

# NSW migrants' unmet legal needs

A report by MOSAIC (Justice Connect) and Redfern Legal Centre

Research shows that recently arrived migrants in NSW have a high volume of unmet legal needs, and experience special vulnerabilities in their interactions with the legal system.

In particular, research reveals a demand for assistance with civil law problems amongst the new migrant community.

Recently arrived migrants commonly face difficulties accessing legal help. Common barriers to assistance include limited English language proficiency, limited financial resources, lack of understanding of the Australian legal system, lack of access to interpreters, a fear of authority, mental health issues and lack of awareness about where to seek assistance.

New migrants are particularly vulnerable to the predatory behaviour of some businesses and organisations that exploit new migrants' poor knowledge of their legal rights.

Targeted legal services for new migrants have the potential to be a source of valuable support for this community.

In response to increased demand for legal services amongst this community, Justice Connect and Redfern Legal Centre (RLC) have developed programs to assist new migrants to resolve civil law issues.

Targeted services such as those provided by MOSAIC and RLC are also well-placed to identify emerging legal issues amongst new migrant communities, and to advocate for law reform to address systemic legal issues.

Generally, new migrants are aware of the availability of assistance to resolve migration and criminal law issues. However, they remain unaware of the availability of legal services that can assist with other common legal issues such as tenancy, employment, consumer, fines and credit/debt issues.

Increasing new migrants' awareness of targeted legal services that can assist with these types of issues is critical to addressing the unmet legal needs of this community.

Both MOSAIC and RLC are working to improve new migrants' awareness of targeted legal services through innovative marketing. This includes the development of new multilingual training videos and fact sheets and the delivery of community education. Yet these measures alone are insufficient to meet the legal needs of new migrants.

MOSAIC and RLC are both working to address the ongoing challenge of raising new migrants' awareness of available legal services that can assist them with civil law issues.

## In 2014, MOSAIC provided



**210** clients with legal advice



**135** clients with ongoing advice and case work



**150** case workers, support workers, refugees and new migrants with training

## In 2014, Redfern Legal Centre provided



**262** clients with legal advice



**118** clients with ongoing advice and case work



**100** case workers and support workers with training



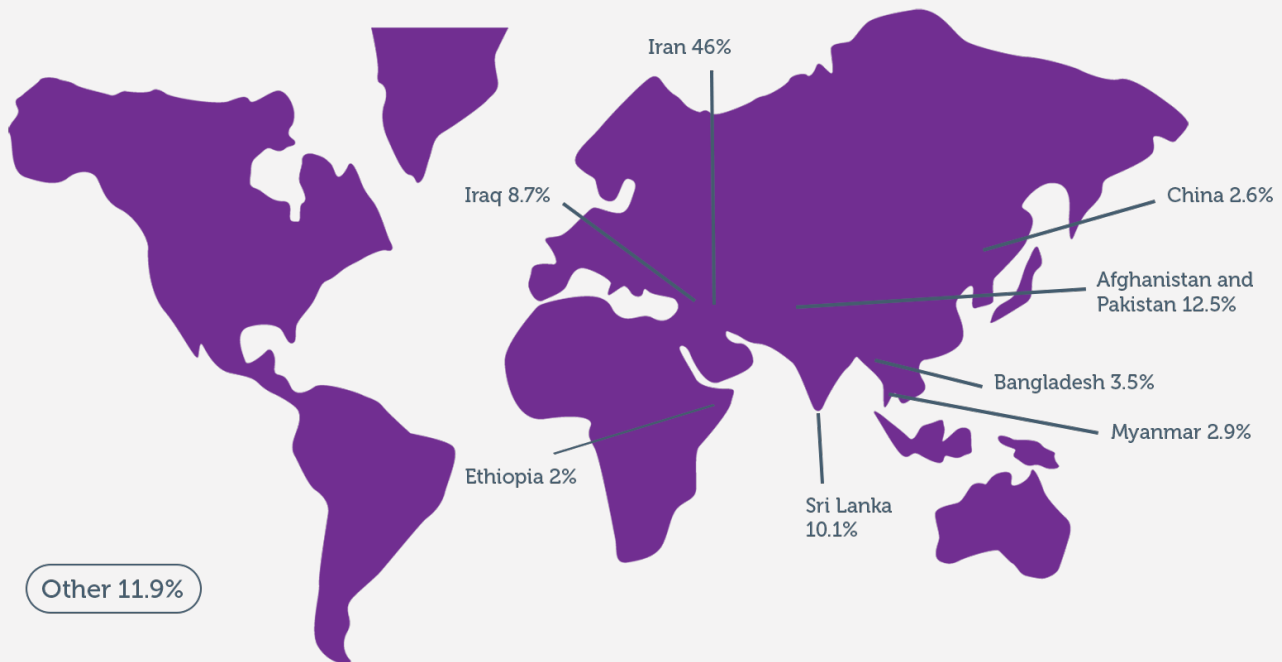
Redfern Legal Centre

justice  
connect  
MOSAIC



# Justice Connect MOSAIC

## clients' country of origin

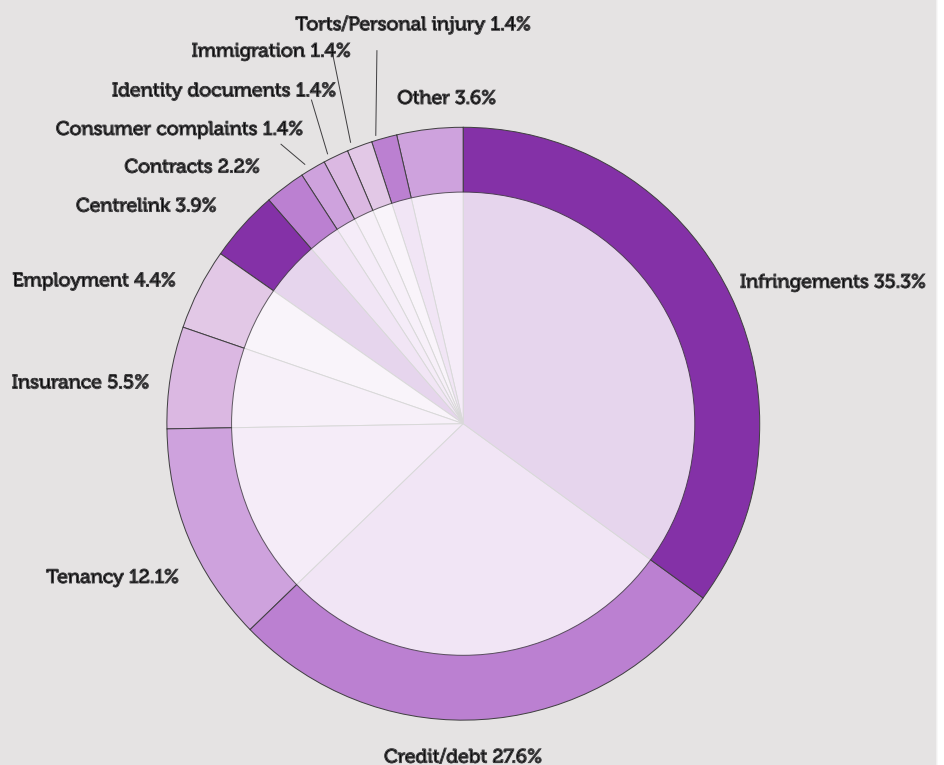


Justice Connect delivers access to justice through pro bono legal services to people experiencing disadvantage and the community organisations that support them. We partner with pro bono lawyers to provide legal advice, assistance and education to disadvantaged people and not-for-profit community organisations.

MOSAIC (Migrant Outreach Services; Advice, Information, Community Education) is a program of Justice Connect that has been using pro bono lawyers to provide free legal outreach services to asylum seekers, refugees and recently arrived migrants in NSW since July 2013.

MOSAIC is a generalist service providing clients with advice in relation to civil law issues such as fines, credit and debt, tenancy, social security entitlements, car accidents, and discrimination. MOSAIC also undertakes community legal education for caseworkers, community organisations and individuals as well as policy and law reform.

## clients' type of legal issue



# Redfern Legal Centre

## International Students Service

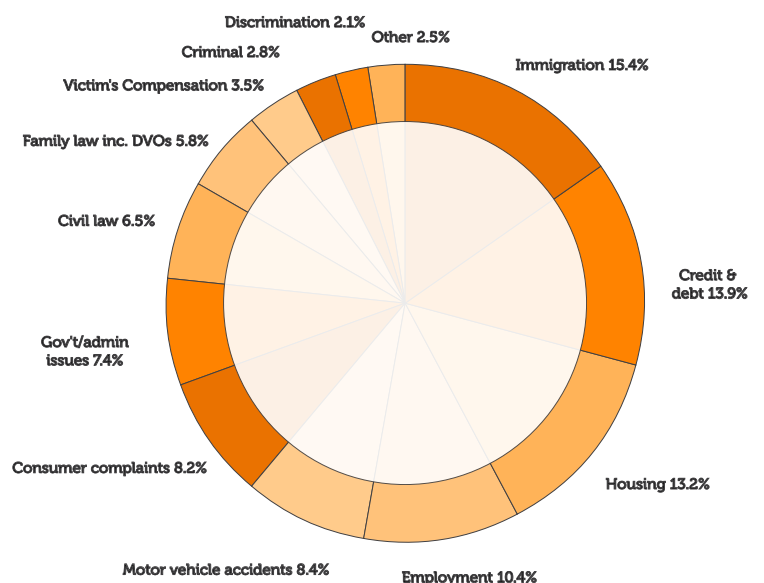
Redfern Legal Centre (RLC) is an independent, non-profit and community based legal organisation. It is the oldest legal centre in NSW. RLC has a particular focus on human rights and social justice.

The RLC International Student Service provides legal advice in the areas of housing, employment, consumer, credit and debt, discrimination, domestic violence, family law, complaints about education providers and student visa compliance to students across NSW.

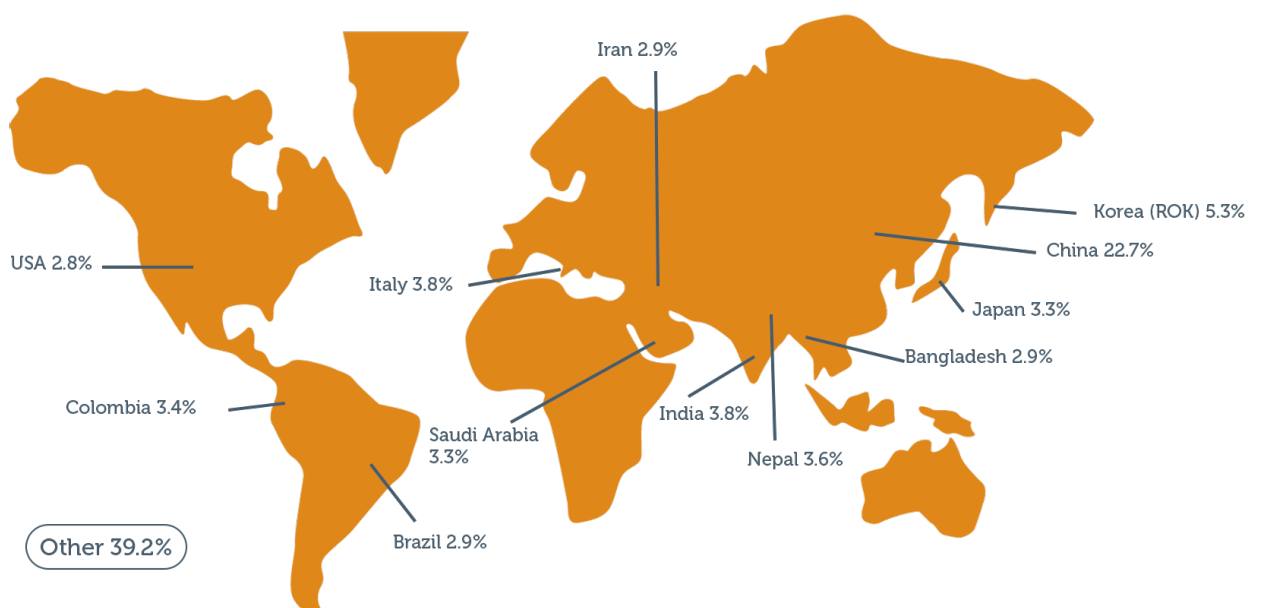
The service provides legal education to case workers and students about common issues facing students. The service also carries out targeted casework advocacy and works to reform unfair laws and practices that effect international students.

It is a free, confidential, state wide service which operates each Wednesday evening from 6:30pm at RLC offices in Redfern. Appointments can be done face to face, by telephone or through video conferencing.

### clients' type of legal issue



### clients' country of origin





Redfern Legal Centre

Redfern Legal Centre

Redfern Town Hall, 73 Pitt Street, Redfern NSW 2016

General line (02) 9698 7277

Inner Sydney Tenants' Advice and Advocacy Service (02) 9698 5975

International Student Advice Line (02) 9698 7645

[rlc.org.au](http://rlc.org.au)

## Resources and further reading

Fined Out - ICLC & Legal Aid NSW

[iclc.org.au/finedout](http://iclc.org.au/finedout)

Law Assist – debts & small claims

[lawassist.lawaccess.nsw.gov.au/lawassist/](http://lawassist.lawaccess.nsw.gov.au/lawassist/)

I can't pay my phone debt - Financial Rights Legal Centre

[financialrights.org.au/fact-sheet/](http://financialrights.org.au/fact-sheet/)

Redfern Legal Centre's "Share Housing Survival Guide"

[sharehousing.org/](http://sharehousing.org/)

Tenants Union of NSW Tenants' rights manual

[legalanswers.sl.nsw.gov.au/guides/tenants\\_rights\\_manual/](http://legalanswers.sl.nsw.gov.au/guides/tenants_rights_manual/)

Fair Work Commission fact sheets

[fwc.gov.au/about-us/resources/fact-sheets-guides](http://fwc.gov.au/about-us/resources/fact-sheets-guides)

Fair Work Ombudsman - Starting a new job guide

[fairwork.gov.au/about-us/policies-and-guides/best-practice-guides/a-guide-for-young-workers](http://fairwork.gov.au/about-us/policies-and-guides/best-practice-guides/a-guide-for-young-workers)

The Legal Handbook

[legalanswers.sl.nsw.gov.au/guides/law\\_handbook/index.html](http://legalanswers.sl.nsw.gov.au/guides/law_handbook/index.html)

Justice Connect and Redfern Legal Centre acknowledge the support of the City of Sydney in producing this report.

**CITY OF SYDNEY**



GPO Box 863  
Sydney NSW 2001  
DX 78 Sydney

Tel +61 2 8599 2101  
Fax +61 2 9114 1792

ABN 54 206 789 276

[justiceconnect.org.au](http://justiceconnect.org.au)