



LawRight
Access | Justice



2021-2022 Annual Report

19,000 pro bono hours


Increased
access to justice
for

2,228
clients

1,120
Pro Bono Connect

625
Court and Tribunal
Services

483
Community & Health
Justice Partnerships

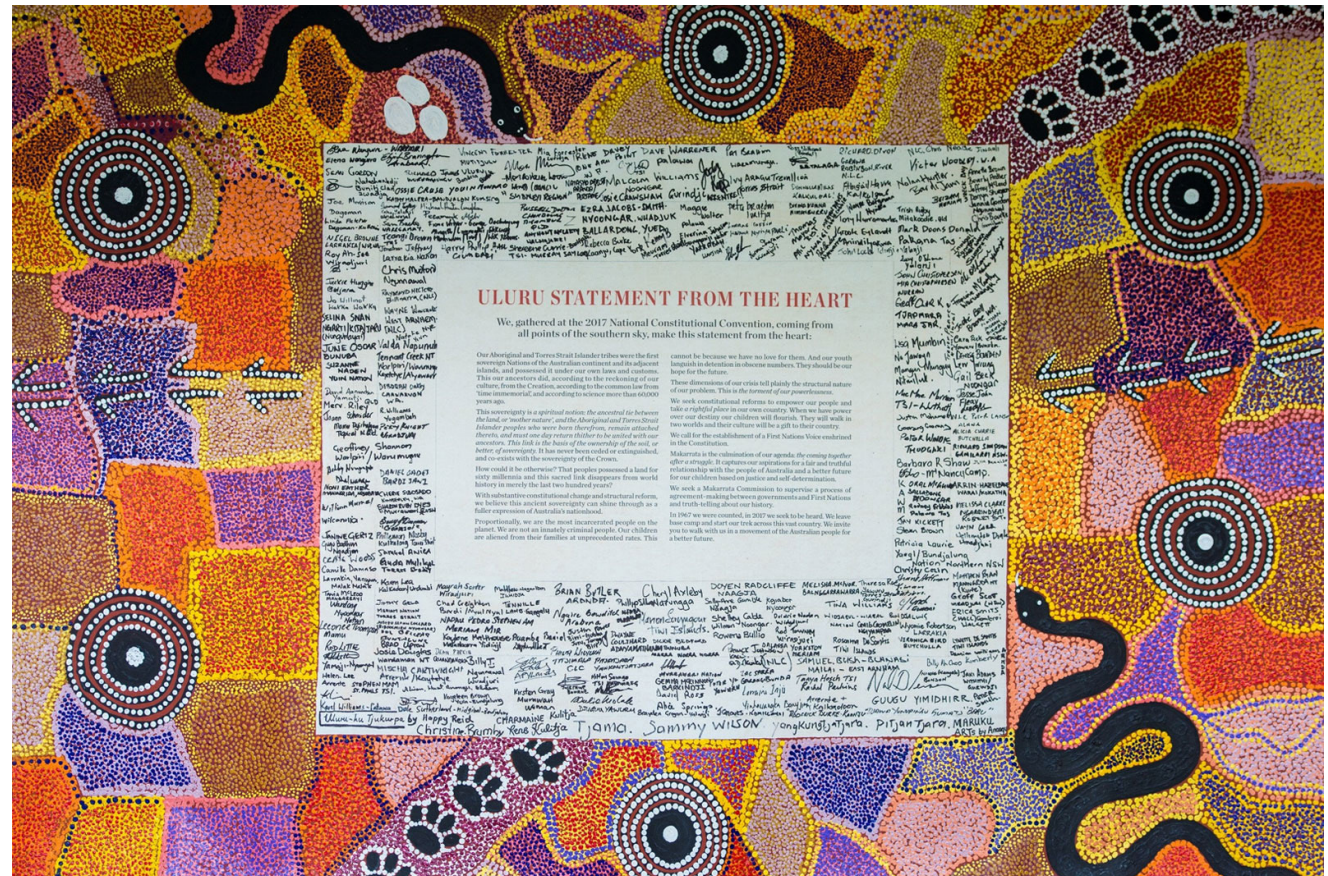
A group of people, including men and women of various ages, are walking along a paved path that runs alongside a river. In the background, a large concrete bridge spans the river, and beyond that, a city skyline is visible with several tall buildings, some of which are under construction with cranes. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is overlaid on the middle of the image, containing the text.

**LawRight improves the lives of
vulnerable people
by increasing access to justice
through strategic partnerships
with pro bono lawyers**

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.



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LawRight Patron

The Honourable Chief Justice Helen Bowskill

Access to justice is an essential element of the rule of law: in essence, it is the means by which we as a society give practical content to the principle of equality before the law. But although there are now more lawyers than ever before, paid legal services are not accessible to all.

LawRight's services are essential to bridging that gap. The many legal practitioners, solicitors and barristers, who have volunteered their time to enable LawRight to provide those services over the past year are to be congratulated and applauded. As Ruth Bader Ginsberg has observed, that is a sign of true professionalism: doing something that makes life a little better for others who are less fortunate.

The 2022 Queensland Legal Walk was once again a resounding success. I was very pleased to lead the walk for the first time in my role as Chief Justice, with the Attorney-General, the Honourable Shannon Fentiman, joining so many enthusiastic members of the profession, the academy, court staff and judicial officers.

As well as successfully raising much needed funds for the important work of LawRight, the Legal Walk is a demonstration of the collegiality of the legal profession. There continue to be challenges to face and obstacles to overcome, but the work of LawRight shows that the community spirit of the legal profession is alive and well.



Queensland Legal Walk



The Queensland Legal Walk was held on 17 May 2022. Together we raised over \$130,000. In Brisbane, the Walk was led by our new Patron the Honourable Chief Justice Helen Bowskill, and Attorney-General The Honourable Shannon Fentiman MP.

Champion Team and Chambers

Level 27 Chambers > \$17,000

Champion Law firm

Clayton Utz > \$11,000

Champion Individual

Oliver Cook of Level 27 Chambers > \$15,000

Champion Law School

Griffith Law School > \$1,000



President

It has been my great privilege to be the President of LawRight during the past three years. They have of course been years of great challenge in our society particularly for the already vulnerable, whom LawRight exists to serve. Our staff and volunteers have been magnificent, showing flexibility and innovation along with strong continued commitment.

What has helped us to continue LawRight's important work is the strong and unwavering support of our members and supporters to increase access to justice to these people. Together they have delivered 19,000 hours of pro bono legal services.

We are of course extremely grateful for the funding provided to us by government and by philanthropies. We are also very grateful for the fundraising efforts of our supporters. Participants in the annual Law Walk raised \$130,000; our 34 Friends of LawRight and some anonymous

and very generous donors all help LawRight to increase the capacity of existing services and initiate new services.

Our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan concluded in 2021 with work undertaken and more on the way to improve cultural responsiveness.

I would also like to welcome and thank our new Patron, Chief Justice Helen Bowskill, with whom we have had a very constructive engagement. I also thank the Hon Margaret McMurdo AC as Patron of the LawRight Fund and for her help to transition this vehicle for perpetual bequests, formerly known as the Civil Justice Fund.

I would like to highlight just one of the initiatives that LawRight undertook this year. Using LawRight fundraising and a one-off contribution from DJAG, LawRight operated a pilot service in the Magistrates Court from July 2021 to June 2022. The pilot service collaborated with Magistrates Courts officers and coordinated pro bono lawyers to provide appointments to self-represented litigants in civil matters, using the same model as our State Courts office. Despite the success of the pilot in responding to unmet legal need, the service has been paused for review, due to budget concerns.

The positive impact of the Magistrates Court initiative can be seen in what we were able to achieve. We helped 85 clients access their legal rights and navigate Magistrates Court civil proceedings more effectively. 25% of our clients avoided further hearings or were able to leave the court system with LawRight's help. Two matters were referred for pro bono representation at

settlement conferences and counsel represented one client in proceedings that continued to the Supreme Court.

The cohort of clients shows how this service, like all LawRight services, responds to the unmet need of the most vulnerable in our community – 85% had an annual income of <\$52,000, 17% live with disability, 15% did not have English as a first language and 11% identified as First Nations people.

My heartfelt thanks to those firms that supported this pilot service and to the many other firms, large and small, and the many barristers from the most senior to the most junior who have provided pro bono legal assistance throughout the year.

We could not have thrived without the hard work and dedication of our wonderful staff, led by our outstanding Joint Directors, Sue Garlick and Linda Macpherson. Thanks also to the Management Committee, who have been a joy to work with during my time as President. I hope to remain on the Management Committee as an ordinary member and wish the organisation continuing success and growth in the years to come.

The Hon Roslyn Atkinson AO



Joint Directors

As we reflect on 2021/22, flexibility and strategy emerge as consistent themes.

Our external environment has demanded flexibility – Covid continued to impact planning, core operations, fund-raising, events and the well-being of our staff and clients. Eastern Australian floods in February 2022, a federal election, turmoil in Afghanistan and an unexpected premises change – all needed to be navigated and responded to.

Throughout this report are stories of another year of LawRight staff, members and supporters, community and court partners collaborating, learning and changing, so that whatever the challenges, we fulfil our mission to increase access to justice for vulnerable people.

The necessary balance to all this “pivoting” has come from our deeply embedded and clear strategic plan. LawRight has five core strategies

1. We respond to legal needs by identifying and addressing the access to justice barriers faced by vulnerable communities;
2. We connect to our clients by locating and embedding our legal services at courts, health and community organisations;
3. We recruit and resource the pro bono resources of the legal profession to respond to these clients;
4. We focus on improving the housing, income, health and legal rights of our clients; and
5. We maintain a strong and stable organisation in order to persist with the first four strategies.

Throughout another year of, frankly, exhausting flexibility, reflecting on these strategies has provided the solution to our many quandaries.

It is therefore pleasure to report that even with reduced pro bono hours, missed fundraising opportunities and the distractions of working from home arrangements, LawRight has deepened our impact. The stories and statistics in this report reflect that the percentage of clients who receive an intensive service, the quality and influence of our law reform and advocacy and engagement with court and community partners have all improved or remained steady.

We continued our new integrated financial counselling service. We experimented with two innovations – partnering with the Bond Law School pro bono clinics and operating a 12-month pilot service for self-represented litigants in the Magistrates Court.

The sustained reduction in pro bono hours seems to reflect shorter secondments, reduced attendance by volunteer lawyers at some locations and significantly reduced opportunities for student volunteers. Although we missed holding Red Wine for Justice in 2021/22 despite three attempts, we appreciated the record-breaking event in October 2022. We welcomed the return of the in-person Walk and although total funds raised were reduced, per-participant donations increased.

We are ably guided through these challenges and opportunities by our energetic President, the Hon Roslyn Atkinson AO and the Management Committee. We welcomed Tim Longwill and Stephen Knight and farewellled Gabriella Ritchie and Katie Clark. We thank the Honourable Catherine Holmes AC, who stepped down as our Patron when retiring and we welcome our new Patron, the Honourable Chief Justice Helen Bowskill Thank you also to the Patron of the newly named LawRight Fund, the Hon Margaret McMurdo AC.

The staff of LawRight impress our members, clients and networks with their compassion, professional skills, persistence and yes, flexibility. We are grateful and proud to lead such dedicated and supportive people.

**Sue Garlick and
Linda Macpherson**

Public Interest Address

Every two years, the Public Interest Address (PIA) raises awareness about an important civic, social or human rights issue. The Honourable Chief Justice Susan Kiefel AC agreed to deliver the PIA in 2020 as part of LawRight's 20th anniversary celebrations but the event was rescheduled to 2021 due to Covid.

The Chief Justice delivered the address on 25 October 2021 on the role of courts in our society. Her Honour confirmed the role of pro bono in helping to achieve the purpose of the law and the courts to settle disputes and maintain confidence in the legal system.

"In the provision of essential legal services to individuals, organisations like LawRight contribute to advancing the rule of law for the benefit of the whole community."

We were also privileged to have Judge Nathan Jarro offer an Acknowledgment of Country on our behalf. His Honour helped us appreciate the Traditional Owners' passage and camps among the bends and plentiful resources of the Brisbane River (Meanjin) and to lament that:

"Perhaps by the mid to late 1800s, Aboriginal people might have lost control of Meanjin which they had nurtured and visited since time immemorial."



Previous Public Interest Addresses

2002

David Marr, lawyer, journalist, presenter of the ABC's Media Watch and author with Marian Wilkinson of Dark Victory, presenting on "the Tampa affair".

2004

Lex Lasry QC, appointed as Australia's independent observer of the military commission in Guantanamo Bay prior to the trial of David Hicks and the charges against Mamdouh Habib on his report to the Law Council of Australia and his firsthand account of the military commission process.

2005

Christina Rau, her insights on the investigation into the immigration detention of her sister Cornelia Rau.

2006

The Rt Hon Sir Anthony Clarke, Chairman, Civil Justice Council (UK), Master of the Rolls and Head of Civil Justice; **Mr Robert Musgrove**, Chief Executive Civil Justice Council (UK); **Mr Michael Napier**, Member Civil Justice Council (UK), solicitor and partner at Irwin Mitchell and Attorney General's Pro Bono Envoy; and **Mr Colin Stutt**, Barrister, Policy and Legal Department, Legal Services Commission (UK) on the progress of reforms in the UK civil justice system.

2007

Emeritus Professor Ian Lowe AO, President Australian Conservation Foundation on 'Lawyers and the environment in a warming world'.

2009

Mr Michael Napier CBE QC, UK Attorney General's Pro Bono Envoy, Consultant, Civil Justice Council, Senior Partner, Irwin Mitchell, Member Legal Services Board and **Mr Robert Musgrove**, Chief Executive Civil Justice Council on "Achieving better access to civil justice – civil law reforms in the UK from Woolf to the future".

2010

The Hon Patrick Keane, Chief Justice Federal Court of Australia on "Costs and the public interest".

2011

The Hon Paul de Jersey AC, Chief Justice of Queensland on the tenth anniversary of QPILCH and celebrating the legal profession's commitment to pro bono.

2014

Professor Brett McDermott, Child and Youth Psychiatrist, Executive Director of Mater Child and Youth Mental Health Service and Director, Beyond Blue on systemic and innovative responses to mental health and **Allan English**, Chair and Founder of the English Family Foundation on philanthropy.

2016

Jacqueline Reed, CEO of Create Foundation and 2014 Churchill Fellow on challenges for young people transitioning from the child protection system and **the Hon Margaret White AO**, Chair of QPILCH's LegalPod Reference Group on LegalPod's success at responding to the legal needs of these young people.

2018

Mr Mick Gooda, descendant of the Gangulu people of central Queensland, former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, and a Royal Commissioner of the Royal Commission into the Child Protection and Youth Detention Systems of the Government of the Northern Territory on access to justice issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Titles of speakers as they were at the time of the address.

Pro Bono Connect

Pro Bono Connect assesses applications for legal help and links vulnerable people to the pro bono resources of the Queensland legal profession.

75% of referrals are accepted. Applicants may be provided with full pro bono representation, advice, or assistance with discrete tasks.

People or NFP organisations that 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.

Pro Bono Connect has coordinated public interest referrals since 2001 and has managed the pro bono schemes of the Queensland Law Society and the Bar Association of Queensland since 2009.

LawRight’s online application form is available statewide and triaged by our small staff team. Our scope of service is flexible to adapt to the demand for pro bono legal services as it arises.

PBC projects

This year, additional funds were provided for PBC to adjust intake and scope to accommodate applicants with:

- Covid-related legal need (until September 2021)
- flood-related legal need (from May 2022)
- legal help provided by students at Bond Law School’s Property Law and Commercial Law Clinics (September 2021 to April 2022)

Secondee

Bond University, Dr Francina Cantatore, Associate Professor

Bond Clinic firms

MinterEllison Gold Coast
Cronin Miller Litigation
Cronin Shearer Lawyers

Pro bono referrals

Member firms

Allens
ALV Legal
Ashurst
Baker McKenzie
Barry.Nilsson.
Clayton Utz
Clyde & Co
Guy Sara & Associates
Hall & Wilcox
HBA Legal
Holding Redlich
HopgoodGanim Lawyers
K & L Gates
Sentry Law
Shand Taylor Lawyers
Shine Lawyers
Sparke Helmore Lawyers
Thornton Legal

QLS scheme firms

Colin Biggers & Paisley
DWA (Australia)
Fisher Dore
McInnes Wilson
Rostron Carlyle Rojas
Lawyers
The Will & All

Member barristers

Anand Shah
Andrew Stumer
Angela Rae
Benedict Coyne
Bob Reed
Clare O’Connor
Damien O’Brien KC
Emma Fitzgerald
Hamish Clift
Heathcliff Berghofer
Iris Gajic-Pavlica
Joshua Sproule
Jules Moxon
Kelly McIntyre
Mark Steele
Matthew Jones
Michael Thomson
Nola Pearce
Samuel Walpole

BAQ scheme counsel

Matthew Brady KC
Kathryn McMillan KC

Disability rights

Aki lives with a life-limiting disability, requiring her to use a wheelchair and minimise her exposure to infection – she only leaves her home for medical appointments.

Aki's public housing was no longer suitable for her daily needs, and a disability report recommended she be approved for single occupancy accommodation with wheelchair access. The report further stated she is unable to live with others due to the significant risk of infection, mental health risks as well as privacy and dignity considerations.

The NDIA refused to provide funding for Aki to move to suitable accommodation. A member firm helped Aki appeal to the AAT, where the necessary funding was approved at last.

Helping NFPs

"As a not-for-profit organisation, we needed help to resolve a complex legal issue. We had been unable to find a service that would listen to us, discuss the issues and point us in the correct direction.

LawRight was understanding and more than helpful. We had tried a few different avenues before contacting LawRight and no one has been as helpful as you. Thank you."

Refugee rights

Mary is a single mother and English is not her first language. Mary needed to work to support her child but could not afford childcare – she was not considered a resident and therefore ineligible for the government childcare subsidy.

Mary's application for an exemption to the residency requirement under hardship provisions was rejected.

A member firm helped Mary have the decision reviewed and Mary is now eligible for the childcare subsidy.

Impact Pro Bono Connect

Triage & advice

1,120 applicants given comprehensive assessment of their legal problem

745 given information, advice and target referrals

Connect

231 clients connected to pro bono representation or advice:

64 public interest matters referred to LawRight members

42 referred to QLS or BAQ members

47 referred from Court and Tribunal Service

78 clients of Law Clinics at Bond University

Legal problems

17% NFP issues
14% refugee & immigration
13% property disputes
9% elder abuse
8% estate disputes
6% credit & debt

Clients

50% rely on social security
36% live with disability
27% impacted by family violence or human rights violations

5,300 pro bono hours

Flood Legal Service

February 2022 floods

Brisbane was one of several eastern Australian communities impacted by flooding in February 2022, with some Brisbane areas receiving over 1,000 mm in 72 hours. 177 Brisbane suburbs were impacted with more than 23,000 homes inundated, together with extensive infrastructure damage, community and individual distress.

The frequency and extent of natural disasters and their disproportionate impact on people who are already vulnerable has accelerated awareness of the need to respond to these events through a systemic climate change and human rights lens.

Emergency funding

LawRight was one of five Community Legal Centres that, together with Legal Aid Queensland, received three months of emergency funds in April 2022. This funding was extended in July 2022 by the Department of Justice and Attorney-General and augmented by the new federal government's October 2022 budget.

LawRight can offer both a crisis response and a structural, long-term response to disasters.

We have a deep connection to highly vulnerable communities and the organisations that support them; flexibility to increase the scope of existing services to match demand; and ability to coordinate pro bono resources to respond to problems that are beyond the scope of other community legal centres.

LawRight is collaborating closely with other funded centres to ensure coverage for impacted communities as well as to gather data to support adequate, integrated and proactive responses by governments.

Bill Mitchell, Principal Solicitor at Townsville Community Law, has been providing and researching disaster legal response since the 1990s and recently noted the following about LawRight to a sector flood forum:

"[LawRight] have always been a fantastic partner, have always very supportive of us and helping find connections. Well set to make connections between you, your client and lawyers with more capacity to help. So this is the time they really come into their own (not to make it sound like they're not busy the rest of the time) so make use of those connections."

Impact

(operational May and June 2022)

LawRight's Community Health Justice Partnerships, Financial Counselling service, the rapidly formed Flood pro bono panel and our Courts and Tribunal Services delivered:

- **98** legal, financial and community education services in response to the flood in May and June 2022, including:
 - Training community agency workers, hospital staff, prison and parole officers on the likely legal and financial impacts for flood victims and sources of help
 - Advice for clients whose property, employment, income, housing, businesses and court proceedings were impacted.

Flood pro bono panel

Sam's business was devastated by the floods and they were being threatened with legal action by the landlord. Sam sought advice on terminating their lease and recovering unpaid rent.

Participants in LawRight's Flood pro bono panel helped Sam to end the lease, collect their goods and avoid ongoing legal proceedings.

From crisis to capability

Teenager Tara had no trusted and responsible adults to turn to. When she had to vacate her regional student rental to access treatment and rehabilitation at the Mater, the landlord (who had been advised of her circumstances) demanded additional rent and issued a breach notice.

LawRight's Mater Health Justice Partnership negotiated the withdrawal of the breach notice, waiver of the remaining rent, the return of the bond and the reinstatement of Tara's clean rental record.

After learning to trust us, Tara disclosed a history of sexual abuse. We helped her apply to Victim Assist and linked her with Mater clinicians to provide trauma support and counselling.

Tara reached out to resolve a driving offence and we helped her self-advocate. Her fine was downgraded to a caution.

When Tara was impacted by the 2022 floods and couldn't access disaster payments, she reached out to LawRight again and we linked her with our Financial Counsellor. Together, they are building Tara's financial literacy, increasing her resilience and helping Tara access her entitlements.



LawRight



Court and Tribunal Services

LawRight has on-site offices and services at Brisbane registries and delivers remote services throughout Queensland to increase access to justice for vulnerable people navigating complex court and tribunal proceedings. Our strategic partnerships with law firms and barristers match pro bono assistance with the legal problem and capability of the individual.

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

Secondments

State Courts Service

Corrs Chambers Westgarth, Hugo Oates, July – December 2022 and Zundus Ahmed April – June 2022
DWF Law Australia, Bronwyn Van Wyk, September – December 2022
Barry.Nilsson, Olivia Lambert, February – July 2022

QCAT Service

Colin Biggers & Paisley, Jacob Currie, August 2021 – May 2022

MHRT Service

Hall & Wilcox, Georgia Gamble, July – October 2021

Law reform

Parole Board delays – submission and oral evidence on amendments to extend decision-making requirements of the Parole Board (from 120 days to 150 days) in the *Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 (Qld)*. This amendment will roll back a key outcome of the 2017 Sofronoff review and cause great difficulties for prisoners planning housing and income options in the community.

Defamation law changes – ongoing participation in consultation on the *Defamation Act 2005 (Qld)* and Council of Attorneys-General's defamation law reform.

Blue Card Processes – Written and oral submissions on the *Child Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021*. Complementary written submissions on the *Working with Children (Indigenous Communities) Legislation Amendment Bill 2021*.

Review of *Anti-discrimination Act 1991* – written submission on the changes and the interaction of the Queensland Human Rights Commission and QCAT

Impact

Court and Tribunal Services

Increased access to justice for:

625 clients (incl 477 new clients)
navigating complex litigation

2,129 legal services (incl duty lawyer and mediation services)
improved legal rights

5,592 pro bono hours

Impact

Court and Tribunal Services

State Courts

Supreme Court of Queensland
District Court of Queensland
Queensland Court of Appeal
Magistrates Court Pilot Service
Enforcement Hearings Duty Lawyer

On-site, full-time legal services in Brisbane registries and remote services statewide, for vulnerable people navigating civil proceedings without a lawyer

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

Legal problems

- Defamation – 24 clients
- Parole review delays – 32 clients
- Contract, credit or debt disputes – 99 clients
- Property – 17 clients
- Other civil disputes (incl. tort, wills & estates, religious discrimination) – 55 clients

Forums

Court of Appeal – 10 clients
Supreme Court – 64 clients
District Court – 34 clients
Magistrates Court – 117 clients, incl 32 Enforcement Hearing clients
Forum not yet determined – 12 clients

Pro Bono

Firms

Law firms delivered 97 appointments, including 40 for Magistrates Court clients

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

Barristers

Matthew Jones
Tom Ritchie
Chris Templeton
Sean Russell
Steven Hogg
Michal Horvath
Sean Lamb
Justin Carter
Stephanie Philippou

Referrals for full pro bono representation

Brighton Langley with Sean Lamb and Michal Horvath
HopgoodGanim
Hall & Wilcox with John Lee
Allens with Rachel De Luchi

Court-ordered mediation

LawRight collaborated with the Queensland Law Society ADR Committee, Caxton Legal Centre and members of the judiciary to develop a court-ordered mediation program and associated practice direction for matters involving self-represented litigants in the District and Supreme Courts.

In July 2022, the first plaintiff was referred to LawRight under the scheme and was connected to a member barrister for representation within two days. Our members have already expressed great interest in these referrals.

Thank you Allens

Allens delivered 22 appointments in 2021/22 for prisoners seeking advice about judicial review for delayed decisions of Parole Board and helped deliver 49 toolkits.

This project began in February 2021 and with pro bono help responded to a total 158 enquiries from and provided 206 toolkits to prisoners. With the addition of two more Parole Boards, the delays have reduced and the project has ended, although our concerns about parole reviews continue.

Pro bono representation ends decade-long case

Irene has severe and complex mental health issues which impact her ability to engage in the legal process. She was the defendant in District Court proceedings that started in 2008 and limited progress had been made. The Court asked LawRight to assist and a member barrister took a direct brief to represent Irene at mediation, where the matter finally settled after more than a decade. Irene appreciated the

"kind soul" who gave "some of the professional time to assist the less privilege[d]".

Proceedings discontinued for massive debt

A defendant named in a Supreme Court claim for more than \$500,000 believed he was not responsible for the debt and the co-defendant agreed. Without funds to afford a lawyer, they prepared and filed an inadequate defence.

It took multiple appointments with pro bono and staff lawyers to prepare amended defences, make and respond to requests for particulars, undertake disclosure, prepare for various review hearings, and draft affidavits setting out their side of the story.

These are complex processes that most Australians cannot navigate by themselves. Eventually, the plaintiff agreed to discontinue proceedings against both defendants. Our client told us the assistance they received was "invaluable" and that they could not have done it without our help.

Termite disaster

Sam and Kat have four young children, each with a disability. With their small, combined income of \$56,000 they bought a house with a clear pest inspection but within a week of settlement, they discovered termite damage everywhere – the house was uninhabitable.

It seemed the real estate agent had known about the termite issues, so Sam and Kat started District Court proceedings against them but could not afford ongoing legal costs, especially when the estate agent joined other parties.

Pro bono lawyers, who first met Sam and Kat at a LawRight appointment, then directly assisted them for many hours to significantly amend the Statement of Claim. After this phase was finalised, Sam and Kat returned to LawRight for help to respond to the Defence and to prepare for mediation.

A settlement payment was agreed and LawRight helped them discontinue the proceedings. They were *"incredibly thankful"* for LawRight's help and are now *"planning on moving forward and putting all of this behind us."*

LawRight's State Courts service has a key role in the legal assistance sector, so that vulnerable people don't "fall through the cracks"...

- 85 referred from LAQ or other CLCs
- 45 referred from Court or Tribunal staff
- 24% live outside SEQ

Impact

State Courts

Increased access to justice for

237 people (incl 225 new clients) navigating complex litigation

763 legal services provided

- ranging from advice to intensive support and representation
- average 4 hours advice per client
- 42% to people responding to proceedings
- improved clients' use of their legal rights and reduced their financial and other stress
- 16 referrals to law firms and barristers for pro bono representation or legal opinion

Diversion

>22% clients avoided further hearings or were able to leave the court system with LawRight's help

29% clients were eligible for our help but changed their mind about proceeding, potentially because of our advice

Clients

85% <\$52,000 individual annual income
25% live with disability
12% First Nations
13% non-English-speaking background

2,338 pro bono hours

Enforcement Hearings Duty Lawyer

Duty lawyer services at debt enforcement hearings

Each Wednesday morning in the Brisbane Magistrates Court, in collaboration with the judiciary and registry.

The Magistrates Court Enforcement Hearings Duty Lawyer service commenced in 2016 to increase access to justice for people involved in debt enforcement hearings.

The debts being enforced in this forum are typically small, but the process is still complex and the stress for clients is considerable. Clients may be unaware of the debt and most are also unaware that a judgment had been entered, cannot afford to repay the debt or are unfairly named on the debt documents.

Most have never received legal advice, despite often multiple court or tribunal processes. Common debts include breach of contract, credit card debts, damages from vehicle accidents, unpaid rent or bond claims. The Service increases procedural efficiency and ensures judgment debtors are treated fairly.

Systemic change

The service assisted 20% fewer clients this year, partially due to court closures due to Covid and flood. However, it may also be related to LawRight impacting structural change. We have observed an increased willingness by creditors to negotiate away from court, reducing listed matters and client reappearance rates.

100% of clients are referred by the Registry, which now also contacts parties to confirm adjournments (rather than this being determined on the morning of the hearing). The Registrar now frequently stands matters down to refer potential clients to LawRight during their enforcement hearings, so that matters can be resolved on the day, thus avoiding further proceedings.

Pro Bono

Barristers

Alexander McKinnon	Michael Larsen
Anthony Anderson	Nathan Laing
Bianca Kabel	Reimen Hii
Bridget O'Brien	Robert Gallo
Catherine Chiang	Robert Lake
Duncan Marckwald	Samantha Amos
Emma Hoiberg	Samuel Walpole
Georgia Kiss	San-Joe Tan
Heath Berghofer	Sean Lamb
Hedy Chen	Stephanie Philippou
Jason Mitchensen	Sue McLeod
Louise Kruger	Steven Hogg
Matt Jones	Zoe Brereton
Matt McDermott	Zoe Earl

Student volunteers

Abby Griffiths
Steph Teoh
Caitlin Williamson

Impact

Enforcement Hearings Duty Lawyer

Increased access to justice for

32 new clients

52 duty barrister services improved legal rights

100% clients referred by Magistrates Court staff

Outcomes

94% clients followed our advice

81% clients avoided further enforcement hearings

Debts addressed

66% involved debts under \$10,000

9% involved debts over \$50,000

Clients

70% <\$52,000 individual annual income incl 31% Centrelink

13% live with disability

326 pro bono hours

Domestic violence debt

Marie had experienced domestic violence for over 15 years and was unaware she was liable for a \$60,000 debt. She didn't know the creditor and suspected the debt was from a contract her ex-partner had entered into. She was also reluctant to provide bank statements to the creditor, as they might disclose her location to her ex-partner.

LawRight's pro bono duty barrister negotiated with the creditor's agent to provide redacted statements and appeared in court to explain why Marie wasn't complying with the court summons. Marie felt relieved and safe.

Covid and small business

Shelley ran a successful business at a hotel, but the business collapsed when the hotel became a quarantine location during the Covid pandemic. Shelley couldn't repay clients who held a valuable but un-used gift card for the business, and she wasn't aware they'd obtained a default judgement for the debt.

When Shelley was summoned for the enforcement of the debt, LawRight's pro bono duty barrister represented her during cross-examination.

The enforcement hearings were dismissed once the creditors understood the inability of Shelley's business to pay the debt.

Court and Tribunal Services

Magistrates Court Pilot

Using LawRight fundraising and a one-off contribution from DJAG, LawRight operated a pilot service in the Magistrates Court from July 2021 to June 2022. The pilot service collaborated with members of the judiciary and registry and coordinated pro bono lawyers to provide pro bono appointments to litigants, using the same model as our State Courts office. Despite the success of the pilot in responding to unmet legal need, the service has been paused for review, due to funding concerns.

Pro bono

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

The need

LawRight has long sought funding to respond to well-documented need in the Magistrates Court, where proceedings can involve claims of up to \$150,000, causing financial distress for many. Some Community Legal Centres provide one-off advice to these litigants, however that level of assistance is insufficient for most civil proceedings.

LawRight has previously attempted to respond by creating a dedicated barrister referral panel for Magistrates Court matters and by informally expanding the scope of the existing State Courts office. However, both initiatives ended as they were not sustainable without dedicated funding.

Prior to the commencement of the pilot (and despite actively advertising that we did not assist with matters in the Magistrates Court) LawRight received up to 18 enquiries weekly from people with proceedings in the Magistrates Court.

LawRight hopes to recommence the service in 2023.

40 Magistrates Court registry staff attended LawRight's training on how to connect litigants with the service.

Brisbane pro bono resolves Cairns love scam stress

Sasha believed the man she met on the internet who said he loved her and promised to visit but 'in the meantime could she help him?' Some goods were delivered to her that she packaged and sent on. The police were soon involved and told her she'd been scammed but her real distress came when the supplier of the goods commenced court proceedings for almost \$20,000. Sasha could only just afford the low-cost home loan she had through a First Nations service, had no other income and many debts. She was worried she would lose her home and felt angry and embarrassed.

Sasha sought help from a community support service in Cairns and was connected to LawRight's on-site service. They connected her to our pilot Magistrate Courts Service. Pro bono lawyers from Brisbane worked with her support workers to help Sasha prepare and file a defence. The plaintiff discontinued the proceedings.

Our Cairns office continued to support this process and in conversation with Sasha learnt her car loan debt was adding to her stress. The loan didn't meet responsible lending standards and Sasha was again connected to Brisbane lawyers who negotiated a loan refund of \$4500 and fairer repayments.

Impact

Magistrates Court Pilot Program

Diverted from stressful proceedings

Evie agreed to live in a run-down house and renovate it in return for a lower rent. When a relative of the owners started stalking her, she applied for a DVO and had to leave the house.

Despite multiple verbal and written agreements from the owners to return belongings she had left behind and to pay her for \$35,000 of renovations, no payments were made.

Evie wanted to start proceedings in the Magistrates Court but after a series of appointments with volunteer lawyers, she issued a letter of demand. The matter was resolved after we helped Evie respond to a settlement offer.

Hire car hassles

The service helped Ji-Min, who hired a car, which was stolen after her locked house was broken into and the car-keys taken. The hire car company started Magistrates Court proceedings for damages, arguing that Ji-Min failed to keep the car locked and the keys secure. She was told “she should have slept with the keys on her” and that if she didn’t propose a payment plan, costs would escalate.

Ji-Min tried to prepare a defence but found the task and process too complicated, so she reached out to LawRight. A pro bono lawyer helped Ji-Min understand the court process and the deficiencies in the statement of claim and assisted her to respond with a settlement offer. This was accepted and the matter was discontinued.

This outcome resolved months of stress for Ji-Min and ensured that court resources wouldn’t be wasted.

LawRight’s Magistrates Court service plays a key role in the court and legal assistance sector, so that vulnerable people don’t “fall through the cracks”...

- 40% referred from LAQ or other CLCs
- 24% referred from Court or Tribunal staff

Increased access to justice for

85 new clients with Magistrates Court proceedings
259 legal services delivered to improve their legal rights

24% of clients avoided further hearings or were able to leave the court system with LawRight’s help

2 matters were referred for pro bono representation at settlement conferences, and Counsel represented one client in proceedings that continued to the Supreme Court

Legal problems

49 contract, credit and debt
13 defamation

Other matters included property, consumer issues, animal registrations and permits, negligence claims and compensation for loss of income, creditors seeking assistance

Clients

85% <\$52,000 income incl 45% on Centrelink
17% live with disability
15% non-English-speaking background
11% identify as First Nations
19% live outside SEQ
55% defendants

372 pro bono hours

Queensland Civil & Administrative Tribunal

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

QCAT commenced in 2010 with strong support from the foundational members and President. We farewelled the Hon Martin Daubney AM as QCAT President and welcomed Her Honour Justice Mellifont in November 2021.

We regularly meet with QCAT staff including client services, security and registry staff to discuss appropriate referrals from the Tribunal and adjusting LawRight's services to respond to the needs of the Tribunals users.

After many Covid-related changes, the CTS team returned to QCAT in November 2021 with an office on Level 10.

Pro bono

Participating firms

Colin Biggers and Paisley
Clyde and Co
HopgoodGanim
Clayton Utz
Sparke Helmore
McCullough Robertson
McInnes Wilson
Cooper Grace Ward
Lander and Rogers
Murphy Schmidt
Minter Ellison
Barry Nilsson

Secondees

Jacob Currie
Colin Biggers and Paisley
August 2021 to May 2022

Participating Barristers

Gillian Shepherd
Hamish Clift
Angela Rae
Danae Younger
Sally Robb
Steven Jones
Hannah Lilley
Sean Lamb
Troy Newman

Volunteers

Jamie Robbins
Alani Tenaglia
Howard Wang

Resolving DV and debt complexity

Gigi's violent ex-partner brought proceedings against her in QCAT for a \$20,000 debt. Gigi didn't dispute the loan, which she had been repaying, but she didn't accept the additional interest or the requirement to pay the balance of the loan in full.

Her partner, despite being the alleged perpetrator of the violence, had obtained a DVO against Gigi as a form of control. He constantly threatened to report Gigi for breach of the order, so she couldn't contact him to resolve the dispute.

Pro bono lawyers at a QCAT service appointment helped Gigi draft a response to the minor debt application and a firm decided to provide on-going representation to Gigi. They negotiated with her partner, arranged mediation, a settlement and a no-interest payment plan.

Gigi said:

"I would like to thank you and your team sincerely for your professionalism and help with resolving this. It is truly appreciated."

LawRight's QCAT service plays a key role in the court and legal assistance sector, so that vulnerable people don't "fall through the cracks"

- 29.6% referred from LAQ or other CLCs
- 39% referred by Court and Tribunal staff
- 7% referred by government departments or Ombudsman
- 26% live outside SEQ

Damaging and unacceptable Blue Card delays

Jacqui is a university social work student who is rebuilding her life, despite many challenges. Her parents severely abused her as a child and in a common manifestaion of trauma, later partnered with a violent abuser. During that relationship she committed property crimes and was imprisoned.

Following her release, Jacqui began to rebuild her life by seeing a counsellor to deal with PTSD and depression and enrolling at university. To complete the practical placement for her degree, she required a Blue Card (working with children check).

When Blue Card Services (BCS) rejected Jacqui's application due to her past criminal history, pro bono volunteers with our QCAT service helped Jacqui apply for review of BCS' decision. A LawRight member firm and barrister provided ongoing representation to help Jacqui prepare evidence and participate in a compulsory conference.

BCS was ordered to reconsider its decision but decided to maintain its refusal. However, six days before the final QCAT hearing, BCS again reconsidered its decision and this time, issued Jacqui with a Blue Card.

This seems a good outcome, but it was 1,007 days from when Jacqui applied for a Blue Card to when she was issued with one - a process that takes most people just a few months. LawRight considers there are structural and individual inequities in both the extent of these delays and the reasons Blue Card provides for making their decisions.

LawRight continues to advocate for systemic change to address Blue Card inequities and injustices.

- We made submissions on to the *Child Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021* and gave evidence at the public hearing. We made complementary submissions on the *Working with Children (Indigenous Communities) Legislation Amendment Bill 2021*.
- Over 12 months, we have worked with law students from QUT to audit all LawRight Blue Card files from 2018-2022. This research confirmed our concerns about procedures following the introduction of the "no card no start" policy (which we raised in our parliamentary submissions) and confirmed:
 - LawRight assisted with 278 Blue Card matters;
 - LawRight assists with approximately one-third of all applications to QCAT to review a Blue Card decision;
 - In 30 cases where the Chief Executive was required to change their decision, the average wait from the time a negative notice was issued was 648 days;
 - In 42% of our files, clients dropped out of the process, with some citing the length of time, the complexity or their pessimism about the process;
 - These delays excluded already vulnerable applicants from training, family or community participation and work opportunities; and
 - HopgoodGanim and other pro bono partners will help LawRight advocate for reasonable system changes and have invested more resources to support vulnerable individuals through these processes.

Increased access to justice for

231 clients (incl 147 new clients) navigating complex processes connected to housing, family, job, training and other loss

842 legal services improved their legal rights

494 additional enquiries responded to

6 people represented at hearings or compulsory conferences

16 referrals for pro bono representation

Legal problems

33% Blue Card reviews
22% guardianship & administration
9% Appeals
7% Anti-discrimination
6% Child Safety reviews
23% other QCAT matters

Clients

80% <\$52,000 income incl 63% on Centrelink or no income
34% live with disability
12% identify as First Nations

1,820 pro bono hours

Court and Tribunal Services

Federal Courts

Federal Court of Australia
Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia
(migration and general federal law matters)

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

We assist with:

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

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

Afghan refugee crisis

The Fall of Kabul in August 2021 exacerbated an ongoing humanitarian crisis. LawRight already meets regularly with key legal services, community leaders and support organisations. We met again with these groups to plan a coordinated response to the crisis, especially given the court's new approach to migration judicial review matters, and its impact on refugees already awaiting decisions.

LawRight also supported senior staff to volunteer with RAILS during work hours, to supervise pro bono clinics for new and existing refugees impacted by the crisis.

Pro bono

Firms

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

Barristers

Anand Shah
Damien Payard
Justin Byrne
Matthew Coe
Matthew Jones
Robert Quirk
Sean Lamb

Settlement Conferences

LawRight facilitates pro bono conciliations for parties involved in small claims proceedings in the FCFCOA on a fortnightly basis. LawRight and the Registry work together to coordinate these conferences. This year, in-person conferences recommenced following Covid disruption but many are still conducted remotely for one or both parties.

Andrew See
Chris Lenz
Matthew Jones
Reimen Hii

Joseph O'Hare
Rob Stevenson
Stephen Lee



Overwhelmed by bankruptcy

Joseph had a defence to the debt claim brought against him in the Magistrates Court, however he wasn't made aware of the hearing date and a default judgement was made. When the creditor then petitioned for his bankruptcy, Joseph got advice from our Federal Courts office about how to set aside the default judgement but he was so overwhelmed by his money, personal and health troubles that he delayed taking action and a sequestration order was made. LawRight kept helping Joseph and, together with our Magistrates Court pilot service, he prepared evidence of his defence to the default judgement and the sequestration order was overturned on review.

Unpaid wages leads to volunteering

Jai wanted to recover four years of unpaid wages from her employer. Staff and pro bono lawyers helped Jai calculate her loss, draft and lodge her claim and prepare all the documents needed at each stage of the proceedings. She was able to settle the dispute at the conciliation conference and move on.

"Time with the legal professionals was invaluable and contributed to the opportunity to win my case and rewrite my history."

Unfair dismissal

George was underpaid and dismissed after he complained about work, health and safety issues. Across five pro bono appointments, LawRight advised George on prospects, helped amend his claim, prepare documents and for mediation. Prior to the final hearing, LawRight helped him navigate settlement negotiations successfully. George expressed sincere appreciation.

Disability discrimination

Natalie's disabilities prevented her from accessing a business and she brought a disability discrimination complaint in the Federal Courts after she couldn't resolve her concerns through a Australian Human Rights Commission conciliation. Through several appointments, LawRight volunteers helped Natalie draft her originating application, affidavit, and a statement of claim. Her strong case elicited an early offer to settle and LawRight guided Natalie's negotiations so that the matter was resolved without extensive litigation.

"I think this is a service that is needed, particularly by people such as myself who are unable to afford solicitors' costs. The service meant that I was able to get justice within the system. I would not have been able to get any result otherwise. The other party in the case continually said that I would not win my case, expressing that they had more money on several occasions, this service ensured that I was able to reach a solution in my favour."

LawRight's Federal Courts service plays a key role in the court and legal assistance sector, so that vulnerable people don't "fall through the cracks"

- 36% referred from LAQ or other CLCs
- 21% referred by Court staff (does not include court-ordered referrals)
- 15% referred from Fair Work Ombudsman
- 20% live outside SEQ

Increased access to justice for

88 clients (incl 78 new clients) navigating complex litigation

428 legal and mediation services improved legal rights

16 referrals for pro bono representation

Settlement conferences

34 conferences facilitated

12 hours on average per client

48% resolved the dispute

Legal problems

52% employment matters, incl. unpaid wage entitlements, general protections and unfair dismissals

23% judicial reviews, mostly for migration matters

8% bankruptcy
7% anti-discrimination

6% appeals from federal tribunals

Clients

85% <\$52,000 individual income incl 32% on Centrelink

17% live with disability
43% limited written English, incl 24% requiring interpreter

1,086 pro bono hours

Court and Tribunal Services

Mental Health Review Tribunal

LawRight is on the panel for matters where the Mental Health Review Tribunal is required to appoint a legal representative, including:

- where the Attorney-General is represented, typically in Forensic Order hearings for a person's mental health or disability
- applications to perform electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) without the patient's consent
- where a child is placed on any order (typically a Treatment Authority (TA))
- fitness for trial hearings
- where legal representation is considered to be in that person's best interests

Legal issues

- 74 Forensic Orders (Mental Health)
- 15 Forensic Orders (Disability)
- 10 Treatment Authority reviews
- 9 Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) applications
- 3 Fitness-for-trial reviews
- 2 Treatment Support Order reviews

Professional forums

- Mental Health and Disability Legal Assistance Forum, currently chaired by the Public Advocate, Dr John Chesterman
- Queensland Human Rights Commission Human Rights and Public Law Committee



Human rights and mental health orders

While Rheumatic Heart Disease (RHD) has been eliminated from most Australian cities, the rates of RHD in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are equivalent to developing nations. Comorbidities of chronic health and mental health conditions are common amongst our First Nation clients.

Dennis has acute RHD, as well as a 20-year history of multiple admissions to psychiatric hospitals. Increased support from a medium secure health facility has helped Dennis remain stable for several years, despite significant Sorry Business happening in that time with the loss of both his parents.

Dennis was unable to attend either funeral as he was detained in hospital away from his hometown. He has demonstrated considerable will power to recently overcome drug addictions that started as a teenager. LawRight has supported Dennis through several hearings. We helped his treating team convince the Tribunal that Dennis no longer needed an inpatient Forensic Order, despite the intensive support he relies on for his physical and mental health.

The crux of our argument rested on section 28 of the *Human Rights Act 2019*. We argued that continuing to be held as an inpatient in a large city away from his country and community was an unreasonable restriction of Dennis' right as an Aboriginal man to maintain his identity, cultural heritage and kinship ties.

The change to community category means that Dennis can move back to his hometown to spend time with his family on Country, which is increasingly important as his life expectancy is now measured in months.

Able to stand trial

Julie still suffers from paranoid delusions which are exacerbated by her active ICE addiction but wanted to move on with her life. Placed on a Forensic Order while judged temporarily unfit for trial, Julie was stuck where she had few friends or family.

Julie wanted to move towns and jobs but felt unable to make any permanent decisions, as at any time, she could be found fit for trial and potentially sent to jail. Julie was sick of living in limbo and wanted to get her court matters dealt with, even if she ended up with a jail sentence.

LawRight concluded she met the Presser criteria for fitness for trial despite some ongoing psychotic symptoms and drug use and had capacity to instruct us. We were successful in having Julie found fit for trial. Julie's Forensic Order will be automatically revoked when she appears in court to have her charges dealt with.

Julie told us she was grateful for our assistance as she had previously had negative experiences with lawyers.

Medical evidence

LawRight self-funded additional help for a long term client, including obtaining medical records which were crucial to their prospects and successfully advocated for further medical investigations for our clients.

*Due to restrictions in reporting on matters under the Mental Health Act 2016, client details and stories have been changed to be representative of case work only.

Increased access to justice for

69 clients (incl 27 new clients) receiving involuntary treatment

114 legal services improved legal rights

30 clients achieved less restrictive conditions

4 forensic orders revoked

4 clients able to go home and receive community-based treatment

Clients

100% complex mental health conditions
72% identify as First Nations
34% impacted by family and domestic violence

10% live in SEQ.
13% sleeping rough or at risk of homelessness

Locations

91% live in regional areas, including in Cairns and surrounds, incl Doomadgee
32% in Townsville and surrounds, incl Palm Island
42%

348 pro bono hours

Community and Health Justice Partnerships

LawRight nurtures partnerships with 13 services where staff and pro bono lawyers collaborate with health and community workers to increase access to justice.

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

The CHJP Financial Counselling Service continued to provide integrated services to clients, staff and pro bono lawyers at all locations.

Pro Bono

MinterEllison
Clayton Utz
DLA Piper
MurphySchmidt
Herbert Smith Freehills
McCullough Robertson
Corrs Chambers Westgarth
Allens

Ashurst
Holding Redlich
King & Wood Mallesons
Maurice Blackburn Lawyers
Baker & McKenzie

Locations

We regularly review and adjust our service locations to balance the needs of clients with staff and pro bono resources. Despite closing some services this year which reduced client numbers overall, an increased proportion of clients received intensive legal services, and there was an increase in the number of debts resolved and the amount of Victim Assist payments accessed.

Ongoing locations

- 3rd Space
- Brisbane Youth Service
- Community's New Farm Neighbourhood Centre, incl. Footprints
- Refugee Civil Law Service at Multicultural Australia
- Micah Projects, incl. Kyabra Community Assoc.
- Zig Zag Young Women's Resource Centre
- Anglicare Homelessness Hub, Cairns
- Mater Young Adults Health Centre, incl. Clarence St

New locations

- Redlands Probation and Parole
- Anglicare Homelessness Services, Women and Families

Paused or closed during the year

- Atira – a Covid-specific project
- Encircle, the Salvation Army and Red Cross Homestay program – clients can still access our lawyers directly via their community workers
- Mission Australia's Douglas House, Cairns – subsequently re-opened in 2022/23
- Wuchopperen Health Service, Cairns – in adherence to self-determination principles, LawRight no longer partners to deliver this Health Justice Partnership and will no longer use or promote the Law Yarn.

Resilience Project

Herbert Smith Freehills funded CHJP staff to assess and address vicarious trauma risks. Staff met monthly for reflective practice with a visiting psychologist, developed personal resilience and safety plans and improved their capability to support pro bono lawyers with complex clients.

Secondees and interns

MinterEllison

Adam Connolly was seconded to LawRight from September 2021 to March 2022 and has since become a Friend of LawRight!

King & Wood Mallesons

Marcus Traucnieks was placed with the CHJP as part of KWM's Waiwa Mudena program to support Indigenous law students.

Queensland Law Society

Yale Hudson-Flux, Meagan Liu and Irene Gallagher were placed with LawRight for a six-week rotation.

Caseworker training day

In addition to formal and informal training sessions, which we held for frontline community workers at each CHJP location throughout the year, we have coordinated an annual free Training Day since 2011.

In June 2022, the Caseworker Training Day was held online for the first time, with 12 sessions available over three days. 233 frontline workers from community organisations registered for training on Domestic Violence Orders, consumer and credit disputes and support for victims of crime, with up to 50 workers per session. Staff from LawRight presented as well as colleagues from FisherDore, Maurice Blackburn, Legal Aid QLD, Women's Legal Service, Queensland Advocacy and Inclusion, Tenants QLD, QLD Youth Housing Coalition and Brisbane Emergency Response Outreach Service.

Community engagement

Spring Hill Community Day

Staff attended to build referral pathways with other community and government agencies, engage with our client base and refer them for legal assistance.

Homeless Connect

This biannual event is an opportunity for people experiencing homelessness and other forms of disadvantage to connect with social, legal, financial, medical, and other support services. Staff and volunteers attended in November 2021 and May 2022.

Law reform

- **Tenancy reform** – written submission in response to *Housing Legislation Amendment Bill 2021*, as well as advocacy with politicians and other stakeholders
- **Disability Support Pension Inquiry** – collaborated with an alliance of organisations led by People With Disabilities Australia to make submissions
- **ASIC Product Intervention Powers** – written submissions on ASIC's product intervention power to prevent Cigno from engaging in predatory lending
- **Toll fines** – in collaboration with MinterEllison, LawRight made written and oral submissions on the *State Penalties Enforcement (Modernisation) Amendment Bill 2022*
- **Criminal Procedure Review of the Magistrates Court** – participated in consultation

Impact

Community & Health Justice Partnerships

Increased access to justice for

483 clients (incl 384 new clients)
with complex needs

840 legal services improved their
housing, income, health and
wellbeing

43% legal services were intensive
(10+ hours), provided to
279 of our clients

Debts resolved

\$484,000

Victim Assist payments recovered

\$163,000

8,007 pro bono hours

impact

Financial Counselling Service

Redlands Probation and Parole, Capalaba

Fortnightly 9am – 5pm and monthly case coordination with Bayside Property Offenders Program

Helana Jones Correctional Centre

Fortnightly 10am – 3.30pm
HJCC is a female-only low custody centre for up to 26 low-risk prisoners preparing for discharge.

The Financial Counselling Service works with:

Incarcerated women pre and post release

- resolve financial problems that prevent access to housing and employment
- empower women to explore and participate in financial solutions
- empower women to recognise the red flags in a financially unsafe or coercive relationship and where to seek help
- provide structured training to prisoners on financial literacy, victims support services and maintaining tenancies.

Community & Health Justice Partnerships

Staff and pro bono lawyers at all CHJP locations to improve financial rights and literacy for clients.

People on parole

In addition to referrals through programs at the Redlands Probation and Parole Office, the Financial Counselling Service receives referrals from Queensland Corrective Services and high-risk clients on parole throughout Queensland. The Bayside Property Offenders Program is a multi-government and community agency collaboration.

People impacted by the 2022 floods

The Financial Counselling Service also responds to people impacted by the February 2022 floods in Brisbane (see our separate report on Flood Legal Services page 14).

Community workers

Training to increase the capacity of community workers and pro bono lawyers to respond to financial stress, through training:

- Kyabra workers at Runcorn
- Helana Jones Correctional Centre staff at Albion
- Brisbane Youth Service workers at Fortitude Valley
- Mater psychologists and social workers
- Parole officers and workers at MARA Women's Re-Entry Program for South East Queensland
- CHJP Caseworker Training Day program

“The Financial Counsellor has really helped the women who would ordinarily never have a hope of paying off that debt and be debt free when they walk out of jail.

Without that debt hanging over their heads, it gives them a head start getting their life back together.

I know of quite a few ladies that [LawRight] has helped get their SPER debt cleared. It gave them a chance to get their drivers licence back. It also meant they could pick their kids up from school and find work.”

- Helana Jones Correctional Centre Officers

Ending the DV downward spiral

Victims of long-term domestic violence with limited resources frequently spiral downwards and become involved in crime, as part of the cycle of abuse. Although Jane (together with her new baby) was eventually placed in custody, her spiral didn't end there – now she had no capacity to make repayments on her many crisis “payday” loans and no control over how her property was used.

Jane knew she had debts but didn't know what they were or how to manage them but was cautious about the LawRight financial counsellor who visited the Correctional Centre each fortnight. The other prisoners encouraged her to connect.

At her first appointment, Jane was shocked to learn that while she was in prison, her ex-partner had driven her car and incurred \$6,000 of speeding fines in her name as well as a 6-month licence suspension. If Jane had driven her car on release, it would breach her parole and she'd be returned to prison.

Over many appointments Jane had the fines withdrawn and re-issued to the actual driver, which also lifted the suspension on her licence. LawRight also worked with Jane to resolve an additional \$3,000 in other fines and \$15,000 in crippling debts.

Over many months, the financial counsellor also increased Jane's financial literacy and her understanding of her rights and entitlements. Jane learnt to budget and track her spending.

On release, Jane secured safe accommodation for her small family – housing that was only affordable and sustainable because her debts had been resolved. LawRight continues to support Jane – now firmly on her upwards spiral!

“I would like to say thank you so much for all of your help with my financial struggles if I didn't have, you're help I don't know if I would have been able to get back into my feet.

You went out of your way to help me resolve any issues with the department of transport and so much more I really appreciate everything you have done for me it has really made a lot of things so much easier for me to get my life back on track.”

- Jane

Impact

Financial Counselling Service

Increased access to justice for

- 89** new clients received integrated legal and financial counselling services
- 31** clients received intensive services (10+ hours)
- 41** clients were connected by the financial counsellor to LawRight staff and pro bono lawyers for ongoing legal assistance

Debts

All clients had consumer or debt issues. We helped them resolve more than

\$265,300 of debts

Fines

\$418,439

resolved, deferred and payment arrangements set up

Clients

- 69%** impacted by domestic or sexual violence
- 7%** culturally diverse

Financial Counselling Service

Restoring survivors' rights and confidence

LawRight first met Anna at a community centre, but she was reluctant to engage with us, having fled a violent relationship where she felt let down by the system, the police and other supports. She only spoke with LawRight lawyers because a close friend vouched for us.

Anna's legal matter was complex. She faced financial issues connected to her experience of violence and wanted to access victim support but was hesitant.

Working closely with our volunteer lawyers and financial counsellor over many months, Anna applied to Victim Assist and accessed \$10,000 support.

Over the same period, the financial counsellor empowered and educated Anna on her financial rights. Together they resolved various debts impacting Anna's life.

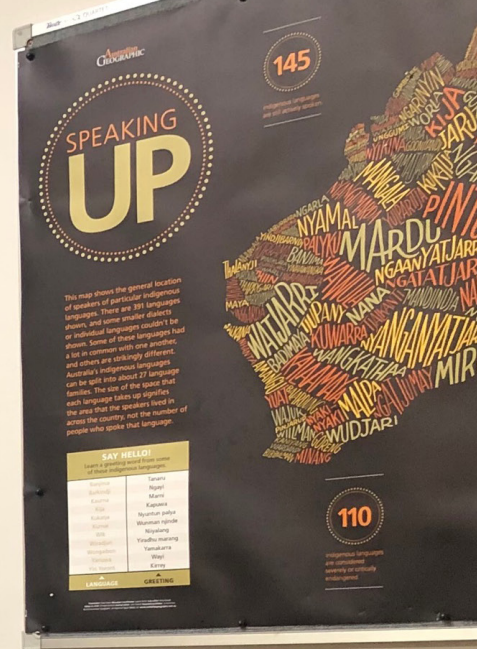
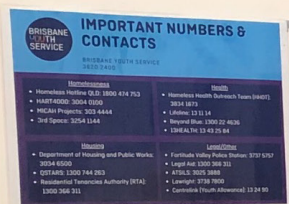
After building a relationship of trust, Anna began reaching out for advice before making big financial decisions. Anna is now living and working independently.

"I was in such a vulnerable state when I was first linked in with LawRight. I thank you all from the bottom of my heart, you have all played such an immense part in changing my life for the better and thank you so much for acknowledging the pain and suffering I had endured and by assisting me with not only my victims assist application but with improving my life.

I know I wouldn't be where I am today if I hadn't met you and without your guidance, patience, and utter kindness.

When I was first linked in with LawRight, I was lost, broken, and felt beaten and defeated. I gave up in life and could have ended up in a dark place. You provided support and understanding and helped me to pick myself up again and continue fighting.

You not only assisted me with my victim assist application which I would never have been able to submit on my own due to the complexity and trauma associated with it but you also assisted me in so many other aspects which from the trauma had a ripple effect for i.e., especially my finances after I had a car crash had spiralled out of control."
- Anna



Brisbane Youth Service

On-site legal services each Monday with an embedded solicitor who facilitates appointments with pro bono lawyers from two firms.

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

LawRight also trains and collaborates with the youth workers, doctors, nurses and psychologists at BYS to provide integrated services.

Pro bono partners

“Another great year of working with CHJP! Despite ongoing challenges thrown up in the last year by the Covid-19 pandemic and Brisbane floods (including cancelled appointments and office closures, and the more substantive issues experienced by BYS clients) we’re incredibly proud of the ongoing support we were able to provide.

Volunteering for the CHJP clinic continues to be an invaluable experience for our junior practitioners. It is also incredibly rewarding to be involved in the positive outcomes which are so regularly achieved on behalf of CHJP clients. We look forward to continuing our work with LawRight in the years to come.”
- Pro-bono team leaders

Financial exploitation of young people

Our BYS partnership integrates with our Financial Counselling Service and frequently assists young people facing financial exploitation. As well as individual help, we aim for broader impacts.

Some financial products are marketed to young adults as the pathway to glamour but lead instead to vulnerable young people accumulating thousands of dollars of debt – impacting their capacity to sustain tenancies, support children or even buy food or medicine.

LawRight has joined with Financial Counsellors Australia (FCA) to call for better regulation of financial products such as Afterpay and other Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) products.

Our BYS staff lawyer also presented on young people and financial harm at the National Financial Counselling conference, and takes opportunities to present to high school students about their financial and legal rights.

A young client with multiple disabilities who met with us at BYS had accumulated \$2,000 of debts to three Buy Now Pay Later services. We resolved two of the debts but the final BNPL provider was unresponsive and could not be compelled due to the lack of protections that apply to other credit products.

However, the advocacy and relationships of our Financial Counsellor resolved the debt. We were also able to meet with this provider to work together better next time.

Our client agrees with increased regulation and in response to our advocacy said:

“A weight has been lifted and my confidence to move forward and be more financially secure has changed massively.

The benefits to my mental health and wellbeing cannot be understated - it's a completely different dynamic, it's life changing, it feels very good to not have that weight anymore.”

Impact

Brisbane Youth Service

From homelessness to law student

LawRight helped Sam with advice about his fines and helped him to resolve them. When Sam wanted to apply to university, LawRight helped him enrol by drafting statutory declarations explaining his unique circumstances. Since working with LawRight and the Brisbane Youth Service, Sam has commenced studying law and is about to complete the first year of his degree.

"Thanks to the help of LawRight I remain without a criminal record and no outstanding debt. I am very pleased with the help I got and am very grateful."

- Sam (he consented to his real name being used).

Covid and sleeping rough

Lee's home was unsafe and he was sleeping rough but police fined him \$3,000 for breaching Covid lockdowns. LawRight had the fines withdrawn and also worked with Lee to connect to and complete a training program that reduced all his other fines. He is now debt-free.

Young victims of violence

Lana was pregnant and struggling financially. Pro bono lawyers helped her resolve almost \$10,000 of debt and Lana used her new knowledge about her rights to advocate for other credit waivers. Lana then disclosed a history of domestic and other violence and we helped her access financial assistance from Victim Assist.

When Lana gave birth, she was still homeless and at risk of the baby being removed.

LawRight collaborated with the youth workers to help Lana safely connect with her family for support and then move into safe independent accommodation. We are still supporting her precarious but courageous journey to stability.

"My young person [Lana] was not able to work towards any of their goals due to the stress imparted by their debts. LawRight supported both myself and the young person to navigate these debts, in addition to other tenancy related matters."

- BYS worker

Increased access to justice for

61 clients (incl 55 new clients) with complex needs

136 legal services improved their housing, income, health and wellbeing

43 young people received intensive, on-going legal services (10+ hours)

Debts

>\$45,450 debt resolved for 24 clients

>\$12,200 fines resolved for 3 young people

Victim Assist

15 young people helped to apply to Victim Assist

To date, 4 have received payments totalling

>\$47,000

Clients

100% young adults
80% experiencing homelessness
77% impacted by domestic or sexual violence
65% had legal problems involving violence
18% identify as First Nations

1,395 pro bono hours



Zig Zag Young Women's Resource Centre

LawRight staff on site fortnightly on Mondays, 12pm – 5pm

Zig Zag Young Women's Resource Centre supports young women (12-25 years) who are homeless or who are survivors of sexual violence. Zig Zag offers counselling, accommodation and support for education, employment and housing opportunities.

Due to staff changes, LawRight was not on site from August 2021 until March 2022. Since then, LawRight has attended Zig Zag fortnightly on Monday afternoons to meet with clients and work with the Zig Zag staff.

Recovery from violence

Brooke is a First Nations teenager who survived a violent sexual attack in a Brisbane park after she got off a bus. Brooke experienced significant mental health challenges and found it difficult leaving the house.

Brooke tried to apply to Victim Assist but found it confusing and had given up. Her Zig Zag worker connected her with LawRight. We collaborated to gather evidence and make the application. Brooke was very relieved.

While we are waiting for an outcome, we will work with Brooke to ensure that she receives the necessary supports to recover from the violence.

Community partners

"The support that LawRight staff provide to Zig Zag workers and the young people who access our service is invaluable."

LawRight has assisted sexual violence survivors to access vital financial resources to assist them to move forward in their lives.

[Our clients] describe LawRight provided them with a sense of justice, closure and healing which they were not able to find via the criminal justice system.

LawRight staff also make themselves accessible to Zig Zag staff in terms of training & answering queries about complex legal issues facing young people we work with.

Zig Zag are extremely proud to be a partner service with LawRight and grateful for the invaluable support they provide."

- Sexual Assault Counselling & Support Worker

Impact

Zig Zag

Increased access to justice for

26 young women (incl 8 new clients) with complex needs

25 young women received intensive services (10+ hours) that improved their housing, income and health

Debts

17% had consumer or debt issues

>\$4,000 of debts resolved

Victim Assist payments

\$72,800

Clients

100% impacted by domestic or sexual violence

100% had at least one problem involving violence

33% identify as First Nations

Multicultural Australia

Refugee Civil Law Service

LawRight staff and volunteers on-site fortnightly, Mondays 1:30pm - 4:15pm

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.

LawRight staff are embedded fortnightly to collaborate intensively with community workers and to support pro bono volunteers from Corrs Chambers Westgarth.

Accident adds to adversity

Mariam is a refugee and single mother of many children. Besides coping with trauma from their complicated journey to Brisbane, she faced other injustices. Despite applying for many roles, Mariam has found no work. Rent increases made her housing unsustainable and she couldn't afford groceries, furniture or school equipment.

Then a car accident left her with a debt of more than \$10,000 and immense personal stress. LawRight's staff and pro bono lawyers advocated to have the entire debt waived.

Mariam thanked LawRight for *"standing by my side. I want others in a similar situation to know where they can get help."*

"[This] was a key example of the crucial role lawyers play in clarifying and simplifying unfamiliar or overwhelming situations for everyday people. We are proud to be able to contribute to the Refugee Civil Law Service to help its clients achieve life-changing outcomes."

– LawRight volunteers

Impact

Multicultural Australia

Increased access to justice for

20 clients (incl 12 new clients) with complex needs

30 legal services improved their housing, income, health and wellbeing

10 refugees received intensive, ongoing legal services (10+ hours)

Debts

50% had consumer or debt issues

>\$15,700 of debt resolved

Victim Assist

Three refugees received Victim Assist payments totalling

\$13,500

Clients

25% experiencing homelessness

100% culturally diverse

611 pro bono hours

Community & Health Justice Partnerships

3rd Space

LawRight staff and pro bono lawyers on-site weekly Thursday 9.30am - 11.30am

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

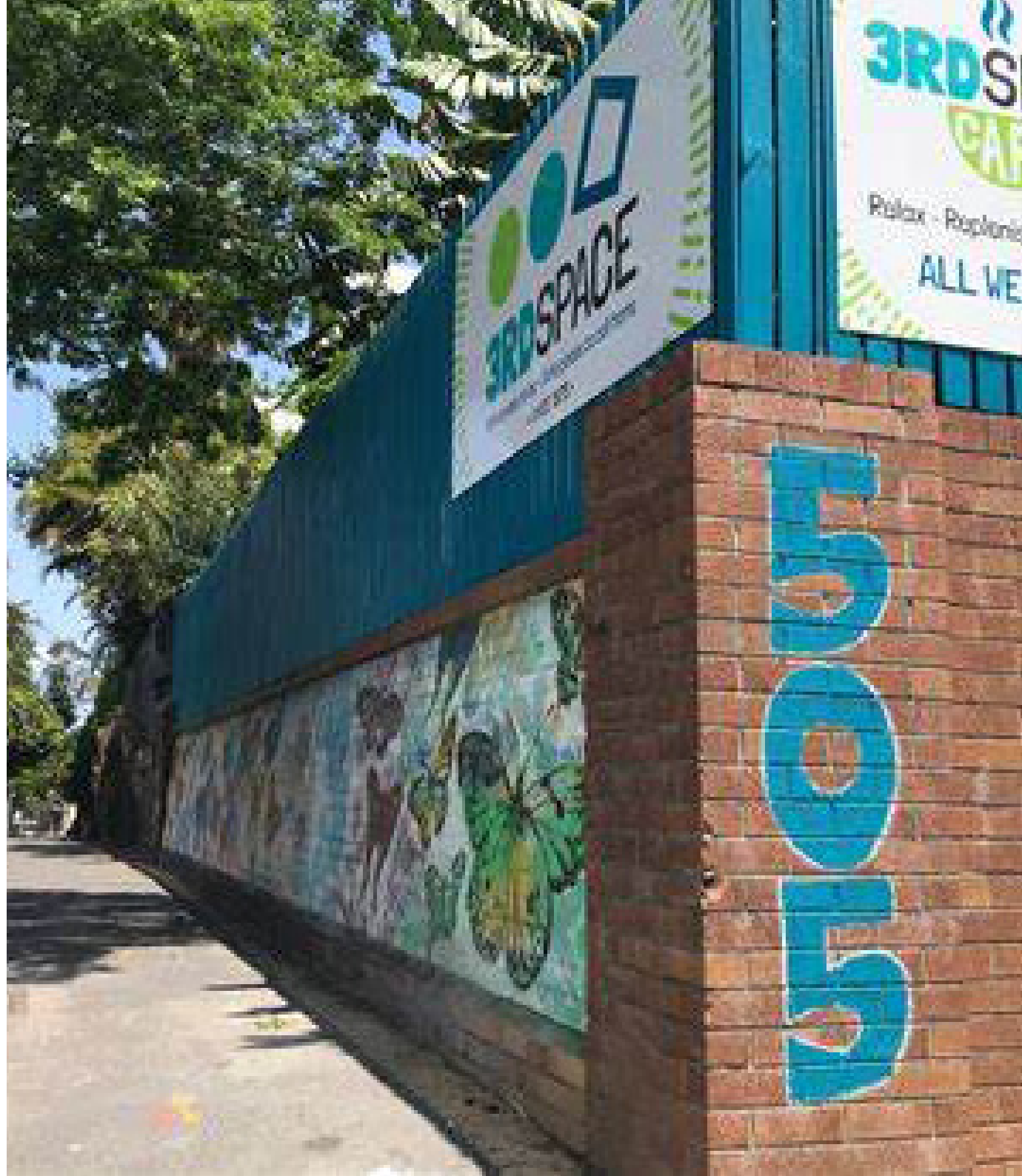
LawRight has partnered with 3rd Space since 2013, providing weekly on-site legal services and training community workers to recognise the legal dimensions of problems. Two firms send volunteer lawyers to conduct initial client appointments and provide ongoing legal assistance with support from LawRight if required.

During Covid restrictions, LawRight staff attended in person while our pro bono firms attended appointments by video link. In-person attendance resumed in June 2022.

Pro bono

“I was privileged to work as a secondee with CHJP. I learned a great deal about client management, how to manage a diverse file list, and achieved several significant outcomes for clients. I would strongly recommend a secondment to any young lawyer interested in exploring the community legal sector.”

- Secondee and Volunteer



Fighting for rehab

Jay wanted to attend residential rehab for his addiction issues but he faced many barriers. The landlord of the room he rented wanted to charge him a heavy penalty for breaking the lease while he was away.

Jay also owed thousands of dollars of debt to payday lenders. Jay's options to get ahead were limited.

LawRight collaborated with Jay's 3rd Space support workers to help Jay end the lease without penalty. He found alternative suitable housing, got waivers for his debts and got himself to rehab.

DV debts

Jo endured an abusive relationship for years but when she finally left, she learnt she was still responsible for a large bank loan her partner had taken out in her name without her consent.

LawRight helped Jo advocate with the bank to have the debt waived. Pro bono lawyers advised Jo about options to help her recovery, including accessing Victim Assist and housing.

Scams risk housing

Kristen had been carefully saving money for a rental bond, but she lost it all in a scam. Pro bono lawyers had the transaction refunded on compassionate grounds.

"You gave me your time and support when I was struggling. It felt like I had a team looking after me. So, thank you guys."

Increased access to justice for

75 clients (incl 37 new clients) with complex needs

111 legal services improved their housing, income, health and wellbeing

59 clients received intensive, ongoing legal services (10+ hours)

Debts

>\$19,000 resolved

Fines

>\$7,500 fines resolved

Victim Assist

>\$15,300 payments

Clients

87% homeless or at high risk
51% impacted by domestic or sexual violence
32% had legal problems involving violence
79% received ongoing support

2,832 pro bono hours

Micah Projects

LawRight staff and volunteers on-site Wednesdays 9am – 12pm

Micah Projects supports people experiencing hardship, homelessness and violence, 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.

Clients from Kyabra Community Association at Runcorn and Mission Australia also connect to lawyers through this service.

Due to Covid disruptions, LawRight ran the clinic by telephone at the start of the year.

Community partners

LawRight increased the capacity of community workers to respond to tenancy issues through a series of individualised training workshops to frontline community workers at Kyabra.

“Kyabra staff engaged in a series of Tenancy Workshops delivered by the team at LawRight. These workshops upskilled our team’s knowledge base around tenancy laws & QCAT processes.

The team at LawRight have always been approachable, reliable & generous with their time & practice wisdom, we cannot thank them enough!”

– Kyabra Coordinator

Facing homelessness

Asha is a single mother of five children who was at risk of being evicted into homelessness from her rental property. Staff and pro bono lawyers worked closely with Asha’s community support team to prepare for her tribunal hearing: drafting submissions, speaking notes, and providing advice on negotiations with the housing provider. Ultimately, the parties settled the dispute and Asha was able to stay.

“LawRight provided an invaluable service to our shared client. They took the time to understand the client’s goals and values and went above and beyond in assisting the client to prepare for a daunting QCAT Hearing.

They also took the time to ensure that I had an in depth understanding of their work, enabling me to pass information on to other clients in similar positions.

LawRight was instrumental in the client achieving a fantastic outcome and they have been a wonderful organisation to work alongside.”

– Kyabra community housing worker

“From there my life changed”

Elaine is a single mum who lost her job and her housing unexpectedly, had to put her belongings into storage and was using 85% of her income for emergency accommodation. Debt collectors harassed her, and she struggled with basic necessities.

LawRight staff and pro bono lawyers helped Elaine resolve over \$3,500 worth of debt and had \$1,000 of her storage costs waived.

LawRight's financial counsellor helped Elaine enter a fairer plan to repay her fines and she is now safe in public housing. We continue to help her.

Elaine wrote and told us the story in her own words:

“I dont know how to say it without tears. My life was a struggle... I had no one to turn to... I lost my job and got kicked out of the unit with my [child]... We were on the streets. [They] missed school and I was struggling with... panic attacks.

Couldnt afford my medications coz the little I had was going into fuel and food for my [child]. I was in the dark trying my best but still couldn't see the light at the end of the tunnel until Micah Project got involved.

They found us a place and not long after I get a call from Law Rights.

They well explained what they do and booked us for a longer meeting on the phone. From there my life changed. They helped me with everything that I couldn't do on my own. They called to see if I was OK and was ready to help me sort my bad situations.

Thank you.. my [child] and I are living stress free from the work you did for us. I thank you so much and appreciate everything you have done for us. You saved us..”

Impact

Micah Projects

Increased access to justice for

51 clients (incl 36 new clients) with complex needs

124 legal services improved their housing, income, health and wellbeing

33 clients received intensive, ongoing legal services (10+ hours)

Debts

39% had consumer or debt issues

>\$46,000 of debt resolved

Fines

>\$9,400 fines resolved

Victim Assist

12 clients helped to apply to Victim Assist

Two clients received payments totalling

\$14,000

Clients

68% homeless or at high risk
43% impacted by domestic or sexual violence
43% had legal problems involving violence
29% identify as First Nations

700 pro bono hours

Mater Young Adult Health Centre

LawRight Staff, students and volunteers are onsite Mondays and Wednesdays 9am – 4pm

The Mater Young Adult Health Centre (MYAHC) works with adolescents and young adults with chronic health conditions, who face multiple health, social and legal challenges which, if 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 clinicians to address health-impacting legal needs. We also assist adult patients with complex legal and healthcare problems.

Pro bono

Maurice Blackburn Lawyers have partnered with LawRight since 2020 providing volunteer lawyers on-site each week to assist with casework as well as training clinicians and LawRight staff in specialist areas of law such as personal injuries, superannuation and employment.

Interdisciplinary teaching clinic

Law students from The University of Queensland and Social Work students on their clinical placement with Mater help deliver training and support casework. Learning together in multi-disciplinary student clinic environment is transformative and teaches solutions beyond the "silos" of professional expertise.

"The placement has allowed me to not only see the more practical side of my studies but to be involved in it. This experience gave me further insight into the inequalities experienced by marginalised social groups and sparked an interest in the role of legal advocacy in achieving social change."

– UQ Law Student



Cancer to homelessness

Cathy was a regional business owner whose battle with cancer left her unable to run her business or pay her mortgage, leaving her homeless.

To generate income, Cathy connected to an online service to sub-divide her land that pressured her to pay their fees via a second, unsustainable mortgage. She lost her home.

When Cathy came to Mater for a second opinion on healthcare, she was introduced to LawRight. By this time, Cathy was on Centrelink, unable to afford rent and couch-surfing.

LawRight connected Cathy to pro bono lawyers for her property law problems and helped with options for her medical negligence claim. She now receives specialised legal assistance for both issues and has good prospects of success. Cathy is still in unstable housing, but her health is slowly improving.

Cathy notes that without LawRight she would never have pursued her legal rights.

Health, housing and violence

Despite legislated protections for tenants impacted by violence, neither people in crisis nor their real estate agents can easily navigate these complex scenarios. Community lawyers are needed to ensure a just and appropriate outcome.

Jess lived in rooming accommodation with her abusive partner. When she confronted him about withdrawing money from her account he became violent. Jess called the police, who made a police protection notice on the spot.

However, the real estate agent evicted Jess for 'disturbing the peace' and property damage, left her with a large repair bill and took her bond. All of these actions, even where lawful, did not reflect the legislative intent of tenancy laws.

Jess provided the agent with the protection order, but she was ignored and her experience of violence was minimised. On top of everything, the agent listed Jess on a tenancy database, restricting her access to alternative accommodation. She moved in with her parents.

When Jess gave birth months later, the Mater social workers were concerned about her housing stress and connected her to LawRight. We advocated to withdraw the listing and connected Jess to DV legal assistance to vary the protection order to include her child. We are now addressing a number of debts and payday loans that Jess accumulated when leaving the relationship.

"...access to onsite legal support has directly supported the best healthcare outcomes and a safe discharge from hospital for this vulnerable family. Great work and a great outcome."

- Mater social worker

Impact

Mater Young Adult Health Centre

Increased access to justice for

66 clients with complex needs

144 legal services improved their housing, income, health and wellbeing

10 clients received intensive, ongoing legal services (10+ hours)

Debts

28% had consumer or debt issues

\$64,000 of debt resolved for 11 clients (average debt \$5,300)

Housing

20% of clients had tenancy issues

3 clients saved from eviction into homelessness

Clients

33% homeless or at high risk
25% impacted by domestic or sexual violence
23% had legal problems involving violence
48% young people (16-25)
100% with disability / chronic health conditions

75 pro bono hours

Anglicare Homelessness Services Hub, Cairns

LawRight staff embedded at Anglicare on a full-time basis. We see clients by drop-in or appointment as needed.

The Anglicare Homelessness Services Hub provides emergency and support services to people experiencing homelessness in Cairns.

LawRight has been embedded at the Cairns Anglicare Homelessness Services Hub since 2012. We work closely with staff from Anglicare NQ and Mission Australia to resolve legal problems connected to homelessness.



A tent is not a home

The only home Margie could afford was a tent where she lived with her son and baby granddaughter. She was no longer able to work due to a significant, terminal health issue, but her living conditions made her health even worse.

Her support workers at Anglicare NQ connected her with LawRight and we helped her access her superannuation, which Margie used to secure a stable and appropriate tenancy. Stable housing enables Margie to attend her medical appointments and care properly for her small granddaughter.

I don't think you'll ever understand what your help meant to me. It's completely changed my life.
– Margie

Protect housing rights

Lesley was a previous client so they knew where to get help when their landlord issued a Notice to Leave. LawRight helped Lesley argue at QCAT that the landlord did not have grounds to issue the various notices.

By defending the proceedings, Lesley and their children were able to stay in the property. We continued to provide Lesley with advice as they looked for a property they could move into when their lease eventually ended.

Brisbane pro bono resolves Cairns love scam stress

Sasha believed the man she met on the internet when he said he loved her and promised to visit but 'in the meantime could she help him?' Some goods were delivered to her that she packaged and sent on. The police were soon involved and told her she'd been scammed, but her real distress came when the supplier of the goods commenced court proceedings for almost \$20,000.

Sasha could only just afford the low-cost home loan she had through a First Nations service, had no other income and many debts. She was worried she would lose her home and felt angry and embarrassed.

Sasha sought help from Anglicare and was connected to LawRight's on-site service. They in turn connected her to LawRight's pilot Magistrate Courts Service, based in Brisbane. Pro bono lawyers from Brisbane worked with Sasha's support workers to help her prepare and file a defence. The plaintiff discontinued the proceedings.

Our Cairns office continued to support this process and in conversation with Sasha identified that her car loan debt was adding to her stress. The loan didn't meet responsible lending standards and Sasha was again connected to Brisbane lawyers who negotiated a loan refund of \$4,500 and fairer repayments.

Increased access to justice for

57 clients (incl 39 new clients) with complex needs

102 legal services improved their housing, income, health and wellbeing

10 clients received intensive, ongoing legal services (10+ hours)

Debts

\$25,800 resolved

Housing

66% improved housing situation with our help in complex tenancy matters

Clients

88% homeless or at high risk
46% identify as First Nations

New Farm Neighbourhood Centre & Footprints

LawRight staff and pro bono lawyers on-site fortnightly Monday 9.30am – 1.30pm

NFNC is a drop-in centre providing kitchen, laundry, shower, and computer facilities. NFNC is operated by Community's Sustainable Tenancy Team and an on-site social worker provides support.

Footprints provides a range of services for people who are homeless, have disabilities or are living with mental illness.

LawRight has partnered with NFNC since 2009 and with Footprints since 2010.

Years of misery ended

Paul was permanently injured and could no longer run his business or earn an adequate income. The stress and mounting debts impacted his mental health and ended his marriage.

Paul connected to LawRight in 2020 with multiple substantial debts. Many volunteer lawyers helped Paul over 18 months to respond to creditors, wind up his business and settle property with his ex-wife.

Meanwhile, community workers helped Paul get a NDIS package and a sustainable public tenancy.

Paul's last alleged \$10,000 debt was resolved in 2022. When he got the news, he told us:

"Thank-you. When all this happened, I thought my life was over. I thought there would always be a big black mark against my name, which I would never be able to crawl back out from under. Your team has given me renewed hope and a new start. I can't thank you enough."

Impact NFNC & Footprints

Increased access to justice for

38 clients (incl 22 new clients) with complex needs

67 legal services improved their housing, income, health and wellbeing

28 clients received intensive, ongoing legal services (10+ hours)

Debts

>\$4,800 resolved

Clients

61% homeless or at high risk
40% impacted by domestic or sexual violence
12% culturally diverse
65% have a disability

224 pro bono hours

Anglicare Women & Families

**LawRight staff and pro bono lawyers on-site
Thursday fortnightly 1– 3pm**

Anglicare Homelessness Services, Women and Families is a temporary accommodation for women (including young women with children) who have experienced domestic violence and need support to transition to secure and safe housing.

LawRight staff and pro bono lawyers started visiting the service this year, attending fortnightly. We work intensively and long-term with each woman, addressing an average of three complex legal problems per client.

Community partners

LawRight has joined the Economic Abuse Reference Group - a group of community lawyers, financial counsellors and support organisations responding to the financial impacts of domestic and family violence.

“Anglicare Homelessness Services Women and Families cannot rate LawRight highly enough. Their work they do with our women experiencing homelessness has brought real life-changing transformation to their complex and stressful, financial and legal concerns.”

– Recovery Worker

Dodgy lenders

Kat had to leave her job and seek emergency shelter to flee domestic violence. She was struggling to pay her car loan, of which she had already paid \$2,000. LawRight identified that the creditor had given her a draw-down facility on the loan, which breached the *National Consumer Credit Protection Act* and added to Kat's repayments.

The loan was also unaffordable and LawRight asked the creditor to put the loan on hold due to Kat's homelessness.

After six months of negotiations, the creditor agreed Kat could keep her car, waived the remaining \$10,000 on the loan and reinstated her good credit history.

LawRight has noticed that several other women have sought our advice about this creditor and we are considering a systemic response to their inappropriate lending practices.

“LawRight has been absolutely fantastic. This loan has caused me stress for years so your help has been... has been a light at the end of the tunnel for me”
– Kat

Impact

Anglicare Women and Families

Increased access to justice for

26 new clients with complex needs

77 legal services improved their housing, income, health and wellbeing

23 women received intensive, ongoing legal services (10+ hours)

Debts

\$34,500 of consumer debt resolved for 11 women

Victim Assist

53% helped to access Victim Assist payments

Clients

100% homeless or at high risk

100% impacted by domestic or sexual violence

80% had legal problems involving violence

30% identify as First Nations

Disbursement Fund

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

Proceeds from the Queensland Legal Walk enable the Disbursement Fund to increase access to justice.

This year, the Fund received 17 applications totalling more than \$9,000. Every application was approved for the whole or a portion of the funds.

Senior's 28-month marathon to access disability supports

Jane is a senior Australian living with a significant disability. She applied for access to supports under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in October 2019 but was denied. Queensland Advocacy for Inclusion (QAI) supported Jane to appeal to the AAT and to obtain several additional medical reports.

However, the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) organised an occupational therapist (OT) to perform a full functional assessment with Jane, which misinterpreted information about Jane. NDIA relied on this report to maintain that Jane's impairments were not permanent and hadn't resulted in a substantially reduced functional capacity.

The NDIA argued that because a treatment mentioned by Jane's treating specialists was considered an 'available' treatment, Jane hadn't had tried all treatments available. The NDIA also argued that because Jane could 'cope' for days without assistance, she didn't usually need assistance.

With no resolution possible, the matter was heading for a hearing, and QAI engaged a pro bono barrister who identified that a supplementary OT report may assist Jane. QAI applied to LawRight's Disbursement Fund, with LawRight agreeing to pay for most of the report after the OT discounted her fee and Jane made a small (but significant) contribution.

QAI filed final submissions and a hearing certificate in January 2022 but a month later, the NDIA agreed the medical/expert evidence was sufficient and granted access to Jane – more than 28 months after she applied.

Jane was approved for a two-year plan, thanks to a team effort, perseverance, and pro bono.

Without integrated community legal centres and pro bono, the legal rights and health of people like Jane remain precarious.

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.

Roslyn Atkinson AO
The Hon Justice Thomas Bradley KC
Lucy Bretherton
Andrew Buchanan
Olga Buchanan
Daryl Clifford
Damian Clothier KC
Andrew Crowe KC
Tony Denholder
Randal and Susan Dennings
Barry Dunphy
The Hon Justice Robert Gotterson AO
Michael Hodge KC
Marshall Irwin
Matthew Jones
Tamara McCombe
Margaret McMurdo AC
Jennifer McVeigh
Simon Morrison
Paul Newman
Damien O'Brien KC
Katharine Philp
Majella Pollard
Angela Rae
Joanne Rennick
Michael Trim
Adam Connolly
Jacqueline Wootton
and six anonymous Friends



Law schools

Pro Bono Connect

Queensland University of Technology

Semester 2, 2021

Julia Kym

Griffith University

Trimester 1, 2022

Kelly Lee

Ronald Cheng

Amelia Roadknight

Tayla Weinert

Emma Webster

Community & Health Justice Partnerships

The University of Queensland

Semester 2, 2021

Sophia Prui

Emma Campbell

Michael Tong

Sam Harbison

Lucy Cornwell

Sadie Burton

The University of Queensland

Semester 1, 2022

Ailis Rogers

William James

Jordan Koningham

Carolyn Farago

Mater HJP

The University of Queensland

Semester 2, 2021

Jeanina Wu

Sonia Kwen

Michelle O'Grady

Claudia Just

Isabella Harding

Georgia McCreedy

Allanah Miers - Social Work

Amy Iskander - Social Work

Semester 1, 2022

Matthew Stark

Georgia-Paris Williams

Sarah Drayton

Michaela Gyasi-Agyei

Jennifer Bradder-Denning

Dorothy Luo

Faiza Qureshi

Monique Evans

Kathleen Pahor - Social Work

Katina Yanardasis - Social Work

Court and Tribunal Services

Bond Litigation Clinic

Trimester 3, 2021

Abby Griffiths

Clay (Wenjia) Li

Heidi Le Masurier

Luna Zhou

Sam Souyave-Murphy

Sonia Clements

Sophia Mephram

Vivian Lee

Queensland University of Technology

Semester 1, 2022

Lucy Davie

Morgan Hughes

Alice Ingabire

Madeleine Jones

Caitlin Josey

Renae Lowden

Ella Perry

Claudia Shelley

Legal Research Capstone

Queensland University of Technology

Semester 2, 2021

Tadaya Mujdrlica

Callum Birnie

Grace Carlson

Jaime Gunning

Semester 1, 2022

Mia Loukas

Commercial Law Clinic

Bond University

Alice Warner

Angela Mara

Chelsea Austin

Coco Zu

Francesco Tolfa

Isabella Parsons

Lanxim (Nancy) Yang

Levi Holt

Qiaoyu (Penny) Peng

Sam Souyave-Murphy

Shivam Rishi

Sonia Clements

Tanisha Chadha

Thomas Winter

Wenja (Clay) Li

Xiaochen (Gary) Li

Yuan (Grace) Zhang

Zara Baxby

Property Law Clinic

Bond University

Abby Griffiths

Alice Weir

Analiese Parker

Ashleigh Mather

Ellie Maccoll

Isabella Di Cesare

Kendall Bronson

Manuela Ziegler

Michael Ashenden

Molly Swanson

Nicole Gdanski

Shivam Rishi

Resources

LawRight provides factsheets on many topics in the following categories (formerly LegalPedia Qld):

- ADR & mediation
- Bankruptcy
- Blue Cards
- Child safety
- Consumer law
- Coronial Inquest/System
- Defamation
- Disability screening
- Discrimination
- Employment
- Enduring power of attorney
- Environment and planning
- Going to Court - Drafting court documents, preparing for court, during the trial, and enforcement proceedings
- Going to QCAT
- Guardianship
- Health Care Planning
- Malicious prosecution
- Mental health
- Not-for-profits
- Personal injuries
- Police misconduct
- Prisoners
- Time Limits



Training

Training for volunteer lawyers

Inductions for new and existing volunteer lawyers

Options for survivors of violent crimes

Rights and responsibilities when dealing with telecommunication companies

Capacity and working with young people – KWM Impact Academy together with Simon Fuller of counsel

Working with clients experiencing homelessness and disadvantage

Lifecycle of Litigation Series – Seminar 1: Practical guide to civil litigation in Queensland

Amendments to the *Defamation Act 2005* (Qld) – presented by Rachel de Luchi of Counsel

Reviewing Blue Card Services negative notice decisions: updates and changes

Administrative review in Federal Courts migration matters – presented by Anand Shah of Counsel and hosted by Hall & Wilcox

Bankruptcy law primer

Training for stakeholders

National Financial Counselling conference – young people and financial harm

BYS community workers – integrated service delivery

Courtlink – legal solutions and referrals

QShelter – engaging with SPER to resolve their debts

Fair Work Ombudsman Community Engagement Team – better referral pathways

Working Women Qld – better referral pathways

Magistrates Court registry staff on the new pilot service and options for self-represented civil litigants

Community legal education

Kelvin Grove State High School panel discussion – young people and the legal system

BYS social work students – lawyers supporting your clients

BYS Young Women's Young Families – debts and financial hardship

Kyabra Community Association staff – tenancy rights – two workshops

Helana Jones Correctional Centre – managing debt and SPER

BYS workers on youth focused financial literacy, resolving debts and accessing LawRight services

Mater Psychologists and social workers on financial literacy, resolving debts

Caseworker training day

DVO orders – LAQ

Mandatory reporting guidelines for caseworkers

Tenancy and DV – Tenants Queensland

Victims Register

Accessing Victim supports from VAQ

Options for Resolving SPER Debts

Cigno loans

Telecommunication debts and credit reporting

Tenancy rights

Resolution for consumer and credit disputes

Supporting transitions between inpatient settlements and community care

Assistance for people experiencing homelessness

Financial Counsellor training

Kyabra Community Asssocation staff – financial literacy, resolving debts and accessing LawRight services

Helana Jones Correctional Centre staff managing debt and SPER whilst in custody

CHJP Caseworker Training Day – SPER, Superannuation and debt
Parole officers, corrections officers and MARA

Women's Re-Entry Program for – financial literacy and elevated difficulty faced by clients re-entering society after imprisonment

Professional forums

LawRight staff are members of the following forums or boards:

Queensland Legal Assistance Forum (QLAF)

QLAF Working Groups:

- Best Practice and Evidence Base
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Service Planning
- Mental Health Service Planning
- Community Legal Education

Queensland Law Society, Access to Justice Committee

The University of Queensland Pro Bono Centre, Advisory Board

Queensland Human Rights Commission Human Rights and Public Law Committee

Community Legal Centres Queensland, Management Committee

National Employment Law Network

Qld Employment Lawyers' Network

Asylum Seekers Legal Working Group

Court User Stakeholder Group

Make Renting Fair Queensland Alliance

ASIC Consumer Regulator Forum

RTA Stakeholder Forum

Brisbane Alliance to End Homelessness

QCOSS Living Affordability Policy Network

QCOSS Homelessness and Housing Network

QHYC mandatory reporting working group

BYS Couchsurfing Hotline Community Advisory Group

BNPL Network (Financial Counsellors)

Members

Firms & ILPs

Allens
Ashurst
Australian Workplace Lawyers
Baker McKenzie
Barry.Nilsson
Bartley Cohen Litigation Lawyers
Clayton Utz
Clyde & Co
Colin, Biggers & Paisley
Cooper Grace Ward
Corrs Chambers Westgarth
DLA Piper Australia
DWF Australia
Hall & Wilcox
Herbert Smith Freehills
Holding Redlich
HopgoodGanim
King & Wood Mallesons
Lander & Rogers
Law Force Lawyers
Maurice Blackburn
McCullough Robertson
McInnes Wilson Lawyers
MinterEllison
MurphySchmidt Solicitors
NV Law
Shand Taylor Lawyer
Sentry Law
Sparke Helmore
Thornton Legal
Wotton & Kearney

Barristers

Roslyn Atkinson AO,
LawRight President

Senior Counsel

Dr Jacoba Brasch KC
Andrew Crowe KC
Peter Franco KC
Peter Hastie KC
Melanie Hindman KC
Rowan Jackson KC
Nitra Kidson KC
Douglas Savage KC
Roger Traves KC
Rebecca Treston KC

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Philippa Ahern
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Anthony Anderson
Heath Berghofer
Judy Brien
Justin Byrne
Justin Carter
Catherine Chiang
Morgan Clarke
Hamish Clift
Stephen Colditz
Benedict Coyne
Elliott Dalgleish

Clare Dart
Rachel De Luchi
Graham Dietz
Jason Dudley
Emma Fitzgerald
Margaret Forrest
Dr Kim Forrester
Iris Gajic-Pavlica
Robert Gallo
Ben Gardiner
Christopher George
Sophie Gibson
Ming Gu
David Guttridge
Gavin Handran
Reimen Hii
Steven Hogg
Emma Hoiberg
Mathew Jones
Louise Kruger
Carla Klease
Nathan Laing
Dr Stephen Lee
Duncan Marckwald
Jade Marr
Salwa Marsh
Michael May
Adam Mason
Alexander McKinnon
Jane Menzies
Evan Mijo
Paula Morreau

Joshua Morris
Troy Newman
Toby Nielsen
Rowan Pack
Damien Payard
Nola Pearce
Stephanie Philippou
Angela Rae
Mitch Rawlings
Brent Reading
Robert (Bob) reed
Anthony Reilly
Andrew Schriiffer
Peter Somers
Sarah Spottiswood
Joshua Sproule
Mark Steele
Andrew Stumer
Danielle Tay
David Taylor
David Thomae
Michael Thomson
Maxwell Walker
Samuel Walpole

Government Legal Unit members

Crown Law, Department of
Justice and Attorney-General

Associate members

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

Specified members

Bar Association of QueenslandInc
Queensland Law Society

Life members

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



Staff and volunteers



LawRight staff

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Ada Sculthorp
Alexandria
Ansam Hummadi
Baillie McLeod
Ben Craig
Ben Tuckett
Bronte Coates
Caitlin Holmes
Christie Groves
Cicilia Halaholo

Clare Scrine
Elizabeth Gallagher
Erica Wilkinson
Fleur Hopkins
Isaac Ford
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Toby MacGregor
Zachary Denovan
Zachary Revere
Zoe Rienecker

LawRight volunteers

Pro Bono Connect
Stephen McClure

CHJP Brisbane
Lydia Hay

CHJP Cairns and QCAT
Miad Jamali (PLT)

State Courts CTS
Dan Pennicott

Management committee



President (and committee nominated representative)

The Hon Roslyn Atkinson AO

Secretary

Gabriella Ritchie, Special Counsel of McCullough Robertson

Treasurer and Legal Practice Member

Tony Denholder, Partner of Ashurst

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 (resigned 22 November 2021)

Stephen Knight, Partner of MinterEllison (appointed 22 November 2021)

Tania Boal, Partner of MurphySchmidt

Jacqueline Wootton, Partner of Herbert Smith Freehills

Barrister Members

Hamish Clift
Matthew Jones
Angela Rae

Bar Association of Queensland Nominee

Andrew Crowe KC

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 Treasurer's report, as well as the audited and financial statements for LawRight for the 2021-2022 financial year.

This year we have had a modest profit of \$21,325, which was an improvement from last year's small operating loss and thereby increasing our equity to \$807,556.

Pleasingly in the past year we increased our membership revenue, and there was also a large increase in revenue from events and donations (which included a very generous gift of \$50,000 from a member of the legal professions).

LawRight's ability to meet future contingencies through a significant cash balance as well as healthy prudential reserves ensures that it is in a strong financial position. Queensland Government funding provided 71% of LawRight's income. LawRight once again sincerely thanks 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. This year we particularly thank the Government for providing flood contingency funding of \$42,500 which it provided.

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, LawRight's Queensland Legal Walk received terrific support by individual participants and their organisations, with \$128,000 raised on the day which was a great result. A big thank you to everyone involved.

It is hoped that the increasing success and profile of this signature event for LawRight will continue. It serves not only as an important fundraising function, but also as an occasion to highlight the importance of pro bono legal assistance in Queensland.

The Friends of LawRight campaign also continues to be successful. We now have 34 members of the legal profession who have committed to making a substantial annual donation to LawRight. I would like to thank each of member who has made this commitment. The Friends of LawRight play an important role in helping to enable LawRight to fund all of the services it provides. Once again, the Management Committee has benefited greatly from the stellar and tireless 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. I also thank the wonderful staff of LawRight for their continuing hard work in what can often be a difficult legal environment. Their efforts ensure that those who are most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our community have access to essential legal services.

Treasurer

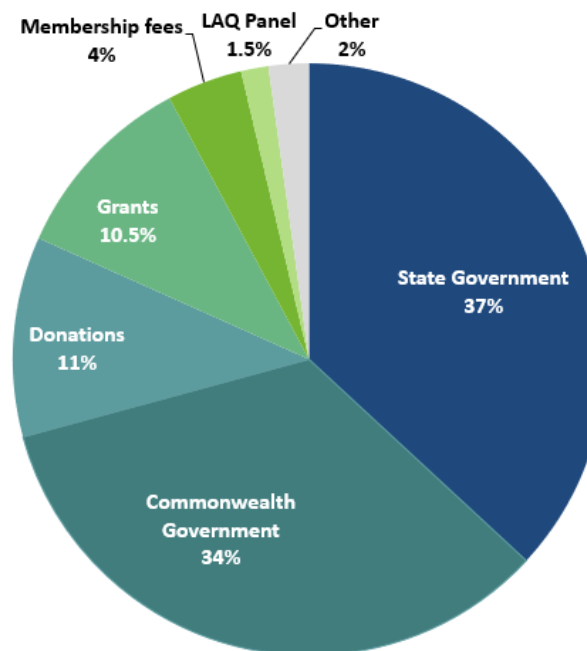
Tony Denholder, Partner of Ashurst

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 under Annual

LawRight income



Contact LawRight

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

Main office

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

Pro Bono Connect

(07) 3187 4379
probonoconnect@lawright.org.au

Community and Health Justice Partnerships | Brisbane

(07) 3518 8125
chjpadmin@lawright.org.au

Community and Health Justice Partnerships | Cairns

(07) 3518 8125
cairnshub.chjp@lawright.org.au

www.lawright.org.au

Court and Tribunal Services | State Courts Office
Level 1, Queensland Elizabeth II Courts of Law Building
(Including **Enforcement Hearing Duty Lawyer**)
415 George Street
Brisbane QLD 4000
(07) 3738 7800
state.cts@lawright.org.au

Court and Tribunal Services | QCAT Office
Level 10, National Australia Bank (NAB) Building
259 Queen Street
Brisbane QLD 4000
(07) 3564 7561
qcat.cts@lawright.org.au

Court and Tribunal Services | Federal Courts Office
Level 6, Harry Gibbs Commonwealth Law Courts
119 North Quay
Brisbane QLD 4000
(07) 3052 4309
fed.cts@lawright.org.au

Court and Tribunal Services | Mental Health Review Tribunal
(07) 3518 8126
mhrt.cts@lawright.org.au



**LawRight improves the lives
of vulnerable people
by increasing access to justice
through strategic partnerships
with pro bono lawyers.**

Thank you for your support.