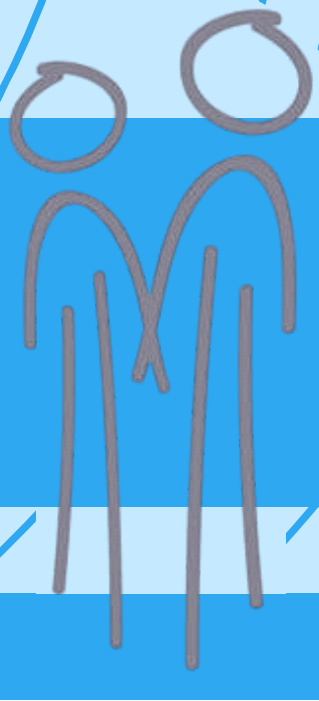
STREET LAW CENTRE WA

ANNUAL REPORT

2022 - 2023



Street Law champions for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, through our legal work for social justice.

www.streetlawcentre.org.au

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Street Law Centre respectfully acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land as being the first peoples of this country. We acknowledge the custodians of the land on which we work, the Wadjuck (Perth region) people of the Noongar nation. We embrace the expansive Aboriginal cultural diversity throughout Western Australia and pay respect to elders past and present and recongise their continuing connection to country, water and sky.

Sovereignty has never been ceded.
Always was, always will be Aboriginal land.

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 experiencing homelessness. We are focused and purposeful in what we do.

WE HAVE INTEGRITY

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

WE ARE COMPASSIONATE

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

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MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

Dear Members and other Supporters,

I am honored to address you in this Annual Report and reflect on Street Law Centre's journey over the past year. In this period, our organisation has continued to make a meaningful and direct impact on the lives of our clients, thanks to the collective efforts of our dedicated staff, secondees, volunteers, and the unwavering support of our valued partners.

The 2022-2023 financial year presented opportunities and challenges for Street Law Centre. Street Law has continued to increase service delivery to people who are experiencing homelessness and are at risk of homelessness across Western Australia. With the rising cost of living and the related crisis in housing availability, the need for the service proved to be as high as ever. This is clear from the significant rise in our clients' street present homelessness we saw throughout this financial year.

The client group Street Law assist present with complex legal issues that require trauma informed legal expertise and commitment to working collaboratively with service providers to remove barriers to exiting homelessness.

Our staff, secondees, and volunteers have exemplified dedication and commitment to ensure that access to justice is not just an aspiration but a reality for all. Their tireless efforts have provided vital legal advice, advocacy, and representation to the most vulnerable members of our society, making a profound difference in the community. Lead by Principal Solicitor, Ann-Margaret Walsh, the Street Law team showed continual tenacity in their advocacy for clients. We were pleased to welcome Adam Hammond to the Supervising Solicitor for criminal matters during the year and appoint Anna Hitomi as Supervising Solicitor for civil matters. Both Adam and Anna bring skills and expertise to their roles that greatly assist our team in achieving its mission.

Street Law increased service delivery through two new legal outreach clinics at Koort Boodja and the Beacon and continued outreach at Tranby, Karnany, St Pat's and Ruah.

I want to express Street Law's gratitude to our funders—the State and Federal Governments, the Public Purposes Trust, and LotteryWest. Your continued support enables us to carry out our mission and expand our reach, making justice accessible to those who might otherwise be left without assistance to fully participate in society.

Furthermore, we are deeply thankful for the collaboration and support of the law firm partners (Corrs Chambers Westgarth, King & Wood Mallesons, Ashurst, and MinterEllison), outreach centers (Ruah, Karnany, Passages, Mobile Midlas, St Pat's, Tranby, Koort Boodja and the Beacon), the independent bar and other organizations that work hand-in-hand with us. Your partnership has allowed us to amplify our impact and extend our reach, ensuring that justice can be accessed by everyone.

As we look to the future, we invite organizations that share our vision and our mission to join with us. Together, we can continue to advance the cause of justice and make our community a fairer and more equitable place for all.

In closing, I want to express my gratitude for your unwavering support. It is through our collective efforts that we can create a brighter, more just future for our community.

Thank you for believing in Street Law and for being part of our journey.

Drew Broadfoot

OUR CENTRE

Street Law Centre WA is a specialist community legal centre that provides free, high-quality, independent legal advice and legal assistance to people experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness in Western Australia. We provide culturally aware and trauma informed legal advice, advocacy, representation, and assistance in a wide range of civil and criminal legal areas that most commonly impact our client group. We pride ourselves on being responsive and the depth of legal services we provide.

Our client group commonly have multiple and complex legal issues which are intertwined with social, welfare and health issues. Our services are delivered holistically and in collaboration with social, welfare and health services to ensure our clients have support to address all of the issues causing and contributing to their experience of homelessness. We are motivated by the vision of a compassionate community where every person has a safe place to call home.

In addition to our legal services, we empower our client group and community service workers through our comprehensive community legal education program.

We are drivers of change through our involvement in law reform and advocacy projects aimed at addressing systemic issues for people experiencing homelessness.

We are proud to be Western Australia's only free legal service to people experiencing homelessness, thereby ensuring they have access to justice.

OUR OVERALL REACH

553
clients assisted

425
new
clients assisted

650
Legal advices delivered

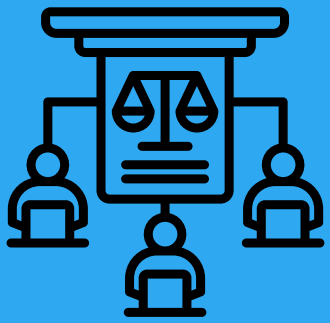
104
Court appearances

307
Information and referrals provided

47%
of clients presented with **2 or more legal issues**

15%
of clients presented with **3 or more legal issues**

129
Ongoing representation and court/tribunal matters **opened**



81
Ongoing representation and court/tribunal matters **closed**

OUR LEGAL SERVICES

TOP 5 LEGAL ISSUES

1. ID Documents
2. Fines & Infringements
3. Criminal Matters
4. Criminal Injuries Compensation
5. Department of Communities, Housing, issues

1 ID DOCUMENTS

*Name changed for confidentiality

Jamie* was 14 years old when she called our free advice line. Due to the difficulties Jamie faced in her family life, she was unable to attend school. Jamie had left her family home due to experiencing ongoing family violence and was street present for several months. When Jamie contacted our centre she was couch surfing with a friend.

It was during our first discussion with Jamie that she said she wanted to get back to school and obtain financial and health support. She also needed her identity documents to move on with her life and become responsible for herself.

Jamie needed her birth certificate so she could open a bank account, apply for Centrelink, tax file number and Medicare card, and re-enroll in school. Generally, a person under 16 years old is unable to apply for their birth certificate without the consent of their parents. However, for Jamie's application we outlined her extenuating circumstances and outlined why she had adequate reasons for requesting her birth certificate. This application was successful.

To determine whether it was necessary to have the support of a parent when enrolling into school, Street Law reviewed the laws and policies relating to the enrolment requirements for public schools. We successfully submitted that Jamie be designated an independent minor for the purposes of her education as Jamie had the capacity to make her own decisions and did not want her parents involved in her life.

Street Law also provided Jamie with advice and instructions on how she could open a bank account and apply for her Medicare card and tax file number and Youth Allowance as an independent. Without Jamie's birth certificate these applications would not be possible. By Jamie getting her birth certificate, it resulted in her having a wider range of both legal, social and welfare issues addressed. Although we only paid for Jamie's birth certificate in this matter, the legal resources invested in resolving Jamie's several legal issues are conservatively valued at $1,200.

2 FINES AND INFRINGEMENTS

We successfully negotiated with government agencies to have

$62,051.20

of our client's infringement debt withdrawn

We assisted **135** clients with managing their outstanding fines and infringements. Infringement debt is especially common for our client group. Commonly our clients are issued with infringements for failing to vote in elections, using public transport services without a valid ticket or failing to return their registration plates. Clients in this position are issued the infringements as a consequence of their circumstances of homelessness and other complex issues that stem from that experience. Outstanding infringements create a further barrier for our clients to exit homelessness, as it leads to significant debt, licence suspension, and further social exclusion.

3 CRIMINAL MATTERS

Rachel* called our free advice line for assistance with obtaining identity documents. We soon discovered that Rachel was scheduled to appear in the Magistrate Court for a charge of unlawful wounding in circumstances of aggravation. This was a serious charge that carried a maximum penalty of three years imprisonment and a fine of $36,000. Rachel was a young mum to a 4-month-old baby and was facing a high likelihood of being sentenced to an immediate term of imprisonment. This was due to the seriousness of the offence and her previous criminal history, which included poor compliance with court orders. If imprisonment was ordered, Rachel would have been separated from her baby and missed out on the first years of her life. Understandably, this was Rachel's greatest concern.

Name changed for confidentiality

Rachel's life over the past few years was challenging. Rachel's addiction issues resulted in her experiencing homelessness and having no stable and secure accommodation. Rachel's addiction had a direct correlation to her previous offending and poor compliance with court orders. When Rachel became pregnant with her baby, she successfully overcame her drug addiction and was committed to starting a new path. At the time Rachel was charged, she was intoxicated with alcohol; however, alcohol was not an ongoing problem for her. This was the first time Rachel had a drink in over a year. There was also an element of provocation by her brother contributing to Rachel's offending.

20%

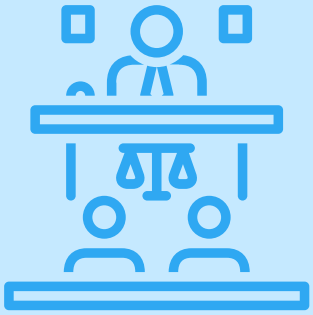
of our legal services this financial year were criminal matters

Rachel was charged with unlawful wounding in circumstances of aggravation after her and her brother got into a heated altercation. When Rachel engaged with us, she had not received legal advice and had already gone through four adjournments in court.

After reviewing initial disclosure from the police, we advised Rachel on the options available and the potential penalties and consequences of her charge. Rachel decided to plead guilty to the charge and we agreed to negotiate to have one of the two circumstances of aggravation removed from the charge. We did this as the evidence relied upon by the police did not support the circumstances of aggravation as alleged. Our submissions on this point were successful. It is vital that the statement of material facts accurately represents the circumstances of offending and that the charged person agrees with those facts, as it is those facts that the Magistrate will take into account when imposing a sentence.

When we made our first appearance on behalf of Rachel to enter her plea of guilty, we requested that the court order a pre-sentence report to assess Rachel's suitability for a community-based order. This was an important report to obtain given that Rachel faced a real likelihood of a term of imprisonment.

At the sentencing hearing, during our plea in mitigation submissions we raised factual reservations based on how the altercation unfolded between Rachel and her brother. The Magistrate stated that the difference between Rachel's version of events and the statement of material facts would impact on the sentence imposed and a trial of the issues was ordered. After seeking further instructions from Rachel and negotiating with the prosecution, the trial of the issues was abandoned as amendments to the statement of material facts were agreed upon. Rachel was then sentenced, and a 7-month suspended imprisonment order was imposed. This was very positive as it meant Rachel could remain the primary caregiver to her baby and was not required to serve time in prison.



Street Law appeared on Rachel's behalf four times for the duration of her matter and required the investment of 20 hours of legal resources. Without our assistance, it is very likely Rachel would have been sentenced to a term of imprisonment and separated from her baby. We ensured that Rachel had access to legal advice and advocated on her behalf to ensure the facts of the charge reflected a true depiction of events and that the Magistrate had the appropriate information available to ensure an outcome commensurate with Rachel's mitigating factors was ordered.

4 CRIMINAL INJURIES COMPENSATION

People who are experiencing homelessness experience high rates of victimisation. We assist our clients to submit criminal injuries compensation applications where they have been a victim of a criminal offence which has caused them physical and/or psychological injuries. The compensation awards that client's can receive as a result of injuries they have suffered allows them to alleviate day-to-day stressors. Some awards allow clients to consider buying cars, obtain private rentals or even put a deposit on a home. Criminal injuries compensation awards give clients the potential to be able to exit homelessness and obtain stability.

We received decisions on four applications this financial year. These four clients overall were awarded

$246,381.20

5 HOUSING

*Name changed for confidentiality

Patrick* is a 63-year-old First Nations man with an extensive history of experiencing homelessness and mental health issues. Since Patrick was a young boy, he experienced long periods of homelessness and has never had stable and secure accommodation.

We met Patrick at one of our outreach legal clinics. While assisting Patrick with another legal issue he instructed us to confirm that his name was still on the housing list with the Department of Communities ('the Department'). Patrick was shocked to discover that his name on the housing waitlist had been removed in 2019. Patrick's application was removed after the Department had sent an annual review form and Patrick had not responded to that form. Patrick instructed us that he did not receive the form or any direct contact from the Department. Further, Patrick had not received any confirmation of his name being removed from the housing waitlist in 2019 due to having no permanent contact details and having no fixed address; a consequence and reality of experiencing homelessness.

Patrick was faced with the unnerving fact that a new housing application would give him a waitlist date of 2022. This meant Patrick would remain street present and in a cycle of homelessness for many more years until it was his turn to receive an offer of accommodation with the Department.

As Patrick was not aware that his housing application had been withdrawn and given his extenuating circumstances and ongoing hardship, we advised him of the option of submitting an appeal to review the decision made by the Department to withdraw the housing application. As Patrick's general right to appeal had expired 12 months after the housing application was withdrawn, we submitted that the Department exercise their discretionary decision making power to accept our request to extend the time in which Patrick could appeal. These submissions focused on Patrick's ongoing experience of homelessness which was a direct factor contributing to him not being able to respond to the annual review form.

Without access to a permanent address, postal address, regular contact number, emails, and not having the ability to charge and pay for a mobile phone, it was not equitable that Patrick's housing application be withdrawn, particularly given Patrick had not had the opportunity to discuss the decision with the Department.

Our appeal submissions advocated that Patrick's housing application being withdrawn was due to the realities of experiencing homelessness. The Department policy states that it is up to its clients to update their contact details and to respond to all Department correspondence. However, it is very difficult for people experiencing homelessness to meet those requirements. Patrick, and people in his position, do not know where they will be sleeping most nights. Further, when a person who is experiencing homelessness has a contact number this can change for many reasons including having their phone stolen, losing the phone while street present, running out of credit or having their number disconnected. We included in the submissions that Patrick remained eligible for housing assistance between 2019 to 2022 and that Patrick's age, cultural identity and extreme hardship were relevant factors that must be considered by the Department.

Our appeal submissions were successful. This meant that Patrick's housing application was reinstated and backdated to his original waitlist date in 2018. In April 2023, Patrick was offered a property with the Department.

The policy that was relied upon to withdraw Patrick's housing application is adversely impacting many people who are experiencing homelessness. By working in this legal area and assisting our clients to maintain their position on the Department's housing waitlist and where needed advocating for housing applications to be reinstated and backdated, Street Law is responding to the needs of its client. This outcome was achieved through the investment of 30 hours of legal resources.

OUR LEGAL CLINICS

We provide legal services at co-located outreach legal clinics to ensure Street Law's legal service is delivered holistically and alongside social, welfare and health services. This financial year we continued our long-standing partnerships with the following six community support services where we hosted our legal clinics on a weekly and fortnightly basis.

Indigo Junction
Open doors - create change

RUAH
COMMUNITY SERVICES
Open Hearts. Bold Strides.

midlas

St Pat's | St Patrick's Community Support Centre

Rotary Club of Perth | Vinnies good works

Uniting WA

THE SALVATION ARMY

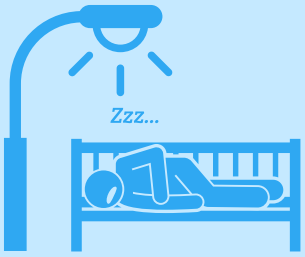
We also strengthened our partnerships with Uniting WA's Koort Boodja service and the Salvation Army's Beacon Accommodation Service to provide legal clinics to their residents throughout the year.

We extended our reach within the Perth metropolitan area and regionally to host pop up legal clinics with Street Doctor, Bloodwood Tree's Wapa Maya centre, 55 Central, and the Albany & Regional Volunteer Service.

OUR CLIENTS

STREET LAW'S PRIORITY GROUPS

Our clients that fall within these groups are those who are in the most vulnerable situations experiencing deep and persistent disadvantages. Of all our clients:



38%

were street present

26%

identified as First Nations Peoples

23%

were women & children experiencing family & domestic violence

5%

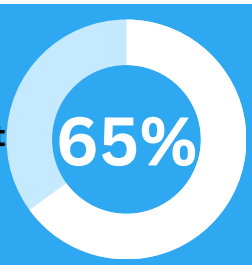
were women over 55 years old

20%

were under the age of 25

CLIENT TRENDS FROM OUR LEGAL CLINICS

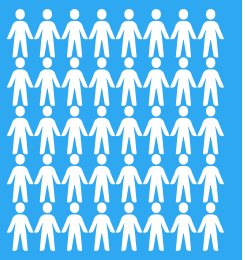
The highest proportion of clients who identified as **First Nations** peoples attended our legal clinics in **Midland**



49%

of clients who attended our weekly legal clinic at Uniting WA's **Tranby** Centre were **street present**

The age bracket of **35 to 49 years old** was the most **common age** of clients from 7 of our 8 legal clinics



Our **young person's** clinic at Vinnie's Passages Youth Engagement Hub saw the highest number of clients who had experienced **family & domestic violence** issues

37%

of clients who attended our fortnightly legal clinic at **St Pats** in Fremantle were between **50 to 64 years old**

47% of clients who attended our weekly legal clinic at **Passages** were **street present**

12% of clients who attended our weekly legal clinic at **Passages** were **under the age of 17**

OUR ADVICE LINE

Our advice line provides accessible legal advice to our clients. Our free advice line is run by our lawyers and allows our client group to access legal assistance from anywhere in Western Australia.

235

Legal advices delivered

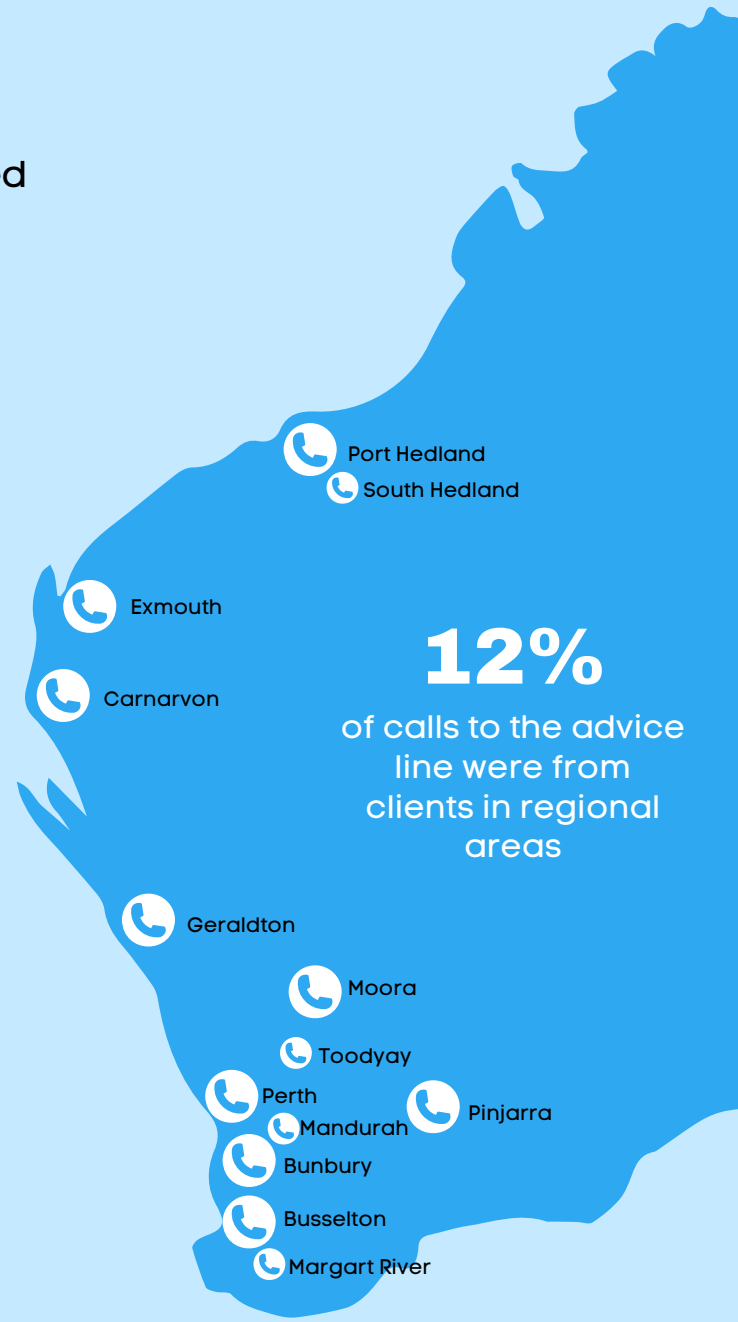
157

Information & referrals provided

46

Ongoing representation and court/tribunal matters opened

LOCATIONS AND REACH



IDENTITY DOCUMENTS

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 6, establishes that it is a basic human right to have a legal identity. Having documents that demonstrate your identity from birth ensures that rights and access to services are protected. Legal identity is so vital that the United Nations have included it as one of its 17 sustainable development goals for 2030.

People experiencing homelessness commonly do not have access to documents that prove their legal identity. This is because people experiencing homelessness are unable to keep their documents safe as they have no permanent or secure accommodation and are more likely to be the victims of crime. Without formal identity documents our client group are unable to participate in society and access essential services such as applying for accommodation, accessing a bank account, applying for Centrelink benefits, and purchasing and activating a mobile phone. This leaves people experiencing homelessness in further social isolation.

This financial year, we assisted

49%

of our clients to obtain their identity documents.

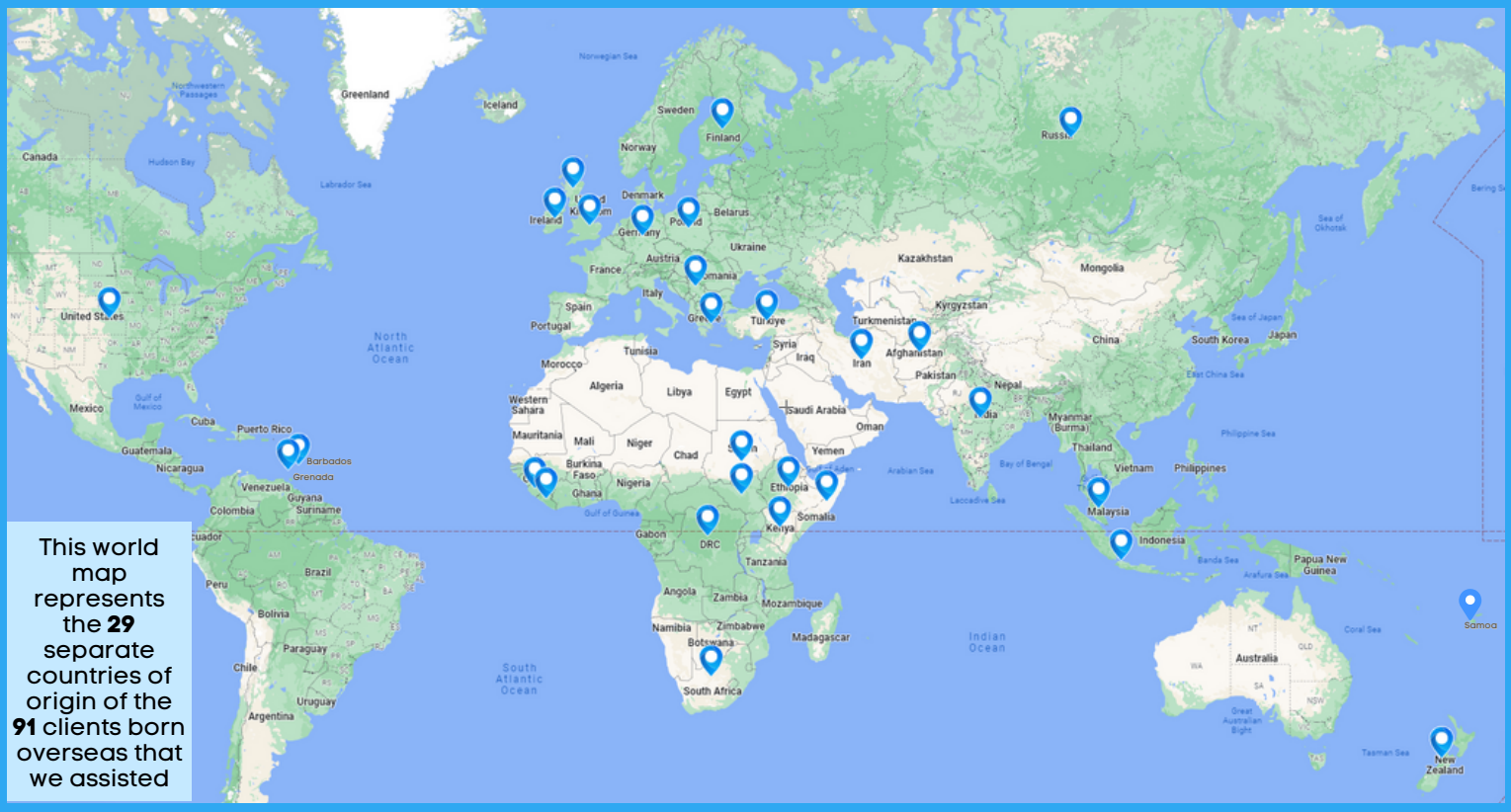
There are inflexible and inconsistent policies in place that create barriers for people experiencing homelessness to obtain their identity documents. The degree of difficulty in replacing identity documents for people increases significantly when they are born interstate or overseas. We are one of the few community legal centres that deliver legal services in this area.

43%

of our legal services were ID related, making it our top legal issue for this financial year.

Our legal expertise and advocacy is vital for our clients to obtain their identity documents as we navigate around the policies and barriers. Without access to identity documents a person will not be treated fairly and equally when interacting with both government and private services. We are protecting and advocating for the right to identity by ensuring our clients have access to their identity documents.

17% of the identity document matters we worked on were for clients who were born overseas and now living in Australia as permanent residents or Australian citizens.



This world map represents the **29** separate countries of origin of the **91** clients born overseas that we assisted

IDENTITY DOCUMENTS: OUR IMPACT

Through Street Law's persistence, support and legal work Malik obtained photo identification for the first time since arriving in Australia in early 2009

Malik* arrived in Australia in 2009 as an asylum seeker fleeing persecution from his country of origin. During his journey to Australia, he was forced to throw any identity documents he had overboard. After spending several months at Christmas Island's Detention Centre, Malik's application for refugee status was accepted and he was granted permanent residency in Australia. Unfortunately, Malik became entrenched in a cycle of homelessness and poverty. Malik describes his circumstances as "always homeless; going from one friend to another when they let me, otherwise I live on the streets". Malik could only speak limited English and had no identity documents which greatly contributed to Malik experiencing homelessness for 10 years.

Malik contacted Street Law for assistance with obtaining photo identification ('ID'). Malik needed photo ID for everyday life as he found it difficult to participate in society without it. Specifically, he needed photo ID to obtain employment, make an application for Australian citizenship, apply for a tax file number, and to access other necessary services including accommodation.

Malik needed to provide full proof of identity to obtain a photo card with the Department of Transport ('the Department'). This meant Malik had to provide the Department with documents that evidenced his arrival and residency status in Australia.

A Freedom of Information application was made to the Department of Home Affairs for Malik's arrival and visa status documents. Hundreds of pages were received from Home Affairs, however, the documents received did not satisfy the proof of identity requirements prescribed by the Department. As Malik was unable to obtain any documents to satisfy the Department's category A requirement – proof of arrival and residency status – submissions were sent requesting that they exercise the discretion outlined in the Photo Card Act 2014 (WA) and accept Malik's application. Research into the National Proofing Guidelines revealed the guidelines prescribed alternative identity proofing options for clients who satisfy the definition of an exception case.

An exception case includes people experiencing homelessness, people with limited access to identity documents and people with limited participation in society. Malik's application was accepted based on our submissions.

Street Law's assistance was required as Malik was extremely vulnerable; he had experienced chronic homelessness; English was not his first language which formed a significant barrier for him; and he had medical conditions, including post-traumatic stress disorder and physical illnesses that he was unable to adequately manage due to experiencing homelessness. Through Street Law's advocacy, which included working with interpreters, Malik obtained a photo card with the Department of Transport. We also assisted Malik with a priority housing waitlist application to the Department of Communities and facilitated a successful referral for Malik to obtain transitional accommodation. Through Malik's transitional accommodation he was designated a case worker, who then assisted Malik to address his social, welfare and health issues that also formed barriers to him exiting homelessness permanently.

We see many clients who experience similar circumstances as Malik and struggle to obtain documents to satisfy the relevant government departments' proof of identity requirements. Through our advocacy we break down the barriers and assist clients who are born overseas and living in Australia permanently with obtaining photo identification. Further, it ensures that clients whose first language is not English have their voices heard.

This matter required the investment of 25 hours of legal time. Due to the urgency of Malik requiring identity documents, this legal issue was responded to as a priority. The relationships Street Law has with social, welfare and health providers enabled a successful urgent referral to supported transitional accommodation which Malik has been able to maintain and has allowed Malik to manage his health issues.

*Name changed for confidentiality

MIDLAND PROJECT

People who are experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness in the Midland area have an increasing legal need with limited legal services in the area. We have responded to this gap in legal services by providing dedicated weekly outreach legal clinics for our clients in the Midland community. Our Midland Project is made possible by the Public Purposes Trust Fund.

Through the Midland Project we held two weekly outreach legal clinics in Midland, one at Indigo Junction's Karnany Resource Centre, and the other in collaboration with the mobile Midlas bus at the Swan District Football Club. Due to the Midlas bus project concluding, our services at the Swan District Football Club were paused in January 2023. We will recommence services at the football club in the 2023/2024 financial year.

49
Clients assisted through the Midland Project

52
Legal advices provided

9
Ongoing representation and court/tribunal matters opened

18
Court appearances

37%
of clients presented with **two separate legal issues**

65%
of clients who attended our legal clinics in Midland identified as **First Nations peoples**

25%
of clients were **street present**

33%
of clients from our legal clinic with **Mobile Midlas** were between the ages of **50 to 64 years old**

22%
of clients experienced **family & domestic violence**

26%
of clients from our **Karnany** legal clinic were under the age of 25

10%
of our **Karnany** clients were **women over 55**

MIDLAND PROJECT: OUR IMPACT

Street Law's Midland Project, funded by the Law Society's Public Purposes Trust Fund has allowed Street Law to provide end-to-end legal services for our clients in the Midland area.

Sam* began experiencing homelessness due to a family violence restraining order. He was allowed to contact his ex-partner to communicate about their child. Sam was charged with breaching the restraining order when a text that was unrelated to the child was sent, Sam maintained that his device was hacked. Street Law reviewed the evidence, undertook a merits assessment, and represented Sam at his trial. Due to Street Law's advocacy, Sam was acquitted and was able to maintain contact with his child subject to a conduct agreement order he agreed to. The conduct agreement order was in the same terms and conditions as the family violence restraining order but contained no admissions, which meant Sam had not accepted any acts of family violence had occurred between him and his ex-partner.

Sam presented again at our legal clinic at Karnany in August 2022. He was distressed that his ex-partner had applied to the court to extend the conduct agreement order for two more years. Sam was very anxious about the situation and did not want to agree to the extension of the order.

Street Law proceeded to review the evidence and assess whether there was any likelihood or reasonable grounds that acts of family violence would be committed in the future.

This was necessary as it was a key consideration as to whether the conduct agreement order would be extended at the upcoming hearing. As Sam had not breached the existing conduct agreement order which had been in place for two years, it was our view that there was no evidence in favour of extending the order.

Street Law provided advice on the merits of the options available to Sam, they being, accepting the proposed extended conduct agreement order, varying the terms of the conduct agreement order, or both parties entering into a Mutual Undertaking. A mutual undertaking is a promise to the courts and can contain the same terms of a restraining order. Sam advised that his first preference was to enter a Mutual Undertaking with his ex-partner. Sam did not want the matter to proceed to the scheduled hearing. Street Law negotiated with the other party's solicitors and a Mutual Undertaking was agreed to.

Due to Street Law's representation and negotiation, the matter was resolved which benefited Sam. Street Law's advice and advocacy resulted in a Mutual Undertaking which protected both parties for two years. This was a great outcome for all. This matter required the investment of 10 hours of legal time by a restricted practitioner including supervision.

*Name changed for confidentiality

Client FEEDBACK

Sam said the assistance he received was quickly executed and extended his gratitude to Street Law.

YOUTH OUTREACH LEGAL PROJECT

People under 25 years old account for 19% of all West Australians experiencing homelessness. To combat the rise of youth homelessness we partnered with Vinnies WA's Passages Youth Engagement Hub in 2012. Passages provides a non-judgmental safe space for marginalised and at risk young people between the ages of 12 to 25 years old. In 2021, with the support and funding of Lottery West, we further collaborated with Passages to bring the Youth Outreach Legal Project. This collaboration continued this financial year with a dedicated Street Law solicitor working with a dedicated Passages case worker to provide holistic, tailored, and trauma informed services to street present youth. The project provides wrap-around support and ongoing assistance to the people within the program to address their socio-economic, health, housing and legal issues. Clients in the program presented with an average of three legal issues and 85% identified experiencing family and domestic violence issues. The legal issues the young clients needed assistance with were complex and required the investment of 103 hours of legal resources. The project's focus is bringing about real change to the lives of the young people.

13
Clients assisted

12
Court/tribunal matters opened

2
Ongoing representation matters opened

22
Court appearances

72%
of clients in the project needed assistance with criminal matters

YOUTH OUTREACH LEGAL PROJECT OUR IMPACT

After experiencing years of domestic violence and neglect in her family home, Kelly* made the decision to leave her home at the age of 13 years old to protect herself. Kelly went on to experience long term homelessness for the next nine years. Kelly's ongoing homelessness had significantly impacted her mental health, causing her to have numerous unmanaged mental health conditions. Kelly was referred to Passages Youth Engagement Hub through a mental health service. It was quickly identified that Kelly would benefit from being part of the Youth Outreach Legal Project to address her outstanding legal issues and obtain social, welfare and health support through Passages.

Kelly had two traffic charges for no authority to drive and reckless driving. The maximum penalty for the no authority to drive charge ranges from a fine not less than $400 or more than $2000 and imprisonment for not more than 12 months. Additionally, the court is required to impose a licence disqualification of a period between 9 months and 3 years. The maximum penalty available for reckless driving is a fine of $6000 or imprisonment for 9 months, as well as a licence disqualification period that is not less than 6 months. Street Law provided Kelly with legal advice on her charges, negotiated to have the statement of material facts amended, prepared plea in mitigation submissions and provided representation and advocacy at Kelly's court hearing. Kelly received a $600 court fine for her charges and was disqualified from holding or obtaining a driver's licence for 9 months for the no authority to drive charge and 6 months for the reckless driving charge. The disqualification period was ordered to be served concurrently, meaning her licence would only be disqualified for a 9-month period. We also successfully argued for a spent conviction order for these charges, which meant that the convictions would not appear on any future National Police Check Kelly obtained. This was a good outcome for Kelly which was reflective of our advocacy which enabled the court to have a full understanding of the circumstances of the offending in the context of Kelly's extenuating circumstances she was experiencing at the time.

Once Kelly's criminal matters had resolved, we assisted Kelly with making a criminal injuries compensation claim for a sexual assault she experienced as teenager. We assisted Kelly to gather documents to support her application and demonstrate the immense impact the assault had on her life. Kelly was awarded $55,000 by the Office of Criminal Injuries Compensation.

While we assisted Kelly with her legal issues, Passages assisted Kelly to determine her goals, which was to obtain accommodation, education and employment. Passage assisted Kelly to meet these goals by submitting referrals for accommodation. The Passages case worker also connected Kelly with a service to assist her with managing her mental health conditions. After the legal matters were concluded, Kelly felt she was in the position to reconnect with family members and the case worker was also able to refer Kelly into transitional accommodation. Together our services made it possible for Kelly to move forward with her life. This outcome was achieved through the investment of 50 hours of legal resources.

*Name changed for confidentiality

PRO BONO SUPPORT

This year Street Law continued to receive pro bono and non-legal support to expand the much needed services to our clients.

SECONDEE SUPPORT

Ashurst, **Corrs Chambers Westgarth**, **Minter Ellison**, and **King & Wood Mallesons** provided **1,597 hours** of pro bono support, an equivalent value of **$399,250.**

Ashurst
Jade Campbell
Yasoda McGeary
Ben Paganin
Junaid Sheikh
Jordan Soresi
Harry Yeo

Corrs Chambers Westgarth
Carla Hawgood
Nanacy Zhao
Brenna Varcoe

Minter Ellison
Nicole Phillips

King & Wood Mallesons
Georgina Due
Ebony Harris
Zachary Heim
Maddison Hogan

We additionally received the assistance of two solicitors from **DLA Piper, Rebecca McMahon** and **Joshua Scoles**. DLA Piper provided us with 72.4 hours of pro bono support, an equivalent value of **$18,100.**

MCCUSKER PROGRAM

We participated with UWA's McCusker Internship Program to have two students assist us with projects. The students contributed **200 hours** of assistance. Thank you to **Madeleine Davenport** and **Nozomi Suzaki** for your contribution to our centre.

Thank you to all our secondees and pro bono partners for your continued support.

SECONDEE FEEDBACK

What have you enjoyed the most in your time with us?

"Going into the Tranby legal clinic has certainly been the most enjoyable aspect of my time at Street Law. I really enjoyed meeting the clients and working through their problems with them on the spot."

"I enjoyed going to clinic and working with regular clients from start to finish so you can see the positive change your help can make."

"I have enjoyed gaining insight into the work that Street Law does to support vulnerable members of our community. Having the opportunity to contribute to this work has been rewarding . I particularly enjoyed seeing the close relationships Street Law shares with its clients and other services at the outreach clinics I attended."

"Working with the whole team and being able to contribute to the meaningful work that everyone is doing has been really satisfying and enjoyable. It is very rewarding to know that the work you are doing directly impacts someone's journey in life."

"I loved seeing the team at Street Law work together to achieve desired outcomes for the clients."

How do you feel about the organisation?

"I am very impressed by the valuable work Street Law does and am glad that this service exists to support clients. As a workplace, I think Street Law does a great job at supporting the wellbeing of staff. Everyone was incredibly welcoming and supportive."

"The necessity of the organisation is almost unparalleled - there is no one else providing these services directly to this client group in Perth."

"Highly positive. It is refreshing to see so much empathy and energy at Street Law."

"It is amazing to witness how an organisation like Street Law is directly helping disadvantaged peoples' journey through life. The team is hardworking and friendly, and they are truly dedicated to the good they are doing."

How did you find the supervision at Street Law?

"I really enjoyed being supervised by Anna, she was great with feedback and allowed me to help draft many of the documents required."

"Being supervised by Ann-Margaret was great - there is so much I was able to learn and takeaway. Whether it was legal technical skills involved with drafting correspondence, or learning the thought processes behind casework - it has been great working with Ann-Margaret and the team."

COMMUNITY LEGAL EDUCATION

Our comprehensive community legal education program, funded by the Public Purposes Trust Fund, focuses on providing legal education to our client group, to community service workers and to the broader community.

CLIENT DIRECTED TRAINING

The provision of direct legal education to our client group is critical, due to the regular interaction those experiencing homelessness may have with the police and the courts. Our client directed education focuses on empowering our client group with the knowledge and tools to assist them to get legal advice, understand their rights and responsibilities when interacting with police and the courts, and to equip them to act more quickly when problems occur. Our training sessions are developed and designed specifically for our client group, covering the following topics:

Street Law's community legal education team

WE PROVIDED CLE TRAINING TO:

137 Clients

145 Community workers

16 Organisations

COMMUNITY SERVICE WORKER TRAINING

Our client group commonly have multiple and complex legal issues which are intertwined with social, welfare and health issues. We work collaboratively with community service workers to provide clients with holistic support to address and resolve all of their issues. The key focus of our community service worker education is to equip organisations with the tools to identify legal issues and to increase knowledge of where to seek legal advice and assistance when needed for their clients. Working collaboratively and proactively with the homeless sector agencies helps with effectively streamlining issues for legal assistance and can troubleshoot issues at an earlier stage.

REGIONAL COMMUNITY LEGAL EDUCATION

In Western Australia there are high numbers of homelessness in regional areas. Being a state wide service, we travel to regional areas to strengthen our partnerships with organisations assisting people experiencing homelessness and to deliver community legal education training. This financial year we travelled to the Pilbara and Albany. As part of these regional trips we developed and delivered two training modules. These modules focused on providing services with the knowledge and skills to directly assist people they work with to resolve issues that affect a person's right to drive and how to obtain Western Australian identity documents.

OUR CLE TRAINING WAS DELIVERED TO

47 Community workers

8 Organisations

DURING OUR TRIPS TO THE PILBARA AND ALBANY

Client FEEDBACK

"All information was very useful and really easy to understand."

"She was very knowledgeable, and it was a good presentation."

"Very well explained and I needed it for my current situation with fines and infringements."

Community Service Worker FEEDBACK

"Thank you for taking the time to come and explain the work that you do."

"Information on the legal health check was extremely useful, thank you."

"The tools you provided will be well used by the front-line staff."

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Raising awareness in our community is key to driving change and ending homelessness. We increase engagement with the broader community and promote awareness of the social, welfare, health and legal issues that affects people experiencing homelessness. We do this by creating and sharing education messages and resources through our social media platforms, our newsletters and our videos which provides understanding of the intersection of legal and homelessness issues.

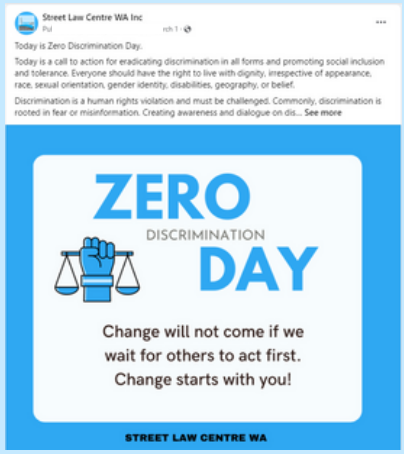
108
Resources published

4
Newsletters published

2
Videos created

Increased our Linkedin followers to
1,086

Increased our Facebook followers to
1,853



During the financial year we held an Identity Document Fundraiser through our social media platforms. The fundraiser raised money to cover the fees involved in obtaining our client's essential documents. All donations received went directly to our client's identity document applications. With the donations received, we were able to pay the fees for:

15 Birth Certificates

27 Photo Cards

5 Replacement Australian Citizenship Certificates

LAW REFORM, SECTOR REFORM & CAPACITY BUILDING

LAW REFORM

Our focus within the law reform space is to provide submissions and contribute to reform projects that will provide systemic change for people experiencing homelessness. During this financial year we identified a number of areas that need reforming, and we are working on submissions to bring about change in those areas. These project areas are:

EARLY RELEASE SUPERANNUATION

The laws outlined in the Superannuation Act 1976 (Cth) and the Superannuation Industry (Supervision) Regulations 1994 (Cth) prescribe restrictive laws that impact's New Zealanders and non-permanent residents who are legally living and working in Australia from accessing their superannuation accounts when experiencing financial hardship.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITIES, HOUSING, OPERATIONAL POLICIES

We are responding to an increased demand of requests to review decisions made by the Department of Communities, Housing. We have reviewed the housing operational policies and have found several policies that are contrary to the All Paths Lead to a Home: Western Australia's strategy on homelessness.

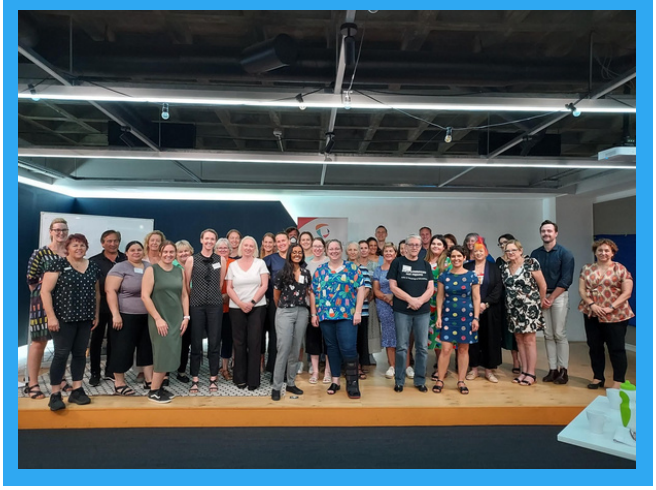
CHANGE OF NAME - UNDER 18

The Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1998 (WA) does not allow a person under the age of 18 to apply to change their name. This causes undue trauma for individuals who are transgender and/or non-binary and need to change their name so they are not dead-named.

INFRINGEMENTS

Unlike court fines, the only option to repay outstanding infringements is through payment arrangements. It is vital that there are options such as the work and development permit scheme available for outstanding infringements. Otherwise our client group can spend years of their lives burdened with debt they cannot repay.

CAPACITY BUILDING & SECTOR REFORM



Street Law has devoted significant time to engage with Community Legal Western Australia and other community legal centres on the Legal Assistance Reform Agenda. We attended multiple forums hosted by CLWA that focused on the sector sustainability and we participating in the following:

Minimum Standards Working Group

This working group, formed by CLWA, established minimum standards across the sector and the wider legal assistance landscape. We contributed our expertise and ideas to the development of a sector position regarding minimum service standards across the community legal sector in Western Australia.

Sector Consultations

We participated in sector consultations and meetings about the roles of specialist and generalist community legal centres and collaborative service design models.

CLWA Data Strategy Community of Interest

We participated in regular meetings and workshops with the purpose of improving quantitative and qualitive data across individual centres and the sector.

Legal Needs Data Tool

We participated in meetings regarding the data tool and improvements.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

OUR FUNDERS

GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA
Department of Justice

lotterywest

Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department

Public Purposes Trust

OUR PRO BONO PARTNERS

Ashurst

Minter Ellison.

CORRS CHAMBERS WESTGARTH

DLA PIPER

KING&WOOD MALLESONS

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

CHAIRPERSON
Drew Broadfoot

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON
Julian Blais

SECRETARY
Tracey Dunn
Matt Keating*

TREASURER
Andrew Ravenscroft
Mackenzie Godson*

COMMITTEE MEMBERS
Conrad Liveris*
Briannen Morrow
Leon Magistro

** resigned during financial year*

THE STREET LAW TEAM

PRINCIPAL SOLICITOR

Ann-Margaret Walsh

SUPERVISING SOLICITORS

Adam Hammond
Selena McCrickard*

CENTRE COORDINATOR

Nina Lafferty

FINANCE OFFICER

Su Chew

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Tahnee Gilmour
Melissa Robinson*

SUPERVISING SOLICITOR & CLE COORDINATOR

Anna Hitomi

SOLICITOR & CLE PROJECT SUPPORT

Luella Botteon

SOLICITORS

Kanesthorn Anamwong
Darcie Mather-McCaw
Lily Philp
Annabel Sweetnam-Groom*
Angie Underwood*

** resigned during financial year*

HIGHLIGHTS

Our solicitor and community legal education coordinator, Anna Hitomi, became our supervising solicitor for our civil legal team.

We welcomed junior lawyers Darcie and Lily to the team.

We were invited to attend two of the Law Society of Western Australia's Young Lawyer's Committee's Social Justice Career Opportunities Evenings. One in which we presented at.

We extended our services with pop up legal clinics with our friends at Street Doctor and 55 Central.

HIGHLIGHTS

We were presented with a grant from Lottery West by John Carey, Minister for Housing and Homelessness. The grant enabled us to access vital improvements to our IT infrastructure, enabling us to deliver our legal services more efficiently and effectively.

Our criminal team goes from strength to strength with supervising solicitor of our criminal team, Adam Hammond joining Street Law.

We launched two new legal clinics in collabartion with the Salvation Army's Beacon accommodation service and Uniting WA's Koort Boodja accommodation service.

We received a generous donation from the Rotary Club of Northbridge. The donation went directly to our identity document program.

The team attended the Law Society's gala dinner where we were named one of the three finalist in the annual Attorney General's Community Service Award.

HIGHLIGHTS

Our community legal team went to Albany and the Pilbara.

Our leadership team, Ann-Margaret, Anna and Nina, went to Hobart for the National Community Legal Centres Conference.

We attended our pro bono partner, Ashurst's, quiz night where they raised money for our centre.

We wrapped up the calendar year with lawn balls.

OUR STRATEGIC FOCUS

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.

Our team drives change

Driving change and leading legal initiatives to eliminate and prevent homelessness

Our team makes an impact

Making a difference through innovative and collaborative service delivery

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

Our team are empowered through our workplace culture

Supporting our people through creating a collaborative and supportive culture

Street Law Centre WA

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