

Redfern Legal Centre

Annual Report 1999/2000

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Redfern NSW 2016

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Redfern Legal Centre offers free legal advice to disadvantaged people who live and work in the South Sydney area. You can contact us through an interpreter by ringing the Telephone Interpreter Service on 131 450. Ask the interpreter to contact us on 9698 7277 between 9am and 6pm, Monday to Friday.

يسكنون ويعملون مركز ردفرن القانوني يقدم استشارة قانونية مجانية للأشخاص الغير قادرين في منطقة سدني الجنوبية . يمكنكم الاتصال بنا عن طريق مترجم الذين بالاتصال بمركز خدمة الترجمة على الرقم ١٣١٤٥٠ . الرجاء الطلب من المترجم ان يتصل بنا على الرقم ٩٦٩٨٧٢٧٧ بين الساعة ٩ صباحا والساعة ٦ مساء، من الاثنين حتى الجمعة.

Redfern法律中心为在悉尼南区生活和工作的人提供免费的法律咨询.您可以拨打电话传译服务131450,通过传译员与我们联系.请传译员于每星期一至星期五上午9:00到下午6:00通过电话96987277与我们联系.

To Νομικό Κέντρο του Redfern [Redfern Legal Centre] προσφέρει δωρεάν νομικές συμβουλές σε άτομα που βρίσκονται σε μειονεκτική θέση, τα οποία ζουν και εργάζονται στην περιοχή του Νότιου Σίδνεϋ [South Sydney]. Μπορείτε να επικοινωνήσετε μαζί μας μέσω διερχόμενων καλώντας την Τηλεφωνική Υπηρεσία Διερχόμενων [Telephone Interpreter Service] στο 131 450. Ζητήστε από το διερχόμενο να επικοινωνήσει μαζί μας στο 9698 7277, Δευτέρα με Παρασκευή, 9πμ έως 6μμ.

사우스 시드니 지역에서 분리한 조건으로 거주하시며 일하시는 분들께 Redfern 법률센터는 법률에 관한 조언을 무료로 제공해드립니다. 131 450의 통역 서비스로 전화하심으로써 통역관을 통해 저희에게 연락하실수 있습니다. 통역관에게 9698 7277으로 연결을 부탁하시면 됩니다. 월요일부터 금요일, 아침 9시와 저녁 6시사이 언제든지 저희와 연락하실수 있습니다.

Юридический центр Редферна (Redfern Legal Centre) предлагает бесплатное юридическое консультирование людям, попавшим в различные затруднительные ситуации, которые проживают и работают в районе Южного Сиднея (South Sydney). Вы можете связаться с нами через переводчика, позвонив в Телефонную Переводческую Службу по номеру 131 450. Попросите переводчика позвонить нам по номеру 9698 7277 с 9.00 до 18.00 в любой день с понедельника по пятницу.

El Centro Legal de Redfern (Redfern Legal Centre) ofrece sus servicios legales en forma gratis a gente de menos recursos que vive y trabaja en el área Sur de Sydney. Usted nos puede contactar por medio de un intérprete llamando al Servicio Telefónico de Intérpretes 131 450. Pidale al intérprete que se contacte con nosotros llamando al número 9698 7277, de Lunes a Viernes, entre las 9am y las 6pm.

Trung Tâm Pháp Lý Redfern giúp cố vấn luật pháp miễn phí cho các đồng bào bị thiệt thòi đang sống và làm việc tại Khu vực Phía Nam Sydney. Quý vị có thể liên lạc với chúng tôi qua dịch vụ thông ngôn bằng cách gọi điện thoại cho Sở Thông Dịch Điện Thoại, tức the Telephone Interpreter Service qua số 131 450. Hãy yêu cầu thông dịch viên gọi điện cho chúng tôi qua số 9698 7277 ban ngày từ 9 giờ sáng đến 6 giờ chiều, suốt tuần từ Thứ Hai đến Thứ Sáu.

Our Vision

Redfern Legal Centre aims to:

- provide an accessible, appropriate legal information, advice and referral service
- provide ongoing casework services to people who live or work in the RLC catchment area and who cannot afford the services of a private solicitor nor obtain adequate assistance from Legal Aid
- identify the inequalities in the laws, legal system, administrative practices and society as a whole that affect our clients and disadvantaged people generally and to work for social and legal change to remove those defects and inequalities
- promote community legal education
- provide services in a way that promote empowerment of individuals and communities
- investigate and where appropriate develop new ways of providing legal services to our clients in the interests of improving access to our services and to ensure that the quality of those services is maintained and improved.

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Funding

RLC receives funding and in-kind support from a range of sources. We thank these Departments, organisations and individuals for their ongoing support of the Centre.

- The General Legal Service is funded principally through Community Legal Centres Funding Program which is administered by the NSW Legal Aid Commission and the Family Law, Legal Aid Division of the Commonwealth Attorney Generals Department.
- The Women's Domestic Violence Court Support Service is funded by the NSW Legal Aid Commission
- The Credit & Debt Service is funded by the NSW Department of Community Services, the NSW Department of Fair Trading and the Commonwealth Financial Counselling Program
- The Students Legal Service (Branch Office) is funded by the Students' Representative Council at Sydney University.
- The Inner Sydney Tenants Advice & Advocacy Service is funded by the NSW Department of Fair Trading.
- South Sydney Council provides the Centre with a community worker, concessional rent, and occasional small grants for specific purposes.

From time to time the centre is successful in gaining funds for non recurrent projects or joint projects. This year project funding was provided by

- Law Foundation of NSW
- NSW Department of Corrective Services

Client Statistics

In 1999/2000 we assisted 8,401 clients with:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| • Referrals and Information | 2,134 |
| • Advice | 5,317 |
| • Casework | 950 |

The main areas of law we advised people in included:

- Tenancy
- Domestic violence
- Victims compensation
- Credit and debt
- Employment
- Police complaints
- Discrimination

Management Structure

Redfern Legal Centre is a company limited by guarantee. It has six elected directors who have delegated responsibility to the Centre's Management Committee. The Management Committee meets monthly. Members are involved in a range of activities including recruitment of new staff, policy development, Centre planning, and of course, decision making.

This Committee is made up of:

- 4 staff members (2 elected, 2 appointed)
- 6 volunteers (at least 2 practitioners and 2 legal assistants)
- 4 others at least one of whom is from a community organisation and one who is not a lawyer
- 1 Director

Directors

Member Name	Occupation	Basis of Appointment	How Appointed
Stamatia Stamatellis	Solicitor	Member	Elected at AGM
Mary Perkins	Community Service Agency Assist Director	Member	Elected at AGM
Nigel Vertigan	Solicitor	Member	Elected at AGM
Paul Farrugia	Solicitor	Member	Elected at AGM
Peter Stapleton	Solicitor	Member	Elected at AGM
Gerard Craddock	Barrister	Member	Elected at AGM

Management Committee

Name	Occupation	Basis of Appt	How App
Jenny Lovric	Solicitor	Volunteer	Elected
Mehera San Roque	Academic	Volunteer	Elected
Katherine Biber	Author/Academic	Volunteer	Elected
Susan Price	Solicitor	Volunteer	Elected
Justin Smith	Barrister	Volunteer	Elected
Rob Davidson	Solicitor	Volunteer	Elected
Sarah Crawford	Solicitor	Volunteer	Elected Resigned 8/99
Joanna Quilty	Social Worker	Community	Appointed
Paul Farrugia	Solicitor	Community	Appointed
Clare Petre	Ombudsman	Director	Appointed Resigned 12/99
Caitlin Perry	Co-ordinator	RLC Staff	Appointed
Pat McDonough	Senior Solicitor	RLC Staff - elected	Elected Resigned 10/99
Kylie Kylgour	Tenants' Worker	RLC Staff - elected	Elected 6/99 Resigned 12/99
Denele Crozier	Administrator	RLC staff	Appointed
Mat Deighton	Solicitor	RLC staff – elected	Elected
Polly Porteous	Tenants' Worker	RLC staff – elected	Elected

Redfern Legal Centre Staff

Permanent Staff

Fiona Britton – Tenancy Worker (resigned May 2000)
Denele Crozier – Administrator
Susan Davitt – Principal Solicitor (resigned November 1999)
Mathew Deighton – Solicitor (Credit & Debt)
David Dobell – Tenancy
Lyndal Gowland – Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Scheme
Matthew Hazard – Solicitor (SRC)
Robyn Holden – Volunteer Co ordinator/ Admin Officer
Beth Jewell – Policy and Tenancy Co-ordinator
Angela Jones – Solicitor (General)
Kylie Kilgour – Tenancy Worker (resigned December 1999)
Patricia McDonough – Senior Solicitor / Principal Solicitor
Timothy Moore – Drug Law Policy
Rebecca Neil – Senior Solicitor
Caitlin Perry – Co ordinator
Polly Porteous – Tenancy Worker
Penny Quarry – Solicitor (Credit & Debt)
Ildi Kasa Ritzema – Tenancy Worker
Gabrielle Sullivan – Solicitor (Credit & Debt)

Locums & Casual Workers

Bernadette Allas - Solicitor (General)
Chris Bath - Administration
Katherine Biber – Night Advice Service
Hazel Blunden - Tenancy
Kath Brooks – Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Scheme
Louise Buchanan - Tenancy
Elizabeth Ciesiolka – Supervision Day Service
Sandra Clark – Solicitor (SRC)
Katrina Dawson – Night Advice Service
Melanie Faithfull - Library
Mary Flaskas - Tenancy
Paul Garde – Solicitor (SRC)
Kath Hall – Supervision Day Service
Michael Halloway – Solicitor (Credit and Debt)
Sadie Hamer – Solicitor (General)
Nicholas Hogan - SRC
Camilla Hughes – Solicitor (General)
Katherine Jeffreys – Night Advice Serve
Muhunthan Kanagaratnam – Night Advice Service
Anna Kerr – Solicitor (General)
Jane King – Supervisor Day Service/Accounts
Susan Malley - Solicitor

Bridget McDermott – Administration
Cheryl McDonough - Administration
Amelia Montague – Night Advice Service
Sarah Nielsen – Solicitor (General)
Kate Owens - Administration
Bridget Purcell - Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Scheme
Sue Thomas – Tenancy/Supervision Day Service
Dave Trudinger - Policy

Consultants

Computer Support
Tilda Communications

Pro Bono Support

A number of legal professionals and law firms provided substantial pro bono assistance to our clients or to the Centre. Without this assistance, we would not be able to continue to provide such a comprehensive range of services.

This year we have received support from the following:

Firms

Blake Dawson Waldron
Gilbert & Tobin
Henry David York
Clayton Utz
Keddies
Graham Jones

Solicitors

Julie Walsh
Suzanne Christie
Irene Baghoomians
John Eager
Roxanne Dunkel

Barristers

Michael Windsor
Janet Manuel
Bill McManus

We also refer clients to the Law Society's Pro Bono Scheme and the Bar Association's Legal Assistance Scheme.

Volunteers

This year – as usual – volunteers contributed to all aspects of the Centre’s work. Our volunteers are of all different ages and from all walks of life. We had approximately 200 volunteers during 1999/2000 – there are usually at least 70 active volunteers on our books at any one time.

Daytime volunteers – “legal assistants” – are generally law students and interested members of the community. They do weekly half day shifts, working on reception, casework (under the instruction of the caseworker), research and administration.

Night time volunteers – mostly solicitors – take instructions and provide legal advice and do either weekly or fortnightly shifts.

All volunteers receive training and all volunteers are supervised by a member of staff. We thank the following people who have been volunteers for the Centre during 1999/2000.

Roxanne Adler	Rosemarie Cavill	John Eager
Paul Ahearn	Kate Chaney	Troy Edwards
Jaya Aiyappan	Ding Chen	Seth Eeles
Jan Alewood	Adrian Chiodo	Libby Elvy
Rachel Amamoo	Selena Choo	Patrick Eyers
Wendy Andrews	Suzanne Christie	Sammy Fang
Irene Baghoomians	Michelle Chung	Ben Fawcett
Mimi Barbaro	Libby Ciesiolka	Brett Feltham
Julie Barca	Felicity Clarke	Sean Flood
Sandra Basile	Sharon Collett	Tiffany Fozzard
Elizabeth Beal	Tureia Corr	Tina Gavel
Nicole Beavan	Michael Cowled	Fiona Gayler
Melissa Bellanta	Andrew Craig	Krista Gerrard
Benjamin Benson	Harry Crowe	Eric Ghosh
Terese Berrigan	Michael Culshaw	Stephanie Giannis
Katherine Biber	Paul Curnow	Mark Gilligan
Georgette Billeh	Mylinh Dang	Bridget Godwin
Craig Biscoe	Alison Davidian	Emma Golledge
Gordana Bozinovska	Rob Davidson	Kara Goodsell
Janet Bremner	Greg Davoren	Alexis Goodstone
Kate Brown	Katrina Dawson	Nicholas Goodstone
Suzie Brown	Theresa Devlin	Harriet Grahame
Sandy Cameron	Gabriella Di Pietro	Alison Haines
Kirsty Campbell	Rachael Doland	Kate Hall
Sinead Campbell	Gavin Douglas	Matt Hall
Brett Casey	Dora Doukas	Scott Hall-Johnston

Vanee Harichandran
Oliver Harvey
Samantha Harvey
Monica Hayes
Lyll Hickson
Nick Hogan
Sophie Holsman
Annabelle Horton
Alice Hryniewicka
Sarah Hunt
John Hutley
Marie Irwin
Martin Irwin
Majed Issa
Michael Izzo
Elizabeth James
John Jameson
David Jay
Brian Jebb
Katherine Jeffreys
Daniel Joffe
Muhunthan
Kanagaratnam
Anna Kerr
Jahangir Khan
Sally Knox
Ajay Kumar
Kevork Kyalk
Tina Lee
Felicity Lehane
Craig Lenahan
Samantha Lennox
Kevin Lew
Marina Lloyd Jones
Jenny Lovric
Natalie Lowe
Landy Luk
Martine Magers
Veronique Maury
Melissa McAdam
Elise McHugh
Leah McKeown
Ross McKinnon
Sheila McMahan
Emma McWilliams
Tanya Mitchell

Russell Mogilevsky
Shirin Mohebbaty
Monique Molaro
Amelia Montague
Robert Mooy
Daniel Moran
Kelsey Munro
Camilla Newcombe
Thuy Nguyen
Albert Nguyen
Ross Nicholas
Wesley O'Donnell
Katherine O'Hagan
Chris O'Hara
Richard O'Keefe
Vanessa O'Sullivan
Catherine Oldenburg
Mariana Olubas
Kate Owens
Elizabeth Parkes
Jillian Parkin
Nicolas Patrick
Elizabeth Payne
Peter Penklis
Olivia Perks
Celia Pitcher
Karen Preston
Susan Price
Jenni Priestley
Kate Prior
Elizabeth Raper
Bilal Rauf
Tom Roche
Cameron Roles
Stephen Roseman
Dani Rourke
Kirsty Ruddock
Janice Saddler
Robyn Sahota
Mehera San Roque
Stephen Sander
Kaye Sato
Carla Saul
Angela Seward
Joanne Sharah
Luma Sherif

Gail Sherlock
Adrian Smetsers
Katrina Smith
Raymond Smith
Stephen Smith
Lucinda Smithers
Gaby Stein
Itu Taito
Siew Tan
Gillian Tang
Kath Taplin
Penelope Taylor
Yun-Hui Teoh
Sue Thomas
Phear Tor
Theo Tsambas
Ming Lun Tsui
Nicole Urban
John Valarezo
Janet Van Kernebeek
Phillipa Venning
Jennifer Vytopil
Dorothy Wai
Susan Wallace
Julie Walsh
Brendan Walters
Nick Weeks
Trisha Whipple
Carla Wienicki
Stefan Williams
Rebecca Williams
Elizabeth Windsor
Michael Windsor
Karl Wolfenden
Susan Yoo
Eric Young
Albert Yuen
Vanessa Zah

Thanks
everyone!

Project Reports

Drug Law Reform

Drug law reform was again identified as a priority area of work for the Centre. Timothy Moore continued as Drug Law Policy Project Officer. Despite being only a two days per week position, Timothy worked on a number of important issues including access to safe injecting rooms, provision of information and training about harm minimisation approaches to drug related issues, commenting on a range of legislative and procedural issues.

During this period the project actively supported the campaign for access to medical cannabis. The work of the committee for medical cannabis has had immediate and long term impact on the debate. There are some promising signs of policy reform from a number of jurisdictions. The media have been handled well and have given the issue a reasonable hearing.

Further work needs to be carried out in the development of the scientific research agenda for medical cannabis in Australia. Also effort is required to ensure that the policy reform follows the support developed to date. As well as developing relationships outside NSW with ministers responsible for the carriage of this issue input to the NSW review committee needs to be supported and co-ordinated.

The reform preparation program has been going well to date and the committee and its supporters have been successful in placing the issue of medical cannabis firmly on the agenda. The committee backed by Redfern Legal Centre, Drug Policy Project has been ably supported by many volunteers and staff. The President of the NSW Law society and Australian Committee for Medical Cannabis patron Mrs Margaret Hole and the president of the NSW AMA Dr Kerryn Phelps have been working hard through the media in conjunction with their media officers. The media officers at the NSW Law Society, Anabel Dean, and at the NSW branch of the Australian Medical Association, Kristen Brown, have been key in directing this process. Dr Mac Christie from the University of Sydney has been a somewhat reluctant star in this campaign that has truth and compassion in its lead roles.

Further support since the launch and committee announcement in NSW has come from individuals and organisations including the Breast Cancer Action Group, the Hepatitis C council of NSW, People Living with HIV and AIDS and the AIDS council of NSW.

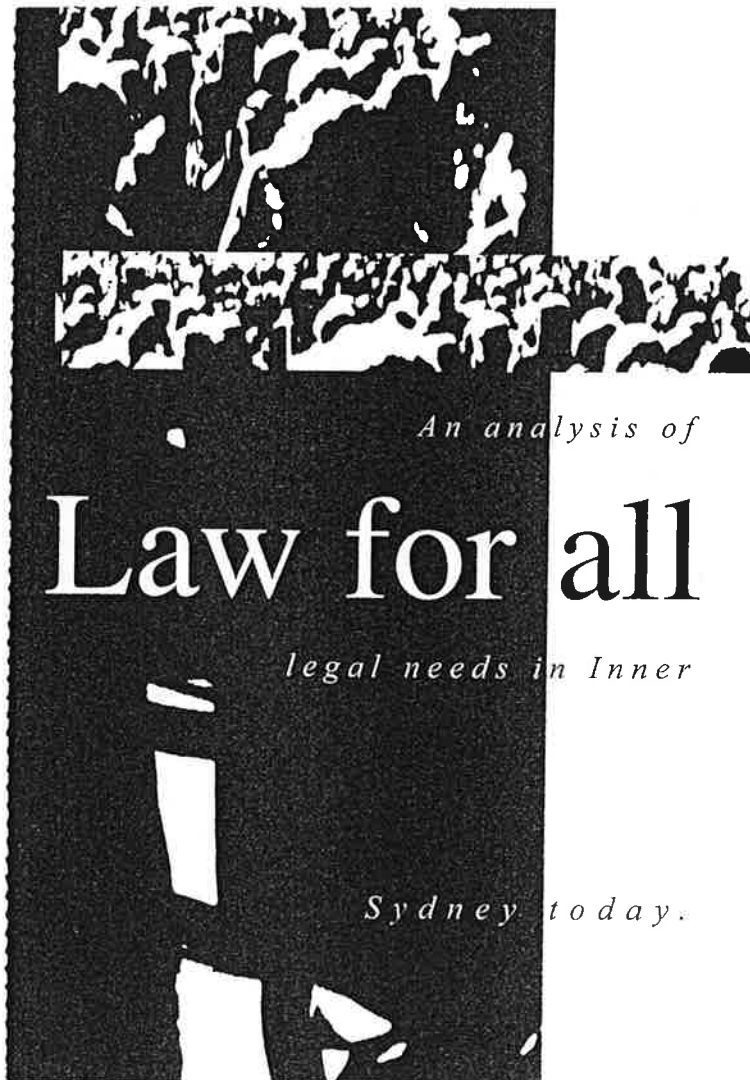
A special thanks to the people using medical cannabis who have gone public in trying circumstances to bring the honest humanity of their situation to the media and have received so far a compassionate hearing. Their bravery, honesty and patience is greatly appreciated.

Aboriginal Access

A joint submission by Redfern, Kingsford, Marrickville and Inner City Legal Centres for funding for an Aboriginal Access worker was unsuccessful. The four inner Sydney community legal centres are continuing to work together to enhance Aboriginal access to our services and at the same time are exploring other funding options.

Law For All

Co-ordinators from the four inner Sydney community legal centres - Redfern, Kingsford, Marrickville and Inner City – worked together to produce a comprehensive report about legal need in the Inner Sydney region and how each of the four community legal centres are working to address that need. The book is ready for production and distribution in the new financial year.



Our Legal Practice

General Legal Service

The Generalist Legal Service provides face to face and telephone advice to people who live and/or work in the Botany, Sydney, South Sydney and Leichhardt local government areas as well as undertaking casework in priority areas of law. The service employs two full time solicitors, one part time solicitor (three days per week) and relies on some 50 volunteer solicitors. Like all Redfern Legal Centre staff, generalist legal service solicitors are involved in policy and law reform work and provide community legal education. The service works closely with the other teams at the Centre.

Credit and Debt Service

Two of the most important emerging issues for credit and debt advocates and financial counsellors during the reporting period were e-commerce and telecommunications.

Electronic commerce involves commercial activities such as the purchase of goods and services, carried out through electronic networks. These electronic networks include business computer systems relating to services such as banking, telephones, electricity and other utilities, and goods purchased over the Internet. Consumer protection issues of concern to credit workers in this regard include fair business practices; disclosure of the terms and conditions of contracts; procedures for complaint handling; security and authentication of information; and privacy issues.

Telecommunications issues such as mobile phone problems have been developing for a number of years now, but new trends are occurring. For example, in the USA, a consumer can purchase a product by telephone, and the price of the product is billed to the consumer's telephone account. Similarly, a very new development is the formation of contractual agreements by "voice data recognition systems": that is, contracts made by recording someone's voice over the telephone. Legal issues associated with this include recording people's voices without their consent; proving that a contract exists at all; and proving what the terms of the contract are.

In short, telecommunication issues and electronic commerce issues are becoming intermingled in many regards.

For these reasons, Redfern Legal Centre's credit and debt solicitors have been forging stronger links with other consumer organisations which have an understanding of these issues, such as the Consumer's Telecommunications Network.

In addition, we have acted as consumer representatives on two Australian Communications Industry Forum (ACIF) Working Parties which developed Guidelines for Electronic Customer Authorisation and Customer Transfer Selling Practices. ACIF is an industry-owned company established by the telecommunications industry to manage communication self regulation in Australia.

We also prepared a written submission to the Federal Government's draft Code of Conduct entitled "Building Consumer Sovereignty in Electronic Commerce: A Best Practice Model for Business". Following this, during the second round of consultations, a Treasury official met with us in Sydney to discuss our submission further. The final Code included some of our key recommendations, such as the "opt-in" arrangement for commercial e-mail (ie businesses can only forward e-mail to existing customers and those who have requested it); a requirement that businesses include their physical address in their web-site (not just e-mail addresses); and that businesses must provide to consumers all relevant terms and conditions of trade.

Other developments of note during the reporting period were as follows:

At the end of 1999, the ACCC instituted a civil action against a debt collection agency in Perth, alleging that the agency harassed consumers and breached the Trade Practices Act. This followed submissions regarding harassment of consumers by debt collectors, made by ourselves and a number of other community organisations to the ACCC.

Casework

Gold Coast real estate

Our client attended a so-called "no-obligation" weekend at the Gold Coast which had been organised by a real estate agent. She felt that she was pressured by the real estate agent and solicitor to enter into a contract to purchase property in the Gold Coast.

She later decided that she did not wish to go ahead with the contract, partly because the finance organised for her was not satisfactory but also because she felt pushed into it. The solicitor then wrote a letter to her threatening/ implying that the vendors would take legal action against her.

We wrote a forceful letter to the solicitor pointing out the conflict of interest, the pressure brought to bear on our client, and the various misrepresentations which were made during the course of the weekend. The solicitor responded saying that after receiving independent legal advice, the vendor had decided not to proceed with the sale, and would not enforce the contract.

Rental Cars

Our client and his friend hired a car. They drove the car to Wollongong, but it broke down and had to be towed back to Sydney.

Both the car hire fee and the towing fee were charged by the hire car company, to our client's credit card. He decided that he wanted to take the company to the Fair Trading Tribunal, to object.

We assisted our client to summarise the issues and arguments to raise in the Tribunal, and explained what to expect at the Tribunal in terms of procedure etc.

Our client successfully obtained an order from the Tribunal that the car hire company pay him \$ 870.00 within 4 weeks.

Harassment by Debt Collectors

We made a complaint to the Department of Fair Trading about the harassment of one of our clients by debt collectors.

An officer of the Department of Fair Trading advised us that the relevant firm of debt collectors ultimately agreed to write off our client's remaining debt, and offered their sincere apologies. The firm also requested a meeting with Department to advise on the changes they had made since taking over the operation from a previous firm, including training new staff.

Tenants' Service

Redfern Legal Centre receives funding from the Department of Fair Trading to run the Inner Sydney Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service.

In the year 1999 -2000 the service did a massive amount of advice work.

- 3,101 clients received tenancy advice and information.
- 186 clients received face-to-face advice.
- 205 cases were opened.

The biggest impact on the tenancy team during this time was the impending Olympic Games. The impact of gentrification, evictions and lack of affordable housing peaked and the advice service was inundated with calls. It was truly heart-breaking to see the number of clients facing eviction and the stress on the tenancy workers was enormous. The demand for assistance was so great that the service was only able to represent clients at the Tribunal who were facing eviction – not for any other matters such as bond disputes, repairs, security etc.

Olympics Impact

• *Forced Evictions*

The service received an alarming wave of calls from tenants who received 60 day no-cause evictions notices. In many cases the landlord or agent verbally told the tenants the owner wanted the premises for the Olympics. In one case a tenant's agent tried to insert a clause into the tenancy agreement stating that the tenant had to pay double the rent for the 3 week Olympics period. The service notified the Minister for Fair Trading, who issued a press release describing the case as "a blatant attempt at a rip-off" and praising the Redfern Legal Centre for "standing up for the tenant."

• *Boarding House Residents*

Enquiries from people living in boarding houses tripled during this year. Most residents only seek advice when they are being evicted, and as whole boarding houses were being closed down to re-open as back-packer accommodation – thousand of boarders were made homeless.

Most residents of boarding houses are boarders/lodgers, and the Service has been unable to successfully stop evictions as there is no legislative protection for these residents in NSW! However, some of these residents are actually tenants and covered by the Residential Tenancies Act and some protected under the 1948 legislation. In the latter cases we were able to at least fight for more time for them to relocate.

Two elderly women living in a boarding house in Glebe are fighting a lengthy battle against a large landowner and we commend them for their tenacity. We are assisting the local council in a SEPP 10 case at the Land & Environment Court while advocating on behalf of the boarders as the owner attempts to evict them through appeals to the Supreme Court. A victory in all aspects of this case will provide a very important precedent for all boarders in NSW and assist in lobbying for the introduction of protective legislation.

• *Rent Increases*

Hundreds of tenants faced large rent increases during the pre-Olympics period. Many on low incomes were forced to terminate tenancies due to unaffordable rent hikes others struggled to meet rental payments. One woman in the city area received a \$100 rent increase – her rent went from \$200 - \$300 per week and she was forced to relocate as the Residential Tenancies Act still fails to protect tenants from unfair rent increases in an artificially inflated market.

Other Casework

• *Hailstorm Damage*

The service continued to see tenants who have problems caused by the hailstorm in April 1999. Of grave concern are the tenants who are seeking advice for the first time, having put up with intolerable conditions for up to a year.

- *Protected Tenant*

A protected tenant sought our assistance as her new landlord was breaching her right to quiet enjoyment. The landlord wanted to auction the property. He entered the tenant's home unlawfully (he jumped the fence & let himself in through the back door), and once inside he allowed 100 people to enter her home in order to view the property. The tenant complained to police, but they did not assist. We referred the matter to the Department of Fair Trading and the compliance unit is prosecuting the landlord for breach. We are still pursuing the complaint against the police.

- *Tenants at risk of homelessness*

Our casework with "tenants at risk of homelessness" is undertaken by our part-time worker who specialises in people with disabilities. We successfully ran a case to prevent the eviction of a Department of Housing tenant under the Social Housing Act. After lengthy negotiations and submissions to the tribunal the Department decided to withdraw the application for termination. Another tenant with a disability was successful in negotiations with a private landlord to enable him to stay in the premises for another 5 months, allowing him time to find suitable alternative accommodation.

The Rentwatchers Campaign

Despite the huge increase in casework the tenancy team continued to play a major role in the Rentwatchers campaign. This was a coalition formed to lobby the government to minimise the impact of the Olympic Games on housing. Some highlights:

- After negotiations with the Ministers responsible for the Olympics, Housing and Fair Trading proved fruitless; Rentwatchers embarked on more direct action with other groups such as the Olympic Impact Coalition, the Anti-Olympics Alliance, Eastern Area Tenants Service etc. We held three rallies and received good media attention and helped increase public awareness of the mounting adverse impacts of the Games.
- Media coverage included Japanese TV, Korean documentary, Asia CNN, SBS Australia, Channel 7 Today Tonight, Commercial TV News, SMH, Sydney radio, National ABC radio, German and Dutch print media and more.
- Other speaking engagements included the Sports and Human Rights Conference, NCOSS Conference, National CLC conference, Australian Human Rights Lawyers etc
- One of the highest achievements was sending a delegate to the United Nations! With the support of the Law Foundation of New South Wales and RLC we addressed the 21st Session of the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in November 1999. The response from UN delegates was overwhelming and enabled RLC and Rentwatchers to consolidate its involvement in an international network of activists concerned with the Olympics social impacts. We await eagerly the report of the Committee on Australia's human rights performance to be brought down in October 2000.

Other Policy Work

- Human rights and housing project
- Review of Residential Tenancies Act
- Boarders and Lodgers – the Need for Protection
- Access and Equity – People from multi-cultural backgrounds
- Social Housing and people with disabilities project
- Department of Housing policy – security
- Domestic Violence and Tenancy Law

Community Legal Education

The following CLE sessions were conducted:

- UTS students - sharehousing - 15 participants
- St Vincent De Paul financial counsellors - tenants rights - 35 participants
- NSW Police Service - tenancy law – 120 participants
- NCOSS - boarding houses and the law - 15 participants
- Newtown Neighbourhood Centre – tenants rights – 5 participants
- Salvation Army Financial Counsellors – tenancy rights – 20 participants
- Eastern Region Police Force – training “police and tenancy law” – 24 participants
- Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre – tenancy law – 16 Russian participants
- Sydney University International Students introduction (over 200)

A Boarding House training package was developed with Marrickville Legal Centre TAS. The resulting CLE package is an innovative blend of legal information, case studies and audio/visual materials. We’ve had great feedback from all agencies we’ve run the session with. These are:

- Open workshop for local community organisations – 12 participants
- St Johns Church Rough Edges Community Centre - 6 participants
- Homeless persons information centre – 6 participants
- Centrelink social workers (Sydney area) – 13 participants
- Sydney Tenants workers – 7 participants

Some special thanks

We would like to thank Hazel Blunden, Sue Thomas, Mary Flaskas for their hard work and wonderful support as locums, often called in at the drop of a hat. Also thanks Ben Fawcett, Catherine Jefferies and Michael Izzo for doing the hotline. We farewelled Fiona Britton and welcomed David Dobell and Ildi Ritzema to the team. Special thanks to Polly especially for holding the fort all year, training everyone and working tirelessly for the tenants and boarders of NSW.

Students Representative Council Branch Office

The legal service at the Students' Representative Council (SRC) is provided by Redfern Legal Centre and operates as a branch office of the legal centre. Redfern Legal Centre provides a solicitor, legal support, access to its volunteer program, supervision and some administration. The SRC funds the service.

Staffing

The SRC Branch office is staffed by a solicitor who is a full time employee of Redfern Legal Centre. The solicitor spends the major part of his/her time at the SRC offices, working there four days a week on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. The solicitor works from the main office in Pitt Street Redfern on Wednesdays - this allows the solicitor to make good use of the Legal Centre's resources to assist students and to engage in policy work.

Ms Sarah Neilsen resigned as Branch Office Solicitor in February 2000. Sarah had been with Redfern Legal Centre for many years – as a volunteer, as a main office worker and as the SRC solicitor for two years.

Mr Matthew Hazard was appointed to the full time position and commenced work on 6 June 2000. Matt had previously worked at the Branch Office as a locum solicitor, has worked in private practice as well as for Aboriginal Legal Service. He has extensive experience in many areas of law.

During the interval between Sarah's resignation and Matthew's appointment, the SRC Branch Office was staffed by locum solicitors and RLC solicitors. Solicitors who carried out the work of the Branch office during this period were Paul Garde, Sandy Clark, and Matthew Hazard (locums); and Rebecca Neil, Mathew Deighton and Angela Jones (RLC Solicitors).

Legal Services Provided

The service is available to undergraduate students at the University and students at the affiliated campuses of Sydney College of the Arts, The Conservatorium of Music, Orange Agricultural College and Camden Farms.

The solicitor provides a very active advice service three days per week. Appointments are available 2 days a week with a third afternoon dedicated to a drop in service. Students at distant campuses can also make telephone appointments.

The solicitor also provides legal assistance and back up to the student advisors and welfare officers at the main office and the offices of affiliated campuses.

The solicitor provides ongoing casework services representing clients in legal action or providing assistance for clients to represent themselves. Wherever possible, the decision to take on more extensive work for a client is made with consideration of the other legal services available to the client as well as the client's resources, and the ability of the

client to manage the matter themselves with assistance from the solicitor. The aim is to provide the most efficient and useful service to the student community and also to allow the solicitor to spend greater time on client's with a high degree of need who are unable to access any other services.

The solicitor also undertakes policy work and community legal education. Policy or law reform work is work that is not necessarily related to any one particular client but aims to achieve some systemic change in the legal system or the University in order to benefit a group or students or all students.

Community education aims to increase the ability of clients to avert legal problems or to solve them themselves by providing legal information, for example in the form of fact sheets, information brochures or, in some instances, education sessions.

A close link is maintained between the branch office of the legal centre and the main office. The SRC office benefits from the support offered by the co ordinator and administrator of the legal centre.

The current Branch Office Solicitor (employed from 6 June 2000) has an unrestricted Practising Certificate. He is supervised by a solicitor at the main office of the legal centre. He also receives valuable assistance from the other workers at the legal centre and in particular the credit and debt solicitors, the tenancy workers and the past SRC solicitor – and now Principal Solicitor - Pat McDonough.

The Branch Office is covered by the RLC Professional Indemnity Insurance.

In addition to the duties at the SRC the solicitor participates in the organisational life of the main office of the legal centre through attendance at staff meetings and file intake meetings.

Casework

The SRC Branch Office provides legal information and advice, and conducts casework in a range of matters. These statistics include both advice sessions (that may be 'face to face' or over the telephone) as well as 'cases opened'.

A file (or case) is opened once some work is done for a client or the solicitor undertakes to represent the client. Unfortunately these statistics cannot show the amount of work done on a particular matter, only that work was done. A file may be opened to write one letter only or it may be opened in order to undertake lengthy and complicated litigation.

During the year 305 appointments were made and 80 new files were created.

A number of trends can be identified from the advice and casework.

University matters

The legal service also advises on University matters. These may relate to the University's internal procedures such as chapter 13 misconduct proceedings, expulsions or disputes over results. The solicitor attended two hearings to assist a student in relation to misconduct charges.

There were concerns over the conduct of security guards to relation to demonstrations on and off the university campus and the use of the misconduct disciplinary procedure to curtail political activity.

We advised many other students in relation to their complaints about the actions of the University. Matters of concern included the impact of compulsory criminal record checks for all students on placements within the NSW public health system pursuant to government policy.

Motor vehicle accidents

Motor vehicle accidents continue to be a major source of legal problems for students. The advice in this area is generally to young drivers who are liable for the damage to another vehicle and have no property damage insurance. We have also advised students in relation to their rights and obligations arising out of their own contracts of insurance in matters such as disclosure and legal fees.

Debts claimed can be significant and where possible we have assisted the client to negotiate a favourable settlement. This year we have been attempting to extend the advice students receive by referring them to financial counselling services to get financial advice as well as legal advice.

Crime

A significant number of students sought advice on criminal matters. In most cases students were given initial advice and assistance to understand the court process implications of the charges, and then referred to either private solicitors for representation or Legal Aid. The service represented one client in relation to a charge of hinder police arising out of a demonstration. This matter is ongoing.

Tenancy

Many students, particularly young and overseas students find themselves enmeshed in legal problems related to share housing, boarding and tenancy. We help clients to negotiate these problems and in some cases to prepare submissions to the Residential Tribunal.

Consumer

We continue to have a number of inquiries about consumer matters. These problems arise with students purchasing goods and services and then finding themselves vulnerable either to aggressive sales techniques or the victim of dodgy sales or credit contracts.

Discrimination

The service assisted a blind student to lodge a complaint with the Anti-Discrimination Board over the refusal of the Department of Health to consider her for employment. The service attended a conciliation hearing at which the complaint was not resolved. The matter was referred to the Administrative Decision Tribunal for further mediation and was successfully resolved.

The service advised a student in relation to a complaint of sexual harassment at a university college. The incident became the focal point for general discussion and has led to the development of new guidelines for dealing with sexual harassment in the university colleges.

Employment

Most students work part time and many experience difficulties with employers over pay and other conditions. A number of students were successfully assisted in the recovery of unpaid wages at the end of their employment.

Policy And Law Reform / Community Legal Education

The SRC solicitor undertook policy work related to the student community.

The solicitor participated in the campaign against voluntary student unionism and made submissions to the Senate Inquiry on Student Unionism.

During the year the SRC legal service provided the following legal information to:

- During Orientation Week at the University, staffing a stall for the legal centre.
- Provided back up advice to the Welfare and Education workers at the SRC.

Pro Bono Assistance

The SRC service received invaluable assistance from a number of people including the following. During this period Janet Manuel, Barrister has provided extensive assistance including pro bono representation of a client in a complicated criminal matter.

Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Scheme

In March 1990, Redfern Legal Centre began operating the first women's domestic violence court assistance scheme at the Redfern Local Court. The Scheme was developed largely in response to the recognition that women seeking protection from violent relationships were finding it difficult, and in many cases impossible, to negotiate the court system and obtain legal information or advice. Essentially the aim was to provide a holistic and appropriate response that would empower women and assist them to seek legal protection from domestic violence.

Redfern Legal Centre's Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Scheme operates at both Redfern and the Downing Centre Local Courts. The Scheme provides assistance and support to women and children. The scheme co-ordinator arranges a roster system where local community workers are available to support women seeking Apprehended (Domestic) Violence Orders on the courts' list days. During this year, twelve new support workers have been recruited and trained for the Scheme. The following local community organisations second staff to work on the Scheme:

- Domestic Violence Line
- Women and Girls Emergency Centre
- Aboriginal Medical Service
- Broadway Early Childhood Centre
- South Sydney Aboriginal Corporation
- South Sydney Community Aid
- Mudgin gal Aboriginal Corporation
- D4 Family Support Services, Harris Centre
- The Shop Women and Children's Centre
- WISH program
- Kirkton Road Drug and Alcohol Centre
- Darlinghurst Community Health Centre
- Fact Tree Youth Service
- The Factory
- Central Sydney Area Health Service
- SCARBA

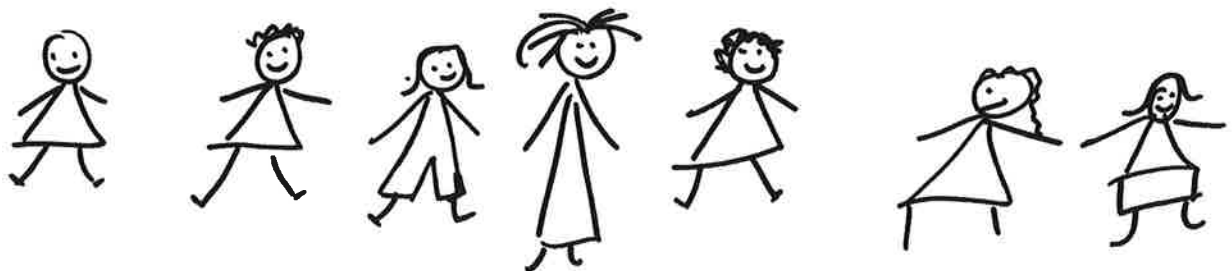
Without the continuing support and commitment of these agencies, the Scheme would not be able to operate. All workers already carry heavy workloads within their own agencies, and many are part time. Their time commitment in all cases is difficult to maintain and we are extremely grateful to the many agencies who have supported us in this way.

RLC and Inner City Legal Centre solicitors provide representation at Redfern Court, and solicitors from private firms work on a pro bono basis at the Downing Centre Court. Four new solicitors from private firms have joined the Scheme in the past year. In addition, solicitors from private firms have assisted WDV CAS clients by providing both legal advice and representation at hearings. In particular cases, clients are referred to the

Community Legal Education and Community Development

A Redfern Multicultural Celebration was held for International Women's Day at which Anne Summers was the keynote speaker. A grant from South Sydney Council financed the event and was organised jointly with the South Sydney Domestic Violence Liaison Committee. The Celebration provided local women from a diversity of backgrounds the opportunity to learn about Indigenous culture, women's safety and health, through a series of interactive workshops. Seven different language interpreters meant that information was made available to a large number of women from non-English speaking backgrounds. Entertainment and stalls from local agencies and government departments provided information relevant to local women. Approximately 300 women attended the Celebration and the day was a great success.

A local "Stop Domestic Violence Day" event was held in Waterloo Green. Local police provided the BBQ while local community groups provided entertainment. Speakers including Rebecca Neil, solicitor of Redfern Legal Centre, the WDVCS Co-ordinator and Local Police Commander Parsons and addressed the changes the Apprehended Violence Legislation. Entertainment and stalls from local agencies and government departments provided information relevant to women survivors of domestic violence.



Redfern Legal Centre's evening legal service for advice concerning their AVO application or to assist clients to prepare for self representation at hearing.

We would like to thank the following law firms, community legal centres and individual practitioners for their ongoing support for the scheme:

- Gilbert and Tobin
- Inner City Legal Centre
- Robyn Sexton
- Keddies
- Clayton Utz
- Blake, Dawson & Waldron

Casework

The scheme assisted a total of 587 clients during the year – these statistics provide information about who we assisted, and in what way.

Contacts during 1998/99

Total number of contacts	587
Number of women assisted at Redfern Court	20%
Number of women assisted at Downing Centre	80%
Number of ATSI clients	8%
Number of NESB clients	32%
Number of clients with a disability	35%

Policy and Law Reform

Inadequacies and difficulties in the legal system affect not only women who seek protection, but also lead to recurring court appearances and complex follow-up work for the Scheme. The Scheme contributes to law reform and policy development through lobbying and active participation in relevant committees. These include the WDVCS Network, the NSW Combined Community Legal Centre Domestic Violence Committee, South Sydney Domestic Violence Liaison Committee and the Apprehended Violence Legal Issues Co-ordinating Committee, which was established to advise the NSW Attorney General on the application of Apprehended Violence legislation. Issues addressed included reform of the Apprehended Violence legislation, service of Apprehended Violence Orders and provision of police and court services during Olympic period.

Trading and Profit & Loss Account 1999/2000

REDFERN LEGAL CENTRE LIMITED
 ACN 001 442 039 ABN 31 001 442 039
 DETAILED PROFIT & LOSS ACCOUNT
 FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2000

	2000 \$	1999 \$
Other Income		
Donations received	1,665	110
Interest received	20,470	19,191
Other income	5,386	2,594
Costs awarded by the courts	26,331	10,770
Grants	750,828	767,211
Total Other Income	<u>804,680</u>	<u>799,876</u>
Expenditure		
Audit fees	6,390	5,618
Bank charges	890	961
Depreciation	21,353	24,484
Insurance	3,721	3,273
Office equipment	3,175	12,118
Printing, stationery and postage	32,267	23,958
Program and sundry expenses	13,972	16,426
Rent	8,366	5,955
Repairs and maintenance	8,852	12,504
Salaries and wages	621,620	666,110
Staffing costs	25,018	24,201
Subscriptions	17,890	18,190
Superannuation	31,836	33,492
Telephone	13,666	16,738
Travelling expenses	13,236	13,167
Total Expenses	<u>822,252</u>	<u>877,195</u>
Operating Loss	<u>(17,572)</u>	<u>(77,319)</u>