

STREET NEWS

INSIDE STREET LAW

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TOPIC OF THE QUARTER:

- THE VALUE OF COURT REPRESENTATION FOR OUR CLIENT GROUP

Masks on and business as usual!

Despite the covid-19 environment in 2022, it has not stopped us from doing what we do best, representing our client group.

Our regular outreach legal clinics have continued to run with all solicitors ensuring they have a negative RAT test prior to attending clinics. Our priority is not only to protect our staff but the clients we see at clinics aswell.



Street Law solicitors, Tom and Kane, at our Bassendean outreach legal clinic in collaboration with the mobile Midlas bus.

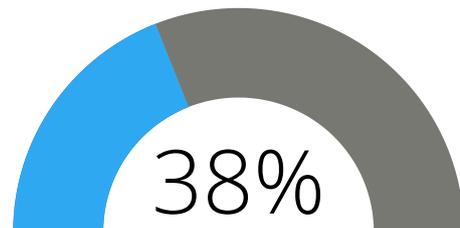
Street Law 2022 Stats



of clients are street present.



of clients identified as First Nations people.



of assistance provided in 2022 so far was for identity documents. ID docs are our number 1 problem type for this quarter.

Free legal advice over the phone

Advice Line

1800 752 992

Street Law has been able to expand its advice line after receiving additional funding from the Department of Justice. This has allowed us to recruit more solicitors so that we can respond to a larger number of calls from our clients and their support workers. The additional lawyers have also enabled us to provide more ongoing assistance to clients across a range of legal matters including court representation for criminal matters in the Magistrates Court.

Introducing our New Advice Line Supervisor

To lead our new advice line initiative, we have welcomed Briannen as our advice line supervisor.

Briannen has always wanted to be a lawyer, even as a kid, and has been working in the legal industry since 2018.

Briannen has dipped her toes in many areas of the law and comes to Street Law from private practice. She is excited to return to the community legal sector, where her true passion lies.

Briannen has always had an interest in increasing access to justice for vulnerable people within our community. When the chance to work at Street Law came up she couldn't help but apply.



"The work that Street Law does to assist the homeless community in WA is unprecedented and the opportunity to work with people with such a strong passion for justice and representation is one that cannot be passed up."

Briannen has said she is still blown away every day by the work that she gets to do and the knowledge and care that everyone working here has.

CALL US ON 1800 752 992 TO HAVE A CHAT WITH OUR ADVICE LINE SOLICITORS REGARDING YOUR LEGAL MATTERS TODAY

THE VALUE OF COURT REPRESENTATION FOR OUR CLIENT GROUP



Amir* is a young client who emigrated to Australia in the early 2000s. Amir has undiagnosed learning difficulties and suffers from anxiety.

Amir was charged with criminal offences and engaged with our service for legal assistance.

Amir was assisted by our dedicated Midland Solicitor, Tom, to represent and support him through his criminal matter. Tom attended the Midland Magistrates Court for Amir's court hearing. However, by the time the court list had begun Amir had still not appeared. Fortunately, Tom was able to contact Amir by phone. Amir was very agitated and told Tom he did not want to come to court. Tom had a lengthy discussion with Amir and explained if Amir did not attend court, he risked breaching his bail undertaking and this could lead to further charges. Amir agreed to attend but told Tom he didn't want to fight the charges anymore and that he was sick of being on bail and going to court. Tom told Amir he understood his frustration and that they would talk face to face about it once he arrived.

THE VALUE OF COURT REPRESENTATION FOR OUR CLIENT GROUP

Upon Amir's arrival, Tom advised Amir and assured him that Street Law would continue to support him throughout the process.

Tom's representation and support gave Amir a voice through his court proceedings; a voice that would have otherwise been silenced by the challenging personal circumstances our clients often face.

Street Law's Midland Project, funded by the Law Society's Public Purpose Trust Fund, has enabled Street Law to expand our services to provide court representation to our clients in the Midland area. Amir's story is testament to the value of having resources available to assist clients with representation in court; without Tom's support and court representation, Amir would have likely breached his bail conditions and been arrested if he didn't attend his hearing. This project means highly vulnerable clients can have holistic support and ongoing representation through the court process, this is not only beneficial to the clients but to the administration of justice as a whole.

If you are experiencing homelessness or at risk of experiencing homelessness, you may qualify for free legal advice.

STREET LAW'S LEGAL CLINIC LOCATIONS

RUAH

33 SHENTON STREET, NORTHBRIDGE
(TUES, 10:00am-12:00pm fortnightly)

KARNARY

25 SPRING PARK ROAD, MIDLAND
(TUE, 9:00am-12:00pm weekly)

STPATS

12 QUEEN VICTORIA STREET, FREMANTLE
(TUES, 9:00am-11:00am fortnightly)

PASSAGES

143 EDWARD STREET, PERTH
(WED, 10:00am-12:00pm weekly)

MOBILE MIDLAS

BASSENDAN FOOTBALL OVAL
(FRI, 10:am-12pm weekly)

TRANBY

6 / 5 ABERDEEN STREET, PERTH
(FRI, 8:30am-10:30am weekly)

Youth Outreach Legal Project Update



Demi Butler, Anna Hitomi & Shounok Chatterjee during a zoom Youth Outreach Legal Project meeting

written by Shounok Chatterjee, Street Law's youth outreach legal project solicitor.

It was with a mixture of excitement and nervousness that I returned to Street Law at the end of 2021 to take on a promising new legal project - the Youth Outreach Legal Project. The Youth Outreach Legal Project is a collaboration between Street Law Centre WA and the Passages Youth Engagement Hub (a program of the St Vincent de Paul organisation). Based on our long partnership with Passages, we identified the need for extended holistic services to be delivered to at-risk street present youth (age 12 to 25 years) throughout the COVID 19 pandemic. We obtained this new grant as a result of a thoughtful grant application that drew on the wisdom and insight of many knowledgeable members of the Street Law team.

The initial challenge when I commenced this role in October 2021 was to develop the strategic framework, policies, and procedures to allow this project to thrive. The natural synergy between Passages and Street Law cultivated from many years of successful collaboration was a crucial strength in these discussions between our Principal Solicitor, Ann-Margaret Walsh, and Niamh Kelly, Manager of the Homelessness Services at St Vincent de Paul.



In subsequent discussions, we developed a practical policy and procedure guide that addressed our professional requirements, the objectives of the grant, and the specific needs of our client base. Anna Hitomi, who has been the solicitor responsible for Passages clinics for some time now, played a crucial role in these discussions.

A key early milestone was the recruitment of a full-time outreach youth worker under the grant. Demi Butler, a youth worker at Passages prior to taking up this role, was hired in December 2021. Demi has brought an inimitable combination of energy, compassion, and tenaciousness on behalf of clients to this project.

The purpose of this role is to work alongside Street Law to identify social, wellbeing, and accommodation support required to enable young people to thrive in other areas of their life with the goal of reduced recidivism and an increased sense of belonging to their community.

Sometimes lawyers can seem like very strange creatures with inexplicable fixations on small things to people with other backgrounds and life experiences. At an early stage, we identified the need for training to establish a bridge of understanding between our legal culture with an emphasis on process, recordkeeping, and confidentiality to the informal, outcome focussed culture of youth and social workers. Our supervising solicitor Selena McCrickard provided presentations on Legal Privilege and Confidentiality to many of the youth workers at Passages to provide a framework for discussions.

The learning has not been one way. From my conversations with Demi in relation to clients I now have a much more concrete understanding of the social and accommodation context driving my client's behaviour. For instance, I wasn't aware at the time of the stringent curfew requirements placed on young people in particular crisis accommodation services. Or the current waiting times for admission assessment into the leading residential rehabilitation services. Thinking about these factors at a more concrete level has provided invaluable insight into the advice I give to clients and in preparing detailed submissions for the Court.

YOLP Case Study

Approximately six months into this project, I am pleased to reflect on several positive case studies that demonstrate how this project has made a positive impact on the lives of street present young people. Due to the constraints of space, I will limit my consideration here to one case study.



Timothy* is a young person who suffers from anxiety and has alcohol dependence issues. When he first provided instructions, he was sleeping rough and feeling overwhelmed. Timothy had been charged with disorderly conduct in a public place, possession of a prohibited weapon in relation to an alcohol-fuelled altercation in a public place on Grand Final night, and also, breach of police order and a threat to injure in relation to a family violence incident with his estranged father. The root cause of the behaviour leading to these charges related to Timothy's alcohol dependence issues and the resulting deterioration of his family support.

Demi successfully arranged for Timothy to undergo residential treatment for alcohol dependence issues at Fresh Start. Timothy completed approximately six weeks of residential treatment while negotiations continued on his criminal matters. I was able to downgrade the possession of a prohibited weapon to possession of a controlled weapon and obtain a lenient outcome by way of a fine. As I grew to know Timothy better, Timothy's consistent instructions in relation to the breach of police order and threat to injure charges led me to raise several issues with the Police case. As a result of my submission to the WA Police, these two family violence related charges will also be discontinued.

Timothy is now renting a room from a friend and is continuing to engage positively with alcohol treatment services.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of Lotteries west without whom the positive impact of this project would not have been made possible.