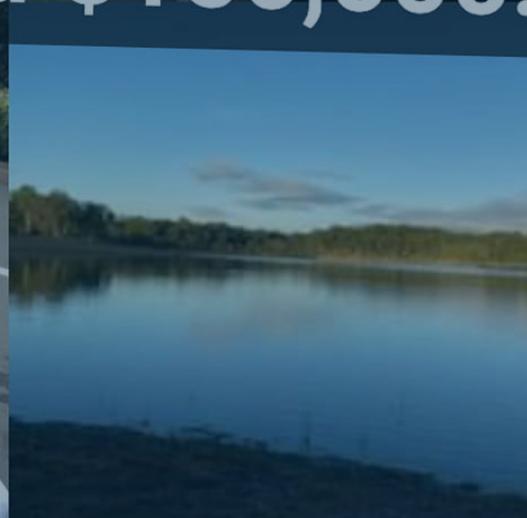
Salwa Marsh

Level 27 Chambers

Alysha Hall



**You raised \$150,000!**



# Queensland Legal Walk

Planning a mass event in May 2020 brought plenty of uncertainty, but the 2020 Queensland Legal Walk transformed into a live broadcast, with LawRight friends as its presenters and hosts. More than 500 supporters walked in their own suburbs and towns across Queensland and shared their photos and stories.

Together we raised an extraordinary \$150,000 in support of LawRight and pro bono services across Queensland. Thank you to each generous donor.



\$10,000 from the 2019 Walk was donated to Townsville Community Law to support their flood response work.

# 2020: Virtual Walk

## Impact

# \$150,000

raised in support of LawRight and pro bono work across Queensland

### 2020 champions

#### Team Fundraising

Land Court of Queensland

#### Individual Fundraising

Salwa Marsh, Level 27 Chambers

#### Law School Fundraising

Griffith University

#### Team Spirit

MurphySchmidt Solicitors

# Pro Bono Connect

Pro Bono Connect has been the pro bono “matchmaker” for the Queensland profession since 2001, assessing and referring matters with a public interest for full pro bono representation. We partnered with the Queensland Law Society and the Bar Association of Queensland in 2009 to manage their pro bono referral schemes, where a “public interest” test is not required. Once a matter is successfully referred, the firm acts in their own name and LawRight continues to support the matter with referrals to pro bono barristers and community support.

## COVID changes

Pro Bono Connect saw an increase in requests and referred almost 25% more matters for pro bono assistance. We worked with member firms and barristers to match individual matters to the expertise and interest of its members and as a result, firms accepted 200% of the usual number of requests in April and 100% of our requests for help were accepted – the highest pick-up rate of referrals that PBC has experienced.

Members have also helped with discrete advice and tasks for clients who are not eligible for full pro bono representation.

## Member Firms and Barristers that accepted referrals

Allens  
Ashurst  
Baker McKenzie  
Bartley Law  
Clayton Utz  
Colin Biggers and Paisley  
DLA Piper  
Guy Sara & Associates  
Hall & Wilcox  
Herbert Smith Freehills  
Holding Redlich  
HopgoodGanim  
King & Wood Mallesons  
MinterEllison  
Murphy Schmidt  
Shine Lawyers  
Sparke Helmore  
Thornton Legal

Anand Shah  
Bridget O'Brien  
Damien O'Brien QC  
Emma Hoiberg  
Gavin Handran  
George Kalimnios  
Hamish Clift  
Hugh Scott-Mackenzie  
Jules Moxon  
Justin Carter  
Margaret Forrest  
Mark Steele  
Matt Jones  
Michael de Waard  
Robert Lake  
Stephen Lee  
Steven Forrest  
Steven Jones

## Who asks for help

**Mandy transferred her home to her son** on the basis that she would be able to live there for the rest of her life. A tenancy agreement was drafted but was soon breached by her son. Her son's partner, children and animals moved in to the house, which in turn created a toxic living environment for Mandy.

**Hamid was in immigration detention** after his visa was cancelled on character grounds. Hamid had 28 days to apply for an internal review so he completed the required forms and gave them to the officers of the correctional centre. The officers failed to send the forms in time and the limitation period expired. The correctional centre acknowledged that it did not submit the forms in time, but the Department still refused to conduct the internal review.

**George was in hospital** when his neighbour persuaded George to appoint him as attorney under an Enduring Power of Attorney. The neighbour then sold George's home and all of his possessions without his knowledge and convinced George's doctors that George was an alcoholic. The doctors subsequently misdiagnosed George and treated him for dementia caused by alcoholism. When George recovered and asked to return home, he found out that his home had been sold and he had nowhere to go. George had to move into rental accommodation with nothing.

# Pro Bono Connect

People who cannot afford a lawyer or obtain legal aid may still need legal representation to protect their rights, income and housing, especially where the matter is of "public interest" due to the impact of the problem on the individual, organisation or their community.

Our on-line application form is available statewide and triaged by our team of two part-time staff lawyers

## Our applicants

**819** vulnerable people and NFP organisations applied for help

**47%** referred from other community legal centres that could not offer the intensive legal service required

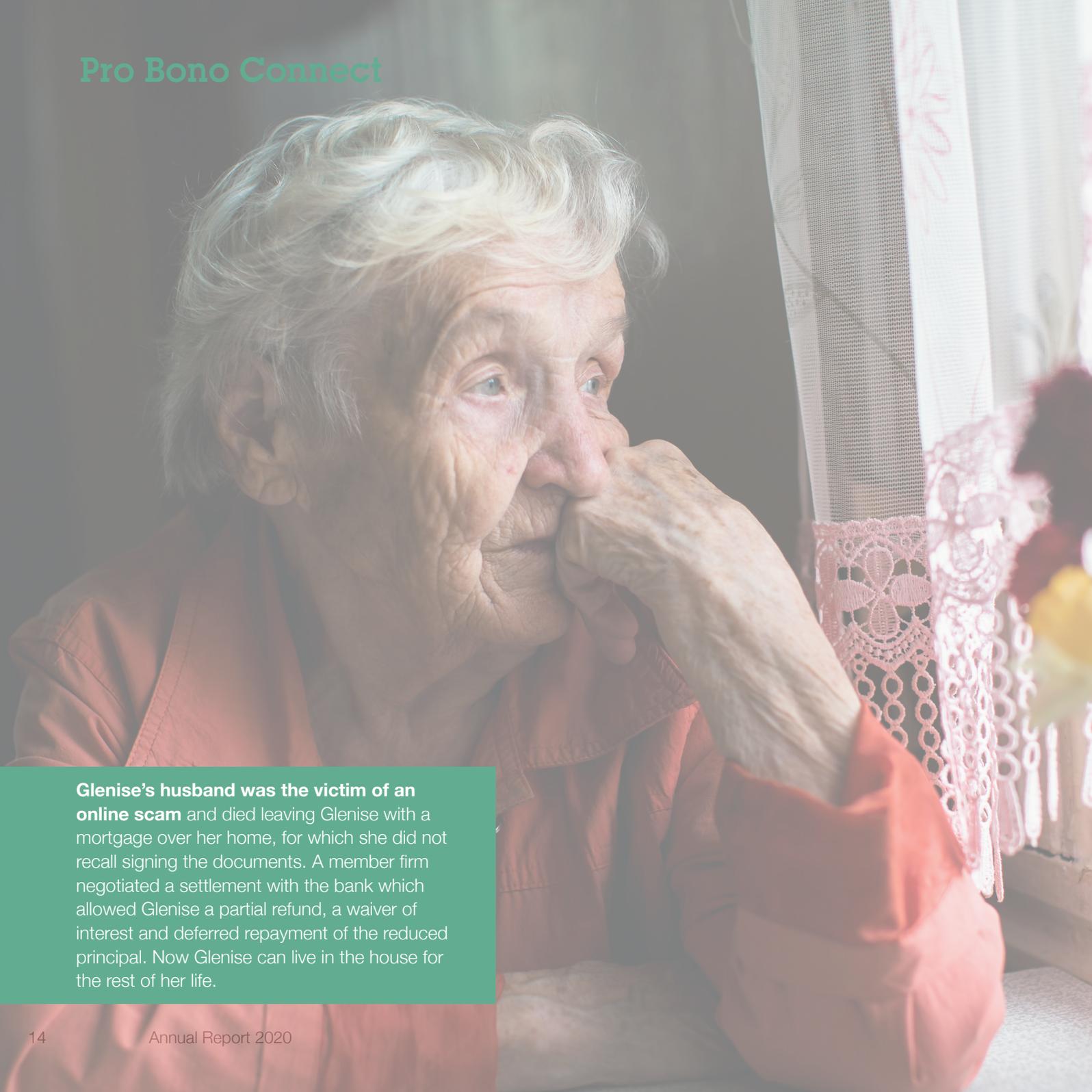
**34%** live in regional or remote Queensland

**40%** income of <\$21,000 with 60% on government benefit

**45%** with a disability

**4,410**  
pro bono hours

## Pro Bono Connect



**Glenise's husband was the victim of an online scam** and died leaving Glenise with a mortgage over her home, for which she did not recall signing the documents. A member firm negotiated a settlement with the bank which allowed Glenise a partial refund, a waiver of interest and deferred repayment of the reduced principal. Now Glenise can live in the house for the rest of her life.

## Stories of Impact

**Khym was sexually abused** by her adoptive father when she was 7 years old. A member firm and barrister enabled Khym to discharge the adoption order as part of her recovery journey.

**Sandy is a First Nations woman** who lives in a remote area. Sandy took out a payday loan and the lender charged fees of almost 100% of the loan on the same day. By the time she applied for assistance, she had repaid the loan three times over and was still making repayments. A member firm negotiated a complete release from the loan plus a partial refund for Sandy.

# Pro Bono Connect

## Impact

**444** applicants given a comprehensive assessment of their complex legal problems

**111** given full pro bono representation with:

**69** people with public interest matters referred to LawRight members

**42** referred to QLS or BAQ members

**375** given information, advice and targeted referrals

## Legal problems

**14%** Not for Profits

**11%** elder abuse

**10%** migration and refugee issues

**9%** property disputes

**7%** estate disputes

**7%** discrimination



# Court & Tribunal Services

LawRight has on-site offices at three Brisbane registries and remote services throughout Queensland for vulnerable people navigating civil Court & Tribunal proceedings.

Our strategic partnerships with law firms and barristers match pro bono assistance with the legal problem and capability of the individual. Court & Tribunal Services incorporate the former Self Representation Service, Duty Lawyer, mediation, and appearance services. LawRight also operates representation and advocacy services at the Mental Health Review Tribunal.

## **Court & Tribunal Services Reference Group**

The Honourable Margaret McMurdo AC  
The Honourable Marshall Irwin  
Joanne Rennick  
Gavin Handran  
Tony Woodyatt  
Stephen Colditz  
Monica Taylor  
Assistant Professor Narelle Bedford

## Getting the Law Right Debate

November 6, 2019 - Banco Court

**Topic:** Should court rooms be left to the specialists?

**Debaters:** Gavin Handran, Danielle Tay, Mark Thomas, Katie Clark, Sophie Devitt and John Flood

**Adjudicators:** Margaret White AO, Melanie Hindman QC and Joanne Rennick.

**Chair:** Damien O'Brien QC



## Corrs Secondment

Corrs Chambers Westgarth continued to provide a full-time secondment to the State Courts Service. This year's secondees were Hanna Seal, Yasmin Steele and Molly D'Arcy.



# Court & Tribunal Services

Supreme Court of Queensland  
District Court of Queensland  
Queensland Court of Appeal  
Magistrates Court (Enforcement Hearings)  
Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal  
Federal Court of Australia  
Federal Circuit Court of Australia  
Mental Health Review Tribunal

## Impact

**2,797** legal services

**778** clients

**13,327**  
pro bono hours

# Court & Tribunal Services

# State Courts

SUPREME COURT OF QUEENSLAND  
DISTRICT COURT OF QUEENSLAND

LawRight has partnered with the State Courts since 2006, collaborating with stakeholders and providing on-site services, resources and training to increase access to justice.

- 22% of clients are connected by court staff — security guards, registry staff, Registrars, Case List Managers, the Client Relations Team, Associates or Judges.
- Registry staff refer litigants to LawRight when a *Notice of party acting in person* is filed or documents are filed without a lawyer.
- The Supervised Case List (for Supreme Court matters involving self-represented litigants) encourages contact with LawRight and our staff attend case reviews to speak to any parties who have “slipped through the cracks”.
- We share referrals with Court Network and Court Network’s Victim Support Unit.
- LawRight participates in Court’s Workplace Health and Safety Committee, Court User Stakeholder Group and other working groups.

## COVID changes

Although Supreme and District Courts premises remained open during COVID, parties were encouraged to make applications on the papers and appear by telephone or video conference.

Our on-site office closed in March but continued delivering legal services remotely. Our close court connections helped us maintain contact with existing and new clients. There were less ‘informal’ referrals but more direct referrals from Senior Registrars and members of the judiciary, primarily from Supervised Case List review hearings.

## Participating firms

Allens	Crown Law
Ashurst	DLA Piper Australia
Barry.Nilsson.Lawyers	Hall & Wilcox
Bartley Cohen Litigation Lawyers	McCullough Robertson Lawyers
Clayton Utz	McInnes Wilson Lawyers
Cooper Grace Ward Lawyers	MinterEllison
Corrs Chambers Westgarth	MurphySchmidt Solicitors

## Story of Impact

**A worker at Julie's daughter's childcare** kept complaining to Julie about another parent at the centre, including serious allegations that the parent wasn't safe.

Julie was concerned and informed the centre management. She was shocked when months later she was served with court documents alleging she had defamed this parent when she passed on the information.

Julie lives with speech, reading and memory impairments and couldn't afford a lawyer. Her regional community legal centre didn't have the resources to help with complex litigation and helped her apply to LawRight.

Julie filed a defence but was told by lawyers for the other side that it was deficient, liable to be struck out and that Julie would be responsible for their costs. She was highly distressed.

On the day that LawRight received her application, a staff lawyer phoned Julie and explained that we could help, how we worked, and booked her an appointment with our pro bono lawyers.

Rostered pro bono lawyers listened to Julie, helped her understand the complexity of the claim and discussed her options. Staff lawyers helped her correspond with the other side, request more time and amend her defence. The court had a hearing on procedural matters and we helped Julie prepare and consent. The matter was set down for mediation.

LawRight knew Julie would struggle to represent herself at the mediation, so a firm, a QC and his junior agreed to appear pro bono.

The pro bono lawyers negotiated the discontinuance of the proceedings against Julie, with no order as to costs – a huge relief.

# State Courts

Supreme Court of Queensland  
District Court of Queensland  
Queensland Court of Appeal

Full-time office in Brisbane registries and remote service statewide providing pro bono resources for vulnerable people navigating the civil courts without a lawyer.

- advice and document assistance
- advice on the best way to represent yourself
- mediation
- referral for pro bono representation
- self-help resources

## Impact

**646** legal services to **179** clients (including **137** new clients)

**448** advices and **129** legal tasks

**34** matters referred for pro bono representation

**4,784**  
pro bono hours

# State Courts

## Law Reform: Defamation challenges in the social media age and the new Model Defamation Provisions

25% of our clients are involved in defamation disputes. A quick criticism on social media can lead to years of legal battles, which are too complex for self-represented parties to navigate.

### Laura's 3-year ordeal

Laura's comments on a private Facebook page for parents at her children's school pulled her into legal proceedings with seven other defendants that went on for three years. LawRight assisted Laura with all aspects of her litigation, from helping her draft her defence to preparing for trial.

Multiple hearings were required to deal with different aspects of defamation law. The court considered what is needed to establish the defence of honest opinion. Under the *Defamation Act 2005* (Qld), the opinion must be "based on proper material", which the court said requires that the facts on which the opinion is based be stated or referred to in the allegedly defamatory publication. Not many Facebook posts include these types of source notes (including Laura's), so this defence was not available.

After a four-week trial, the claim against Laura was dismissed on the basis that her statements were not defamatory. The court indicated that even if Laura's statements had been defamatory, it would have awarded only \$2,000 in damages against her, instead of the \$150,000 sought by the plaintiff.

Laura was very happy with the outcome and glad it was all over – she told us that there was no way she could have gone through all of this without LawRight's help.

Laura's case is only one of a few that LawRight has seen go to a trial, but the challenges she encountered are common across many self-represented parties, such as how to understand and correctly plead a particular defence. But most defamation matters don't even settle; after a plaintiff brings a claim and the defendant files a defence, the court proceedings stall, remaining in the court system and not progressing. LawRight believed the law could do more to encourage the early resolution of defamation disputes and make things clearer for self-represented parties.

In 2019, the Council of Attorneys-General began reviewing Australia's Model Defamation Provisions, the law on which Queensland's Defamation Act is based. LawRight made initial submissions in April 2019 and further submissions in January 2020. We were invited to roundtable discussions in June 2019 and March 2020. Our submissions and feedback focused on common issues for our clients, including how to:

- encourage parties to resolve their disputes early and out of court;
- establish the defence of honest opinion; and
- reduce defamation claims being commenced for unsubstantiated claims for damages or inappropriately to quell debate or to elicit a quick settlement offer from a stressed defendant.

# State Courts

## Our clients

**78%** outside metro Brisbane  
incl. **28%** regional

**25%** referred from other  
community legal centres

**81%** <\$52,000 household  
income incl. **60%** Centrelink or no  
income

**12%** non-English speaking  
background

**5%** First Nations

**22%** Seniors

**30%** with disability

### New clients' disputes involved:

**56%** District Court

**31%** Supreme Court

**25%** defamation

**15%** property

**15%** contractual disputes

### **57.8% of clients are diverted**

from the courts, do not continue with  
their proceeding, or otherwise reach a  
settlement with the other side.

On 27 July 2020, the Council of Attorneys-General approved the Model Defamation Amendment Provisions. Many of the key changes addressed the issues and potential solutions LawRight raised during the review process. These include:

- making it mandatory for a potential plaintiff to issue a concerns notice before they can start court proceedings, to encourage parties to attempt to resolve their disputes before commencing litigation;
- clarifying the form, content and timing for concerns notices and offers to make amends, so there is less confusion about what these pre-litigation procedures involve;
- clarifying what it means for an opinion to be “based on proper material” in order for a defendant to rely on the defence on honest opinion; and
- introducing “serious harm” as an element to the cause of action, and enabling this element to be dealt with as a threshold issue in order to encourage the early resolution of defamation proceedings.

The changes give more opportunities for parties to resolve their disputes before resorting to litigation or at an earlier stage in the proceedings.

LawRight is optimistic that, once these changes have been adopted in Queensland, we will see positive outcomes for our clients.



Court & Tribunal Services

# Magistrates Court Enforcement Hearings

LawRight has partnered with the Magistrates Court since 2016, working with the judiciary and the registry to operate the Duty Lawyer Service at debt enforcement hearings.

100% of our clients are directed to our Service by Magistrates Court staff.

The Duty Lawyer Service increases access to justice for people involved in debt enforcement hearings. Most are unaware that a judgment has been entered, cannot afford to repay the debt or are unfairly named on the debt documents. Common debts are for unpaid work, breach of contract, credit card debts, damages from vehicle accidents, unpaid rent or bond repayments.

The Service ensures that judgement debtors are treated fairly and helps hearings to be conducted smoothly without unnecessary delay.

## Student volunteers

We couldn't operate the Duty Lawyer Service without our hard-working student volunteers. They arrive early before court starts, complete intake forms with clients, brief barristers and sit in on client conferences and conversations with creditors. Students attend court with volunteer barristers to take notes and record the outcome of the hearing so we can advise the client. After returning to the office, students update the client database, type up file notes and prepare closing letters of advice to clients.

Jennifer Kim  
Li-Zhen Ho  
Natalie Tham  
Leandra Augustin  
Guy Magee  
Claudia McCall

## COVID changes

Enforcement hearings were adjourned from March. LawRight continued to advise clients whose proceedings were adjourned or pending. In late June 2020 enforcement hearings recommenced and the duty lawyer service started one week later thanks to strong liaison with the court and the support of pro bono barristers.

## Story of Impact

**J & J borrowed \$25,000 from friends** to get their business through a “rocky patch”, but while they were interstate with a family emergency, the friends enforced the debt without their knowledge. J & J would have defended the proceeding if they had known they existed. LawRight advised them of their options and negotiated with the creditor on their behalf. Even though J & J provided the relevant documents, the creditor wanted to cross examine them on their bank records. Our pro bono barrister appeared for J & J and was able to have the enforcement hearing proceeding dismissed. After court, the volunteer barrister negotiated realistic repayments and now the business is back on track.

## Thank you Matt

Barrister Matthew Jones is an active supporter of LawRight. Since 2012, he’s been on our Management Committee, including three years as President and regularly offers his legal skills to many clients. In July 2019, Matt and Ben Tuckett, Managing Lawyer Court & Tribunal Services presented training for barristers on the enforcement hearing process, chaired by Damien O’Brien QC. The session was attended in person and online by 45 barristers and increased the number of barristers volunteering with the service, as well as providing ongoing training resources.

# Magistrates Court Enforcement Hearings

In person every Wednesday morning from 8:30am at the Brisbane Magistrates Court.

- legal advice about the dispute, court processes and other options for the resolution of the debt dispute
- assistance to complete court forms
- negotiates with creditors
- represent clients at enforcement hearing

## Our clients

**65%** <\$52,000 household income

## Impact

**71** advices and duty lawyer services for 48 clients

**66** referrals for financial advice or other legal advices

**360**  
pro bono hours



Court & Tribunal Services

# Queensland Civil & Administrative Tribunal

LawRight has partnered with QCAT since 2010, working closely with all stakeholders and providing on-site services, resources and training to increase access to justice.

50% of clients are directed to the service by QCAT staff including the registry, security, client services and tribunal Members and adjudicators. This includes referrals to our onsite office and telephone and internet enquiries.

One tribunal Member stated that she often refers parties to LawRight and noted that when they appear before her again they are more prepared and knowledgeable than before they have engaged us.

## COVID changes

QCAT adjourned non-urgent hearings and re-listed urgent hearings by phone. LawRight moved out of our on-site offices in March. QCAT staff continued to refer clients to us and we worked hard to stay accessible, with May being our busiest month in 19/20, providing 107 legal services to 55 new and existing clients. Pro bono lawyers staffed virtual appointments.

## 10th Anniversary of QCAT

In January 2020, QCAT celebrated its 10-year anniversary. QCAT President, Justice Daubney made special mention of LawRight and thanked our service for being a part of the journey since the tribunal's inception.

## Law firms

Clayton Utz	Murphy Schmidt Solicitors
Cooper Grace	Sparke Helmore Lawyers
Lander & Rogers Lawyers	Colin Biggers & Paisley
McCullough Robertson Lawyers	Clyde & Co
McInnes Wilson Lawyers	HopgoodGanim
MinterEllison	

## Helping people navigate guardianship

48 people applied to LawRight for help with guardianship and administration matters, which is 22% of new matters.

Staff lawyers gave advice to 43 of these and 16 received intensive legal help from pro bono volunteers. Once they understood the law better, many realised their matter could be resolved without the need to commence tribunal proceedings. Only three wanted further help to make applications to the Tribunal.

# QCAT

On-site at Brisbane registry and remote services statewide providing pro bono resources for vulnerable people navigating the Tribunal without a lawyer.

- self representation advice and task assistance
- drop-in advice for same day hearings and conference
- pro bono representation
- self-help resources

## Our clients

62.7% with income <\$32,000  
30% with disability  
27% from regional, rural and remote areas  
12% First Nations

## Impact

**1,422** legal services to **268** clients (incl. 219 new clients)

**512** advices and 200 legal tasks

**46** in-hearing services

**18** referrals to pro bono barristers/firms for full representation

**3,600**  
pro bono hours

# Queensland Civil & Administrative Tribunal

## Law Reform: Structural impacts of Blue Card policy

92 people sought help from LawRight to review a decision by Blue Card Services (BCS). This totals 41% of applications to and 67% of the legal services provided by our QCAT service.

Blue cards indicate that a person is safe to work or volunteer with children, including to act as a kinship carer. BCS decides whether or not to issue a blue card and considers an applicant's interactions with the Department of Child Safety as well as their criminal history, even when a charge has not proceeded to court or where the court has not recorded a conviction. Where BCS has concerns, they issue a negative notice to the applicant, after providing a short amount of time to respond to their concerns.

Many people who receive a negative notice from BCS do not pursue the matter, even though they may have legitimate grounds for a review. For those that do seek a review, it is a long and complex process. The time from the first application to BCS to the final hearing can be three years – by which time the plan to be employed in child-related employment or education, or to care for your grandchildren as a kin-carer may have become futile.

Some communities in Queensland are adversely impacted by this policy and practice. They include people who received inadequate legal representation for criminal matters; women impacted by long-term domestic violence; remote communities where policing criminalises behavior, often due to the absence of community support services; communities with traditional (kin) child-rearing practices; people with low literacy who struggle to respond to government paperwork and timeframes; and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, which are over-represented in child protection systems.

LawRight has made a parliamentary submission and encouraged practices that improve this disproportionate impact and will continue to do so. Pro bono barristers and solicitors contributed to successful reviews in 12 matters, including eight where the client was empowered to keep representing themselves.

## Mary

Mary is a proud Aboriginal woman who applied for a blue card so that she could become a kinship carer for her grandchildren. Unfortunately Mary was issued a negative notice due to her minor criminal history and previous interactions with the Department of Child Safety. The interactions with Child Safety were the result of incidents of domestic violence perpetrated against her by her former partner in the presence of their children. Without a blue card, Mary was not able to become a kinship carer, leaving her grandchildren at risk of being placed with non-Aboriginal carers and losing connection with their family and culture.

Mary's last offence was more than 8 years ago and since then she has taken steps to turn her life around, including seeking help to remove herself from an abusive relationship and undertaking study.

LawRight helped Mary apply to have the decision to issue a negative notice reviewed. Pro bono lawyers supported Mary over the course of her proceedings to adequately represent herself at the final hearing. The tribunal set aside Blue Card Services' decision to issue a negative notice, allowing Mary to apply for a blue card and be issued with a positive notice.

## Siti

Siti migrated to Australia with her husband and children in 2009. She and her children were victims of domestic violence by her husband, and the children were removed from the parents' care as a result. Siti needed a blue card to complete the placement component of her studies in education, and to apply for related jobs. Blue Card Services issued a negative notice based on their concerns about her interactions with Child Safety and her criminal history, which included a charge for assault occasioning bodily harm due to physically disciplining her child in 2014.

LawRight helped Siti apply to reverse Blue Card Services's decision and pro bono lawyers supported Siti to represent herself at the final hearing. QCAT set aside the decision to issue a negative notice, and when Siti applied to Blue Card again, she was issued with a positive notice. Siti said LawRight helped her in many more ways than just getting a blue card – she said she is now more confident, that the process helped her learn about herself and that she can now competently use a computer.

*"Please forward my thanks and gratitude to the last [volunteer lawyer]. He really motivated me and his explanation was so clear and easy to follow when he was explaining to me on how to draft My Outline of Argument because at that time my mind is too condensed to receive further new information. He make it easy for me to understand by breaking it down the context."*



Court & Tribunal Services

# Federal Courts

LawRight has partnered with the Federal Court since 2011, working closely with all stakeholders and providing on-site legal services, resources and training to increase access to justice.

33% of clients were referred by Federal Court staff including judicial registrars, registry staff and Judges.

In some matters the court orders a referral to LawRight for advice on prospects and potential ongoing assistance.

## COVID changes

The Federal Courts moved to remote hearings from March and most lists were conducted by telephone. LawRight staff moved from our on-site offices from March to June, working with clients remotely. Pro bono lawyers continued to staff virtual appointments.

Our bankruptcy drop-in service adjusted to providing advice remotely, with support from registry staff who arranged access to client documents. Settlement conferences in Fair Work matters were suspended from March.

## Pro bono going the extra mile

Since 2011, LawRight has self-funded a Settlement Conference Program to assist Federal Circuit Court Judicial Registrars with the Fair Work Small Claims list. Volunteer mediators conduct settlement conferences for Applicants and Respondents referred from the Small Claims list for mediation.

The program was suspended due to COVID but recommenced in July 2020 at the request of the registry, with mediations conducted by telephone. This could not have occurred without LawRight's pro bono mediators, who conducted mediations remotely, from their own offices, using their own equipment. Mediators assisted with 21 conferences:

Rob Stevenson  
Chris Lenz  
Reimen Hii  
Andrew J See  
George Kalimnios

## Law firms

MinterEllison  
Clayton Utz  
Sparke Helmore  
Hall & Wilcox  
HopgoodGanim  
Ashurst  
McInnes Wilson  
Piper Alderman  
McCullough Robertson Lawyers  
Corrs Chambers Westgarth  
Wotton + Kearney

# Federal Courts

Federal Court of Australia  
Federal Circuit Court of Australia  
Commonwealth Law Courts Building,  
Brisbane

On-site full-time in Brisbane and remote services statewide providing pro bono resources for vulnerable people navigating the Courts without a lawyer.

- self representation advice and task assistance
- drop-in bankruptcy advice service
- mediations (Fair Work conciliations)
- pro bono representation
- self-help resources

## Impact

**617** legal services to **227** clients (incl. 131 new clients)

**386** advices and **100** legal tasks

**21** settlement conferences

**19** matters referred to pro bono barristers/firms for legal opinion or full representation (including a Full Federal Court Judicial Review of a decision of the Full Bench of the Fair Work Commission)

**2,517** pro bono hours

# Federal Court

## Stories of impact

**Brian's landlord tried to evict him** because he had an assistance dog. Brian's complex mental health condition and limited disability support pension meant he could not afford a lawyer.

LawRight helped Brian commence proceedings in the Human Rights Division of the Federal Circuit Court, prepare affidavit evidence and prepare for mediation. Brian settled his matter and has also settled into a new home.

**Grant worked as an agricultural labourer** and needed help to claim over \$50,000 in unpaid wages. His dispute went to trial and LawRight helped him prepare his documents, draft submissions and negotiate the contents of the Court Book (consolidated court documents and evidence), which the court relies on). Just prior to the hearing, Grant was able to settle his matter.

*"Without you I would not have been able to get the job done...from the time I started, when I look back, I would never have won the case without your help...In the end after the last set of affidavits [they] were happy to settle...I'm so grateful."*  
Grant

**Charlotte struggled with debt** following her divorce and faced bankruptcy. LawRight explained the new COVID protections and reviewed the creditor's documents, which were flawed. We helped her seek a dismissal of the creditor's petition, by which time Charlotte had paid off more debt and the remaining amount was below the threshold for bankruptcy.

*"I am beyond grateful... I cannot thank your firm and the volunteers that help people like me enough."* Charlotte

**Hami had a panic attack** on his first day of court and his application for unpaid wages was dismissed due to his failure to attend. LawRight helped Hami get reports from his GP and psychiatrist and guided him in the process to set the dismissal aside. The proceedings were successfully reinstated and Hami could still pursue his entitlements.

# Federal Court

## Our clients

**76%** in South East Queensland

**19%** <\$52,000 household income

**33%** support from Centrelink

**18%** with a disability

**9%** referred from other community legal centres

**Barry worked for years as a cleaner** and claimed unpaid wages. He had been treated as an independent contractor and not an employee. LawRight helped him prepare evidence, prepare for mediation and engage in settlement negotiations. Barry settled his matter and felt his dignity was restored.

*"...once I was in contact (with the Service) it was such a relief, it was fantastic." Barry*

**Cici invested in a managed scheme** and lost all her money. Her family home was being claimed under a bankruptcy order. Cici didn't understand the powers and duties of the trustee in bankruptcy and wanted to annul the bankruptcy. Law Right staff met with Cici and after a lengthy appointment, she realised this would be an expensive and fruitless exercise.

*"I am truly grateful for the time you have given in researching my case. It is amazing people like you that gift their time to others... Unfortunately due to past choices we are in this predicament...it may seem like the end of the road for many but it is truly a new beginning for my family and I. Thank you also for the open door [for the future]." Cici*

## New clients were helped with:

**27** bankruptcy matters

**53** employment matters including unpaid wage entitlements, general protections claims and unfair dismissals

**11** appeals from federal tribunals in social security, migration matters

**10** judicial reviews, mostly in migration matters

**6** anti-discrimination matters

# Mental Health Review Tribunal

The Mental Health Review Tribunal (MHRT) hears reviews and applications under the *Mental Health Act 2016* (Qld). Of 14,614 hearings in 2019/20, statutory legal representation was available for 2,570 reviews for selected matters, including Forensic Orders and ECT applications. LawRight is on the panel for these matters.

82% of MHRT hearings, including of adult Treatment Authorities, don't attract statutory representation. For these matters, LawRight has operated a pro bono advocacy service since 2012 to provide advice and support at hearings. Referrals to this service are from other community legal centres (14%), hospital staff or independent patient rights advisors (14%) and 13% from Legal Aid Queensland or the MHRT

## COVID changes

The MHRT registry closed and hearings moved to video or phone. LawRight adjusted too, with staff working from home.

Clients were impacted by limited access for lawyers to hospitals, closure of community health facilities and reduced access to disability support services. Some clients don't have reliable telephone access or have impaired communication and were not able to give instructions or attend hearings.

Human rights to freedom of movement, protection of family, liberty and security of person, and property rights are concerns for clients on orders that require them to live in hospital as inpatients. COVID restrictions have resulted in their leave being reduced or cancelled, which impacts their freedom to move around, maintain family relationships and ensure their properties are safe and remain in their possession.

## Hall & Willcox secondee

*I've loved getting to know the team and I truly value everything I've learned. My notion of the legal practice has been hugely expanded! It's been such a fantastic experience."*

**Amelia Pattison**

*"The secondment... has been such a wonderful experience for Monique and Amelia."*

**Nathan Kennedy, Pro Bono Partner, Hall & Wilcox**

## Advocacy Service volunteers

Three lawyers and 59 students from all six SEQ Law Schools volunteered with the service.

We closed the Advocacy Service in September 2019 due to limited resources and have been unable to reopen it due to COVID.

## Sylvia & Charles Viertel Charitable Foundation

The Sylvia & Charles Viertel Charitable Foundation extended their philanthropic support, committing to a total partnership of ten years.

# MHRT

Brisbane registry, and by video or telephone all over Queensland.

## Our clients

**30%** First Nations

**39** rural, regional or remote

**24** Brisbane and SEQ

**4** children, 3 of whom were First Nations

## Impact Representation

under the statutory scheme

**72** hearings for 42 clients (including 20 new clients)

**14** Statements of Reasons obtained for 10 clients.

- Two Forensic Orders revoked
- One client released from hospital after >7 years
- One client avoided return to hospital
- One Treatment Authority revoked

## Advocacy and advice

under our pro bono MHRT Advocacy Service

**10** hearings for **14** clients (including 7 new clients)

**6** Statements of Reasons obtained

10 weeks of operation from 1 July 2019

# 858

pro bono hours

# Mental Health Review Tribunal

## Stories of Impact

**Most Treatment Authorities (TAs) are revoked by doctors** once the legislative criteria are no longer met (and this year 6,898 were revoked before a review hearing was even required). However, this year we represented a First Nations client on a TA whose doctors conceded did not have a mental illness.

He was removed from his community to hospital and had no contact with anyone he knew. He spoke limited English and the doctors had not used an appropriate interpreter. They were also contemplating appointing a guardian. We worked with the hospital social worker and our Cairns staff to meet the client in a culturally safe process and the Tribunal revoked the TA. We continued to liaise with multiple agencies to support our client to access a range of basic services.

**Hilda was placed in a mental health unit** by her husband who she was planning to divorce. LawRight's Advocacy Service helped Hilda present evidence that she didn't have a mental illness. The Tribunal agreed there was sufficient doubt, and in a rare move, funded an independent mental assessment.

**We first helped Connor** through our Advocacy Service in 2016 but he became more unwell and this year, we were asked to represent him for an ECT matter. He was in a forensic mental health unit following an alleged crime. He was suicidal, homeless and overwhelmed by debts. He had no assets, no family and no support. When we visited, his only request was for A3 envelopes to organise his legal papers while on a locked ward with little privacy. We also connected him to our Community & Health Justice Partnerships team who resolved several of his debts. Connor was grateful and able to focus on defending his criminal matter and improving his health.

# Working with Toyota

The Toyota Production System Support Centre (TSSC) shares Toyota's manufacturing experience and know-how with local organisations, sharing concepts of the Toyota Production System in ways tailored to their specific needs.

LawRight has done two projects with TSSC. In 2018-19, Pro Bono Connect worked with TSSC, and the improvements embedded in their service have continued this year. While TSSC systems had a "shop-floor focus", the team transferred them online to work remotely. In early 2020 we were invited to share the project with other organisations at TSSC's inaugural conference, unfortunately cancelled due to COVID.

TSSC and LawRight teamed up for a second project in the State Courts service in 2019-20. The main goal of the project was to increase the capacity of the service to assist more clients. To achieve this goal, we looked at ways to maximise the use of existing capacity at volunteer law firms, increase the capacity of staff and scale up or expand the use of volunteer lawyers outside the current service design. We intend to roll out the findings from the project across all Court & Tribunal Services offices.

As LawRight staff developed their understanding of TSSC principles, we have incorporated TSSC philosophy and techniques into other LawRight services.

The TSSC principles of high quality and continuous improvement, putting the customer first, and recognising that people are our most important resource, resonate strongly with LawRight. All the people who contribute their time and expertise to LawRight, are certainly the greatest resource we have.

Thank you TSSC for your contribution to LawRight.



# Red Wine for Justice

Red Wine for Justice was held in August 2019 and superbly hosted by Herbert Smith Freehills. The wines donated for drinking and auction fuelled some excited bidding, with over \$47,000 raised.

The most coveted item of the evening was a Champagne High Tea, generously hosted by Margaret McMurdo AC at her home, with Margaret White AO. Bartley Cohen was victorious with a \$5,000 bid, and the team enjoyed their event in June 2020.

Thank you to speakers Rebecca Treston QC, BAQ President and Matt Dunn, QLS Manager and wine writer for Proctor. Damien O'Brien QC was the MC and Yianni Mooney of Apollo Auctions donated his time.





# Community & Health Justice Partnerships

LawRight nurtures partnerships at 17 locations, where staff and visiting pro bono lawyers collaborate with health and community workers.

Together we resolve the complex, intersecting problems of clients including people experiencing domestic violence, mental illness or homelessness, refugees and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

These partnerships include the former Homeless Persons' Legal Clinic, Refugee Civil Law Clinic, Outreach Legal Clinic and Mental Health Civil Law Clinic; and two Health Justice Partnerships at Wuchopperen Health Service in Cairns and the Mater Young Adults Health Centre in Brisbane, where lawyers are embedded 3-5 days per week to resolve health-impacting legal problems.

## Locations

3rd Space  
Brisbane Youth Service  
Community's New Farm Neighbourhood Centre  
Refugee Civil Law Service at Multicultural Australia  
Encircle  
Red Cross  
Salvation Army  
Footprints  
Micah Projects  
Mission Australia's Roma House  
St Vincent de Paul Homeless Hostel  
Zig Zag  
Anglicare Homelessness Services Hub, Cairns  
Mission Australia's Douglas House, Cairns  
Wuchopperen Health Service, Cairns  
Mater Young Adults Health Centre  
Clarence St

## Law Firms

MinterEllison  
Clayton Utz  
DLA Piper  
MurphySchmidt  
Herbert Smith Freehills  
McCullough Robertson  
Corrs Chambers Westgarth  
Allens  
Ashurst  
Holding Redlich  
King & Wood Mallesons  
Maurice Blackburn Lawyers

# Community and Health Justice Partnerships

## Impact

**948** legal services for **540**  
clients

**482** intensive legal services  
(10+ hrs)

## Brisbane outcomes

**>\$408,000** consumer  
disputes resolved

**\$130,000** fines resolved

**\$55,500** payments to crime  
victims

**15,496**  
pro bono hours

# Community & Health Justice Partnerships

## Law Reform

Community and Health Justice Partnerships seek to change laws and practices that are unfair and make life harder for our clients. We contribute themes and data from our legal casework and include the voices and perspectives of people with lived experience of hardship in all our submissions. We participate in forums and projects where we can collectively understand and create good change.

### Homelessness Inquiry

Our submissions to the *Commonwealth House of Representatives Inquiry into Homelessness in Australia* drew attention to the necessity of specialist homelessness support services, the need for increased access to supported social housing, and the importance of financial and consumer protections for people experiencing homelessness.

We contributed to a joint response to the same inquiry with four other specialist homelessness legal services in Australia: Justice Connect (Victoria), The Public Interest Advocacy Centre (NSW), Street Law WA and Street Law ACT.

### Tenancy Reform

We responded to the *Queensland Government's Open Doors to Renting Reform* consultations, seeking three key areas of law reform: that minimum housing standards should be implemented, for improved protections for tenants experiencing domestic and family violence, and for an end to “without grounds” tenancies.

The *Make Renting Fair in Queensland Alliance* includes Tenants Queensland, QCROSS, Community Legal Centres Queensland and other community organisations. This year the Alliance advocated for extending the COVID eviction moratorium, met with Members of Parliament on tenancy reform, and continues to respond to tenancy reform consultations.

### Criminalisation of Poverty

LawRight is one of ten community legal centres across Australia that partnered with academics at four Australian universities to study the ways in which experiences of homelessness are criminalised. We provide insight into the practical and legal issues faced by people experiencing homelessness, systemic disadvantage within our justice system, and included the voice of people with lived experience of homelessness. The first peer-reviewed article was recently published.

## Submissions

- Australian Securities and Investment Commission's consultation paper on its product intervention power in Pt. 7.9A of the *Corporations Act 2001*
- Senate Economics Legislation Committee's inquiry into the *National Consumer Credit Protection Amendment (Small Amount Credit Contract and Consumer Lease Reforms) Bill 2019 (No. 2)*
- Queensland Parliament's Consultation Regulatory Impact Statement on renting in Queensland
- Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs' inquiry into the adequacy of the allowance payment system for jobseekers and others
- Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs' inquiry Centrelink's compliance program
- Commonwealth House of Representatives Inquiry into Homelessness in Australia – LawRight and joint national submission

## Forums

- ASIC Consumer Regulatory Forum
- RTA Stakeholder Forum
- Community Legal Education Legal Assistance Forum
- Brisbane Alliance to End Homelessness
- Make Renting Fair in Queensland Alliance
- Work and Development Order Implementation Reference Group
- Brisbane Youth Service's Couch Surfing Projects - Community Advisory Group

# Street Soccer



Sixteen teams from law firms, business, police and community agencies competed in the 8th Street Soccer Tournament in August 2019.

Together, the 115 players created an opportunity for social inclusion and raised \$5,000 for the Big Issue and LawRight.

Thank you to Lady Bowen Trust for \$2,000 sponsorship and Clayton Utz for catering. Congratulations to two-time champions, The Big Issue team!

Chief Justice Catherine Holmes presented the awards, together with the Chair of Lady Bowen Trust, Darryl R Secombe OAM



## Community and Health Justice Partnerships

# 3rd Space

3rd Space is a drop-in centre for people experiencing homelessness, offering showers, meals and intensive support to improve housing and community connections.

LawRight has partnered with 3rd Space since 2013, providing weekly on-site legal services and training community workers to recognise the legal dimensions of problems.

### COVID changes

3rd Space closed to visiting services from March. During this time, frontline workers at 3rd Space connected clients to us where possible. When 3rd Space relaxed restrictions in May, workers created a room where clients could meet staff lawyers virtually.

### Pro bono

A Senior Associate was promoted in his pro bono team after he worked with a client for four years to build trust and secure her crime victim payments. The client now reaches out whenever she has a legal question.

“Volunteering with LawRight is one of my favorite aspects to my work... [I have learnt] new skills... legal knowledge and assisted a diverse range of clients.”

**Emma, volunteer lawyer**

“I feel privileged to work with 3rd Space... it allows me to help some of our most vulnerable Australians and give back to my community [and] broadens my perspective.”

**Jess, volunteer lawyer**

## Stories of Impact

**Julian has been homeless for 13 years** after leaving home as a teenager. He works hard to manage his complex and chronic health conditions but had to sleep in his car. When it was involved in an accident, LawRight helped get a waiver the \$29,000 insurance debt.

**T. left home at 16**, and has lived with violence for most of his life. His partners used his credit to cover their own purchases and left him with utilities debts after relationship breakdowns. He can't afford safe housing because he pays 50% of his income to creditors. Pro bono lawyers vigorously negotiated his \$12,000 of debt with the Administrator, creditors and the Australian Financial Security Authority, reducing it to nil.

**After a violent crime** in her home, LawRight helped Lina access >\$7,000 of home security measures and a \$3,500 payment.

*"Thank you for all the help you guys have been and continue to be it can't wipe the smile from my face to see that things really have been moving forward and the change of direction is paying off so enjoy the weekend and keep in touch!"*

## Community workers

"LawRight have been pivotal in supporting 3rd Space visitors with their legal issues. Having a friendly and professional team at the centre not only supports those experiencing or at risk of homelessness but the wider community who seek out LawRight's counsel."

**Caroline**

# 3rd Space Fortitude Valley

LawRight staff and pro bono lawyers on site Thursday 9 am – 11 am

## Our clients

**100%** experiencing homelessness

**29%** impacted by domestic violence

**18%** had legal problem involving violence

**17%** are culturally diverse

## Impact

**101** legal problems addressed for **34** clients

**54** intensive legal services (10+ hours)

**49%** consumer or debt issues with **>\$182,000** of debt resolved.

**\$19,000** Victim Assist payments



Community & Health Justice Partnerships

# Brisbane North Telephone Service

LawRight collaborates with four frontline services across Brisbane North that support people experiencing immediate risk to their housing.

Since 2012, support workers and their clients have phone access to pro bono lawyers to resolve legal problems impacting housing, such as consumer disputes (which limit the income available for rent and housing), tenancy and blacklist disputes.

## COVID changes

Because the telephone service already operates remotely, it continued throughout COVID restrictions. We extended our intake times from two hours on Tuesdays to any convenient time for the lawyer, client and worker. Community workers kept connecting clients to us.

## Collaborating with Encircle and Pine Rivers Legal Service

“Encircle Brisbane North Homestay values the shared work we do with LawRight and respect their organisation as a valuable asset to our sustainable tenancies program, working to support our clients. In addition to Encircle’s Pine Rivers Community Legal Service, LawRight has been a specialist service, helping our clients with debt management, tenancy law and superannuation access.

This referral pathway allows us to work with confidence with clients, who present to us with challenging legal concerns. Encircle Brisbane North Homestay and the Community who access our service value the integrity, compassion and genuine interactions they experience with all members of the LawRight Team.”

## Stories of impact

**Bri was exhausted and fragile** after years of disputes with her landlord. LawRight helped her manage expectations, negotiate effectively and extend her lease. Every week, pro bono lawyers supported Bri's interactions with the property manager until she could safely move on. We are now helping Bri with a disputed bond return.

**Some businesses lure vulnerable clients** with unlawful rent-to-buy schemes that appear affordable but actually cost excessive amounts. Abby came to us with deep debt to one of these companies. We helped her understand her legal protections and negotiate with the lender. Our involvement ensured the lender stopped harassing Abby for amounts they weren't entitled to claim. We continue to work with Abby to make a complaint to the Australian Securities and Investments Commission.

**Sergio was a successful medical professional** but a terminal illness stopped him working. Over time, his housing became unstable and he owed \$110,000. We helped Sergio declare himself bankrupt.

# Brisbane North Telephone Service

## Red Cross, Encircle and Salvation Army

People at risk of losing housing.  
LawRight staff and pro bono lawyers available as required.

## Our clients

**100%** people at risk of homelessness

**36%** experience family violence

**30%** legal problems impacted by violence

**28.5%** First Nations

## Impact

**43** legal problems addressed for 14 clients

**31** intensive legal services (10+ hrs)

**>\$24,800** consumer disputes resolved

**11%** had fines debts resolved

**16%** improved housing

## Community & Health Justice Partnerships

# Brisbane Youth Service

Brisbane Youth Service helps vulnerable young people find and maintain appropriate housing, address physical & mental health issues and thrive in the community.

LawRight has partnered with BYS since 2008 to resolve complex issues connected to a young person's challenges and homelessness.

LawRight delivers on-site legal services, trains youth workers, undertakes systemic law reform for young people and sits on BYS Community Advisory Groups.

### COVID changes

BYS closed its doors but LawRight worked with youth workers to create a virtual legal service, connecting with clients via video chat appointments. BYS supplied devices to clients to support the connection.

### Pro bono

I have loved volunteering at BYS and the opportunity to take ownership of files. The files give us the chance to make a real difference in our clients' lives."

**Tessa, volunteer lawyer**

"Volunteering at BYS provides our volunteers with invaluable experience...[they] gain immense satisfaction from working one-on-one with clients in order to assist with their legal needs."

**Olivia, volunteer lawyer**

### Community workers

LawRight have been invaluable to the young people coming to BYS. [They] are frequently caught up in legal challenges they find difficult to untangle and often put these issues on the backburner due to feeling overwhelmed with the complexities in navigating legal processes. LawRight have been a patient, stable presence at the Hub assisting hundreds of young people

navigate issues such as predatory lending, complex court procedures, victim's assist claims, SPER debt and tenancy concerns. LawRight put time and effort into building rapport with young people and have provided a clear, simple pathway that enables young people to begin addressing their legal concerns.

### **BYS, Hub Team**

### **Stories of Impact**

**Jen was being chased by Centrelink**, who reduced her payments and raised a debt after her ex-partner said he would share care for their baby. He didn't, but Centrelink didn't believe Jen was solo-parenting. LawRight couldn't persuade them to change their decision, so Jen successfully appealed the decision to the AAT. Jen now receives her correct entitlement and is better able to support her young family.

**Violet was homeless as a teenager** and now lives in social housing. She was "broke as hell" when she asked her telco to repair her phone. Instead they signed her up to a more expensive contract. She was now \$2,400 in debt and the telco wanted the phone back. LawRight spent 6 months chasing details of the debt while the telco repeatedly assigned the debt to multiple collections companies. After we raised concerns of inappropriate contracting, failure to conduct correct credit assessments and breaches of consumer protection obligations with the telco and the Ombudsman, the debt was waived and Violet could keep the phone. Violet stays connected with her lawyers, her housing is stable, *"finances in order and everything has been really good for her"*.

# Brisbane Youth Service Fortitude Valley

Young people experiencing homelessness.

LawRight staff and pro bono lawyers on-site weekly, Mondays 1-3pm.

## Our clients

**100%** young people ( 12 - 25yo )  
experiencing homelessness

**53%** experienced family violence

**38%** legal problems impacted by  
violence

**19%** First Nations

**16%** culturally and linguistically  
diverse

## Impact

**73** intensive legal services (10+hrs)  
for **43** clients

**>\$75,800** consumer disputes  
resolved.

**>\$19,000** fines debts resolved

**\$18,000** Centrelink debt  
removed

**18%** claimed Victim Assist  
payments

## Community & Health Justice Partnerships

# Footprints



Footprints works with older people, people living with a disability or mental illness, and those at risk of homelessness.

LawRight has partnered with Footprints since 2010 to resolve complex issues and empower clients to make their own decisions.

LawRight delivers on-site legal services and trains workers to recognise the legal dimension of problems.

### COVID changes

Footprints closed to all visiting services in March. LawRight continued to offer potential clients telephone and virtual appointments with our lawyers, making arrangements with the community workers on a case-by-case basis.

## Pro bono

“Working alongside LawRight and seeing the impact that their work has on members of our community is very rewarding. It was really great to help our client out of a sticky situation, managing to achieve an outcome which has had a big impact on his life and wellbeing.”

### Volunteer lawyer

## Story of Impact

### Derek’s severe mental health condition

makes him vulnerable to entering unsuitable contracts. He was being chased for >\$20,000 of debt with credit providers and telcos. We helped him negotiate the cancellation of contracts, and waivers of the debt and cancellation fees.

*“Just want to say a big thankyou to everyone from lawrite for all your help and patience through this time, its been a big help really mentally for me as I wanted to give up on many of times as it was too much for me. I cant thank everyone enough!”*

### Health worker

“LawRight achieved great outcomes recently with one of my clients. This client was living in a homeless shelter, on Jobseeker payment (pre-COVID supplement) and had debts amounting to around \$20,000. LawRight reduced the debt to around \$1,000 in a quick, efficient manner. The impact on my client’s health and wellbeing is hugely significant – his stress levels, anxiety and symptoms of depression decreased whilst his sleep, physical health and general presentation improved. [My colleagues] had similar experiences and benefits to report. The service is highly valued across all Footprints services.”

# Footprints Fortitude Valley

People experiencing mental health concerns.

LawRight staff and pro bono lawyers on-site monthly.

## Our clients

**100%** have mental health concerns

**50%** impacted by family violence

## Impact

**21** legal problems addressed for six clients

**16** intensive legal services (10+ hrs)

**88%** addressed money problems

**>\$25,000** consumer disputes resolved

## Community & Health Justice Partnerships

# Micah Projects

Micah Projects cares for community members experiencing hardship, homelessness and violence and has programs to support people with a disability, families, women and children, and victims of institutional abuse.

LawRight has partnered with Micah since 2009, delivering on-site legal services, training their staff to recognise legal issues and working together on research and projects. Micah staff book clients into appointments on our behalf.

Clients from **Wesley Mission** and **Anglicare Homelessness Services Women & Families** also connect to lawyers through this service.

### COVID Changes

Micah closed to visiting services in March. LawRight continued to meet clients through phone or virtual appointments.

### Pro bono

“Volunteering with LawRight provides a timely reminder of the good that we, as lawyers, can do for those in most need within our communities. I have seen the strides forward that our clients can make when given [legal] assistance.”

#### Volunteer lawyer

### Community worker

“[LawRight] provides excellent legal advice & support for the vulnerable women I support. [You are] patient & kind, which is so important when supporting people who have experienced significant trauma, are disadvantaged, & have experienced social injustice. With [LawRight support] we were able to resolve a significant debt of my client’s, which has had a positive impact on her stress levels, & mental health.”

#### Homelessness support worker

## Stories of Impact

**Dave suffered a panic attack** while driving so his passenger friend took the wheel. Unknown to both of them, Dave's friend's license had been suspended for unpaid fines. Police pulled them over, issued a notice and impounded the car.

Despite Dave's efforts, the pound refused to release his car and demanded \$3,000 in 7 days or his car would be forfeited. LawRight quickly negotiated the car's release for a significantly reduced fee. Dave needs his car to access vital medical support.

*"I like to thank you Micah and the lawyer because you always stand with me and help and help everybody in need."*

**In 2017 we helped Kiki resolve multiple debts** and get back on her feet. As a result, she recently moved out of public housing but had a dispute with the removalists, who failed to complete the task, over-charged her and damaged property. Kiki reached out to us again and pro bono lawyers negotiated a settlement.

*"Once again I want to thank you all for such a wonderful outcome for an underdog like myself. Thank you!"*

# Micah Projects South Brisbane

People experiencing hardship and homelessness.

LawRight staff and pro bono lawyers on-site fortnightly, Wednesdays 10am - 11.30am.

## Our clients

**100%** chronic homelessness or long-term social housing tenants

**44%** were impacted by violence

**14%** First Nations

## Impact

**32** legal problems addressed for 16 clients

**24** intensive legal services (10+ hrs)

**>\$9,000** debts resolved

**25%** improved housing

**12%** claimed Victim Assist payments

Community & Health Justice Partnerships

# New Farm Neighbourhood Centre



New Farm Neighbourhood Centre provides kitchen, computer, laundry and shower facilities for the community as well as health and housing services, food relief and financial inclusion services, community education and social activities.

LawRight has partnered with NFNC since 2009, providing on-site legal services to drop-in clients. Our priority is to address barriers to housing.

## COVID changes

In early 2019, NFNC commenced major renovations and moved to a temporary site. We moved with them but client numbers dropped significantly. NFNC closed to visiting services in response to COVID, preventing us from connecting with new clients. Renovations at NFNC have finished and the centre has re-opened. We are now back on-site.

## Stories of Impact

**Jim, a senior pensioner**, was being chased by debt collectors after he crashed his car while suffering a seizure. Jim couldn't resolve the matter himself. We helped him collect the evidence and negotiate a full waiver of the claim.

**Ursula lived in a homeless women's hostel**, in debt and terrible health. We worked with her for years to resolve debts and access super and Centrelink entitlements so she could move into independent housing. We recently helped Ursula collect evidence to legally correct her name, allowing her to apply for identification documents. Seeing her life stabilise has been wonderful.

*"Thank you LawRight for taking on my case pro bono. This positive outcome most likely would have not manifested had you not done so."*

## Community worker

"Having the legal clinic available at New Farm is an advantage to people who are experiencing hardship, getting assistance that they would otherwise not be able to access. We are grateful for the clinics and support provided."

**Kelly Sciacca, Manager**

# New Farm Neighbourhood Centre New Farm

LawRight staff and pro bono lawyers on-site fortnightly, Tuesdays 10am - 11.30am.

## Our clients

**100%** chronic homelessness  
or long-term social housing  
tenants

## Impact

**20** people improved legal  
rights

**9** intensive legal services  
(10+hrs)

**30%** improved housing

**>\$24,000** consumer  
disputes resolved

Community & Health Justice Partnerships 28

# Multicultural Australia

Multicultural Australia supports recently arrived Queenslanders to feel at home and find community connections, work and study opportunities and learn new skills. New arrivals have to engage with the Australian legal system without knowledge of their rights and responsibilities. Cultural and language barriers mean that many legal problems remain unaddressed and worsen.

LawRight has partnered with Multicultural Australia since 2007, providing on-site civil legal services and training community workers to recognise the legal dimensions of problems.

## COVID changes

From March we shifted to telephone appointments supported by support workers at Multicultural Australia. Because of our strong partnership with MA, the transition proved seamless with no change in client numbers or outcomes.

## Corrs Chambers Westgarth

All Corrs staff and lawyers are actively encouraged to give back to their community through the firm's Pro Bono and Community Program, which includes LawRight's Refugee Civil Law Clinic. The firm's pro bono commitment is underpinned by formal recognition of all pro bono participation.

"I joined the Refugee Civil Law Service to assist refugees experiencing disadvantage in Australia. I have assisted clients from Iraq, Sri Lanka and Ethiopia with debt collectors, car accidents and even just incorrect billing details. English is not usually the first language of clients, which is an unfortunately common factor in how their situations ended up requiring legal intervention. So it's rewarding resolving a matter, knowing someone is genuinely better off from your assistance."

**Volunteer lawyer**

## Community workers

“LawRight has always been instrumental in supporting my clients with issues including tenancy disputes, debts, applying for VAQ, amending personal details, claims, damages to vehicles, housing.”

“My clients appreciate the support from LawRight because it is:

- easily accessible (clients come to the office where LawRight provides outreach).
- uses interpreters.
- “genuinely fights for me”.

“Thank you LawRight and all the unsung solicitors who assist our newest Queenslanders. Thank you for your patience and your desire to seek the best outcomes for clients.”

## Story of Impact

**Rayan was settling in Australia as a refugee** after fleeing his homeland. With limited English, he was surprised when he received fines for using our tolls roads and fishing in the wrong place. Unsure what to do, his caseworker connected him to our lawyers.

We were able to negotiate the withdrawal of Rayan’s fines, ensuring his settlement in Australia wasn’t impacted by enforcement action. Rayan better understands our laws and is able to focus on establishing his life in Australia.

# Multicultural Australia Woolloongabba

Refugees, recent arrivals and people seeking asylum.

LawRight staff and pro bono lawyers are on-site fortnightly, Mondays 1pm - 3pm.

## Our clients

**100%** culturally and linguistically diverse

## Impact

**46** legal problems for 36 clients

**42** intensive legal services (10+ hrs)

**>\$64,000** consumer disputes resolved

**\$10,000** payments from Victim Assist

## Community & Health Justice Partnerships

# Roma House

Roma House is operated by Mission Australia as a non-exclusionary temporary supported accommodation service in Brisbane, supporting up to 31 residents who are rough sleeping, living in improvised dwellings, or have experienced chronic homelessness.

LawRight has partnered with Roma House since 2009 to resolve legal problems, which are barriers to residents transitioning to stable housing. LawRight delivers on-site legal services, trains workers and provides secondary consults to caseworkers to ensure that clients are receiving appropriate legal services in a timely manner.

### COVID changes

Roma House closed and all residents were relocated to premises in Toowong. LawRight worked closely with Roma House caseworkers to stay in contact with clients, and to ensure that we could continue supporting them without disruption in their new accommodation. Since July we have been on site at their new accommodation.

### Pro bono

Working as a volunteer lawyer with clients from the Homeless Person's Legal Clinic is a rewarding and refreshing opportunity to be involved in alongside my regular legal work in a commercial firm. HPLC presents itself as a fantastic way to be able to use our legal skills in a way that genuinely helps the lives of others, particularly those who wouldn't normally have access to legal assistance.

#### Volunteer lawyer

### Community worker

"I have been working alongside the staff at LawRight in my capacity as a Recovery Worker for almost 3 years. I know I can vouch for all of my colleagues at Roma House of their exemplary conduct. They have made an enormous impact in many of our clients' lives."

## Stories of Impact

**Many residents of Roma House are involuntarily treated** for their complex mental health. Dot was anxious and confused about attending the compulsory review of her treatment at the Mental Health Review Tribunal. LawRight helped her understand her rights and the process of the hearing which relieved her. We attended the hearing as a support person and ensured that she understood the outcome after the hearing.

**Tammy's experience of sexual violence** led to homelessness. Her support worker asked LawRight to help with her debts and unpaid fines and together we saw \$7,000 in debt waivers and a fine withdrawn. A year after Tammy moved out of Roma House, she had tenancy problems. She reached out to LawRight again and we helped her assert her rights.

*"Thanks so much for all of your work, it's been awesome. I didn't expect much when I first went to see you, but you ended up being able to help me with so much. I'm moving into a little flat in the next couple of days, and I don't think I would've been able to without you guys. Give a big thanks to [volunteer] too- she's been putting in a lot of work behind the scenes, and I really appreciate it."*

*"I think you guys are awesome, you have helped me so much. You have been wonderful – I wouldn't be as upbeat without you guys, and you can quote me on that! You're not scary like those lawyers in court, you put things in layman's terms so I can understand it. You help a lot of people who wouldn't be able to get the help otherwise."*

# Roma House Spring Hill

People experiencing long-term complex homelessness.

LawRight staff and pro bono lawyers on-site weekly on Thursdays 9am -11am.

## Our clients

**100%** chronic homelessness

**32%** First Nations

**48%** live with mental illness

**48%** experienced family violence

## Impact

**92** legal problems addressed for **24** clients

**66** intensive legal services (10+ hrs)

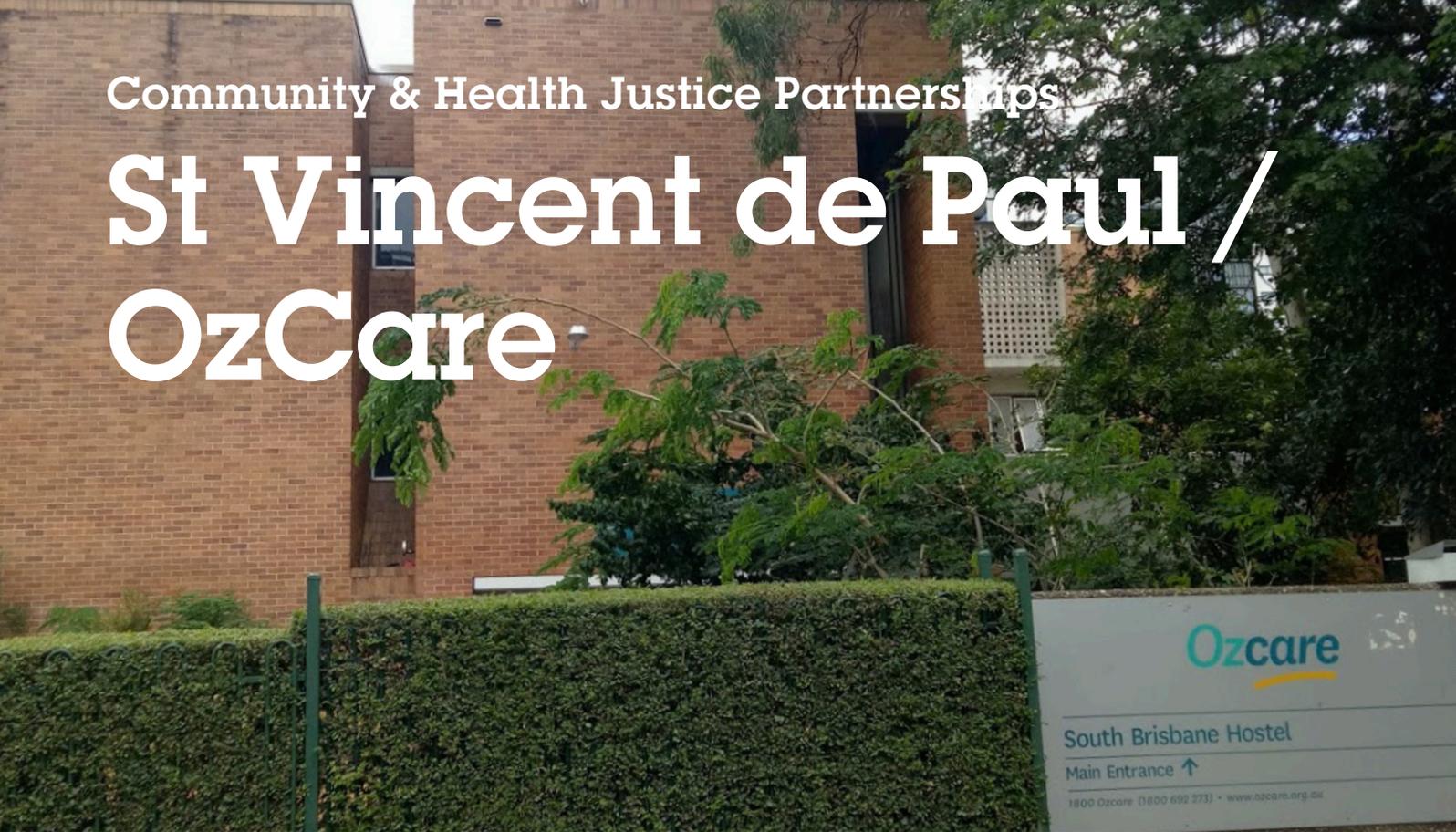
**>\$10,000** consumer disputes resolved

**>\$4,500** in SPER fines resolved

**2** clients supported at the Mental Health Review Tribunal

Community & Health Justice Partnerships

# St Vincent de Paul / OzCare



'Vinnies' Homeless Hostel (previously run by OzCare) provides emergency, short-term accommodation for men experiencing homelessness. Most residents are highly transient, have significant addiction issues and are chronically homeless. As the hostel can only offer limited individual support, delivering a legal service to residents is very challenging.

LawRight first partnered with OzCare in 2002 and this year staff and operational changes at the Hostel hindered our ability to connect with the residents. We were collaboratively reviewing our partnership when COVID forced the closure of visiting services to the hostel.

Despite these challenges, we achieved some great outcomes for residents.

## Stories of Impact

**Brad's life spiralled when his mental health deteriorated.** He lost his job, housing and support network and found himself in debt and homeless.

We worked with Brad over a number of months to negotiate the resolution of his debts and supported him to find longer-term accommodation. Brad continues to work through his mental health matters but hopes to return to work soon.

**Aleks struggled with addiction and homelessness** for years. He came to the Hostel after being kicked out of a boarding house. Aleks was upset the landlord took his bond without giving reasons. We explained the bond process, helped Aleks contest the claim and apply to QCAT.

*"That's excellent news... I hope that that's the last I hear of it other than the confirmation letter..... FEWWWW.....and YES it does relieve some of the stress, I can now concentrate on other matters. I can now put that money towards getting my belongings back from my Mother, or put it towards bond/rent for possible accommodation. I stress I can't thank you enough for your assistance, patience and help..... THANK YOU SOOO MUCH."*

# St Vincent de Paul/OzCare South Brisbane

Emergency homelessness hostel.

LawRight staff and pro bono lawyers on-site weekly Tuesdays 10am - 11:30am.

## Our clients

**100%** homelessness

**25%** impacted by domestic violence

**25%** First Nations

## Impact

**7** new clients, including four who received intensive legal services (10+ hrs)

# Community & Health Justice Partnerships

## Zig Zag



Zig Zag Young Women's Resource Centre supports young women (12-25) who are homeless or survivors of sexual violence. Zig Zag offers counselling, accommodation and support for education, employment, and housing opportunities. LawRight began partnering with Zig Zag in 2018, providing an on-site lawyer one day per week. Our staff lawyer facilitates a safe introduction to pro bono lawyers for complex matters. LawRight also trains Zig Zag workers to recognise the legal dimensions of problems.

### COVID Changes

Zig Zag reduced most of its face to face services and LawRight stopped on-site services during COVID. However our close partnership meant we continued to connect with young women telephone and virtual meetings, accessed on a case by case basis. We are now back on site.

### DLA Piper

Our partnership with LawRight has been rewarding for us both personally and professionally. It is a privilege to assist people in times of vulnerability, and to see the positive impact providing the services has on their lives. It is exciting to see our DLA Piper colleagues so engaged in supporting this much needed ... alliance between DLA Piper, LawRight and Zig Zag Young Women's Resource Centre.

**Elly Brand and Patrick Baisden**

### Community worker

“Young women living with the impacts of sexual violence have a myriad of complex systems and issues to navigate upon their roads to stable housing and personal recovery. LawRight and its volunteers have made such a difference to many young women.

Additionally, Law Right has graciously provided guidance to Zig Zag staff around various legal areas. Zig Zag offers thanks and gratitude to LawRight and its volunteers for their engagement with Zig Zag staff and young women.”

## Stories of Impact

**Cheryl applied to Victim Assist** following an alleged rape but received a Notice of Proposed Refusal. LawRight was able to intervene and advocate for Cheryl to be awarded the highest category of special assistance payment, as well as ongoing psychology support. Cheryl is now accessing regular counseling, which she could not afford without the scheme.

**When Didi was a teenager** she was in and out of home so often due to family violence that she didn't always update Centrelink – she accumulated \$9,000 in Centrelink debt and a hyper-vigilance about reporting. But when she left a violent partner and told Centrelink, they refused her additional support. When she moved into women's-only accommodation and her ex visited – she told Centrelink but they recorded it as a relationship. Zig Zag workers advocated unsuccessfully for months with Centrelink.

LawRight helped Didi access \$13,000 in back pay, ongoing entitlements and support from Centrelink social workers. As a young Mum and a First Nations woman, we recognise that Didi faces more barriers to accessing her legal rights.

**Anna fled domestic violence.** Vodafone's policies allowed all her payments and obligations under the contract to be waived in recognition of the financial abuse she suffered. We collaborated with Vodafone and Zig Zag to make sure the client was safe throughout this process.

# Zig Zag Camp Hill

Young women survivors of sexual violence

LawRight staff on-site all day Mondays and connect clients to pro bono lawyers as needed.

## Our clients

**93%** impacted by domestic or sexual violence

**63%** had legal problem involving violence

**27%** culturally diverse

**14%** First Nations

## Impact

**43** legal problems for 15 clients

**24** intensive legal services (10+ hrs)

**>\$44,000** consumer disputes resolved

**\$23,000** claimed payments from Victim Assist



Health Justice Partnerships

# Mater Young Adults Health Centre

The Mater Young Adult Health Centre (MYAHC) works with young people transitioning from child health services or whose complex health impacts their well-being.

Adolescents and young adults with chronic health conditions face multiple health, social and legal challenges which, left unaddressed, will significantly impact their adult trajectories.

LawRight has partnered with the Mater since 2015 to increase young people's access to justice. Our Health Justice Partnership embeds lawyers in the hospital to collaborate with the multidisciplinary treating team. This holistic approach addresses legal issues simultaneously with health care needs, in a client-centred, trauma-informed model. LawRight regularly presents to Mater clinicians on the legal needs of their patients.

In addition, we attend MYAHC's **Clarence Street youth, drug and rehabilitation service** weekly and connect to patients in **Mater Hospital wards**, through liaison with health and social work staff.

## COVID changes

After the initial COVID lockdown from late March, LawRight staff resumed on-site services in May. We had a surge of COVID-19 related enquiries from March to June and we were able to negotiate better outcomes for vulnerable tenants and advise patients on employment and income issues.

Leo, a young patient at the Mater with a compromised immune system, wasn't safe to continue working under COVID restrictions. His girlfriend lost her job in the fitness industry, so they couldn't afford their lease and asked to be released. Leo mentioned his worries to his hospital psychologist, who connected him to LawRight. We negotiated the termination of the lease and the return of bond monies to Leo.

## Maurice Blackburn Lawyers

Maurice Blackburn Lawyers partnered with LawRight in March 2020, providing on-site volunteers weekly to assist with casework and delivering training to Mater staff on a range of legal topics. This service was disrupted by COVID.

## University of Queensland

The University of Queensland Pro Bono Centre supports LawRight to operate the Health Advocacy Legal Clinic by providing law students two days per week. Students are supervised by LawRight and work together with social work students from The University of Queensland to respond holistically to the legal needs of our clients.

The UQ students assist with casework and deliver training for young adults. Topics include:

- What do You Have to do For the Law, and What Does the Law do For You?
- Tenancy Rights
- Dealing with Fines
- Legalities of Loans

## Financial support

The Mater Health Justice Partnership receives financial support from the Mater Foundation and the Sylvia & Charles Viertel Charitable Foundation.

# Mater Young Adults Health Centre

## South Brisbane

+ Clarence Street

Youth drug and rehabilitation service, South Brisbane.

LawRight staff, pro bono lawyers, and law and students from The University of Queensland on-site Mondays and Wednesdays.

## Our clients

**34%** young adults

**60%** with a disability

**70%** female

## Impact

**80** legal problems for **60** clients

**30** intensive legal services (10+ hours)

**45%** money problems

**19%** housing issues

**23%** family problems

# Mater Young Adult Health Centre

## Medical professionals

“As the Director of the Mater Young Adult Health Centre (MYAHC) I have seen first-hand the immense benefits of the Health Advocacy Legal Clinic here at the Mater. At MYAHC we work with young people facing significant medical conditions. The effect of having legal problems on top of existing medical challenges places considerable additional burdens on these young people. With the support and advocacy of the [LawRight] team, these legal concerns are often able to be addressed swiftly and comprehensively. This is transformative for young people in these situations as they previously had believed these legal concerns to be insurmountable.”

**Dr Simon Denny, MYAHC Director**

“You’ve been able to achieve outcomes for patients we couldn’t have and we... believe this impacts in a positive way on their health outcomes as well.”

**Mater Clinician**

HALC Senior Lawyer, Assoc. Prof. Mandy Shircore co-presented with MYAHC Director, Dr. Simon Denny and Lead Psychiatrist, Dr Tatjana Ewais at the Youth Health Conference (Australian Association for Adolescent Health) in Melbourne in November 2019 about the impact of the Health Justice Partnership, and produced a paper: *Ewais T, Shircore M, Denny S. Health and Law Partnerships in Youth with Chronic Illness. Australian Association for Adolescent Health Conference Bulletin. 2019*



## Stories of Impact

**Because of his complex needs, the Public Trustee was appointed** to control a young patient's finances. Over some years, he engaged consistently with treatment and employment and he wanted to buy a car. His treating team supported his goals, but the Public Trustee wouldn't consent. LawRight helped prepare his application to QCAT to remove the Public Trustee and with the help of a pro bono barrister. He was successful and able to start car shopping.

**Ada was the sole parent** of three young children including a new baby. She had \$9,000 of toll debts as well as other debts. LawRight negotiated a waiver, based on Ada's traumatic history and on-going financial and personal hardship.

**A patient with a terminal illness** was able to stay at home with the help of a paid carer after LawRight helped him access superannuation benefits to pay for the carer.

**Without a variation to her Domestic Violence Order**, a young patient could not be discharged. We understood the history of violence in her relationship, but worked with the treating team and social workers to seek an urgent variation application.

**An elderly cancer patient** lived in fear of her neighbour who had assaulted, harassed and intimidated her over the past 18 months. Despite reports to police and Department of Housing, nothing had been done to assist her. The patient spoke little English. LawRight helped her to make a complaint and appear in court with the help of a pro bono barrister. As a result:

- the neighbour was charged with serious assault on elderly person
- a Peace and Good Behaviour Order was made by the Magistrates Court, in favour of our client against the neighbour
- the Department of Housing moved the neighbour to another public housing complex.

Community Justice Partnerships

# Anglicare Homelessness Services Hub



The Hub provides emergency and support services to over 5000 people per year experiencing homelessness in Cairns, including those sleeping rough or with complex needs.

The Hub delivers drop-in services as well as appointments and a mobile, early intervention for tenancies at risk. Since 2012, LawRight has been embedded at Anglicare Hub, who generously provide full-time office space and facilities. We work closely with their staff to resolve legal problems connected to homelessness.

## COVID changes

Throughout restrictions, the Hub continued to work onsite (with footpath consultations) and remotely. LawRight was also able to connect to clients remotely and have returned to helping clients in-person at the Hub.

Many clients wanted our help to obtain ID and birth certificates so they could access changing Centrelink benefits, and to utilise relaxed access provisions to superannuation.

## Stories of Impact

**Joe, a former truck driver with limited literacy**, had been living in a homeless hostel for more than 6 months with advanced terminal cancer at the time he saw LawRight. We helped him access >\$67,000 from his super fund, arrange a will, liaise with Centrelink and work with his doctor to consider an Advanced Health Directive. Joe used the money to rent accommodation for himself and his elderly mother.

He also fixed up his car for a last big road trip, his final wish as an old truckie.

### **Hub staff referred Mala to LawRight.**

Mala has chronic mental health conditions, a gambling addiction and is under Public Trustee administration. She lived at Three Sistas, a social housing provider, but the managers fraudulently obtained her bond, leaving her with a debt to the Department of Housing. LawRight has spent years pursuing similar concerns on behalf other residents of Three Sistas, and giving evidence at the successful prosecution of the managers. Three Sistas is now under liquidation since the licensee's convictions. LawRight presented evidence to the liquidators and secured a full refund for Mala.

# Anglicare Homelessness Services Hub Cairns

Emergency support services for people experiencing homelessness.

LawRight staff lawyers are embedded full-time at the Hub providing appointments to clients Wednesday 9-11 and as required

## Our clients

**100%** experiencing or at risk  
of homelessness

**45%** First Nations

**42%** domestic violence

**40%** disability/mental illness

**93%** financial disadvantage

## Impact

**202** legal problems of 75  
clients

**63** intensive legal casework  
(5+ hours)

**103** referrals to other services

A photograph of a modern, multi-story residential building with a light-colored facade and blue accents. The building has several windows and a covered entrance area. The text 'Community Justice Partnerships' is overlaid in white at the top left of the image.

Community Justice Partnerships

# Douglas House

Douglas House, operated by Mission Australia provides supported accommodation to people experiencing long-term, complex homelessness. 95 % of the residents identify as First Nations. LawRight has partnered with Douglas House since 2015 to help resolve the legal issues of residents which prevent them transitioning to stable housing and community engagement. Each resident completes a Legal Health Check with a support worker to identify and refer legal need to LawRight.

Some clients have employment histories and may be able to access superannuation. Many clients retain connection to community, often remote. They are strongly motivated to gather their family members and achieve rental accommodation where they can all live together.

## Champion volunteer

Judy Collins has volunteered one day per week with LawRight since 2016 to operate our Douglas House Clinic.

After a career as a nurse, she studied law and practiced as a barrister with the DPP, the Northern Coroner and at Trinity Chambers. She has also worked in Cairns hospitals, TAFE and at Tenants Queensland.

“The diversity of work constantly surprises me. It makes the job interesting, challenging and satisfying - particularly when we have a “win”. I am very pleased to be here and particularly, enjoy the company and support of LawRight colleagues.”

We appreciate Judy so much we employed her in July 2020.

## Community worker

“LawRight provides legal information and guidance to Douglas House and Woree Supported Accommodation tenants and Mission Australia staff. Judy openly [shares] her knowledge to ensure tenants and staff are well informed and empowered to resolve legal issues. Judy often goes above and beyond what is expected of her when faced with complex needs, advocating passionately and professionally for those who have experienced significant disadvantage and injustice. We at Mission Australia look forward to the ongoing collaboration with Judy and LawRight in 2021.”

**Barbra Burton, Douglas House Manager**

## Story of impact

**John was born in the NT of Aboriginal parents.** He taught art and ran an art gallery but over time, he stopped working and drifted away from his family. He became homeless and lived at Douglas House for two years.

During that time he started painting again and encouraged other residents to create art. All John's paintings sold at a Homelessness Week exhibition. John recently completed a TAFE barista course and has now moved on to more independent living.

We helped John represent himself for some minor criminal matters and access money from his superannuation. As John couldn't afford a mobile phone, it was complicated to create the requisite myGov account. When the super payment came through, John's first purchase was a mobile phone!

# Douglas House Cairns

Supported accommodation for people experiencing chronic homelessness.

LawRight pro bono lawyer on-site weekly Wednesday.

## Our clients

**100% complex homelessness**

**95% First Nations**

**100% financial disadvantage**

**75% with a disability**

**60% experience family and public violence**

## Impact

**7 clients with 11 intensive legal problems (10+ hrs)**

Health Justice Partnerships

# Wuchopperen Health Service



Wuchopperen Health Service is a community controlled, multi-campus provider of health services to >7,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people annually.

LawRight has partnered with Wuchopperen since 2016 to address the social and cultural determinants of health by increasing access to civil legal rights, diagnosing and addressing housing, income and family issues.

Our Health Justice Partnership embeds LawRight lawyers on-site at two locations, together with lawyers from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service (ATSILS) who attend two mornings per week to respond to family law, domestic violence and child protection matters.

The Law Yarn trains health workers to recognise the legal needs of clients in a culturally safe process. 90% of clients are referred by health staff.

## COVID changes

Wuchopperen closed all on-site services for staff and clients in March and transitioned to tele-health arrangements. Health and executive staff worked closely with LawRight to establish its immediate response by stepping up our capabilities in an ever changing and challenging environment. Our service delivery quickly adapted to a telehealth system which supported the community to settle in to a new way of business.

## Pro bono

A number of pro bono firms support the Wuchopperen HJP actively and with financial and in-kind donations.

King & Wood Mallesons have also established a pathway to pro bono services for Wuchopperen clients, attending on-site where appropriate.

## Health workers

A major strength of the HJP is 'secondary consultations — where lawyers and health professionals consult each other about the legal and health problems a client, or potential client, faces. Our lawyer has up to ten of these consultations each day on campus.

Health workers say:

“The clients keep showing up so something’s working okay! ... I’m not hearing anything negative and this is a nobody pulls any punches kind of place.”

“Often, we don’t even get to the health issues until people have sorted out their more immediate concerns. These are often really basic ones. Might be about shelter, being safe ... If they’re going to get chucked out of their house, we need to start with that before we get to health.”

“I like it that you have to be a client of Wuchopperen to access the clinic. It’s bringing a lot of the clients back. Oh, while I’m here I might as well see the doctor too.”

“It enhances wellbeing of our mob. It’s a one-stop shop. You get your health needs met, and also your legal needs.”

# Wuchopperen Cairns

A community controlled Aboriginal Health Organisation providing comprehensive primary health care services to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Cairns.

LawRight’s Health Justice Partnership.  
On-site, Indigenous lawyers two days per week.

## Our clients

**133** clients

**100%** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

## Impact

**120** legal services delivered

**27** clients received intensive legal casework (5-50 hours)

**>900** consultations with health workers

**28%** money problems

**38%** family problems

**183**

pro bono hours

# Wuchopperen Health Service

## Funding

After two years of project funding allocated by the Department of Justice expired in June 2019, the HJP received reduced emergency funding allocations. LawRight reduced our operations, including our collaboration with ATSILS and contributed \$45,000 to continue services where possible.

## Collaborative Governance

The Wuchopperen HJP is unique in Australia. Partnering across a community controlled health organisation, a mainstream legal service and a visiting Aboriginal legal service is complex. In 19/20 Health Justice Australia, a national centre for excellence in HJPs, helped to secure funding to explore and maximise these relationships.

## Closing the Gap

The 2020 *Closing the Gap Report* followed an historic, ten-year national shared decision-making agreement between the Council of Australian Governments and the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations. The report highlight four domains of cultural determinants of health:

- Self-determination and leadership
- Indigenous beliefs and knowledge
- Cultural expression and continuity
- Connection to country

LawRight's Health Justice Partnership with Wuchopperen Health Service, was profiled as an example of self-determination and leadership:

<https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-social-justice/publications/close-gap-2020>

## Stories of Impact

**Maureen has cared for her profoundly disabled, non-verbal son without formal support his whole life.** When Maureen's son turned 18 her minimal Centrelink income was reduced and she faced medical and financial blockages as she no longer had authority to make decisions for him. She was anxious as to how she would cope as his condition continued to deteriorate. With limited English, overwhelmed by paperwork, and petrified at the idea of going to court, she did not know where to turn.

Her son's doctor at Wuchopperen connected her with our on-site lawyer, a Torres Strait Islander woman, able to use her dialect skills to help Maureen understand the law, identify supports and make plans around his longer term needs.

LawRight helped Maureen obtain guardianship and administration orders to manage her son's affairs and then helped her to submit the first set of financial reports. We helped her set up a bank account for her son and register for Centrelink so that he is now getting his own basic income. We continue to assist Maureen to apply for carers' payment, disability pension and NDIS.

Now Maureen can care for her son at home for as long as possible and is hopeful that her son might get a male support worker who will help him gain some dignity and independence out of the home.

*"I am so glad you guys are here, I was stuck and didn't know about these things."*

**Bessie, an elderly Torres Strait Islander woman had been living without hot water for nine months,** her stove wasn't working, and she had noise from a disruptive neighbour whose noise kept her up at night.

Bessie reported the hot water issue to the property agent but it hadn't been resolved. Bessie spoke little English and was frightened to talk to her neighbour. She felt so frustrated, with winter coming and no hot water or stove, that she seriously considered leaving the house and going to live in a hostel. This would have put her tenancy at risk and hostels only allow short-term stays.

LawRight contacted the property agent, and discovered they thought the problems had already been resolved. The agent quickly arranged to fix her hot water and repair the stove. The agent had had trouble contacting Bessie, so we put them in touch with her support person.

We spoke to the agent for the neighbouring property and they promised to look after the noise issue, avoiding any direct conflict between Bessie and her neighbour.

We also explained to Bessie that if she had any more issues, she should talk to the agent and that leaving the tenancy without warning could have negative consequences such as a TICA listing and debts, which could jeopardise future tenancies.

# Wuchopperen

## System change: Evaluation of LawRight/Wuchopperen health justice partnership

In November 2019, Fiona Allison, Research Fellow at the Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research, UTS, completed an 18-month evaluation of the Health Justice Partnership and found that it significantly and uniquely improved the health or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their communities.

LawRight has spent the year adopting the recommendations of the evaluation, including recruiting for an Identified Position and commencing a collaborative governance workshop.

The full report is available at [lawright.org.au](http://lawright.org.au).



**All** clients improved their health and well-being

**225**  
**health outcomes**  
including reduced exposure to family violence, reduced anxiety, improved connection to health services and improved social and cultural determinants of health

**Most clients were helped with 3 or more legal issues, simultaneously improving their health and well-being, housing, income and legal rights.**

**97%**  
were connected to the on-site legal clinics by health professionals

**86%** of clients would not have resolved the legal issue without the on-site lawyers

**281**  
**well-being outcomes**  
including improved financial resilience, reduced family conflict, increased capacity to exercise rights, prevention of homelessness and support for victims of crime and historic injustice

**75%**  
of clients had no prior assistance for the legal issues they were helped with

## Key evaluation findings

1. The HJP addressed the multiple needs of vulnerable people by focussing on civil law needs, responding to the interaction of health and legal issues, reducing Indigenous-specific barriers to accessing justice and delivering positive health and well-being outcomes.

2. The HJP increased the awareness for clients and health workers of the links between and the benefits of connecting health and justice outcomes - health outcomes were enhanced by addressing the legal needs of clients and unaddressed health needs will lead to legal problems.

3. All clients improved their health and well-being, according to both clients and health staff.

4. No other context could have attained these outcomes, due to best-practice including:

- joined-up lawyer and client interactions
- existing focus on early intervention by both health and legal service is enhanced by empowering clients to make informed decisions about legal options before issues escalate and working holistically with clients
- willingness of legal clinic to assist with non-legal, administrative issues which are barriers for clients to access justice
- barriers to justice experienced by the community including language and physical barriers, limited knowledge of and distrust of the law, were addressed
- co-location addressed barriers of confidence, money and transport
- the strong working relationship of the Indigenous project lawyer and health staff.

5. Culturally-specific impacts were achieved by the HJP's service delivery design:

- co-location with an ACCHO is symbolic, reinforcing self-determination and culture.
- employing a First Nations lawyer and ensuring cultural needs are met addressed disempowerment and distrust due to colonisation and social exclusion.
- social determinants of health were significantly improved.
- community members gained an understanding of laws, systems and their rights, which they are unlikely to otherwise gain given the lack of access to other legal services.
- multiple unmet civil and family law needs were addressed, potentially reducing the over-criminalisation and social exclusion of the community.
- Indigenous-specific legal issues addressed include child protection, stolen wages and family kinship ties, which in turn builds trust
- increased understanding by a community with disproportionate involvement in the criminal justice system, impacting legal issues sit outside the criminal law.

6. The Law Yarn encourages clients to identify their legal needs in a culturally safe facilitated conversation. The Law Yarn uses symbols for housing, income, family and criminal issues within a graphic and narrative framework. The tool had a 100% positive response from health staff, who valued its focus on relevant areas of law, simplicity, culturally safe design, and capacity to guide useful conversations about legal issues.

# Disbursement Fund

The Disbursement Fund offers financial support to clients of community legal centres and pro bono lawyers for expenses associated with their legal case, such as travel, obtaining witness reports, medical reports and filing fees.

This year almost \$6,000 was requested and 24 grants were made.

## Story of impact

Fred was an elderly pensioner at risk of homelessness. He contributed all of his savings to purchase a property with a family member and although Fred lived at the property, his name was not on the title deed.

The family member wanted to sell the property and tried to force Fred to leave his house and not be paid for his initial investment.

A LawRight member firm represented Fred and accessed the Disbursement Fund to cover the registration fees to lodge a caveat over the property to protect Fred's interests in the event of a sale.

# Friends of LawRight

Friends of LawRight creates a reliable income stream to sustainably rebuild and create legal services, leveraging donations with the pro bono resources of our members.

For every \$1,000 of funding LawRight delivers pro bono legal services conservatively estimated at \$10,000.

Friends of LawRight currently support:

- Health Justice Partnerships with the Wuchopperen Health Service and Mater Young Adults Health Centre
- Advocacy Service for the Mental Health Review Tribunal

These services increase access to justice, housing, income and legal rights and improve health and well-being.

## Thank you

Andrew Buchanan  
Andrew Crowe QC  
Angela Rae  
Barry Dunphy  
Damian Clothier QC  
Damien O'Brien QC  
Daryl Clifford  
Dr Jacoba Brasch QC  
Jennifer McVeigh  
Joanne Rennick  
Katharine Philp  
Lucy Bretherton  
Majella Pollard  
Margaret McMurdo AC  
Marshall Irwin  
Matthew Jones  
Olga Buchanan  
Paul Newman  
Randal & Susan Dennings  
Roslyn Atkinson AO  
Tamara McCombe  
The Hon. Justice Philip McMurdo  
The Hon. Justice Robert Gotterson AO  
The Hon. Justice Thomas Bradley  
Tony Denholder  
and five anonymous friends

# Law schools

## Pro Bono Connect

Students help assess requests for legal help and develop research, client and drafting skills.

### Queensland University of Technology Access to Justice, Semester 2 2019

Vartika Sinha  
Terri Morrow  
Rebecca Cohen  
Natalia Weir  
Damien Janbroers  
Liqing Zhang  
Hannah Haidley

### Griffith University Social Justice Lawyering, Semester 1 2020

Maeve O'Leary  
Alberto Meleisea  
Davide Giannini  
Lauren Teklenburg  
Hannah Laviano  
Alan Dobbrick

### Bond University Litigation Clinic, Trimester 3 2019

Students rotate through Court & Tribunal Service and Pro Bono Connect and support service delivery with research, legal drafting and client skills.

Bettina Kobelt  
Dominique Perry  
Emily Lin  
Edward Delany  
Maria Clemente  
Francesca Jones  
Priteshkumar Pachchigar

### Queensland University of Technology Litigation Clinic, Semester 1 2020

Guy Magee  
Lauren Easey  
Elizabeth Rogl  
Claudia McCall  
Allison Devlin  
Dominic Bilton  
Max Eagles

"Despite the sudden changes made to the structure of my placement at Law Right, I still found the experience to be thoroughly enjoyable and highly rewarding. I gained a tremendous amount of real-world experience and I am thankful to have been given the opportunity to work with lawyers and paralegals to assist the most needy and vulnerable people in our society."

"I found my LawRight placement rewarding, especially in terms of understanding how access to justice initiatives operate...working at LawRight was unlike anything I've done at this point in my degrees."

## Mental Health Law Practice Bond University Community Legal Placement

Shanice David  
Egi Bano  
Michelle Daniels

## Community & Health Justice Partnerships

In Semester 2 of 2019, the students attended outreach locations and collaborated on a research report about telco debts and the importance of mobile phones for people sleeping rough, informed by interviews with our client base. In semester one, students researched the Victim Assist Scheme, and collaborated to develop CLE resources for victims of crime, particularly targeted at young women.

### **The University of Queensland Semester 2 2019**

Sam Johnston  
Nicholas Fidler  
Sabrina Schrieber  
Alani Tenaglia  
Thomas Fairweather

### **Semester 1 2020**

Sha Lin Koh  
Anneliese Hughes  
Nini Lu  
Caitlin Philp  
Anand Shah

“We’d like to say a huge thank you for your involvement in the inaugural offering of our new unit LLB251 Law and Design Thinking this semester. We’re immensely grateful for your input, especially for allowing us to video you during our conversations late last year. We’d particularly like to thank Ben and Elizabeth...[their] contribution in creating the major assessment problem for our students (around self-represented litigants) and then making themselves available for our intensive weekend, was incredibly generous and enormously valuable to our students.”

**Dr Rachel Hews, Director Postgraduate Programs  
(Acting) & Lecturer, QUT Faculty of Law**

## Health Advocacy Law Clinic

Law and social work students attend the Mater Young Adult Health Centre to support our Health Justice Partnership.

### **The University of Queensland Semester 2, 2019**

Law students  
Jemima Crockford  
Aimee Griffin  
Ellen Hansen  
Leonie Look  
Mitree Vongphakdi  
Lydia Shuen

### **Social work students**

Louis Stevenson  
Walagerea Aopi  
Carolin Fernandes  
Isabella Nethery  
Sophie Minchell

### **Semester 1, 2020 Law students**

Alessandra Marshall  
Evangeline Woods  
Elizabeth Brown  
James Deeb  
Brigid Geary  
Thomas Cassidy  
Aisling O’Kane  
Zoe Jeffrey

### **Social Work students**

Margaret Smith  
Haley Naylor  
Emily Roberts  
Ivymay McManus-Otto  
Emilie Medina  
Clancy McMahon

# Our profession

## Member firms

Allens Linklaters  
Ashurst  
Australian Workplace Lawyers  
Baker & McKenzie  
Barry.Nilsson.Lawyers  
Bartley Cohen Litigation Lawyers  
Clayton Utz  
Colin, Biggers & Paisley Lawyers  
Cooper Grace Ward  
Corrs Chambers Westgarth  
DLA Piper Australia  
Guy Sara & Associates Lawyers  
Hall and Wilcox  
Herbert Smith Freehills  
Holding Redlich  
Hopgood Ganim Lawyers  
King & Wood Mallesons  
K & L Gates  
Lander & Rogers  
Maurice Blackburn  
McCullough Robertson Lawyers  
McInnes Wilson Lawyers  
Minter Ellison  
MurphySchmidt Solicitors  
Piper Alderman  
Sentry Law  
Shand Taylor Lawyers  
Sparke Helmore Lawyers  
Thornton Legal  
Wotton & Kearney

## Government legal units

Crown Law, DJAG

## Member barristers

Roslyn Atkinson AO

## Senior Counsel

Andrew Crowe QC  
Damien O'Brien QC  
Dan O'Gorman SC  
David de Jersey QC  
Douglas Campbell QC  
Douglas Savage QC  
Dr Jacoba Brasch QC  
Kylie Downes QC  
Mal Varitimos QC  
Melanie Hindman QC  
Michael Hodge QC  
Nicholas Andreatidis QC  
Nitra Kidson QC  
Patrick Cullinane QC  
Peter Franco QC  
Peter Hastie QC  
Rebecca Treston QC  
Rowan Jackson QC  
Stephen Keim SC

## Counsel

Ahmed Fokruddin  
Alexander McKinnon  
Anastasia Nicholas  
Dr Andrew Greinke  
Andrew Stumer  
Angus O'Brien  
Anna Cappellano

Anthony Anderson  
Ben Gardiner  
Benjamin Kidston  
Benjamin McMillan  
Brent Reading  
Bridget O'Brien  
Bruce Wacker  
Carla Klease  
Catherine Chiang  
Chris Curtis  
Christopher George  
Claire Schneider  
Clare Dart  
Clare O'Connor  
Danielle Tay  
David Thomae  
Duncan Marckwald  
Emma Hoiberg  
Frank Maconi  
Gavin Handran  
Graham Dietz  
Hamish Cliff  
Heath Berghofer  
Jade Marr  
James Ford  
Jane Menzies  
Jason Dudley  
Jason Mitchenson  
John Cahill  
John Faulkner  
Joshua Morris  
Joshua Sproule  
Judy Brien  
Julene Winn  
Justin Byrne  
Justin Carter  
Kim Forrester  
Lee Clark

Leonid Sheptoocha  
Margaret Forrest  
Mark Steele  
Matthew Jones  
Maxwell Walker  
Mei Barnes  
Mitch Rawlings  
Morgan Clarke  
Nathan Laing  
Nola Pearce  
Paul O'Brien  
Philippa Ahern  
Reimen Hii  
Robert Gallo  
Dr Robert Lake  
Sally Robb  
Samantha Amos  
Sean Russell  
Seraphina Noble  
Shireen Long  
Stephen Colditz  
Dr Stephen Lee  
Steven Hogg  
Stewart Webster  
Susan Forder  
Thomas Jackson  
Thomas Pincus  
Toby Nielsen  
William LeMass

## Associate members

Griffith University Law School  
Bond University, Faculty of Law  
Queensland University of Technology Law School  
The University of Queensland, TC Beirne School of Law  
James Cook University School of Law

## Specified members

Bar Association of Queensland  
Queensland Law Society

## Life members

Andrew Buchanan  
Hugh Scott-Mackenzie  
Joanne Rennick  
Lucy Bretherton  
Peter Rosengren  
Robert Reed  
Simon Cleary  
Tony Woodyatt

# Training

## Volunteer lawyers

Assisting self represented litigants with small claims for unpaid wages, presented by Rob Stevenson of Australian Workplace Lawyers and hosted by Corrs Chambers Westgarth (July 2019)

Drafting defences in defamation proceedings, presented by Rachel De Luchi of Counsel and hosted by McInnes Wilson (July 2019)

Enforcement hearing process, presented by Matt Jones and Ben Tuckett and chaired by Damien O'Brien QC (July 2019)

Drafting responsive pleadings through discrete task assistance, presented by Maxwell Walker of Counsel and hosted by King & Wood Mallesons (October 2019)

Zig Zag inductions and sexual abuse law training, presented with Zig Zag (September 2019)  
Vicarious Trauma training, at Herbert Smith Freehills (October 2019)

Anti-discrimination matters in QCAT, presented by Member Ann Fitzpatrick and hosted by Clayton Utz (December 2019)

Induction sessions for new Court & Tribunal Services volunteers (November, December, February, April)

Online recorded induction for new CTS volunteers (published April 2020)

Induction sessions for new Community & Health Justice Partnership volunteers (September, November, May, June)

## Community workers

Victim Assist Queensland, presented at Zig Zag (May 2020)

Caseworker training, presented at Multicultural Australia (October 2019)

# Volunteers

## Pro Bono Connect

Michelle Xiao

## Court & Tribunal Services | State Courts

Dan Pennicott, retired practitioner

Zoe Lai

Bailie McLeod

Dee Ardham

Tahnee Snelleksz

## Court & Tribunal Services | Enforcement Hearing Duty Lawyer Service

Jennifer Kim

Li-Zhen Ho

Natalie Tham

Leandra Augustin

Guy Magee

Claudia McCall

## Court & Tribunal Services | Federal Court

Jesse To

Cassandra Hayden

Amanda Wisenthal

Kate Milward

## Court & Tribunal Services | QCAT

Sandra Tran

John Oh

Dominique Perry

Jesenthana Moodley

Michael Fielding

Sifan Lu

India Paul

## Community & Health Justice Partnerships | Cairns

Connor Moors

Taylah Cook

Trung Cuong Cao

Kathleen Cantarella

Haydon Wolski

Judy Collins

## Community & Health Justice Partnerships | Brisbane

Austyn Campbell

Alani Tenaglia

## **Court & Tribunal Services | Mental Health Law Practice**

Lydia Hugrass  
Sabina Crewes  
Saibal Kar

We were delighted that, with the training of working with our Mental Health Law Practice, Lydia moved on to an Independent Patient Rights Advisor role at PA Hospital, and Saibal took up an employed lawyer role in QAI's Mental Health Legal Service.

## **Mental Health Review Tribunal advocates**

Adam Lukacs  
Adam Marsh  
Amanda Hubert  
Amelia Nolan  
Anna Stubbersfield  
Anne Hewson  
Anna Wilson  
Bethanie Patch  
Bree-Anna Bowtell  
Bridgette Vanderwolf  
Bronte Lerch  
Cameron Keast  
Cassandra Hayden  
Catherine Bugler  
Chloe de Almeida  
Dan Dow  
Dan Jess  
Dominic Bilton  
Ted Cleary  
Elaine Lay  
Emily Gorse  
Giulia Marrama  
Jack Morris  
Jaymin Pratt  
Jennifer Kim  
Jess Park  
Kai Nash  
Karell Schmitt-Virgo  
Kate Bartkowski  
Kate Cincotta

Kelly Abrahams  
Kris Karan  
Kristy Do  
Liz Katona  
Loretta Benson  
Lydia Hamer  
Matilda Leausa-Inu  
Mitch Sorensen  
Nick Cleasby  
Noelene Riikonen  
Otis Platt  
Rachel Ponting  
Ramisa Raya  
Rebecca Le  
Renee Smith  
Ruby Eno  
Ryan Chan  
Sarah Sheppard  
Shiralee Rudolph  
Shonna Lye  
Spencer Hayward  
Taranjit Kaur  
Teaghan Bankier  
Thomas Feeney  
Toni-Kris Bennett  
Tracy Bowen  
Vanessa Bouwman  
Vicki Kerr  
Zane Jhetam

# LawRight staff



Aaron Harris

Ada Sculthorp

Andrea Perry-Petersen

Ben Craig

Ben Tuckett

Cassandra Hayden

Cicilia Halaholo

Donnella Mills

Elizabeth Furfaro

Elizabeth Gallagher

Erica Wilkinson

Fleur Hopkins

Jacob Matysek

Jean Brady

Jessica Massa

Joanna Cull

Karen Dyhrberg

Kate Adnams

Kurt Maroske

Linda Macpherson

Loretta Stellino

Mandy Shircore

Melinda Willis

Mitch Sorensen

Nikki Gatbonton

Nikki Hancock

Orchi Sarker

Paula Hughes

Rachel Sloper

Rebecca Scott

Rebecca Slade

Renee Lees

Robyn Schermer

Rose Mackay

Sam Roach

Sifan Lu

Stephen Grace

Sue Garlick

Tomea Ryan

Vinay Veerabhadra

Zachary Denovan

# Professional forums

LawRight staff are members of the following forums or boards:

Queensland Legal Assistance Forum (QLAF)

QLAF Working Groups for Best Practice, ATSI Service Planning, and Mental Health Service Planning, CLE Legal Assistance Forum

Queensland Law Society Access to Justice committee

The University of Queensland Pro Bono Centre, Advisory Board

Community Legal Centres Queensland, Management Committee

Make Renting Fair in Queensland Alliance

Work and Development Order Implementation Reference Group (WIRG)

Courts' Cultural Diversity Project External Consultation Group

ASIC Consumer Regulator Forum

RTA Stakeholder Forum

Community Legal Education Legal Assistance Forum (CLE LAF)

Brisbane Alliance to End Homelessness

Court User Stakeholder Group

# Management committee

## **President (and committee nominated representative)**

The Hon. Roslyn Atkinson AO, Royal Commissioner, Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (appointed 3 December 2019)

## **Secretary**

Gabriella Ritchie, Senior Associate of McCullough Robertson

## **Treasurer and Bar Association of Queensland Nominee**

Damien O'Brien QC

## **Queensland Law Society Nominee**

Binari De Saram, Legal Policy Manager of Queensland Law Society

## **Associate Member representative**

Associate Professor Francesca Bartlett of TC Beirne School of Law, The University of Queensland

## **Legal Practice Members**

Katie Clark, Partner of MinterEllison

Tania Boal, Partner of MurphySchmidt

Tony Denholder, Partner of Ashurst (appointed 3 December 2019)

Jacqueline Wootton, Partner of Herbert Smith Freehills (appointed 3 December 2019)

Peter Smith, Partner of Herbert Smith Freehills (resigned 3 December 2019)

Lucy Bretherton, Counsel of Ashurst (resigned 3 December 2019)

Robyn Wilkinson (resigned 29 July 2019)

## **Barrister Members**

Matthew Jones

Andrew Crowe QC (appointed 3 December 2019)

## **Alumni guest**

Andrew Buchanan, Inaugural LawRight President and retired Partner

## **Fundraising subcommittee**

Andrew Buchanan (chair)

Kathleen Singleton

Matthew Jones



# Our finances

## Treasurer's report

I am pleased to present my second report as Treasurer, as well as the audited and financial statements for LawRight for the 2019-2020 financial year.

This year an overall operating profit of \$109,360 has been achieved. This is down on last year's overall operating profit but nonetheless is a healthy profit in what has been a very challenging year.

Lawright has again improved its overall equity position with net equity of \$845,758. LawRight's ability to meet future contingencies through a significant cash balance as well as healthy prudential reserves ensures that LawRight is in a strong financial position.

Government funding continues to make up 70.8% of LawRight's income. LawRight once again needs to congratulate both the State and Federal Government for their continuing efforts to fund the important services that LawRight provides. While self-funding efforts continue, LawRight would not be able to provide the level of services that it does without this important support from both levels of Government.

All the evidence shows that the funding by Government of services such as LawRight results in significant costs savings to the judicial system in Queensland. Court resources are stretched. The work of LawRight contributes to ensuring that the limited resources of the Courts are used most efficiently.

In an effort to continue to expand LawRight's ability to meet the needs of vulnerable clients, initiatives continue to be undertaken to increase the self-funding of LawRight and to reduce general expenditure.

Once again, a record was set for LawRight's Law Walk with \$167,060.19. raised. This was a tremendous effort considering the walk was held virtually due to the pandemic. It is hoped that the increasing success and profile of this signature event for LawRight will continue.

The Friends of LawRight campaign also continues to be successful. I would like to thank all of those who have made this commitment. It is an important contributor to LawRight being able to fund all of the services it provides.

Once again, the Management Committee has benefited greatly from the effective leadership of LawRight's joint directors, Linda Macpherson and Sue Garlick. They continue to ensure, amongst other things, the successful financial stewardship of LawRight.

Thank you must also be extended to LawRight's bookkeeper, Rebecca Slade, and auditor Jeremiah Thum from Independent Audit Services, who continue to provide outstanding service to the Management Committee through the preparation of financial documents ensuring LawRight's financial integrity.

The staff of LawRight must also be congratulated for their continuing hard work in what can often be a difficult legal environment. Their continued efforts ensure that those who are most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our community have access to essential legal services.

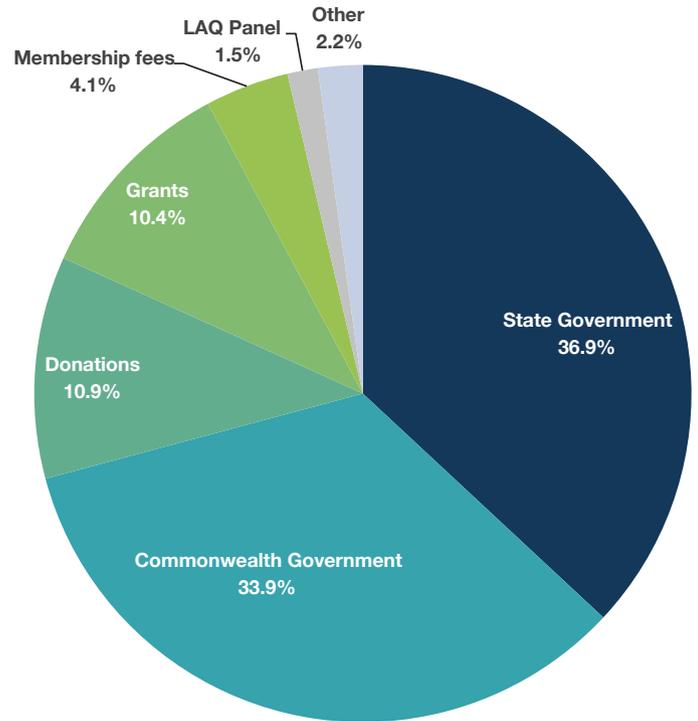
**Treasurer**

Damien O'Brien QC

# Financial statements

LawRight is association incorporated in Queensland. We are a public benevolent institution, endorsed by the Australian Taxation Office as a deductible gift recipient organisation. Our accounts are independently audited. A copy of our audited, annual financial report is available at [lawright.org.au](http://lawright.org.au) under Annual Reports.

# LawRight income



An Australian Government Initiative



Queensland Government

# Contact

## Main office

PO Box 12217, George Street QLD 4003  
(07) 3846 6317  
admin@lawright.org.au

## During remote operation:

**Pro Bono Connect & Court & Tribunal Services** (07) 3738 7800

**Community & Health Justice Partnerships and Mental Health Law Practice** (07) 3102 5311

## Pro Bono Connect

(07) 3248 1165  
probonoconnect@lawright.org.au

## Community & Health Justice Partnerships | Brisbane

(07) 3846 6317  
admin2@lawright.org.au

## Community & Health Justice Partnerships | Cairns

0439 625 334  
cairnsadmin@lawright.org.au

## Court & Tribunal Services | State Courts Office

Level 1, Queensland Elizabeth II Courts of Law Building  
415 George Street  
Brisbane QLD 4000  
(07) 3738 7800  
statecourtsadmin@lawright.org.au

## Court & Tribunal Services | QCAT Office

Level 11, National Australia Bank (NAB) Building  
259 Queen Street  
Brisbane QLD 4000  
(07) 3564 7561  
srsadmin@lawright.org.au

## Court & Tribunal Services | Federal Courts Office

Level 6, Harry Gibbs Commonwealth Law Courts  
119 North Quay  
Brisbane QLD 4000  
(07) 3248 1278  
fedadmin@lawright.org.au

## Court & Tribunal Services | Enforcement Hearing Duty Lawyer Services

(07) 3006 2324  
dutyadmin@lawright.org.au

## Court & Tribunal Services | Mental Health Law Practice

(07) 3846 6317  
admin@lawright.org.au

LawRight offices generally operate 9am to 5pm on business days. The main office phones available 10am to 4pm. Face-to-face availability and offices being open to the public has varied in line with public health restrictions.

