



Western Sydney
COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE LIMITED
ABN 81 963 193 626 | ACN 629 118 903



Annual Report July 2019 – June 2020

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Our Artwork

Isaiah Sines is the artist.

Isaiah is a Dunghutti Man (Kempsey). Isaiah was raised in Mount Druitt and was victim to many systems growing up (child protection, Community Services and the Justice system). Isaiah participated in Youth Koori Court and is now a Just Reinvest NSW Ambassador and a strong advocate for Koori kids in the same situations as he was when growing up.

"I have experienced a lot in my life and that is why I wanted to become a youth ambassador with Just Reinvest. I hope to be able to use this position to advocate for other Koori kids who are going through what I went through and hopefully prevent the future generations from being affected by the same systems I grew up in - this artwork was inspired by my son. It has his handprints and footprints so he can start his journey."

Acknowledgement of Country

Western Sydney Community Legal Centre Ltd would like to acknowledge the Burramattigal people of the Darug Nation, the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation and the and Ku-Ring-Gai people who are the traditional custodians of the land on which our offices are located and where we conduct our work.

We acknowledge and pay respects to Elders, past and present, who have given us time, knowledge and guidance. We appreciate the rich contribution and resilience that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and youth provide to WSCLC and the community.

WSCLC continues to work together with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, and our non-Indigenous staff, to better our understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and the ongoing connection to the land, waters and seas.

We are committed to creating a genuine appreciation for the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their contribution to the workplace and community, and in turn, we are working towards reconciliation.

Always was, always will be Aboriginal land.



(Emu Plains Coo'ee Festival on 26 January 2020)

L-R: Veselko Cuic, Joanne Rudd, Corinne Kew and Louise Coady)

Chair's Report

This year has been one of extraordinary challenges, especially those brought about by COVID-19. Coming into the year we recognised the task ahead of us to continue our focus on governance excellence, cultural cohesion and financial sustainability.

No doubt the pandemic has impacted WSCLC's operations and the dedication of our staff has seen the majority of our services continue effectively, some via online means where possible. We are incredibly proud of our staff's resilience and flexibility during these unprecedented and challenging times.

Throughout this year the organisation has continued on its path of service enhancement. In this report you will read of many examples of ongoing improvement to our service delivery and community engagement. WSCLC's standing in the sector continued via partnerships with legal firms to bolster our services, as well our ongoing commitment to providing internships and valuable training to recent law graduates.

In November 2019 we welcomed the appointment of Louise Coady as Chief Executive Officer and Principal Solicitor. Louise has brought much experience, insight and a passionate vision for the organisation to the role.

A special word of thanks to Merleen Millson and Debra Ronan who left the Board this year. Both Merleen and Debra served on the WSCLC Board and on the management committees prior to amalgamation. They worked tirelessly for WSCLC for many years and I thank them for their dedication.

As we enter this new period the Board has been working on a three year strategy. The strategy will focus on three pillars for the organisation's future success: continuing our journey to becoming a resilient and high quality organisation, continued focus on our programs and capabilities, and the ongoing development of a collaborative culture. I look forward to sharing our progress in the future.

Last but not least, I would like to acknowledge the continued dedicated support of our funding partners through their support and guidance throughout this demanding year. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to the passionate staff and volunteers, all of whom have made such a difference to disadvantaged communities across Western Sydney. And finally I would like to thank all members of our Board of Directors who have been so generous and committed in giving their time and expertise to lead the stewardship of our organisation.

Despite this very challenging year across the sector, we remain optimistic about our future and committed to our mission of equitable access to the legal system for all.

Helen Bouropoulos
Chair



About Us

Western Sydney Community Legal Centre Limited (WSCLC) is a public company limited by guarantee, governed by a Board of volunteer skills-based Directors who are generally local residents and professionals with an interest in social justice. WSCLC is accredited by the Community Legal Centres Australia.

WSCLC's work operates under two separate arms: a legal arm and a social justice arm.

The legal arm incorporates:

1. The Community Legal Services Program (CLSP) including an Aboriginal Legal Access Program (ALAP) team – operating broadly across Western Sydney funded by NSW and Commonwealth Attorneys General and administered by Legal Aid NSW.
2. The Home Building Advocacy Service (HoBAS) – operating state-wide and funded by NSW Fair Trading.

The social justice arm incorporates;

1. The Western Sydney Tenants' Service (WESTS) – operating within certain sections of Western Sydney and funded by NSW Fair Trading.
2. The Parramatta Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (CWDVCAS) – operating within certain sections of Western Sydney and funded by Legal Aid NSW.
3. The Children's Court Assistance Scheme (CCAS) – operating within The Children's Court of NSW at Parramatta and Surry Hills funded by Legal Aid NSW.
4. The Youth Education Program (YEP) – funded by NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ).
5. The Central West Child Contact Service (CWCS) team – operating within Western Sydney and funded by the Department of Social Services (DSS).

WSCLC is pleased to acknowledge the support of our funders and partners, including the Attorney General's Department, Department of Social Services (DSS), Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ), Legal Aid NSW, NSW Fair Trading, HWL Ebsworth Lawyers, Ashurst, Sparke Helmore Lawyers, Sydney West Family Lawyers, Macquarie University, and Western Sydney University.



Mission & Values

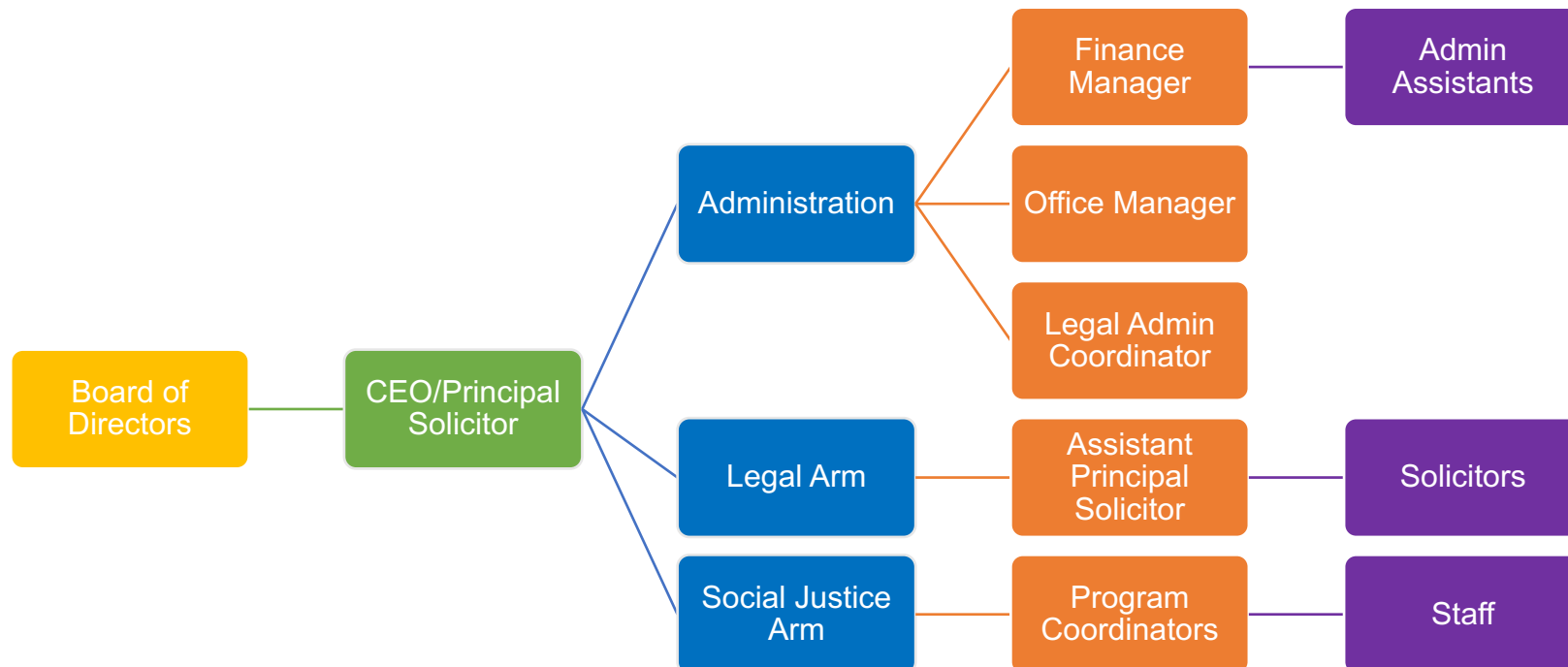
Our Mission

Delivering free legal services and support services to the community of Western Sydney.

Our Values

- Respectful of each other, our communities and stakeholders.
- Supporting and empowering each other to achieve our vision and purpose.
- People, communities and clients come first.
- Accountable in our thinking attitudes and actions.
- Dynamic in pursuit of excellence.

Organisation Chart



CEO/Principal Solicitor's Report

On behalf of WSCLC staff I am pleased to present the 2019-20 Annual Report on the work of our organisation in very challenging and confronting times.

The impact of COVID-19 has created additional complexity to service delivery yet opportunity as we adjust how we did things in the past to be more responsive and innovative as we look to the future. Lock down restrictions gave us space to be considered and deliberate about service delivery proposals, improve our reach via technology-based service and consolidate internal processes.

Firstly, I am particularly proud of the resilience of all staff mobilizing, at very short notice, to shift workspaces while continuing to deliver services across all our programs. While funding remains a challenge however, we acknowledge additional Government funding to support safe and remote workplace practices.

Secondly, our community was clearly feeling adverse effects from lockdown/COVID-19 and all programs adapted so as to respond to need including the Central West Contact Centre being the first Contact Centre across the State to introduce and deliver Zoom contacts for parents. The specific program reports contained within this Annual Report speak to this resourcefulness.

While WSCLC is made up of distinct programs we are now working more as a team, with more frequent communication (remote of course!) and common purpose.

I am pleased and proud to be involved with such an organisation committed to putting the needs – both legal and social supports – of the community of Western Sydney first.

This has been a challenging year and I thank the Program Managers for their personal support and the team themselves for trusting in the direction we are moving towards.

Finally, I acknowledge the invaluable assistance of the Board who have demonstrated a commitment to both the organisation and the community of Western Sydney giving of their time, knowledge and expertise.

Louise Coady
CEO/Principal Solicitor



Legal Arm

Community Legal Services Program (CLSP)



Western Sydney
COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE LIMITED
ABN 81 963 193 626 | ACN 629 118 903

No's on Our Team

15 Solicitors and an Aboriginal (ALAP) Worker.



CLSP Team Photo taken via Zoom – from left to right starting at the top row:

Vivian Michael, Corinne Kew, Jesse Skiller, Nicholas Comino

Susannah Coles, Samiha Alameddine, Teresa Rubio, Clare Mangiokas, Bethany Burns, Michelle Ericoli

Hemal Perera, James Minshall, Veselko Cuic

Absent: Louise Coady, Tamara Bailey, Kim Berry

Funded By: NSW State and Commonwealth Government

Who We Assist: Those within the CLSP catchment, extending from Bucketty NSW 2250 in the north, to Greenacre NSW 2190 in the south, and from Mulgoa NSW 2745 in the west, and to North Ryde NSW 2113 in the east, who do not qualify for Legal Aid assistance but who could not otherwise afford to pay a private solicitor to assist them, in the areas of:

- Care and Protection Law
- Family Law
- Minor Criminal Law
- Civil Law

Methods of Assistance

Services for the Individual

The CLSP team provides legal advice, discrete legal assistance and representation services to those within the CLSP catchment, encompassing almost 2 million people. Legal advice can be provided via telephone, in person or via video conferencing, or by attendance at any of the following partnered services:

- Koolyangarra Aboriginal Family Centre (Every 3rd and 4th Wednesday of the month)

- Daramu – Marist180 (by appointment)
- Marrin Weejali Aboriginal Corporation (Every Friday)
- Emu Plains Correctional Centre
- Dilwynnia Correctional Centre
- Local Courts - Windsor and Blacktown

Services for the Community

The CLSP also provides "Services For The Community" which encompass community legal education, community engagement/education, stakeholder engagement /interagency partnerships and law and legal services reform. These services aim to provide a broad presence within our expansive catchment so that our identity is well known to our local communities and local service providers, and to actively encourage our local communities to engage with the law and legal system.

The CLSP team experienced many highlights in undertaking services for the community, including:

- Attending 7 NAIDOC events across our broad catchment - at Richmond, Riverstone, Emerton, Penrith, Parramatta, Blacktown and Doonside to engage with our local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- Maintaining a strong collaboration with Dementia Australia and Blacktown Council's Older Persons Forum to deliver 14 "Planning Ahead For Future Decision-Making" CLEs to educate older people and/or people with dementia (and their carers) about planning ahead documents
- Maintaining a strong collaboration with Marrin Weejali to deliver 4 "Better Man" CLEs to educate men about domestic violence
- Meeting and working with the Western Sydney offices of Legal Aid NSW to deliver linked-up legal services



Services for the Community Event with Teresa Rubio, SFC Manager



Visit with Dr Hugh McDermott, Prospect MP

L-R: Teresa Rubio, Louise Coady, Corinne Kew, Clare Mangiokas, Susannah Coles, Dr Hugh McDermott, Samiha Alameddine, James Minshall and Jesse Skillier.

Aboriginal Legal Access Program

Our ALAP Worker experienced many highlights in undertaking services for the community, including:

- WSCLC/ALAP held a stall at the Cooe Festival event held on 26 January 2020;
- Quarterlies Yarn Up Day attended in February 2020;
- Community BBQ and information day;
- Meeting with Women's Legal Service and Indigenous Women's Legal Program to discuss how we can work together in Western Sydney;
- Meeting with local Darug artist, Karen Maber about the organisation's RAP.

The ALAP Worker also delivered numbers Aboriginal Cultural Safety Workbook Workshops within the community, including:

- Macquarie University students;
- Our own Community Justice solicitors.

ALAP re-located from our, now closed, Windsor Office to our Rooty Hill Office in early February. The new office space has been updated to ensure it is a culturally safe and welcoming environment.

External Partnerships

The CLSP team partners with the following organisations to accept facilitated client referrals to allow ease of access and timely provision of assistance to clients in need:

- LEAP Partnership
- Blacktown Family Relationship Centre
- Macquarie Park Family Relationship Centre
- Uniting Family Relationship Centre Parramatta
- Uniting Family Relationship Centre Penrith
- The Women's Cottage Richmond

- Strong Nations Windsor
- Nurreen Women's Domestic Violence Accommodation and Support Services

The CLSP team also partnered with a wide range of local service providers and government to strengthen our links to, and provide services to, the community:

- Legal Aid NSW
- Other community legal centres - including Marrickville Legal Centre and South West Sydney Legal Centre
- Family dispute resolution services - Relationships Australia and Uniting
- Politicians, both State and Federal in our catchment
- Local councils - including Blacktown and Penrith
- Local libraries - including Windsor, Castle Hill, Auburn and Hornsby
- Community services, centres and clubs - including Dementia Australia, Eastwood Chinese Senior Citizens Club, Minchinbury Anglican Church Seniors Group, Blacktown Grandparents Support Group and Marrin Weejali

Client Impacts

The CLSP team conducted a client survey with a sample of those provided with services in the 2019-2020 financial year, and results are below.

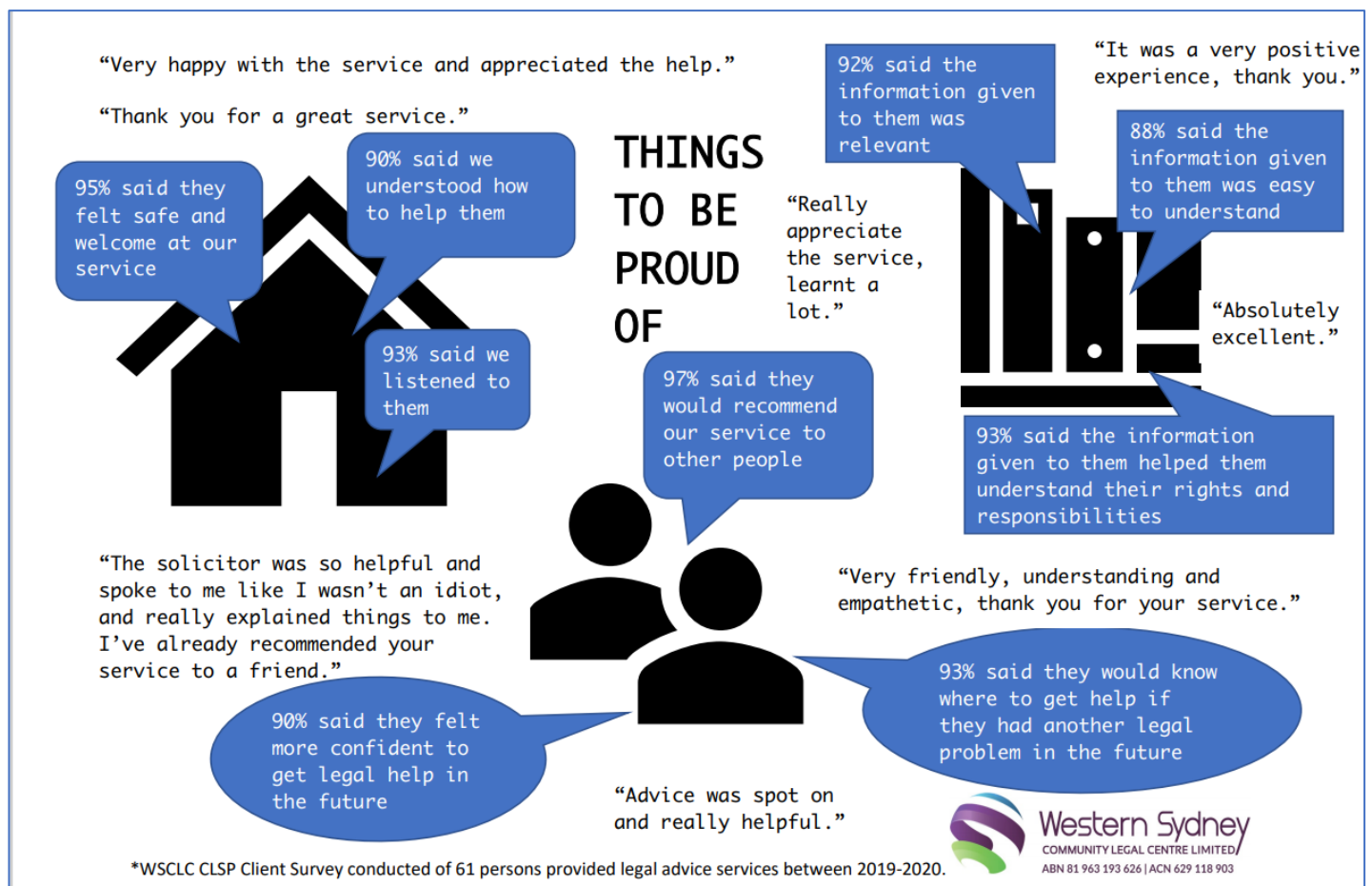
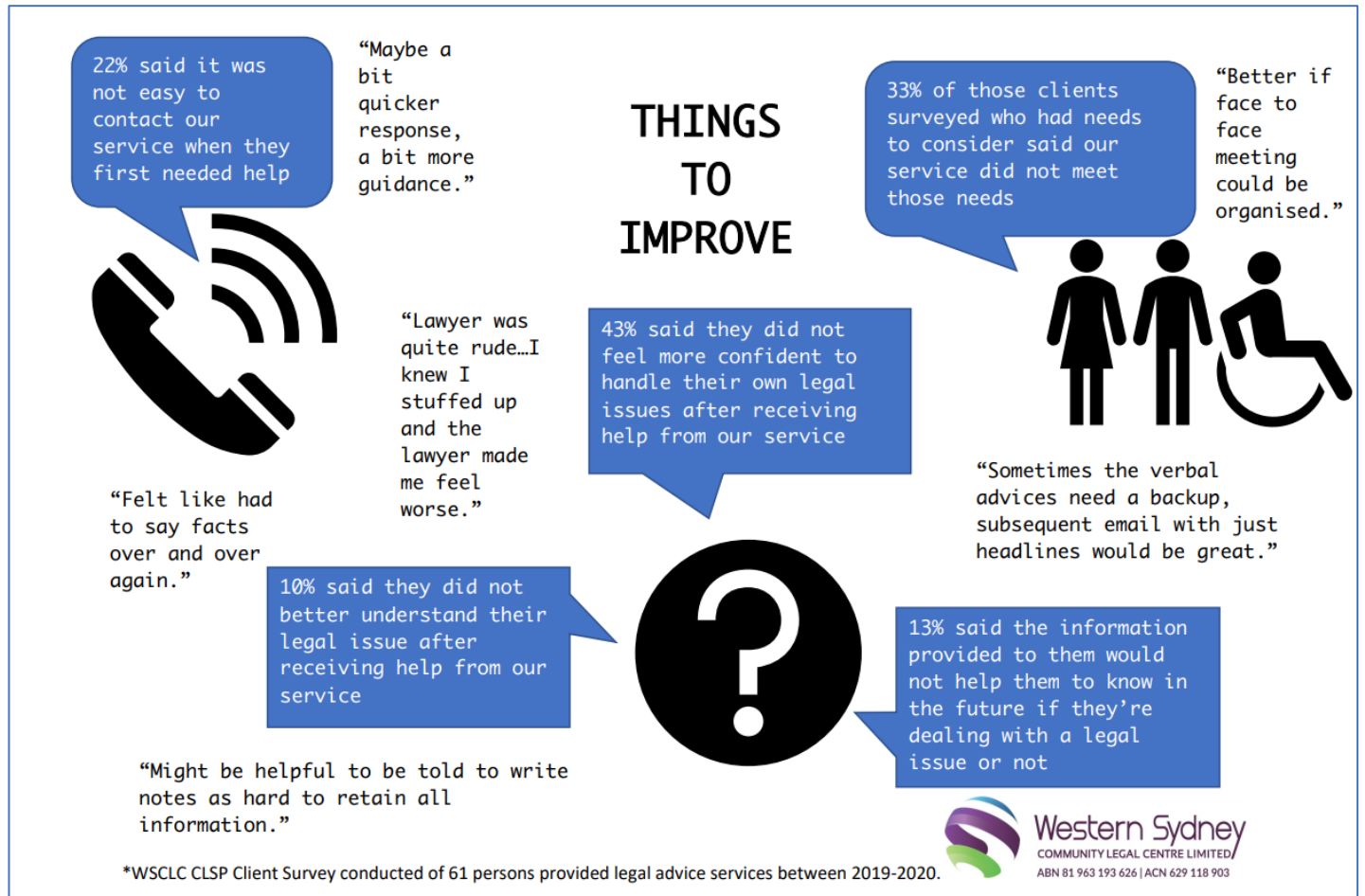
In response to this feedback, the CLSP team considered and implemented a number of strategies to address the areas for improvement, including:

- Diversifying intake methods which now encompass telephone, online form, email and referral avenues;
- Trauma-informed practice training;
- Allowing for more time with clients;
- Engaging in active listening techniques;
- Providing the client with written confirmation of the advice provided; and
- Preparing clients prior to advice with helpful information on questions and tips to help the client engage fully.



NAIDOC Event 2019

L-R: Clare Mangiokas, Samiha Alameddine, Andrea Rodrigues, Fern Hoang, Shannon Pendreigh, Nicholas Comino and Michael Kovac.



CLSP Client Feedback and Case Studies

“...Your knowledge, guidance, dedication and meticulous attention to the details you covered in my submission gave my case a much better chance than were I to have prepared the same myself. Clare, I would particularly like to commend your assistance to me. You offered reassurance, guidance, calmness and diligence. It was very comforting to know that you had my back throughout the last year.

As a pensioner of limited means, I am indeed grateful that a service like yours exists, without which, I know I would never have gotten the outcome that I achieved...”

Assisting a client whose victim's services claim had been rejected at first instance. The client was represented by a CLSP solicitor, who made submissions on behalf of the client which led to the client being successfully provided a \$10,000 payment.

Assisting a client who had been through a domestic violence relationship overseas, leading to proceedings that prevented her from spending time with her children. The client was represented by a CLSP solicitor to engage in Australian Family Law proceedings to re-start time with her children.

Assisting a client who had had an Apprehended Domestic Violence Order wrongly made against them. The client was represented by a CLSP solicitor who was able to make submissions and advocate that the order not be made final and be dismissed after 6 months.

Case Study

Karen had been working as a casual for 13 years in the beauty industry. Karen consistently worked one day each week at the Sydney CBD branch of the employer.

Since COVID-19, Karen was told that there are no shifts and that there is a new policy that she must make herself available 3 days per week (even if the employer did not allocate 3 shifts per week to her). If Karen did not agree to this policy, no shifts would be allocated to her.

The policy was unfair because it was never communicated to Karen and seemed to be targeting Karen specifically as the employer knew she worked elsewhere to supplement her income and could not free up 3 days per week.

Our Centre wrote to the employer and within a week the human resources team telephoned Karen to discuss shifts they could allocate to her.

The Centre's simple intervention by way of a letter to the employer resulted in the employer taking Karen grievance seriously, communicating with Karen and allocating shifts to her.

Case Study

Jack is a Kamilaroi man from Moree. Jack came to the WSCLC Marrin Weejali Aboriginal Corporation outreach in late July 2019 and obtained advice from solicitor Caitlin Comensoli in relation to an apprehended domestic violence order application that was filed by Mt Druitt Police Force for the protection of one of Jack's granddaughters when if untrue would lead the detectives to not charge Jack with the criminal offences.

Veselko Cuic interviewed Jack, as well as 3 of his family members at Mt Druitt Hospital's Aboriginal health Unit and a local school principal. The interviews and statements established that Jack could not be in two places at the same time and therefore had a strong defence.

As the ADVO proceedings progressed, Jack's working with children's check was suspended due to the allegations made against him. An anonymous letter was sent to a local Aboriginal organisation claiming that Jack was a sexual offender, so he was required to stop coaching their football team. This was a big blow to Jack because he set up the football club.

Veselko negotiated with the prosecutor and ultimately the matter settled with no criminal charges laid against Jack.

Running parallel to the criminal proceedings were issues about Jack's role as a carer for the Department of Communities and Justice ("the Department"). Jack and Irene had been foster carers for over 29 Aboriginal children and had a number of children in their care. Given the allegations made by the granddaughter Jack was identified as a "person causing harm" by the Department this resulted in Jack having to move out of his home and live without a fixed address for almost 12 months. All done without any comprehensive investigation by the Department, notwithstanding that Jack and Irene have Court orders allocating parental responsibility of the children to them. The proper course was for the Department to return to Court which they did not do.

Jack opposed the allegations made against him and wanted the matter to be reviewed. Solicitor Susannah Coles negotiated with the Department and established that Jack never relinquished with parental responsibility for the children who had been in his care and so he was able to move back home. The Department agreed not to take any action to remove the children and the client was able to resume his role as carer.

Jack would not have been eligible for legal aid for either of these matters, there is no available funding for a panel solicitor to assist and Jack could not afford to pay for private representation.

COVID-19 (CLSP)

COVID-19 impacted the CLSP team in a number of ways. At the beginning of lockdown in NSW, the entire CLSP team moved to working from home and solely providing advice via telephone due to restrictions and the closure of all external partnership legal clinics. At this time, there were a number of weeks where little to no enquiries for legal assistance were received by the CLSP team, and therefore time was taken to consider processes, reflect on legal service provision methods and review and move forward through supervision and teamwork meetings.

Following this initial period, many requests for legal advice in the areas of employment law and separation, divorce and parenting matters started to come through. Prior to the advent of COVID-19, the CLSP team had one dedicated employment lawyer working on the team, a specialist accredited solicitor who undertook two days a week to advise in the area of employment law. Following the rise in demand for assistance in this area however, the entire team of 8 civil lawyers within the CLSP team undertook training in the area of employment law and began to provide advice in these areas, which continues to show a marked increase from what the CLSP team has dealt with previously.

The team of 4 family lawyers within the CLSP team were able to benefit from a raft of online training provided throughout the initial COVID-19 period in NSW, setting them up well to meet the demand for advice in the areas of domestic violence, separation, divorce and parenting that filtered through from around June 2020. It was clear from these requests that certain demographics within the Western Sydney community were experiencing adverse effects from the lockdown measures imposed due to COVID-19, and the family lawyers within the CLSP team were able to respond to these requests in a holistic and assistive way.

The CLSP team's Services for the Community work was also significantly impacted by COVID 19 starting in March 2020, as it became less possible to be working out and about within the local communities and with local service providers. This issue remains ongoing, although we are hopeful that we will be back on track by the end of 2020/21.

The CLSP team continues to adapt and respond accordingly to the needs of those they assist during these uncertain and unknown circumstances.



Home Building Advocacy Service (HoBAS)

No's in Our Team

1 Manager
4 Solicitors
4 Intake officers
4 HWL Ebsworth Lawyers Graduates

It was another productive year in HoBAS which is in its thirteenth year of operation at WSCLC. The HoBAS team again provided high-quality legal assistance services to consumers throughout NSW with a diverse range of home building matters.

HoBAS is pleased to partner with WSCLC under the exceptional leadership of Louise Coady, WSCLC CEO and Principal Solicitor, whose steadfast guidance, support and wisdom inspires this organisation to achieve greater things for the diverse communities of western Sydney and throughout NSW.

In July 2019 NSW Fair Trading (Community Grants) and WSCLC agreed upon benchmarks and moved away from the targets set out in previous Work Plans.

Caitlin Comensoli and James Minshall both moved onto new challenges and we thank them both for their great work in their time with us. HoBAS welcomed Rachel Lesieli Kite as a newly-minted solicitor in February 2020.

Client inquiries and support were handled by a talented teams of students and volunteers whose energy, enthusiasm and dynamism always adds to the *esprit de corps* of the legal centre.

During the year WSCLC established a relationship with HWL Ebsworth Lawyers and several graduates assisted with HoBAS during this time giving them valuable experience in a specialist area of consumer law. It is hoped that the program may be able to be continued post covid-19.



Peter Longfield, HoBAS Manager



Rachel Lesieli Kite, HoBAS Solicitor



Samir Pokharel, HoBAS Intake Officer

For students, graduates, and even a few lawyers the range of matters for which HoBAs provides free legal assistance services to consumers in NSW is very broad for such a specialised area of law, and includes:

- Contractual disputes and their resolution
- Licensed and unlicensed builders
- Cooling-off periods
- Non-compliance with formal contract requirements
- Breaches of statutory warranty under s 18B HBA
- The relationship between *Home Building Act* 1989 (NSW) and *Strata Schemes Management Act* 2015 (NSW) for buildings in strata schemes
- Transfer of proceedings from courts to NCAT
- Uninsured works
- Home Building Compensation Fund Insurance (HBCFI)
- Preparation of evidence for NCAT proceedings
- Representation of consumers in NCAT proceedings
- Renewal of NCAT proceedings
- Appeals of decisions of NCAT
- Enforcement of NCAT orders

Hosted by WSCLC, HoBAS prioritises legal assistance services to consumers experiencing barriers to access to justice. Although the service is not means-tested, in a real sense the priority groups for HoBAS have always included clients who are:

- Culturally or linguistically diverse
- Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- Living with disabilities
- Living in rural or regional NSW
- Socially and/or economically disadvantaged

Identifying Legal Need

A few new areas of practice have become apparent over the course of the year:

- Assisting consumers in strata schemes with building complaints that involve the common property, and
- Assisting NDIS Participants with problems with home modifications

Casework Highlight

Our client engaged a builder to perform residential building works consisting of renovations to his existing dwelling. The client is a person of disability and lives in regional NSW.

The builder induced our client to enter into a number of work order-type contracts over a short timespan that totalled over \$20,000 in value. The builder was licensed only to carry out building works valued at less than \$20,000 (and that therefore don't require Home Building Compensation Fund Insurance.)

After the works commenced our client became aware of certain behavioural issues with the builder that strained the relationship. Our client also began having significant concerns as to the quality of the works performed. The client ended up making a complaint to NSW Fair Trading and was informed that the builder was performing unlicensed and uninsured contracting.

As a result of our client's participation in a NSW Fair Trading investigation against the builder, the builder's licence was cancelled by NSW Fair Trading.

The builder asserted that our client owed money under the contract. The builder sued our client in the Local Court for alleged unpaid progress payments totalling \$4,700. The builder also applied for an APVO against our client. The builder had thrown a nail gun at our client and then stormed off the site.

HoBAS provided legal advice to the client detailing the builder's non-compliance with the HBA.

HoBAS represented the client and successfully transferred the court proceedings to the Tribunal under s 48L HBA. HoBAS also applied to NCAT for orders that money be not owed, and for defective works. The client obtained an expert report that complied with NCAT PD 3 that identified defective works, the methods of rectification, and the costs of the methods of rectification.

Our client was given leave to be represented by HoBAS in the Tribunal and HoBAS travelled to regional NSW on three occasions and attended a directions hearing by telephone.

The builder was unrepresented and successively increased his claim from \$4,700 to over \$7,000 and finally to over \$87,000 by asserting that he had completed other works for the client. At conciliation in the Tribunal the client offered the builder \$4,700 to settle the matter, accepting that some money was owed but denying that the builder had performed anything like \$87,000 worth of unpaid work. The builder rejected the offer.

The Tribunal dismissed the builders claim, but for a payment of \$2,300.

The Tribunal made some very pointed observations about the builder's conduct of the matter and as to his credibility as a witness. The Tribunal largely accepted our client's expert report on the defective works and accepted that the contract was unenforceable because the works were uninsured. The Tribunal rejected the builder's submissions as to other work performed.

In submissions HoBAS flagged an application for costs against the builder for the cost of our client's expert report and other costs associated with the prolonged proceedings, based on:

- The clear unenforceability of the contract
- That an offer had been made that was not accepted by the builder who achieved significantly less because of the expert report of our client
- That the builder unreasonably disadvantaged our client by unnecessarily prolonging proceedings

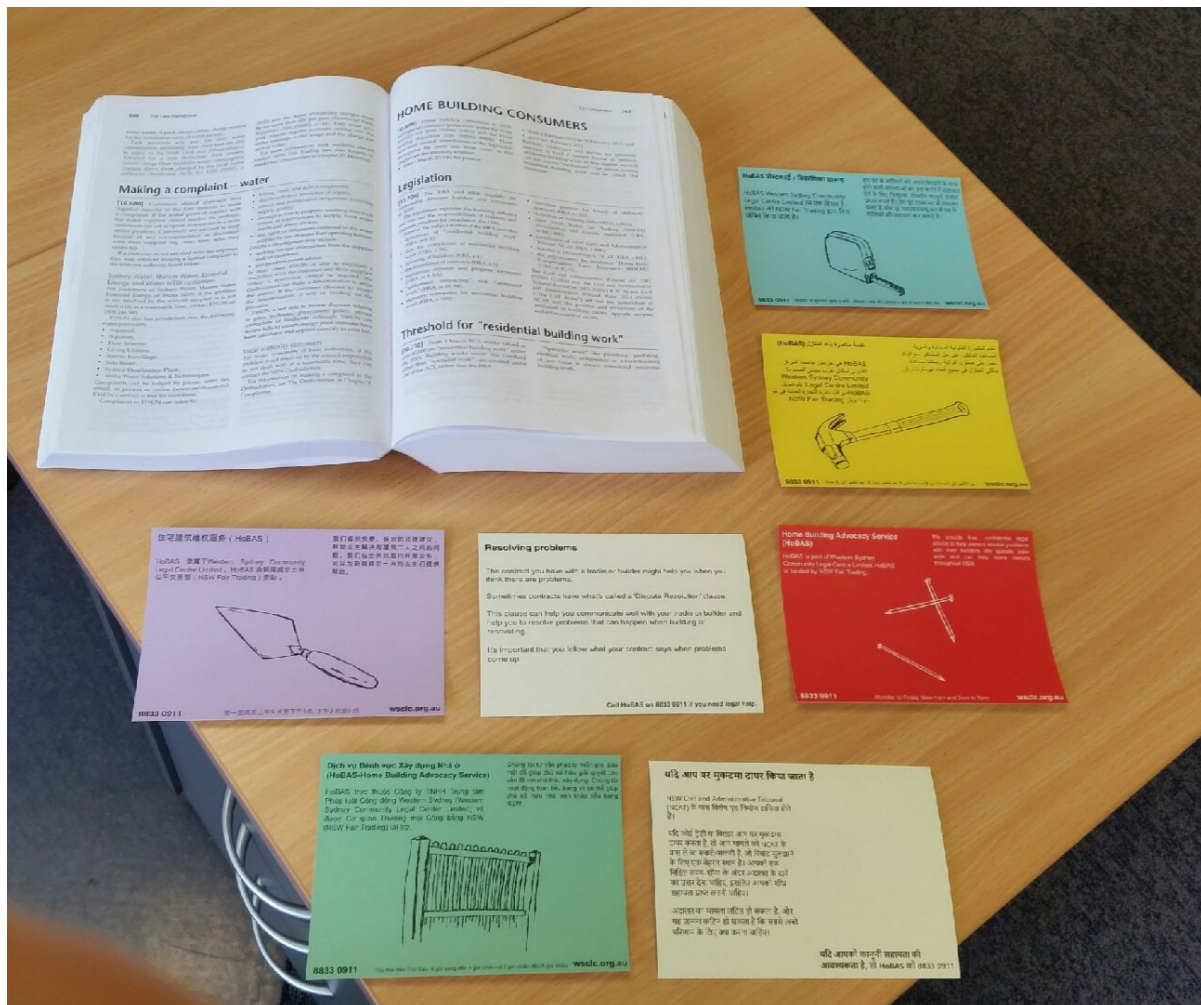
The Tribunal awarded costs against the builder. Our client is now enforcing judgment against the builder.

Community Legal Education

During the year HoBAS was invited to redraft the Home Building Law component of the Consumer Law chapter of *The Law Handbook* published by Redfern Legal Centre that is available in hard copy in bookstores and online through *Lexis Nexis*. The redraft includes more information on:

- Resolving disputes early (through the contract)
- The role of NSW Fair Trading in mediating building disputes where the builder is a licensed person

HoBAS continues to distribute the home building postcards in Arabic, English, Hindi, Simplified Chinese and Vietnamese to community legal centres throughout NSW and to multicultural community groups.



Social Justice Arm

Western Sydney Tenants' Advice and Advocacy Service (WESTS)



No's in Our Team

WESTS team consists of:

One Coordinator

One Senior Advocate

Four- Full time advocates Three- Part time advocates

Two- Intake Officers who share the role.



Funded By

WESTS is funded by NSW Fair Trading.

Program Targets

WESTS provide free, confidential tenancy advice and advocacy to residential tenants, boarding house residents, people living in land lease communities, social and community housing tenants and other renters in our catchment area.

WESTS also cater for tenants from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, low-income earners, social and community housing tenants and/or those with a disability. WESTS use interpreters, face-to-face appointments, communicate to Real Estate Agents or social or community Housing providers on the tenants' behalf as well as attend meetings when necessary.

Supports Within Program

WESTS provide telephone or face-to-face advice, referrals, community education sessions, duty advocacy and assistance in preparation for and in some cases represent clients at the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT).

Early 2020 WESTS relocated their outreach office in Penrith to the Community Connections Building, three days a week, Tuesday to Thursday, to cater for our clients in the Penrith/Hawkesbury region. By being present in the Penrith area we are able to service the Tribunal and service our outreach office.

External Partnerships

WESTS maintain connections with service providers within the Community Connections Building in Penrith.

WESTS continue to maintain a strong relationship with local NCAT registry and Social and Community Housing providers.

WESTS uphold close relationships with local councils by attending regular interagency meetings covering Auburn, Parramatta, The Hills Shire District, Blacktown to Hawkesbury etc.

WESTS facilitate regular community education sessions through service providers, with sessions tailored to either staff members or clients.

WESTS attend major events every year so we are able to connect with diverse groups of people; some events include NAIDOC (Parramatta and Penrith), Western Sydney Homeless Connect and the Doonside Public School Community Expo. Show bags are prepared and about 300-500 are distributed to clients at each event.

WESTS work closely with the Tenants' Union to keep resources updated and promote our service and provide updates on key changes for their website.

WESTS regularly send out brochures and posters to various service providers within our catchment area in order to keep them up to date with our service operating hours and contact details.

Impact Upon Clients Assisted

Statistics show:

- 80.54% of positive resolution rate where our assistance was offered to clients.
- 93.85% of clients showed improved understanding of tenancy law after contact with our service.

Highlights

Western Sydney Homeless Connect- Parramatta Community Event – This was a successful event we were a part of with over 4000 attendees. WESTS prepared and distributed over 450 show bags and connected with even more people who were provided with tenancy information and referrals.

NADIOC Penrith – With thousands of attendees and once again hundreds of show bags distributed. WESTS were able to promote and reach clients from all different backgrounds and areas.



COVID-19 (WESTS)

Following Government and Management directions WESTS had to stop face-to-face appointments, duty advocacy and attending interagency meetings and education sessions in person.

However, we maintain our proactive approach and facilitate duty advocacy and our presence in meetings either by telephone or online.

Since March 2020 over 338 clients have made contact with our service being directly impacted by COVID-19.

WESTS have found an increase in calls from clients that were financially impacted by COVID-19 or their Landlords initiated termination proceedings. Clients have found it difficult to negotiate with their landlords to extend vacating dates and they financially struggled to gather money for moving or bond to secure a new tenancy.

It was found that not many tenants would escalate their repair matters to the Tribunal as they did not want to risk adverse action from the landlord, for example termination.

Parramatta Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (PWDVCAS)



No's in Our Team

10 staff



Funded By

Legal Aid through the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program (WDVCAP) Unit.

Program Targets

We assist female victims of Domestic and Family Violence.

Supports Within Your Program

We provide advice, social supports and court supports each week at Parramatta, Burwood and Fairfield Local Courts.

External Partnerships

WesNet – Provide mobile with \$30 credit to be issued to women who need them, free of charge.

COVID-19 (PWDVCAS)

Having staff work from home is slightly impacting on the flow of our work. However, we have made a lot of necessary changes to ensure that the core work that is required by our Funding Body is up-to-date and the provision of client services continues to be carried out in a professional and timely manner.

Family Advocacy and Support Service (FASS)

No's of Your Team

2 staff



Funded By

Federal Government, Funding allocated by Legal Aid through Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program (WDVCAP) Unit

Program Targets

We assist women who have experienced domestic and family violence and are involved in Family Court proceedings.

Supports Within Your Program

We provide social supports and court supports.

External Partnerships

DV Unit through Legal Aid. The FASS team refer clients to the specialist lawyers of the DV Unit.

Impact Upon Clients Assisted

We provide front line assistance and have supported many clients applying for financial assistance from Victims Services and we receive positive feedback from them when they receive the funds.

COVID-19 (FASS)

Working from home during COVID19 has eliminated the face-to-face support that was provided to client daily. However, we still to receive a lot of referrals to the program and women continue to engage with our service.

Children's Court Assistance Scheme (CCAS)



No's in Our Team

Stan Small – Coordinator

Jessica Mitchell – Support worker

Anne Gillian – Support worker

Funded By

CCAS is funded through the CLSP funding.

Program Targets

The targets for CCAS are young people attending the Children's Courts at Parramatta and Surry Hills. The Children's Court Assistance Scheme was commenced as a project of Macquarie Legal Centre in 1995. The scheme was started after a need's analysis of the support services that were offered to young people attending the Children's Court on criminal matters in Sydney.

Support Within Program

The model of service provision for the Children's Court Assistance Scheme is based around a youth worker model of engaging and rapport building. In the Children's Court these points of contact can be identified as initial contact and ongoing contact. Both these kinds of contacts rely on a relational approach to meeting people. The courthouse provides an ideal meeting place where these relationships can be established. CCAS is the first point of contact for people entering the Children's Court for criminal matters and Apprehended Violence Orders. At this point CCAS performs a shopfront role for the court. Young people and their families are signed in and checked off on a list of people expected to attend the court on that day. CCAS will then inform relevant parties of the young person's attendance. This will usually be either Children's Legal Service (Legal Aid), Aboriginal Legal Service or Youth Justice. CCAS will then assist young people, if needed, in filling out a legal aid application and informing the relevant parties who is in attendance at court.

CCAS has time to be able to spend with young people to find out if there are other needs that the young person may have. Immediate needs may include issues such as information about court processes (which can do a lot to calm a person), accommodation, information about a course or explaining the benefits of mediation for an AVO matter.

When a young person has an established relationship with CCAS, ongoing needs can be assessed, and the young person offered various levels of case management. Each young person will be assessed individually, and the case management can be offered depending upon their individual needs.

External Partnerships

CCAS has always been involved with a high degree of community engagement. This goes back to the original ethos of the organisation connecting with many youth services and associated community groups to support the work of the scheme. The community services involved throughout the history of CCAS include government and non-government services. Many of these services have taken an active role in the Children's Court.

These include Centrelink, Department of Education, Family and Community Services, Youth Justice etc. Many non-government services such as Anglicare, Barnardos, Marist, Open Family, Ted Noffs etc have also been involved.

Client Feedback

CCAS does not do “Client feedback surveys” as such. However, we constantly receive positive verbal feedback about the services we offer.

Many young people comment on how they feel valued and accepted by the CCAS workers. The CCAS offices in the courts often resemble “drop-in” spaces at a youth centre. The relationships that are established often go on for years as the young people grow up and their siblings become a part of the cohort. So we find it is not just a service that they comment on but a relationship. This has expanded in recent years to include community case management.

Stakeholder Feedback

Many of the stakeholders in the courts have commented on how CCAS helps the court function efficiently. These include the court staff, Legal Aid solicitors, Aboriginal Legal Service, the Police etc. The facilitation model CCAS operates by assists all courthouse users to be efficient.

Additional Highlights

During 2019 a plan was discussed to organize an OzTag team for young people from the court who live in the Mount Druitt area. This was to start in April 2020. Many young people signed up very quickly and expressed their interest in any kind of footy. Jessica Mitchell organized this team in partnership with many other stakeholders in the Children’s Court and community.

Due to COVID 19 restrictions the comp was not able to start in April and was started later in the year. It was a great success. More details will be in next year’s Annual Report.

A great many requests for welfare support came from this activity.



COVID-19 (CCAS)

COVID 19 has affected CCAS significantly. At the end of March 2020 CCAS decided to stop attending court until COVID 19 infections settled down. This was consistent with many other stakeholders at court. Weekly assessments were undertaken to see when CCAS would return. CCAS worker worked from home until the end of August when the decision was made to return. A COVID 19 return to work plan was submitted to WSCLC including safe working measures.

It should be noted that the statistics for the 12 months stated above do not include April, May or June 2020. Annual statistics are usually proportionally higher than these.

Youth Education Program (YEP)

No's in Our Team

1 Youth Legal Education

1 Assistant

The Youth Education Project (YEP) provides education, training and resources to young people and those who work with young people, with a specific emphasis on young people and pregnant and parenting young people aged under 20, within the Cumberland and Parramatta Local Government Areas.

YEP aims to educate young people about issues that affect them through interactive training sessions and workshops.

This past year has been a challenging one in many respects. YEP is funded by the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) and this year, DCJ implemented their Targeted Earlier Intervention (TEI) funding program. This has meant positive changes to the way in which funded services operate and report. The TEI program aims to provide services to people in need earlier by being flexible and responsive to make the biggest difference.

The emergence of Covid-19 in early 2020 impacted greatly on the way in which we can deliver services and has meant we have all had to adapt.

YEP conducted community legal education (CLE) sessions to young people through:

- Evolve Housing for Youth (one session);
- Parramatta Mission (one session);
- Red Cross Young Parents Program (one session).

Complexities have arisen in delivering education sessions via traditional (ie face to face) means due to COVID and YEP is working hard to meet those challenges and offer education by alternate means.

YEP is conducting research and consultation to further understand the needs

YEP has developed workshops and power point presentations around a range of issues impacting on young people, including COVID and police powers.
of young people in Western Sydney.

We have participated in a number of inter-agencies and Networks including:

- Youth Justice Coalition Meetings,
- the Cumberland Youth Interagency (CYI),
- CLCNSW Quarterlies,
- Cumberland Linker Network Meetings.

Central West Contact Service (CWCS)



No's in Our Team

1 Manager
1 Assistant Manager
2 Part time Admin Workers
6 Casual Supervisors

Funded By

CWCS is partially funded by Federal Attorneys General Department and this funding is dispersed through Department of Social Services. This funding covers partial costs of the service. CWCS requires all clients to pay a service to utilise the services it offers.

Program Targets

The target group for CWCS is families who are subject to court orders either through Federal Circuit Court of Australia or Family Court of Australia. CWCS provides services to vulnerable groups within society where there are serious allegations of family violence, child abuse, drug and alcohol issues and mental health. CWCS also works with families where there are concerns in relation to child abductions.

Supports Within Program

CWCS provides supervised contact of 2 hours a fortnight where parents who are subject to court orders requiring supervised contact can spend time with their children in a safe, secure and family friendly environment. CWCS also offers a change back service for families where court orders require a third party to intervene in order for the children to not be subject to conflict between the parties. Where CWCS identifies need for further support such as parenting courses or counselling parties are referred to external services.

External Partnerships

CWCS receives pro bono legal advice from Syd West Family Lawyers. CWCS also has working partnerships with services such as:

- Relationships Australia
- Anglicare
- Catholic Care
- Uniting Care to refer clients to for assistance in Course and Counselling.

COVID-19 (CWCS)

COVID has had a significant impact on CWCS resulting in the centre having to cease supervised contacts for a period of 2-3 months. Some supervised contacts continued to be delivered via Supervised Zoom Sessions, but this proved problematic for the little children who do not have the concentration ability to sit and communicate via Zoom for a period of time.

Zoom largely resulted on a decrease in the statistics of services provided by CWCS as they were placed on hold. During this time, it meant that many children were not able to spend time with their non-residential parents.

CWCS have had to introduce a number of measures in order to accommodate for COVID-19. CWCS staff now temperature check all clients, staff and clients are required to mask and sanitise

their hands and families are now confined to single rooms and the outdoor area instead of having the flexibility to utilise the whole house.

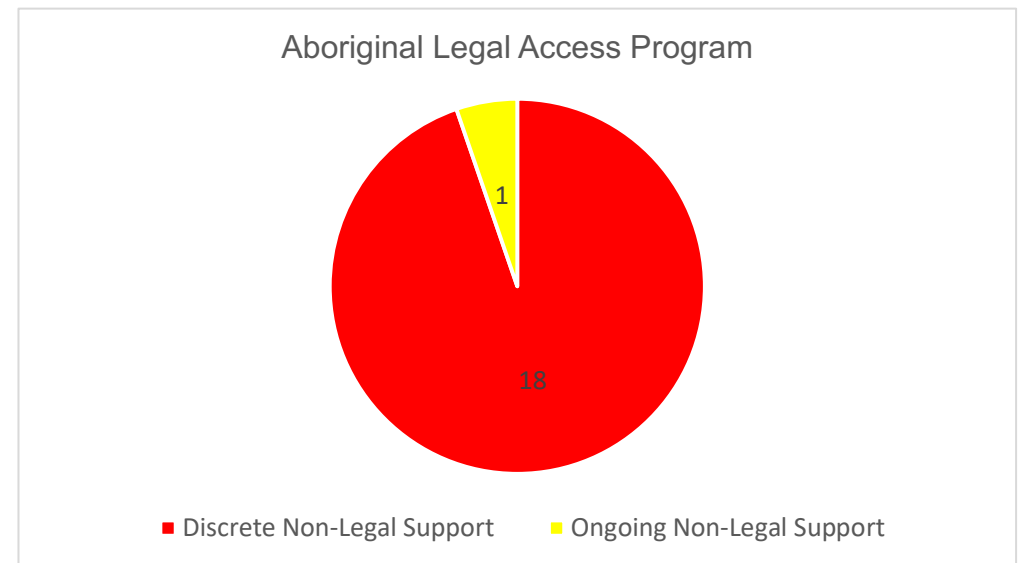
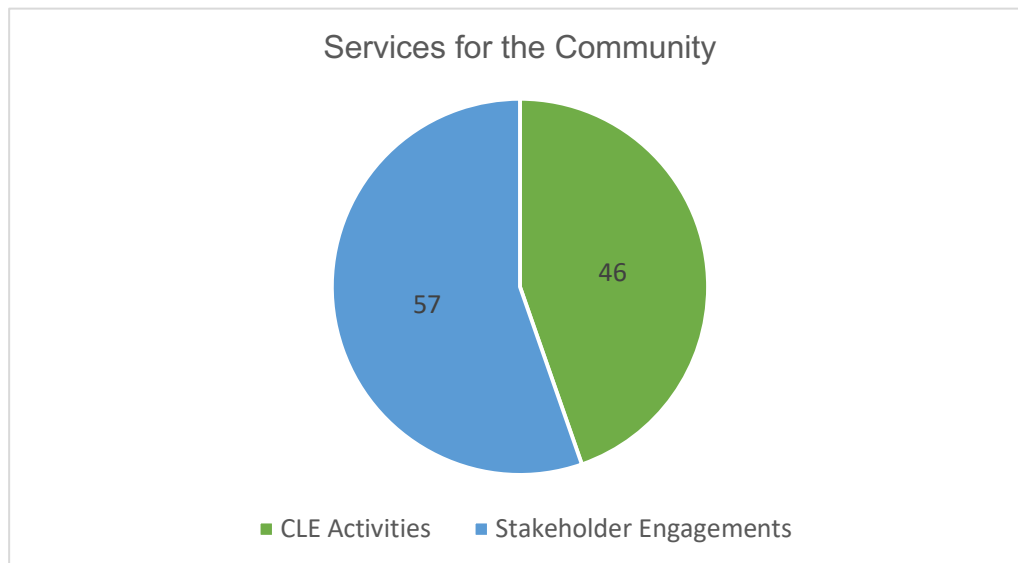
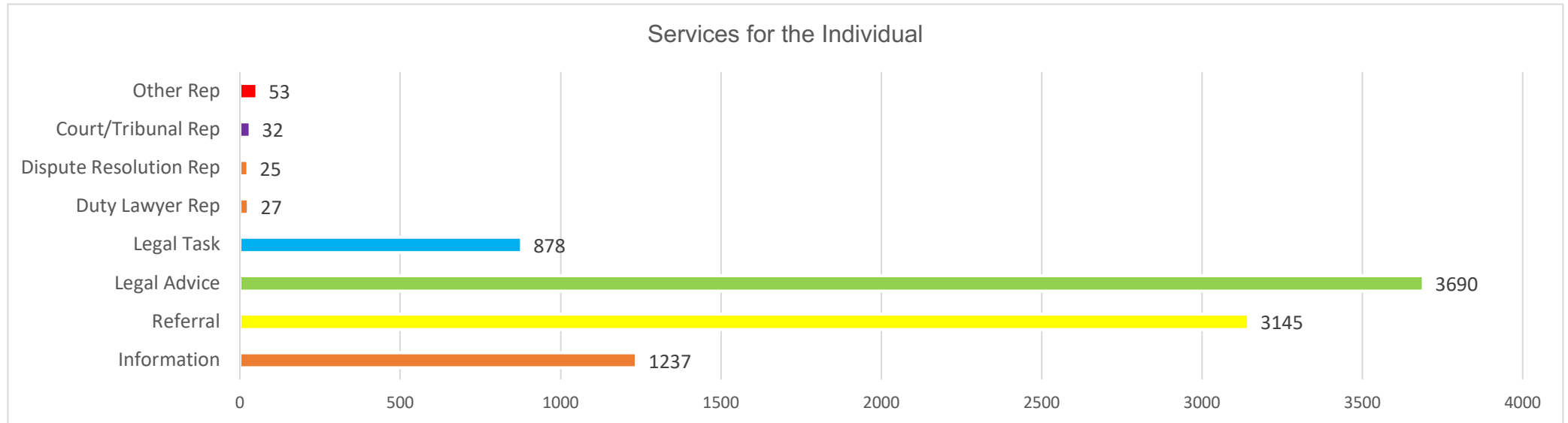
CWCS main catchment area for clients is Western Sydney and South Western Sydney which has been largely impacted as these are the main areas where NSW has experienced COVID clusters and continues to do so.



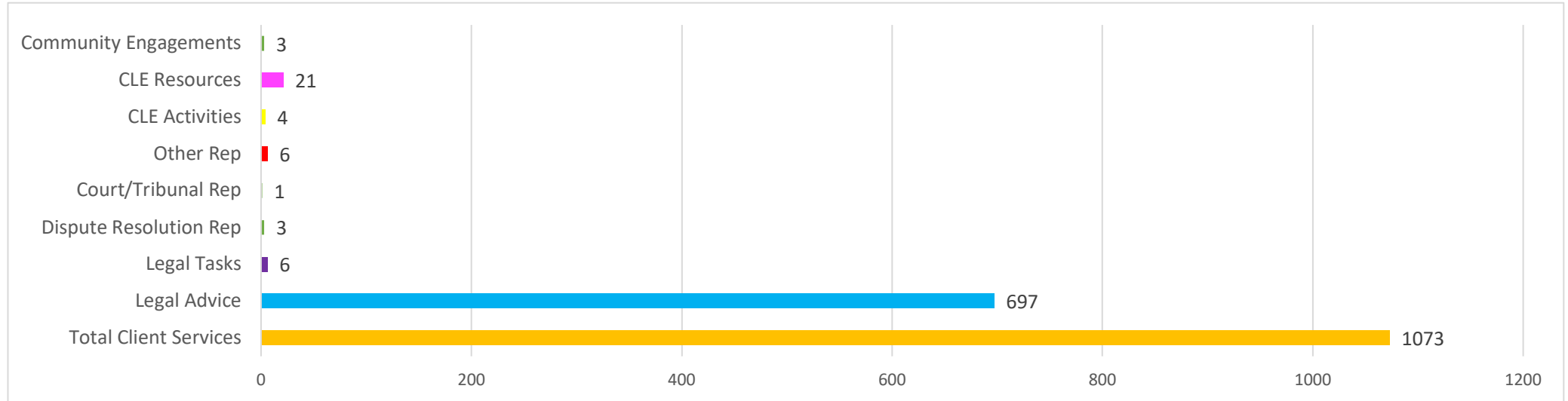
Visit from The Hon. Chris Bowen MP, Member for McMahon

Clients Assisted 2019-20

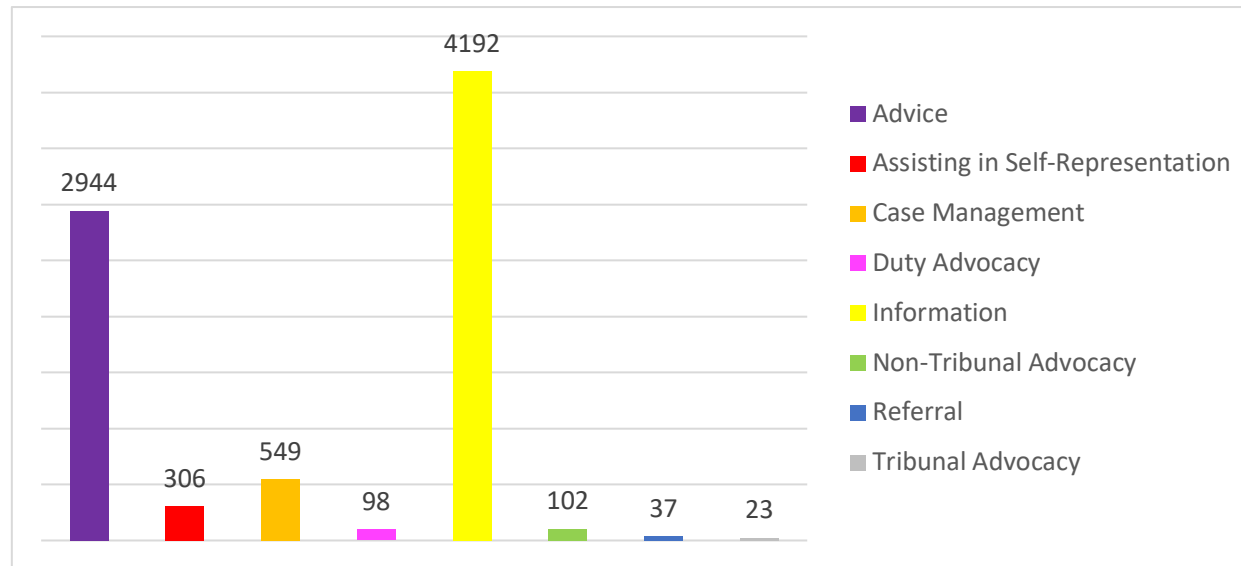
Community Legal Services Program



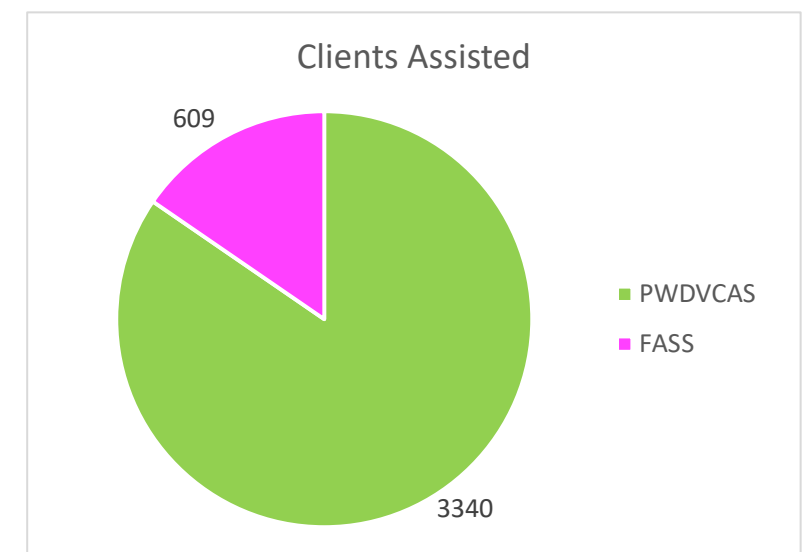
Home Building Advocacy Service



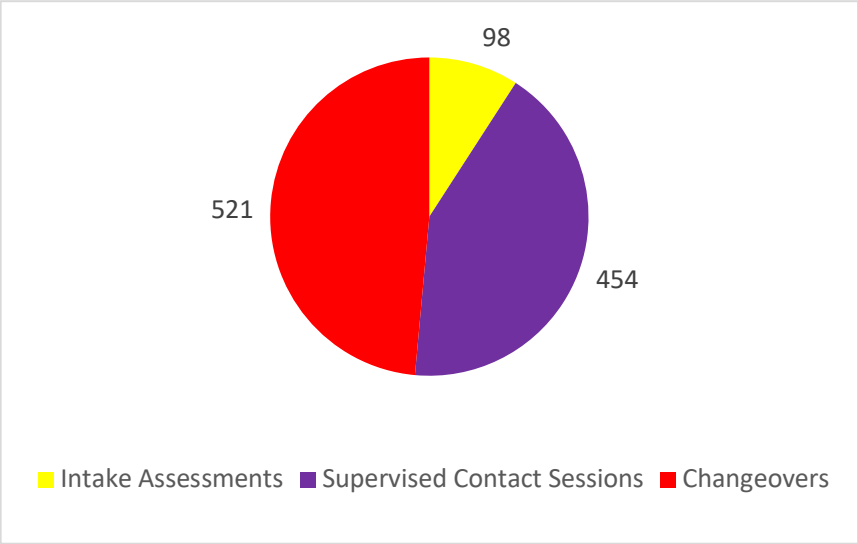
Western Sydney Tenant's Service



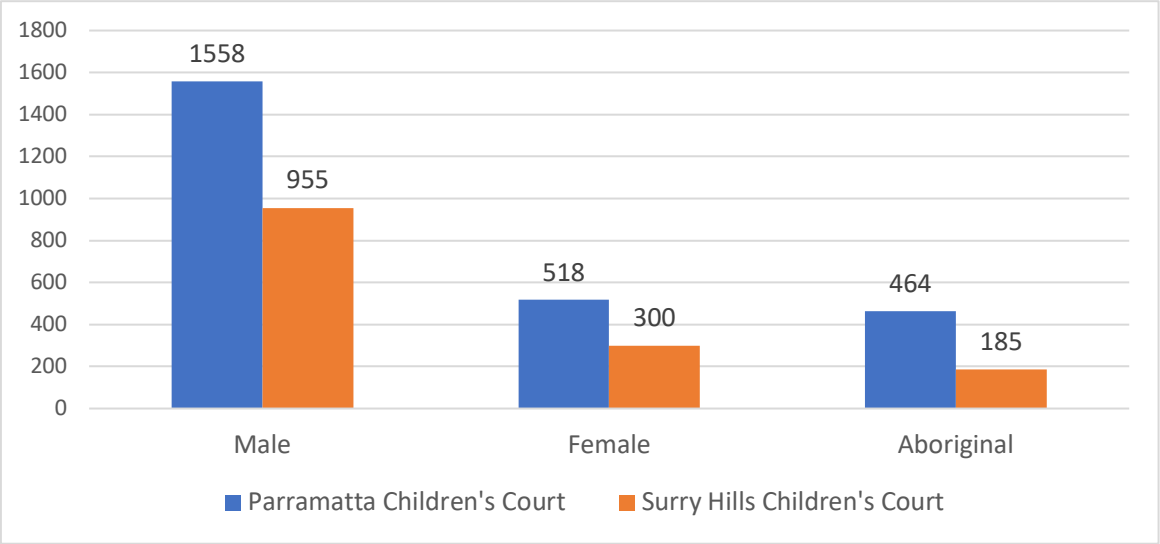
Women's Domestic Violence Services



Central West Contact Service



Children’s Court Assistance Scheme



Audited Financial Statements 2019-20

Western Sydney Community Legal Centre Limited Directors' declaration 30 June 2020

In the directors' opinion:

- the attached financial statements and notes comply with the Corporations Act 2001, the Australian Accounting Standards - Reduced Disclosure Requirements, the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and New South Wales legislation the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 and associated regulations, the Corporations Regulations 2001 and other mandatory professional reporting requirements;
- the attached financial statements and notes give a true and fair view of the company's financial position as at 30 June 2020 and of its performance for the financial year ended on that date; and
- there are reasonable grounds to believe that the company will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of directors made pursuant to section 295(5)(a) of the Corporations Act 2001.

On behalf of the directors



Helen Bouropoulos
Chairperson

25 October 2020



Jessica Tanna
Secretary

Western Sydney Community Legal Centre Limited
Statement of comprehensive income
For the year ended 30 June 2020

	Note	2020 \$	2019 \$
Revenue	4	5,307,971	5,091,812
Interest revenue calculated using the effective interest method		9,430	9,761
Government stimulus		100,000	-
Expenses			
Administration expenses		(496,881)	(702,425)
Employee benefits expense		(4,464,996)	(4,770,664)
Depreciation and amortisation expense		(222,258)	(16,813)
Other expenses		(12,994)	(613)
Surplus/(deficit) for the year attributable to the directors of Western Sydney Community Legal Centre Limited		220,272	(388,942)
Other comprehensive income for the year		-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year attributable to the directors of Western Sydney Community Legal Centre Limited		<u>220,272</u>	<u>(388,942)</u>

Western Sydney Community Legal Centre Limited
Statement of financial position
As at 30 June 2020

	Note	2020 \$	2019 \$
Assets			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	6	1,325,154	1,138,054
Trade and other receivables	7	55,226	1,713
Investments	8	465,886	464,928
Other assets	9	40,179	25,231
Total current assets		<u>1,886,445</u>	<u>1,629,926</u>
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	10	64,378	79,273
Right-of-use assets	11	476,780	-
Total non-current assets		<u>541,158</u>	<u>79,273</u>
Total assets		<u>2,427,603</u>	<u>1,709,199</u>
Liabilities			
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	12	281,876	228,323
Lease liabilities	13	148,839	-
Employee benefits	14	694,585	636,952
Deferred revenue		256,506	408,258
Total current liabilities		<u>1,381,806</u>	<u>1,273,533</u>
Non-current liabilities			
Lease liabilities	15	363,294	-
Employee benefits	16	116,257	89,692
Total non-current liabilities		<u>479,551</u>	<u>89,692</u>
Total liabilities		<u>1,861,357</u>	<u>1,363,225</u>
Net assets		<u>566,246</u>	<u>345,974</u>
Equity			
Retained surpluses		<u>566,246</u>	<u>345,974</u>
Total equity		<u>566,246</u>	<u>345,974</u>

Western Sydney Community Legal Centre Limited
Statement of changes in equity
For the year ended 30 June 2020

	Retained surpluses \$	Total equity \$
Balance at 1 July 2018	734,916	734,916
Deficit for the year	(388,942)	(388,942)
Other comprehensive income for the year	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	(388,942)	(388,942)
Balance at 30 June 2019	<u>345,974</u>	<u>345,974</u>
	Retained surpluses \$	Total equity \$
Balance at 1 July 2019	345,974	345,974
Surplus for the year	220,272	220,272
Other comprehensive income for the year	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	<u>220,272</u>	<u>220,272</u>
Balance at 30 June 2020	<u>566,246</u>	<u>566,246</u>

Western Sydney Community Legal Centre Limited
Statement of cash flows
For the year ended 30 June 2020

	Note	2020 \$	2019 \$
Cash flows from operating activities			
Receipts from grants and clients		5,693,504	5,278,850
Payments to suppliers and employees (inclusive of GST)		<u>(5,310,673)</u>	<u>(5,920,720)</u>
Interest received		<u>382,831</u> <u>9,430</u>	<u>(641,870)</u> <u>9,761</u>
Net cash from/(used in) operating activities		<u>392,261</u>	<u>(632,109)</u>
Cash flows from investing activities			
Payments for property, plant and equipment		(46,336)	(27,483)
Net decrease/(increase) in term deposits		<u>(958)</u>	<u>(400,000)</u>
Net cash used in investing activities		<u>(47,294)</u>	<u>(427,483)</u>
Cash flows from financing activities			
Repayment of lease liabilities		<u>(157,867)</u>	<u>-</u>
Net cash used in financing activities		<u>(157,867)</u>	<u>-</u>
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		187,100	(1,059,592)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year		<u>1,138,054</u>	<u>2,197,646</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	6	<u><u>1,325,154</u></u>	<u><u>1,138,054</u></u>

Western Sydney Community Legal Centre

Independent Auditor's Report to Members

Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

Opinion

We have audited the financial report of Western Sydney Community Legal Centre Limited (the Company), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2020, the statement of comprehensive income, the statement of changes in equity and the statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the directors' declaration.

In our opinion the financial report of Western Sydney Community Legal Centre Limited has been prepared in accordance with Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, including:

- a) Giving a true and fair view of WSCLC's financial position as at 30 June 2020 and of its financial performance for the year then ended; and
- b) Complying with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 2, and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013*.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. We are independent of WSCLC in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* (ACNC Act) and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's *APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Emphasis of Matter – Basis of Accounting

We draw attention to Note 2, to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling WSCLC's financial reporting responsibilities under the ACNC Act. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

ACCOUNTANTS & ADVISORS

Sydney Office
Level 29, 66 Goulburn Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Parramatta Office
Level 7, 3 Horwood Place
Parramatta NSW 2150

Telephone: +61 2 8263 4000
williambuck.com

Responsibilities of the Directors for the Financial Report

The directors of WSCLC are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and have determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 2 to the financial report is appropriate to meet the requirements of the ACNC Act and the needs of the members. The directors' responsibility also includes such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the directors are responsible for assessing WSCLC's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the directors either intend to liquidate WSCLC or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

The Directors are responsible for overseeing WSCLC's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of these financial statements is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website at:

<http://www.auasb.gov.au/Pronouncements/Australian-Auditing-Standards/Auditors-Responsibilities.aspx>

This description forms part of our independent auditor's report.



William Buck
Chartered Accountants
ABN 16 021 300 521



Michele Nevill
Partner

Sydney, 25 October 2020

List of Staff and Volunteers 2019-20

Alexandra Payne-Baggs	Mariam Rifai
Alice Wheatley	Mariecar Capili
Alicia Sohail	Megan Daniels
Andrea Rodrigues	Megan Tran
Andrea Smit	Michael Kovac
Anne Gillian	Michelle Ericoli
Arjun Lamna	Miri Rakoia-Masters
Barbara Gosche	Nawal Wehbe
Bernard Muchemwa	Neal Bent
Blake Bowerman	Nicholas Comino
Caitlin Comensoli	Nick Sabel
Clare Mangiokas	Oliver Ibbotson
Corinne Kew	Oloa Savaiinaea
Emily Wong	Peter Longfield
Emma Stillitano	Pia Gonzalez
Erin Keogh	Rachael Dawud
Feras Suwan	Rachel Kite
Fern Hoang	Raymond Finch
Francesco Terranova	Rebecca Anava
Franya Repolusk	Rebecca Gyles
Gabriella Ponzio	Reece Nuttall
Gladys Amal	Rita Barrett
Gladys Andrea Regalado	Rosemary Davies
Hannah-Joy Gillard	Roya Aran
Harry Halliday	Ruby Au-Yeung
Hemal Perera	Sabna Balan
Ivana Haseb	Sam Marsh
James Minshall	Samiha Alameddine
Jamie-Lee Phillips	Samir Pokharel
Janette Icao	Shannon Pendreigh
Jesse Skiller	Stan Small
Jessica Mitchell (Brown)	Stephanie Van
Joanne Rudd	Susannah Coles
Julia Horton	Swati Ghai
Karen Rose	Tamara Bailey
Kate Barbagallo	Teresa Rubio
Kim Berry	Theresa Haines
Leah Cruickshank	Vanita Vekaria
Lizzie Wong	Veselko Cuic
Louise Coady	Vivian Michael
Lynelle Newman	Wendy Lines
Lyntette Taylor	Zac Zielinski