



# ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19



*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.*

# LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

**The faces at Street Law may change, and providing Street Law's services to homeless people in Western Australia, and those at risk of homelessness, remains challenging.**

Despite the challenges, Street Law is dedicated to its newly refreshed vision ("We are inspired by the vision of a compassionate community where everyone has a safe place to call home.") and our mission ("We work towards our vision by championing for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.")

While Street Law's vision is aspirational, the struggle to achieve it will have benefits for Western Australia's most vulnerable people.

Street Law's work was recognised in the last year in a number of different ways, including winning the Attorney General's Community Service Law Award and the Richard (Dick) Fletcher Award at the Western Australian Consumer Protection Awards.

Despite this welcome recognition, the challenges that Street Law faces in delivering on its vision and mission are apparent. Although Street Law takes advantage of the tireless efforts of talented staff and volunteers, and the support of capable secondees from our law firm pro-bono partners, Street Law's finances remain insecure. The Management Committee and all who support Street Law remain dedicated to putting Street Law on a more solid financial and organizational footing.

Street Law is grateful for the assistance it receives from the Community Legal Centres Association (WA).

**"Street Law is hopeful that its important work, and the important work of all Community Legal Centres in Western Australia, will be recognised with appropriate provision in upcoming government budgets"**

Street Law said goodbye to a number of talented staff members this year, including Megan McCormack, Solicitor, and Rachael Doraisamy, Solicitor and Community Legal Education Coordinator. We wish them all the best. Street Law also thanks members of its Management Committee who provided years of dedicated service, including our former Treasurer, Ryan Jones.

Street Law also welcomes the support of its new Patron, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Western Australia, and thanks the former Chief Justice for his years of support.

I encourage you to review this Annual Report to appreciate Street Law's service and the dedicated team who provide it. Thanks for your continuing support of Street Law.

**DREW BROADFOOT**  
**CHAIR OF STREET LAW CENTRE WA**

# OUR VISION & MISSION

*We are inspired by the vision of a  
compassionate community where everyone  
has a safe place to call home*

We work towards our vision by championing for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, through our legal work for social justice.

## OUR STRATEGIC FOCUS

**1**

**Our team champions for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness**

Advocating for our clients, looking for new ways to increase the reach of our service

**2**

**Our team drives change**

Driving change and leading legal initiatives to eliminate and prevent homelessness

**3**

**Our team makes an impact**

Making a difference through innovative and collaborative service delivery

**4**

**Our team are supported by an organisation built for purpose**

Working to ensure our organisational structure is sustainable and equipped for the work that lies ahead

**5**

**Our team are empowered through our workplace culture**

Supporting our people through creating a collaborative and supportive culture

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.*

# OUR VALUES

## **We innovate**

We create opportunities, seek out new solutions and are open to change. We are courageous and willing to take risks.

## **We collaborate**

We do nothing in isolation and adopt a holistic approach. We support others and work to achieve our vision, which goes beyond ourselves.

## **We are proactive**

We are responsive and determined in advocating for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. We are focused and purposeful in what we do.

## **We are compassionate**

We create a supportive community, focused on championing people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. We show kindness to, and have dignity and respect for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

## **We have integrity**

We treat each other with kindness, dignity and respect. We advocate for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness in the legal system, in government processes, and throughout our community.



**"Very kind & compassionate people."**

*WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAID*  
Street Law Centre WA Inc. 2019

# THANK YOU



## MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

CHAIRPERSON

**Drew Broadfoot**

VICE CHAIRPERSON

**Matthew Keating**

TREASURER

**Stephen Gibson**

**Ryan Jones\***

SECRETARY

**Tim Langmead**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Julien Blais**

**Mackenzie Godson**

**Tim Langmead**

**Leon Magistro**

**Linda Sperring\***

\*resigned during the financial year

### Pro bono legal services - clients

Carolyn Moss  
Francis Burt Chambers

Kathryn Heslop  
Albert Wolff Chambers

Mark Pendlebury  
Francis Burt Chambers

Nicholas Van Hattem  
Francis Burt Chambers

Richard Ingleby  
Aikin Chambers VIC

Varun Ghosh  
Francis Burt Chambers

Kaminni Kumar  
Equus Chambers

Simon Watters  
Albert Wolff Chambers

Jennifer Sollis  
Francis Burt Chambers

Jones Day

### Pro bono legal services - Street Law

Clayton Utz  
Herbert Smith Freehills  
Moore Stephens

### Pro bono Human Resource Support

Kate Beaumont  
Welfare Rights and Advocacy  
Service

### Many individual and corporate donors

# OUR SECONDEES AND VOLUNTEERS

**Our secondees, legal volunteers and community volunteers are an integral part of our service and are key to the invaluable service that Street Law delivers.**

**This year, we have had a record number of student volunteers at Street Law.**



*"You all do an amazing job for the community and it was a pleasure volunteering!"*

*WHAT OUR  
VOLUNTEERS SAID*

## SECONDEES

### Ashurst

Jordan Leahy  
Monique Robertson

### Corrs Chambers Westgarth

Andre Schoombe  
Shonouk Chatterjee

### King & Wood Mallesons

Aidan Hawkes  
Collin Ong  
Emily Lamberto  
Olivia Harle  
Patrick MacKenzie  
Tahnee Gibson  
Olivia Harle

### Volunteer Law Students & Lawyers

Aline Benkendorf  
Katie Cranfield  
Felicia Chan  
Leishae Burke  
Gatwiri M'mbijiwe  
Jenna Cook  
Anthony Worrall  
Emma Boogaardt  
Taylah Bell  
Eliza Murphy  
Cheryl Lees  
Shonouk Chatterjee

### Community Volunteers

Frances Tomasi  
Christina Gorevski  
Stella Tskaries  
Taylor Ford



# WHAT WE DO

**The homeless and those at risk of homelessness have access to justice and through our exclusive outreach legal services**

Through our outreach legal clinics and telephone advice line we provide legal advice and undertake ongoing casework on many varied legal issues.

Our solicitors attend our outreach legal clinics co-located with our partner community service agencies, listed on the right. This is a core element of our collaborative and holistic service delivery model.

In addition legal services are also provided through our telephone advice line.

We continue to provide a comprehensive community legal education program to both community service workers and clients.

This financial year we have also had the opportunity to provide detailed submissions on the Homelessness Directions Paper and the proposed amendments to the *Fines, Penalties and Enforcement Notices Act 1994 (WA)*.

Our operating hours are Monday to Friday from 9am - 5pm.

*"Street*

*Law has a good reputation, provides excellent value, and is meeting program reporting requirements to a high standard"*

*WHAT OUR  
STAKEHOLDERS 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)

# OUR TEAM

**This year, Street Law has received unprecedented recognition for its hard work and service delivery model. Our team continues to strive by providing our clients with effective, proactive legal assistance.**

The commitment of our team cannot be overstated. We thank Megan McCormack for her professionalism and dedication as our Safe as Houses program solicitor. Our CLE program expanded to include the delivery of legal education and legal advice to five separate regional areas under the guidance of Rachael Doraisamy and with the continued support of Stacey Price. We also thank Officer Coordinator Corinne Mercer for her ongoing commitment and Kimberley Wilde and Joshua Marks for their administrative support throughout the year. Thank you also to our Principal Solicitor Ann-Margaret Walsh for her continued commitment and dedication to Street Law.

PRINCIPAL SOLICITOR

**Ann-Margaret Walsh**

SOLICITOR

**Megan McCormack\***

OFFICE CO-ORDINATOR

**Corinne Mercer**

SOLICITOR & CLE

COORDINATOR

**Rachael Doraisamy**

SOLICITOR & CLE PROJECT  
OFFICER

**Stacey Price**

ADMIN ASSISTANT

**Kimberley Wilde\***

**Joshua Marks**

\*resigned during the financial year





# OUR CLIENTS

## Who we helped and our priority groups

ONE  
THIRD OF THE  
CLIENTS WE  
SAW THIS  
FINANCIAL YEAR  
WERE RETURN  
CLIENTS

We determined that 70% of our clients were directly experiencing homelessness, and 24% were at risk of homelessness.

Statistics provided by the ABS for WA report that of those experiencing homelessness, 13% are sleeping rough. Street Law's statistics show that 19% of all our clients are sleeping rough.

Street Law's clients are those experiencing homelessness and those at risk of experiencing homelessness.

We have identified women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, young people under 25 years of age, and rough sleepers as our priority clients.

These groups continue to be over-represented in homeless service data and require targeted legal services.

318

We assisted:  
162 Males  
135 Females  
8 Other genders  
13 Organisations

23.5%

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples made up 23.5% 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.

# LEGAL SERVICES

Our clients often present with varied legal issues that cut across several different areas of law. Service provision is made more complex not only because of the number of legal issues faced by our clients, but because of the inherent uncertainty that homelessness can bring.

Across all programs  
and legal services

**66% CIVIL**  
**25% CRIMINAL**  
**9% FAMILY**

*"Kind, compassion[ate] and  
understood what I was going  
through"*

*WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAID*



**28%**  
**OF LEGAL**  
**ADVICES WERE**  
**PROVIDED BY**  
**TELEPHONE**

**427**

LEGAL ADVICE SERVICES  
DELIVERED

**303**

REFERRALS TO OTHER  
LEGAL SERVICES

**749**

LEGAL TASKS  
COMPLETED

**42**

LEGAL INFORMATION  
SERVICES PROVIDED

# CORE SERVICE DELIVERY

We opened a total of 63 cases under our core services and our top legal issues were divided across civil and criminal law.

23

CRIMINAL CASES  
WERE OPENED

40

CIVIL CASES  
WERE OPENED

## TOP 5 LEGAL ISSUES

18%

FINES AND  
INFRINGEMENTS

17%

ACCESSING FREEDOM OF  
INFORMATION/PRIVACY

6%

CIVIL VIOLENCE AND  
RESTRAINING ORDERS

6%

CRIMINAL INJURIES  
COMPENSATION

4%

THEFT AND RELATED  
OFFENCES



*"Extremely pleased"*  
*"Easy to converse with"*

*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 STUDIES: YOUNG PEOPLE & DEBT

Jo, a transgender Aboriginal person who has significant family issues, many of which have contributed to and resulted in Jo battling serious mental health concerns and experiencing homelessness. Over the last few years, Jo has incurred over \$20,000 in debt for fines and infringements. This debt hangs over Jo's head and has made it hard for them to move on while living off the Disability Support Pension, trying to get off the streets and managing their own mental health.

Over the last few months, we've helped Jo officially change their name, this has helped Jo with the management of their mental health issues. We have provided legal advice as to their options for the outstanding fines and infringements including referrals to financial counsellors.

The issues our clients may face are varied, and specific to their particular circumstances. We deliver flexible, compassionate legal assistance, focusing on providing the best possible solutions.



Gabe is another young person who met us at Passages. Although Gabe had a place to stay, he was at risk of homelessness due to the amount of fines and infringements outstanding being over \$23,500.00. Gabe had also been a victim of crime and was experiencing significant post traumatic stress disorder. Gabe was struggling to make ends meet as his only income was Youth Allowance.

We negotiated for Gabe to undertake community work to pay off his outstanding court fines and an affordable time to pay arrangement for his outstanding infringements. We also assisted Gabe with applying for criminal injuries compensation.

*You see young people being set up to fail with the size of their debts, often owed to the government. It's not uncommon for young people to owe over \$50,000 worth of debt. Many of these young people have mental health illnesses, have been in care, or have been failed by the people meant to protect them.*

*WHAT OUR STAFF SAID*

# SAFE AS HOUSES PROGRAM

**We opened a total of 16 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 Legal Service.

A comprehensive Evaluation Report, June 2019, highlights the value of the program and the critical void it provided where clients have a multiplicity of legal and non-legal needs that put them at risk of homelessness.

The SasH program has not received continued funding, and has only been funded until September 2019. This will re-open the void in effective legal service provision to women and children experiencing or at risk of experiencing homeless and escaping family violence.



**SAFE as HOUSES**

**5**

**CRIMINAL CASES  
WERE OPENED**

**11**

**CIVIL CASES  
WERE OPENED**

## TOP 5 LEGAL ISSUES

**14%**

**FINES AND  
INFRINGEMENTS**

**10%**

**CRIMINAL INJURIES  
COMPENSATION**

**10%**

**RESTRAINING ORDERS**

**7%**

**DEBT OWED BY CLIENT**

**7%**

**TRAFFIC AND VEHICLE  
OFFENCES**



# CASE STUDY

## Izzy's Story

Izzy separated from her partner nearly 10 years ago. At that time both Izzy and her ex-partner were joint tenants of the family home with their children. The relationship broke down due to domestic violence, and at the time of separation, Izzy agreed with her ex-partner that she would retain the family home and continue to make the mortgage payments and forgo child maintenance. The balance of the mortgage at that time was approximately \$74,000.00

Unfortunately, Izzy was unable to refinance the family home and have it transferred into her own name because her only income was a Centrelink allowance. Izzy, however, continued to make the mortgage repayments and secured a part time job. At the time of seeking assistance from Street Law there was approximately only \$10,000 owing on the mortgage

In 2018 Izzy's ex-partner declared bankruptcy. The Australian Financial Security Authority (AFSA) acting as the Official Trustee in Bankruptcy notified Izzy that the family home formed part of the bankrupt estate. AFSA indicated it would seek to sell the family home and assumed that the family home was held in equal share between Izzy and her ex-partner unless contrary evidence was provided.

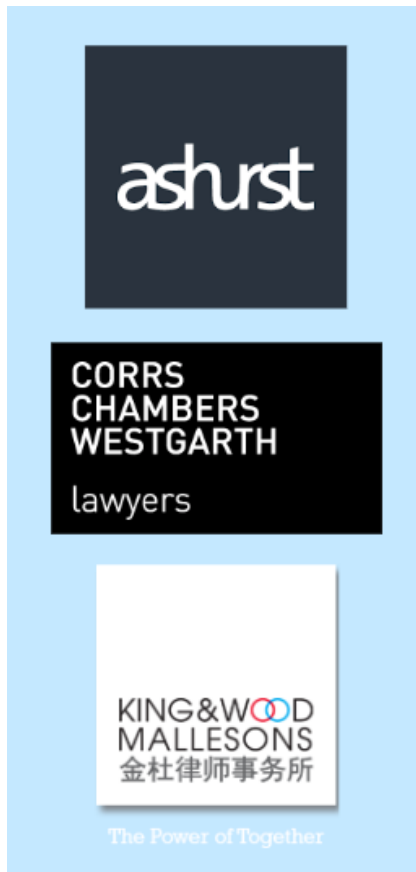
Street Law sought pro bono assistance from the WA Bar Association. As a result, a leading commercial barrister provided detailed advice on the enforceability of Izzy's agreement with her ex-partner, the kind of interest arising from the agreement and the impact of bankruptcy on Izzy's interest and whether she would be able to retain her family home. Detailed submissions were drafted outlining Izzy's position and why AFSA had no grounds in which to claim the family home. As a result of the representations made, AFSA agreed the property did not vest with the Trustee following the bankruptcy of the ex-partner. Women's Legal Service then provided advice to Izzy on applying for consent orders in the Family Court of WA to order the transfer of the property into her name only.

**39.8%**  
*of all homelessness in  
WA is due to family  
and domestic violence*

As a result of our help, Izzy was able to continue residing in her family home. In addition, Izzy obtained approximately \$14 000 in expert pro bono legal advice.

# LEGAL VOLUNTEERS

## Student volunteers, secondees and law firm partnerships



Our long standing pro-bono partnerships with Ashurst, Corrs Chambers Westgarth, 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 1024 pro bono hours.

In addition our volunteer law students contributed 1298 hours to Street Law over the financial year. These volunteers are normally final-year law students who go through our recruitment process and volunteer with Street Law for at least 3 months.

*"I have had a great time during my Street Law secondment. I found both the case work and clinic work very enjoyable and rewarding"*

*"It is a very different type of law to the corporate work I do day to day and this helped me to develop new skills"*

*WHAT OUR SECONDEES SAID*

# VOLUNTEER IMPACT

**The value of our legal volunteers' work more than doubles our total annual operating budget**

*Legal volunteers working from our offices provided 2322 hours of work to Street Law, valued at approximately \$627,577.50*

Our volunteers ensure Street Law can continue to deliver high quality legal services. Street Law prides itself on quality supervision, support, and mentoring of our volunteer staff. We are proud to teach our volunteers legal skills, professionalism, and how to conduct themselves with empathy and compassion. It is an immense privilege to work with the future of the legal profession.

*We would not be able to assist as many clients as we do without the generous contribution from our volunteers*



**"Advocating for individuals that would otherwise have difficulties accessing legal services and seeing the impact that the services Street Law can have on their lives has been fantastic.**

**The successes we achieve for clients are both professionally and personally rewarding."**



# PRO BONO LEGAL SERVICES

**Expert advice and representation provided free of charge to Street Law's clients and to the Street Law service totals \$82,097.00.**

## ASSISTANCE TO STREET LAW CLIENTS

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, Criminal Injuries Compensation, a claim pursuant to *Family Provision Act 1972 (WA)*, and various Magistrates Court criminal matters.

**Pro bono assistance increases our capacity to provide quality assistance to our clients**



**Pro bono assistance received by our clients was worth over \$74,597.00**

## ASSISTANCE TO STREET LAW

This year, Street Law received assistance from Herbert Smith Freehills, Clayton Utz, and Moore Stephens, who have once again provided us with a pro bono financial audit.

The total value of all of these services was over \$7,500.00.

**The total value of direct pro bono assistance provided to Street Law was over \$7,500.00**

# CASE STUDY:

## Robin's story

Robin approached us at our Tranby outreach legal clinic for advice concerning a potential assault charge. We provided advice concerning the criminal issue and during the interview Robin stated that he had outstanding fines and infringements. At that time the total fines and infringements outstanding was \$16,633.60.

Due to an accident Robin sustained an acquired brain injury (ABI) and as a result he experienced significant short-term memory issues. Following the accident, Robin was sleeping rough for nearly two years before finally obtaining secure accommodation. Robin's outstanding infringements continued to increase as he frequently forgot whether he had purchased a ticket or whether he tagged on and off with his Smart Rider. Robin was often issued multiple infringements on a daily basis. This resulted in the debt increasing exponentially.

The only option available to Robin under the *Fines, Penalties and Infringements Notices Enforcement Act 1994 (WA)* (FPINES Act) was to enter into a time to pay arrangement. As Robin's only source of income was Centrelink payments, this debt was placing his accommodation at risk.

Street Law researched the FPINES Act and proceeded to obtain medical records. The aim was to seek to reduce the debt on medical grounds and to put in place strategies for Robin so that he was not continually incurring infringements.

**Street Law  
worked on  
Robin's file for  
over 35 hours**

As a result, Street Law successfully applied for a Half Yearly Unrestricted Ticket from the government agency, so that he was not required to purchase tickets or use his Smart Rider. This meant going forward he was less likely to be issued infringements.

A detailed submission was forwarded to the relevant government agency requesting that all of the infringements incurred from the date Robin sustained his ABI be withdrawn. At the time the submission was forwarded the total outstanding had increased to \$25,038.30. Street Law's submission was accepted and all of Robin's outstanding infringements were waived. Without help, Robin's accommodation would have been jeopardised.

Robin now has an effective system in place to utilise public transport. The government agency thanked Street Law for its advocacy on behalf of Robin as it recognised the difficult circumstances he was in.





# COMMUNITY LEGAL EDUCATION (CLE)

*We developed our CLE program, focusing on providing both community legal education and advice services to our client group in order to address legal issues holistically. Additionally, we provided training sessions across WA, trialed a Schools Project and continued to provide extensive training to our own volunteers and staff.*

*Over the course of the year we provided 40 training sessions for community workers, and 32 for our client group. Training focused on practical ways to navigate legal issues.*

## We provided direct training to

**149**

PEOPLE EXPERIENCING  
OR AT RISK OF  
HOMELESSNESS

**43**

COMMUNITY LEGAL  
CENTRE STAFF AND  
VOLUNTEERS

**15**

COMMUNITY  
MEMBERS

**150**

COMMUNITY WORKERS

**62**

STREET LAW STAFF  
AND VOLUNTEERS

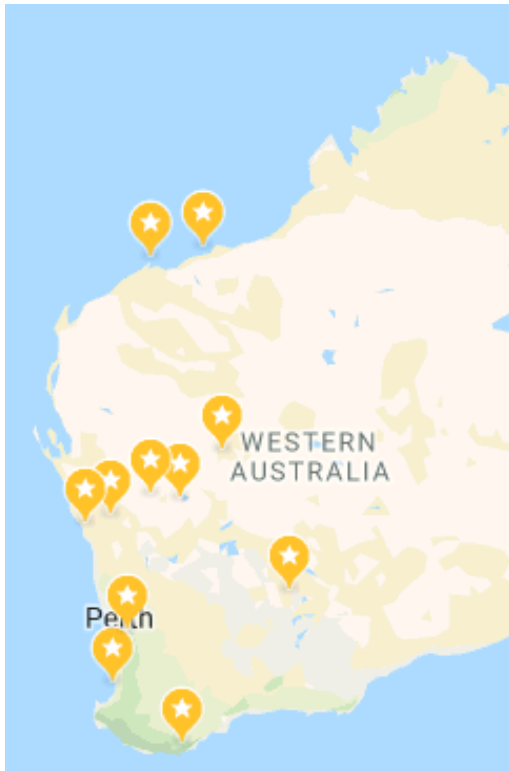
**249**

SCHOOL  
STUDENTS



Homelessness in regional areas was a key focus for our CLE service delivery over this year. It became clear that key homelessness preventative initiatives were Perth based, but resources, legal and otherwise, were limited outside of Perth

We chose regional locations based on presence of people experiencing homelessness, interest from the local community, and support and evidence of need shown by the local community legal centres in regional areas.



## Our regional training

9

SESSIONS PROVIDED TO  
CLIENT GROUPS IN  
REGIONAL AREAS

10

SESSIONS PROVIDED TO  
COMMUNITY LEGAL  
CENTRES IN REGIONAL  
AREAS

24

SESSIONS PROVIDED TO  
COMMUNITY WORKERS  
IN REGIONAL AREAS

*"Street Law [staff] spoke to all ... with respect and understanding, which I feel helped the women open up and ask quite a few questions"*

*WHAT COMMUNITY  
WORKERS SAID*



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

A key resource developed this financial year was the ID Docs App, created in conjunction with the University of Western Australia.

The web based app was created to assist people in identifying if they had enough ID documents to open a bank account, get photo ID, and to access Centrelink.

Where they did not have enough ID, it would give suggestions as to how to access this. The launch of the ID App happened during Law Week. We extend our thanks to Tranby for hosting this event, and for the Hon. Chief Justice Peter Quinlan for delivering the opening address.

# 89

**LEGAL EDUCATION  
RESOURCES  
CREATED**



## RECOGNITION & AWARDS

**"[STREET LAW] RECOGNISES  
THAT LEGAL PRACTITIONERS, TO  
HELP HOMELESS PEOPLE  
EFFECTIVELY, NEED TO BE ABLE  
TO RESOLVE MULTIPLE LEGAL  
ISSUES FOR THEIR CLIENTS ON  
THE SPOT AND MUST BE BASED  
ALONGSIDE OTHER SERVICES  
WHICH ASSIST SUCH CLIENTS."**

*THE HON JOHN QUIGLEY,  
WA ATTORNEY GENERAL LAW WEEK 2019*

Street Law were recognised as winners of the WA Attorney Generals Law Award, and the Consumer Protection 'Richard (Dick) Fletcher' award.



# 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

- Social Reinvestment Fine Default Sub-Committee
- 10 Year Homelessness Strategy
- Contribution to Criminalisation of Homelessness Research (Prof. T Walsh, the University of QLD)

## Committees

- Legal Public Insurance Indemnity subcommittee
- Shelter WA member
- WA Alliance to End Homelessness (WAAEH)

## Contributed

- Homelessness Services Accreditation Process City of Perth
- WAAEH Outcomes Measurement Framework

## Presented at

- IMPACT 3x10 event at King & Wood Mallesons

# STRATEGIC PLANNING

A focus organisationally is to plan forward, and look at maximising our impact with the available resources. This involved an in-depth evaluation of our service delivery, consultation with our stakeholders and clients, and a planning day with our staff and Management Committee. We were also privileged to welcome back our founding Chairs, Ian Murray and Daniel Sawyer to discuss the history and development of Street Law Centre.





# 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.

A key focus of our social media presence is to highlight areas of stigma and disadvantage to our clients, and show the impact of legal assistance for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.



**804**

*likes on Facebook*



**32%**

*increase in Facebook followers*



**259**

*Twitter followers*



**2836**

*Website users*

**join us at  
@StreetLawWA**





# FINANCIALS

**Street Law's financials can be found attached.**

