



2022 - 2023 Annual Report





87%

of the people we assist (and 100% of people we give full representation to) are experiencing financial disadvantage



46%

of our clients are representing themselves in court



39%

of our clients are homeless or at risk of homelessness



26%

reported disability or mental illness



24%

have experienced domestic violence



17%

regional, rural or remote



12%

older people



11%

young people



14%

culturally & linguistically diverse



10%

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander



6%

affected by disaster



5%

are in prison

Through LawRight programs, members contributed over
16,000 pro bono hours

We improved justice for **1,782** people

788 through Pro Bono Connect

504 Court and Tribunal Services clients

490 Community & Health Justice Partnership clients

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



Acknowledgment of Country

LawRight acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land and waters throughout Australia and pays our respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

We benefit from the gifts of First Nations peoples, acknowledge the historical and ongoing injustices they bear and support their call for power over their destiny.

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LawRight Patron

The Honourable Chief Justice Helen Bowskill

It is my pleasure to have continued to serve as the Patron of LawRight throughout this year and, in this way, to show my support, and that of the courts, for the significant contribution LawRight, its staff and volunteers, make to the administration of justice in Queensland. One of the goals of our democratic society is equality of all before the law. But the reality is that for that goal to be achieved, the services provided by an organisation like LawRight are essential, for there is otherwise no means by which all can have access to justice.

Each day, the staff and volunteers who give so generously of their time to this worthy endeavour are not just helping vulnerable individuals, but are contributing to the community more broadly. For this, they deserve our most grateful thanks and appreciation. As the staff and volunteers would no doubt attest, they also receive great personal and professional satisfaction from their important work. A combination of all these factors will hopefully see more lawyers volunteering their time and efforts to provide their services for the public good in the year to come.



Our year at LawRight

We reflect on a year with significant change and challenges and are proud of the LawRight team's response, continuing to put pro bono where it can do the most good.

Early 2022 saw Queensland and New South Wales again responding to disaster with widespread flooding. Throughout the 2022-2023 year, the increasing cost of living has caused existing disadvantage to become further entrenched.

Disaster and poverty cause legal problems, and LawRight services have continued to respond to where the need is. This is reflected in the high percentages of our clients who are in priority groups including people who are facing homelessness, representing themselves, recovering from disasters, experiencing family violence, as well as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culturally and linguistically diverse communities. This shows that we are putting pro bono where it is needed.

Reflecting on the year that was, Covid cancellations may seem a thing of the past but we finally held a Red Wine for Justice in October after three postponements and much patience from our guests.

At our AGM in November, Jacqui Wootton took over as our President of the Management Committee from The Hon. Roslyn Atkinson AO, who we are grateful has remained on our committee. In January, our main office moved from Law Society House to a few blocks away in Spring Hill.

In March, we farewelled Joint Director Sue Garlick. Sue had been with LawRight since 2006 and was responsible for a wide range of access to justice innovations. We thank Sue for her contribution to LawRight, its vulnerable clients and the sector. In May,

Karen Dyhrberg was welcomed as Co-CEO. Karen has a long history with LawRight having first joined as a secondee in 2008.

In May, a thousand supporters braved the rain (in most locations) for the 16th Queensland Legal Walk and raised \$108,000. Our Patron, the Honourable Chief Justice Helen Bowskill, led walkers in Townsville.

Looking forward, we have recently welcomed internal appointments Rose Mackay, Ben Tuckett and Stephen Grace as Directors of Pro Bono Connect, Court and Tribunal Services, and Community & Health Justice Partnerships respectively and are looking forward to this experienced team leading LawRight through another big year.

We are extremely grateful for the fundraising efforts of all our supporters, members and Friends of LawRight. Your support allows us to significantly subsidise all our government-funded programs to meet the need that continues to rise.

This report highlights how through all this change, our staff and volunteers continued to help people who need it most. Each service's report tells a story of impact and how these legal needs were identified and addressed.



Jacqueline Wootton
LawRight President



Linda Macpherson
LawRight Co-CEO



Karen Dyhrberg
LawRight Co-CEO
(Commenced May 2023)



We farewelled
Sue Garlick in
March 2023

Our volunteers supported these clients with over 16,000 pro bono hours. This is a credit to the dedication of our member firms and barristers. With some post-Covid service changes, this number has plateaued in recent years but as we equip our volunteers with resources and strategic supervision, we find we are achieving much more with the same investment of time.

We thank our Patron, the Honourable Chief Justice Helen Bowskill for her Honour's support. Thanks also to the guidance and skill of our Management Committee and the support of our Friends of LawRight. We are grateful for the many hours that our committee voluntarily invests in LawRight on behalf of the profession.

Finally, our staff at LawRight have shown great resilience in a year of change. We acknowledge all staff who have departed and commenced with LawRight in this past year, as well as the many long-serving staff members who have continued to faithfully serve our vulnerable clients. They continued to amaze us with their dedication and achievements. We thank you all for your commitment, compassion, and hard work.

We hope you enjoy reading the stories, highlights and achievements in this report.



Queensland Legal Walk

16 May 2023

The Queensland Legal Walk is a chance to celebrate the important role of pro bono in helping the most vulnerable and marginalised Queenslanders, while raising funds for the invaluable pro bono work that LawRight continues to do. For over 15 years, members of the legal profession have woken up early on National Pro Bono Day to connect with their colleagues and walk in support of LawRight.

This year we walked with more than 1,000 walkers across Queensland, with representatives from over 70 law firms and 11 chambers, and raised \$108,000 for our vital services.

The Honourable Chief Justice Helen Bowskill led the Walk in Townsville, and the Honourable Justice Bond led the Walk in Brisbane and spoke on the Chief Justice's behalf. The Hon Peter Russo MP also led the Walk and spoke on behalf of the Attorney General.

Champion Fundraisers

\$17,700 Overall Team and Chambers: Level Twenty Seven Chambers

\$13,440 Individual: Michael Maynard

\$11,670 Law Firm: Clayton Utz

\$730 Law School: University of Queensland

\$108,000
raised overall



Red Wine for Justice

14 October 2022

Red Wine for Justice was held in October 2022 and generously hosted by Herbert Smith Freehills.

The wines donated for drinking and auction fuelled some excited bidding, with over \$80,000 raised.

The most coveted item of the evening was a bottle of 2008 Penfolds Grange Vintage donated by Andrew Crowe KC. Matthew Jones KC was victorious with a \$7,050 bid.

Thanks to guest speaker the Honourable Justice Peter Applegarth AM, MC Bridget O'Brien, sommelier Andrew Buchanan, and auctioneer Yianni Mooney.

Hosted by Herbert Smith Freehills



\$80,000
raised overall



Pro Bono Connect

Public Interest Referral Scheme Queensland Law Society Referral Scheme Bar Association of Queensland Referral Scheme

People or Not-For-Profit organisations that cannot afford a lawyer or obtain legal aid may still need legal representation to protect their rights, income and housing, especially where the matter is of “public interest” due to the impact of the problem on the individual, organisation or their community.

Pro Bono Connect assesses applications for legal help and connects vulnerable people and NFP organisations to the Queensland legal profession for pro bono assistance. The assistance provided is flexible and is considered on a case by case basis. Applicants may be provided with full pro bono representation, advice, or assistance with discrete tasks, carried out by members of the private profession. The Pro Bono Connect team also assist with advice, discrete tasks and referrals to other legal services when we are unable to refer.

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

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

Pro Bono referrals

Firms that took pro bono referrals this year

Sentry Law
Clyde & Co
McInnes Wilson
Clayton Utz
Shand Taylor Lawyers
Holding Redlich
Barry Nilsson
Hall & Wilcox
Shine Lawyers
DWF Lawyers
HopgoodGanim
Colin Biggers Paisley
Baker and McKenzie
Herbert Smith Freehills
Allens
Sparke Helmore

Barristers who took pro bono referrals this year

Emma Hoiberg
Jules Moxon
Philip O’Higgins
Bianca Mendelson
Bridget O’Brien
John Lee
Anand Shah
Michael May
Bob Reed
Mark Steele
Damien O’Brien KC
Christopher Schaffer
Justin Carter
Ryan Nattrass
Mark Steele

Volunteer

Stephen McClure

How we triage applications

When clients are seeking pro bono representation or help to self-represent, we do intake via an application form. We received **1,107** applications this year. 788 applicants were triaged to Pro Bono Connect while **504** went to Court and Tribunal Services. Some clients received help through both services.

- Of the matters that went to Pro Bono Connect:
- **605** applicants were given basic information and referral, but were not eligible for pro bono referral.
 - **183** applications received for a more detailed assessment.

Of those, **100** were opened as Public Interest files and **83** in the QLS / BAQ Referral Scheme.

We sent **136** referral requests.

By the end of financial year, only **75** were successfully referred for pro bono help, but many more were picked up early in the new financial year.

We cannot measure exactly how many pro bono hours are done when a matter is referred to a firm or barrister, but based on the closure reports we do receive, for matters referred this year and ongoing matters referred in previous years, and the average number of hours per referral, we estimate that our members did well over 4,000 hours this year on matters referred by Pro Bono Connect.



Legal Problems

- 16%** property disputes
- 14%** credit and debt
- 12%** Government and administration
- 10%** refugee/immigration
- 10%** elder abuse
- 8%** not for profit issues

4,000 pro bono hours

Pro Bono Connect

Pro bono helps combat elder financial abuse

An older couple, the Martins, emigrated to Australia to help with the needs of their grandchildren. For many years they lived as an extended family, contributing to the mortgage, schooling and household needs but without a formal agreement.

When the relationship broke down, the Martins brought court proceedings to protect their interest in the property but were soon unable to afford lawyers. The proceedings were complicated by the Martins' limited English and they were encouraged to apply to LawRight.

After LawRight obtained counsel's opinion on prospects, a firm agreed to represent them pro bono, amending the Martins' claim and arguing that they had an equitable interest. Throughout proceedings, LawRight's Disbursement Fund contributed to the cost of interpreters to obtain quality evidence and to support the Martins to participate.

Eventually a mediation was scheduled with an interpreter present and the matter settled.

“ I was just calling to touch base with you and extend my sincere gratitude for you and LawRight's assistance.

I have now been in touch with the firm, and they have indicated that they are taking it on. The team have been brilliant! Thus far, there have been a variety of senior legal professionals to law graduates on the team. It appears you have selected the special forces of legal professionals.

I feel very confident in their abilities to obtain some justice. Thus far, they have been very invested in achieving a great outcome for me irrespective of it being pro bono.

You and them have certainly helped considerably. There now appears to be some light at the end of the tunnel.

Thank you again to you and your team at LawRight. Without your assistance, I am confident such an outcome would not have been on the horizon. **”**

Services delivered across LawRight

138 successful referrals for pro bono help (including discrete & full representation)

Homelessness Law and Multicultural Law delivered...

291 wraparound representations to clients

14 secondary consultations to workers

364 people received Financial Counsellor services

Court and Tribunal services delivered...

54 Duty Lawyer services

13 conciliation conferences

Across LawRight, we delivered...

1,853 legal advices

658 legal tasks

4,372 information services

4,135 referrals

186,000 visits to our online factsheets

8 community legal education resources

32 community legal education activities

Our phone lines gave information to 3,350 people and made 2,300 referrals.

Responding to disasters

Disasters cause legal problems, and they disproportionately impact the most vulnerable people in our community. For many, the February 2022 floods exacerbated existing disadvantages, pushing people in unstable living and financial situations further into insecurity.

After receiving initial emergency funding to respond in the immediate wake of the disaster, LawRight's funding was extended in July 2022 by the Department of Justice and Attorney-General and augmented by the new federal government's October 2022 budget. LawRight's flood response has focussed on meeting vulnerable clients where they are, and offering practical, trauma-informed legal support to assist them to regain a solid footing in their lives.

We have continued to build on existing relationships with our outreach partners to identify and connect to flood-affected clients, and to support them in a holistic way to resolve their legal problems, both

directly caused by the floods and exacerbated by the disadvantage they experience from the flow-on effects of the natural disaster. Many of our outreach partners were affected by the floods themselves, and our work has also focussed on expanding our capacity to support them through legal education and training.



Alira's story

Alira is a young Indigenous woman raising her own young children as well as caring for siblings. We initially connected in with Alira through our Brisbane Youth service, assisting her to recover from acts of violence and manage accumulating debts.

Alira reached out to us after the floods for assistance with her living situation. Her Department of Housing property had significant damage including a pest infestation, a fouled carpet causing

scabies, structural issues, swollen doors, damaged wiring, flickering lights and broken flyscreens. Alira's baby ended up in hospital after ingesting loose paint that was peeling from the walls. When she rang the Department of Housing's maintenance line she was told that it wouldn't be fixed because "she knew the condition of the house when she accepted it" (even though she moved in long before the floods) and that they were busy fixing other houses.

LawRight supported Alira by drafting an email to the Department and advising her on her rights and the best avenue to escalate the matter. With our support, Alira was able to advocate for herself with the Department, who then agreed to fix the damage within 3 weeks.

Alira was assisted through our Homelessness Law program, you can read more about her story on page 35.

LawRight helped 413 flood-affected clients.

58 of these services were wraparound, ongoing support.

Of our flood affected clients:

74% had no income or were on government support

54% had experienced family and domestic violence

19% were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

Court and Tribunal Services

LawRight has on-site offices and services at Brisbane court and tribunal registries and delivers remote services throughout Queensland to increase access to justice for vulnerable people navigating complex court and tribunal proceedings.

Our strategic partnerships with law firms and barristers match pro bono assistance with the legal problem and capability of the individual. We currently assist in the:

- Supreme Court of Queensland
- District Court of Queensland
- Queensland Court of Appeal
- Magistrates Court (including Enforcement Hearings)
- Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal
- Federal Court of Australia
- Federal Circuit & Family Court of Australia

Our service in the Mental Health Review Tribunal ended this year.

State
Courts

Enforcement
Hearings Duty
Lawyer

QCAT

Federal
Courts



Secondments

State Courts Secondee
Beth Royan, Barry.Nilsson

QCAT Secondee
Jacob Currie, HopgoodGanim

Federal Courts Secondees
Remy Crozier and Joe Kennedy, Barry.Nilsson



Law Reform

Defamation Law Reform
In September 2022, our State Courts office made submissions to the COAG Defamation Law Working Party on the Stage 2 Review, Part A exposure draft amendments to the Model Defamation Provisions.

LawRight has previously contributed to the State 2 Review of the Model Defamation Provisions by providing a submission in response to the State 2 Discussion Paper on 17 May 2021 and participating in a Stakeholder Roundtable on 8 September 2022.

Employment Law Reform
The Federal Courts office endorsed a joint submission of community legal centres in relation to the Terms of Reference of the Employment White Paper.



Court and Tribunal Services

State Courts

Supreme Court of Queensland
District Court of Queensland
Queensland Court of Appeal

Our State Courts office of the Court and Tribunal Services sees clients on-site at the Brisbane registry and provides remote services to clients from across the state with current or potential proceedings in the District Court of Queensland, Supreme Court of Queensland, and the Court of Appeal. Depending on capacity, we also assist with some matters in the Magistrates Court. Depending on the client’s circumstances, legal problem, and the available pro bono resources, we may:

- Provide legal information or self help resources;
- Provide legal advice and assistance to prepare court documents and legal correspondence;
- Suggest other options to resolve court proceedings; and
- Refer for discrete or full representation.

We also operate and manage a court ordered mediation referral scheme for matters in the Supreme Court. Under the scheme, matters on the supervised case list are directed to attend mediation, and are then referred directly to LawRight by the Supreme Court. We assist the individual to prepare for mediation and also refer their matter to our panel of barristers for pro bono representation at the mediation.

Pro Bono

Firms

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

Barristers

Alex Nelson
Jules Moxon
John Lee
Sean Lamb
Michal Horvath
Ben Kidston
Peta Willoughby
Robert Quirk
Matthew Jones
Rachel De Luchi
Tom Pincus
Tom Ritchie
Stephanie Philippou
Hamish Clift

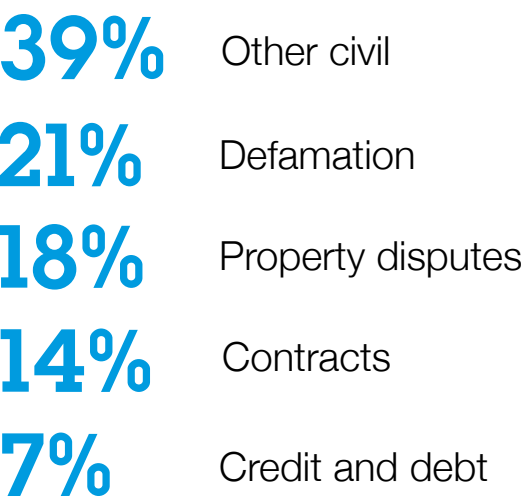


Paulo’s story

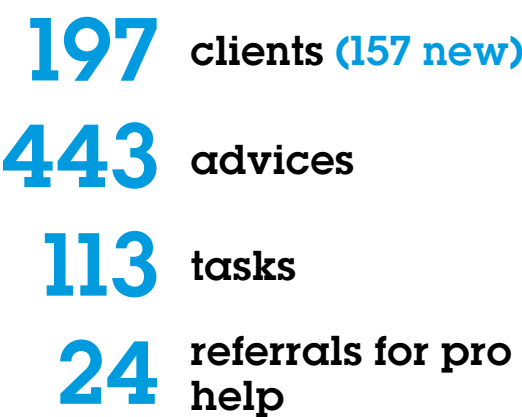
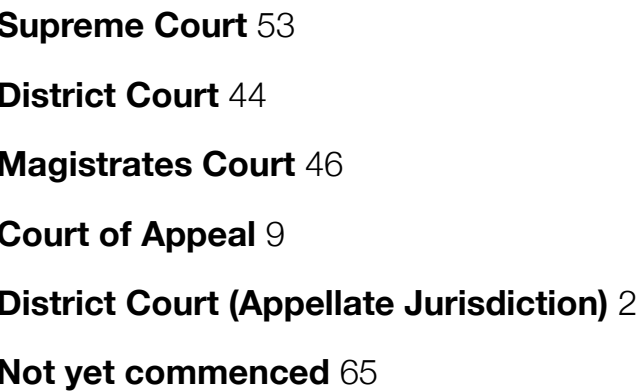
When Paulo received letters from a lawyer accusing him of defaming someone in a Facebook comment, he thought it was a bluff, so he didn’t respond. The next paperwork he received was court documents for a District Court claim. Paulo was worried – as a pensioner, he couldn’t afford help from a lawyer, and the stress of the matter was making his mental health issues worse. Through multiple appointments with pro bono and staff lawyers, Paulo was able to file a defence to the claim, complete interlocutory steps in the court proceedings, and even start negotiations with the Plaintiff to try to settle the matter.

After LawRight got involved to help Paulo, the Plaintiff backed off from their more aggressive stance, and ultimately just stopped pursuing the court proceedings. Paulo was relieved that it was over and thanked LawRight for the “great support” he received throughout his matter.

Legal problems



Clients per jurisdiction



Diversion
For 25% of our clients, we advised them not to continue or commence proceedings, and they followed our advice.



State Courts

Maureen's story

Maureen's mother promised to buy a property for Maureen to live in if she paid for certain costs. However, a few months after Maureen moved into the house and spent her own money paying for rates, various bills, and improvements to the property, her mother evicted her and denied that she had any interest in the property.

Maureen initially had lawyers to help her start Supreme Court proceedings against her mother, but her savings quickly ran out and she was stuck representing herself in complex legal proceedings without any guidance. The Court ordered that the parties attend a mediation under its new scheme for pro bono mediations, and referred Maureen to LawRight. Under the new scheme, LawRight was able to obtain a barrister to represent Maureen at the mediation. With the barrister's help, Maureen was able to come to an agreement with her mother and settle the matter without having to go to trial, which would have been difficult, costly and stressful.

“Without your help (and Tom's help) I may have been lost in the legal system, my life savings would have been gone, because I was unable to afford the legal help for my matter to progress.”

“The matter is a good demonstration of the effectiveness of the Supreme Court's pro bono mediation/pro bono representation scheme.”

The parties had been in dispute for many years. It was not until the parties were forced to a mediation, by way of Court order, and the client properly advised by a pro bono barrister (and his legal position competently articulated to the defendant) that the matter was able to settle.”

- Tom Ritchie of Counsel for
Supreme Court Mediation

Hyein's story

Hyein was able to save up enough money to pay a lawyer to help her with an unfair dismissal claim against her employer. Unfortunately, the lawyer locked her into an unfair costs agreement. Hyein was able to get the costs agreement set aside at QCAT, but then the lawyer appealed the QCAT decision to the Court of Appeal.

Hyein struggled to understand the Court of Appeal proceedings, as her first language is not English

and the matter involved complicated technical legal arguments and had a very strict timetable. LawRight staff lawyers gave Hyein advice about the appeal process, and we were also able to quickly refer the matter to two pro bono barristers to give Hyein more advice about the legal issues and represent her in the proceedings.

After the pro bono barristers got involved, Hyein's former lawyer withdrew the appeal, and Hyein was able to get some of her money back.

Billy's story

Billy had been a member of a sports club for over a decade, and had even previously served as its president for a couple of years. Billy got into a disagreement with the club committee members about some decisions the committee had made about the club rules. Shortly afterwards, Billy's club membership was suspended.

Rather than fight the club committee, Billy decided to leave the club and rejoin once things had 'cooled down'. A few months later, Billy applied to rejoin the club – but his application was rejected. He tried applying four more times and reaching out to the committee members, but each time he was rejected.

Billy was ready to start court proceedings against the Club and had even started working on a statement of claim to file in the Supreme Court, with the aim of getting the Court to order the club to reinstate his membership and make the committee give him an apology.

LawRight's pro bono lawyers advised Billy about why his proposed court proceedings were misconceived, and discussed other options he might have under the club's own rules to appeal the decision to reject his membership application. After attending his LawRight appointment, Billy decided not to start expensive and risky court proceedings and opted to try to resolve his dispute away from the court system.



Enforcement Hearings Duty Lawyer

LawRight delivers in-person advice and representation services to self-represented debtors at debt enforcement hearings on Wednesday mornings in the Brisbane Magistrates Court, with assistance from volunteer barristers.

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

The debts being enforced in this forum are typically small, but the process can still be complex, confusing, and stressful. Clients are often unaware that a money order has been made against them, do not know why they have been summoned to a court hearing, and do not understand what they need to do next. Most clients cannot afford to repay the debt, and some may be unfairly named on the debt documents. Most have never received legal advice, despite often multiple court or tribunal processes.

Common debts include general or motor vehicle property damage, unpaid professional services, or credit card debt. The

service increases procedural efficiency and ensures debtors are treated fairly.

This year, we have again seen a drop in numbers of clients at hearings, with more matters resolved by negotiation.

Pro Bono

Barristers

Bridget O’Brien
Catherine Chiang
Duncan Marckwald
Emma Hoiberg
Genevieve Feely
Georgia Kiss
Hedy Chen
Jason Mitchenson
Jason Wang
Jayleigh Sargent
Matthew McDermott
Nathan Laing
Reimen Hii
Robert Gallo
Robert Lake
Ryan Nattrass

Samantha Amos
Samuel Walpole
San-Joe Tan
Sarah Spotiswood
Steven Hogg
Zoe Brereton

Student Volunteers

Flora Dinh
Ella Battams
Cynthia Chan

Joachim's story

Joachim is a young TAFE student living at home with his parents. He got into a car accident and was ordered by QCAT to pay \$15,000 to the other driver. Joachim struggled to repay the debt because he was having trouble finding a stable job. The creditor got impatient, and summoned Joachim to an enforcement hearing.

The creditor took an aggressive approach to the enforcement hearing process, requiring documents to be provided within unreasonable timeframes, demanding a payment plan that Joachim couldn’t afford, and even

asking to cross-examine Joachim because they believed he was lying about his financial situation.

Joachim had to attend three separate hearings, but at each one, a volunteer barrister was able to give him advice about the process, negotiate on his behalf with the creditor, and represent him in the hearings, including throughout cross-examination. At the final hearing, the volunteer barrister was able to get the creditor to agree to a payment plan that Joachim could actually afford, so that Joachim no longer had to attend any more stressful court hearings.



Angie's story

Angie had a history of homelessness. She had a \$5,000 debt and had been summonsed to attend an enforcement hearing. She had already sent the creditor a statement explaining her financial position, then the week before her enforcement hearing, she started a new part-time job.

When she got to the hearing, the creditor demanded that she complete a new statement and provide even more information about her financial position. Angie

got help from our volunteer barrister, who explained what types of information she did and didn’t have to give the creditor and negotiated with the creditor on Angie’s behalf.

Thanks to the barrister’s intervention, the creditor stopped pressing for the extra information and agreed to a payment plan that Angie could afford. Angie was very grateful for the assistance, and was glad that she didn’t have to attend any more hearings.

“Thank God you were here because I shut down whenever I have to talk to the other side’s lawyer. It’s intimidating. I’m so grateful for your assistance.”

28 total clients assisted

19% of clients avoided further enforcement hearings

37% involved debts between \$10,000 and \$50,000

13% involved debts over \$50,000

Our clients

43% <\$52,000 individual annual income

18% on Centrelink only income

11% identify as First Nations

11% culturally & linguistically diverse

11% older people

7% regional, rural or remote

7% experienced family and domestic violence

154 pro bono hours

Queensland Civil & Administrative Tribunal

Our QCAT office of the Court and Tribunal Services sees clients on-site at the Brisbane registry and provides remote services to clients from across the state.

Depending on the client’s circumstances, legal problem, and the available pro bono resources, we may:

- Provide online legal information or resources;
- Help the client to self-represent to the best of their abilities;
- Provide legal advice and assistance to prepare tribunal documents and legal correspondence;
- Suggest other options to resolve court proceedings;
- In limited cases, represent a client in proceedings before the Tribunal; and/or
- In limited cases, connect clients with a private lawyer or barrister for pro bono representation.

Pro Bono

Law Firms

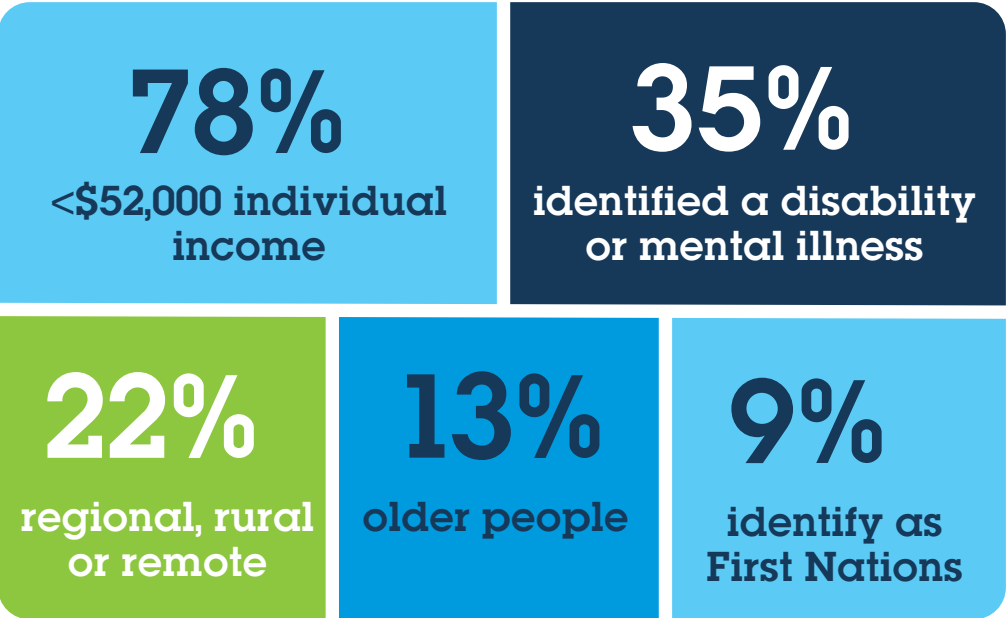
Clayton Utz
Cooper Grace Ward Lawyers
Lander & Rogers Lawyers
McCullough Robertson
Lawyers
McInnes Wilson Lawyers
MinterEllison
Murphy Schmidt Solicitors
Colin Biggers & Paisley
Clyde & Co
HopgoodGanim Lawyers
Sparke Helmore Lawyers
Barry.Nilsson. Lawyers
AECOM
Allens

Barristers

Dan O’Gorman SC
Jade Marr
Angela Rae
Duncan Marckwald
Ryan Nattrass
Paula Morreau



285 clients (202 new)
718 advices
178 tasks
14 referrals for pro bono help



Legal problems

39% Blue Card
26% Guardianship & Administration
7% Anti-Discrimination
6% Minor Civil Dispute - Minor Debt
6% Appeal
5% Administrative Review (Child Safety)
4% Residential Tenancy

3,024 pro bono hours

Queensland Civil & Administrative Tribunal

Sophie's story

Sophie was issued a negative Blue Card notice due to her criminal history, which included a conviction for supply dangerous drugs within a correctional institution.

Sophie said that this first offence occurred more than twenty years ago when she was 18 years old and she was pregnant to her abusive ex-partner, who instructed her to bring drugs to him while he was in prison. Due to the domestic violence in their relationship, Sophie felt she had no option but to do this. Sophie also more recently had another offence for possessing dangerous drugs, as she was using cannabis for pain relief for a chronic health condition.

Sophie sought assistance from LawRight with reviewing the negative notice in QCAT, and had four appointments with our volunteer solicitors to help her prepare her documents for filing and prepare her to represent herself in QCAT. With LawRight's help, Sophie was able to provide evidence to QCAT of the steps she had taken to turn her life around, including having cut contact with her ex partner, successfully raising her son from the time she was a teenager, and having surgery for her chronic health condition so that she no longer needs any medication.

Sophie successfully self represented and QCAT found that she was an exceptional case and that the decision to issue a negative notice should be set aside. Sophie expressed how grateful she was for LawRight's assistance.

“ Thanks for the help, it means so much to me to have been given a card if not just to prove that just because I have a criminal history I am not a “bad” person as presumed. Although it has mentally, emotionally and physically and financially cost me so much the last 23 months, I am glad I never gave up and appreciate the help. ”



Magistrates Court

There is no funded service dedicated to helping people represent themselves in the Magistrates Court. The Magistrates Court can decide cases up to \$150,000, so people who cannot afford a lawyer can end up self-representing in quite complex cases with significant consequences.

Magistrates Court matters are outside the normal scope of LawRight's Court and Tribunal Services. LawRight sees a strong need for self-representation help in the Magistrates Court and has self-funded pilot projects where possible. Currently we make exceptions to help through our State Courts office if we have capacity, the client is particularly vulnerable, and the legal matter would have significant consequences for the client or is a public interest issue. Exceptional matters may also be referred for full representation through Pro Bono Connect.

In 2022/2023, we provided services to **46** clients with civil matters in the Magistrates Court. The majority of these clients were pre-existing clients who were opened when our earlier Pilot service was still running. We opened new files for **13** new Magistrates Court clients this year.

Jordan's story

The State Courts office assisted Jordan with Magistrates Court proceedings brought against her for defamation. Jordan had been a member of a social club, and she developed concerns with some of the practices of the president of the club, which she posted about on her Facebook page. Jordan removed the post a couple of days later, but by then other members of the club had seen and commented on the post.

The club president banned Jordan from club events and started proceedings against her. The State Courts office gave Jordan extensive assistance to respond to the proceedings throughout 2021 and 2022, both through internal

staff advice and in volunteer appointments, including help to draft her pleadings and undertake disclosure.

The matter was set down for a settlement conference, and we were able to obtain representation for Jordan at the settlement conference from a barrister with significant experience in defamation law, as well as instructing solicitors who had staffed some of Jordan's previous appointments. Ultimately, with LawRight's help and the help of our volunteers and members, Jordan was able to settle her dispute with the president of the club and resume attending club events.

Court and Tribunal Services

Federal Courts

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

- The Federal Courts team provides pro bono services on-site at the Brisbane registry and remote services statewide to vulnerable people navigating proceedings in the FCFC and the Federal Court without a lawyer. This includes:
- **Assisting parties to represent themselves in pre-court negotiations;**
 - **Assisting parties through advice and task assistance to represent themselves in court proceedings;**
 - **Referring clients for pro bono representation;**
 - **Coordinating a Fair Work small claims conciliation; conference program**
 - **Providing self-help resources.**

This year we had an increased focus on migration matters, redesigning our approach to offer migration clients appointments with volunteer lawyers to assist them to understand their case to date, the relevant law and next steps before referring their matters for advice on prospects from member barristers.

Pro Bono

Firms that assisted

AECOM
Ashurst
Barry.Nilsson
Clayton Utz
Corrs Chambers
Westgarth
Hall & Wilcox
Holding Redlich
Landers & Rogers
McCullough Robertson
Lawyers
McInnes Wilson
Lawyers
MinterEllison
Sparke Helmore
Lawyers
Wotton + Kearney

Barristers that assisted

Alexander North
Anand Shah
Benedict Coyne
Damien Payard
David Keane KC
Douglas Campbell KC
Emma Hoiberg
Gabriel Perry
Gillian Shepherd
Justin Carter
Lachlan Tassell
Mark Steele KC
Matthew Jones
Paul Carasco
Robert Lake
Robert Reed
Sean Lamb
Stephen Colditz
Tom Ritchie

Conciliation Conferences

Andrew See
Chris Lenz
Joseph O'Hare
Matthew Jones
Reimen Hii
Rob Stevenson
Stephen Lee

George's story

We assisted George when he wanted to seek judicial review of a decision to refuse his application for parole.

George was refused parole because Corrective Services had not approved any of George's post-release accommodation options. George submitted over 15 requests for accommodation across South East Queensland, all of which were refused without reasons being provided.

People in custody often face hurdles in accessing justice, even when their legal issue is urgent and affects their fundamental rights.

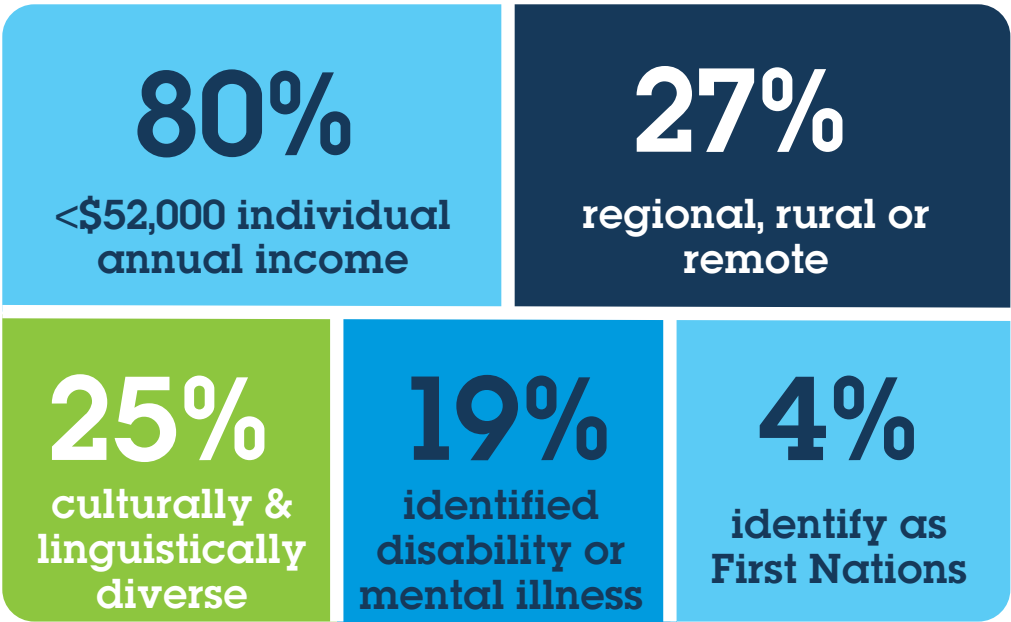
We advised George over several teleconferences and letters in relation to his judicial review application.

We found counsel to provide an urgent opinion on George's prospects of success in making the application. Counsel ultimately advised that George did not have prospects and we provided George with advice about discontinuing his application on this basis.

Even when a client lacks prospects and agrees to discontinue, the client and the justice system are both served by a timely resolution where the client has been able to obtain proper advice.

I am extremely grateful for the service provided by LawRight. The assistance provided made this legal issue much less daunting. The advice given about the deed of settlement was amazing. I would be speaking highly of LawRight even if I did not achieve a favourable result.

- Lucy, a Federal Courts client



110 total clients assisted

92 new clients assisted

286 advices

80 tasks

25 referrals for pro bono help

13 conciliation conferences

50% of conciliation conferences that went ahead settled

Legal problems

50% Employment law

26% Judicial Review

8% Bankruptcy

938 pro bono hours

Federal Courts

Neil's story

Neil came to Australia as a child and now has five dependent children. His visa was cancelled in 2020, leaving him with no income, no assets and in immigration detention facing imminent detention.

The AAT affirmed the Minister's decision to not revoke the visa cancellation.

We assisted Neil with his Federal Court migration matter after we received a court-ordered referral for him.

We referred Neil's matter to Counsel and assisted Neil to provide the required information to Counsel, including obtaining the transcript from the Tribunal proceedings. Counsel advised that Neil had prospects of success in making a judicial review application and agreed to represent Neil at his final hearing.

We then briefed pro bono instructing solicitors to support counsel at Neil's upcoming final hearing. We wish Neil the best in his final hearing and hope for a successful outcome.



Mental Health Review Tribunal

LawRight has operated a Mental Health law service of some type for many years. In its first iteration, a student clinic provided extra support to LawRight applicants whose civil law matters were affected by mental illness. From 2012, we offered a Mental Health Review Tribunal Advocacy Service, using student volunteers to support clients in the Tribunal.

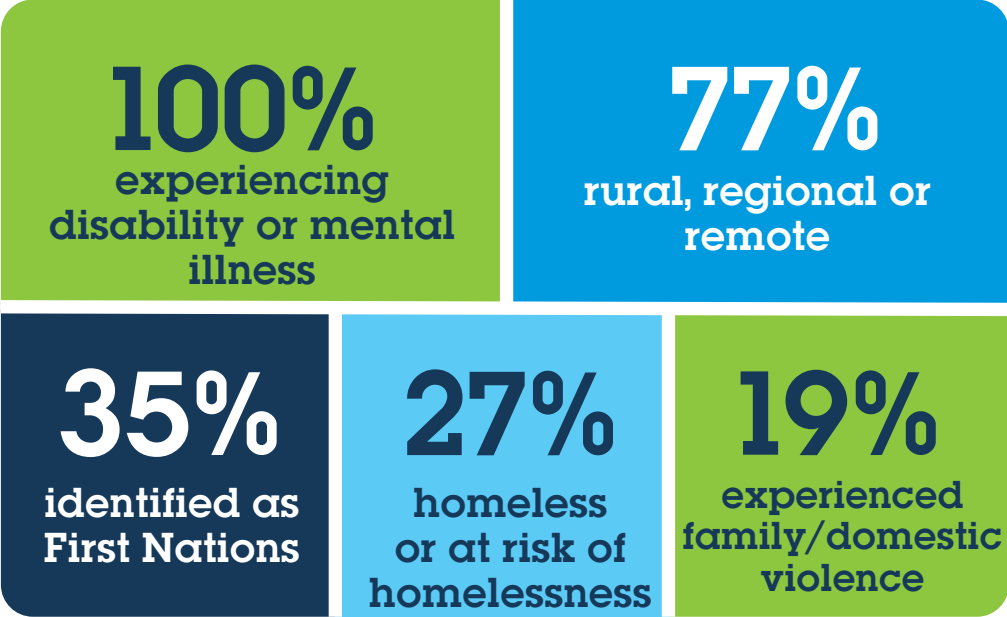
More recently, the service focused on tendering with LAQ as Tribunal-appointed lawyers for certain types of hearings before the Tribunal.

These services were largely self-funded, with support from the Viertel Foundation and secondments from member firms.

Unfortunately, the service was no longer financially viable and we made the difficult decision to close the service in the second half of 2022.

The service consistently supported clients experiencing intersecting disadvantages.

In 2022-23, we took on 26 new clients from July to when we closed to new clients in October 2022.



Community & Health Justice Partnerships

Community & Health Justice Partnerships programs implement a best-practice, outreach-based, trauma-informed service delivery model.

Recognising the benefits of integrated, holistic legal assistance, our staff lawyers and senior financial counsellor are fully embedded in 11 frontline homelessness, community and health agencies in both Brisbane and Cairns.

Staff work collaboratively with frontline workers and pro bono lawyers to resolve legal issues connected to a person's experience of disadvantage. We further scale the impact of our client-centred work by empowering Queensland's frontline community and health workers to address legal issues early, and by advocating for better laws and policies.

Homelessness Law

Multicultural Law

"I felt entrapped forever regarding my unfair and devastating financial situation after escaping my 20-year abusive relationship. [When I first spoke with LawRight] I cried and explained that I feared it all so much, and Elise and Bonnie were so amazing in hearing my depth of such anguish and exhausted level of hope. [LawRight] helped me claim recognition for the horror I'd experienced."

I remember my lawyers saying that my harm does matter. I was awarded the full recognition payment at the exact moment of need and it literally saved my son's and my life and brought us to safety again. Bless LawRight."

Pro Bono partners

MinterEllison
Clayton Utz
DLA Piper
MurphySchmidt
Herbert Smith Freehills
McCullough Robertson
Allens
Ashurst
Holding Redlich
King & Wood Mallesons
Corrs Chambers Westgarth

Projects

Your Own Home
Help to Heal
Stable Futures for Young
Queenslanders
Homelessness Consumer
Advocacy Project

6,588
pro bono hours

Empowering frontline workers

We scaled our impact by empowering almost 600 frontline workers through 31 targeted, co-designed sessions to identify and resolve legal issues impacting their client base, including:

- tenancy disputes for people facing homelessness
- consumer credit and debt disputes
- resolving infringements and fines, including options to help clients with SPER debts
- helping vulnerable Queenslanders to access financial supports to help their recovery from an act of violence

"Expand this service, it's desperately needed. I have never felt this cared for until now. Thank you so very much to you all."

Trauma Informed Legal Practice

LawRight recognises the widespread impact of trauma and the need to implement trauma-informed practices in legal service delivery.

Since 2019, the Community & Health Justice Partnerships programs have implemented incremental, continuous improvements to ensure our service delivery design is flexible, client-centred, respectful, and empowering. We have reviewed our service design, internal structures, role descriptions, and supervision through a trauma-informed lens.

Building on our longstanding community partnerships, we adopt a best-practice co-location model, with LawRight staff fully embedded in our partner community and health organisations. These partnerships ensure our staff work closely with frontline workers, medical professionals, financial counsellors, and tenancy support workers in a fully integrated practice.

Encouraging a culture of collaboration across multiple levels, we provide a holistic, wrap-around service tailored to individual client needs. Working together, we prevent and end homelessness.

Kate Adnams

Kate Adnams, Senior Lawyer, won the 2022 Women in Law Awards for Not-For-Profit Lawyer of the Year.



Kate leads our work supporting young Queenslanders to resolve legal issues connected to an experience of homelessness. She has a focus on effective responses to violence, including accessing supports to promote recovery and addressing economic abuse. In 2023, Kate completed the Legal Aid Queensland's Youth Practitioner Certification, and is currently completing her Masters of Law at the University of Melbourne.

Kate has been embedded at Brisbane Youth Service since 2019, establishing longstanding collaborative partnerships with frontline youth workers. Kate is also embedded at the Mater Hospital, working closely with the Mater Young Adult Health Centre.

Natasha Ramsay

In 2023, Natasha Ramsay, Senior Financial Counsellor, was invited to become a Committee Member of Financial Counselling Association of Queensland.



Tash joined LawRight in 2020 as LawRight's first financial counsellor. In a predominantly self-funding role, she brings a wealth of knowledge and experience. Tash's expertise and longstanding sector relationships further amplified Homelessness Law's impact, refining our approach when resolving consumer debt disputes.

Working collaboratively with consumer representatives, government agencies and regulatory bodies, Tash provides specialist knowledge that shapes high-level decision making to ensure fairer outcomes for vulnerable Queenslanders. A strong and effective client advocate, Tash directly resolved \$586,700 in consumer debts in 2022/23.

Tash has a particular interest in supporting people in and exiting prison, and leads our partnerships with Redlands Parole Office and the Helena Jones Correctional Centre.

Homelessness Law

With compounding housing and cost-of-living crises, demand for impactful, ongoing homelessness services increased continuously through 2022-2023.

Homelessness Law met this increased need, providing integrated, holistic supports to prevent and end homelessness by resolving legal issues connected to a person’s housing, money, and experience of violence.

Homelessness Law provides tailored representation to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, with a focus on key priority cohorts including women and their families with an experience of violence, children and young people, and people in or exiting prison.

As Queensland’s free specialist legal and financial counselling service for people facing homelessness, Homelessness Law’s impact has never been greater. More than any previous year, we accessed more financial support for victims-survivors, resolved more consumer disputes, addressed more fine and infringement debts, and kept more Queenslanders safely housed.

\$934,020

consumer disputes resolved

\$327,380

finest addressed

\$326,395

victims assist payments accessed

Alira’s story

Alira is a young First Nations woman with a history of family violence and homelessness. Due to her previous experiences, Alira was distrustful of government and community assistance agencies, meaning she was unlikely to engage with supports. Leveraging the trust built through our longstanding partnership at Brisbane Youth Service, Alira’s frontline support worker connected her to LawRight’s embedded staff lawyer for help with various money and debt issues that were putting her housing at risk.

When she first connected, Alira was struggling to manage over 15 separate debts connected to her extensive history of violence. LawRight’s experienced lawyers and senior financial counsellor worked closely with Alira and her broader support team to successfully resolve each of the debts. Our senior financial counsellor provided ongoing, in-depth support to proactively access appropriate Centrelink benefits and increase Alira’s financial literacy.

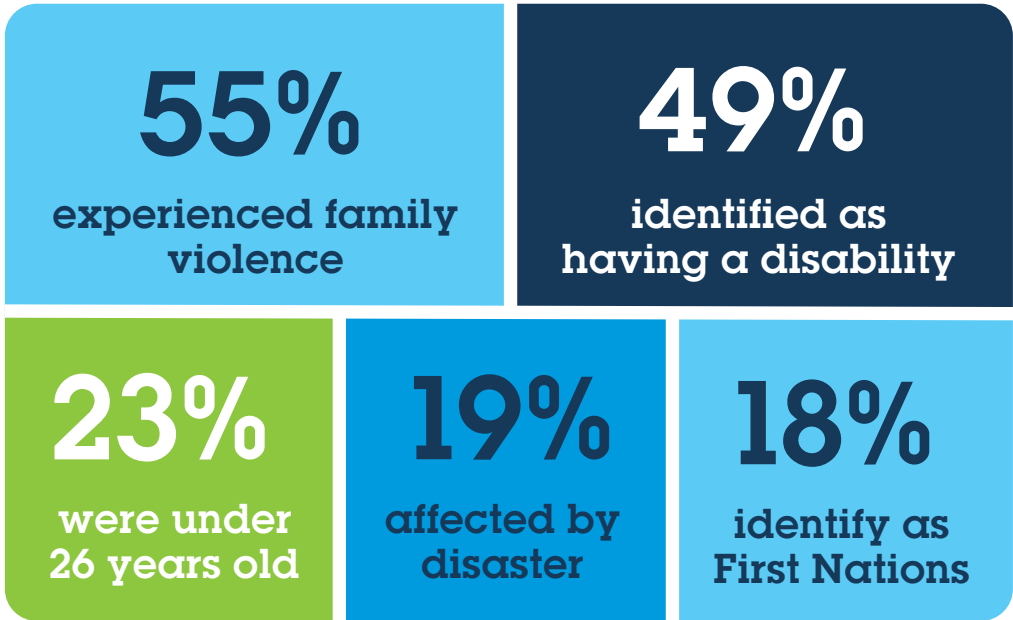
Implementing a trauma-informed, client-centred approach, LawRight’s financial counsellor and lawyers built trust and respect with Alira. During our assistance, Alira more fully disclosed the details of her experience of family and sexual violence.

“It meant so much to me. It has enabled me to ensure my babies and our home is safe and secure. I get to live my life to the fullest potential as I feel I have regained my confidence and strength.”

Alira had previously fled a physically and sexually violent relationship into homelessness. She had been told about Victim Assist but the process was overwhelming and inaccessible. LawRight advised Alira of her options, worked closely with the medical team at a specialist youth homelessness agency to collate her medical records, prepare the application and make submissions to Victim Assist. Through this holistic, collaborative representation, Alira received a \$10,000 special assistance payment and access to additional financial assistance to support her recovery.

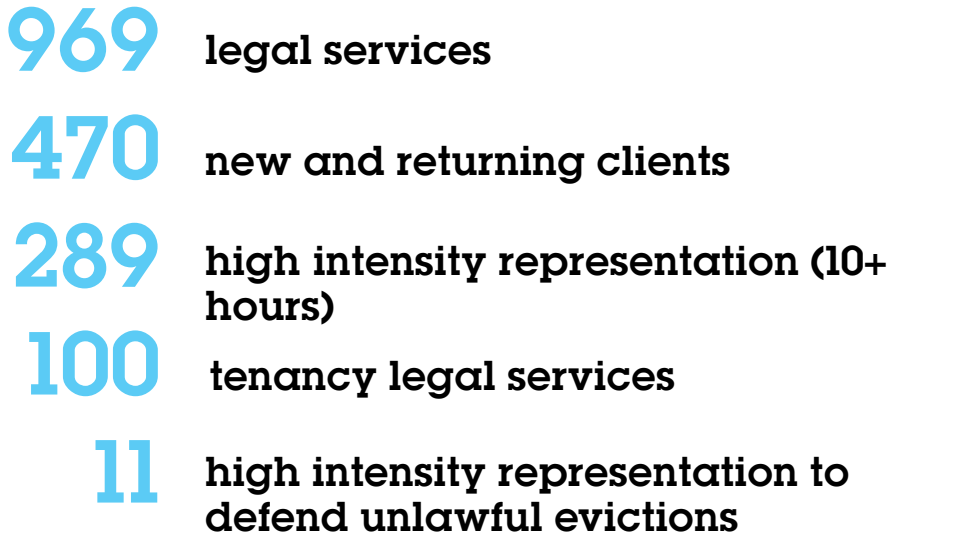
While we were assisting Alira, her home was inundated by the 2022 floods which caused plaster to peel from the walls, cupboards and doors to be broken, and cockroach infestations. The house became a danger for Alira and her children. LawRight’s staff and pro bono lawyers empowered Alira to engage with her tenancy worker, successfully negotiating for her landlord to urgently resolve the issues.

Alira is now confident to engage directly with Victim Assist and her landlord. She reaches out for advice when she needs it.



Embedded Community Partnerships

- Brisbane Youth Service
- Communiy’s New Farm Neighbourhood Centre
- 3rd Space
- Micah Projects
- Anglicare Homelessness Services (Women and Families)
- Health Justice Partnership at Mater
- Cairns Homelessness Services Hub
- Mission Australia’s Douglas House
- Redlands Parole Office
- Helena Jones Correctional Centre



CHJP | Projects

Your Own Home

Preventing Homelessness for Women & their Families with an Experience of Violence

Homelessness Law’s *Your Own Home* project assists women and their families, particularly those with an experience of family violence, to avoid homelessness.

The *Your Own Home* project adopts a best-practice, trauma-informed approach to legal assistance. Homelessness Law’s staff lawyers are embedded in frontline community agencies that assist women and their families, including **Anglicare Women’s Hostel** and **Micah Projects**. To further ensure we connect with the most at-risk families, we have tailored referrals pathways with **Kyabra, Salvation Army - Women’s Homelessness Service, Women’s House**, and **Accoras**.

Working closely with frontline homelessness and family violence workers, Homelessness Law provides ongoing representation to ensure women and their children remain safely housed or can access safe and secure housing, free from violence.

“**LawRight helped me greatly with my matters of the past from being mistreated. Their compassion, communication, kindness, and getting things sorted is very appreciated.**

I’m so grateful. It’s helping me to repair and move forward to a better life. Thank you all so much.”

- LawRight Client



Pamela’s story

Pamela is a single mother of 5 children who fled a violent relationship. With no family or community support, Pamela struggled with the increased cost of living and feared eviction into homelessness.

When Pamela first connected to LawRight, a car loan and historic debt were causing her stress and anguish, impacting her mental well-being. Both debts were connected to her experience of violence and acted as a regular trigger to her trauma. Compounding her distress, one of the debt collectors would come to her home demanding she make repayments.

Advocating for Pamela, LawRight asserted that the car financier breached its responsible lending obligations. The negotiated settlement allowed Pamela to keep her car, with the lender agreeing not to pursue the \$9,000 it alleged she owed.

Working closely with Pamela, LawRight also negotiated to have her remaining debts waived on personal and financial hardship grounds. Through this process, Pamela learnt about her rights and is now empowered to engage more directly with creditors. She commented that she now feels confident to advocate for herself and her family.

With her debts resolved, Pamela can spend her limited income on living expenses and rent, keeping her family safely and securely housed.

Adopting a strength-based, trauma-informed approach allowed LawRight’s lawyers to develop a relationship of trust with Pamela. During our representation, she shared further details of her experience of violence. With stable housing, Pamela felt ready to address her experience of violence. LawRight has now supported her to apply to Victim Assist for financial assistance to further help with her recovery.

Project Impact since 2021

Holistically helped **124 women** and their **132 children** facing homelessness to resolve almost **500 distinct legal issues**. Of these 124 women:

- **95%** received government benefits or had no income
- **90%** experienced family violence, often directly connected to their experience of homelessness
- **37%** identified as having a disability
- **18%** identified as First Nations
- **19%** identified as being from a CALD background

“**I appreciate LawRight so much. Professional, approachable and respectful, which makes the process of working through legal problems much easier.**”

- LawRight Client

Financial Year Impact CHJP | Your Own Home

- 242** legal services
- 84** high intensity, on-going supports to resolve legal issues
- 65** children impacted through our service
- 65** women assisted



“**LawRight sorted issues causing my financial burden, which had been a major stress to me and for years impacted my life. Amazing.**”

- LawRight Client

Help to Heal

Helping Victim-Survivors Access Support and Avoid Homelessness

People facing homelessness are more likely to experience violence, including family and sexual violence. The relationship between an experience of homelessness and violence is multidirectional: family violence remains a primary cause of homelessness, particularly for women and young people, while homelessness increases the likelihood of an experience of violence.

The *Help to Heal* project provides best-practice, trauma-informed representation to help victim-survivors access supports and resolve housing, income, and consumer issues connected to an experience of violence and recovery.

Supporting victim-survivors following an incident of violence both prevents and ends homelessness, allowing those impacted by violence to prioritise their wellbeing and recovery. Holistic, integrated legal and non-legal supports help victim-survivors to resolve legal issues connected to an experience of violence, while also removing barriers to safe and secure lives.

Danielle's story

Danielle is a young woman with a history of homelessness and financial disadvantage. After years of housing instability, Danielle recently moved into a social housing property and connected to local support services.

When Danielle spoke with her youth support worker about a serious sexual assault, the worker knew to connect her to LawRight's embedded lawyers. Danielle was reluctant given her negative experience with other lawyers but agreed to see us when her worker assured her our lawyers were trustworthy.

Danielle had previously been told about support from Victim Assist but, while desperate to access support to assist in her recovering, the application process was too overwhelming.

Working closely with her existing supports, LawRight submitted Danielle's application. Victim Assist raised concerns about the application, questioning her eligibility on technical grounds as Danielle had withdrawn her complaint in response to how she was treated by police. Victim Assist also required

further evidence of the violence, despite Danielle being treated in a hospital following the assault.

LawRight worked with embedded medical staff at our longstanding community partner to gather the required information, successfully advocating for Danielle to receive the maximum recognition payment and gain access to additional financial support.

LawRight's trauma-informed, person-centred approach ensured mutual trust and respect with Danielle. While assisting her to access victim supports, Danielle asked for advice about her responsibilities and rights as a tenant. LawRight's advice empowered Danielle to navigate a complex housing situation, ensuring she remained safely and securely housed.

Danielle remains engaged with her support networks and contacts LawRight's team to give updates. She now feels empowered to work directly with Victim Assist to process the remainder of her claims.

"You helped me immensely and I would like to say thank you! I reflect upon what you did for me often and feel so grateful."

- LawRight Client

Project Impact since 2019

- assisted **313 victim-survivors to better understand their rights** and to **access supports**
- provided **195 victim-survivors intensive, wrap-around supports** to resolve legal issues related to an act of violence
- accessed **\$927,321** in financial support from Victim Assist Queensland

I just want to thank Lawright again for helping me with the application and taking the stressful bits off my shoulders.

- LawRight Client



Financial Year Impact

- 239** legal services
- 121** high intensity, on-going supports to resolve legal issues
- 118** legal issues connected to an incident of violence
- 91** victim-survivors assisted
- 7** training sessions to frontline lawyers, medical professionals, and social workers

95%
received
government benefits
or had no income

83%
experienced family
and domestic
violence

70%
experiencing
homelessness
or at risk

49%
identified
as having a
disability

21%
identify as
First Nations

\$326,395 victims assist payments accessed

Stable Futures for Young Queenslanders

Stopping Homelessness for Children & Young People

The *Stable Futures for Young Queenslanders* project provides specialised, trauma-informed representation to Queenslanders aged 12 – 26 facing homelessness. By resolving legal issues pushing people into housing and financial insecurity, we empower young Queenslanders to establish stable futures.

Through our embedded, best-practice partnership with the **Brisbane Youth Service** and our **HJP at the Mater Hospital**, we help young Queenslanders avoid homelessness by addressing tenancy concerns, resolving consumer debts from products targeted at young people in financial hardship, and accessing financial supports following an experience of violence.

Our established referral pathways with **ZigZag Young Women’s Resource Centre**, **Mater Young Adult Health Centre** and **Young Adult Support Unit** ensure we connect with the most at-risk young people across south-east Queensland.

“**LawRight made a huge impact and helped with a heap of things. LawRight is a great service.**”
- LawRight Client

Ruby’s story

Ruby is a young woman with a complex history of housing insecurity, financial hardship, and family violence. Through an established referral pathway, Ruby’s domestic violence support worker connected her to Homelessness Law’s embedded staff lawyer for help with various legal issues connected to Ruby’s experience of violence and homelessness.

When Ruby’s relationship ended, her ex-parnter left her with multiple debts, creating barriers to maintaining a safe and secure home. Ruby’s ex-partner had also stolen her car, leaving her without a vehicle and troubled with the various toll fines and infringements he incurred.

LawRight’s staff and pro bono lawyers empowered Ruby through our representation to successfully finalise her insurance claim, allowing her to buy another car. Working collaboratively with her existing support networks, we resolved the toll and driving fines, ensuring Ruby wasn’t punished for her ex-partner’s actions.

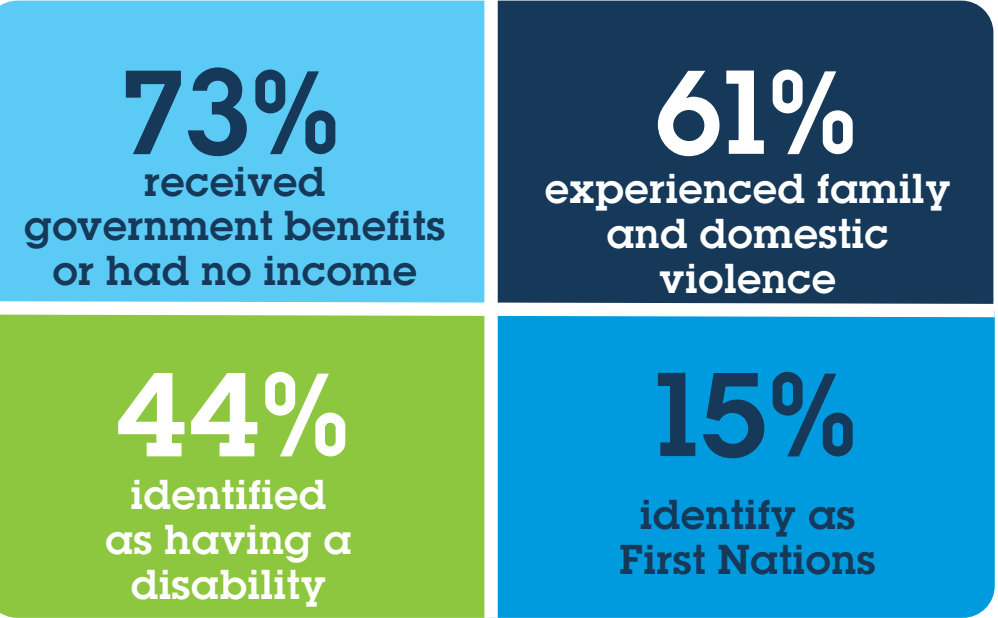
As we built trust with Ruby, LawRight helped her to understand that some debts in her name had resulted from her ex-partner’s financial abuse. LawRight successfully advocated to have these debts waived, allowing Ruby to move forward without being burdened with debt.

Adopting a holistic, wrap-around approach, we urgently applied for financial support through Victim Assist Queensland. Through our advocacy, Ruby received the maximum recognition payment, as well as approval to claim counselling, security expenses, whitegoods and emergency accommodation. These payments acknowledge Ruby’s experience of violence and will help in her recovery.

Ruby continues to be assisted by our community partners, receiving ongoing support with her housing while accessing health and psychological services.

Financial Year Impact

203 legal services
101 high intensity, on-going supports to resolve legal issues
59 children and young people



Community partner reflection

Kate Adnams, Senior Lawyer, continues to build Brisbane Youth Service’s capacity in legal literacy and in opening pathways for young people to address their legal concerns. This year Kate conducted regular workshops and consultations with front-line workers and continued to make herself available weekly for appointments with young people.

In the context of a housing crisis with all of its flow-on societal impact, Kate has seen a dramatic shift in her work towards Victims Assist applications and supporting young people in a trauma informed way through what can be a daunting and difficult process. Kate continues to expand the scope of our service, working towards SPER partnerships and continuing to build on her exceptional work with young people.

CHJP | Stable Futures for Young Queenslanders

Project Impact since 2020

Holistically helped **254 children and young people** facing homelessness to resolve **730 distinct legal issues**. Of these 254 young Queenslanders:

- **68%** received government benefits or had no income
- **59%** had an experience of family or sexual violence, often directly connected to their experience of homelessness
- **38%** identified as having a disability
- **17%** identified as First Nations.



Homelessness Consumer Advocacy Project

Addressing Financial Products Targeted at Queenslanders in Financial Hardship

Financial difficulties and increased housing costs are the most common reasons Queenslanders facing homelessness seek help. During compounding housing and costs-of-living crises, more people than ever before need help to address debts putting their housing at risk.

The *Homelessness Consumer Advocacy Project* keeps people safely housed by resolving consumer debts. Our lawyers and senior financial counsellor work collaboratively to address financial products targeted at people in financial hardship, including payday loans, consumer leases, buy now pay later, and high-cost car loans.

Through our integrated, holistic approach, we work closely with clients to stabilise their financial position, while empowering them going forward.

Building financial literacy

Through a series of targeted training sessions, our Senior Financial Counsellor, Natasha Ramsay, increased the financial literacy of women in custody at Helena Jones Correctional Centre.

Delivering Money Minded content using an empowerment framework, Natasha Ramsay provided sessions on individual needs and wants, identifying spending

leaks, bank accounts and engaging with creditors. Further extending our impact, staff lawyers delivered training on tenancy rights and accessing financial support for victim-survivors.

Each session was well attended, with most of the women at Helena Jones Correctional Centre participating.

Fairer laws for consumers

Expensive and unfair consumer products disproportionately impact people in financial hardship, pushing at-risk Queenslanders into homelessness. Better protections lead to better outcomes for the most vulnerable consumers.

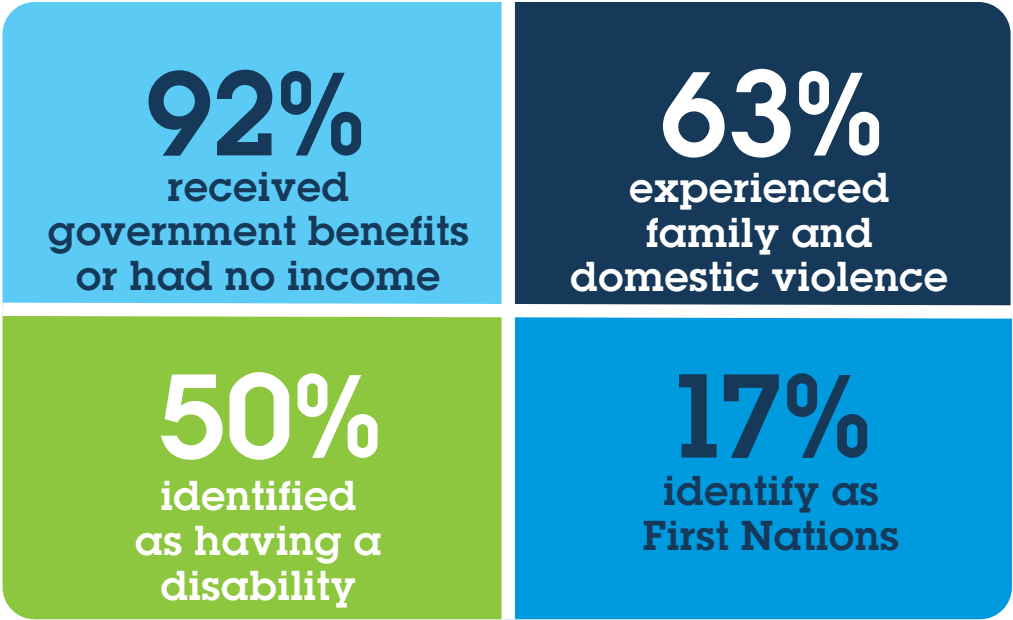
Throughout the year, we made multiple submissions on legislative amendments for increased consumer protections, participated in various stakeholder reference groups, and worked closely with regulatory bodies to advocate for fairer laws for vulnerable consumers.

“Thank you so much for your support of our mutual client in her quest to find a solution to being sold a lemon of a car, with a very unaffordable loan. The advocacy you provided was amazing, and the clear, consistent communication was so helpful for both our client and me. I would have been lost navigating this without you!”

- Frontline Worker

Financial Year Impact

628 legal issues
198 high intensity, on-going supports to resolve legal issues
197 people facing homelessness assisted



\$893,638 consumer debts resolved

CHJP | Homelessness Consumer Advocacy Program

Project Impact since 2019

Holistically helped **563 people** facing homelessness to address **1522 legal issues**, including **818 high-intensity, on-going supports** to resolve money and debt issues pushing people into homelessness.

Successfully resolved **\$2,170,593** in consumer debts.

- Of the 563 people:
- **90%** received government benefits or had no income
 - **48%** had an experience of family or sexual violence, often directly connected to their experience of homelessness
 - **37%** identified as having a disability
 - **17%** identify as First Nations

Homelessness Consumer Advocacy Project

Sally's Story

People who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness typically experience multi-faceted trauma, in addition to financial and social challenges, which compound barriers to services, supports, and change.

Sally is a single mother of three with multiple physical and mental health conditions. She has a long history of financial disadvantage, which is exacerbated by the current housing and cost of living crises.

When Sally first connected to LawRight's staff and pro bono lawyers she needed help with multiple matters connected to her experience of homelessness and violence. She had over \$10,000 in fines for failing to pay toll fees, was being chased by multiple creditors and was struggling to make her car loan payments. Unable to make these payments and her rent, Sally and her children faced eviction into homelessness.

Sally's pro bono lawyers have worked with her for multiple years to resolve her various legal issues. They successfully negotiated to have the toll fines withdrawn and cancelled, reducing Sally's SPER debt to a manageable amount. They negotiated waivers for Sally's historic debts and provided advice about her tenancy.

Sally's car loan payments continued to place her in financial hardship. Reviewing the loan documents, LawRight's lawyers formed the view that the loan was provided in breach of the lender's responsible lending obligations. On this basis, we negotiated for the lender to refund the money Sally had paid above the value of the car, remove any claim they had over the vehicle and waive the amount they claimed she owed.

Unburdened by debt, Sally can use her limited income to ensure her family remains safely and securely housed. Sally proactively reaches out if issues arise.

“The team at LawRight literally saved my life! I was suicidal, homeless and in debt with no way out. It was a very dark time. They have had my back for years now and words cannot explain how much the unwavering support has helped me become the person I am today with next to no debt, and life skills that I would not have gained anywhere if not for them.”

- Sally, LawRight Client

Multicultural Law

Multicultural Law is Queensland's free specialist civil law service for newly arrived Queenslanders from multicultural backgrounds.

LawRight has partnered with Multicultural Australia since 2007, providing targeted, trauma-informed, and culturally appropriate legal representation.

With over 15 years of learnings from our partnership, our goal remains to empower newly arrived Queensland to understand their legal rights and to remove barriers for new arrivals to engage with the Australian legal system. LawRight staff are embedded at Multicultural Australia to collaborate intensively with case managers and to support pro bono volunteers from Corrs Chambers Westgarth.

Responding to community need

New arrivals face multiple, intersecting barriers to successfully integrate into Australian society. Many gender-diverse asylum seekers seek our support to legally change their name to reflect their gender identity.

Responding to an increase in need, we developed a tailored approach to support recent arrivals to change their name and update their legal documents.

“It was a pleasure to get into contact with the team. They tried their best to help me with the process and it was done sooner than I expected. They were very supportive and informed any matter as soon as possible.”

- LawRight Client

100% culturally & linguistically diverse

49 legal services for 20 new clients

11 intensive legal services (10+ hours)

“I was new in Australia as a refugee transgender woman. LawRight helped me to be able to reach my correct identity documents. LawRight played a special role in preparing everything for changing the name and gender in my documents, and I appreciate their assistance. Josephine was always caring and supportive during the process and prepared everything for me.

Thank you very much LawRight for being there for me.

- LawRight Client

Disbursement Fund

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

Every year, funds are contributed from the proceeds of the Queensland Legal Walk.

This year, there were 13 applications to the fund and all applicants received either their full or a portion of their request.


Mark's story

Mark was an elderly client, living on a pension and financially vulnerable. Mark gave his granddaughter \$150,000 to purchase a house, which was registered solely in his granddaughter's name. Mark also contributed \$25,000 to the repair, maintenance and improvement of the home. It was mutually understood that Mark would live in the house for the rest of his life in exchange for his contributions.

When Mark's granddaughter could no longer afford the repayments on the home, Mark agreed for the granddaughter to sell the home provided there was a financial settlement of his share. Mark's granddaughter refuted this however and issued a notice to leave, giving Mark two months to vacate the property.

A member firm has been assisting Mark pro bono with court proceedings after a caveat was lodged to protect his interest. When the matter came to trial, Mark was living interstate with his daughter and due to his health was unable to travel to Brisbane. With assistance from the Disbursement Fund, a support person with some legal experience was able to attend with Mark via video link to enable Mark to give evidence at the trial. Without this assistance, Mark would not have been able to give the evidence required which led to the matter being settled.

A further grant from the fund was then provided to allow the removal of the caveat that had been lodged to protect Mark's interest. Pro bono assistance from the member firm and financial assistance from the Disbursement Fund helped Mark regain some much-needed financial stability.



Friends of LawRight

Friends of LawRight pledge \$1,000 a year for three years. This secure income stream helps LawRight deliver vital services unfunded by government, as well as building new services that address the legal needs of highly vulnerable communities.

- Roslyn Atkinson AO

The Hon. Justice Thomas

Bradley KC

Dr Jacoba Brasch

Lucy Bretherton

Andrew Buchanan

Olga Buchanan

Damien Clothier KC
- Adam Connolly

Andrew Crowe KC

Tony Denholder

Randal & Susan Dennings

The Hon. Robert Gotterson AO

Tamara McCombe

The Hon. Margaret McMurdo AC

Simon Morrison
- Paul Newman

Damien O'Brien KC

Katharine Philp

Majella Pollard

Michael Trim

Jacqui Wootton

and nine anonymous friends



Resources

We had **186,000** clicks to our factsheet pages in the 22-23 financial year.

LawRight provides factsheets on many topics in the following categories:

- ADR & mediation
 - Bankruptcy
 - Blue Cards
 - Child safety
 - Consumer law
 - Defamation
 - Discrimination
 - Employment
 - Enduring power of attorney
 - Environment and planning
 - Going to Court – Commencing court proceedings, drafting court documents, preparing for court, during the trial, and enforcement proceedings
- Appeals in the Queensland Court of Appeal
 - Default and summary judgements
 - Standing and involvement in legal proceedings
 - Going to QCAT
 - Guardianship
 - Health Care Planning
 - Malicious prosecution
 - Mental health
 - Not-for-profits
 - Personal injuries
 - Prisoners
 - Time Limits

www.lawright.org.au/legal-information

Forums

LawRight staff are members of the following forums or boards:

ASIC Consumer Regulator Forum	Human Rights Advocates Group	Queensland Human Rights Commission
Asylum Seekers Legal Working Group	Human Rights and Public Law Committee	Human Rights and Public Law Committee
Buy Now Pay Later Network (Financial Counsellors)	Maintaining and Sustaining Tenancies Forum	Queensland Law Society, Access to Justice and Pro Bono Law Committee
Brisbane Alliance to End Homelessness	Make Renting Fair Alliance	Queensland Legal Assistance Forum (QLAF)
BYS Couchsurfing Hotline Community Advisory Group	Mental Health and Disability Legal Assistance Forum	QLAF Working Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Best Practice Evidence Based Legal Assistance Forum• Rain Event Working Group• Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Service Planning• Mental Health Service Planning• Regional Legal Assistance Forum
Cairns Regional Legal Assistance Forum (RLAF)	National Employment Law Network	Review of the Model Defamation Provisions Stakeholder Roundtable
Community Legal Centres Queensland, Management Committee	National Human Rights Network Meeting	RTA Consumer Regulator Forum
Community Legal Education Legal Assistance Forum	National Lemon Cars Working Group	RTA Stakeholder Engagement Forum
Consumers’ Federation of Australia	NQ Consumer Taskforce	The University of Queensland Pro Bono Centre, Advisory Board
Court User Stakeholder Group	QCAT Guardianship and Administration Stakeholder Group	
Economic Abuse Reference Group	QCROSS Homelessness and Housing Network	
	QCROSS Living Affordability Policy Network	
	QHYC mandatory reporting working group.	
	Queensland Employment Lawyers’ Network	



Management Committee

President

Jacqueline Wootton, Partner of Herbert Smith Freehills

Queensland Law Society Nominee

Binari De Saram, Legal Policy Manager and Solicitor of Queensland Law Society

Barrister Members

Hamish Clift
Angela Rae

Committee Nominated Representative

The Hon. Roslyn Atkinson AO

Secretary

Tania Boal, Partner of MurphySchmidt

Legal Practice Members

Stephen Knight, Partner of MinterEllison
Tim Longwill, Partner of McCullough Robertson

Bar Association of Queensland Nominee

Andrew Crowe KC

Alumni guest

Andrew Buchanan, Inaugural LawRight President and retired Partner

Members

Firms & ILPs

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

Barristers

The Hon. Roslyn Atkinson AO, Management Committee Member

Senior Counsel

Andrew Crowe KC
Gavin Handran KC
Melanie Hindman KC
Nitra Kidson KC
Damien O'Brien KC
Rebecca Treston KC

Counsel

Judy Brien
Justin Carter
Scott Carter
Catherine Chiang
Morgan Clarke
Hamish Clift
Stephen Colditz
Benedict Coyne
Clare Dart
Graham Dietz
Margaret Forrest
Christopher George
Reimen Hii
Steven Hogg
Emma Hoiberg
Mathew Jones
Louise Kruger
Carla Klease
Nathan Laing
Dr Stephen Lee

Duncan Marckwald
Jade Marr
Salwa Marsh
Michael May
Jane Menzies
Ryan Nattrass
James O'Regan
Rowan Pack
Damien Payard
Nola Pearce
Gabriel Perry
Angela Rae
Anthony Reilly
Sarah Spottiswood
Danielle Tay
Pav Zielinski

Corporate Members

AECOM Australia Pty Ltd

Government Legal Unit Members

Crown Law, Department of Justice and Attorney-General

Specified Members

Bar Association of Queensland Inc
Queensland Law Society

Associate Members

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

Life Members

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



Staff and Volunteers

LawRight staff

Aaron Harris
Ada Sculthorp
Alexandria
Ayla Fetahagic
Ben Craig
Ben Tuckett
Bonnie Djordjevic
Bronte Coates
Caitlin Holmes
Christie Groves
Constance Whiteside
Elise Dorsa
Elizabeth Gallagher
Erica Wilkinson
Fleur Hopkins
Isaac Ford
Jo Sampford
Josephine Allan
Karen Dyhrberg
Kate Adnams
Kathleen Pahor

Kurt Maroske
Linda Macpherson
Linden Peacock
Madeleine Depace
Madeline Lilly-Howe
Melinda Willis
Miad Jamali
Natalie Morris
Natasha Ramsay
Nikki Gatbonton
Nikki Hancock
Rachel Sloper
Rebecca Scott
Rebecca Slade
Rohan Moore
Rose Mackay
Ruby Chiswell
Sadie Burton
Stephen Grace
Sue Garlick
Tadaya Mujdrica
Zoe Rienecker

LawRight volunteers

Pro Bono Connect
Stephen McClure

CHJP
Ailis Rogers

Federal Courts
Simran Gill
Sam Dunkley
Matthew Hovi

QCAT
Caitlin Josey
Jeremy Lim
Gabriella Neihues Esser
Katty Escobar-Gomez
Delou Uwayo
Howard Wang
Zahraa Al Saedi

State Courts

Kevin Keller
Lucie Davie
Edbert Kang
Melody Suen
Cynthia Chan

Enforcement Hearings

Flora Dinh
Ella Battams
Cynthia Chan

Law Schools

Pro Bono Connect
Queensland University of Technology
Semester 2, 2022
Michael Fairbairn
Maxi-Lee Glancy
Helen Kwon

Griffith University
Semester 1, 2023
Liam Cochrane
Ella Kimler
Juan Ornelas
Oo Hyun Park
Amanda Walker
Jessica Willis

Homelessness Law
The University of Queensland
Semester 2, 2022
Alexander Carey-Foster
Benita Bhikha
Jocinda Wong
Josephine Murphy
Tyler Bradley (Cairns)

The University of Queensland
Semester 1, 2023
Isabella Rehbein
Annabelle Khoo
Raul Iute
Catrina Gu
William Cook
Kasey Chandler

KWM Waiwa Mudena Cadetship Program
Shaquille Chong
Caitlin Watson
Natalie Legge

Health Justice Partnership at Mater Clinic
The University of Queensland
Semester 2, 2022
Alexandria Zoppi
Thomas Wilkinson
Laura Rowsell
Romy McLean
Angus Robertson

The University of Queensland
Semester 1, 2023
Hannah Woodfield
Grace Hancock
Isabelle Killen
Lilian Quinn
Sian Wright
James Rochester

Court and Tribunal Services
Queensland University of Technology
Litigation Clinic
Semester 2 2022
Chloe Greene
Cat Smith

Queensland University of Technology
Litigation Clinic
Semester 1 2023
Xuemei (Sophie) Bai
Christina Zerafa
Nadia Mian
Sam Dunkley
Thomas Unwin
Cynthia Chan

Bond University Litigation Clinic
Trimester 3 2022
Jordan He
Lyndal Brennan
Brett Kostiw
Atousa Toudiei
Isabella Parsons
Flora Dinh
Simran Sidhu
Paramdeep Bhangu



“LawRight has provided a warm and welcoming workplace environment in which I am able to experience, firsthand, the value of my legal studies by assisting to afford vulnerable people with access to justice. I am grateful for the skills, knowledge, and guidance I have gained while at LawRight and I look forward to continuing to volunteer.”
- Sam Dunkley (Federal Courts student volunteer)

Our Finances

Treasurer's Report

I am pleased to present my Treasurer's report, as well as the audited and financial statements for LawRight for the 2022-2023 financial year.

This year we recorded an abnormal loss of \$202,877, reducing our equity at year end to \$604,669. Actual expenses during the year were on par with the 2022 financial year, however, there was additional salary expenditure which related to a prior period.

Pleasingly our membership revenue remains strong in 2022 – 2023.

Government funding provided 81% of LawRight's income. LawRight once again sincerely thanks both the State and Federal Government for their continuing efforts to fund the important services that LawRight provides. While self-funding efforts continue, LawRight would not be able to provide the level of services that it does without this important support from both levels of Government.

This year we particularly thank the Federal Government for the flood funding to respond to the impacts of the 2022 floods.

All the evidence shows that the funding by Government of services such as LawRight results in significant costs savings to the judicial system in Queensland. Court resources are stretched. The work of LawRight contributes to ensuring that the limited resources of the Courts are used most efficiently.

In an effort to continue to expand LawRight's ability to meet the needs of vulnerable clients, initiatives continue to be undertaken to increase the self-funding of LawRight and to reduce general expenditure.

Once again, LawRight's Queensland Legal Walk received terrific support by individual participants and their organisations, with \$108,000 raised on the day which was a great result. A big thank you to everyone involved.

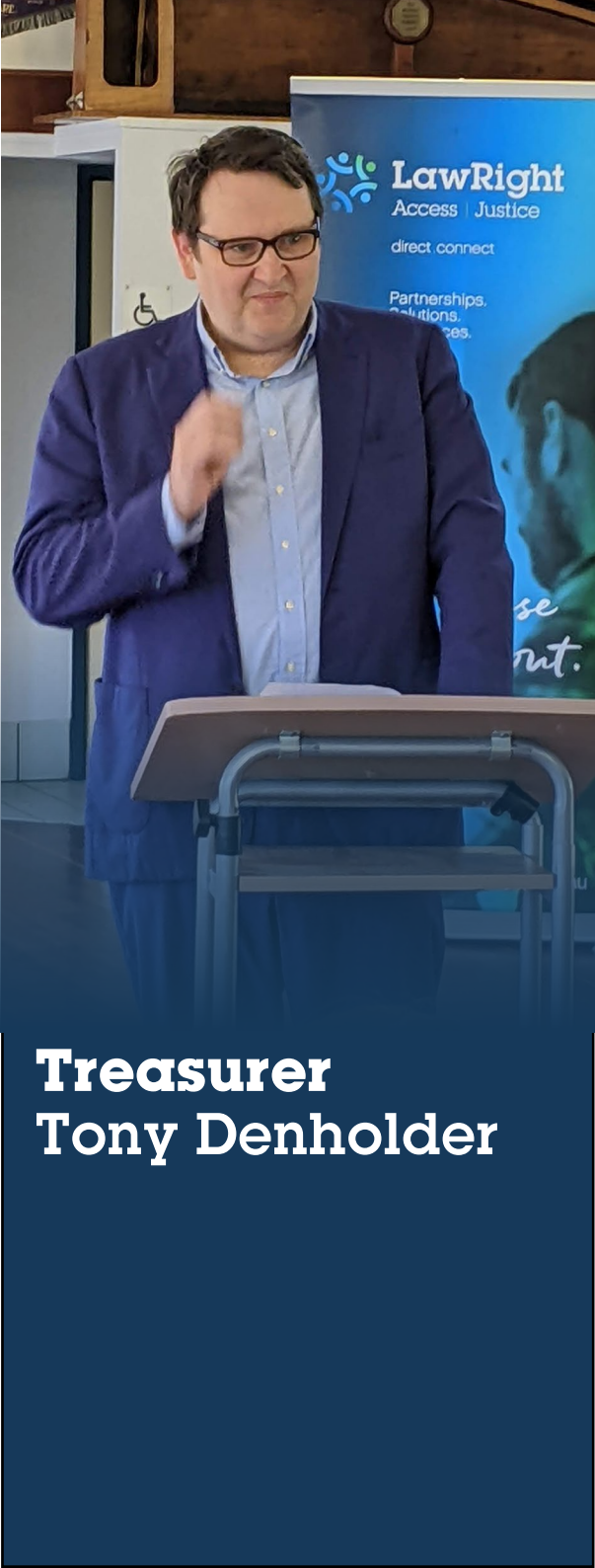
It is hoped that the increasing success and profile of this signature event for LawRight will continue. It serves not only as an important fundraising function, but also as an occasion to highlight the importance of pro bono legal assistance in Queensland.

The Friends of LawRight campaign also continues to be successful. We now have 32 members of the legal profession who have committed to making a substantial annual donation to LawRight. I would like to thank each member who has made this commitment. The Friends of Lawright play an important role in helping to enable LawRight to fund all of the services it provides.

Once again, the Management Committee has benefited greatly from the stellar and tireless leadership of LawRight's joint directors, Linda Macpherson and Sue Garlick and subsequently Karen Dyhrberg who joined Linda as Co-CEO in May. They continue to ensure, amongst other things, the successful financial stewardship of LawRight.

Thank you must also be extended to LawRight's bookkeeper, Rebecca Slade, and auditor Jeremiah Thum from Independent Audit Services, who continue to provide outstanding service to the Management Committee through the preparation of financial documents ensuring LawRight's financial integrity.

I also thank the wonderful staff of LawRight for their continuing hard work in what can often be a difficult legal environment. Their efforts ensure that those who are most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our community have access to essential legal services.



**Treasurer
Tony Denholder**

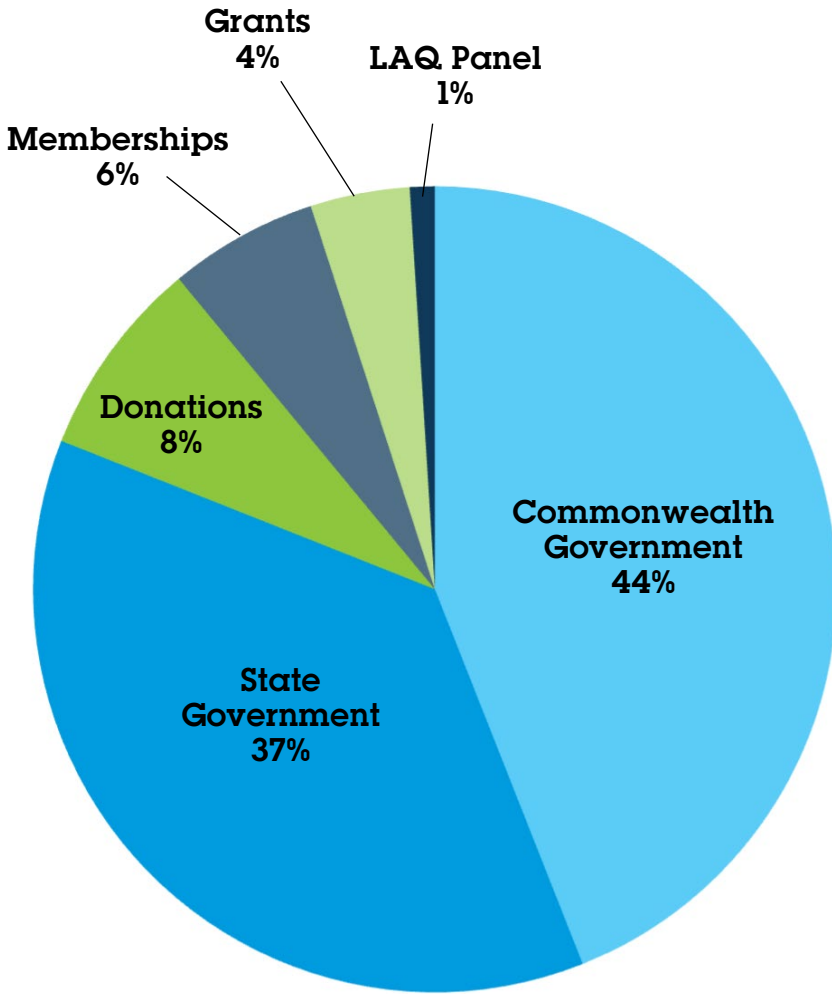
Financial Statements

LawRight is an association incorporated in Queensland. We are a public benevolent institution, endorsed by the Australian Taxation Office as a deductible gift recipient organisation. Our accounts are independently audited.

Our audited, annual financial report is available at lawright.org.au/annualreports.



LawRight Income



Contacting LawRight

LawRight offices generally operate from 9am to 5pm on business days. The main office phones are available 10am to 4pm.

Main Office

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

Pro Bono Connect

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

Community and Health Justice Partnerships | Homelessness Law and Multicultural Law

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

www.lawright.org.au

Court and Tribunal Services | State Courts Office

Level 1, Queensland Elizabeth II Courts of Law Building
(including **Enforcement Hearing Duty Lawyer**)
415 George Street
Brisbane QLD 4000
(07) 3738 7800
state.cts@lawright.org.au

Court and Tribunal Services | QCAT Office

Level 10, National Australia Bank (NAB) Building
259 Queen Street
Brisbane QLD 4000
(07) 3564 7561
qcat.cts@lawright.org.au

Court and Tribunal Services | Federal Courts Office

Level 6, Harry Gibbs Commonwealth Law Courts
119 North Quay
Brisbane QLD 4000
(07) 3052 4309
fed.cts@lawright.org.au

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

Thank you for your support.