



2023-2024 Annual Report



LawRight supported...

1,246
applications

3,318
enquiries by phone,
email, in person

LawRight supported...

1,860
people to access justice

527
at Court &
Tribunal Services

491
at Community & Health
Justice Partnerships

842
through Pro Bono
Connect

LawRight delivered...

535
intensive
casework
services

1,560
advices

795
tasks

24
duty lawyer
services

3,138
referrals

4,865
legal
information
services

77
financial
counselling
help

LawRight's impact is scaled through strategic partnerships

35 staff

137 members

22,750
pro bono hours

Embedded at
13
partner locations

500
volunteers

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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.

Co-CEOs' report

As we reflect on another busy year, we would like to acknowledge the partnerships and teams that make LawRight what it is:

- our government and philanthropic partners
- our members and pro bono partners
- our community and court connections, who host our services and connect clients to us
- our staff – the glue that holds it all together!

Our government and philanthropic partners

The majority of our funding comes from the Commonwealth and State governments and we look forward to working with them to improve services as the National Legal Assistance Partnership is replaced by the new National Access to Justice Partnership.

With additional funding from the Commonwealth Government, we established the Migration Law program in our Federal Courts office.

We have also increased our partnerships with other funders, with grants moving from 4% to 8.5% of our income.

Our members and pro bono partners

Pro bono contributions

Thank you to our wonderful firms, ILPs, legal units, barristers and law school partners, and the wider profession who supported LawRight with their membership, work and fundraising.

We tally up pro bono hours, as just one measurement of the work achieved. Total hours had plateaued in recent years both due to covid but also our efforts to ensure all pro bono work

was efficient. Therefore, it is significant to see them climb once again to 22,750 hours - we know it is all time spent strategically.

Secondments

Of all the contributions a member firm can make, providing a secondee perhaps increases our capacity the most. We thank Corrs Chambers Westgarth and Sparke Helmore for their secondments this year.

Our Patron and Management Committee

We thank our Patron, the Honourable Chief Justice Helen Bowskill for her Honour's leadership and support.

Our members also provide our management committee, and we particularly thank the tireless Jacqui Wootton for her work as president this year, along with all the management committee members.

Our community and court partners

To provide access to justice, we place lawyers in court registries, community and health agencies. Of course, this would not be possible without deep relationships with those agencies. They host our staff and our offices, and entrust us to work with them to support their clients and court users. Without their partnerships, LawRight could not reach the clients who need it most.

The LawRight Staff

Executive Team with 50 years of LawRight experience

This year saw the formation of our Executive Team, with Rose Mackay, Ben Tuckett and Stephen Grace

being appointed as directors of our services. Rose, Ben and Steve all bring considerable expertise to their services and our Executive Team has an impressive 50+ years of experience at LawRight.

Farewells and thanks

We had a staff cohort of around 32 and this year saw 7 staff depart. Four were paralegals who left to pursue their careers after graduating - Caitlin Holmes, Alex Gehrke, Tadayya Mujdrlica and Miad Jamali. We also farewelled senior financial counsellor Natasha Ramsay, and lawyers Sadie Burton and Elizabeth Gallagher.

Elizabeth worked across many roles, most recently Principal Solicitor, and helped build the Court and Tribunal Services to the program it is today. We wish our departing staff all the best, and thank all staff, old and new, for their ongoing contributions to LawRight.

We look forward to another exciting year ahead.

Karen Dyhrberg and Linda Macpherson, Co-CEOs



Karen Dyhrberg
LawRight Co-CEO



Linda Macpherson
LawRight Co-CEO

LawRight Patron

The Honourable Chief Justice Helen Bowskill

As Patron of LawRight, I thank the many barristers, law firms, legal teams, and law students who support LawRight to increase access to justice. Every day, they generously donate their time and pro bono resources to provide advice, guidance, and representation to vulnerable Queenslanders through LawRight's programs. I also extend my thanks to the staff at community agencies, court registries and members of the judiciary who take the time to connect people to the help they need at LawRight.

LawRight plays a vital role in increasing access to justice across Queensland, particularly in the courts. Without LawRight, many people would be left to navigate the complexities of the legal system for much longer. This not only places a significant personal burden on the individuals themselves, but also increases costs for all parties and the courts.

The staff and volunteers of LawRight make a significant contribution to the administration of justice in Queensland, from which the whole of the community benefits. I express my heartfelt thanks to all of them.



President's report

Jacqueline Wootton, LawRight President

LawRight is a creation of the legal profession - the barristers, law firms, ILPs, legal units, law schools and individuals who are committed to an accessible justice system. This year, LawRight members and supporters:

- provided 22,750 hours of pro bono work – a significant increase and no mean feat when we have worked to ensure every hour is efficient and impactful; and
- contributed over \$388,000 of financial support through their Membership contributions, Friends of LawRight, fundraising at the Queensland Legal Walk and Red Wine for Justice, grants (including from QLS and BAQ) and donations.

These fantastic contributions are only possible, and meaningful, with the work of LawRight's staff, and I thank our staff for their dedication, hard work and commitment to excellence. They use their significant expertise coordinating pro bono to maximise the impact for clients.

LawRight members also provide leadership to LawRight through our management committee, and I thank my fellow committee members for their stewardship of LawRight this year.

I also acknowledge and thank Co-CEOs Linda Macpherson and Karen Dyhrberg for their leadership this year. As we move into 2024-25, Linda is moving to the role of Director of Governance & Operations, and Karen will continue as CEO.

We look forward to refreshing our strategic plan, recommitting ourselves to our First Nations work and, as we navigate the end of our funding cycle, continuing our important work for clients.

And that work has never been so important. We will continue supporting people to maintain their employment, their housing, their income, to support their recovery from violence and overall, increasing their access to the justice system.





Queensland Legal Walk



The Queensland Legal Walk is a chance to celebrate the important role of pro bono in helping the most disadvantaged and marginalised Queenslanders, while raising funds to support access to justice.

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 to show their support.

This year, 1,056 walkers across Queensland raised \$119,538 for LawRight’s vital services. They represented over 71 organisations, including chambers, law firms and practices, and university law schools.

In Brisbane, the Walk was led by LawRight patron, the Honourable Chief Justice Helen Bowskill. Mr Jimmy Sullivan MP also led the Walk and spoke on behalf of Attorney-General Yvette D’Ath MP.

Thank you to our regional organisers – Townsville Community Law, Anglicare & Mission Australia (Cairns) and the Downs and South West Queensland Law Association.

Champion Fundraisers

Overall Team and Chambers:

Level Twenty Seven Chambers \$16,240

Individual: Rafa “the Miniature Schnauzer” Denholder \$4,410

Law Firm: Clayton Utz \$12,140

Law School: Griffith University Law School \$1,680

\$119,538

raised overall



Thanking LawRight members

On 7 March 2024, LawRight members and supporters gathered to hear stories of how their work through LawRight makes a difference and improves access to justice.

This was also a chance for us to thank them for their pro bono work, membership, donations and support in many ways.

Members heard from guest speakers Tom Ritchie of Counsel, and past LawRight secondees Adam Connolly of Clayton Utz (seconded from MinterEllison) and Beth Royan of Barry Nilsson Lawyers.

All spoke about how their work with LawRight changed the lives of their clients.

We thanked Friends of LawRight, who have made \$160,000 in donations since the program started in 2019. This has allowed many of our services to continue when funding was uncertain, and to reach more people.

Thanks to McCullough Robertson for hosting the event.





Pro Bono Connect

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

Pro Bono Connect assesses applications for legal assistance and connects vulnerable people and NFP organisations with the Queensland legal profession for pro bono assistance.

The assistance provided is flexible and is considered on a case-by-case basis. Some applicants may be provided with full pro bono representation, where others may receive advice, or assistance with discrete tasks, carried out by members of the private profession.

The Pro Bono Connect team also assists with advice, discrete tasks and referrals to other legal services when unable to refer to the private profession.

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.

The scope of service adapts to the demand for pro bono legal services as it arises.

Pro Bono referrals

Firms that took referrals this year

Hall & Wilcox
Clayton Utz
Guy Sara & Associates
Allens
MinterEllison
HopgoodGanim Lawyers
Holding Redlich
Sparke Helmore
Shand Taylor
Baker McKenzie
AKS Law
McInnes Wilson
Aitken & Whyte
Murphy Schmidt
Johnson Winter Slattery
HWL Ebsworth

Mediator

Natalia Wuth

Barristers who took referrals this year

Christopher Templeton
Douglas Savage
Mitchell Downes
Grace Devereaux
Gavin Handran KC
Michael de Waard
Maxwell Walker
Christopher Schaffer
Hamish Clift
Robert Gallo
Andrew Crowe KC
San-Joe Tan
George Kalimnios
Steven Forrest
Damien Payard
Nola Pearce
Reimen Hii
Justin Carter
Kate Fuller
Stephanie Philippou
Laura Dawson
Matthew Jones KC
Jules Moxon

Application and triage process

LawRight's online application form is available statewide and triaged by our small staff team. This year we received **1,246** applications.

- We triaged **381** matters to the Court and Tribunal Services
- **22** were connected to Community and Health Justice Partnerships (while most CHJP clients connect to us directly through our community partners)
- We had to turn away **685** people, but the PBC team provided information and referral to appropriate organisations.
- The remaining **168** people were given a full assessment of their legal issue by the PBC team, and they connected **66** to pro bono assistance (from **150** attempted referrals). Applicants who couldn't be referred for full pro bono were given advice, information and referral to appropriate supports.
- Across LawRight, we connected **208** clients to pro bono assistance – full representation or a one-off advice or assistance.

203

clients (168 new)

150

referrals to pro bono representation

709

referrals elsewhere

42

advices

68

tasks

Rose Mackay, PBC Director

In late 2023, Rose Mackay was appointed as Director of LawRight's Pro Bono Connect service.

Rose has been at LawRight for over 6 years, after more than 10 years in top-tier national firms in property and taxation.

Rose looks after assessing and triaging applications, providing advice, and managing referrals to the private profession. Rose believes in the importance of developing and maintaining strong relationships with firms and barristers, to help the private profession meet their pro bono goals and to ensure that the best legal assistance is provided to vulnerable individuals and not-for-profits in Queensland.

Rose also supervises law students for university student clinics, and was recently nominated for a teaching award.



Connecting people to pro bono

From difficult past to new profession

Jack had completed his legal studies and was applying for admission as a solicitor. Jack had previously been diagnosed with depression, and had used alcohol to self-medicate. Jack was seeking ongoing treatment including counselling. The Law Society originally sought a psychological report, and Jack was issued with a certificate of suitability, qualified by a requirement of full disclosure to the Supreme Court.

Pro Bono Connect arranged a pro bono barrister who was able to assist with Jack's submissions, and later moved Jack's admission. Jack is now a solicitor of the Supreme Court of Queensland.

Artist rights

Sarah, an Aboriginal artist, became aware that an open-air art gallery was unlawfully copying and selling her work. Sarah sent a letter to the proprietor of the gallery, asserting copyright and moral rights but he stated that he did not copy Sarah's work. Pro Bono Connect found a member firm to assist Sarah to assert her copyright and remove all infringing copies for sale.

"Keep up the good work and thanks for making a difference."

"Your team has given me the strength I needed to pursue my case. I am therefore very grateful and will donate/help in my capacity for your cause."

"Thank you for replying and assisting. So very much appreciated. Your response by steering me into other options will afford me a possible chance to see my grandson."

Combating elder financial abuse

Jenny sold her property and used a portion of the sale proceeds to build a granny flat on her son's property. Jenny's son used the remainder of the sale proceeds to build his own house on the property. Jenny and her son had agreed that Jenny could live in the granny flat on the property for the rest of her life. After Jenny moved in, her son began to impose a number of very strict rules on Jenny. Not long afterwards, Jenny's son told her she could no longer remain living in

the granny flat. When Jenny applied to LawRight, she was living in temporary accommodation and was at risk of homelessness. Without recovering the money she had invested in the granny flat and her son's house, Jenny would be unable to secure long term accommodation. Pro Bono Connect was able to connect Jenny with a member firm who could help her to recover the money invested in the granny flat and her son's property.

Top areas of law

Property disputes

Elder abuse

Not-for-profit issues

Other civil law

Government and
Administrative law

Wills/Probate

Our clients

41% identified disability
or mental illness

35% homeless or at risk
of homelessness

28% older people

25% rural, regional or remote

24% experienced domestic violence

9% First Nations

Responding to disasters

Climate disasters affect our existing clients

Climate disasters, including floods, disproportionately impact the most vulnerable people in our communities, particularly people experiencing housing insecurity.

All LawRight services saw clients who were affected by the 2022 SEQ floods and other disasters, either directly or through an exacerbation of their existing disadvantage.

Collaborating to respond to disaster

LawRight delivered training to community agency workers on the likely legal and financial impacts for people affected by flood. We regularly connect to those workers to answer questions about those areas of need.

We also train volunteer pro bono lawyers, and incorporate information about how disasters affect already-disadvantaged clients and interact with other legal problems.

LawRight staff have also contributed to the Disaster Legal Assistance Forum.

Learning from past events

From past experience we have designed the response to disasters around our existing services rather than to establish new partnerships in the wake of a disaster.

Helping people whose legal problems fall between the cracks

In the past year, we have assisted a number of clients with flood-related legal matters who have 'fallen between the cracks' and not been able to resolve their matters elsewhere.

The matters emerging more recently have included insurance disputes, building disputes, contractual disputes caused or exacerbated by the floods, disputes with local government and state government departments about damage linked to neighbouring government properties, and eligibility for government support such as Resilient Homes Fund and Structural Assistance Grant.

We have sought to connect these clients with pro bono representation for individualised help.



Legal problems follow flood damage

Joan was triaged to Pro Bono Connect as she could not get help elsewhere.

Joan owned her own home, but then found herself in a financial hardship a few years ago. At the time, the client's sister agreed to assist our client by jointly signing a mortgage for the property. Both our client and her sister were noted on title as tenants in common. The sister made no financial contributions to the property. In the 2022 floods, the property was severely damaged and a cash settlement was provided by the insurer. The sister spent the insurance money on other things because she had no need to live in the house.

Joan was left with not enough money to carry out repairs to the property. She couldn't afford to maintain the mortgage and now needed to sell the property, but the property remained damaged and not in a state fit for sale.

Joan was unable to get help anywhere else, and came to LawRight's Pro Bono Connect

service, where we assessed her application and considered her legal options.

LawRight referred Joan to a law firm for full pro bono representation to resolve her challenges.



Responding to disasters

Services

141 clients

43 high-intensity, ongoing casework matters

62 advices

65 tasks

25 clients assisted by our Financial Counsellor

121 informations

101 referrals

4 Community Legal Education activities

9 stakeholder engagements

2 law reform activities

Court and Tribunal Services

LawRight's Court and Tribunal Services offer statewide assistance to individuals, primarily self-represented litigants with proceedings in various courts and tribunals. The Court and Tribunal Services currently includes five legal programs:

- State Courts office (incorporating the Supreme Court Mediation Scheme)
- Enforcement Hearing Duty Lawyer Service
- QCAT office
- Federal Courts office
- Migration Law Service

Goals of the Court and Tribunal Services

- Increasing Access to Justice – Courts and tribunals should be accessible to all individuals, regardless of their circumstances or ability to afford private legal assistance. No one should have to be involved in civil litigation without access to independent legal advice and assistance.
- Improving Administration of Justice – The operation of the rule of law requires that courts and tribunals operate alongside effective legal assistance services. These services are an integral part of any functioning justice framework and our courts and tribunals operate better and more efficiently when litigants have access to advice. It is the responsibility of the legal profession to ensure that litigants have access to legal advice services for the effective administration of justice.

How we work

The Court and Tribunal Services have been in operation for 17 years. Our unique, scalable pro bono partnership model tailors discrete legal assistance services to individual clients based on their vulnerability, circumstances, and specific legal problem. Our model operates differently in each jurisdiction, but at its core it revolves around three arms:

- Law firms – We partner with 22 law firms to offer three dedicated timeslots each week, in each office, for client appointments. These law firms provided 3,348 pro bono hours across 367 client appointments. This figure doesn't include the firms that undertook considerable pro bono work outside of these appointments or that took on matters for representation. Each firm, through their team leaders, coordinates a roster



of volunteers that provide clients with advice, drafts pleadings and coaches clients to represent themselves to the best of their abilities.

- Barristers – This year, over 80 barristers provided assistance to the Court and Tribunal Services, whether that was representation at a mediation or hearing, help to draft or settle a court document, providing an advice on prospects or acting as a phone-a-friend for our staff to discuss litigation strategy.
- Our team – We partner with firms and barristers to increase the number of people we can assist, and the level of assistance we can provide; however, the majority of advice and task assistance is provided by our staff lawyers, supported by our paralegals and student volunteers. Our team of 15 staff members are experienced litigators, who provide urgent, targeted, and comprehensive advice and task assistance to vulnerable litigants.



Nikki Hancock, CTS Assistant Director, and Ben Tuckett, CTS Director



5,350
pro bono hours



Ben Tuckett CTS Director

With 8 years of experience in litigation and legal program management, Ben brings extensive expertise to his role as Director of LawRight's Court and Tribunal Services (CTS).

Ben first joined LawRight in 2014 on secondment as part of the Pro Bono Connect team, before taking on the management of the Queensland Law Society (QLS) and Bar Pro Bono Referral Schemes in 2015. In January 2017, he transitioned to CTS as Senior Lawyer of the State Courts office. Since then, Ben has held a series of key roles within CTS, including Managing Lawyer and Principal Solicitor, before being appointed Director in late 2023.

Throughout his tenure, Ben has played a pivotal role in the growth and enhancement of CTS, driving the development of innovative programs, new services, and the broader expansion of CTS. His leadership has been crucial in enhancing access to legal advice and assistance for self-represented litigants, ensuring they receive the support they need to effectively navigate the court system.

Outside of LawRight, Ben is an active member of the legal community, serving on the management committees of Community Legal Centres Queensland and Prisoners' Legal Service, as well as representing Queensland on the National PII Network.

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 our office on Level 1 of the District and Supreme Court Building in Brisbane 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 the client's circumstances, legal problem, and available pro bono resources, we may:

- Provide legal information or self help resources and toolkits
- Provide legal advice and discrete task assistance including correspondence between parties and settlement negotiations
- Draft court documents, including applications, statements of claim, defences, and other pleadings
- Assist clients to negotiate or otherwise pursue alternative dispute resolution options
- Refer for discrete representation at hearings or mediation and full representation

Pro Bono

Firms and legal units

Allens
Ashurst
Barry Nilsson
Bartley Cohen
Clayton Utz
Cooper Grace Ward
Corrs Chambers Westgarth
Crown Law
DLA Piper
Hall & Wilcox
Lander & Rogers
McCullough Robertson
MinterEllison

Barristers

Alex Nelson
Anthony Morris KC
Sean Russell
Christopher Schaffer
Graham W Dietz
Hamish Clift
Jules Moxon
Lauren Gamble
Matthew Jones KC
Olivia Perkiss
Rachel De Luchi
Stephanie Philippou
Steven Hogg
Tom Ritchie

Who referred clients to us

33% referred by judiciary or court staff

29% referred by other pro bono legal assistance services

14% referred by private law firms and barristers

Top 5 areas of law

- 31% Other civil
- 20% Property disputes
- 18% Defamation
- 9% Judicial Review
- 9% Debt owed by client

Clients per jurisdiction

- 6% Court of Appeal
- 45% Supreme Court
- 29% District Court
- 7% District Court appellate jurisdiction
- 13% Other

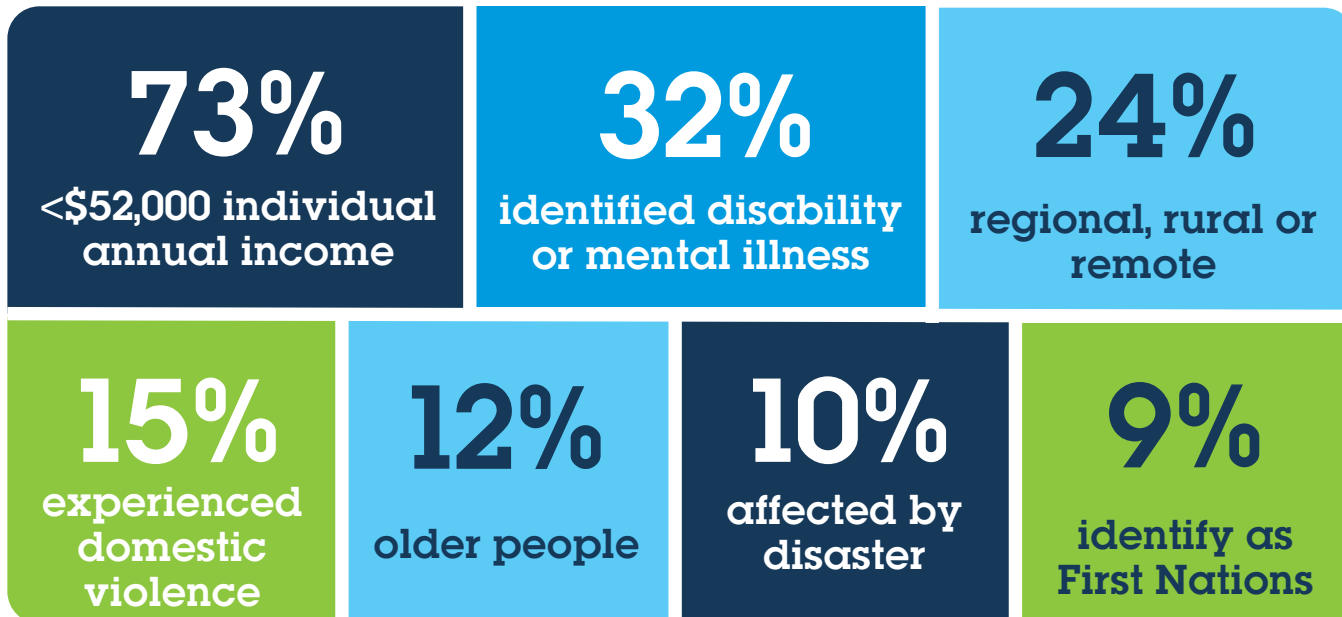
154 clients

47 facilitated referrals
for discrete and full representation to our firms and barristers

418 advices

133 tasks

676 pro bono hours
for 52 client appointments



Court and Tribunal Services

State Courts

Corrs Secondment

Since 2008, Corrs Chambers Westgarth has provided a secondees to LawRight to assist with the delivery of our programs. Since 2017, that secondment has been with our State Courts office. LawRight CEO Karen Dyhrberg was the first Corrs secondee to LawRight and CTS Director Ben Tuckett was also a former Corrs secondee. In 2023-24, the secondment program was expanded to offer a rotating opportunity for all Corrs grads. In the last year we welcomed:

Michaela Gyasi-Agyei

Thilini Joseh

Lucy Noble-Dickinson

Carmen Zhu

Chelsea Zwoerner

Stephen Epping

Will James

Alex Zagami

Rory McFadden

Lucy Davie

Naomi McCarthy

Taylor Thomas

Lauren Kelly

Jack Donnelly



“LawRight’s secondment program gives young lawyers crucial hands-on experience in advising and interviewing clients. In the two weeks I was seconded to LawRight, I performed detailed reviews and memoranda on possible claims of two existing client files. This led to the opportunity to lead client interviews to fill in missing facts, before completing a more fulsome advice. This developed my skills in fact-finding, issue-spotting and client expectations management.”

- Jack Donnelly, secondee lawyer from Corrs Chambers Westgarth

Defending a claim: In court against your will

Defending a claim in the District or Supreme Court is a difficult and stressful process, but even more so if you can't afford a lawyer to represent you.

Many of our State Courts clients have been forced to defend lengthy and confusing court proceedings where the claims against them are weak, but the plaintiffs take an aggressive and intimidating approach to the litigation and refuse reasonable attempts to resolve the matter.

With our help, clients are empowered to understand and navigate the Court process, put forward a strong and clear response to the claims, and resolve their disputes out of Court before they spiral any further and take up more of the Court's time.

Jungwon's journey to justice

Take Jungwon as an example. His ex-partner sued him in the District Court for a personal injury matter, and while Jungwon was trying to get legal advice, the plaintiff got a default judgment against him. It turns out that the plaintiff had confusingly also started separate proceedings against Jungwon's aunt for the exact same injury. LawRight's staff and volunteer lawyers helped Jungwon correspond with the plaintiff about the two proceedings, and prepare, file and serve court documents to consolidate the two proceedings and defend the claim against him.

When the parties agreed to attend a mediation, LawRight referred Jungwon to a member barrister, who represented Jungwon on a direct brief at a couple of interlocutory hearings and at the mediation. At the mediation, the parties were able to come to an agreement, with Jungwon not having to pay any money at all. Jungwon said that that he was enormously grateful for all of LawRight's help and support throughout the whole ordeal. Said Jungwon:

"It honestly couldn't have worked out better."

Supporting Maureen from afar

Then there was Maureen, who had to defend herself against a very weak claim for compensation based on a business agreement that was never finalised. The plaintiff took a very aggressive approach to the court proceedings, frequently letting them lie dormant for months at a time, and then suddenly taking lots of steps and threatening to seek legal costs when Maureen struggled to respond quickly.

In the meantime, Maureen moved overseas for her family, and found it very difficult to manage her Queensland case by herself from a completely different country and time zone.

LawRight's staff and volunteer lawyers organised appointments that worked with Maureen's schedule, to give her advice and help to defend the proceedings. We were ultimately able to help Maureen negotiate a settlement agreement where the plaintiff agreed to drop the Court proceedings and bear his own legal costs.

Maureen said the State Courts team, including the volunteer lawyers, were "exceptional in their dedication to justice".

"No matter the complexity of my case, I felt assured knowing that I had a dedicated team of knowledgeable professionals working on my behalf. Every time I called the LawRight office, the team was professional and friendly and were able to effectively strategise and respond appropriately to my case. I believe LawRight's role in the framework of the Australian legal system is of the utmost importance to ensure people from all walks of society are able to access justice."

Supreme Court Mediation Scheme

Since 2022, the State Courts office has operated and managed a court-ordered mediation referral scheme for matters in the Supreme Court. Under the Scheme, parties in matters on the Self-Represented Litigants supervised case list are directed to attend mediation, and the self-represented party is then referred directly to LawRight by the Supreme Court.

If the self-represented party is eligible for and wants assistance from us, we connect them with a barrister from our panel for pro bono representation at the mediation. In some cases, litigants are already clients of the service and we have provided them with assistance to draft their pleadings, deal with interlocutory issues, and otherwise ensure their case is presented in the best possible way before they attend mediation.

Since the start of the Scheme, we have successfully referred 12 clients across 10 Supreme Court proceedings to barristers for representation at mediation, and 70% of these matters were able to settle at mediation. Many of these matters involved multiple parties and complex legal issues, and had been in litigation for years. Without the Scheme and the assistance of LawRight and our pro bono barristers, these matters would have dragged on much longer, clogging up the court system and causing even more emotional and financial burdens for the self-represented parties. In the cases where the clients are unable to resolve their matter at mediation, we can provide ongoing assistance through the State Courts office.

Tom Ritchie of Counsel has represented two clients under the Scheme, and both matters settled at mediation. At our Thank You event for volunteers in February, Tom spoke about the strengths of the Scheme and said that he was confident that the matters would never have resolved without the Scheme.



Honorias story

Honorias had originally used her savings to pay lawyers to help her start Supreme Court proceedings in relation to a work injury. Unfortunately, she ran out of money and her lawyers told her they couldn't continue representing her. She tried to find another law firm that might be able to help her, but she couldn't afford any more legal fees. The Court ordered the parties to attend mediation under the Scheme, and

Honorias was referred to LawRight. We connected her with a barrister from our panel.

The barrister represented Honorias at the mediation and helped her understand her position and reach a settlement she was happy with.



Armandos story

Armando is a retiree and had drawn down on his superannuation to pay some lawyers to help him start Supreme Court proceedings against a company who had scammed him out of his life savings. Unfortunately, the lawyers had to stop representing Armando when his funds ran out. Armando struggled to keep representing himself in the proceedings because the legal issues in his claim were very complex. The Court ordered the parties to attend mediation under the Scheme, and Armando was referred to LawRight. One of our panel barristers agreed to represent Armando at the mediation, where they negotiated an agreement for the defendant company to pay Armando some compensation and have the Court proceedings dismissed.



Thanks to the Scheme and the assistance we were able to provide, Armando was able to finally resolve a stressful dispute that had been in court for three years.

280
pro bono hours by
barristers conducting
mediations

Enforcement Hearing Duty Lawyer Service

The Magistrates Court Enforcement Hearings Duty Lawyer service commenced in 2016 to increase access to justice for people involved in debt enforcement hearings. We deliver in-person advice and representation services to self-represented debtors at debt enforcement hearings in the Brisbane Magistrates Court, with assistance from volunteer barristers. Hearings take place every first and third Wednesday of the month.

Enforcement hearings can be complex, confusing and stressful for self-represented litigants. 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 have never received legal advice, despite being through multiple court or tribunal processes.

We ensure that every client who attends court is provided with advice and representation from a volunteer barrister. The Service increases procedural efficiency for the Magistrates Court, and ensures debtors are treated fairly and fully understand their legal rights and obligations in the enforcement hearing process. This year, 86% of our clients were able to resolve their matter after their first attendance at the service without the need for further hearings.

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

Pro bono partners

The Enforcement Hearing Duty Lawyer service would not be able to operate without our student volunteers. Each fortnight, these students shadow our barristers while they attend court and negotiate with creditors. Our students take instructions, prepare notes of hearings and otherwise assist barristers in court.

We thank student volunteers

Cynthia Chan, Jack Ryan and Rita Zhiltsova.

Barristers who attended hearings this year

Sarah Spottiswood
Duncan Marckwald
Jason Wang
Steven Hogg
Emma Hoiberg
Robert Lake
San-Joe Tan
Hedy Chen
Michael Springer
Robert Gallo
Reimen Hii

Barristers on the active roster

Bridget O'Brien
Catherine Chiang
Genevieve Feely
Georgia Kiss
Jason Mitchenson
Jayleigh Sargent
Louise Kruger
Matt McDermott
Nathan Laing
Ryan Nattrass
Samantha Amos
Samuel Walpole
Zoe Brereton

Roberto's story

Roberto was convinced by his girlfriend to sign up for a loan with her company that he ultimately couldn't afford to pay back. The loan company sold the debt to a debt collector, who started Court proceedings against Roberto for the outstanding amount, which was over \$40,000. Roberto didn't understand what was going on, so he didn't respond to the Court proceedings, and a default judgment was made against him. The next thing he knew, Roberto was summoned to an enforcement hearing.

By the time Roberto came to the enforcement hearing, he had already given the creditor his statement of financial position and supporting documents. He wasn't sure what the hearing was about or what he needed to do.

Roberto connected with LawRight's EH Duty Lawyer Service on the day of his hearing. Our volunteer barrister gave Roberto advice about the enforcement hearing process and Roberto's

options to negotiate a payment plan with the creditor or otherwise challenge the underlying default judgment. At the hearing, the barrister argued that the enforcement hearing summons should be discharged since Roberto had given the creditor all the necessary documents and had done everything he needed to do. The Registrar ultimately discharged the enforcement hearing summons, bringing the entire enforcement hearing proceedings to an end.

Without our assistance, Roberto would have had to navigate the enforcement hearing process on his own, without any knowledge or understanding of his rights and options for dealing with his debt.

Our EH Duty Lawyer Service was able to help Roberto finalise the enforcement hearing so he wouldn't have to keep coming back to Court.



Top 3 types of debts:

38% Business debts

23% Unpaid fees for services

16% Unpaid loans

Duty Lawyer services

19 enforcement hearings attended by the service and our supporting barrister members

16 court appearances

Unfortunately, due to funding and staffing challenges, we weren't able to attend 7 scheduled enforcement hearings.

Our clients

90% income under \$52,000

29% experiencing family violence

21% identified disability or mental illness

14% First Nations

14% affected by disaster

LawRight Toolkit: Enforcing Money Orders in the Magistrates Court

The Enforcement Hearing (EH) Duty Lawyer service is the only LawRight service that is funded to provide assistance and advice to people with Magistrates Court matters. However, the EH Service is limited to providing free legal advice and one-off representation to enforcement debtors only.

Although we don't assist creditors who want to enforce money orders, we receive numerous requests for assistance each month from vulnerable litigants who can't afford legal assistance. We found that the publicly-available information didn't provide enough guidance about what to do to start enforcement proceedings and what actually happens during the proceedings, and there were not many useful resources available that people could use to help themselves.

That's why in November 2023, the State Courts office, with support from the Enforcement Hearing Duty Lawyer Service, published a self-help Toolkit for individuals (creditors) who want to enforce a QCAT or Magistrates Court money order in the Magistrates Court. This Toolkit is the culmination of 2 years of work and extensive stakeholder consultation to ensure this resource can apply in all Magistrates Courts and align with the various processes in each region.

The Toolkit explains:

- What the creditor's options might be if the debtor does not comply with the money order;
- What an enforcement hearing is, how to apply for an enforcement hearing, and what happens at the enforcement hearing; and
- The different types of enforcement warrants available and how to apply for an enforcement warrant.

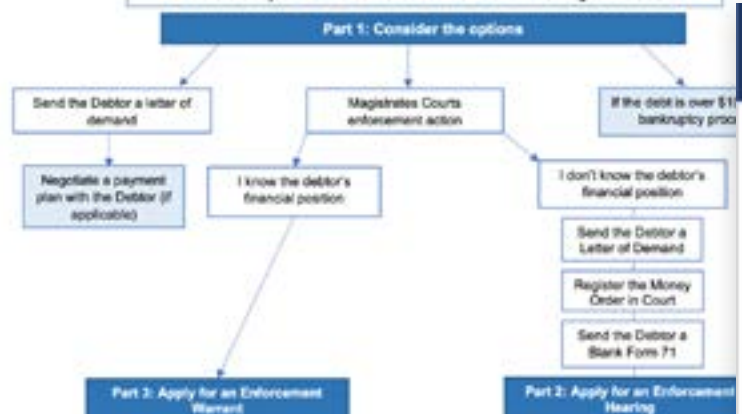
It also includes template and example documents, such as letters of demand and Court forms.

The Toolkit (as well as Word versions of each template/example document) can be downloaded from:
www.lawright.org.au/enforcing-judgments-toolkit/

We could not have produced this Toolkit without the support of Barry Nilsson, who provided us with a secondee, Olivia Lambert, to help with initial research and preparation of the first draft.

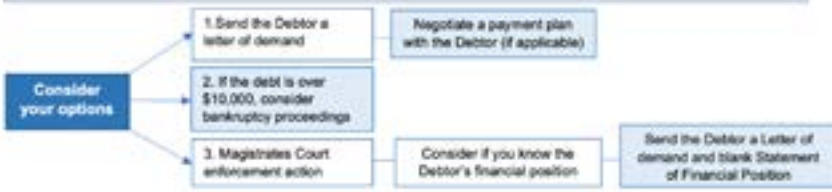
This flowchart shows the steps that you can take to enforce a Money Order. More detail on each step is provided in this Toolkit.

What steps can I take to enforce a Money Order?



LawRight Toolkit: Enforcing Money Orders in the Magistrates Court

PART 1 - BEFORE STARTING ENFORCEMENT ACTION



What are your options?

If a Money Order requires a Debtor to pay you money, but they have not complied with the Money Order, you have a few different options. This Toolkit will cover the most common options, although there may be other options available.

Option 1 – Letter of Demand

Your first option is to write a formal letter of demand to the Debtor, asking them to make payment of the Money Order to you.

What happens at an Enforcement Hearing?

Going to Court can be stressful, but there is information online to guide you on what to expect. You can look at the following factheets for more information about Court etiquette:

- <http://www.courts.qld.gov.au/going-to-court/factsheet-010416.pdf>
- <http://www.justice.qld.gov.au/what-information-is-needed-to-attend-the-hearing-outside-the-court>

This section provides a general overview of what to expect at an Enforcement Hearing. Depending on the Court, the Enforcement Hearing may be conducted slightly differently.

Enforcement Hearings in the Brisbane Magistrates Court generally happen in Court 26 or level 7 of the Brisbane Magistrates Court. Enforcement Hearings begin at 9am on Wednesdays, so everyone who has an Enforcement Hearing listed for that date waits in the Courtroom for their matter to be called.

Depending on the Court, the person that sits at the bench will be either a Magistrate or Registrar. When your Enforcement Hearing begins, you and the Debtor will both appear before the Magistrate/Registrar who speaks first and in what order is not fixed – it is up to the Court on the day to decide how the Enforcement Hearing will go. It usually depends on what orders are being sought by the parties.

Often the Magistrate/Registrar will ask what the Enforcement Hearing is about. You should be ready to explain the purpose of the specific Enforcement Hearing, e.g. whether it was to have the Debtor supply you with a completed Statement of Financial Position (Form 71 or 71A), have the Debtor provide you with supporting documents about their financial position, ask the Debtor questions about the information they have already provided in a Statement of Financial Position, etc.

There are generally three scenarios that are likely to occur on the day of an Enforcement Hearing:

- The Debtor attends but does not bring their Statement of Financial Position or documents.
- The Debtor attends and brings the completed Statement and supporting documents; or
- The Debtor does not attend.

1. What if the Debtor attends but does not bring their documents?

If the Debtor attends the Enforcement Hearing but does not bring their completed Statement of Financial Position or supporting documents with them, the Magistrate/Registrar may adjourn (postpone) the hearing to another date to give the Debtor time to provide the relevant documents. You will normally be asked whether you consent or object to the adjournment of the hearing. It can often be a good idea to consent to the adjournment, because it gives the Debtor an opportunity to give you the documents you need, and you will then have some time to review the documents and decide if you want to proceed before the adjourned Enforcement Hearing. If the Enforcement Hearing is adjourned, the Magistrate/Registrar will usually set a date for the adjourned Enforcement Hearing as well as set an earlier date for the Debtor to provide you with a completed Statement of Financial Position.

made and the amount of the Money Order, and attach a copy

amount of the Money Order (in the letter);

to be paid (e.g. provide your

pay the amount of the Money O

PART 3 - ENFORCEMENT WARRANTS



What is an Enforcement Warrant?

To enforce your Money Order, you can apply for an Enforcement Warrant. An Enforcement Warrant is used to direct a person to pay you the money owed in a specific way.

You do not have to request an Enforcement Hearing before applying for an Enforcement Warrant (Rule 21(3)(c) UCPR).

When deciding whether to issue any kind of Enforcement Warrant, the Court will generally consider:

- whether the Debtor has adequate means of satisfying the debt after deducting necessary living expenses of the Debtor and the Debtor's family and any other known liabilities of the Debtor; and
- whether the Enforcement Warrant would impose unreasonable hardship on the Debtor.

This means that, if the Debtor would not be able to repay the debt without suffering unreasonable hardship due to their particular financial circumstances, the Court may not issue the Enforcement Warrant.

If you have information about the Debtor that suggests they might suffer hardship if the Court grants an Enforcement Warrant, then you should carefully consider whether it is worthwhile applying for an Enforcement Warrant. You may want to consider negotiating a payment plan directly with the Debtor, or waiting for a period of time (within the 6 year limit) to see if the Debtor is in a better financial position in the future.

If you believe you do not have enough information about the Debtor's financial position to satisfy the Court that the Debtor will not suffer unreasonable hardship, then you should consider applying for an Enforcement Hearing before applying for an Enforcement Warrant. For more information about applying for an Enforcement Hearing, see Part 2 of this Toolkit.

Court and Tribunal Services

Queensland Civil & Administrative Tribunal

Our QCAT office of the Courts and Tribunal services operates statewide, providing advice and assistance at our on-site office at the QCAT Brisbane registry. We assist with targeted areas of law, chosen in consultation with QCAT to target the areas of greatest need or where self-represented individuals face the greatest barriers. These areas are:

- Review of government/administrative decisions (Blue Card, Child Safety, Victims Assist, Disability Worker Screening, Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency)
- Guardianship and administration (assisting interested parties)
- Anti-discrimination
- Right to information and information privacy
- Disciplinary matters for health practitioners
- Appeals and reopening

Where a client is particularly vulnerable and another community legal centre is unable to assist, we can also help with other areas of law in QCAT.

Scaling help depending on need

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, including providing ongoing support and coaching
- help clients gather and collate their evidence, including statements from witnesses, medical practitioners and other third parties
- provide legal advice and assistance to prepare tribunal documents and legal correspondence, including communication with the Tribunal and other parties
- represent clients in proceedings before the Tribunal
- work with our member barristers to draft Tribunal documents and provide clients with detailed opinions on prospects and evidence
- refer matters to our member firms and barristers for representation.



Demand exceeding service funding

This year saw a huge increase in demand for our help, in line with similar increases faced by the Tribunal itself.

Our QCAT office reached 160% of its target deliverables, with a 26% increase in total advices and tasks this year.

Although we have always managed our client numbers (including turning people away), for the first time ever we were forced to close the office for several months mid-year.

We also made 609 referrals to other agencies for matters outside our scope. Like all CTS offices, we have heavily leveraged the help of barrister members to provide more targeted drafting assistance and discrete representation.

Pro Bono Firms & legal units that assisted

Clayton Utz
Cooper Grace Ward
Lander & Rogers
McCullough Robertson
McInnes Wilson
MinterEllison
Colin Biggers & Paisley
Clyde & Co
HopgoodGanim
Sparke Helmore
Barry Nilsson
AECOM
Johnson Winter Slattery

Barristers who assisted

Ryan Nattrass
Angela Rae
Kim Bryson
Maxwell Walker
Dan O’Gorman SC
Kate Fuller
Justin Carter
Edmund Robinson

Secondments

Sparke Helmore partnered with us this year to provide ongoing secondments of junior lawyers. Harrison Pie was seconded to the office for 3 days a week

for 3 months at the end of 2023 and returned May to July 2024. Harrison also provided some assistance to the State Courts team during this time. Ava Pearson was seconded 1 day a week from May to September 2024. These secondments have assisted the office with clearing a backlog of files and have given the staff lawyers extra capacity to complete non-casework tasks.

213 clients

23 facilitated referrals for discrete and full representation to our firms and barristers

537 advices

228 tasks

7 ‘door of the court’ duty lawyer services

Our clients

50% identified disability or mental illness

42% experienced family violence

30% rural, regional or remote

19% older people

17% children & young people

13% First Nations

11% non-English speaking

1,912 pro bono hours for 239
client appointments

Blue Card Advocacy

Blue Card matters make up 40% of our clients, and 60% of our workload in QCAT.

Since June 2018, we have assisted almost 500 clients with blue card decisions under the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000*.

Reforms over the past few years have made getting a blue card even harder. As more people are required to hold a blue card, delays have increased, adding to disadvantage for already vulnerable people trying to get into work.

Our average client is a woman aged 40 to 64, with criminal history linked to an experience of domestic violence

Law reform

In addition to our casework, we have provided numerous submissions to parliament advocating for systemic changes. As the only community legal centre in Queensland operating a model focused on helping self-represented litigants in QCAT, we are well placed to comment on proposed amendments to the Act.

Research and advocacy

Since 2021, we have been collating data on our clients' experiences dating back to 2018. This was done initially with help from QUT students, then HopgoodGanim secondee Jacob Currie. We found:

- The most common offences are related to cannabis.
- The problems compound for marginalised groups - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants, applicants with a disability, and people over 65 are less likely to complete the review process. The main reason is the stress of litigation and the complexity and length of the process.
- The minimum timeframe for a decision after a negative notice was two years.
- The process is detrimental to applicants' wellbeing.

When a reform bill was introduced into Parliament in June 2024, we made a submission highlighting these problems and emphasising the need for Blue Card Services, QCAT and community legal services to be properly funded. We were pleased to see the bill reflect changes we have advocated for, including:

- requiring a clear nexus between the conduct, and risk to harm of children;
- removal of the requirement for kinship carers to hold a blue card; and
- specific consideration of the effects of intergenerational trauma and systemic injustice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants

We will continue this advocacy and hope to grow our services to provide more targeted help to people from CALD backgrounds, victim-survivors of domestic violence and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Thanks to HopgoodGanim Lawyers

HopgoodGanim Lawyers have supported the work of the QCAT office by staffing appointments and accepting referrals for full representation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and clients experiencing domestic violence who have QCAT proceedings in relation to a blue card. The firm has also provided an extensive amount of assistance with our law reform projects including assisting with research and drafting as well as providing a secondee to collect, collate and present data.

Broader law reform advocacy

As well as advocacy around Blue Cards, we made submissions in response to the Anti-Discrimination Bill 2024 and collaborated with the CHJP on a submission to the Independent Review of the Human Rights Act 2019.

In all submissions drafted this year, we highlighted the need for QCAT to be properly funded. The Miles government announced in June that QCAT will receive an additional \$70.1 million dollars over 5 years to help alleviate demand on their services. The President of QCAT, the Honourable Justice Mellifont has thanked all organisations that have advocated for more funding for the Tribunal.

Blue Card challenges for nurse and DV survivor

Lyn was the victim of domestic violence. She had no criminal history, not even a parking ticket.

Lyn and her partner had been hunting at a rural property. In the evening, Lyn had a few drinks, which was out of character for her. Lyn remembers picking up one of the hunting rifles to have a look at it and someone taking it off her.

Nothing was said about this incident until 8 weeks later, when Lyn tried to leave the relationship, taking her two children with her. Lyn's ex-partner alleged to police that she had pointed the gun at him that night and pulled the trigger on an unloaded rifle. Lyn was charged with weapons and domestic violence charges. Lyn plead guilty because she could not afford a lawyer to defend the charges. Lyn received a fine and no conviction was recorded.

Lyn was a nurse and had enrolled to study paramedicine. She applied for a blue card to complete the practical component and was given a negative notice, which meant she also lost her nursing job. Lyn commenced proceedings in QCAT and came to LawRight, where we helped to compile her evidence.

QCAT directed Blue Card Services (BCS) to reconsider their decision but BCS maintained the negative notice. We helped Lyn to prepare additional evidence and submissions.

For the final hearing, the matter was referred to Barrister Ryan Nattrass for representation. Attempts to find a firm to instruct were unsuccessful, so

LawRight went on the record to instruct at trial. QCAT found in Lyn's favour, taking Lyn's good character, excellent work history and the context of the relationship into account. Lyn cried tears of joy upon learning of the positive decision.

"I would like to send my deepest and sincere gratitude to you [Nikki], Ryan and the rest of the volunteers that work endlessly to help me gain my blue card. I am beyond grateful for all your help. Without you I would not have been able to get through this, so from the bottom of my heart, I thank you all."

Although this was a positive outcome for Lyn, 874 days passed between the day Lyn made her application for a blue card to when the Tribunal set the decision aside. An additional 93 days passed until Lyn's blue card was approved.



Magistrates Court – an unmet need

LawRight is not funded to run a Magistrates Court service (except the limited scope of our Enforcement Hearing Duty Lawyer service) and there is no other community legal service in Queensland dedicated to helping people represent themselves in the Magistrates Court.

However, there is still a strong need for self-representation help in the Magistrates Court.

The Magistrates Court can decide civil cases up to \$150,000 and often involve similarly complex legal issues to those in the District and Supreme Courts. This means that people who cannot afford a lawyer end up self-representing in complex cases with significant financial consequences.

In 2021-22, LawRight started a pilot service for Magistrates Court matters but we were unable to secure additional funding. Although these matters are outside the scope of our State Courts office, we make exceptions where we have capacity.

This year, due to limited capacity we have only been able to assist clients with civil matters in the Magistrates Court in the 12 most exceptional cases.

Joanne's story

Joanne is an Indigenous woman getting by on Centrelink payments, and her only asset is the house she lives in with her two children.

One day, Joanne received a letter and court documents from a lawyer. She has low literacy and had trouble understanding the documents.

Joanne tried to contact some law firms in her local area, but she couldn't afford legal advice and nobody would help her. Joanne attended a drop-in advice clinic at another community legal centre. They couldn't provide ongoing help, so they connected Joanne to our State Courts office.

It turns out that someone had sued her in the Magistrates Court for damage caused by a car accident. The Plaintiff had managed to get a default judgment against Joanne for \$13,000 without Joanne's knowledge, and was threatening to start enforcement proceedings. Joanne couldn't pay the \$13,000 and risked losing her house.

What's more, she hadn't even been the driver at the time of the accident – her brother had borrowed her car and was driving at the time of the accident.

Through several appointments with LawRight's State Courts office, we helped Joanne to file multiple court documents to apply to set aside the default judgment and defend the claim against her. LawRight staff, secondees and volunteer lawyers helped Joanne understand the court process, drafted her court documents, gave her easy-to-follow step-by-step instructions about what she needed to do to file and serve her court documents, and talked her through attending court hearings.

After Joanne put her defence before the Court, the Plaintiff agreed to completely drop the proceedings against her and pay their own legal costs.

Juanita's story

Juanita had an ongoing dispute with a former friend, Noah. She had agreed with Noah to pay for works to be done on Noah's property so she could place a live-in container there, on the understanding that they would live together in the container, and that he would repay her for the container and works if their relationship broke down. Their friendship fell apart, but Noah refused to pay Juanita.

Juanita received extensive assistance and advice from LawRight over the course of about 18 months to help her understand her potential causes of action and the litigation process, and commence and progress Magistrates Court proceedings against Noah. Juanita had difficulty understanding legal concepts and terminology and was not very good at using technology. However, LawRight's staff, secondees and volunteer lawyers spent many hours patiently advising Juanita in writing and over the phone, making sure to explain each step as clearly as possible and helping Juanita to fix up any mistakes she made.

We helped Juanita request a Magistrates Court settlement conference, and at the settlement conference the parties agreed to settle the matter, with Noah agreeing to let Juanita remove the container from his property and keep it. Juanita said she had tried to avoid going to Court as long as possible, and she was very pleased that the matter was finally over.

“Thank you all very much for the long hours spent to help me.”



Court and Tribunal Services

Federal Courts

LawRight's Federal Courts office of the Court and Tribunal Services assists with current and potential proceedings in the Federal Court of Australia and the migration and general federal law jurisdictions of the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia. We provide onsite services at the Commonwealth Law Courts building in Brisbane and remotely across the state in areas of laws chosen in partnership with the court to target the areas of greatest need. These areas are:

- Employment Law, including unpaid entitlements, unfair dismissal and general protections claims;
- Bankruptcy;
- Anti-Discrimination;
- Information Privacy;
- Competition and Consumer;
- Judicial review of government decisions, including migration; and
- Appeals from Federal Tribunals or within the courts in the areas listed above.

The assistance we offer is scaled and tailored to the client's circumstances, legal problem and the available pro bono resources and can include:

- Providing legal information or self-help resources and toolkits
- Providing legal advice and discrete task assistance including correspondence between parties and settlement negotiations
- Providing advice and coaching to assist parties to represent themselves to the best of their abilities
- Drafting court documents, especially in the case of initiating documents and other court ordered pleadings including statements of claim and outline of argument.
- Assisting clients to negotiate or otherwise pursue alternative dispute resolution options
- Facilitating referrals for representation under the court ordered referral schemes
- Refer for discrete representation at hearings or mediation and full representation



Who referred clients to us

20% Federal Courts

27% CLCs and Legal Aid Queensland

27% Government departments including
Fair Work Ombudsman

Jurisdiction

12% Federal Court of Australia

88% Federal Circuit and
Family Court of Australia

Barristers who assisted

Alexander McKinnon
Alexander North
Anand Shah
Ben McMillan
Benjamin Wilson
Charles Martin
Christopher Schaffer
Douglas Campbell KC
Emma Hoiberg
Gabriel Perry
Hedy Chen
Jason Wang
Jozef Borja-Erece
Matthew Jones KC
Michael Maynard
Pav Zielinski
Peta Willoughby
Rachel Hew
Renae Kirk
Reimen Hii
Robert Quirk
Ryan Natrass
Scott Carter
Shane Ogden
Stephen Colditz
Tom Pincus

Firms and legal units that assisted

AECOM
AKS Law
Allens
Ashurst
Barry Nilsson
Clayton Utz
Colin Biggers & Paisley
Corrs Chambers Westgarth
Hall & Wilcox
Herbert Smith Freehills
Holding Redlich
Lander & Rogers
McCullough Robertson
McInnes Wilson
MinterEllison
Norton Rose Fullbright
Sparke Helmore
Wotton + Kearney

Secondment

The Federal Courts team welcomed Piers Langbroek on secondment from Barry Nilsson. Barry Nilsson have supported the Court and Tribunal Services with secondments for several years, with lawyers placed across all of our court and tribunal programs.

Main areas of law:

- 54%** Employment (eg unpaid entitlements, general protections and unfair dismissal)
- 16%** Migration
- 9%** Bankruptcy

Services

- 141** clients
- 53** facilitated referrals for discrete and full representation to our firms and barristers
- 314** advices
- 83** tasks

Clients

- 60%** under \$52,000 annual income
- 21%** rural, regional or remote
- 19%** culturally and linguistically diverse or required a translator
- 15%** identified disability or mental illness
- 3%** First Nations

730 pro bono hours
across **73** client appointments

Court and Tribunal Services

Federal Courts

Since the service commenced in 2010, our Federal Courts office has assisted with judicial review of migration matters made by the Immigration Assessment Authority and the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (now the Administrative Review Tribunal), including protection visa decisions and visa cancellations.

In early 2024, we received additional funding from the Commonwealth Government to assist applicants with protection visa matters in the Federal courts as part of an initiative to reduce the backlog of cases.

This has allowed the office to expand to include a new migration team.

From March 2024, the Federal Court office moved all migration matters over to the Migration Service, which will continue assisting with this work heading into 2024-25.

Closure of Conciliation Conference Service

For several years, our Federal Courts office has operated an independent Conciliation Conference Service, where we arranged for pro bono barristers and accredited mediators to mediate conciliation conferences for unpaid entitlements matters in the Federal Courts.

This service ensured that matters could be resolved at an early stage, significantly reducing the need

for further pleadings or hearings, minimising the stress and costs for all parties and the drain on the Federal Courts resources.

This service was entirely self-funded by LawRight, thanks to donations from our members and our fundraising. Unfortunately, due to rising costs in all of our government funded services, we made the difficult decision to stop this program at the start of 2024. We look forward to recommencing the program in future if we can secure stable funding.



Fired for making a complaint

Leila is a woman in her 60s from Papua New Guinea who speaks English as her second language. She has no income and is being supported by her family. Leila was fired the day after making a complaint about her employment.

Leila did not achieve a successful outcome at the Fair Work Commission and approached LawRight for assistance commencing in the Federal Courts. We gave Leila general advice about commencing proceedings, which Leila did independently.

We arranged an in-person appointment for Leila with our volunteer lawyers to provide her with general advice about her claim and assisted her to prepare for an upcoming case management hearing. Due to the challenges Leila had faced self-representing to date, and Leila's own view of her capacity to self-represent, we decided to place Leila's matter with a firm.

Leila then received full representation from the firm. Leila is very grateful and provided us with this feedback

“I cannot thank you all, the Staff... and the Volunteers Lawyers... for the tremendous work & support you all have given to me for 6 months, without [a] job and no income.”

Unpaid entitlements

Brian worked over 800 hours of overtime, which the employer refused to pay out at the end of his employment.

The Federal Courts team organised an appointment for Brian with our volunteer lawyers to provide him with general advice about his claim, take further instructions from him and provide him with general advice about drafting a letter of demand.



Following the appointment, the volunteer lawyers reached out to LawRight to offer to take Brian on as a client on the basis that they thought Brian had a good claim and would have a better chance of a good outcome with full representation.

The firm prepared a letter of demand which was sent to Brian's employer, who responded agreeing to settle. Brian was awarded \$20,000, in satisfaction of the substantial portion of his unpaid entitlements claim.

Brian is pleased with finalising the matter and has said he greatly enjoys his new job and feels valued by his new employer.

“I would like to thank you for your professionalism, knowledge and assistance to review and assess my case. I also extend my sincere thanks to the Barrister who gave up their time to review my case and provide their advice and any other staff who have assisted me over the past few weeks... I wish you all the best and want you to know that I am eternally grateful to you and LawRight for providing their services, it restores my faith somewhat that there are organisations and kind-hearted people willing to assist those of us who find ourselves in difficult situations.”

Migration Law service

In 2024 LawRight received funding from the Commonwealth Government to address protection visa backlogs. Our Federal Courts office has historically helped in migration matters, but to meet this need we expanded our Federal Courts office to include a dedicated Migration Law Service. This will focus on helping individuals with reviews of decisions related to protection visa matters.

In March 2024, we started transferring migration matters from the Federal Courts office to the new Migration Law Service, and we officially launched the service in August 2024. This team now has the capacity to dramatically upscale LawRight's provision of assistance in relation to protection visa matters.

The Migration Law Service assists individuals and family groups with applications for judicial review of protection visa decisions in the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia or Federal Court of Australia, including Temporary Protection and Safe Haven Enterprise Visas, and certain cancellation matters where the court has issued a pro bono referral certificate.

The service is based on-site at the Brisbane registry of the Commonwealth Law Courts, where we offer appointments in-person, and remotely to clients statewide.

All clients of the service come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and most appointments are conducted with the assistance of an interpreter.

The aim of the service is to ensure that every individual that has a current or potential proceeding in the Federal Courts has the opportunity to meet with, and receive advice on their legal proceedings and their prospects of success. All clients' first interaction with the service is with one of our staff lawyers, who will complete an intake and take some instructions. By connecting clients with lawyers immediately, we minimise the impact of re-telling their story and ensure they can receive legal advice as soon as they contact us.

Following that first intake, we can then:

- Provide clients with an appointment with our volunteer lawyers to receive advice about their proceedings and legal matter and take further more detailed instructions.
- Help people to obtain additional documents, including transcripts and translations of documents.
- Connect the matter with a pro bono barrister to consider and assess the merits of their case.
- If the matter has prospects of success, we then connect them with a private law firm for ongoing representation.

Our new team

The new Migration Law Service is headed up by Clare Carter, who joined us from the Refugee and Immigration Legal Service where she worked on a broad range of protection visa and humanitarian visa matters. Ruby Chiswell, a long-term staff member and former paralegal from our QCAT office and Harrison Pie, a previous secondee from Sparke Helmore lawyers joined Clare as the three lawyers in the service.

Firms that assisted

Allens
Barry Nilsson
Hall & Wilcox
Holding Redlich
Lander & Rogers

Barristers who assisted

Ben Wilson
Emma Hoiberg
Jozef Borja-Erece
Matthew Jones KC
Rachel Hew
Renaë Kirk
Robert Quirk
Scott Carter

Malani's story

Malani is a Sri Lankan national who arrived in Australia in 2011 with her parents at 12 years of age. Malani and her younger siblings are victims of domestic and family violence perpetrated by both parents.

Malani has no income and is living in temporary accommodation with her younger brother, for whom she is the sole caretaker. Malani's parents made their application for judicial review of a negative decision of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) in 2018 and no steps had been taken in the case in recent years.

The Federal Courts office organised an appointment for Malani with volunteer lawyers to provide her with some advice about her matter to date and explain the law and process of judicial review.

Malani expressed gratitude to the volunteers, sharing that she had never had this information explained to her previously. She requested the AAT decision be sent to her so that she could engage with her matter further. The team then referred Malani to a barrister for advice on the best approach moving forward and this advice was provided to Malani.



Types of migration matters:

63% Protection visa matters (26% permanent and 37% temporary)

26% Visa cancellation (501) matters

11% Other matters

Services (March to June 2024)

19 clients

16 facilitated referrals for discrete and full representation to our firms and barristers

22 advices

Our clients

100% culturally & linguistically diverse

100% annual income less than \$52,000

68% identified as having mental health concerns

42% in immigration detention

21% experiencing family violence

10% rural, regional or remote

160 pro bono hours

by barristers providing opinions on merits

Community & Health Justice Partnerships

Holistically addressing the everyday legal issues that impact a person's housing, financial stability, and well-being.

Homelessness Law and Multicultural Law embed staff and pro bono lawyers in frontline community, homelessness, and health agencies in Brisbane and Cairns. Through these long-standing partnerships, we provide early-intervention, specialist legal support to resolve issues before they escalate. Working collaboratively ensures our services are trauma-informed, while recognising the skills and capabilities of our clients.

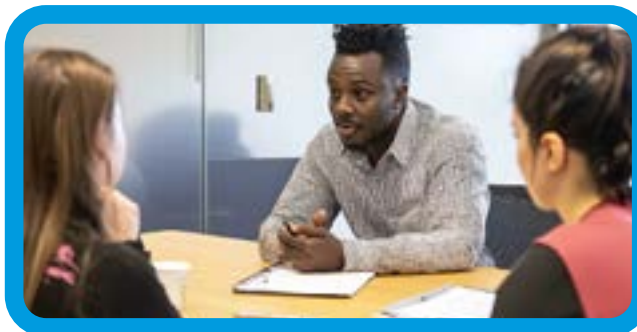
We further scale the impact of our client-centred work by empowering Queensland's frontline community and health workers to address legal issues early, and by advocating for better laws and policies.

Homelessness Law

Multicultural Law



"I can't praise LawRight enough. From the moment I contacted the service, I was made to feel comfortable and safe. Josie handled my case with so much empathy and kindness, whilst remaining professional and giving me excellent advice and guidance. I will be forever grateful for the assistance LawRight provided."



Pro Bono partners

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

7,840
pro bono hours

Sharing Best-Practice Learnings on Trauma-Informed Lawyering

The benefits of delivering trauma-informed legal services are well established: it's better for clients, safer for staff, and leads to more impactful outcomes.

Recognising these benefits, principles of trauma-informed lawyering are incorporated into all aspects of Homelessness Law and Multicultural Law's service delivery design.

LawRight was invited to share with the broader legal assistance sector our best-practice learnings from operating a trauma-informed legal service, including through presenting at:

- The Queensland Health Justice Symposium on the benefits of integrated, embedded legal services in a health setting
- A partner law firm's national impact academy on trauma-informed lawyering for young clients
- The Community Legal Centres Queensland 2024 Conference on Guiding Principles for Effective Collaboration with Frontline Workers

Further scaling our impact, Community & Health Justice Partnerships Director Stephen Grace was invited to Co-Chair National Legal Aid's Legal Assistance Sector's Trauma-Informed Community of Practice.

Each month, the Community of Practice provides lawyers, lived experience practitioners, allied health professionals, and frontline staff working in the legal assistance sector the opportunity to hear from practice area experts, share knowledge and reflect on best practice models.

Evolution of service delivery design to increase impact

Since 2017, Homelessness Law has implemented learnings from our Legal Outreach Best Practice Guide to make continuous improvements to our service delivery design and supervision structures to ensure our work is impactful, targeted, and trauma-informed. This evolution was designed to:

- adopt a best-practice, integrated service delivery model that responds to the needs of people experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity.
- provide streamlined internal processes and improved efficiencies.
- support service delivery continuity while recognising ongoing funding and capacity uncertainty.
- improve our evidence base to support systemic advocacy and justice reform.

As part of this process, LawRight fully embedded staff lawyers at our partner community agencies, further strengthening our collaboration with frontline social workers, financial counsellors, DFV specialist workers, and health professionals.

These changes improved access to justice for some of Queensland's most marginalised by ensuring our service is flexible, client-centred, holistic, and empowering. Evidencing the benefits of those improvements, Homelessness Law has increased impact across all aspects of its outcomes framework. Put simply, we do more with less.



Stephen Grace

This year, Stephen Grace was appointed as Director of LawRight's Community & Health Justice Partnerships.

Steve has over ten years' experience in multidisciplinary, embedded community legal services. Prior to being appointed to his current role, Steve spent a combined 6 years as the manager of LawRight's Homelessness Law and Justice Connect's Homeless Law programs, working locally in Melbourne, Brisbane and Cairns. While working in Cairns, Steve was a casual academic with James Cook University.

He believes passionately in the holistic benefits of integrated, client-centred health and legal services, and is a co-Chair of the With You National Legal Assistance Sector Trauma-Informed Community of Practice.

In 2024 Steve was named as a Finalist in the Queensland Law Society's Access to Justice Award.

Homelessness Law

Queensland's free specialist legal service for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Responding to increased demand for integrated legal and social support

The current housing and cost-of-living crises are forcing more Queenslanders into homelessness.

In this context, Homelessness Law has seen a significant increase in demand for free integrated legal services, coupled with an increase in the complexity of circumstances faced by our clients. In 2023-24, Homelessness Law delivered 509 high-intensity legal services, a 76% increase on the previous year.

LawRight is committed to continuing its best-practice, trauma-informed legal services to people facing homelessness. To meet the increased demand in the community, Homelessness Law has taken various measures, including:

- identifying key client cohorts and areas of law to focus our work on high-impact, targeted legal services that prevent and end homelessness.
- redesigning our service delivery model to increase efficiencies for our staff and pro bono lawyers. These changes allow us to achieve more with less.
- closing services to new clients across our embedded partnerships for between 4 – 6 months last financial year to ensure staff have capacity to deliver high-standard, integrated legal services in partnership with pro bono partner firms.

- increasing capacity of staff and pro bono lawyers through digital solutions.

Our longstanding connections with the private profession allows Homelessness Law to continue to provide impactful, cost-effective legal assistance.

Our clients

59% reported an experience of family violence

27% reported an experience of sexual violence

52% identified as living with a disability

18% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

31% children & young people

Projects

Homelessness Law's Consumer Advocacy Project

Your Own Home

Stable Futures for Young Queenslanders

Help to Heal

Scaling our impact through advocacy

Sharing evidence and insights for our direct client work, Homelessness Law scaled our impact through 16 distinct law reform activities, including:

- supporting continued improvement of Queensland's Human Rights protections through submissions to the Independent Review of Queensland's Human Rights Act
- improving options for victim-survivors of violent crimes, including increasing the financial support available, through the passing of the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2023
- improving protections for vulnerable renters through legislative change. LawRight consulted with Government on the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 both directly and as a member of Make Renting Fair Qld
- providing valuable insights to inform the creation of Queensland's first Victims' Commissioner, a role created by the Victims' Commissioner and Sexual Violence Review Board Act 2024
- in consultation with other consumer advocacy groups, providing feedback and reflections to inform the Senate Economics Legislation Committee consideration of the *Treasury Laws Amendment (Responsible Buy Now Pay Later and Other Measures) Bill 2024*

48%

consumer credit &
debt issues

16%

SPER debts

7%

tenancy

24%

accessing victim
compensation

458 clients (341 new)
509 high-intensity, ongoing casework matters
225 advices
285 tasks
77 financial counselling services
135 referrals
8 facilitated referrals

Embedded Community Partnership Locations

- Brisbane Youth Service
- Community's New Farm Neighbourhood Centre
- 3rd Space
- Micah Projects
- Anglicare Homelessness Services (Women and Families)
- Mater Young Adult Health Centre
- Cairns Homelessness Services Hub
- Mission Australia's Douglas House

7,264
pro bono hours

Homelessness Law

“The support from LawRight has been so healing and useful after going through a few extremely traumatic events.


It is so hard to access any other kind of assistance, especially when you're homeless.

It felt like LawRight were the only ones who showed up and really tried to help me get support and justice for the things I went through.”

“I was referred by a friend who knew of LawRight. The service has honestly been life changing.

Having a team of caring and professional people to help me through this process and to reclaim a sense of dignity has been profound.”



A pregnant woman with long dark hair, wearing a dark blue sleeveless dress and black flat shoes, stands in profile on a sidewalk. She is holding a brown and blue tote bag. Behind her is a dark door with a diamond-patterned glass insert, set in a light-colored brick wall. To the left of the door is a window with vertical metal bars. The scene is lit with warm, golden light, suggesting late afternoon or early morning.

“Thank you for helping me overcome my debts. As a young Blak woman transitioning from a small Indigenous community to Brisbane, while caring for my younger siblings, I found myself overwhelmed by significant debt incurred from payday loans taken out to simply make ends meet.

The weight of this financial struggle weighed heavily on me for a very long time, leaving me feeling hopeless at times. Because of how ashamed I was, I never even spoke about it.

Meeting [LawRight lawyer] Kate was a turning point, as she provided the guidance and assistance I needed to see a way through my challenges. I now understand the profound impact that financial struggles can have on one’s life. I am immensely thankful for Kate’s dedication and support in guiding me through these tough times. Thank you, Kate for everything.”

Homelessness Law's Consumer Advocacy Project

Addressing Financial Products Targeted at Queenslanders in Financial Hardship

Homelessness Law's Consumer Advocacy Project provides impactful, tailored help to prevent and end homelessness by resolving money and debt issues. Homelessness Law's experienced staff and pro bono lawyers 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.

Financial disadvantage does not exist in a vacuum. Taking a holistic approach, our staff and pro bono lawyers support clients to resolve the other legal issues that impact their lives, including tenancy disputes, fines and infringements, discrimination, and issues that arise following an experience of violence.

Adopting a trauma-informed, multidisciplinary approach, Homelessness Law's embedded staff lawyers work collaboratively with frontline social support workers and financial counsellors to provide holistic, wrap-around help to support a person's transition into safe, secure, and stable housing.

"I had to pull myself together! And wipe away the tears of relief! Wow !! I cannot believe it. I'm so appreciative of your help, understanding and patience with me. It's taken a huge relief off my chest and feel I can breathe again."

"LawRight helped me resolve a lot of financial burdens and made my life a bit more stress free. Thankyou. :)"

"I've never come across a team so dedicated. [LawRight lawyer] Bonnie has already changed my life with the amazing job she done. She's given me hope in the human race."

"I love LawRight, especially Tracey. She is very kindly friendly good understanding of me 2 look after me in every matters or problem of any credit or financial issues ... I rely on LawRight and would love to recommend to my all friends. Thank you LawRight - you did amazing job!"

Project Impact

Project Impact since 2019

Holistically helped

733 people facing homelessness to address

2,071 legal issues, including

1,100 high-intensity, on-going supports to resolve money and debt issues pushing people into homelessness

\$2,739,000

consumer debts resolved

Impact this year

545 legal issues addressed

271 high-intensity, on-going supports to resolve legal issues

193 people facing homelessness supported

\$569,018

consumer debts resolved

Holistic multidisciplinary services support First Nations victim-survivor

Abigail is a young, First Nations mother. She first connected to Homelessness Law through one of our embedded partnerships following an experience of intimate partner violence.

When Abigail fled her previous relationship, she was burdened with significant debts connected to her experience of violence. She was struggling to repay a car loan of almost \$30,000. She was given the loan at 19 years old, despite only having a limited income from a recently obtained customer service job. When she met with our lawyers, Abigail disclosed that she was unable to make her repayments and she feared losing her car. Abigail's car allowed her to stay connected to her community supports and was necessary for her to remain employed.

Homelessness Law's embedded staff and pro bono lawyers successfully argued that the loan was irresponsibly lent. We negotiated for Abigail to keep her car, the loan to be reduced to an amount significantly below the purchase price, the remaining amount be repaid through an affordable payment plan, and for no fees or charges to be applied to

the loan.

While assisting Abigail, she disclosed that she had fallen into arrears with her childcare provider when she fled violence. She was able to pay for childcare going forward but didn't have the money to pay the arrears and was concerned she wouldn't be able to work if she lost her childcare. Homelessness Law used the DFV Rent Assist Brokerage to pay the arrears, ensuring Abigail was able to keep working.

Working closely with Abigail's support workers, we successfully assisted her to access financial and recovery support through Victim Assist.

Complementing our assistance, Abigail's support workers have provided budgeting and financial literacy assistance, including guidance on how she can use the Victim Assist payment. As she moves into safe and stable accommodation, Abigail feels empowered to address any future issues that may arise. Reflecting on the assistance she received, Abigail shared:

"It has been so nice working with LawRight. They have absolutely helped me with my debts and I 100% recommend anybody who needs help to contact them."

Help to Heal

Helping Victim-Survivors Access Support and Avoid Homelessness

Help to Heal provides comprehensive, on-going assistance to resolve the various everyday legal issues that impact a person's ability to recover from an act of violence. Adopting a best-practice approach, we work with clients until their matters are fully resolved.

Beyond just addressing the legal issues, our embedded staff and pro bono lawyers collaborate closely with frontline support workers from our partner community, homelessness, and health services to provide a multidisciplinary, holistic response to violence. By addressing the complex, compounding legal issues connected to an experience of violence, we remove barriers to safe and secure lives.

Embedded, holistic support helps woman facing homelessness recover from violence

Jane's specialist domestic violence worker connected her to Homelessness Law's embedded lawyer through our established referral pathways. Initially unsure how a lawyer could help, Jane agreed to see us because she trusted her support worker.

Jane had recently fled a violent relationship. With a long history of mental and physical health concerns, Jane was struggling to navigate the complex legal frameworks impacting her money, housing, and health. She was living in supported accommodation but multiple, compounding debts meant she was struggling to pay her rent from her Disability Pension. The recent act of violence exasperated her psychological illness but she was unable to access appropriate help to support her recovery.

Homelessness Law's staff and pro bono lawyers provided holistic, collaborative support to address the intersecting legal issues preventing Jane's recovery from her act of violence. We

provided urgent tenancy advice to help Jane understand her rights, ensuring her tenancy was secure. Our experienced lawyers successfully resolved various smaller debts, alleviating Jane's immediate cost of living pressures.

The documents Jane shared with us showed she had been paying a car loan debt for many years. Some weeks Jane went without food or other life essentials to make these payments. Over many months our expert lawyers successfully argued that the loan was irresponsibly lent, resulting in a refund to Jane. Unburdened by the ongoing payments, Jane can use her small income to pay for necessary everyday costs.

Adopting a trauma-informed framework, our lawyers worked closely with Jane's existing supports to collect the evidence of family violence and sexual assault needed to support multiple applications for Victim Assist support. This financial assistance has provided Jane some financial stability and allowed her to access support to assist in her recovery.

Project Impact

Project Impact since 2019

Implementing a best practice, trauma-informed approach, Help to Heal:

428 victim-survivors assisted to better understand their rights and to access supports

292 victim-survivors provided intensive, wrap-around supports to resolve legal issues related to an act of violence

\$2,067,161

victim support payments accessed

Impact this year

167 victim-survivors (83% increase) assisted

471 legal services

242 high-intensity, ongoing supports to access financial assistance to support their recovery

229 other legal issues connected to an incident of violence addressed. Of these:

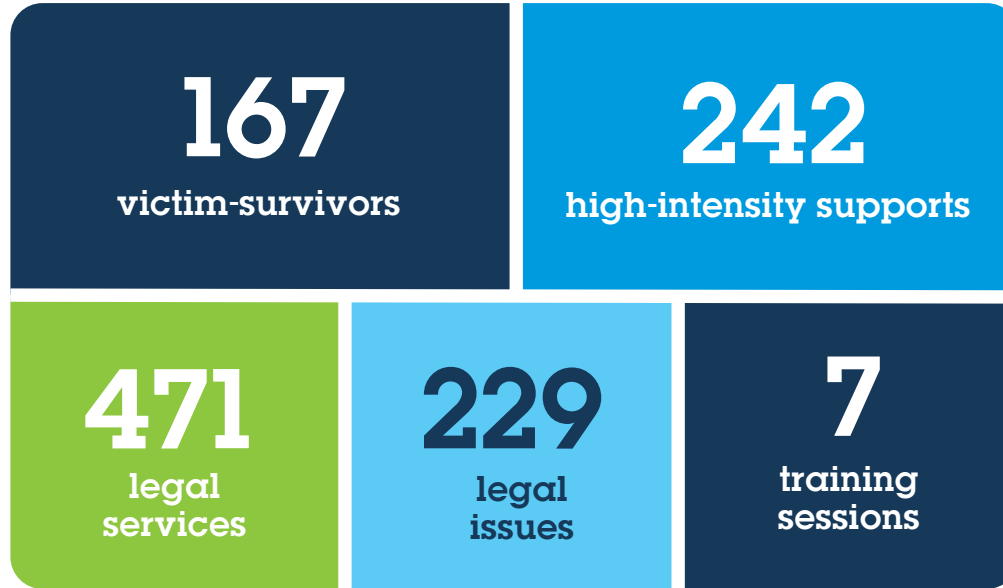
63% money and debt

19% government fines

14% housing and tenancy

10% non-intensive victim support

7 training sessions delivered to frontline lawyers, medical professionals and social workers



Enabled victim-survivors to access

\$1,139,840

“I wish more people knew about this service and could access it. It was so vital to me feeling a sense of respect and worth again after going through some really horrible experiences with family and partners. Thank you, LawRight”

“LawRight and the volunteer lawyers are invaluable for the people we as an organisation support. The air of safety, security, and hope that [the lawyer] brings with her work is nothing short of a miracle, and she delivers on her goals that she sets with our clients”

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.

Your Own Home 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 has been really supportive. They made me feel like there are people out there to help you. When I broke up with my ex ... all the manipulation he put me through, it feels like it's God fighting for me since I couldn't fight for myself. For me, LawRight is a God-send."

"LawRight have been providing me with assistance over many years and I can honestly say that without their help, I would not be where I am today. They have saved my life and the lives of my children and I am will forever be grateful to the volunteer lawyers for advocating on my behalf."



Supporting single mum to exit homelessness

We first connected to Julie through Micah Projects when she was couch-surfing after fleeing a violent relationship. Julie was trying desperately to resolve multiple, interconnected legal issues caused by her experience of violence and homelessness. These issues further compounded Julie's hardship and created insurmountable barriers to safe and stable housing.

Addressing her most immediate need, our staff and pro bono lawyers successfully advocated to have a tenancy database listing withdrawn, removing a barrier to Julie accessing housing. Throughout our assistance we held various practical and tailored conversations with Julie about her rights and responsibilities as a renter, empowering her to effectively manage her future tenancies.

We worked closely with her existing support networks to resolve various debts that further entrenched Julie's financial hardship. Most of Julie's debts were incurred when she fled

violence into homelessness. Using responsible lending and consumer protection arguments, we negotiated waivers and refunds of various payday loans, a car loan and other debts connected to her experience of financial hardship. Without this burden, Julie was able to use her limited income to cover her basic, everyday expenses. It also allowed her to show more comfortably that she could afford a private rental.

As we developed trust and rapport with Julie she opened up about her previous experience of violence. When she was ready, we supported her to access over \$20,000 in financial support from Victim Assist. Adopting an empowerment approach, we helped Julie to understand her rights so that she could make informed decisions about how she spent her payment.

With our support, Julie now has safe and secure housing.

In stable housing, she is again able to

Project Impact

Project Impact since 2021

Holistically helped **172 women** and their **154 children** facing homelessness to resolve almost **720 distinct legal issues**.

\$455,396 victim support payments accessed

\$392,637 consumer debts resolved

Impact this year

- **77** women and their **57** children assisted
- **322** legal services
- **161** high-intensity, ongoing supports (92% increase) to resolve legal issues pushing them into homelessness

\$350,396
victim support payments accessed

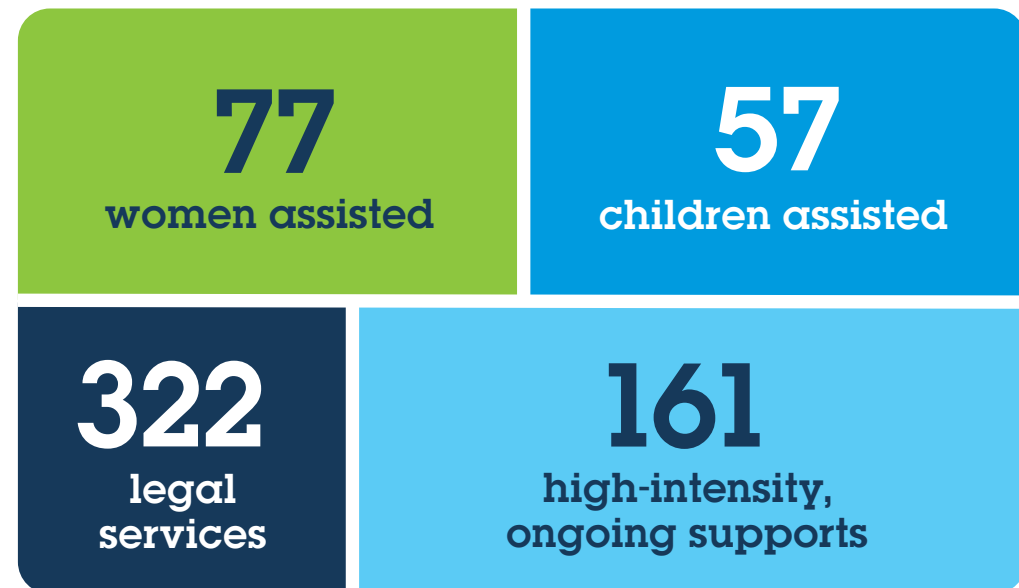
\$242,150
financial legal disputes resolved

CHJP | Your Own Home

“LawRight puts our clients’ minds at ease.

Having an issue resolved in the legal sense makes it easier for the clients to tick that off the list of issue weighing the client down.”

- Allied Health Professional



Stable Futures for Young Queenslanders

Supporting young First Nations mother to stay safely housed

Rianna, a young First Nations mum of four, was connected to Stable Futures by her allied health professional. Rianna's housing was at risk due to financial hardship, and she was afraid she would be made homeless with four young children. Rianna was struggling to pay off an expensive consumer lease, car loan, and payday loans.

Working collaboratively with Rianna's health and social support team, we successfully challenged the legality of Rianna's consumer lease and car loan. Accepting our argument, the lenders agreed to waive a collective \$20,000 allegedly owing while allowing Rianna to retain the goods. We also negotiated waivers of the payday lending debts on responsible lending and hardship grounds.

Without these obligations, Rianna was able to use her limited income to pay her rent. We further empowered Rianna by explaining her rights and obligations under her tenancy agreement, preventing future disputes with her landlord.

Once trust was established, Rianna disclosed previous experiences of childhood sexual assault and domestic violence.

We represented Rianna to successfully apply for over \$20,000 in financial support from Victim Assist Queensland to assist in her recovery.

Reflecting on our assistance, Rianna shared:

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

Project Impact

Since 2020, we have holistically helped:

429 young people through integrated, holistic legal representation to resolve **1,051** distinct legal services, including **606** high-intensity, on-going supports

\$1,061,120 victim support payments accessed

\$426,095 consumer debt disputes resolved

Impact this year

166 children and young people helped

309 legal services

218 high-intensity, on-going supports (116% increase) to resolve legal issues

\$620,981 victim support payments accessed

\$102,262 consumer debts resolved

Stopping Homelessness for Children & Young People

Stable Futures for Young Queenslanders 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.

166
children and
young people

198
legal services

101
high-intensity,
on-going supports

209%
increase in
legal issues

“I have had a lot of help from LawRight over the years and I’m very appreciative of the amount of support and help I’ve received”

“I want to express my sincere appreciation. The financial aid I have received will contribute to my ongoing access to services for recovery and ultimately change my life. Words cannot express how grateful I am.”

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

Stakeholder quotes

“Thank you for the great presentation you gave recently. I have been able to better promote access to VAQ since your presentation. Thank you for your advocacy in this space.”

- Health Worker

“The lawyer’s support is invaluable for the young people we help. The air of safety, security, and hope she brings with her work is nothing short of a miracle.”

- Allied health professional



Multicultural Law

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

LawRight staff and pro bono lawyers work collaboratively with frontline workers from Multicultural Australia to empower newly arrived Queenslanders to understand their legal rights and to remove barriers for new arrivals to engage with the Australian legal system.

33

refugees and their families supported

45

legal issues addressed

53%

amending identity documents

32%

money and debt issues

Supporting refugees with identity documents

Many refugees have issues with their Australian identification documents, including errors in their names, missing names (due to different naming conventions in their home countries), or names that do not reflect their gender identity. Other refugees would like to anglicise their name as they settle into Australia.

Under the now repealed Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 2003, a refugee could apply to change their name with the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages (Registry) provided they 'ordinarily reside in Queensland'.

The Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 2023 commenced in late June 2024 and now imposes an additional requirement that a person must ordinarily reside in Queensland for 12 months immediately before they can apply to change their name, unless exceptional circumstances apply.

A significant number of Multicultural Law clients seek assistance to make a change of name application within 12 months of their settlement. Often, whole families will be impacted by

errors on their official documents, which has significant impact on their daily lives, including for example in their children settling into schooling, obtaining employment and accessing medications from the pharmacy.

In our experience, the new residency requirement has so far been strictly interpreted and applied, which has in turn caused immense barriers to our clients settling into the community. We are continuing to monitor the impact of these legislative changes on our vulnerable client base and to explore advocacy options.

Applying for a change of name certificate from the Registry is an expensive process and cost-prohibitive to the majority of our clients who often only receive Centrelink income.

While LawRight has been able to cover some of the fees through our Disbursement Fund, there is an urgent need for further funds to be raised to facilitate our casework on this issue and to allow our clients to access this process with the Registry.

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 14 applications to the fund and 13 applicants received either their full or a portion of their request.

Story of impact

We connected with a young Syrian refugee through our embedded partnership with Multicultural Australia. Our client wished to change her name so it aligned with how she was known in her community. She faced barriers in navigating the name change processes herself due to its complexity and cost. LawRight helped her to successfully change her name with the Registry of Births, Deaths & Marriages and with other government agencies. To help reduce the financial burden on the client,

LawRight paid the application fee from the Disbursement Fund.

“To change my name was my biggest dream, I’ve been struggling many years to change it before, but to be honest without your help I will never be able to do it.

Thank you for all the help and advices, and a big thanks to make my wish come true.”





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Tania Boal, Partner of MurphySchmidt

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Queensland Law Society Nominee

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

Legal Practice Members

Stephen Knight, Partner of MinterEllison

Tim Longwill, Partner of McCullough Robertson

Barrister Members

Angela Rae (to 12 Dec 2023)
Salwa Marsh (from 12 Dec 2023)
Hamish Clift

Bar Association of Queensland Nominee

Andrew Crowe KC

Committee Nominated Representative

The Hon. Roslyn Atkinson AO

Staff and secondees

LawRight staff

Co-CEOs: Linda Macpherson & Karen Dyhrberg
Office Manager: Nikki Gatbonton
Bookkeeper: Rebecca Slade
Data Management & Projects Officer: Zoe Rienecker
Admin Officer: Bronte Coates

Pro Bono Connect

Director: Rose Mackay
Lawyer: Jessica Massa
Lawyer: Stephen McClure
Admin Officer: Bronte Coates

Community & Health Justice Partnerships

Director: Stephen Grace
Senior Lawyer: Kate Adnams
Senior Lawyer: Josephine Allan
Senior Financial Counsellor: Natasha Ramsay (to Dec 2023)
Lawyer: Bonnie Djordjevic
Paralegal: Elise Dorsa
Paralegal: Ayla Fetahagic

Cairns office

Senior Lawyer: Tracey White
Paralegal: Constance Whiteside
Paralegal: Miad Jamali (to Nov 2023)

Court and Tribunal Services

Director: Ben Tuckett
Assistant Director: Nikki Hancock

State Courts office

Senior Lawyer: Natalie Morris
Lawyer: Melinda Willis
Paralegal: Alex Gehrke (to Nov 2023) / Shona Jackson
Paralegal: Tadayu Mujdrlica (to Jan 2024) / Edward Griffin

Enforcement Hearing Duty Lawyer Service

Lawyer: Melinda Willis
Paralegal: Alex Gehrke (to Nov 2023) / Shona Jackson

QCAT office

Senior Lawyer: Nikki Hancock (to June 2024)
Lawyer: Caitlin Josey
Paralegal: Ruby Chiswell

Federal Courts office

Senior Lawyer: Madeleine Depace
Lawyer: Sadie Burton (to June 2024)
Paralegal: Caitlin Holmes (to Jan 2024) / Caitlyn Larkin

Migration Law Service

(staff commenced after July 2024)
Senior Lawyer: Clare Carter
Lawyer: Ruby Chiswell
Lawyer: Harrison Pie

Secondments

Sparke Helmore

Harrison Pie
Ava Pearson

Corrs Chambers Westgarth

Alex Zagami
Carmen Zhu
Chelsea Zwoerner
Jack Donnelly
Lauren Kelly
Lucy Davie
Lucy Noble-Dickinson
Michaela Gyasi-Agyei
Naomi McCarthy
Rory McFadden
Stephen Epping
Taylor Thomas
Thilini Joseh
Will James

King & Wood Mallesons - Waiwa Mudena secondment

Jakhobi Moren
Stephanie Luyt



Friends of LawRight

Friends of LawRight pledge \$1,000 a year for three years, and many made additional donations. The support from these Friends enables LawRight to build services that are responsive to the needs of vulnerable communities.

The Honourable Roslyn Atkinson AO
The Hon. Justice Thomas Bradley KC
Lucy Bretherton
Andrew Buchanan
Olga Buchanan
Damian Clothier KC
Adam Connolly
Andrew Crowe KC
Tony Denholder

Randal & Susan Dennings
The Hon. Robert Gotterson AO
Marshall Irwin
Matthew Jones KC
Nitra Kidson KC
Salwa Marsh
Tamara McCombe
The Hon. Margaret McMurdo AC
Simon Morrison

Paul Newman
Damien O'Brien KC
Katharine Philp
Majella Pollard
Angela Rae
Joanne Rennick
Michael Trim
Jacqueline Wootton
.. and eight anonymous Friends.



Members

Firms & ILPs

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

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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

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Crown Law, Department of
Justice and Attorney-General

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AECOM Australia Pty Ltd

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Bar Association of Queensland
Queensland Law Society

Barristers

The Hon. Roslyn Atkinson AO

Senior Counsel

Andrew Crowe KC
Patrick Cullinane KC
Donald (Ben) Gardiner KC
Gavin Handran KC
Peter Hastie KC
Melanie Hindman KC
Michael Hodge KC

Matthew Jones KC
Nitra Kidson KC
Mark Steele KC
Andrew Stumer KC
Roger Traves KC
Stewart Webster KC

Counsel

Lisa Ashley
Rebekah Bassano
Kate Boomer
Jozef Borja-Erece
Zoe Brereton
Paul Carasco
Scott Carter
Justin Carter
Florence Chen
Catherine Chiang
Morgan Clarke
Hamish Clift
Matthew Coe
Stephen Colditz
Benedict Coyne
Christian Curtis
Clare Dart
Laura Dawson
Rachel De Luchi
Grace Devereaux
Graham Dietz
Christopher Duplock
William Evans
Emma Fitzgerald
Margaret Forrest
Stephanie Forward-Smith

Kate Fuller
Lauren Gamble
Karen Gaston
Christopher George
Ming Gu
David Guttridge
Susan Hedge
Rachel Hew
Reimen Hii
Steven Hogg
Emma Hoiberg
Benjamin Kidston
Renae Kirk
Carla Klease
Louise Kruger
Nathan Laing
Hannah Lilley
Fiona Lubett
Duncan Marckwald
Jade Marr
Salwa Marsh
Adam Mason
Michael May
Michael Maynard
Alexander McKinnon
Bianca Mendelson
Jane Menzies
Evan Mijo
Ryan Nattrass
Bridget O'Brien
Shane Ogden
James O'Regan
Benjamin O'Sullivan
Rowan Pack

Tristan Pagliano
Matthew Paterson
Damien Payard
Nola Pearce
Gabriel Perry
Stephanie Philippou
Robert Quirk
Angela Rae
Robert (Bob) Reed
Anthony Reilly
Madeline Rodgers
Jayleigh Sargent
Andrew Schriiffer
Sarah Spottiswood
Timothy Stork
Danielle Tay
David Taylor
Michael Thomson
Samuel Walpole
Jing-Yu (Jason) Wang
Charles Wilson
Felicity Wood
Helena Meyers-Nicolas
Pawel (Pav) Zielinski

Life members

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

Law Schools

LawRight partners with Queensland's major law schools to deliver student clinics, where law students spend a semester supporting LawRight services, and learning first-hand about access to justice.

"Thank you for the truly valuable opportunity at LawRight this semester! Everyone was incredibly willing to share their knowledge and provide me with guidance. Josie especially was extremely kind and made me feel part of the team. I really respect the positive work environment that you have established at LawRight!" - Isabella Crawford (Homelessness Law student volunteer)

"I have learnt so much about the community legal sector and have gained confidence in the direction of my career path. I will miss my Tuesdays at LawRight so much!"
- Sam Dunkley (Federal Courts student volunteer)



Homelessness Law - University of Queensland

Brisbane Homelessness and Community Services

Christina Zhang
Ethan Bishcha
Jason Lorenzo
Michelle Sully
Rebecca Moses-Hills
Sian Murray Boyle
Ashley Greenwood
Grace Beattie
Isabella Crawford
Laura Peters
Olivia Ferguson
Tobias Kennett

Mater Young Adult Health Centre

Christina Zhang
Ethan Bishcha
Jason Lorenzo
Michelle Sully
Rebecca Moses-Hills
Sian Murray Boyle
Imogen Whiteside
Jake Davies
Meghan Roelofs
Mitchell Leishman
Nicola Bown
Ruby Mirza

Court and Tribunal Services - Bond University

Zoe Stevens
Benyan Wang
Alicia Wilson
Flora Cheung
Preet Deol
Chloe Daniel
Yi-An Chen

Pro Bono Connect - Queensland University of Technology

Yu Chen
Liberty Humphreys
Charlotte O'Sullivan
Li Qu
Shay Yen

Pro Bono Connect - Griffith University

Jazlyn Bauer
Milliann Cadieux
Mary Jamierin Yco
Kealin Liwiski
Lachlan McDonald
Luke Retter

Student volunteers

“I just wanted to take the time to let you all know how grateful I am for my experience at LawRight. Thank you for taking the time to ensure that I received the most out of my time with your team. I have learnt so much and am so happy to say I can add another positive legal experience to my professional journey. It meant a lot that you each took the time to provide me with feedback; and guidelines of what work expectations there might be of me if I was working in a different setting.

I appreciate all the kindness, learning opportunities and support I received during my placement. It's been an invaluable experience and I hope to keep doing similar work as a way of giving back to the community and helping people in need of pro bono legal services.”

– Student volunteer

Volunteers

Amber Sheridan

Admin

Amina Zafari
Amyleigh Murphy
Brandon Botting
Caleb Jones
Kush Solanki
Lucas Poon
Nabilah Mat Pozian
Visun Wijeyewickrema

State Courts

Amina Zafari (PLT)
Cynthia Chan

Jack William Ryan
Kevin Keller
Rita Zhiltsova
Shona Jackson

CHJP

Alec Sutherland
Helet Kalay
Shristi Semwal

QCAT

Caitlyn Larkin
Jacob Betts
Kush Solanki
Natalie Graham
Olivia Chan

Paige Symes
Stephanie Ho
Yusha Khanal
Zita Li

Federal Courts

Maddison Facey
Matthew Hovi
Sam Dunkley



Resources

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



Forums

LawRight staff are members of the following forums or boards:

ASIC Consumer Regulator Forum
Brisbane Alliance to End Homelessness
Cairns Regional Legal Assistance Forum (RLAF)
Community Legal Centres Queensland, Management Committee
CLCQ Disaster and Climate Justice Exchange
Community Legal Education Legal Assistance Forum
Consumers' Federation of Australia
Court User Stakeholder Group
Disaster Legal Response Working Group
Economic Abuse Reference Group
Human Rights Advocates Group
Maintaining and Sustaining Tenancies Forum
Make Renting Fair Alliance
Mental Health and Disability Legal Assistance Forum
National Employment Law Network
National Lemon Cars Working Group
NQ Consumer Taskforce

QCAT Guardianship and Administration Stakeholder Group
QCOSS Homelessness and Housing Network
QCOSS Living Affordability Policy Network
Qld Employment Lawyers' Network
Queensland Health Justice Partnerships Network
Queensland Employment Lawyers' Network
Queensland Human Rights Commission
Queensland Law Society, Access to Justice and Pro Bono Law Committee
Queensland Legal Assistance Forum
Regional Legal Assistance Forum
Review of the Model Defamation Provisions Stakeholder Roundtable
RTA Consumer Regulator Forum
The University of Queensland Pro Bono Centre, Advisory Board

217 stakeholder engagements

LawRight engaged with colleagues across the legal profession and community sectors, to ensure we are providing the best services and referral pathways for our clients.

Finances

Treasurer's Report

It is a pleasure to present the Treasurer's report for 2024.

This year LawRight recorded an operating loss of \$329,049, with our equity at year end standing at \$275,620. This loss reflected in part an increased investment in our front line services over the past 12 months. We are on track however to return to an operating surplus in the coming year.

Income

Government funding provided 81% of LawRight's income. This year, LawRight received additional government funding to expand the Homelessness Law Program (Cth and State Governments) and to commence the Protection Visa Scheme (Cth Government).

During the course of this financial year, we also secured an additional \$280,000 in grants, increasing non-government grants from 4% of our income last year to 8.5% this year.

Fundraising

LawRight works hard to subsidise our government sourced revenue with our own fundraising.

The Queensland Legal Walk received terrific support, raising \$119,916. A big thank you to everyone involved, with a special mention of course to the highest fundraising individual, Rafa "the Miniature Schnauzer" Denholder.

Our membership revenue remained strong in 2023-24.

The Friends of LawRight campaign also continues to be successful. We now have 35 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.

Effectiveness

Every dollar spent on supporting LawRight is a fantastic investment for government, as it enables us to deliver over

24,000 hours of pro bono support across Queensland. This includes providing advice to people who would not otherwise have the means to access justice, help individuals finish their court proceedings quickly or to avoid unnecessarily commencing them in the first place, and in recent years, helping people to not lose their housing.

Workforce

Our largest expense is wages and employee costs, at \$3.153 million. With community legal sector wages being much lower than that for other private and public legal roles, we have invested this year in increasing salaries to meet the market and maintain a staff cohort that are leaders in pro bono legal service delivery.

Thanks

Thank you to LawRight's bookkeeper, Rebecca Slade, for her support to the Co-CEOs, and auditor Jeremiah Thum from Independent Audit Services, whose outstanding service continues to ensure LawRight's financial integrity. Thanks also to my fellow Management Committee members, particularly the Finance & Audit Subcommittee.

Looking forward

2024-25 will be the final year of LawRight's secure government funding under the National Legal Assistance Partnership. While we have commenced significant planning to steer through these uncertain times, we look to both the State and Commonwealth governments to provide certainty for our centres, staff and clients.

Tony Denholder, LawRight Treasurer



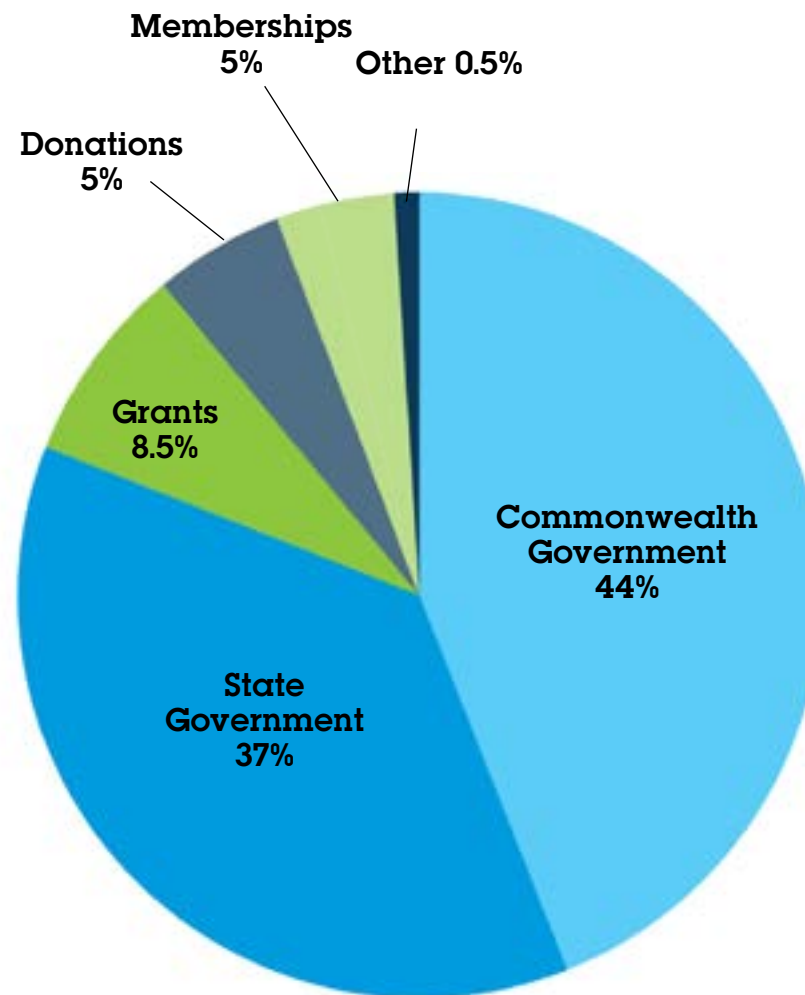
Treasurer
Tony Denholder

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 on our website.

LawRight Income



An Australian Government Initiative



Queensland Government

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
QLD 4003
(07) 3846 6317
admin@lawright.org.au

Pro Bono Connect

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

Community and Health Justice Partnerships | Brisbane & Cairns

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

www.lawright.org.au

Court and Tribunal Services | State Courts Office

(including Enforcement Hearing Duty Lawyer)
Level 1, Queensland Elizabeth II Courts of Law Building
415 George Street, Brisbane
(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
(07) 3564 7561
tribunal@lawright.org.au

Court and Tribunal Services | Federal Courts

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

Court and Tribunal Services | Migration Law

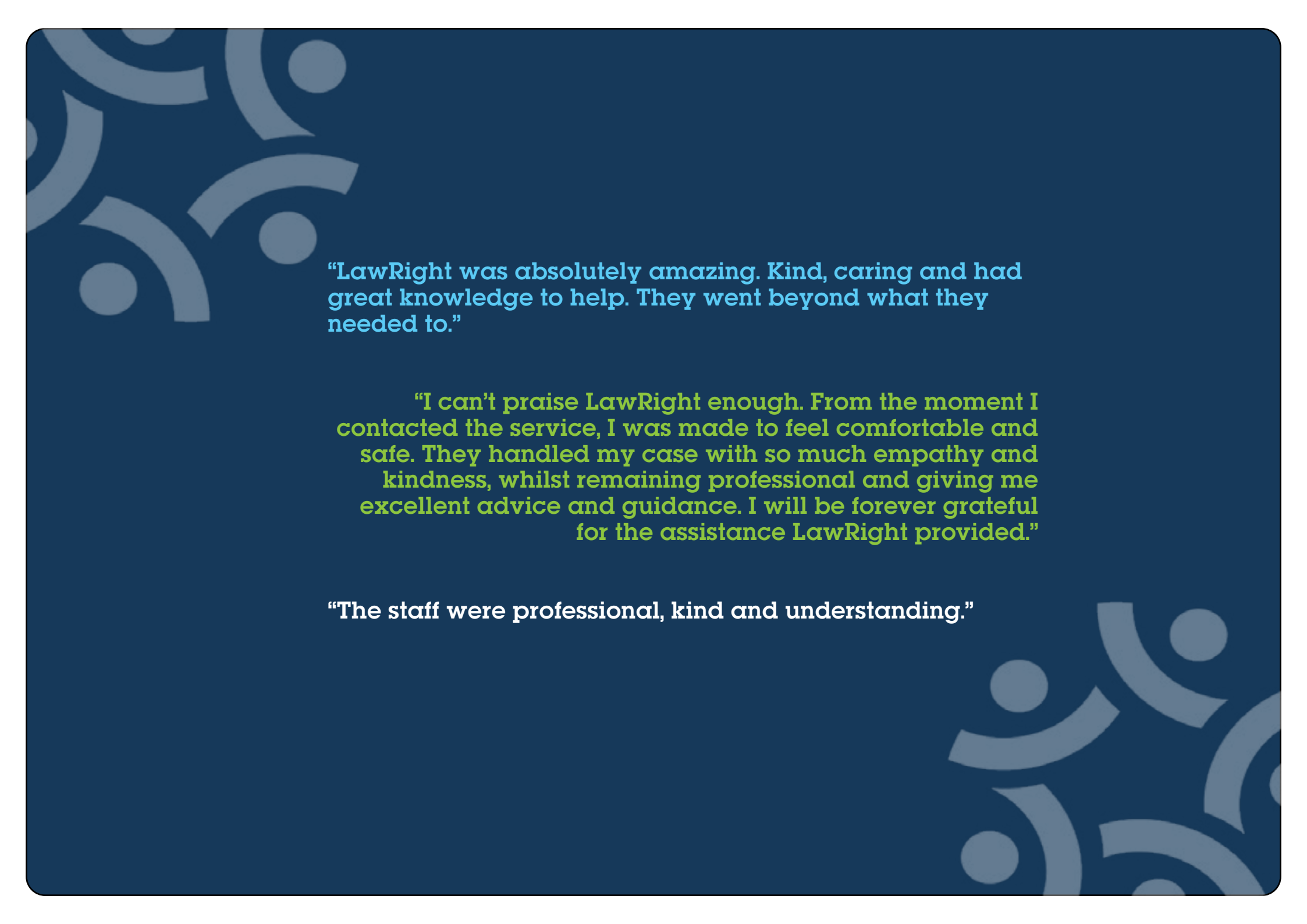
Level 6, Harry Gibbs Commonwealth Law Courts
119 North Quay, Brisbane
(07) 3052 4309
migration.cts@lawright.org.au

Thank you for your printing support:



Graphic Design: Martin Howard, with thanks to Amber Sheridan

Note: Some names have been changed to protect client privacy.



“LawRight was absolutely amazing. Kind, caring and had great knowledge to help. They went beyond what they needed to.”

“I can’t praise LawRight enough. From the moment I contacted the service, I was made to feel comfortable and safe. They handled my case with so much empathy and kindness, whilst remaining professional and giving me excellent advice and guidance. I will be forever grateful for the assistance LawRight provided.”

“The staff were professional, kind and understanding.”