



ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

We wish to acknowledge the custodians of this land, the Wadjuk (Perth region) people of the Nyoongar nation and their Elders past, present and emerging. Street Law Centre WA Inc acknowledges and respects their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.

ABOUT STREET LAW

Street Law delivers accessible, excellent, innovative outreach legal services through collaborative partnerships.

*We treat our clients with dignity, respect,
and acceptance.*

We provide legal information, advice, advocacy and education to people experiencing homelessness. We prioritise being accessible, responsive, non-judgmental with our clients to meet their needs. We also support community workers in dealing with clients' legal issues and advocate for our clients within the broader community.

VISION & MISSION

*Access to justice for
people experiencing
homelessness.*



We strive towards this vision by providing free, specialist legal services addressing the needs of people experiencing or who are at risk of homelessness.

All the work we do is focused on building partnerships, and looking to collaborate with others in order to provide the best outcomes for people experiencing homelessness.

Our work is made possible by our funding partners:

State Criminal Property Confiscation Funds and the Commonwealth Community Legal Services Program. Additionally, The Law Society Public Purposes Trust provide grant funding for our Community Legal Education Program, and LotteryWest provide Emergency Relief funding.

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Unfortunately, far too often society inflicts the adverse legal consequences of day-to-day life on the most vulnerable people in our society. These consequences are not just financial. These consequences are physical, emotional, mental and spiritual.

*Lacking a safe place
to live makes everything
worse, and means that
homelessness, and
associated legal problems,
can become entrenched*

The philosophy underpinning legal consequences is equality under the law. For example, if our fellow citizen has a mental impairment that makes it impossible for them to remember to buy a train ticket, should they suffer the same consequences as others who don't have a ticket on the train? It is challenging for society to administer laws in a manner that is responsive to everyone's individual circumstances.

There is a gap. The most vulnerable people in our society suffer because of that gap. But with the utmost commitment, and endeavour, the staff, volunteers and secondees of Street Law, with the generous assistance of our partner law firms, host agencies, funders and collaborating legal centres help to fill that gap.

DREW BROADFOOT
CHAIR OF STREET LAW CENTRE WA


I am constantly in awe of the efforts and dedication of everyone involved in Street Law. It is an amazing coalition of like-minded people and organisations, and I am proud to play a small part.

In circumstances where future financial support for Street Law is uncertain, it remains incumbent on Street Law and its supporters to show the value that Street Law provides to the most vulnerable members of our community, and the benefit that Street Law provides the community at large. By promoting Street Law's innovative outreach and Community Legal Education services, and raising Street Law's profile, Street Law will remain at the forefront of any strategy to address the issues of the homeless in Western Australia.

I encourage you to review this Annual Report to appreciate the excellent, valuable work of Street Law. None of this would be possible without our amazing staff, led by our Principal Solicitor Ann-Margaret Walsh.

We look forward to facing the challenges ahead at Street Law, both the day-to-day challenges of serving our clients, and the challenges for Street Law's sustainability. By maintaining the focus on our vision – Access to justice for people experiencing homelessness – the road ahead is clear.

THANK YOU



“Street Law has given me the opportunity to see where real life intersects with the law”

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

CHAIRPERSON

Drew Broadfoot

TREASURER

Ryan Jones

SECRETARY

Linda Sperring

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Tom Moreton*

Tim Langmead

Matthew Keating

Alex Antoniazzi*

**resigned during the financial year*

Pro bono Lawyers

Adam Nolan
Francis Burt Chambers

Frank Meranda
Francis Burt Chambers

Greg McIntyre SC
John Toohey Chambers

Jackson McDonald

Kott Gunning
Nicholas Van Hattem
Francis Burt Chambers

Richard Ingleby
Aikin Chambers VIC

Slater & Gordon

Pro bono Assistance

Herbert Smith Freehills

Moore Stephens

Human ResourceSupport

Sara Kane
Employment Law Centre

Printing and Publishing 2017/18 Annual Report

Corrs Chambers Westgarth

OUR VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteers work in-house as part of our team. They provide invaluable support to the team as a whole.



"Volunteering at Street Law taught me that homelessness is a lot more complex than it may seem. It is a multi-faceted issue, impacting people in diverse ways."

"It is important to realise that causes and consequences of homelessness are different for everyone, so it is vital to be open-minded."

Ashurst

Monique Robertson
Susanah Vindedzis

Corrs Chambers Westgarth

Julien Blais
Mila Banovic

Jackson McDonald

Daniel Sutherland
Melissa Settineri
Simon Ringrose
Simon Webster

King & Wood Mallesons

Aidan Hawkes
Caitlin Morris
Joel Bond
Rachael Coffey

Law Students & Graduates

Aheli Guha
Alisa Fedotova
Carolyn Gann
Jade Bates
Felicia Chan
Jamie-Lee Read
Stacey Price
Terence Hanson

Community Volunteers

Felicia Chan
Frances Tomasi
Lavanyah Thangarasu
Robert Spinks
Stella Tsakires

WHAT WE DO

We increase access to justice, for the homeless and those at risk of homelessness through our exclusive outreach legal services

Our partner community service agencies, listed on the right, provide locations for our lawyers to operate legal clinics. This is a core element of our collaborative and holistic service delivery model.

Through this we receive referrals from, and make referrals to our community service partners. Ann-Margaret and Megan, our solicitors visit each centre once every week or fortnight with a legal volunteer. They manage all advice and ongoing casework that arise from the legal clinics, and our telephone advice line.

Our office co-ordinator Corinne manages our services, including finance and volunteer induction and provides constant support for the team. Kimberley joined our team this year as an administrative assistant. Her duties include managing the CLASS database, developing policies and procedures for Accreditation, and maintenance and organisation of our case files.

*"Very positive, lots of smiles
and laughter!"*

Felt very comfortable"

WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAID



Ruah (Ruah Community Services), St Pats (Pt Patrick's Community Support Centre), Tranby (Uniting Care West), Passages Resource Centre (a joint venture between the Rotary Club of Perth and St. Vincent De Paul), and Women's Health and Family Services.

OUR TEAM

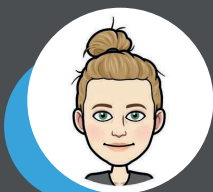
Enormous gratitude is extended to each staff member for all their contributions over the year. Their ongoing commitment is appreciated in times of funding uncertainties.



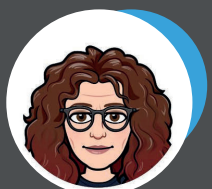
Ann-Margaret Walsh
Principal Solicitor



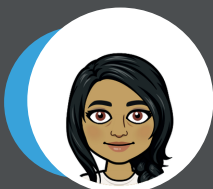
Corinne Mercer
Office Co-ordinator



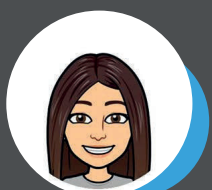
Kimberley Wilde
Admin Assistant



Megan McCormack
Solicitor



Rachael Doraisamy
CLE Project Officer



Stacey Price
CLE Project Worker

Our Community Legal Education (CLE) program recommenced this year, and is delivered by Rachael and Stacey and supervised by Ann-Margaret. Rachael and Stacey have both developed and delivered innovative CLE modules and resources to both community service workers, clients, and volunteers. Further, Rachael has continued to raise Street Law's profile through a targeted social media presence.

Street Law is a partner in the Safe as Houses (SaSH) program, which has also been established over the year. Ann-Margaret manages the program for Street Law, and Megan is the primary solicitor for the program providing advice and ongoing casework. SaSH clients often present with complex and multi layered legal issues.

In addition, we have contributed to a number of law reform projects over the year.

OUR CLIENTS

Who we helped and priority groups

**OVER 30%
INCREASE IN
CLIENTS THIS
FINANCIAL
YEAR**

In the last quarter of the financial year, we did a snapshot analysis to see where our clients were sleeping.

We determined that 65% of our clients were directly experiencing homelessness, and 35% were at risk of homelessness.

The ABS statistics for WA report that of those experiencing homelessness 12% are sleeping rough. Street Law's statistics show that 20% of all our clients are sleeping rough.

Due to the transient nature of homelessness, the living situation of clients is constantly changing.

We have continued to target our identified priority groups for our service provision.

Our priority groups were identified based on vulnerable people in the community who are over-represented in homeless service data, but underrepresented in Street Law data. These groups are women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and young people under 25.

300

We assisted
176 Males
113 Females
4 Other genders
7 organisations

19%

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples made up 19% of our total client demographic. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples make up 3.1% of the WA population, and 29% of the WA homeless population (ABS 2016 census)

16%

Young people under 25 years made up 16% of our client group, an increase of 7% from the last financial year.

LEGAL SERVICES

The people we assist experience complex and varied legal issues that require assistance across a number of different areas of law

Across all programs and legal services

57% CIVIL
32% CRIMINAL
11% FAMILY



Each client has an average number of **4.5 legal issues**

318

LEGAL ADVICE SERVICES DELIVERED

229

REFERRALS TO OTHER LEGAL SERVICES

260

LEGAL TASKS COMPLETED

46

LEGAL INFORMATION SERVICES PROVIDED

People experiencing or at risk of homelessness often present with multiple legal issues. We respond effectively because staff solicitors are responsible and accessible, and they understand the barriers people who are experiencing homelessness face in accessing justice.

Further, our service delivery model is underpinned by the ability to develop relationships of trust, and communicate in a way that can be understood. Through this we deliver generalist legal advice, give sound referral options and have strong relationships with community service agencies and pro bono partners.

"Street Law is very good for people who don't understand"

"[They] help people that are illiterate and people who struggle with understanding [legal] orders"

WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAID

CORE SERVICE DELIVERY

Our top legal issues within the core service delivery were divided across civil and criminal law. We opened a total of 46 cases under our core service delivery.

22

CRIMINAL CASES
WERE OPENED

24

CIVIL CASES
WERE OPENED

TOP 5 LEGAL ISSUES

11%

FINES AND
INFRINGEMENTS

7%

OFFENCES AND
ASSAULTS AGAINST
THE PERSON

6.5%

CRIMINAL INJURIES
COMPENSATION

6%

THEFT AND RELATED
OFFENCES

5%

ACCESSING FREEDOM OF
INFORMATION/PRIVACY

100%

of clients surveyed
said we responded
to their issues "very
quickly" or "quickly
enough"

*"I got more useful and
practical advice in 10
minutes than I'd previously
gotten from... [other legal
services]. I can't sing their
praises enough."*

WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAID

Our Core services are funded through State
Criminal Property Confiscation Funds and the
Commonwealth Community Legal Services
Program,

**This information excludes the SasH program.*

CASE STUDY

Zofia's story

Having no ID documents is an issue many of Street Law's clients struggle with. This is a significant barrier as ID is required to access crisis accommodation, Centrelink, and other essential services.

Recently Zofia* got in contact with us with help from her support worker. She had been sleeping rough for 15 years, and had her ID documents were stolen during this time. Her support worker helped her get her Bulgarian birth certificate, but she needed to prove her Australian citizenship to access Centrelink, and open a bank account to receive any form of payment.

We applied for copies of Zofia's documents from the Department of Home Affairs. When we received these, they had to be translated to be useful as documentation to apply for a Photo Card. This was required to open a bank account.

In order to get a copy of her Citizenship certificate, Zofia had to submit a statutory declaration outlining her identity and the theft of her ID. The whole process took over 12 months.

Zofia now has the copies of her ID documents, a Photo ID Card, access to money through the NewStart Allowance, and her own bank account. Recently, she has also managed to get accommodation!

Without help, it is likely Zofia would still be struggling to prove her identity, have no welfare benefits and be sleeping rough.

The complexity of these processes are debilitating to people who have no ID but rely on it to access services.

There are no strict rules, guidelines or processes for accessing documents. This makes it difficult for individuals and support workers to navigate the process.



The translation of documents, photos and applications to Department of Foreign Affairs were funded by Street Law through its Lottery West ER fund.

SAFE AS HOUSES PROGRAM

We opened a total of 31 cases for clients we assisted through the SasH Program.



The SasH is a collaborative program run by Tenancy WA (lead agency), Street Law and Women's Law Centre. The program provides case managed legal and support services to women experiencing family or domestic violence and who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Through the SasH program we expanded the areas of legal issues we assist with. This resulted in a higher number of applications for Criminal Injuries Compensation (CIC), divorces and restraining orders. We also provided some advice on property of marriage and financial abuse resulting in mortgage stress. This is a focus which would not normally fall within our core service delivery.

6

CRIMINAL CASES
WERE OPENED

25

CIVIL CASES
WERE OPENED

TOP 5 LEGAL ISSUES

14%

CRIMINAL INJURIES
COMPENSATION

13%

PROPERTY IN MARRIAGE

8.5%

RESTRAINING ORDERS

7.5%

DIVORCE

7%

FINES AND
INFRINGEMENTS

CASE STUDY

Mary's Story

Mary co-owned two properties with her ex-partner who had perpetrated family violence against her during their 10 year marriage.

She was seriously assaulted by her ex-partner when he spat on her and violently dragged her through the house by her hair. Mary called the Police who did not charge him but issued a 24 hour Police Order for him to leave the property. Three days later the Police were called by the ex-partner, which resulted in Mary being charged with common assault. They identified Mary as 'difficult' and 'angry' after a Police discussion with her ex-partner. Police failed to see the pattern of violence and Mary was not properly identified as a victim of family domestic violence. Her ex-partner managed to get a FVRO against her meaning she had no where to live and her children couldn't live with her.

Through the SasH program, Street Law was able to obtain disclosure from the Police regarding the criminal charge. Following the preparation of detailed submissions and negotiations with the prosecutor the matter was discontinued and did not proceed to trial. Mary chose not to make a CIC claim or a police complaint. Womens Law assisted Mary with advice on recovering care of her children, property and legal advice regarding the FVRO.

Without help, Mary may have had a criminal record and, due to the nature of her work, this would have resulted in the loss of her job.



One trend we see from the SasH program is women in violent relationships are being charged with criminal offences by the police.

LEGAL VOLUNTEERS

Student volunteers, secondees and law firm partnerships



"As a secondee, it's been a really good feeling to be involved in matters, and get positive outcomes for our clients."

Our long standing pro-bono partnerships with Ashurst, Corrs Chambers Westgarth, Jackson McDonald and King & Wood Mallesons have been the cornerstone of Street Law's volunteer program and service delivery for many years. They contributed a total of 1148 pro bono hours.

This financial year we also increased our intake of law student/graduate volunteers. These volunteers are normally final-year law students who go through our recruitment process and volunteer with Street Law for at least 3 months. Volunteer law students contributed an additional 756 hours to Street Law over the financial year.

ALL OF OUR SURVEYED VOLUNTEERS FOUND THAT THEY HAD IMPROVED THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF BROADER COMMUNITY ISSUES THROUGH WORKING WITH US, AND SAID THEY WOULD RECOMMEND VOLUNTEERING AT STREET LAW TO OTHERS.

VOLUNTEER IMPACT

The value of our legal volunteers' work exceeds our total annual operating budget

Legal volunteers working from our offices provided 1904 hours of work to Street Law, valued at approximately \$513,310

The time and contribution made by pro bono partners and legal volunteers are essential to our service delivery.

We simply could not help as many clients as we do without them.



We take pride in the quality of our volunteers, and provide them with training, mentoring, supervision and, where possible, opportunities for professional development.



"The team at Street Law are very motivated and passionate about providing the best service to the clients, as well as providing volunteers with valuable experience. I really appreciated the mentoring by the solicitors and their willingness to invest time into my professional development."

PRO BONO ASSISTANCE

Expert advice and representation provided free of charge

Street Law also receives pro bono assistance for the centre. For many years, Herbert Smith Freehills have provided us with legal assistance. We also received a free financial audit from Moore Stephens.

The value of pro bono services recieved by the Street Law Centre is in excess of **\$20,000**.



We have a longstanding relationship with law firms and the WA Bar Association. The generosity of these lawyers provides our clients with legal representation in Court and legal advice on complex matters.

The legal issues we received legal assistance with included insurance claim for total permanent disability, age discrimination, a claim pursuant to Family Provision Act, and Magistrates Court criminal matters.



Pro bono assistance received by our clients was worth over \$30,000.



This time was supported by over 150 hours of work from our volunteers, pro-bono secondees, and staff.

CASE STUDY:

Impact of pro bono support

We encourage people to seek legal advice as often they don't understand the consequences of being found guilty, or what could happen to them as a result of a conviction. Not getting access to justice can lead to a miscarriage of justice, particularly when they are not guilty.

Pro bono lawyers provide access to justice and a voice for people who otherwise would not be heard.

For example, one client James*, an older Aboriginal man came to us with two criminal offences: stealing and assault. James admitted to stealing but denied having committed an assault saying that he had been grabbed and had simply pushed the other person away.

We requested help from a Pro Bono Barrister who assisted with finalising our drafted submissions which outlined to the Police the reasons why the charge of common assault should be discontinued. Preparation for trial continued as no confirmation had been received that the charge would be discontinued.

On the trial allocation date the police discontinued the common assault charge against James. Our solicitor attended court and submitted a plea in mitigation for the stealing charge, outlining the circumstances James was experiencing when he committed the offence. James had experienced homelessness, limited education and was unemployed. James was intoxicated at the time he committed the offence and had been attending programs to support him. He had not committed any further offences.

With the assistance of the pro bono Barrister and Street Law, James was able to tell his side of the story and avoid a conviction for assault.

James
benefitted
from

28

HOURS SPENT BY
STREET LAW
ANALYSING EVIDENCE
AND ATTENDING COURT

7-8

HOURS OF PRO-BONO
ASSISTANCE GIVEN

\$2500

THE VALUE OF
ASSISTANCE BY THE
BARRISTER

\$200

THIS WAS THE FINE
JAMES PAID FOR
STEALING. HE WAS
ORDERED TO PAY \$48 TO
REPAY THE VALUE OF
WHAT HE HAD STOLEN

COMMUNITY LEGAL EDUCATION (CLE)

We recommenced our CLE program, focusing on ways to empower individuals experiencing homelessness to deal with legal issues, train community workers to assist clients and train our own legal volunteers to navigate and provide casework assistance on complex matters. We provided 13 training sessions for community workers, and 11 for our client group. Training focused on practical ways to navigate legal issues.

We reached:

33

PEOPLE EXPERIENCING
OR AT RISK OF
HOMELESSNESS

50

COMMUNITY WORKERS

23

VOLUNTEERS AND
STAFF

"Engaging and practical"

"Discussion was useful and enjoyable; really filling a gap, extremely beneficial"

*WHAT COMMUNITY
WORKERS SAID*

64%

of people attending the client group training were young people under 25 years old.

Our CLE program has run at the following locations to be accessible for our client group and community workers:

- The Beacon Salvation Army
- King Edward Memorial Hospital
- Passages Vinnies WA, Rotary Club Perth
- Wungening Aboriginal Corporation East Perth, Armadale

Developing resources and providing training to engage the community and build awareness about issues for people experiencing homelessness

123

LEGAL EDUCATION
RESOURCES CREATED

A key resource was our new wallet card, designed to communicate about Street Law effectively to our client group. Legal resources are distributed during trainings, while lawyers were at outreach legal clinics and at events where Street Law interacts with people experiencing homelessness.

We provided 3 training sessions for our volunteers and secondees, and developed a new online training system, with two modules.

The first module looks into the issue of homelessness and what we do to assist. The second focuses on internal process, legal areas and self-care for people working with us. Nine further modules were completed this year.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We were finalists for the Community Serviced Excellence Award for Small Organisation based on our outreach legal program services!

*"Great to see a service
providing a more holistic
approach"*

*WHAT COMMUNITY
WORKERS SAID*

*Provided pop-up legal
education and advice for:*

- *Homeless Connect Nov 2017*
- *Law Week (Beacon Presentation and Legal Advice clinic)*
- *Law Week (Legal outreach with the Street Doctor)*



LAW REFORM & CAPACITY BUILDING

This year we provided training and contributed to law reform. We also participated in different forums to highlight the legal issues faced by our clients and to raise awareness in the community of these issues and our service.

Law Reform

- Criminalisation of Homelessness
- The Justice Project

Provided

- Homeless Issues Training: CIC and the Redress Scheme by Robert Guthrie (CIC Assessor), hosted by King & Wood Mallesons

Presented at

- Social Justice Opportunities Evening
- CLCA Quarterlies Social Media

Committees

- Legal Practice & PII Administration Sub-Committee
- Shelter WA member

“Street Law Centre helps and represents a community who is in need. I have learnt from Street Law, that through inclusion and acceptance, you could make an individual, who feels like an outcast for not fitting into the ‘normal’ society standards feel accepted and loved, as the majority of the homeless population are lonely. I hope to keep spreading positive messages about this community and create awareness even if I am not part of this organisation anymore, I have a voice and will keep using it for as long as I can.”

- McCusker Student volunteer

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

This financial year, Street Law took on community volunteers who assisted us in a variety of non-legal tasks. These volunteers provided us with over 390 hours of their time.

We have also established a strong relationship with the McCusker Centre for Citizenship (UWA) Internship Program. A number of the projects which were completed included:

- Social Media Analysis, Monitoring and Evaluation Project
- Grants Calendar
- Researching service delivery models for Homeless legal centres

SOCIAL MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS

We developed resources and built our social media presence in order to engage the community and build awareness about issues for people experiencing homelessness.



545

likes on Facebook



40%

increase in Facebook followers

After undertaking a social media review, we increased our presence through active Facebook interaction, the creation of a Twitter account, and the reactivation our LinkedIn page. We also launched a newsletter, "Space: Inside Street Law".



144

Twitter followers since starting our account in January.



3044

Website users

**join us at
@StreetLawWA**



