

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

finances 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.

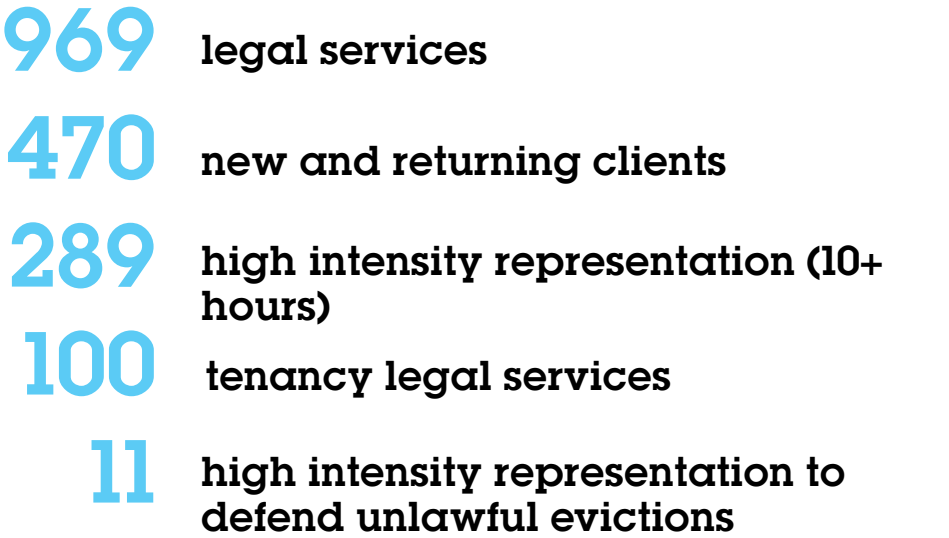
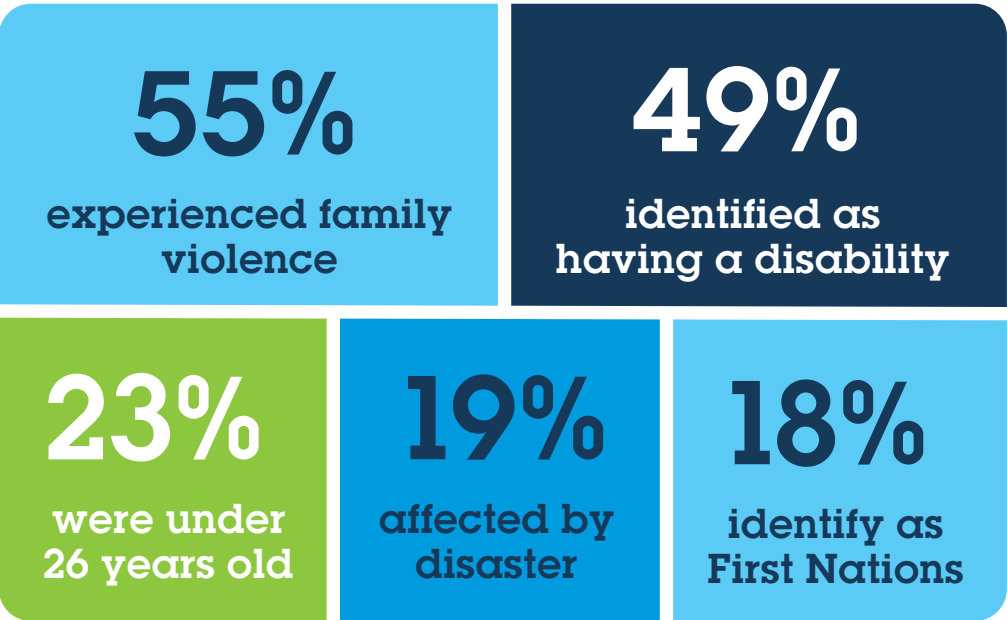
Implementing a trauma-informed, client-centred approach, LawRight’s financial counsellor and lawyers built trust and respect with Alira. During our assistance, Alira more fully disclosed the details of her experience of family and sexual violence.

“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
- Communify’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.

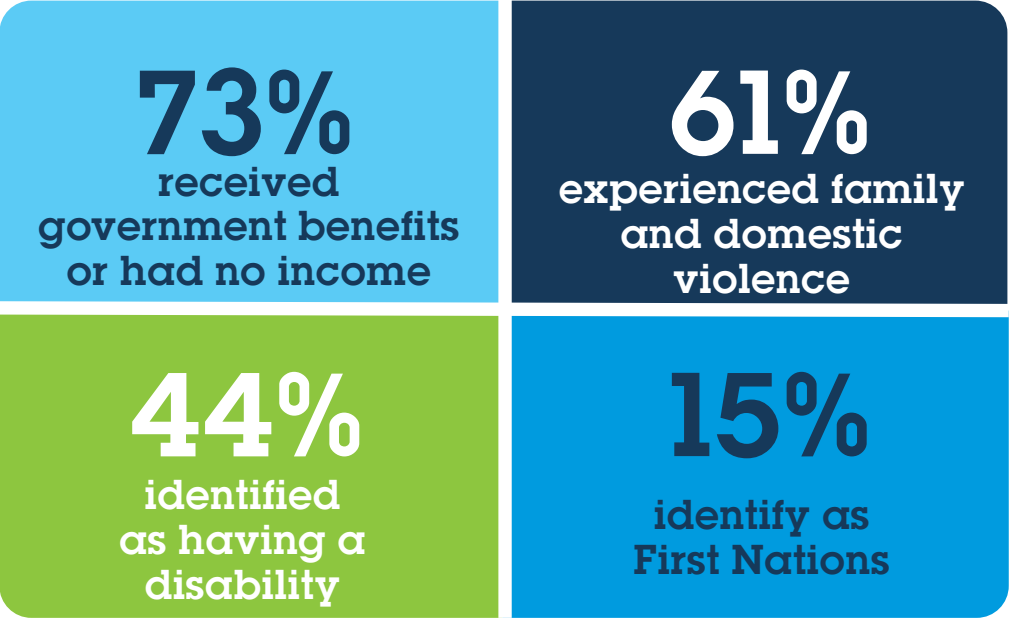
As we built trust with Ruby, LawRight helped her to understand that some debts in her name had resulted from her ex-partner’s financial abuse. LawRight successfully advocated to have these debts waived, allowing Ruby to move forward without being burdened with debt.

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.

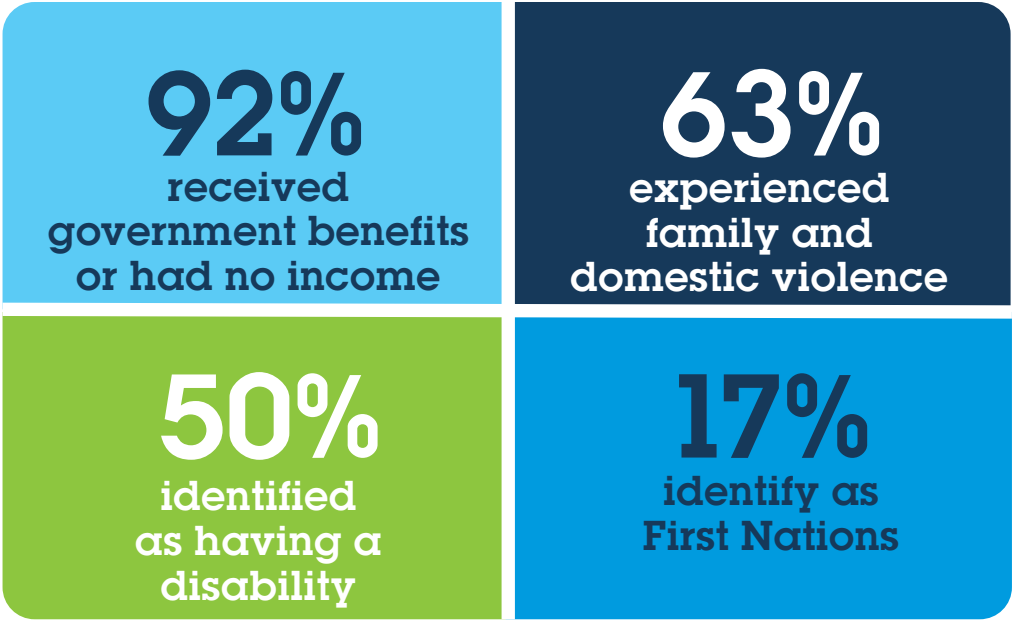
Throughout the year, we made multiple submissions on legislative amendments for increased consumer protections, participated in various stakeholder reference groups, and worked closely with regulatory bodies to advocate for fairer laws for vulnerable consumers.

“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