



Redfern
Legal Centre

Annual Report
2018–2019

Redfern Legal Centre 2018–19: Expanding our reach

It's been an exciting year for Redfern Legal Centre, with dynamic new partnerships, services, and law reform initiatives extending our connections and expanding our reach.

Our Annual Report showcases our impact and areas of focus across the 2018–19 financial year. The reports from our team are accompanied by client stories and feedback, further illuminating the purpose of our work. Thank you for being part of our ongoing journey, helping people in crisis through legal support.



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Cover photos (clockwise from top left): The NSW Attorney-General, the Hon Mark Speakman, SC MP, meeting with RLC volunteers and staff; RLC's Safe and Sound campaign is calling for reform of strip search laws in NSW; strategic planning with RLC staff and board; Health Justice Partnership (HJP) information stall; in the lead-up to NAIDOC Week 2019, a local Aboriginal artist donated an original artwork to RLC's HJP practice; in November, RLC's tenancy team received the Golden Warren Award; RLC's International Student Solicitor launching *My Legal Mate* with the Lord Mayor of Sydney, Clover Moore (Image: Katherine Griffiths/City of Sydney); and members of RLC's Young Professionals Committee.

RLC acknowledges that we work on Aboriginal land, traditionally the home of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation.

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Welcome from our Chair and CEO

It's been a massive year for Redfern Legal Centre (RLC), which has seen exciting new collaborations, law reform initiatives and strategic work – increasing our scope to help more people in need, while maintaining a focus on systemic change.

In August, we were thrilled to host the NSW Attorney-General, the Hon Mark Speakman SC MP, who came to RLC to announce the outcome of the Review of NSW Community Legal Centre (CLC) Services. Mr Speakman unveiled new funding measures that will give CLCs additional support to meet unmet legal need across the state.

This funding was distributed through a tender process, which we navigated with great success. In addition to core funding, we also received funding for two specialist services: our Health Justice Partnership and the statewide Migrant Worker Employment Legal Service, delivered in partnership with Marrickville Legal Centre, Inner City Legal Centre and Kingsford Legal Centre. We look forward to working with these CLCs to launch this much-needed new service.

Our Health Justice Partnership (HJP) with the Sydney Local Area Health District has gone from strength to strength. A first of its kind in NSW, Our HJP provides early intervention and access to the legal system for hundreds of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people each year who would not otherwise access legal assistance.

This year is the first time any HJP has received funding from the NSW Attorney-General, and we are grateful for the government's support of our service. This funding from the NSW Attorney-General builds on that provided by the Limb Family Foundation and another anonymous donor. We are leveraging this combined funding pool to increase the reach of the service by hiring an Aboriginal solicitor and an Aboriginal Access worker, enabling us to provide advice at the Sydney Dental Hospital, as well as the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital.

In response to increasing numbers of people with strip search complaints presenting to our police accountability practice, in December we launched an initiative to improve strip search law in NSW. This campaign has generated an enormous amount of attention, and is working hard to achieve systemic change. Check out safeandsound.org.au!

Our mobile app for international students is poised to be a real gamechanger by delivering on-demand multi-language legal information to international students at universities across NSW. Meanwhile, the head of our International Student Legal Service NSW was honoured



Pictured: Amy Munro, Chair (left) and Joanna Shulman, CEO.

with the NSW Human Rights Medal in recognition of the practice's outstanding work.

Collaboration continues to be a hallmark of our success. Our employment law service worked in collaboration with Kingsford Legal Centre, Women's Legal Centre and the National Association of Community Legal Centres to produce a comprehensive report that was submitted to the Australian Human Rights Commission's National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces.

Our tenancy team went to great lengths to inform the Residential Tenancies Act five-year review, making submissions and working collaboratively with other community legal centres on joint submissions. The team was recognised for its outstanding achievements in the policy arena, receiving the Golden Warren award in November. The team also delivered a series of multi-language outreach sessions as part of our ongoing work funded by City of Sydney to support public housing tenants in Waterloo facing the trauma of relocation.

This year, the board made the difficult decision to not extend our contract to auspice the Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (Sydney WDVCAS). Sydney WDVCAS has experienced a significant increase in demand in recent years, and required the expertise of a service provider who could oversee the provision of non-legal court support, counselling, and other vital services essential to supporting victims of domestic violence.

Redfern Legal Centre is a specialist in the provision of legal services for women and children in domestic violence situations, and we will continue to provide support, in particular for women experiencing financial abuse.

RLC pioneered frontline domestic violence legal services for more than 30 years and we are immensely proud of



In August, the NSW Attorney-General, the Hon Mark Speakman SC MP, came to RLC to announce the outcome of the Cameron Review of Community Legal Centres.

the work that was achieved by Sydney WDVCS whilst under the auspice of our Centre. The dedication of staff in this service to women and children experiencing extreme circumstances has been extraordinary.

We are pleased to see this service continue under the auspice of another trusted provider, with many of the same staff. A huge thank you to our departing Sydney WDVCS team: Alena Wilson, Amie Stevenson, Charmaine Weldon, Fiona Koutsoukis, Helen Shelton, Janice Waring, Kate Hunter, Kath Chegwiddden, Leah Holmes, Rayila Maimaiti, Sidnei Pettit and Susan Smith.

We also bid farewell to two long-serving staff members from other services: Ingrid Van Tongeren (SUPRA) and Sue-Ellen Hills (HJP). We wish all our departing team members the very best in their new roles.

Three highly-valued board members also stepped down this year: Sally Giblin, Alison Aggarwal and Kristin Van Barneveld. These passionate and skilled members of our board have provided RLC with expert guidance in relation to (respectively): technology projects and innovation; community engagement, collaboration and staff wellbeing; and employment-related issues. Thank you for your years of involvement with Redfern Legal Centre – you will be missed.

Amid these sad farewells came some exciting new beginnings. After a comprehensive skills audit and

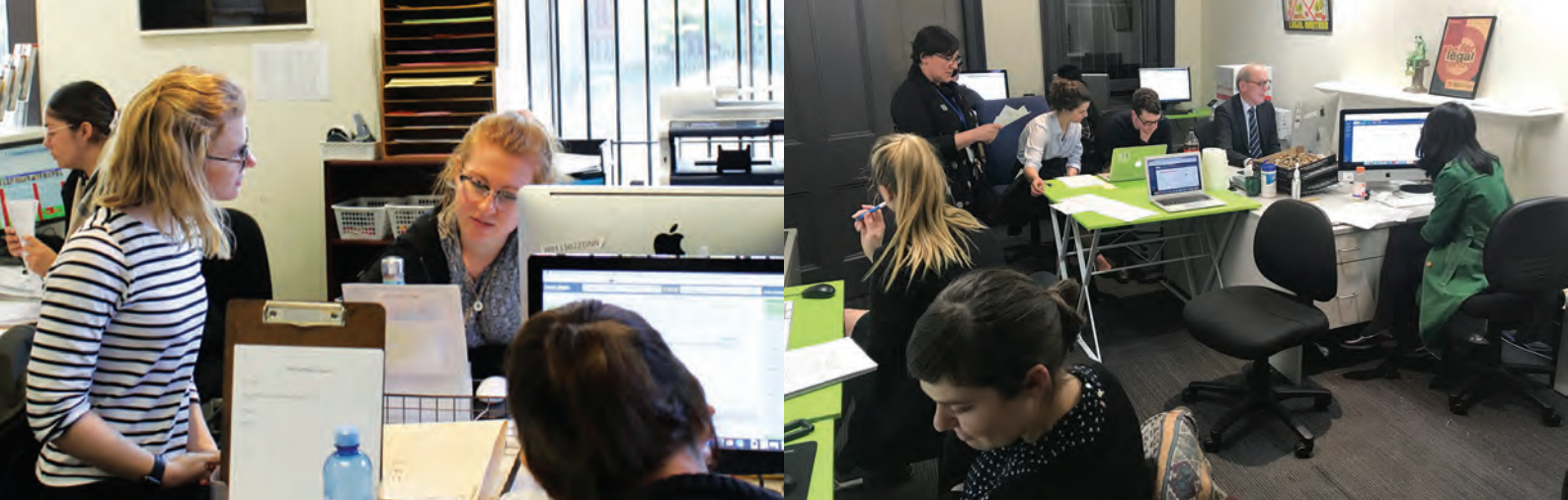
review of our constitution, we were thrilled to welcome in several new committed and enthusiastic board members. You can learn more about these new members of our team on pages 46 and 47 of this report.

We also welcomed staff to our new Financial Abuse Legal Service. Thanks to the generous support of American Express, King & Wood, Mallesons, Ashurst and PwC Australia, this innovative service will meet unmet legal by providing free, confidential legal information and advice for people who have experienced financial abuse in intimate partner relationships.

As always, it is our hardworking staff, volunteers, and partners whose expertise and dedication improve the financial security, housing and employment circumstances, and safety and wellbeing of thousands of people every year. Thank you to everyone who has lent their time and energy to ensure our continued success; it has been a(nother) huge year for Redfern Legal Centre.

Amy Munro, Chair

Joanna Shulman, CEO



Pictured: Volunteer Legal Assistants on RLC's Front Desk (left), and volunteer solicitors preparing for evening advice (right).

Our vision

Our vision is that Redfern Legal Centre (RLC) is acknowledged as a leader in providing quality legal services to the community.

Our vision is that RLC will respond to the needs of the community through its development of core specialist skills in the following areas:

- Credit, debt and consumer complaints
- Financial abuse
- Health justice partnerships
- International students
- Tenancy and housing
- Police and government accountability
- Employment, and
- Discrimination and human rights.

Our vision is that RLC will also provide generalist advice to clients on low incomes who experience disadvantages such as:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- People with disability
- People that are, or are at risk of being, homeless
- People experiencing financial abuse and domestic violence
- People of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Single parents
- Young persons (under 21)
- Older persons
- Other vulnerable people, and
- Persons recently released from prison or a psychiatric institution.

As a result, RLC will be a Centre of Excellence, providing thought leadership and cutting-edge law reform in these areas for the benefit of our community.

Our purpose

RLC promotes social justice by:

- Providing free legal advice, legal services and education to disadvantaged people in New South Wales; in particular to residents of inner Sydney and to the groups who advocate for them, and
- Participating in activities that reduce inequalities and defects in laws, the legal system, and administrative and social practices that impact on disadvantaged people.

Our values

- Equity and social justice
- Empowerment of individuals and communities to enjoy their rights, and
- Respect for clients, the communities we work within, and each other.

Our objectives

1. Legal Services

To assist people experiencing vulnerability people and their advocates to access justice and the legal system.

2. Legal Reform

To identify and seek to remove inequalities in the law, legal system, administrative practices and society as a whole that affect vulnerable people by working for social and legal change to enhance respect for human rights.

3. Legal Education

To empower individuals and advocates through the provision of legal education to resolve their legal issues and assert their rights.

4. Organisational Resourcing

To sustain an infrastructure and administration that provides adequate resourcing for our activities and to effectively manage and maintain those resources.

Our Impact

Over the last financial year, Redfern Legal Centre has assisted 2,474 people with 5,915 occasions of advice, assistance and representation. In addition, our student volunteers provided 1,073 instances of information and referrals.

Feedback from our client survey, May–June 2019

- 95% agreed or strongly agreed it was easy to contact our service when they first needed help.
- 98% agreed or strongly agreed we listened to them and they felt respected.
- 96% agreed or strongly agreed we helped them understand their legal problem.
- 70% said they needed support to use our service for personal or cultural reasons, and 89% agreed we helped them with those needs.
- 90% said they would recommend our service to family and friends
- 89% agreed they had one or more of the following outcomes:
 - > 54% reported reduced stress
 - > 32% an improved financial situation
 - > 16% more secure housing
 - > 24% increased safety.

WHO WE HELPED

18%

people with a disability

18%

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

76%

people experiencing financial disadvantage

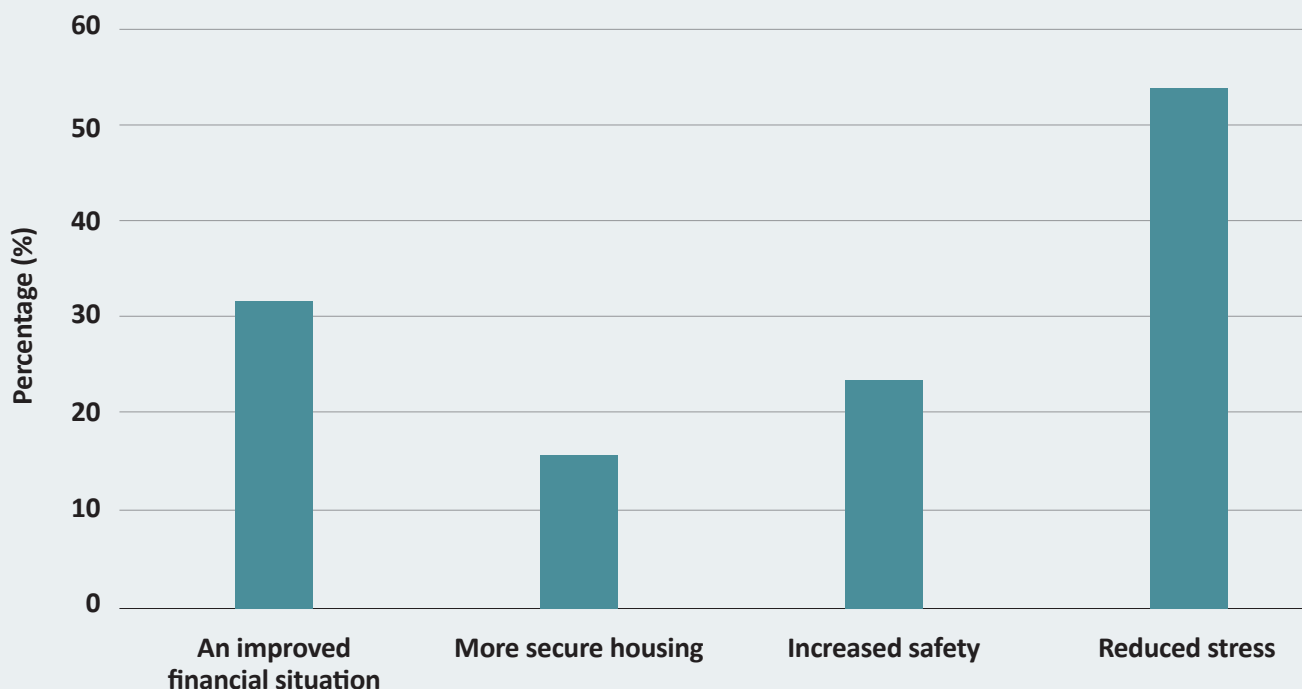
33%

spoke a main language at home other than English

20%

were experiencing or at risk of family violence

AS A RESULT OF RLC'S HELP, I HAVE:



International Student Legal Service NSW

Top issues:

1. Employment law
2. Tenancy and housing
3. Disputes with universities
4. Motor vehicle accidents
5. Credit, debt and consumer law
6. Road traffic infringements and fines
7. Minor criminal matters
8. Family law and domestic violence
9. Victims of assault
10. Immigration relating to other legal issues (such as employment law).

WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY

100%

reported reduced stress

20%

an improved financial situation

40%

more secure housing

20%

increased safety



"I would like to recommend RLC to those who are in need of legal advice and who want to know about rights we have, so we don't live like we don't have [any]."

Health Justice Partnership (at RPA Hospital, Sydney Dental Hospital and RedLink)

Top issues:

1. Family Law, Child Support and Child Contact
2. Child Protection
3. Domestic Violence and AVOs
4. Credit, Debt and Consumer Law
5. Wills, Probate and Guardianship
6. Victims of Assault, including National Redress Scheme
7. Tenancy and Housing
8. Minor Criminal Matters
9. Stolen Generations Reparations
10. Government benefits and pensions.

WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY

63%

reported reduced stress

44%

an improved financial situation

25%

more secure housing

44%

increased safety



"Thank you so much for listening to me and providing me with non-judgmental support. I am more grateful than you could know."

"... excellent lawyers and staff are helping me in coping with injustice and unfairness."

"Thank you so much for your support and belief. You cannot fathom how much it truly means to be heard."

Inner Sydney Tenants' Advice and Advocacy Service (ISTAAS)

Top issues:

1. Advice on going to NCAT
2. Termination of tenancies
3. Bonds and compensation
4. Rent and other charges
5. Repairs
6. Social housing issues
7. Issues in shared housing or boarding houses.

WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY

75%

reported reduced stress

63%

an improved financial situation

50%

more secure housing

25%

increased safety

“Tenancy issues are never easy, but through your hard work and dedication I was able to get through it and reach the best possible result.”

Our impact 2018–19

Participated in

45

decision making committees and roundtables

253

Community legal education, engagement, and public speaking events

Represented tenants at an NCAT hearing or conciliation

84

times

3

Hansard inclusions

Total advice, advocacy and representation

5,915

Total number of clients

2,474

2

Awards

4

published journal articles

Assisted

99

tenants at duty advocacy

113

published media stories

8

publications and factsheets

6

submissions

Police Powers and Government Administration

We provided advice and assistance on police complaints on 426 occasions.

Top issues:

1. Police complaints
2. Fines – disputes and appeals
3. GIPPA – Freedom of Information applications
4. Local Government and By-laws Issues
5. Government processes and procedures
6. Disputes with schools.



Students and staff from UNSW's Police Powers Clinic with RLC's Police Accountability solicitor.

“Please offer a personal thankyou to the [police powers solicitor] but also the lovely ‘legal student’ ... again, my sincere and heartfelt thankyou.”

Credit, Debt and Consumer Law

Top issues:

1. Consumer complaints – services
2. Debt owed to client
3. Debt recovery at Court stage
4. Debt management/negotiation
5. Consumer complaints financial/insurance/super
6. Consumer credit
7. Debt owed by client.



Financial abuse training session.

“[T]he importance of your work is greatly underestimated ... I felt defeated in every aspect of my life until you gave me guidance, knowledge and courage.”

Employment Law

Top issues:

1. Underpayments
2. Conditions and entitlements
3. Unfair dismissals
4. General protections
5. Injuries
6. Redundancy
7. Bullying and harassment.



RLC's Employment Law solicitor with a Practical Legal Trainee.

“Because of the advice provided by the Centre, I was able to confidently represent myself in a conciliation process against two powerful organisations and their law firm.”

Our Volunteers

279 volunteers worked with RLC over the 2018–19 financial year:

- 119 front desk volunteers
- 81 volunteer solicitors
- 79 Practical Legal Trainees and other specialist volunteers.



RLC volunteers, staff and supporters.

OUR VOLUNTEERS

Speak

37

different languages

Contributed over

15,000 hours

of volunteer time

Our volunteer legal assistants, solicitors and pro bono partnerships provide a commercial value of over

\$2 million

worth of benefit to the Centre each year

Listed below are the 279 dedicated RLC volunteers who contributed to our story over the last financial year.
To each and every individual, our heartfelt thanks.

Adam Yu	Christina White	Huong Tran	Luke Simon	Sam Westley
Adrian Rook	Christine Jeong	Ian Chong	Luyao (Lucy) Zhou	Samantha Titmuss
Aiko Wadley	Christine Weekes	Imogen Szumer	Lydia Albright-Le Page	Sara Virk
Aishah Ali	Christopher Lees	Irisa Rashid	Margaret Jones	Sarah Avery
Albert Cheng	Chun Fung	Isabella Pearson	Maria Wallis	Sarah Schwartz
Aleisha Vinoly	Chuyu Xiao	Isabella Satz	Mariham Guirguis	Sarahanne Moody
Alex Antoniazzi	Clare Yu	Isobel Blomfield	Mary Hawkins	Sarita Preedeesanit
Alex Dale	Claudia Robinson	Isobelle Waller	Matthew Churkovich	Scott Venter
Alex White	Cormac Guthrie	Ivan Li	Matthew Mewing	Shahad Nomani
Alexa Roach	Courtney Robertson	Jacinta Wang	Matthew Newcombe	Shaun Ch'ng
Alexis McShane	Daniel Roff	Jack Jacobs	Maxine Napret	Shiguang Zheng
Ali Zein	Danuzia Pontes	Jae Ho Lee	Merrilyn Mansfield	Shirley Yeung
Alia Richmond	Darrell Bagang	Jaipartee Singh	Meryem Aydogan	Shona Scully
Alice Chong	David Mulligan	James Walker	Michael Gibson	Shreosi Deb
Alina Kaye	David Tilley	Janet Simpson	Michael Windsor	Shuhong (Lisa) Liu
Alison Mackey	Dean Tyler	Jared Wilk	Milarose Ramos	Si Jin Angela Chen
Alison Smith	Denea Bascombe	Jason O'Neil	Nabeela Raihan	Simon Rice
Allison Rickett	Destiny Valencia	Jason Ye	Nadezna Wilkins	Simran Kaur
Ameisa Konneh	Diana Reid	Jennifer Hilliar	Nagham Suleiman	Sinem Kirk
Amelia Simpson	Dominic Keenan	Jennifer Wu	Naushin Khan	Sing Hau Yeap
Amrita Saluja	Dominic Longhurst	Jenny Li	Neha Chopra	Sofia Bahas
Amy Munro	Dominic Tran	Jessica Jin	Nicholas Simpson	Sophia Bouhalis
Amy Wang	Dominic Wright	Jessica Yu	Nicole Sammel	Sophie Hall
Amy Zhao	Eden Weller	Jevan Griffiths	Nikila Kaushik	Sophie Heithersay
Andrea Damiano	Eileen Zekun Yang	Jia Yi Lee	Noeline Harendran	Stefanie Vogt
Andrew Martin	Eleanor Maxted	Jie Nin Liang	Olivia Irvine	Stephanie Blancquart
Angelica McCall	Elijah Lim	Johannah Lowe	Osaigbovo Ojo	Stephen Mckenzie
Angelina Boutouridis	Elinore Rema	John Bi	Oscar Eunseok Lee	Sue Kang
Anna Fitzgibbon	Elizabeth Clark	Joseph Murphy	Patil Sevagian	Susan Winfield
Anna Kedves	Elizabeth Hunt	Joshua Poon	Patrichia Meleka	Tahmina Rashid
Anna Marquard-Karp	Elizabeth Jones	Juhi Jin	Patrick Trieu	Thalia Park
Anthony Hong	Ella Logan	Julian Charters	Paul Ahearn	Tiffany Ha
Antonia Fox Koob	Ella Parkes-Talbot	Kaitlyn Oliver	Paul Hong	Tim Capelin
Arinta Wanichpongpan	Elle Triantafillou	Kamani Krishnan	Paul Tatarov	Tim Forrest
Armity Hashkavaei	Elleni Zacharia	Kate Duke	Paula Stafford	Tina Huang
Ben Day	Elsie Cheung	Kate Sammut	Paulina Fusitu'a	Trilby Donald
Ben Salon	Emily Shen	Katelin Chambers	Peerce McManus	Tyrone Kelly
Bonnie Hart	Erin Turner Manners	Katie Latimer	Penelope Parker	Umeya Chaudhuri
Brendon Francis	Esther Adeyinka	Kerry O'Brien	Phil Andrews	Uzma Sherieff
Brett Stone	Esther Matthews	Kirstyn Ho	Philippa Meikle	Vanja Bulut
Bronte Sevil	Faye Gabby Schachter	Krista MacPherson	Philippa Noakes	Vasili Maroulis
Bryce Lewis	Ferdous Bahar	Labdhi Jhatakia	Polina Churilova	Victor Wai
Caitlin Tao	Fiona Katauskas	Laila Ali	Preeti Lo	Vijay Prakash
Callum Christodoulou	Florence Fermanis	Lara Czysnok	Prue Bolton	Vy Dao
Callum Hair	Francesca Lilly	Laura Toren	Puneet Sandhu	Waveney Lewis
Camilla Clemente	Freya Henfrey	Lauren Lai	Rachel Spittaler	Winny Bhushan Seelam
Carla Cristina Massai	Gayatri Nair	Lauren Mendes	Rebecca Blumberg	Winston Chu
Fedatto	Genevieve Couvret	Lauren Parnaby	Rebecca Koelmeyer	Yeting Guo
Carla Ianni	Grace Paton	Lauren Stefanou	Rebecca Malek	Yi Weiliu
Carolyn Liaw	Guy Williams	Lauren Wang	Rebecca Pecovski	Yijing Yuan
Catriona Cook	Halil Ozbeyazli	Lily Jones	Rita Caruana	Yuogang Chung
Cecilia Ngu	Harris Kershaw	Linda Tucker	Rory McLeod	Zeinab Zein
Chitra Rangarajan	Harry Phan	Lindsay Stevens	Rose Short	Zoe Anastassiades
Chris Anderson	Hassan Naveed	Lola Chang	Sabrina Wong	Zoe Behrens
Christian Huston	Hayley Melville	Louisa Henderson	Saeed Saadie	Zoe Dunford
Christina Dang	Helen Wei	Luciana Chong	Sahana Sateesha	Zoe Papagiannis

Honouring Margaret Jones (1927–2019)

One of RLC's longest-serving volunteers, Margaret Jones, passed away this year, aged 91. Margaret died peacefully in her sleep on Saturday 2 February 2019.

Born in 1927, Margaret was an uncompromising lesbian feminist-separatist who devoted her life to social change politics. Margaret advocated for a broad range of issues, including women's liberation, the union movement and LGBTIQ rights.

As was typical for many Irish working-class families of her time, Margaret was removed from school at the age of 14 and sent out into the workforce to support her family.

Without any formal training, she cut her teeth as a 'Girl Friday' in law offices during the 1940s and went on to maintain a long and successful career as a managing clerk at various Sydney law firms.

A true trailblazer, Margaret came out as a lesbian in the 1950s – an exceptionally brave move for a woman of her time. She was a founding member of CAMP Inc, the first gay and lesbian rights organisation in Australia, and attended the first Mardi Gras protest of 1978.

She first joined Redfern Legal Centre (RLC) in 1977 as a volunteer office manager for our evening advice service, while working by day as a legal clerk at a Redfern law firm. She went on to volunteer at other organisations including Welfare Rights Centre.

Margaret was passionate about advancing the rights of women and championing the achievements of women in public life. She was instrumental in putting many women forward for Australia Day honours, including Mary Waterford, Trish Doyle MP, Roxanne McMurray, former RLC CEO, Helen Campbell, and former RLC principal solicitor, Elizabeth Morley.

Margaret was also the biggest contributor of nominations to the Ernie Awards for Sexist Behaviour and is responsible for the most wins in the award's history, earning her the title, "Queen of the Ernies".

Retiring at 60, Margaret showed no signs of slowing down. She immediately took up an arts degree at Macquarie University, where she specialised in women's studies. In 2006, she returned to RLC, where she spent the last 12 years deftly handling client intake on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, as well as being a mainstay of our drop-in JP service.

"What really stands out about Margaret is not so much her considerable wisdom as her boundless compassion for those who are in difficult circumstances."

– Helen Campbell, AOM

Margaret gained many significant accolades for her volunteer work. In 2011, she received the Senior Highly Commended Volunteer of the Year Award, presented to her at Parliament House by the Hon Victor Dominello MP, Minister for Volunteering, as well as the MP's Volunteer of the Year Award, presented by the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP.

In 2012, film producers Rose Tracey and Spencer Austad made a documentary about Margaret's life, *Seeing Margaret Jones*. The film highlighted Margaret's many achievements, speaking to friends and colleagues including Tanya Plibersek MP, Sally McManus, Dr Mary Spongberg, Dr Meredith Burgmann, Helen Campbell AOM and Trish Doyle.

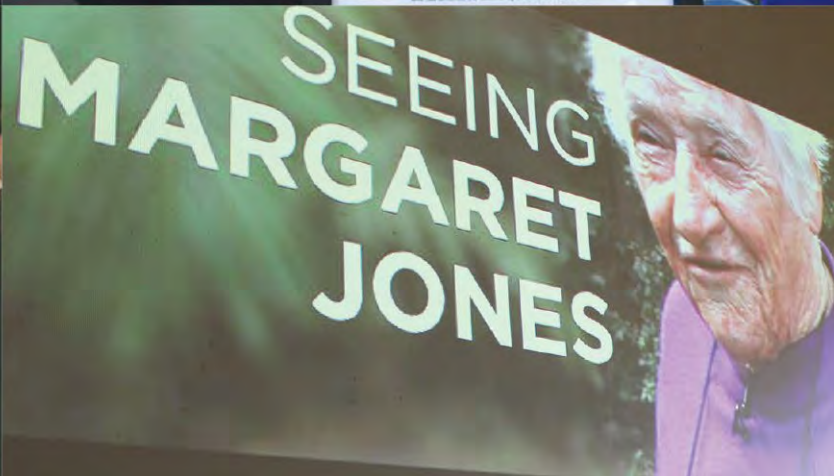
In 2018, during National Volunteer Week, Margaret was awarded the Counterpoint Founders' Choice Award in recognition of her tireless volunteering efforts and decades of dedicated service to the community.

RLC staff and volunteers alike depended on Margaret's many talents, including her razor-sharp proof-reading abilities ("Has Margaret checked this yet?"), her flamboyant, no-nonsense attitude, and her immense knowledge of Australia's legal and political landscape.

Margaret was a uniquely passionate and principled woman and the example she set remains an inspiration. She is deeply missed by all of us.

In recognition of Margaret's immense legacy, the film *Seeing Margaret Jones* screened publicly during the 2019 Queer Screen Mardi Gras Film Festival in February. A private screening was also held at Redfern Town Hall in March for RLC staff and volunteers.

In Margaret's honour, RLC will hold an annual Margaret Jones Volunteer award, recognising outstanding achievements and dedication to RLC.



Pictured clockwise from top left: Helen Campbell AOM, Hilary Chesworth (RLC Administrator), Margaret Jones, and the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, 2011; Kristin Van Barneveld (RLC board), with Margaret at an International Women's Day rally; Margaret Jones, NSW Volunteer of The Year, 2011; *Seeing Margaret Jones*, Redfern Town Hall, March 2019; Margaret with RLC staff at the Ernie Awards for Sexist Behaviour, NSW Parliament House, 2019; and Margaret and Hilary Chesworth.

Our Team

In 1977, RLC opened its doors as the first community legal centre in NSW. We are dedicated to upholding human rights, improving access to justice, and delivering innovative legal solutions to support people in crisis.

Our Centre was founded by a passionate group of legal advocates, activists and academics. Their commitment to equity and fairness under the law drives our work to this day.

RLC continues to expand as we seek out new ways to help communities in need. We not only maintain a diverse range of free legal services, we achieve systemic change through our policy and law reform work, build capacity through community legal education, nurture the next generation of lawyers through our volunteer program, and provide an authoritative voice on human rights, equality and justice.

Volunteers are integral to everything we do, exponentially expanding our impact and our reach. Passionate law students work on the frontline of our service. Skilled solicitors staff our evening advice nights. Practical Legal Trainees and other specialist volunteers support our day-to-day operations; and our dedicated board lend us their expertise to help guide our strategic directions.

None of this would be possible without the generous support of our funders, donors and supporters who ensure we have the resources we need to maintain RLC's critical services.

The ever-growing demand for free legal help will always outpace our limited funding pool. The continued support of our extended networks is our greatest resource in the fight for greater financial sustainability. It is only through the energy and generosity of our entire team that we are able to increase the reach of our programs and achieve new goals.

Our sincere thanks to the pro bono partners, universities, corporate partners and student law groups who have supported us this year:

- American Express
- Ashurst
- DLA Piper
- Fragomen
- Gilbert + Tobin Lawyers
- King & Wood Mallesons
- Lander & Rogers
- McCabe Curwood

“This kind of work has without a doubt, motivated me to continue my passion for a human rights-based career!”

– Chitra, Volunteer Legal Assistant

“Working at RLC was a truly inspiring and wonderful experience. It was an excellent opportunity to learn about legal practice in the community legal sector from a team of inspiring and incredibly talented people.”

– Umeya, Practical Legal Trainee

- New South Wales Bar Association
- PwC Australia
- Sparke Helmore Lawyers
- Sydney Uni Law Society
- Sydney University Law Revue
- Telstra
- The Hand Up Foundation
- Thomson Reuters
- University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) Law Students' Society
- UNSW Law School
- UTS Law School
- Watts McCray Lawyers
- Wotton + Kearney.

Special thanks to all the individual solicitors, secondees and pro bono coordinators and partners from the firms included above, who have provided advice, casework and advocacy to our clients and strategic support to RLC.

Barristers

We thank the following barristers for providing their services to our clients on a pro bono basis:

- Andrew Naylor
- Brenda Tronson
- Chris Ronalds, SC
- Christoph Leiderman
- Marea Wilson
- Mark Seymour
- Vanja Bulut.

Partnerships

RLC is highly appreciative of the assistance and partnership of the following firms, each of which is connected to one of our key areas of law.



Credit and Debt Partner

RLC's credit and debt team continues its pro bono partnership with Ashurst. Lawyers from Ashurst provide assistance with advice and research for casework and community legal information, enabling the team to take on more complex and difficult matters. They also accept referrals from the credit and debt practice, where possible. This partnership is an important resource for RLC and we greatly appreciate Ashurst's continued support.

CLAYTON UTZ

Employment Law & Health Justice Partnership Partner

RLC continues its highly successful partnership with Clayton Utz in the area of employment law, providing support for clients who have been underpaid or unpaid, representation in unfair dismissal and general protections conciliations and underpayment claims to the Federal Circuit Court. The scheme results in excellent outcomes for many of RLC's clients who would otherwise be unable to obtain representation and be unfairly disadvantaged in their disputes with employers. Clayton Utz also supports RLC's innovative Health Justice Partnership with the Sydney Local Health District, which delivers legal advice to people in a hospital setting and trains hospital staff to identify legal issues affecting their patients.



Police Accountability Practice Partner

DLA Piper supports RLC's police accountability practice. DLA provides solicitors to help staff RLC's Monday night police accountability advice clinic, and assists with the practice's advice and casework by drafting police complaints, undertaking research, developing resources and assisting in the investigation and conduct of test cases. The assistance provided by DLA Piper is invaluable to the police accountability practice.



International Student Legal Service NSW Pro Bono Partner (Visa Advice)

In RLC's targeted service to international students, effective legal advice often entails advice about the student's visa. Fragomen continues its pro bono partnership with RLC by providing registered migration agents to attend RLC advice clinics. Fragomen's expertise in migration law is a great asset to this service.



Domestic Violence Partner

Gilbert + Tobin Lawyers were the pro bono partner for RLC's Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (Sydney WDVCS), accepting referrals for clients not eligible for Legal Aid and assisting with law reform and policy submissions. Throughout the year, Gilbert + Tobin also provided invaluable administrative support to Sydney WDVCS, scanning all of its intake forms and copying and preparing information packs for all of its clients. We are incredibly grateful for this support.



Housing and Homelessness Partner

RLC's Inner Sydney Tenants' Advice and Advocacy Service (ISTAAS) is fortunate to enjoy continued support from the Human Rights Law Group at King & Wood Mallesons. Their invaluable legal advice and support has assisted us to provide representation for additional people in Tribunal matters. King & Wood Mallesons also provides assistance to the inner-city community legal centres by providing a venue and support for the volunteer solicitors' training program.



International Student Legal Service NSW and Pro Bono Advice Clinic Partner

McCabe Curwood are the pro bono partner for RLC's state-wide international students' service, funded by Study NSW to advise students in a range of areas of civil law, including credit, debt and consumer issues, employment, complaints against education providers, family law and housing. McCabe Curwood provides much-needed legal support for international students, who often lack sufficient resources and knowledge of the Australian legal system to avoid exploitation and access justice. McCabe Curwood also assists with RLC's weekly pro bono advice clinic on a monthly basis, assisting people experiencing disadvantage with a range of legal issues, including credit and debt, consumer and tenancy matters, review of government decisions, victims' compensation applications, access to records and mental health and guardianship.

Watts McCray

L A W Y E R S

Family Law Partner

Watts McCray has been providing family law advice to clients of RLC on a weekly basis for many years, including in relation to divorce, children and property. Their support and expertise is invaluable to the people we assist, many of whom are victims of domestic violence and financial abuse. We look forward to continuing our partnership with Watts McCray for many years to come.

Lander & Rogers

Lawyers

Pro Bono Advice Clinic and Family Law Partner

Lander & Rogers assists with RLC's weekly pro bono advice clinic on a fortnightly basis, assisting people experiencing disadvantage with a range of legal issues, including credit and debt, consumer and tenancy matters, review of government decisions, victims' compensation applications, access to records and mental health and guardianship. Lander & Rogers has also commenced providing family law advice and assistance to clients of RLC's new Financial Abuse Legal Service.



Pro Bono Advice Clinic Partner

Wotton + Kearney assists with RLC's weekly pro bono advice clinic on a monthly basis, assisting people experiencing disadvantage with a range of legal issues, including credit and debt, consumer and tenancy matters, review of government decisions, victims' compensation applications, access to records and mental health and guardianship.

Financial Abuse Legal Service NSW Partners and Supporters

Trained pro bono solicitors from corporate firms including PwC Australia, American Express, King & Wood Mallesons, Ashurst and Telstra advise clients attending RLC's Financial Abuse Legal Service clinics on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. Pro bono solicitors from Lander & Rogers also attend the clinic to advise clients on overlapping family law issues.

The Financial Abuse Legal Service NSW would not be possible without funds from American Express, Ashurst, King & Wood Mallesons and PwC Australia.

Redfern Legal Centre Young Professionals Committee

The RLC Young Professionals Committee ('YPC') continues its mission to proactively seek out new ways of supporting the work of RLC through promotion and fundraising.

Financial Abuse: Uncovering a Silent Form of Domestic Violence

In March the YPC proudly presented our inaugural panel discussion, which focused on financial abuse in intimate partner relationships. Held at King & Wood Mallesons, this highly informative fundraiser was a great success, with plenty of positive feedback from attendees and speakers.

Facilitated by RLC CEO Jo Shulman, our panel of experts discussed the social and psychological impact of financial abuse, outlining some unique challenges faced by people experiencing this widespread but under-reported form of domestic violence.

Speakers included Jozica Kutin, a researcher at RMIT University who recently completed a PhD on financial abuse in intimate partner relationships; Rachael Natoli, financial abuse survivor and founder of the Lokahi Foundation; Laura Bianchi, the solicitor who is heading up RLC's new state-wide financial abuse practice; and Vanessa Emery, a financial counsellor at the Wesley Mission and member of the Financial Counsellors Association of NSW Board.

We were delighted to see the event sell out raising much needed funds for RLC, with 35% of proceeds also supporting Lokahi Foundation Australia's efforts to assist women affected by financial abuse.

Special thanks to all our panelists for giving us their time and invaluable insights. The YPC would also like to express our gratitude to the event sponsor, King & Wood Mallesons who provided the wonderful venue, and in particular, to Dan Creasey and Jane Timbs, whose support was crucial to ensuring the night was a huge success.

Redfern and Waterloo Volunteer Awards

During National Volunteer Week, the RLC YPC received an award in the Redfern and Waterloo Volunteer Awards in recognition of its contributions to the community. Co-Chair Ivan Li attended the awards ceremony to receive the award on behalf of the Committee.

"I cannot even articulate how incredible my time has been at RLC. I have learnt an unbelievable amount and the experience has been so formative for me in deciding what career path I want my life to take."

– Matthew, RLC Young Professionals Committee Member

Comedy Night

In May, the YPC assisted with the running RLC's annual comedy night: 'Truth, Justice and the Redfern Way!' and helped secure prizes for the fundraising raffle. Held at Giant Dwarf theatre in the heart of Redfern, and featuring a diverse line up of comedy talent, the event sold over 200 tickets.

A huge thanks to our wonderful performers, who generously donated their time or reduced their fee to stand up for RLC. Thank you: Joe Shaffer (MC), Tom Ballard, Shiralee Hood, Michael Hing, Angus Thompson, Nina Oyama, Oliver Twist, Lauren Bonner and Tom Walker. Thanks also to all the hardworking staff at Giant Dwarf, and in particular to Moira Kennedy.

Blackmores Running Event

The Blackmores Sydney Running Festival is a marathon that takes place in September each year, with participants fundraising for the charity of their choice. With the event transitioning to a new online platform, the RLC YPC took charge of setting up RLC's online presence and worked to formulate a promotional strategy to attract runners and donors for the event. In total, 20 runners pledged their fundraising proceeds to RLC.

The year ahead

Over the coming year, the Committee will continue to develop new fundraising ideas, as well as looking at ways to reconnect with volunteer alumni, while strengthening our relationship with the next generation of Front Desk volunteers. Stay tuned for more exciting networking events, including a trivia night!

Get in touch

If you have any questions about the RLC YPC and its work, or if you would like to get involved, please email to youngprofessionals@rlc.org.au. We would love to hear from you!



Pictured clockwise from top left: YPC Co-Chair accepting an award at the Redfern and Waterloo Volunteer Awards, May 2019; The YPC at RLC's sold-out financial abuse panel discussion, March 2019; Oliver Twist performing at 'Truth Justice and the Redfern Way', May 2019; Tom Ballard headlining 'Truth Justice and the Redfern Way', May 2019; Panellists discussing financial abuse, March 2019; and Team RLC at the Blackmores Sydney Running Festival, September 2018.

YPC Committee Members 2018-19

Ali Zein, Treasurer

Brendon Francis, General Member

Cecilia Ngu, General Member

Elizabeth Clark, General Member

Elizabeth Jones, General Member

Ferdous Bahar, General Member

Ivan Li, Co-Chair

Jason O'Neil, General Member

Lily Jones, Co-Chair

Matthew Mewing, General Member

Rachel Spittaler, General Member

Sarah Avery, General Member

Shaun Ch'ng, General Member

Shona Scully, General Member

Sofia Bahas, Secretary

Credit, Debt and Consumer Law and Financial Abuse Legal Service

RLC's Credit, Debt and Consumer Law practice provides advice and advocacy in areas such as consumer credit, banking, insurance, superannuation, debt recovery, and consumer complaints about products and services including telecommunications and utilities. We also assist people in navigating the legal system through claims to the Ombudsman services, NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal and Local Court Small Claims Division.

Working for change

Over the last year, we have continued to use our casework to achieve systemic change. This year, our focus has predominantly been on financial abuse and advocating for increased protections and better outcomes from industry, government, and regulators.

With this focus, we have contributed submissions on a range of issues, such as ASIC's consultation on responsible lending assessments for credit cards; the Australian Banking Associations Every Customer Counts, Better Banking for Vulnerable Customers consultation paper on developing a new industry guideline; and Treasury's review of the early access to superannuation benefits. We have also participated in discussions with the ACCC regarding the Consumer Data Right and potential safety risks for people who have experienced financial abuse.

Casework

Launch of the Financial Abuse Legal Service

Through our casework, we identified an area of unmet legal for domestic violence survivors experiencing financial abuse. In response, we engaged new partners, funding and support, enabling us to establish a specialist Financial Abuse Service in NSW.

Launched in June, the service provides free, confidential legal information and advice for people who have experienced financial abuse in intimate partner relationships. We have trained pro bono solicitors from corporate firms including PwC Australia, American Express, King & Wood Mallesons, Ashurst and Telstra to advise clients at half-day clinics supervised by RLC every Tuesday and Thursday morning.

Education and training

Our practice continues to build capability within the community sector through the provision of training and support to financial counsellors and community workers. We have presented webinars on financial

"The importance of your work is greatly underestimated. I felt defeated in every aspect of my life until you gave me guidance, knowledge and courage."

– Shannon*

"Due to her legal expertise and skill as a trauma-informed lawyer, she knew how to help me think clearly about all legal aspects of my case, and how to make decisions for myself."

– Sophia*

* Names have been changed

abuse in intimate relationships as well as a two-part series on how to resolve debts through internal dispute resolution and external dispute resolution.

We also conducted specialised financial abuse training for the lawyers volunteering in the Financial Abuse Legal Service. This training provided the lawyers with an understanding of domestic violence and trauma-informed legal practice.

Community and government engagement

This year we have had many opportunities to advocate for our local community at various government and community events. We are active members of the following groups:

- **The Economic Abuse Reference Group Victoria** – an informal group of community organisations that influences government and industry responses to the financial impact of family violence.
- **The Firmer Foundations Advisory Group** – in relation to the free coaching program for women that aims to increase money management skills, financial security and independence.
- **The Thriving Communities Partnership (NSW Chapter)** – a cross-sector collaboration which aims to ensure that everybody has fair access to the modern essential services needed to thrive in contemporary Australia: including utilities, financial services, telecommunications and transport.

The practice has presented at various events. For International Women's Day in March, RLC organised a panel discussion to raise awareness about financial abuse. We also presented to PwC staff at their International Women's Day event. We used this opportunity to discuss the impacts of financial abuse and RLC's early intervention and prevention work.

Forms of abuse



REDFERN
LEGAL CENTRE

Our Credit and Debt Team Leader delivering in-house training to lawyers volunteering at RLC's Financial Abuse Legal Service.

Jessica's story: Financial abuse

Content warning: domestic violence, suicide

When Jessica* met her partner, she had long term employment, a stable rental and significant savings. After they moved in together, Jessica's partner became increasingly reliant on her to pay for the rent, bills and groceries. Slowly, the controlling behaviour escalated. He encouraged Jessica to give him joint access to her savings account and later stole most of the money by transferring it to an overseas account without her permission.

He gained access to her personal banking details and set up passwords for her online accounts. He got a credit card online in Jessica's name without her knowledge. He wanted a brand-new luxury car, and Jessica was coerced into getting an expensive car loan in her name.

Jessica was struggling to afford the repayments across these various loans. Her partner refused to contribute. Jessica later discovered he was gambling and had lied about working. When Jessica confronted him, he became violent. She says she was afraid that he would have killed her if a neighbour had not come to her aid. Soon after this, her partner pressured her to attend the bank with him and withdraw a large sum of cash from her account. Shortly after, he left Australia and Jessica was left with all the debt.

Jessica's experience of domestic violence made her so unwell she was unable to work. She went months with no income, during which time she attempted suicide and obtained more debt in an attempt to manage her existing debt. For years, Jessica was being chased by debt collectors and suffering from extreme financial stress. Despite working long hours, she could not get ahead. Eventually, her wages were garnished, reducing her income to only \$495 per week which was less than her rent, let alone her other bills and debt repayments. She was actively considering bankruptcy when she contacted RLC for advice.

RLC investigated the financial abuse in the context of the lending by the various creditors. After lengthy negotiations with the creditors, over \$80,000 in debt was waived. We also assisted Jessica with a successful claim of almost \$25,000 compensation for irresponsible lending on the car loan.

*Name and some identifying details have been changed

RLC in the media

Changes to Australian Consumer Law: key benefits for vulnerable consumers

By Laura Bianchi, Credit, Debt and Consumer Law Solicitor at Redfern Legal Centre. *The Law Society Journal*, November 2018.

The Treasury Laws Amendment (Australian Consumer Law Review) Bill 2018 (Cth) was recently passed and will enact the first suite of proposals from the Australian Consumer Law Review. These reforms aim to 'strengthen and clarify the law, help consumers and traders better understand their rights and obligations, improve outcomes across Australian markets and help future-proof the ACL' (*Consumer Affairs Australia and New Zealand, Australian Consumer Law Review Final Report* (March 2017) Commonwealth of Australia).

Vulnerable consumers will benefit from amendments to unsolicited agreements, price transparency, guarantees for transportation and storage of goods, and the addition of a power for the ACCC and ASIC to investigate unfair contract terms. Further legislative amendments and economy-wide studies are expected to follow. These will require policy development, stakeholder engagement and regulatory impact analysis.

Vulnerable consumers will still rely on practitioners, particularly community legal centres to continue to advocate for their rights.

Full article available at: <https://lawsociety.cld.bz/LSJ-November-2018/70/>

OUR IMPACT



**Increased safety
and financial
independence**

**Reduction in poverty
and homelessness**



**Increased confidence and ability to leave and remain out of
an abusive relationship**



**Greater public awareness
about financial abuse**



Working together

Thank you to American Express, Ashurst, King & Wood Mallesons and PwC Australia who provided the funds and solicitor time which allowed us to launch the Financial Abuse Legal Service. We are pleased to partner with these four innovative corporations to together tackle financial abuse.

Employment Law

This year, the employment law practice focused on recovering underpayments, and agitating for law reform to stop sexual harassment in the workplace. In both of these areas, there is an overwhelming need for additional avenues of legal support, and it is often impossible for our clients to take action without legal assistance and representation.

Working for change

Wage theft

Over the past year, community awareness and concern about the endemic levels of wage theft in Australian workplaces has increased.

There is growing support for businesses to be held to account for exploiting workers and for underpayment and non-payment of wages to be criminalised. We are seeing this play out at a state level (Victoria and Queensland) and at a national level. The Morrison federal government has indicated that it intends to introduce criminal sanctions for the worst cases of wage underpayment.

RLC has worked towards law reform that deters employers from exploiting their employees and improves access to justice for vulnerable workers, such as international students.

This year, RLC has focused on novel ways to protect international students from workplace exploitation. We were instrumental in creating the new Migrant Employment Legal Service for migrant workers across NSW, in collaboration with Kingsford Legal Service, Inner City Legal Centre and Marrickville Legal Centre.

This service will provide access to justice to an underserved group of people who, for a variety of reasons, are often reluctant to access existing government employment resources, especially in relation to the recovery of stolen wages. We are very excited about this new opportunity: watch this space.

Sexual harassment

In April, we released the report *#MeToo: Legal Responses to Sexual harassment at Work*. Produced in collaboration with Kingsford Legal Centre and the Women's Legal Service of NSW, the report was submitted to the Australian Human Rights Commission's National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces. It details the endemic nature of sexual harassment at work, highlighting our clients' experiences and deficiencies in the current law and complaints system.

“Everyone in the conciliation was stunned when they realised I knew what I was doing ... It was so important to me that I got that chance to speak my truth, and do it without falling apart.”

– Mouna*

* Names have been changed

Our report focuses on the specific difficulties faced by international students experiencing sexual harassment at work, and makes recommendations to offer increased protections to international students experiencing workplace exploitation and sexual harassment.

Advice and casework

RLC is interested in achieving systemic change for exploited workers, whether they are classified as contractors or employees. Novel platform-based models of engaging workers, ostensibly as contractors, drives down working conditions by circumventing workplace laws.

We have advised many international students engaged in work through mobile phone apps, who are paid far below the basic minimum wage for the hours they are logged into the app, and are not protected by their employer's insurance policies or offered the benefit of workplace training. The gig economy is creating a second-tier model of workers vulnerable to exploitation and we are working with clients to change this through the courts.



Pictured left: In July, RLC convened a roundtable bringing together community legal centre staff, RLC pro bono partners and other employment law experts to discuss strategies to address high levels of exploitation of migrant workers; and **right:** RLC's Employment Law solicitor with a Practical Legal Trainee at Western Sydney University.

Rosa's story: Wage theft

Rosa* was a migrant worker employed in the marketing department of an internet start-up company. Her employer failed to pay her for six weeks. Rosa tried to settle her dispute with the business and was able to recover \$6000 of the \$12,000 owed. Rosa continued to work for the business on the promise that she would be paid the balance in the future but each time she raised the debt, her boss made excuse about the delay.

RLC helped Rosa draft a letter of demand to her employer and then lodge an application in the small claims division of the Local Court. In response, her employer argued that Rosa was not an employee but was an independent contractor. Rosa came to us for advice before the pre-trial review. We helped her draft evidence of her status as an employee, and told her what to expect on the day at court. She was well prepared and knew how to negotiate and handle herself and she obtained a settlement amount to her satisfaction.

*Name and some identifying details have been changed

Mikko's story: Gig economy

RLC partnered with Colin Biggers and Paisley in a potential test case on the gig economy involving an international student.

Mikko* used an app to pick up jobs to drive out and wash cars in various locations in Sydney. He came to RLC to get advice about whether he had been underpaid and whether he was an independent contractor or employee. We advised Mikko that he was an employee, calculated that he was underpaid by \$10,000 and advised how to bring a claim against his former employer. Mikko then initiated proceedings in the Federal Circuit Court, and obtained a default judgment in his favour. An application was then made by the employer to set this decision aside.

RLC appeared for Mikko in the Federal Circuit Court, where a decision was made to set aside the default judgment on the basis that it was in the public interest to have this matter opened for hearing to determine whether the company's workers were contractors or employees. While we were committed to run this possible test case to hearing, the parties independently settled the matter without involvement from RLC.

*Name and some identifying details have been changed

RLC in the media

Backpackers, international students losing out on \$1 billion in unpaid wages

Leesa McKenny and Omar Dabbagh report for SBS investigations (29 October 2018)

Redfern Legal Centre's employment solicitor Sharmilla Bargon said international students they dealt with often weighed up whether recovering wages was worth jeopardising a \$300,000 degree. "They have to balance that against pursuing a \$5,000 underpayment claim," said Ms Bargon, who added in some cases employers threatened to report complainants to the Department of Home Affairs for breaching their visa conditions. "So for some people, it's a very simple answer and they don't take action, and it's understandable."

Full article available at: <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/backpackers-international-students-losing-out-on-1-billion-in-unpaid-wages>

Promise of training with luxury hotel group entraps visa workers

Anna Patty reports for *The Sydney Morning Herald* (7 July 2019)

Employment lawyer Sharmilla Bargon from the Redfern Legal Centre says employers have a legal obligation to keep accurate time sheets and wage records. They are also required to provide pay slips that reflect the total number of hours worked. And any deductions from wages should "absolutely" be recorded. She said if hotel employees were offered a room and meals as part of their wages, it should not cost more than \$215.63 for a room of their own.

"If a hotel is trying to charge an employee more than this amount for keep, I'd be concerned they are making a non-permitted deduction, in breach of the law," Bargon says. "If an employer is found to have falsified work records, a court can order them to pay significant penalties of up to \$63,000 for each contravention."

Full article available at: <https://www.smh.com.au/business/workplace/promise-of-training-with-luxury-hotel-group-entraps-visa-workers-20190620-p51ziq.html>

OUR IMPACT



Workplace harassment, discrimination, unfair dismissal and underpayment matters resolved



Improved quality of life for workers

Increased awareness of workplace rights and responsibilities



A safe and secure workplace

Employers and corporations are better educated



International Student Legal Service NSW

RLC's International Student Legal Service NSW (ISLS) is the only independent specialist legal service available to the 264,000 international students studying in NSW. Funded by Study NSW and the Fair Work Ombudsman, ISLS provides free legal advice, advocacy and casework relating to the complex socio-legal problems that impact international students, alongside law reform and education work.

Throughout the year, we maintained strong relationships with NSW's diverse international student population, including students from India and China – the two largest communities of international students in NSW. We also increased engagement with the growing body of international students from South American nations.

The practice is uniquely placed to identify emerging trends as they happen, enabling us to respond with targeted education and awareness campaigns, effective law reform, and the most current legal advice possible. These insights also allow us to create innovative legal resources to address the unique challenges faced by NSW's culturally and linguistically diverse international student community.

In recognition of the practice's significant impact, ISLS solicitor Sean Stimson was awarded the 2019 NSW Human Rights Medal by NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian on 28 February 2019.

Working for change

ISLS plays a lead role in addressing exploitative practices affecting international students. This year we continued to push for change surrounding endemic levels of non-payment and underpayment of wages, working closely with RLC's employment practice. We also collaborated with RLC's tenancy team to address targeted accommodation exploitation.

Your Body, Your Choice

In partnership with City of Sydney and Study NSW, ISLS developed the multi-language resource *Your Body, Your Choice*. Our resource – a first of its kind – was created in response to the increasing number of international students contacting our service with questions about sexual assault. Available in 11 languages, the factsheet has been distributed to multiple stakeholders across NSW.

This fact sheet is part of our ongoing work to address sexual assault on university campuses.

"Being an international law student, it has been much more difficult for me to find a placement. Thank you for believing in me and taking me on board... You truly are one of the biggest blessings I received in 2018."

– Darrell, PLT volunteer

* Name has been changed

Modern Slavery Act

As part of our ongoing efforts to address exploitation within the fresh food industry supply chain, ISLS drafted a submission to federal government. This submission was quoted in Hansard on 12 September 2018, by Chief Opposition Whip Chris Hayes MP.

To maintain momentum on this issue, ISLS engaged with the University of Technology, Sydney and UNSW Sydney to establish a roundtable with fresh food supply chain retailers and investors. This enabled us to brief industry stakeholders on the importance of adopting an evidence-based approach when responding to the underpayment of migrant workers within Australian fresh food supply chains, in the light of forthcoming legal responsibilities under the *Modern Slavery Act*.

Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA)

Purpose-built student housing provided by universities and other student accommodation providers has been another area key area of focus over the year. PBSA housing providers are able to 'opt-out' of the Residential Tenancies Act, which can create a unique set of problems within contract law. As a result, the practice is assisting a growing number of international students seeking remedies for unjust contracts.

In addition, outstanding accommodation fees are able to be characterised as education debt. This can have serious flow-on effects for many international students, preventing enrolment progression and affecting students' visa status.

ISLS has partnered with City of Sydney and engaged with state and federal government, and other key stakeholders including the Student Accommodation Association (SAA) to achieve change. In partnership with RLC's Inner Sydney Tenants' Advice & Advocacy Service (ISTAAS), ISLS has drafted a standard form agreement, which provides better protections for those students residing in PBSA.

Jai's story: Tenancy scam

Jai* was an international student who moved into an apartment building he saw advertised online. The landlord deducted Jai's rent from his credit card, but Jai soon realised he was also being charged additional amounts for cleaning and administration. These unauthorised deductions did not form part of Jai's rental agreement, and were for services not even being carried out.

Jai soon discovered other international students in the building were also being charged for services they had not requested or received. Emails to the landlord went unanswered. Upon moving out of the property, the landlord failed to return the students' rental bond.

Jai and 17 other students went to RLC's International Student Legal Service NSW for advice. RLC drafted letters of demand which the landlord sought to avoid by changing their registered business address. RLC identified the new registered business address, resulting in the recovery of over \$36,000 for the students.

*Name has been changed

Migration Act

Following the Migration Workers' Taskforce failure to adopt ISLS' recommendations to amend section 499 of the Migration Act, we are looking at other ways to enable more international students to speak out about workplace exploitation. This includes lending our support to the growing call to criminalise wage theft.

My Legal Mate and Check-In

The continued growth of NSW's international student population has led ISLS to seek out new ways to engage and educate the community. This includes the finalisation of a new interactive mobile app, My Legal Mate and the development of Check-In, a web app designed to support international students in their engagement with ISLS. Both these digital resources are set to be launched in October 2019.

Advice and casework

Collapse of an education provider

One of the most significant matters being undertaken by ISLS over the last financial year was our response to the failure of an education provider to provide its 900-plus students with an industry-recognised qualification. This crisis highlighted how well regarded our service is, with the request for ISLS to attend emergency briefings coming from federal and state government.

In response to these requests, within 24 hours ISLS addressed more than 200 affected students en masse about their concerns, and subsequently created specialised resources, including a webpage, information videos and workshops to assist those students.

ISLS has taken the lead in providing legal assistance to the students affected in partnership with our pro bono partner, McCabe Curwood.

Education and training

Education and training remain a core component of ISLS's work. Over the year we attended 36 external events including stakeholder advisory groups, roundtables, orientation events, national conferences, the annual Lord Mayor's Welcome for International Students, and student association events. In addition, ISLS maintains and updates its online resources, including the popular and highly-successful short video series *Tip of the Week*.

Dead Lucky

ISLS was a key advisor to SBS-TV regarding the production of a series of multi-language legal factsheets and videos which tied in with the release of the Australian television drama, *Dead Lucky*. This series addressed many of the issues affecting international students in Australia.

UTS student clinic

Now in its third year, ISLS's annual UTS Clinic remains popular and highly valued, with letters of appreciation from UTS's Dean of Law acknowledging the significant insights it provides students about the vulnerabilities of our client group, and the unique work undertaken by community legal centres. Many students who have taken part in this clinic have remained engaged with ISLS, or with similar organisations, assisting those most marginalised in society.



Pictured clockwise from top left: RLC's international student solicitor launching *My Legal Mate* with the Lord Mayor of Sydney, Clover Moore, February 2019. Image courtesy of Katherine Griffiths/City of Sydney; UTS Law students developing the Check-In web app with RLC and Allens; staff and volunteers team up with Redfern police to promote *Your Body, Your Choice*; Students from RLC's UTS International Student Clinic, June 2019; International Education Providers Forum, Sydney Town Hall, November 2018; and *My Legal Mate* production still, May 2019.

OUR IMPACT



Students' rights are protected



Reduced racial vilification and violence



Reduced accommodation and workplace exploitation

Reduced stress and anxiety



Improved university support strategies



More students complete their studies



Police and Government Accountability

RLC's police powers practice provides a state-wide service advising and representing clients in complaints against NSW Police. Our key focus is on preventing and deterring police misconduct through casework, policy and advocacy, and strategic litigation.

Working for change

Safe and Sound Campaign

In response to a disturbing rise in complaints about traumatic and potentially unlawful police strip searches, in December 2018 the practice initiated its 'Safe and Sound' campaign.

Commencing over the summer festival season with a website (www.safeandsound.org.au) and 'Festival Rights Adviser' app, this education and advocacy campaign is calling for amendments to NSW strip search legislation to ensure better safeguards for the public and improved guidance for police.

Launched with a video that reached over 22,000 people on social media, the campaign has played a lead role in shaping public discourse on this issue, attracting considerable media interest throughout the year.

In February, RLC convened the first in a series of roundtable discussions examining ways the legal profession can work together to address the overuse of police strip searches in NSW. Representatives from 12 community legal centres and other legal organisations attended the meeting, sharing experiences and ideas to inform collective advocacy across the sector.

In June, RLC drafted an open letter sent to the NSW Police Minister outlining the harmful impacts of strip searches. The letter was signed by over 50 legal organisations and prominent members of the legal profession, including former NSW Director of Public Prosecutions Nicholas Cowdery QC, former Chief Justice of the Family Court, the Hon Elizabeth Evatt AC, and the NSW Bar Association.

Redfern Legal Centre has commissioned a report from UNSW Law to compare the operation of police strip search laws in NSW with other jurisdictions across Australia. Our efforts to achieve law reform are continuing.

Advice and casework

Throughout the year, the police powers practice has focused on a number of systemic issues through our casework.



RLC's Safe and Sound campaign is playing a lead role in shaping public discourse on strip search law in NSW. Pictured: RLC's Police Accountability solicitor, February 2019.

Mobile phones

We are preparing to run a test case that will seek to confirm whether police have any power under the *Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002* or common law to search mobile phones and deleted mobile phone content.

Strip searches

The practice has referred a number of complaints to the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission (LECC) and Police NSW regarding the unlawful application of strip searches under s31–34 of the *Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002* (NSW).

Trespass

We have also referred complaints to the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission (LECC) and Police NSW regarding the unlawful entry of police onto persons' property under s85 of the *Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002* (NSW).



In February, RLC convened a roundtable attended by 12 community legal centres and other legal professionals to discuss strategies to address the rise in strip searches in NSW.

Gail's story: Strip-searched in a metal booth

Gail was 18-years-old when she attended a music festival in Sydney. As she entered the festival venue, a police officer with a sniffer dog followed her. The police officer stopped Gail, stating that the dog had detected the presence of a prohibited drug, which Gail denied. They then asked Gail why the dog had followed her, but she said she didn't know.

Female officers led Gail into a small metal booth. The officers did not tell Gail that they intended to conduct a strip search, nor did they provide any reason for conducting a search. They searched her bag. Nothing unlawful was found. Gail was then directed to place her hands on a table and ordered to take off all her clothes. Police continued to question her throughout the search. The door to the booth was left partially open during the search, and Gail could see other people moving around outside. After the search, although no charges were laid, police officers confiscated Gail's festival ticket and directed her to leave the premises.

Gail was a former sexual assault victim, referred to RLC by a sexual assault service. She said the strip search left her highly traumatised. She no longer enjoys going to festivals and says that even just the sight of a police officer makes her highly anxious.

RLC has submitted a complaint about Gail's story to the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission.

*Name has been changed

Education and training

In May, the practice hosted a community information night on strip search law in NSW. This interactive question and answer session featured a panel of speakers: David Shoebridge MP (The Greens), Jane Sanders (Principal Solicitor, The Shopfront Legal Centre) and Samantha Lee (Head of Police Accountability, RLC).

The practice solicitor also delivered a training session on police powers issues at Central Coast CLC and worked with Legal Aid NSW to deliver a series of training days to solicitors about conducting police torts and complaints matters.

Community and government engagement

The practice met with key legal and government stakeholders throughout the year, including: Council of Civil Liberties, Aboriginal Legal service, Shine Lawyers, Legal Aid NSW, Public Interest Advocacy Centre, The Law Enforcement Conduct Commission, Police NSW, Alex Greenwich MP, the Hon Trevor Khan and Lynda Voltz MP.



Pictured clockwise from top left: Staff and students from UNSW's Police Powers Clinic; RLC's Police Accountability solicitor next to a 'privacy screen' at Central Station, May 2019; CLCNSW Quarterlies network meeting on strip searches, February 2019; and 'Does NSW Have a Strip Search Problem?', a free community information session at Redfern Town Hall, May 2019.

RLC in the media

'I felt completely helpless': Woman's strip search revives trauma of sexual assault

By Angus Young, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 June 2019

A Sydney woman says a police strip search at a Homebush music festival in 2018 forced her to relive a sexual assault that occurred just over a year earlier. The Sydney Morning Herald put a number of questions to NSW Police, including whether there were protocols to ascertain if a person was the victim of trauma, such as sexual assault, that could be exacerbated by a strip search. A spokesperson did not answer the questions but, among a list of responses, said: "Members of the public with nothing to hide from police should not be concerned about police searches."

Solicitor Samantha Lee, head of police accountability at the legal centre, said there was an obvious power imbalance where young people with limited knowledge of the law were being made to stand naked in front of two police officers.

"This is an age group where they're young, their bodies are still developing and they're still discovering their identity in life, and to be hit by police officers asking them to take off their clothes makes a negative, lasting impression on young people. It's a harmful practice," Ms Lee said.

The full article is available at: <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/i-felt-completely-helpless-woman-s-strip-search-revives-trauma-of-sexual-assault-20190530-p51svp.html>

Inner Sydney Tenants' Advice & Advocacy Service (ISTAAS)

RLC's ISTAAS Advocates continue to support tenants with ongoing advice and case management, through to full representation in the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) and the NCAT Appeal Panel. The service also engages in targeted policy work and tenancy law education initiatives through its Community Legal Education (CLE) program. ISTAAS is a collaborative service and works closely with all the practice areas of Redfern Legal Centre (RLC).

Working for change

This year saw the commencement of the first tranche of legislation passed as a result of the five-year review of the *Residential Tenancies Act 2010* (Act). In addition to making submissions to inform this process, ISTAAS maintained collaboration with other community legal organisations on submissions to legislators around the proposed Residential Tenancies Regulations 2019, particularly in relation to the function of domestic violence provisions.

The ISTAAS team also met with and participated in a feedback session with the Registry of Community Housing Providers around general operations, handover of public housing and boarding houses.

Proposed Residential Tenancies Regulations 2019

ISTAAS, working with a number of other community legal centres, lobbied for minor amendments to the Residential Tenancies Regulations 2019 around the new domestic violence sections implemented as a result of the Act review.

Our joint submission recommended extending the definition of a 'competent person' to reflect the wider list of competent persons recognised by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. The submission also encouraged review of the excessive penalties in place for knowingly providing false or misleading information in relation to a competent person's declaration, and called for improved provisions to make pet ownership for tenants easier.

Residential Tenancies Act 2010 Review

We continue to work with the Tenants' Union and other community organisations in making submissions on the proposed regulations, that once in place, will allow the rest of the Act amendments to come into force.

"Great experience with RLC's tenancy team, who helped me for a year with my tenancy issue. Without you I could not have won this."

– Helena*

* Names have been changed

Registrar of Community Housing Providers

The ISTAAS team met with representatives of the Registrar of Community Housing Providers several times over the year, to discuss:

- Conduct of Community Housing Providers – issues such as 'no grounds' termination notices being issued to transitional housing, a lack of support around transitional programs, and staff's lack of knowledge around tenants' rights and obligations
- Handover of public housing stock to Community Housing Providers and the inconsistent policies and review processes between public housing and community housing providers
- Boarding houses managed by Community Housing Providers where occupancy agreements are being signed in place of tenancy agreements, giving the occupant fewer rights.

Advice and casework

Social Housing Repairs

Our service continues to support public housing tenants in navigating the NCAT process to get orders for home repairs. Our ISTAAS Advocates have also helped secure orders for compensation for extremely vulnerable tenants left living in appalling conditions.

Our service continues to collaborate with volunteer solicitors from King & Wood Mallesons through our pro-bono partnership, successfully representing clients in repairs matters before the Tribunal. Additionally, we are working together on the development of a set of tools to support advocates running repairs matters through the Tribunal.

Exploitation of international students

ISTAAS worked closely with RLC's international student practice this year to address unlawful conduct by a specific landlord who was repeatedly including unfair terms and illegal fees and charges in tenancy agreements issued to international students. This practice was also illegally limiting the tenants' rights, contrary to the *Residential Tenancies Act 2010*.

Chanel's story: Public housing repairs

Chanel* is an elderly public housing tenant living in the inner city, who experienced a serious leak through her bathroom ceiling for many months. The leak was so bad that Chanel often needed to use an umbrella when entering the bathroom. She made numerous requests to the Department of Housing asking for the leak to be fixed, but after four months of waiting, no action was taken.

Chanel contacted Redfern Legal Centre for advice. We helped her make an application to the Tribunal seeking a repair order to stop the ceiling from leaking and a rent reduction based on a withdrawal of goods, services and facilities. Through the Tribunal, Chanel successfully secured an order requiring Housing to carry out the necessary repairs, along with a 100% rent reduction for the four-month period she waited for the repairs and \$7,000 in compensation for loss of enjoyment of the property.

*Name has been changed

15 of these cases were taken to NCAT to establish that these occupants were in fact tenants – regardless of the title of their agreements – as well as challenging a number of the fees and charges in the agreement as either contracting out of the Act, or as unfair and unreasonable. All 15 students recovered 100% of the money they sought, and all were found to be tenants.

These cases have formed the basis of ongoing talks and complaints with the Department of Fair Trading and the Student Accommodation Association to resolve the issues of exploitation of students as tenants.

Education and training

ISTAAS continues to run a variety of tenancy training and community workshops, many with a focus on pursuing repairs in social housing premises. These workshops and CLEs are tailored to a range of audiences including tenants and tenants' representatives.

Social Housing Tenancy Forum

In June, we delivered a social housing forum, 'Safe as Houses? From Millers Point to Waterloo'. A panel of academics, tenants' advocates, tenancy solicitors and social housing residents led a frank and robust discussion about the redevelopment process in Millers Point, with the aim of informing strategies to support residents facing relocation in Waterloo and other public housing areas.

Using excerpts from Blue Lucine's Millers Point documentary *The Eviction* as a reference, the forum highlighted the immense trauma that public housing relocation can cause, particularly for older or more vulnerable tenants.

The forum highlighted the need for residents and advocates to clearly understand the process and how it can be applied, and to heed the 'warning signs' of neglected repairs, which tend to increase in the lead-up to redevelopment.

Community engagement

Waterloo Relocation Service information sessions

With funding support from City of Sydney, we established the Waterloo Redevelopment Service and held a number of information sessions to support residents throughout the year.

Working with bilingual redevelopment educators, we delivered these information sessions in English, Russian, and Mandarin – the three most common languages spoken in the redevelopment precinct. The sessions also led to the production of a series of redevelopment factsheets in these three languages.

ISTAAS media and publications

ISTAAS participated in a number of media stories on key systemic issues, such as no-grounds evictions (City Hub), affordable housing (ABC AM) and poorly maintained social housing properties (ABC Background Briefing). The service also lent its legal expertise to articles examining the impact on tenants of the Housing NSW Public Housing for Employment Scheme (The Guardian).

The Repair Kit

The legal guide for public housing tenants in NSW was updated and republished this year. This valuable resource was originally produced with the support of the Lord Mayor Clover Moore MP Salary Trust and was officially launched at the Housing Forum earlier this year. This resource is available both in print and online.



The Repair Kit

Getting FACS Housing to repair your home
A legal guide for public housing tenants in NSW



Pictured clockwise from top left: In June, RLC hosted a community forum on public housing redevelopment and displacement, and launched a new resource to support public housing tenants seeking urgent repairs; and members of RLC's tenancy team with other tenants' advocates at a Sydney University housing forum, August 2018.

RLC in the media

Ground shifts under tenancy laws

Lanie Tindale reports for *City Hub*, 9 October 2018

"No grounds evictions can affect any renter; however, these provisions have an even greater impact on people living in social and community housing," Nicole Kennedy says. "Social housing is designed as a safety net for the most vulnerable tenants in our society, including people with disabilities, the elderly and low-income families. When renters in these properties face sudden eviction, inevitably they are ejected straight into homelessness."

Full article available at: <http://www.altmedia.net.au/ground-moves-to-change-tenancy-laws/134421>

OUR IMPACT



A better standard
of living

Changed housing
policy



Tenants relocated to areas
appropriate to their needs

Prevention of
homelessness



Tenants are less stressed

Health Justice Partnership

RLC's Health Justice Partnership, a first of its kind in NSW, provides legal advice and advocacy to vulnerable patients within the healthcare system, with a priority focus on assisting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The service helps hundreds of people each year who would otherwise not access legal support.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people often experience multiple forms of disadvantage, which has a compounding effect on vulnerability to legal problems: 49% experience financial disadvantage, 35% have low education levels, and a high proportion live in Aboriginal or social housing.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experiencing family violence are often reluctant to seek help for fear of negative repercussions, such as removal of children and incarceration of perpetrators. When people do seek legal advice, they are more likely to ask a non-legal advisor, such as a health professional.

Because of poor health, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more likely to be hospitalised. Indigenous women are 35 times more likely to be hospitalised due to family violence. From 2011 to 2015, admissions of Indigenous people to Sydney Local Health District (SLHD) hospitals increased 33% compared to 8% for non-Indigenous people.

Our service delivery employs an approach that addresses the social determinants of health via legal remedies. These include, among others, housing issues, fines and debt, family and child protection issues. These determinants all have the potential to impact health.

After successfully operating at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (RPA) for over four years, in mid-2018 we expanded the HJP to other Aboriginal service organisations within the Redfern area including the Men's Cave, RedLink, Redfern Medical Service, and Redfern Community Health Centre.

In March, we took another significant leap forward by extending the HJP to the Sydney Dental Hospital, which sees 15,000 patients per year, 5,000 of whom identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Our success is evidenced by our strong word-of-mouth referrals, and the fact that clients regularly return to our service for help with subsequent issues.

This year also saw the establishment of a steering committee to govern the partnership, made up of representatives from the SLHD and RLC.

"Thank you so much for your support and belief. You cannot fathom how much it truly means to be heard."

– Steven*

"[Your] dedication to the case alleviated much of the stress for me ... Your service has saved two lives. Thank you from the bottom of my heart."

– Dev*

"The HJP solicitor was so open-minded and non-judgemental ... and actually made me feel like my problems matter. A big thank you for helping me. Really appreciate it."

– Alan*

"I attribute all the peace and happiness in my life since I came to the Centre to the credits of [the HJP solicitor] and all the staff."

– Marilyn*

* Names have been changed

HJP activities for 2018–19 included:

- Recruitment of two solicitors, one of whom is Aboriginal.
- Expansion of service to Sydney Dental Hospital, Redlink Community Health and Poets Corner Medical Centre.
- Training of 160 health professionals at various SLHD sites.

Advice and casework

RLC's HJP solicitors provide advice, casework, and limited Court advocacy. We offer a culturally sensitive, time appropriate, confidential space for people experiencing disadvantage. The success of our approach has seen the number of Aboriginal identified clients attending the Dental Hospital HJP increase from 30 per cent to around 78 per cent in less than six months.

Over the last financial year, our multi-site HJP has continued to provide patient support on a broad array of health-harming legal needs, including:

- Advocating for public housing tenants needing repairs to address untreated mould, or requiring handrails and other aids installed so that people with mobility impairments can continue living independently
- Assisting people struggling with fines or debt to waive, reduce, or arrange payment plans, to ensure that patients can continue to access essentials such as food, utilities, or health costs like filling prescriptions
- Advising on options for people experiencing family violence or elder abuse, and supporting their healthcare professionals to identify these issues and respond appropriately
- Supporting clients needing advocacy with their arrest warrants, non-compliance with bail reporting, traffic offences, breaches of parole obligations.

Care and protection matters continued to be a major focus over the year. We prioritise early intervention advising mothers and pregnant women about their rights and obligations. Our primary aim is to keep or restore children to family care. We do this with the aid of committed RPA social workers.

This work includes helping families understand the NSW Department of Families & Community Services' (FACS) role, responsibilities and legal processes. We also provide assistance preparing for case planning and Family Group Conferencing, facilitating access to the support services to address FACS' child welfare concerns, and providing help identifying alternative actions they can take to prevent child removals (for example through the Family Court).

Working for change

RLC is advocating for improved client outcomes in government programs such as Victims Services, the National Redress Scheme and the National Reparations Scheme. As an acting member of roundtables for both the National Redress and Reparations Scheme, RLC works to seek greater transparency, and the provision of additional support for clients actively experiencing trauma. In addition to fighting for policy changes, RLC has cemented its reputation within the community as a trusted service provider for survivors, assisting with successful outcomes for five clients in the National Reparations Scheme in the previous six months.

In late 2018, in partnership with other CLCs, we successfully advocated for legislative reform to amend to s21 of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* (NSW) Act to recognise "primary caregivers" as well as birth parents. This amendment is critical to keeping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island families together, where it is common for non-biological extended family, such as aunties and uncles, to care for children.

Outreach, education and training

We continue to engage extensively within and external to our HJP settings. This includes running weekly outreaches at RedLink and Men's Cave, having a presence at community events, and speaking engagements and training sessions for health professionals.

Thank you

The HJP is at the coalface of assisting vulnerable people with pathways for improving their current situation, actively working with each person to provide practical advice and solutions that help. We feel privileged to be part of this partnership.

We are appreciative of the hard-working and dedicated health professionals who join us in this partnership. We also thank the former HJP solicitor Sue-Ellen Hills, who worked hard to build up the practice over many years of service with RLC, and Clayton Utz the Pro Bono for the service.

For the last four years, this service has been completely funded by two philanthropic donors: an anonymous Foundation and the Limb Family Foundation. This service would not exist without their generous support and on behalf of the hundreds of people the service has provided life-changing interventions to, we thank you.

OUR IMPACT

- Streamlined process formed with Aboriginal Affairs for clients to apply to the Reparation Scheme
- Coalition building and advocacy around legislative amendments allowing adoption without parental consent – given 40% of those in out of home care are Aboriginal, there are significant concerns this will lead to another Stolen Generation. An RLC HJP solicitor was quoted in NSW Hansard on this issue.

Angela's story: A mother and child are reunited

Angela*, a young Aboriginal woman, left school at in her first year of high school due to the volatility within the family home. At this time, Angela was placed in foster care after her mother experienced a mental breakdown. Angela was exposed to various forms of extreme abuse and neglect. Her Family & Community Service (FACS) file says she was sexually abused by family members. Her father sexually abused her, resulting in Angela having his child. She was isolated from family and community.

Angela approached the HJP solicitor seeking advice about the restoration of her 5-year-old to her care. Care and Protection final court orders had been made in 2014 giving Parental Responsibility to the Department of Family & Community Services.

The HJP solicitor was able to build trust and rapport with Angela leading to her increased confidence in dealing with FACS. Significant advocacy took place between the HJP solicitor and FACS lawyers. Family law advice was provided about what the Family Court would likely order in her circumstances if the father ever considered contact with the child. The HJP solicitor arranged for Aboriginal Legal Service to represent Angela in her restoration application to the Children's Court. In January 2019, Angela, after appropriate support and legal advice, made an application for restoration in the NSW Children's Court of her five-year-old child to her primary care which was successful.

*Name has been changed.

Aunty Maggie's story

Aunty Maggie* is a proud Aboriginal Elder and regular Patient at the Sydney Dental Hospital. Three years ago, Aunty Maggie had an accident which affected her cognition. Aunty Maggie approached the HJP service because she had received a letter from her bank that she was in arrears for credit card payments. Believing that she been issued a debit card not a credit card, she had unwittingly accumulated a debt of \$12,000 over a period of two years.

The HJP solicitor explained why the debt had accrued, and drafted a letter on her behalf requesting documentation from the bank. Upon reviewing the documentation, we drafted a second letter to the bank outlining the questionable lending practice in this case. The bank conceded that Aunty Maggie should not have been approved for a credit card. We also followed up with her on her personal injury claim, which has a strict time limitation, and referred Aunty Maggie to a culturally appropriate service provider who assisted her to apply for NDIS support. Immediate support mechanisms were put in place for her. Aunty Maggie telephoned with her family three weeks later to inform us that the bank had waived her debt. Because of this, Aunty Maggie was able to maintain her housing situation with no risk of eviction.

* Name has been changed.

OUR IMPACT

\$45,000

finances waived

\$414,000

in payments through Reparation application

22,000

Centrelink back payments restored

\$45,000

in fraudulent transactions recovered

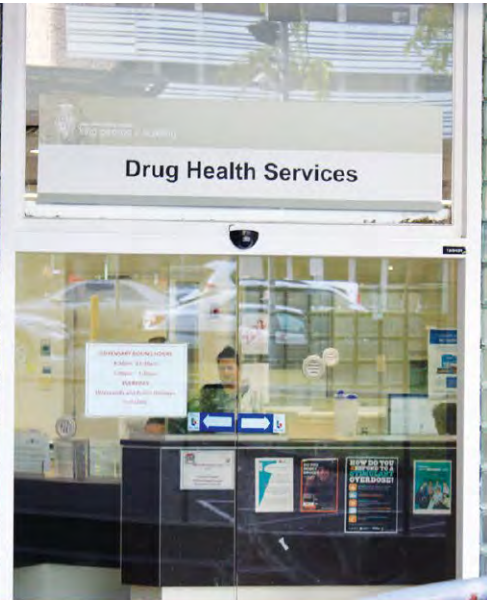


Pictured clockwise from top left: RLC staff and volunteers celebrating NAIDOC Week; NAIDOC Week celebrations at the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence, together with Arts Law Centre of Australia and Community Legal Centres NSW, July 2019; RLC's HPI solicitor presenting at the Aboriginal Chronic Conditions Network conference, July 2019; and in the lead-up to NAIDOC Week 2019 a local Aboriginal artist donated an artwork to RLC's HJP practice, July 2019.

**Do you need
legal help?**



We offer all patients at the
Dental Hospital, Surry Hills
a free legal health check



Pictured clockwise from top left: Our HJP Service brochure; HJP stall at the Sydney Local Area Health Sydney Innovation and Research Symposium, June 2019; RLC's HJP provides free legal advice to patients in the healthcare system at multiple sites, including Drug Health Services, at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital; RLC's HJP solicitor and PLT volunteer, working together with our pro bono partner, DLA Piper; and RPA and RLC HJP staff working together at RPA Hospital.

OUR IMPACT



**Communities feel more
supported by services**

**Reduced escalation of
child protection issues**



**Improved health
and wellbeing**

**Improved social
and economic wellbeing**



Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association (SUPRA) Legal Service

The RLC branch office at the Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association (SUPRA) is funded by SUPRA, via the compulsory Student Services Amenities Fee (SSAF) paid by University of Sydney (USyd) students.

The service provides free legal services to postgraduate students from any of USyd's seven campuses. It also provides regular legal and strategic advice to the seven Student Advice and Advocacy Officers employed by SUPRA to handle student's academic or welfare matters. Additionally, the service also assists and advises other SUPRA staff, such as the publications team and the SUPRA Council and office-bearers.

Advice, assistance and representation

As the SUPRA legal service is independent of USyd, it is able to advise and represent students in matters relating to the university. Mostly these are in the areas of intellectual property law, administrative matters, discrimination complaints, and privacy law.

Additionally, the service provides advice and representation to postgraduate students in external legal matters. In the last year, we mainly provided assistance in the areas listed below.

Accidents on the road

A large number of students seek advice to recover damages and/or defend claims for damages following accidents on the road. The financial impact can be significant for students who are uninsured and have a low income and/or limited financial resources.

During this last year, the service has assisted many clients to obtain compensation for the damage done to their cars or bikes, or to defend matters against them. The practice has also helped students to successfully enforce orders obtained against other parties and recover the money awarded to them that had not been paid.

Credit, debt, and consumer complaints

The legal service receives a large number of inquiries about consumer contracts and matters relating to credit and debt. Many of these are in relation to consumer contracts with telecommunications service providers for mobile phone or internet services. During this last year, the legal service has negotiated successful outcomes for a number of students in a range of matters in these areas.

Employment

Many students work outside the university to supplement their income, which often consists of parental support, scholarships, study benefits, or part-time employment within the university faculties where the student is studying.

In this last year, the legal service has helped many students to recoup underpaid and unpaid wages and entitlements, as well as assisting students to resolve other concerns about working conditions.

Road, traffic and motor vehicle regulatory offences

Inexperience or lack of familiarity with the road rules, coupled with having older or less well-maintained vehicles often means students present with penalty notices. Where students elect or are required to appear in court, the legal service has either represented or assisted them in preparing their case. Overwhelmingly, the involvement of the legal service has resulted in more favourable outcomes.

Working for change

Policy and law reform

The service contributed to both internal university submissions and external submissions written by SUPRA staff and Council members on matters relevant to postgraduate students generally, and to international postgraduate students, for example, submissions to the NSW Ombudsman on supervision issues for Higher Degree Research students, and to the City of Sydney on International student accommodation issues.

Community Legal Education

Information and education sessions

The legal service continued to provide community legal information and education sessions, both at USyd's main Camperdown campus and at external USyd campuses, such as Camden. Topics covered include intellectual property law, traffic offences and fines, consumer contracts (specifically telecommunications service provider contracts), motor vehicle accidents (regarding property damage), as well as tenancy, privacy law, and employment.

Publications

The service wrote legal content for SUPRA factsheets and the 'Get Help' section of its website. This included legal information on matters of interest to the postgraduate student population including cyberlaw, harassment, discrimination and bullying, intellectual property, contracts, privacy, consumer law, tenancy, and fines.

We also updated the following four sections of the revised *HDR Guide* (formerly known as *The Thesis Guide*): 'Research Integrity', 'Intellectual Property Law', 'Harassment, Discrimination and Bullying', and 'Access to Your Thesis'.

Additionally, the legal service published a regular legal information section in the fortnightly SUPRA email bulletin, *eGrad*. Topics covered included dealing with various accommodation issues, employment issues, avoiding or dealing with fines on public transport, and regular alerts about scams, as well as sections on contract cheating issues. The service also produced a range of legal facts sheets in areas of special interest to postgraduate students.

SUPRA branch office taken in-house

In May 2019, following a change in University policy regarding external providers, SUPRA ended its contract with RLC for delivery of the RLC SUPRA branch office, bringing the service in-house. As a result, RLC bid a fond farewell to our SUPRA solicitor, Ingrid Van Tongeren, and we thank her for her incredible work in leading this service.

Ingrid has worked with RLC since 2005, first as our Credit and Debt solicitor and then as Senior Solicitor at SUPRA. Her warm and unwavering dedication, and her skilful guidance in mentoring junior staff will be greatly missed. Ingrid continues to serve clients at the in-house SUPRA service.

William's story: Wage theft

William* got a retail job where he was told he would be paid \$20 an hour. He worked every weekend, some evenings, and public holidays, as well as full-time during the holidays. After 18 months, one of his friends told William that he should be getting paid more per hour. William asked the owner who told him that the Award didn't apply because it was a small family-run retail business. Soon after this, the owner told William that he wasn't needed anymore.

William came to SUPRA for advice and was surprised to learn he had been underpaid the whole time. Since many of the hours he had worked also attracted penalty rates, which had not been paid, he was owed a considerable amount of money. With the service's assistance, William was able to recover his underpaid wages. William also successfully found another job.

Kim's story: Claiming bond

Kim* was an international student. Upon moving into a rental unit, she had been asked to pay her landlord a bond of \$3000, despite this being in excess of the maximum bond payable. At the end of her tenancy, Kim had given her landlord the proper notice, and even paid for end-of-lease cleaning. When her landlord refused to return her bond, she took him to NCAT, and obtained an order that he pay her back. He refused to pay her. Kim then sought the assistance of the legal service. With the service's assistance, Kim was able to take enforcement action and obtain a garnishee order against the landlord's bank account into which Kim and the other tenants had used to pay rent. Kim successfully received her bond money back in full.

Charlie's story: Car accident

Charlie* was an international student who was in his car stopped at a red light when another car hit him from behind. Charlie and the driver of the other car exchanged details but agreed not to take it further since both cars only had minor damage, and the other driver's car had quite a bit of pre-existing damage.

The other driver then called Charlie and told him that it was going to cost \$4500 to fix up her car, and that she had advice that he had to pay. Charlie didn't have insurance and didn't have the money, as he had spent \$1,200 fixing up his own car, so he came to the legal service. The legal service was able to explain the law to Charlie and the other driver, and to negotiate a settlement with the other driver, which meant Charlie received back most of the money he had spent repairing his car.

* Names has been changed.

Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service

In October 2018, RLC ceased its auspice of Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (WDVCAS). RLC has pioneered frontline domestic violence legal services for more than 30 years and is extremely proud to have established the Sydney SWDVCAS, the first DVCAS in NSW. There is now a network of 29 WDVCASs across NSW.

Our history

Since its inception, Sydney WDVCAS has given priority to their clients' wishes and safety needs and ensured clients are provided with specialist advocacy and assistance. Sydney WDVCAS clients have always had access to representation and legal advice provided initially by RLC solicitors or private solicitors acting pro bono, and since 2009, legal advice provided by solicitors from Legal Aid's Domestic Violence Duty Scheme.

Ben Slade was RLC's principal solicitor in 1989 when it became evident there was a need for legal advice and representation for victims of domestic violence attending Redfern Local Court on AVO list day, and the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Scheme (as it was then named) was established in response to the need.

Prior to 1989, RLC had provided ad hoc support to women attending court, with representation depending on the availability of an RLC solicitor. As the number of women seeking apprehended domestic violence orders (ADVOs) at Redfern Court increased, it became a matter of concern that a solicitor was unavailable, and many women were attending court unrepresented. In November 1989 it was decided to establish a roster of

solicitors and local community workers to attend court on AVO list day. This was the WDVCAS model, which in time became a state-wide service funded by Legal Aid NSW.

There are now 29 WDVCASs across NSW, and in the period 1 July 2016 to 20 June 2017 these services provided assistance to 43,006 clients across NSW.

Since the closure of Redfern Court, Sydney WDVCAS has continued to assist women and children in court proceedings for ADVOs at Balmain Local Court (until its closure in 2015) and Downing Centre, Newtown and Waverley Local Courts. In the period 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018, Sydney WDVCAS provided assistance to 2,760 clients

Sydney WDVCAS also hosts the Waverley and Newtown Local Coordination Points and Safety Action Meetings which cover the Eastern Suburbs and Inner West as part of the NSW Government's domestic violence service delivery model, Safer Pathway. The Local Coordination Point receives direct referrals from police for female victims after any domestic violence incident. At Safety Action Meetings, members develop plans for victims at serious threat of death, disability or injury as a result of domestic and family violence.

Under the NSW Justice Strategy, Sydney WDVCAS also receives direct referrals from police for all female victims of domestic violence in the Redfern, Kings Cross, Surry Hills and Sydney City Local Area Police Local Area Commands.

The social support element of the Family Advocacy and Support Service (FASS) at the Sydney Registry of the Family Court is also hosted by Sydney WDVCAS. The FASS and its integration with the WDVCAS has proven to be a valuable and essential service for women going through the process of separation and child custody arrangements.

Family Advocacy and Support (FASS)

Marie's story

Marie*, a young woman who spoke little English, was being badly abused by her husband and came to the FASS for legal advice on divorce. She was referred to FASS social support and was encouraged to report the abuse to police who then took out an ADVO protecting the woman and charged the husband. The matter was to be heard at a local court outside of Sydney but FASS was able to arrange court support through the wide network of WDVCAS.

Agnes' story

Agnes* was a single mum with two small children who presented at FASS for legal and social assistance. She was having difficulty during handover times for the children to see their father. Previous family court orders were not working as Dad had started drinking heavily when the children were with him and used the handover times as an opportunity to abuse mum. FASS assisted with legal advice and an application for legal aid and FASS social support provided assistance with referrals to counselling and some further family support for the children who were reacting their father's behaviour.

*Names have been changed.

Isabelle's story: ADVO

A referral was received from police for Isabelle*. Police had applied for an ADVO to protect Isabelle from her estranged husband after she had reported an assault. Isabelle and her husband had been married for thirty-two years, and were separated but living under the same roof for four years. Isabelle made a statement to police, but did not want her husband charged for the assault. No charges were laid, but police applied for an ADVO to protect Isabelle which included a condition that he not approach her.

When Isabelle was contacted by the WDV CAS worker she was very distressed and expressed her desire for the ADVO to be removed or else varied to remove the 'not to approach' condition so that she and her estranged husband could attend family events together. Isabelle attended court and told the WDV CAS specialist worker that her husband had moved out of the family home and was living elsewhere. The WDV CAS worker discussed safety planning with Isabelle and her adult daughter, and advocated for her with the police Domestic Violence Liaison Officer to have the orders varied to the mandatory orders only and the length of the orders shortened to six months rather than two years.

The Domestic Violence Liaison Officer then spoke with Isabelle's husband's solicitor, and her husband consented to a final ADVO with the standard conditions for six months. Warm referrals were made for Isabelle to Victims Services and Staying Home Leaving Violence, and the locks on her house were changed that same afternoon. Isabelle was also referred to the Family Advocacy and Support Service (FASS) at the Family Court for information and advice about her property matter. Isabelle and her daughter were very happy with the outcome, which they felt would address Isabelle's safety after her husband moved out of the house and at the same time allow them to come together for family events.

*Name has been changed



Taking a stand for gender equality on International Women's Day, March 2019.



Community engagement and education

This year, as always, RLC participated in a range of events in our local community. This included holding stalls at community information days such as at Poets Corner in Redfern and Homeless Connect at Sydney Town Hall, where we talked about the services that RLC provides, and gave on-the-spot legal advice on a few specific matters.

In July, we held stalls at NAIDOC celebrations at Redfern Aboriginal Medical Service and at the National Centre for Indigenous Excellence; we also attended the annual Yabun Festival in Victoria Park on 26 January. Our attendance at these and other events throughout the year provided many opportunities for RLC staff and volunteers to engage with people, and discuss how we can best meet the legal needs of the communities we serve.

Community legal education

Our community worker training program presented eight webinars, to a total audience of several hundred people. Webinars included:

- Financial Abuse in Domestic Relationships
- Short changed at work: Wage theft from migrant workers
- De'Termination: Evictions and how to challenge them
- Help! My Client has Problem Debts #1: How to navigate internal dispute resolution
- Help! My Client has Problem Debts #2: External dispute resolution
- Key changes for NSW renters in 2019
- Navigating legal assistance in NSW
- New domestic violence provisions for tenants in NSW.

Pictured above: At Sydney Homeless Connect, RLC's Credit and Debt solicitor and RLC volunteers conducted outreach and gave on-the-spot advice and referrals. This included assisting people to manage fines, as well as working with an officer from the ATO to locate lost super. Sydney Town Hall, July 2019.

We continued to receive strong feedback on the quality of our community education programs throughout the year:

"Very user-friendly and explained simply and clearly."

"The information was relevant to our work. The timing of the session was perfect - able to stay attentive; right amount of info; easy to fit into the day. Very much appreciated. Thank you."

"It's a very important subject in the community - thanks for choosing the topic."

"Thank you for a comprehensive presentation and for the relevant resources."

"Excellent webinar - presenter gave detailed description of steps and amount of work to fully assist and advocate for affected clients. Some new information for me."

Our annual subscription remains very popular, with more than 20 agencies and several individual community workers taking out subscriptions during the year. Subscribers are notified about all upcoming webinars and can access recordings of past webinars.



RLC staff and volunteers commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, December 2018.

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 the Community Legal Services Program, which is administered by Legal Aid NSW and the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department.
- Legal Aid NSW funds the Care Partners service, which assists parents engaged in Parent Responsibility contracts or Parent Capacity Orders.
- Legal Aid NSW funded the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service; also the Waverley and Newtown Local Coordination Points, which provide victims with case coordination, risk review and referral to a Safety Action Meeting, if needed. (RLC ceased to auspice this service 31 October 2018).
- Legal Aid NSW funded the Family Advocacy and Support Service, whereby Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service trains and manages a Family Violence Support Worker based at Sydney Family Court. (RLC ceased to auspice this service 31 October 2018).
- The NSW Office of Fair Trading funds the Inner Sydney Tenants' Advice & Advocacy Service.
- Study NSW funds the state-wide International Student Legal Service NSW.
- The Office of the Fair Work Ombudsman funds the International Student Employment Law Service.
- Development of an interactive app for International Students was supported jointly by Study NSW, Office of the Fair Work Ombudsman, and City of Sydney.

- The Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association (SUPRA) funded the SUPRA Legal Service through funds received from the Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF). (RLC ceased this service in April 2019).
- City of Sydney continued to provide assistance to provide advice and advocacy for Millers Point tenants.
- City of Sydney provided a grant to support tenants in Waterloo who will be affected by redevelopment of the area.
- The City of Sydney provides RLC with premises at Redfern Town Hall.

Grants and donations

From time to time RLC is successful in gaining grants or donations for specific projects. We thank the following organisations for their support:

- Thomson Reuters Australia supported the Lawyers' Practice Manual and our Annual Report.
- University of NSW continued to fund the UNSW Police Powers Student Clinic.
- University of Sydney Law School funded Social Justice Clinic, whereby RLC provides high quality Experiential Learning for law students.
- University of Technology Sydney funded RLC to teach the UTS Legal Clinic – International Students.
- The Limb Family Foundation provided funding for our HJP.

Our Board of Directors



Amy Munro (Chair)

Amy Munro is a barrister practising from Eleven Wentworth in Sydney. She has a wide-ranging commercial and public law practice. Prior to being called to the Bar, Amy was a senior associate in the Dispute Resolution Group at Mallesons. Amy began her association with RLC as a volunteer in 2002, moving on to become a Tenants' Advocate with the Inner Sydney Tenants' Advice & Advocacy Service and the Project Manager of the Share Housing Survival Guide. Amy was elected to the board in 2010 and continues to act as a volunteer with the Centre.



Tamara Sims (Secretary)

Tamara Sims is a lawyer in Gilbert + Tobin's Pro Bono practice. Her practice covers human rights, administrative law, discrimination, native title, victim compensation, tenancy, guardianship, refugee claims and Aboriginal Stolen Wage matters. Prior to joining Gilbert + Tobin, Tamara worked in the community legal sector practising criminal law, undertaking policy and law reform work and community legal education particularly in matters involving people with intellectual disability. Tamara first became involved with RLC as a volunteer legal assistant, then worked with the Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service and the Inner Sydney Tenants' Advice & Advocacy Service before becoming a Director.



Alexandra Finley

Alexandra Finley is a governance expert with over 20 years' experience across the financial services and energy sectors. She has extensive experience in governance, legal, risk and compliance, business management and strategy, across a range of industries. Alexandra is also an experienced not-for-profit director. She is currently Chair of children's charity Rainbow Club Australia Inc and is a board member of Macarthur Family and Youth Services. Alexandra is the General Counsel and Company Secretary of Spark Infrastructure, an S&P/ASX 100 specialist infrastructure fund and Australia's leading owner of essential service infrastructure. Alexandra holds a Masters of Law and Management and is a member of the Association of Corporate Counsel GC100, Global Leaders in Law, the Australian Institute of Company Directors and the Governance Institute of Australia.



Craig Young

Craig Young is the Australian Managing Director of Engine, a global marketing services group offering consulting services in customer and employee experience, digital transformation and digital advertising services. Craig has 25 years' experience providing research consulting services to support the development of communications campaigns and policy and service delivery in relation to public health and Indigenous affairs. Since 2013, he has been a board member of AMSRO (Association of Market and Social Research Organisations), Australia's industry association for data and research companies, and has been president and board chair of AMSRO since 2017.



Linda Tucker

Linda Tucker is a solicitor and regional legal services coordinator at Shoalcoast Legal Centre. She ran RLC's employment and discrimination law practice before going to Hanoi as a volunteer legal advisor for a women's organisation. She was chair of CLCNSW and has worked at many other CLCs in NSW. Apart from her CLC fixation, Linda has worked for human rights organisations in Australia, Cambodia and the UK and was previously a legal academic and journalist.



Gregory Masters

Greg Masters is a consultant with more than 25 years' experience consulting to government and community sectors. He is the Director of Nexus Management Consulting, a company he founded in 1996 to assist government and community organisations to plan, implement and evaluate strategies to improve the results they achieve for clients and the community. Prior to establishing Nexus, Greg held a number of senior management and executive roles in the areas of policy, planning and research within NSW Government agencies.



Kerry O'Brien

Kerry is a senior associate in the corporate and dispute resolution practice at Colin Biggers & Paisley. Kerry has experience in both advisory work and litigation, with expertise in employment law, discrimination law and industrial relations. Kerry was admitted to practice as a solicitor in NSW in 2014 after completing his legal studies at the University of New South Wales. Kerry also completed a Master of Laws from the University of Sydney in 2017. Kerry has worked in-house in state and federal government agencies, including the Fair Work Ombudsman, before joining Colin Biggers & Paisley in 2018.



Ben Lipschitz

Ben Lipschitz is Managing Director and co-founder of FoodByUs, an online business involving food supply to restaurants. FoodByUs is venture capital backed and is the current leader in its field. Ben has a broad range of commercial experience and holds a strong interest in customer experience, strategy, technology, social impact and how these elements can join together to push social improvement and innovation.



Kristin Van Barneveld (to November 2018)

Kristin began volunteering at RLC in 2005 as a student and went on to provide evening advice as a solicitor on employment matters. Kristin served as a Director from 2006 until November 2018. After many years working at the University of Sydney, Kristin has since worked for various unions providing legal, industrial and policy advice.



Alison Aggarwal (to February 2019)

Alison Aggarwal is currently a Principal Adviser/Manager at the Australian Human Rights Commission, working on the Australian Defence Force Cultural Reform. Previously she was the Principal Adviser to the Sex Discrimination Commissioner Elizabeth Broderick, and she has also worked as a senior policy officer with the Social Justice Unit at the Australian Human Rights Commission. Prior to that, she has worked on advocacy, law reform, policy and human rights issues with community legal centres in Australia and women's human rights NGOs in the Asia Pacific region. She has provided human rights training at the local, national and regional level.



Sally Giblin (to April 2019)

Sally Giblin is a Senior Manager at PwC Experience Centre, where she consults on customer experience to government, corporate and not-for-profit clients. With multi-disciplinary experience across corporate (PwC's Experience Centre, David Jones), not-for-profit (Young UN Women Australia, Caritas Australia), and social enterprise (40K Group), Sally has particular interests in customer experience design, design thinking, shared value, social justice, social impact and social innovation.

Our Staff 2018–2019

Permanent and Fixed Term Staff

Inner Sydney Tenants' Advice and Advocacy Service (ISTAAS) – Tenancy and Housing Team

Amanda Brooker	Tenants' Advocate
Ned Cooke	Tenants' Advocate
Kimberley Mackenzie	Tenants' Advocate
Nicole Kennedy	Coordinator

Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service – DV Team

Kath Chegwiddden	Assistant Coordinator
Leah Holmes	Safety Action Meeting Coordinator
Kate Hunter	Intake and Referral Officer/Admin Officer
Fiona Koutsoukis	Safety Action Meeting Coordinator
Rayila Maimaiti	CALD Specialist Worker
Sidnei Pettit	Intake and Referral Officer
Helen Shelton	Assistant Coordinator
Susan Smith	Coordinator
Amie Stevenson	Intake and Referral Officer
Janice Waring	Family Violence Support Worker
Charmaine Weldon	Aboriginal Specialist Worker/Assistant Coordinator
Alena Wilson	Assistant Coordinator

General Legal Team

Brian Attard	Health Justice Partnership Solicitor
Sharmilla Bargon	Employment Solicitor
Laura Bianchi	Credit and Debt/Financial Abuse Solicitor
Luke Carr	Care Partners/Health Justice Partnership Solicitor
David Hofierka	Credit and Debt Solicitor
Samantha Lee	Police Powers and Administrative Solicitor
Sue-Ellen Hills	Care Partners/Health Justice Partnership Solicitor
Alexis Goodstone	Principal Solicitor
Sophie Parker	Police Powers and Administrative Solicitor
Sean Stimson	International Student Legal Service NSW Solicitor
Ingrid Van Tongeren	Senior Solicitor, SUPRA Branch

Administration, Support and Management

Hilary Chesworth	Finance Officer/Administrator
Nick Manning	Community Engagement and Education Officer/ Front Desk Supervisor
Finn O'Keefe	Communications and Volunteer Manager
Joanna Shulman	Chief Executive Officer
Jacqui Swinburne	Chief Operations Officer
Wendy Wang	Administration Assistant/Data Entry Officer

Casual Staff 2018–19

Inner Sydney Tenancy Advice and Advocacy Service – Tenancy and Housing Team

Sarah Avery	Tenants' Advisor
Jevan Griffiths	Tenants' Advisor
Elizabeth Hunt	Tenants' Advisor
Alison Mackey	Tenants' Advisor
Eleanor Maxted	Tenants' Advisor
David Tilley	Data entry assistant
Leanne O'Reilly	Tenants' Advisor

Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Scheme – DV Team

Chamindri Veitch	Acting Coordinator
Bethany Groom	Data Entry Assistant
Jodie Lee	Intake and Referral Officer
Megan Schauer	Intake and Referral Officer

General Legal Team

Radhika Kumar	Discrimination Solicitor
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Administration, Support and Management

Laila Ali	Supervisor, Day Information Service
Ferdous Bahar	Supervisor, Day Information Service
Kate Duke	Supervisor, Day Information Service
Jack Fu	Cleaner
Rebecca Koelmeyer	Data entry assistant
Ameisa Konneh	Supervisor, Day Information Service
Alexandra Roach	Project Officer
Georgina Rullis	Data entry assistant
Shona Scully	Supervisor, Day Information Service
Rachael Spittaler	Admin assistant
Destiny Valencia	Data entry assistant

Consultants

Adaptive Solutions	IT support
CLCNSW Financial Service	Financial services

Awards and Recognition

Golden Warren

In October, RLC's Inner Sydney Tenants' Advice & Advocacy Service (ISTAAS) was awarded the Golden Warren at the Annual regional Tenants' Advice and Advocacy Service (TAAP) Network Meeting. Facilitated by the Tenants' Union, the Golden Warren highlights outstanding achievements in tenancy policy work.

RLC's tenancy team received the award in recognition of ISTAAS' extensive contributions which informed the *Residential Tenancies Act 2010* five-year review and the subsequent Bill which came out of that process, and has since been passed into legislation.



In November, RLC's tenancy team received the Golden Warren award in recognition of outstanding achievements in the policy arena.

NSW Human Rights Medal

In February 2019, the head solicitor at Redfern Legal Centre's International Student Service NSW (ISLS), Sean Stimson, was awarded the NSW Human Rights Medal in recognition of services rendered to the 264,000 international students studying across NSW. This prestigious medal pays tribute to an individual who has made a lasting and meaningful contribution to advancing human rights.



Pictured top: RLC staff, volunteers and funding partners celebrating at the 2019 Harmony Day Dinner, February 2019; and Nick Shearer (Senior Engagement Officer, Fair Work Ombudsman), Sean Stimson (RLC International Student solicitor), and Alexis Goodstone (RLC Principal Solicitor), Harmony Day Dinner, February 2019.

Directors' Declaration

Redfern Legal Centre

ABN: 31 001 442 039

The directors of the company declare that:

1. The financial statements and notes, as set out on pages 9–21, are in accordance with the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*; and
 - (a) comply with Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulations 2013*; and
 - (b) give a true and fair view of the financial position as at 30 June 2019 and performance for the year ended on that date of the company.
2. In the directors' opinion there are reasonable grounds to believe that the company will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.
3. Pursuant to Schedule 1, Section 7(3) of the *Charitable Fundraising Regulations 2008*:
 - (a) the Statement of Profit and Loss and Other Comprehensive Income is drawn up so as to give a true and fair view of income and expenditure of the company for the year ended 30 June 2019 with respect to fundraising appeals;
 - (b) the Statement of Financial Position is drawn up so as to give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company as at 30 June 2019 with respect to the fundraising appeals;
 - (c) the provisions of the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 and the Regulations under the Act and the conditions attached to the company have been complied with for the year ended 30 June 2019; and
 - (d) the internal controls exercised by the company are appropriate and effective in accounting for all income received and applied by the company from any fundraising appeals.

This declaration is made in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors.

Director: _____



Amy Munro

Dated this 22nd day of October 2019



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REDFERN LEGAL CENTRE
ABN: 31 001 442 039

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF REDFERN LEGAL CENTRE

Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

Opinion

We have audited the financial report of Redfern Legal Centre, which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2019, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the directors' declaration.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of Redfern Legal Centre, is 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 the Company's financial position as at 30 June 2019 and of its financial performance for the year then ended; and
- (b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards - Reduced Disclosure Requirements 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 the Company in accordance with 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.

Other Information

The directors are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Company's annual report for the year ended 30 June 2019, but does not include the financial report and our auditor's report thereon.

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF REDFERN LEGAL CENTRE

Other Information (continued)

Our opinion on the financial report does not cover the other information and accordingly we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial report, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial report or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Responsibilities of the Directors for the Financial Report

The Directors are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of the ACNC Act and for such internal control as the Directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

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

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

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

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.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

REDFERN LEGAL CENTRE
ABN: 31 001 442 039



INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF REDFERN LEGAL CENTRE

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report (Continued)

- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Company's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the directors.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with the Directors regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mark Godlewski'.

Mark Godlewski

Partner

Date: 22 October 2019

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Pitcher Partners'.

PITCHER PARTNERS

SYDNEY

Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the year ended 30 June 2019

	Note	2019 \$	2018 \$
Revenue		2,816,998	3,352,272
Less: expenses			
Depreciation and amortisation expense	5	(24,651)	(30,673)
Salary, wages and on-costs		(2,440,830)	(2,804,622)
Occupancy expense		(187,288)	(189,241)
Repairs and maintenance expense		(8,853)	(20,049)
Advertising expense – Program Related		(5,236)	(10,209)
Consultancy – Program Related		(21,327)	(73,457)
IT Support		(28,963)	(35,295)
Telephone		(21,879)	(25,683)
Travel & accommodation		(16,673)	(19,637)
Printing and stationery		(16,723)	(18,154)
Fundraising and venue costs		(4,656)	(4,014)
Other expenses		(191,502)	(84,686)
		<u>(2,968,581)</u>	<u>(3,315,720)</u>
Surplus (deficit) before income tax expense		(151,583)	36,552
Other comprehensive income for the year		<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>
Total comprehensive income		<u>(151,583)</u>	<u>36,552</u>

Statement of financial position as at 30 June 2019

	Note	2019 \$	2018 \$
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	7	563,082	1,406,233
Receivables	8	26,179	23,624
Other financial assets	9	700,000	700,000
Other assets	11	22,526	22,473
Total current assets		<u>1,311,787</u>	<u>2,152,330</u>
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	10	<u>29,538</u>	<u>44,965</u>
Total non-current assets		<u>29,538</u>	<u>44,965</u>
Total assets		<u>1,341,325</u>	<u>2,197,295</u>
Current liabilities			
Payables	12	674,347	1,164,787
Provisions	13	<u>225,911</u>	<u>375,862</u>
Total current liabilities		<u>900,258</u>	<u>1,540,649</u>
Non-current liabilities			
Provisions	13	<u>68,196</u>	<u>132,192</u>
Total non-current liabilities		<u>68,196</u>	<u>132,192</u>
Total liabilities		<u>968,454</u>	<u>1,672,841</u>
Net assets		<u>372,871</u>	<u>524,454</u>
Equity			
Retained surplus	14	<u>372,871</u>	<u>524,454</u>
Total equity		<u>372,871</u>	<u>524,454</u>

Statement of changes in equity for the year ended 30 June 2019

	Retained surplus
	\$
Balance as at 1 July 2017	487,902
Surplus for the year	36,552
Total comprehensive income for the year	36,552
Balance as at 30 June 2018	524,454
Balance as at 1 July 2018	524,454
Surplus (deficit) for the year	(151,583)
Total comprehensive income for the year	(151,583)
Balance as at 30 June 2019	372,871

Statement of cash flows for the year ended 30 June 2019

	Note	2019	2018
		\$	\$
Cash flow from operating activities			
Receipts from funding agreements and grants		1,984,387	3,543,414
Receipts from other income sources		584,602	535,160
Payments to suppliers and employees		(3,436,291)	(3,621,509)
Interest received		33,375	40,102
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities		<u>(833,927)</u>	<u>497,167</u>
Cash flow from investing activities			
Proceeds from sale of property, plant and equipment		8,833	—
Payment for property, plant and equipment		(18,057)	(19,980)
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		<u>(9,224)</u>	<u>(19,980)</u>
Reconciliation of cash			
Cash at beginning of the financial year		1,406,233	929,046
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held		(843,151)	477,187
Cash at end of financial year		<u>563,082</u>	<u>1,406,233</u>



Join us!

- Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/redfernlegal
- Follow @RLC_CEO on twitter
- Follow @TeamRLC on Instagram
- Subscribe to Redfern Legal Centre's bi-monthly ebulletin via our website www.rlc.org.au
- Volunteer with us: www.rlc.org.au/jobs-volunteers

Donate to support our work

Generous support from individuals, foundations, law firms and others is vital for RLC to continue providing its services. Your contribution helps RLC provide free legal advice services to people who would not otherwise be easily able to access the justice system.

Donate online at:

www.givenow.com.au/redfernlegalcentreappeal
or call us on (02) 9698 7277 to make a donation.
Donations of \$2 and over are tax deductible.



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