

Redfern Legal Centre

**ANNUAL
REPORT**
2016-2017

REDFERN LEGAL CENTRE



CELEBRATING FORTY YEARS

Contents

Redfern Legal Centre – celebrating 40 years

This is a historic year for Redfern Legal Centre, as we commemorate our 40th anniversary. Forty years of service to our community is a momentous achievement. It is a milestone we celebrated with great pride at Sydney Town Hall this April, alongside many dear friends, colleagues, alumni, volunteers, sponsors and donors who have supported us over the years, and remain instrumental to our ongoing success.

Within the pages of this report we look back on our achievements of the last year and reflect on our origins, key milestones and the continued importance of keeping our legal services accessible and relevant.

The work we do – ensuring access to justice for communities in need – is as important today as it ever was. As our organisation has grown, so too has the demand for our services. As you read through this report, we hope you feel proud of what we've been able to achieve together, and that you will continue to support us on this journey as we head into our next 40 years.



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Acknowledgement

Redfern Legal Centre acknowledges that we work on Aboriginal land, traditionally the home of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation. We pay our respect to the traditional owners of the land on which we work and in particular, to elders of this community, past and present.

Editors: Finn O'Keefe and Jacqui Swinburne.

Editorial team: Alexandra Roach, Dong Hop Dao, and Shirley Yeung.

Design and printing:  THOMSON REUTERS

Redfern Legal Centre is an independent, non-profit Community Legal Centre dedicated to promoting social justice and human rights.

Welcome from our Chair



With funding uncertainty continuing to plague our agenda, the Board began the year preparing to make difficult decisions, each with equally unpalatable outcomes. So, we were thankful and relieved when announcements were made by both the State and Federal Governments to reverse the funding cuts foreshadowed for the sector. While we remain a long way from the recommendation made by the Productivity Commission to inject \$200 million into the sector to meet demand, the announcements staved off the difficult decisions for another day.

Serendipitously, the announcements to reverse the funding cuts were made in the week of our 40th birthday party. The mood of the event was one of optimism and enthusiasm. We shared the achievements of the Centre with new friends and old, and continued to be inspired by the work of those gone before us, together with that of our current staff and volunteers. Thank you to all those who made our party such a wonderful celebration. A terrific night was had by all.

I would like to thank the many volunteers and law firms who contribute their time and resources to the Centre. We are particularly grateful to Gilbert + Tobin, who work with our domestic violence team, King & Wood Mallesons who support our tenancy team, Clayton Utz, who assist our employment and discrimination practices, Fragomen and McCabes, who work with our international student service, Ashurst, who support our credit, debt & consumer law practice, and DLA Piper, who assist our police powers practice. These partnerships provide reliable, ongoing and crucial support to our teams, which

enables us to maximise the assistance we can provide to the community.

The assistance we provide to the community is multi-faceted. Not only does it include casework and community legal education, but it also includes law reform. The Centre seeks to ensure that the voices of our clients are heard in any consideration of law reform, in the areas in which we work. For example, we lodged submissions against the imposition of unreasonable restrictions on freedom of speech, we responded to the interim report on the five-year review of Australian Consumer Law, we called for an end to 'no grounds' evictions, we advocated a ban on education brokers and marketing agents, due to the widespread malpractice in the vocational training market, and we participated in an initial consultation on the Australian Law Reform Commission Inquiry into the Incarceration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Law reform is an important component of the work we do. It enables us to seek to effect change for a greater number of people than we could ever possibly assist on an individual basis.

As always, I am thankful to our staff for the work that they do: it is intellectually and emotionally difficult, as well as demanding. Without their commitment, diligence and compassion, we would not be able to deliver cutting edge, innovative legal services to those that need it most.

Thank you too to Jacqui Swinburne for taking on the role of Acting CEO at such a tumultuous time. Jacqui navigated us through a year of prospective funding cuts, and a huge celebration, to place us in a positive position to move forward.

With the stabilisation of funding, we are moving into an exciting time of strategic planning. We will be asking many of you for input into this process and we welcome your feedback and suggestions for the future direction of the Centre. We look forward to working with you.

Amy Munro
Chair of the Board



Message from our Acting CEO

It has been another busy year, and I am once again extremely grateful to have been able to lead the organisation with the support of a highly skilled and dedicated team. It is thanks to this entire team that we were able to successfully navigate a period of great funding uncertainty this year, diversifying our funding and continuing to grow our programs. This year it was also very rewarding to come together and celebrate the organisation's 40th birthday. What a wonderful success story the last 40 years has been, initiated by a handful of dedicated volunteers who started our organisation in 1977.

Our teams have had many fantastic achievements over the past year, which you can read about in detail throughout this report. Some of the highlights include the further expansion of the Safer Pathways program to the Newtown area to support domestic violence victims in a whole of government approach. We are very proud to be a part of this approach to supporting victims to escape violence and be supported in their health, housing, children's education and by police.

Our Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (Sydney WDVCS) was also asked to provide a new support service for domestic violence victims at the Sydney Family Law Court. This is a welcome and essential service for women going through the process of separation and child custody arrangements (with a separate service providing support for men); and having an integrated service with the rest of the Sydney WDVCS team benefits many clients that access both services.

Our tenancy team has continued to support the public housing residents at Millers Point as they relocate to other parts of Inner Sydney (or other locations of their choice). This is a difficult process for residents, many of whom are elderly

and have disability. Without the support of the City of Sydney, we would not have been able to maintain the level of assistance in this area that we did.

Our International Student service has continued to expand, thanks to our successful application for funding from the Fair Work Ombudsman, as well as ongoing support from StudyNSW. Working closely with our Employment law practice, this program has helped to shine a light on many of the systemic workplace exploitation issues that international students face, and we continue to work with government toward solutions to these problems.

This year we also welcomed new staff to the roles of Credit, Debt & Consumer Solicitor, Police Powers Solicitor and Communications and Volunteer Manager. While it is always sad to say farewell to great staff, we have been extremely lucky to have great people join our team as well.

Our education programs for community workers have also been extremely successful this year, including the production of 8 webinars and 6 videos for workers across the State. We have also moved our volunteer program towards more formal student clinics for law students. Our partnerships with UNSW, University of Sydney and UTS recognise the vital benefits that students gain from real life experience.

Our gala birthday event at Sydney Town Hall this April closed out our year in fine style. What a fun night, celebrating our history and achievements while catching up with so many old friends and colleagues! Thank you to our sponsors: DLA Piper, Maurice Blackburn, Ashurst, City of Sydney, Fragomen, The Hand Up Foundation and the NSW Bar Association. Thanks to the many individuals who assisted and contributed to the night,

including: the Hon Justice Virginia Bell AC, Clare Petre, Fran Gibson, the Hon Lord Mayor Clover Moore, Cr Philip Thalys, the Hon Justice John Basten, Fiona Katauskas, Wendy Harmer, Triple J's Veronica & Lewis, The Pragmatics, and D'Alton Baker Productions. Thank you also to everyone to donated items for the auction and all those who bid on them! Thank you also to the two key staff that made it all happen – our wonderful Fundraising Manager, Liz Clark and our Communications and Volunteers Manager, Finn O'Keefe. Finally, thank you to everyone that attended. I hope you had as much fun and felt as proud and inspired as I did.

I hope you enjoy reading about all of these achievements and more in our 2016–17 annual report. As we move into a new phase – one in which we strive to further grow and diversify our funding – I encourage you to consider Redfern Legal Centre in your end of year charities and bequests.

Jacqui Swinburne
Acting CEO

Our Vision

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:

- Domestic violence
- Credit, debt and consumer complaints
- Tenancy and housing
- Police and government accountability
- Employment
- Discrimination and human rights, and
- An advice clinic for international students.

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

- People with disability
- People that are, or are at risk of being, homeless
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- Victims of 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.
- 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 vulnerable people and their advocates to access justice and the legal system.

2. Legal Reform

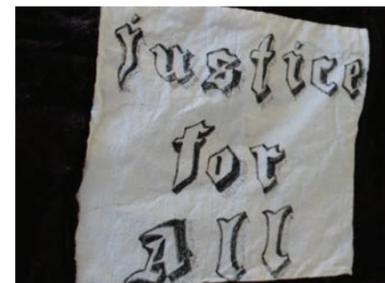
To identify and seek to remove inequalities in the law, legal system, administrative practices and society as a whole that affect vulnerable people by working for social and legal change to enhance respect for human rights.

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.



Partnerships

We are very proud of our partnerships with the following firms, enabling us to increase our capacity to provide access to justice to our clients:

Ashurst - Credit and Debt Pro Bono Partner

Ashurst has provided invaluable support to our Credit and Debt Practice through the provision of casework advice, drafting and editing credit and debt fact sheets, providing guidance in law reform work and assisting with advocacy. Ashurst has also provided support to the Centre's fundraising program through the generous donation of training space and assisting with event management and promotion.

Clayton Utz - Employment and Health Justice Partnership Pro Bono Partner

We continued our successful collaboration with Clayton Utz to provide advice and representation for our clients in unfair dismissal and general protections applications to the Fair Work Commission and in some entitlements and workplace discrimination matters. Clayton Utz have assisted RLC's clients with unfair dismissals, general protections, unpaid wages, discrimination and sexual harassment cases. Clayton Utz has also provided support to RLC's Health Justice Partnership during the financial year.

Fragomen - International Students - Visa Pro Bono Partner

In RLC's targeted advice to international students, effective legal advice often involves advice on student visas. Pro bono support from Fragomen, which sees registered migration agents providing advice during RLC's Wednesday evening legal clinics, is essential to the positive legal outcomes we are able to achieve for our clients.

Gilbert + Tobin Lawyers - Domestic Violence Pro Bono Partner

Sydney WDVCAS is very grateful for all the assistance provided by our pro bono partner Gilbert + Tobin Lawyers. In the past twelve months Sydney WDVCAS data has been entered to a new database, designed by Gilbert + Tobin after the implementation of the information barrier between RLC and the WDVCAS.

On a more practical note, Gilbert + Tobin has provided a huge amount of administrative assistance to the WDVCAS. Every month, Gilbert + Tobin provide copies of all the WDVCAS client intake forms and the information packs specially collated for individual courts. This assistance is invaluable and saves the WDVCAS a huge amount in stationery costs and many hours of photocopying time.

King & Wood Mallesons Lawyers - Tenancy and Housing Pro Bono Partner

The Inner Sydney Tenants' Advice and Advocacy Service (ISTAAS) thanks its pro bono partner King & Wood Mallesons (KWM) for its continued support of our work during the financial year. Under the ISTAAS-KWM secondment scheme, KWM solicitors have assisted ISTAAS on a range of matters and represented ISTAAS clients in the NSW Civil & Administrative Tribunals. The types of matters that can be referred to the scheme have recently been expanded to include evictions, repairs and appeals to the Housing Appeals Committee. We look forward to seeing the scheme continue to expand in the new financial year. ISTAAS also thanks KWM for providing meeting room facilities for its 2017 team planning day.

McCabes - International Student Pro Bono Partner

McCabes Lawyers are our pro bono partner for our International Student Advice Service in relation to credit and debt, consumer issues, employment, complaints against education providers, family law and housing issues. McCabes provide much needed legal support to international students who are often highly vulnerable due to their lack of resources, support networks and knowledge around their legal rights.

DLA Piper

Our Police Powers practice is very grateful for the support provided by our pro bono partner, DLA Piper, who has provided invaluable casework and policy assistance through a secondment arrangement.

Barristers

We thank the following barristers for

providing their services to our clients on a pro bono basis:

- Nick Eastman
- Kevin Tang
- Raoul Wilson SC
- Alexander Edwards
- Stephen Lawrence
- Anais d'Arville
- Ben Fogarty
- Mark Gibian, and
- Irina Hoskinson.

ashurst

CLAYTON UTZ

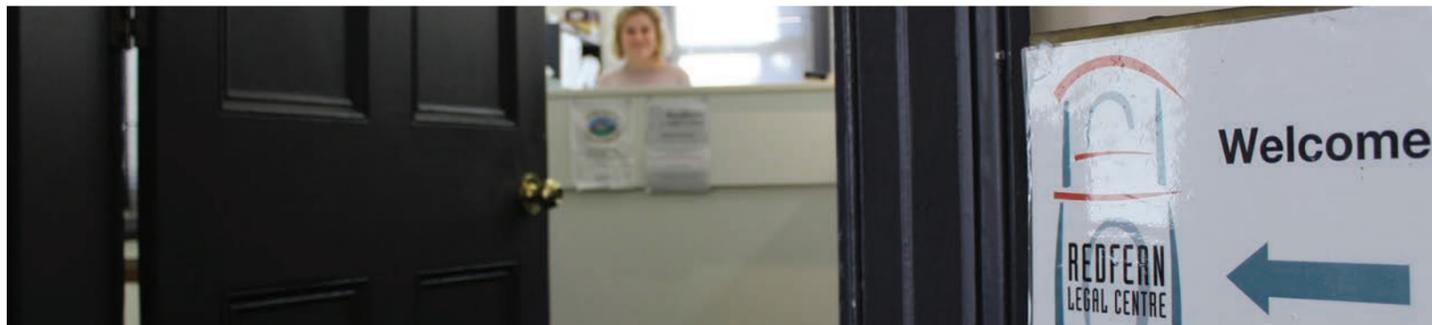
DLA PIPER

FRAGOMEN
WORLDWIDE

GILBERT
+ TOBIN

KING & WOOD
MALLESONS

mc cabes



Team RLC!

Forty years ago, Redfern Legal Centre was founded to provide access to justice for communities in need. As the organisation has grown, our role in the community has also expanded. Today, RLC is not only a gateway to urgently needed free legal assistance, but a trusted source of policy expertise, a leading provider of community legal education, a training ground for future solicitors, a respected authority on social justice issues, and a powerful voice in the fight against inequality.

The success of RLC is thanks to the work of a large team. 'Team RLC' was first born in 1977, when a group of passionate advocates, activists and academics came together to form NSW's first Community Legal Centre. These 'RLC Originals' – as they affectionately came to be known – are the founding staff and volunteers who built up our organisation and solidified its reputation. Their continued support is invaluable to us. At our 40th birthday celebration at Sydney Town Hall in April this year, it was inspiring and humbling to have so many of our founders and alumni – including our keynote speaker the Hon Justice Virginia Bell AC – join with us to commemorate RLC's historic milestone.

Our volunteers are a crucial part of Team RLC. These are the law students who work on the frontline of our service, greeting clients when they first contact our centre. They are the solicitors who generously donate their time to give assistance and advice to our clients and the specialists and PLT students who support our advice sessions and Centre operations.

All this work is sustained by the generous support of our funders, donors and supporters, who provide us with the resources needed to ensure that RLC's critical services can continue.

It is only through the support of this passionate and dedicated network that RLC continues to grow and achieve our many goals. Whether it be saving someone from becoming homeless, providing a helping hand to a survivor of domestic violence, assisting a person to escape a debt spiral, or helping in the provision of human rights, Team RLC is directly responsible for achieving all of these positive outcomes, and more.

Despite some much-needed wins this financial year, long-term financial security for community legal centres remains unstable, and the funding pool is still not enough to meet the demand for our services. Team RLC is our greatest resource in the fight for greater funding sustainability.

Our sincere thanks to those foundations, organisations, universities and student law groups who have supported us this year:

- DLA Piper Australia
- Ashurst
- University of Technology Law Students' Society
- Sydney University Law Revue
- Fragomen
- Maurice Blackburn
- The Hand Up Foundation, and
- New South Wales Bar Association.

Thank you to our pro bono partners for providing technical expertise, in-kind donations, seconded solicitors and support to our clients:

- Ashurst
- City of Sydney
- Clayton Utz
- Corrs Chambers Westgarth
- DLA Piper Australia
- Fragomen
- Gilbert + Tobin Lawyers
- Henry Davis York Lawyers
- King & Wood Mallesons
- Lander & Rogers Lawyers
- McCabes
- Slater & Gordon Lawyers
- Spark Helmore
- Thomson Reuters, and
- Watts McCray Lawyers.

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

The resources given by Team RLC allow us to continue to address inequalities in the social justice system, and to help change the story for people in need.

Case Study: Jane's story

Team RLC is changing the story for people throughout Sydney. People like Jane.

When Jane* came to Redfern Legal Centre she, and her two young daughters, had been subjected to years of severe physical, psychological and financial abuse by her partner.

He would coerce her into using her wages to pay off debts arising from his gambling and drug addictions. He would force her into buying him expensive clothing she could not afford, leaving her with no money to support herself and her daughters. To pay for their basic living expenses, Jane was forced to use a credit card and raised huge debts against her name. Jane felt like she was in a situation with no way out.

Redfern Legal Centre's Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (Sydney WDVCS), assessed her as being under "serious threat".

Following a coordinated response led by our Sydney WDVCS advocates, together with community workers, police and government services, Jane was able to escape the relationship and take out an apprehended domestic violence order (ADVO).

As Redfern Legal Centre acts as a one stop shop for victims of domestic violence, the Sydney WDVCS advocates were able to connect Jane to lawyers with expertise in housing, employment and debt matters to assist with her and her daughters' related needs. Our domestic violence worker referred Jane to our tenancy solicitor, Kimberley, for help. She helped get Jane on the FACS Housing priority transfer list on the grounds that she was at risk in her home. She also advocated successfully for the application to be escalated to the highest level of priority.

Although Jane's transfer application was at the highest level of priority possible, she still had to wait for a suitable property to be identified for her family. She had been diagnosed with post traumatic stress disorder, severe anxiety and depression and was receiving treatment from a number of medical professionals and psychologists. Jane was forced to take leave from her full time job, because the stress of her situation was making work extremely difficult. While she was on leave, Jane received an email from her boss telling her that she could not return to her job. Jane told Kimberley, who referred her to RLC's employment solicitor, Linda, for advice. Linda filed an application to the Fair Work Commission on the basis that Jane's dismissal was a breach of the Fair Work Act. Because of the multiple stressors Jane was facing, Linda also approached Jane's former employer directly to see if we could settle the claim as quickly as possible. She was able to negotiate a very good settlement prior to going to the Commission, which included financial compensation and an excellent reference.

Jane's ex-partner had racked up considerable debt in her name. Losing her job exacerbated her financial hardship making her, and her daughters, solely reliant on social security income. Jane fell into arrears with her housing, credit card and mobile phone repayments. She was once again referred internally to RLC's credit and debt solicitor, Laura, who was able to advocate on her behalf to the various creditors resulting in over \$5000 debt waived!

Stories like Jane's are only possible through the support of Team RLC. On behalf of all of our clients, thank you for being part of that Team!

* Not her real name.

Origins of Redfern Legal Centre

By: Frances Gibson

Redfern Town Hall, 73 Pitt Street Redfern, is an imposing building designed in 1871 by George Allen Mansfield. The suburb of Redfern, one of the most famous in Australia, is now closely associated with the Aboriginal community of Sydney but the hall has another history, separate yet connected. It has long been the site of significant community, political and protest events.

In 1977, it opened its doors as Redfern Legal Centre (RLC) – an organisation that was to become synonymous throughout NSW and nationally with the struggle for justice and equality through law.

Strangely enough the origins of RLC are to be found at the University of New South Wales over in Kensington. The first UNSW Vice-Chancellor, Sir Phillip Baxter believed that the University ‘... must endeavour to meet the needs of a changing society, not be afraid of innovation, and be radical rather than conservative in its attitude to its responsibilities.’

This attitude was reflected in his appointment of the first Dean of the Law School in 1969. Hal Wootten was a leader committed to social justice and determined to create a law school with a difference. Wootten made it a mission to hire academics with a social justice outlook.

The law school which opened on 1 March 1971 wanted to be different and innovative and not based on the big end of town. As Terry Buddin notes, ‘the concept that law could be an instrument for social justice not social control’ was a defining thematic link between people in the Faculty. A number of legal academics at UNSW had been involved with Aboriginal activists and had assisted with the establishment of the Aboriginal Legal Service in 1970.

In 1975, a meeting was held in Redfern at St Luke’s Community Centre in

Regent Street to discuss ideas about community controlled legal services.

By 1976, the idea of setting up a legal advice centre became a focus of meetings at UNSW attended by academics and a vocal minority of students interested in social justice. One of these meetings, entitled ‘What’s wrong with the Law School?’ was held on 6 October 1976. The thrust of the meeting was ‘that the law course was not sufficiently in touch and not focused on practice and particularly poverty law practice.’



Frances Gibson

At this meeting a ‘straw vote confirmed overwhelming acceptance of the idea of establishing a law school clinic to provide legal advice and assistance to the community,’ and a solicitor from Fitzroy Legal Service was sponsored to

attend the second meeting.

At a meeting of UNSW Law School on 26 October 1976 it was resolved ‘that approval in principle be given for the setting up of a legal aid clinic as soon as practicable,’ and that a committee be set up to consider the models for such a clinic.

The membership of the committee was J. Basten, P. Burgess, T. L. Buddin, J. Disney, K. Swan, R. Lansdowne and S. Churchman. Later on, John Kirkwood, Russell Hogg, Steven Catt and Rick Raftos also joined the committee. A number of other academics assisted, including Stan Ross, Owen Jessup, Richard Chisolm and George Zdenkowski.

A general meeting to discuss the legal centre was held on 19 November 1976 at the Law School in the Library Tower. At this meeting there was discussion about whether to provide clinical legal education for students of UNSW or a service for ‘needy members of the community.’ The service approach was selected. It was decided that a community legal centre was the priority and a clinic would be further down the track.

Various locations for the Centre were considered – Mascot, Botany, Redfern – the spot had to be within reach of students from UNSW and accessible by volunteer solicitors from the city.

It was understood that this group had no hierarchy as such but people were allocated specific tasks. John Kirkwood was a driving influence. In late 1976, Terry Buddin was allocated the task of finding accommodation. An approach was made to South Sydney Council – a firm Labor Party council who were seen as being receptive to the proposal.

After a complex and slightly odd negotiation process, in early 1977 the Council contacted the person who established the neighbourhood legal



Redfern Legal Centre

referral service provided by pro bono lawyers from the city running one evening a week at the Town Hall saying; ‘there’s a bunch of people from the University of New South Wales who want to use the Town Hall for a legal service.’

He told the Council: ‘This is going to be much better than anything we are doing.’ The deal was done!

Redfern was seen as an epicentre of disadvantage and the UNSW group had decided that Redfern Town Hall was a good spot. It was close to the city for volunteers, close to a court and the railway station. Probably the deciding factor, however, was that the Council offered the hall for free rent.

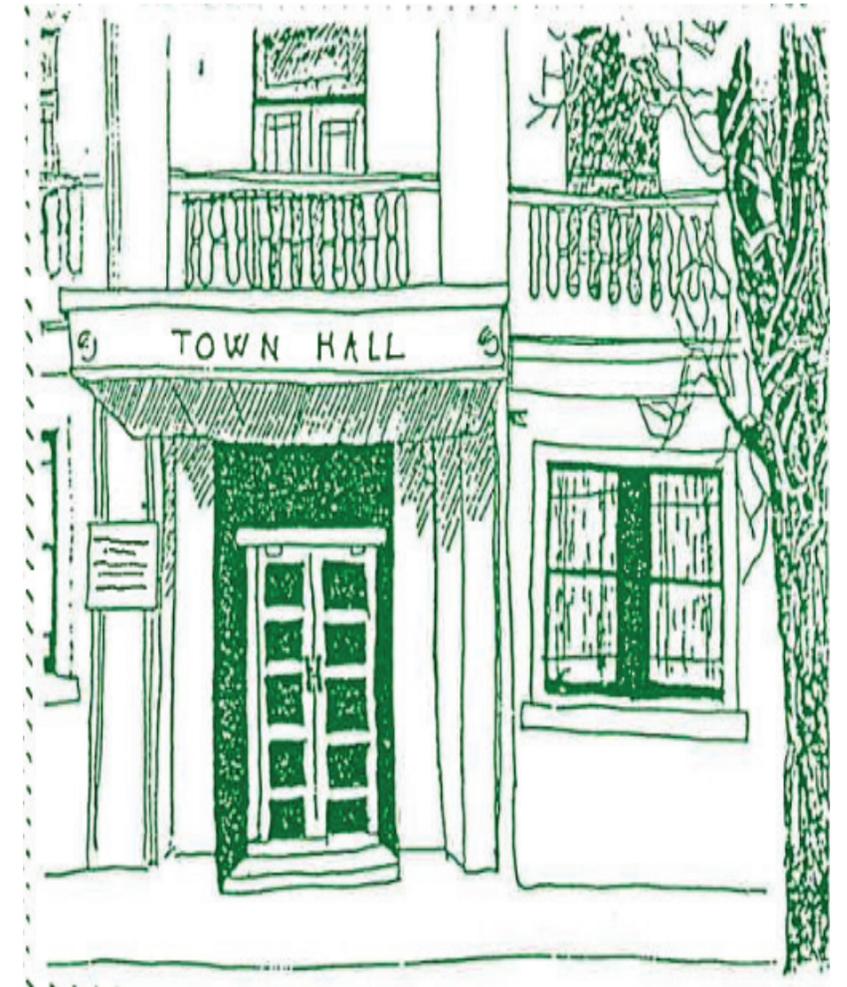
In return, the RLC group would provide lawyers providing free advice. Academics called on their mates to organise a roster of lawyers and a roster of law students was set up over the summer 1976/77. The legal centre was born.

Initially there were no paid staff – volunteer lawyers and law students were rostered on days and evenings. Andy Haesler was a student volunteer rostered on the second day the Centre was open recalls:

‘There were folders and a big table and we must have had some training – probably out at uni the week before. Because it was alien but not totally alien. We had a phone and we had a number... The phone rang and we answered it...’

‘People were wandering in...we took details and got information and clients could come back to get advice in the evenings. ...I can’t remember sending anyone away. The advice was always free. There was never a means test...’

In the first four weeks of operation alone, and with a minimum of publicity, the centre assisted approximately 100 clients.



1977: RLC's First Year

By: Clare Petre

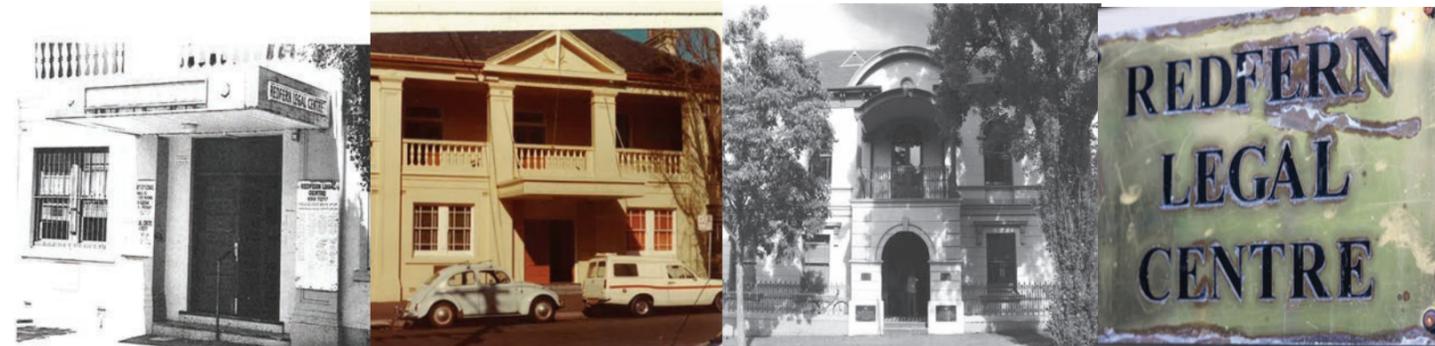
'Poverty law' generally described the vision of the founders of Redfern Legal Centre. They believed that if a person had a tenancy problem they were likely to have other issues; if they had a debt problem they were likely to have financial issues and other debts. RLC wanted to offer a service that did more than just address the strict legal questions.

The Centre therefore again turned to South Sydney Council for help and persuaded them to employ a social worker who would be deployed to RLC on a full-time basis. It was considered an important symbol that the first paid member of staff of this new type of legal service was not a lawyer, although social worker Clare Petre was soon joined by John Terry as RLC's principal solicitor and Susan Davitt as secretary.

Everything in the Centre was donated or scrounged, and the décor truly reflected a 'poverty' law centre. The photocopier was operated by leaning in and pushing a button with a straightened paper clip. However, the energy and enthusiasm of the staff and volunteers more than made up for the less than salubrious working conditions.

Word spread quickly about this new service and RLC's workload grew quickly. Volunteer solicitors from the big end of town and suburban firms, and a core of UNSW Law students were organised into afternoon and evening shifts in a pattern that became the norm.

While free assistance to people who could not afford a lawyer was a focus of the service this was never enough – RLC believed that we had to draw attention to and change laws and policies that had a negative impact on the most disadvantaged members of the community. So campaigning, advocacy and policy work were key elements of RLC's work.



We wrote endless submissions. We were involved in defending people arrested in the first Mardi Gras demonstrations, and later members of the Greek community in the hopelessly conceived 'Greek social security conspiracy'. We argued against vagrancy laws that penalised people for being poor, and took legal action to free a young man with an intellectual disability from a life of institutionalisation.

In the early days, RLC had the media space to ourselves and we used it unapologetically to highlight problems and changes needed in the law. We made enemies in the establishment and knew this meant we were having an impact.

RLC also initiated ground breaking community legal education to demystify the law. This would include the hugely successful *Law Handbook* and *Streetwise Comics*. The Centre identified areas of unmet legal need including for prisoners, social security recipients, and people with an intellectual disability, and supported specialist services to develop in these areas.

The prominence of RLC attracted the interest of a television producer who wanted to make a series based on a community legal centre. Twenty episodes of *Fallen Angels* aired on the ABC – "a community legal centre in a fictional suburb of Sydney and the interesting clients represented by its overworked lawyers". Appropriately it was billed as a comedy/drama!

But it wasn't all overwork. RLC was a close knit community where we partied as hard as we worked, and lifelong friendships and peer groups were formed. There are many stories to be told about RLC, its staff, volunteers,

supporters, and clients that could fill another twenty episodes at least.



Clare Petre (1997).



RLC's achievements over 40 years

Since opening in 1977, Redfern Legal Centre has achieved social justice for thousands of people each year. RLC has consistently championed access to justice for all members of the community and this mission has taken many forms, from providing general advice and casework, to informing and educating the wider public on their legal rights, to providing submissions to Parliament and international bodies such as the United Nations.

RLC has also initiated or been actively involved in projects which have led to the establishment of other services including: Welfare Rights Centre, Prisoners Legal Service, Accommodation Rights Service, Consumer Credit Legal Centre, Campbelltown Legal Service, Redfern Legal Centre Publishing, and Streetwise Comics.

Here is just a brief snapshot of RLC's achievements over the last 40 years...

1977 – RLC established

1978 – Provided representation for Mardi Gras participants

RLC provided representation for 53 people arrested during the inaugural Mardi Gras parade.

1985 – RLC's defence of prisoners at Long Bay Prison

RLC opened over 920 action files and defended over 220 matters for the prisoners at Long Bay Prison.

1986 – Establishment of the Intellectual Disability Rights Service (IDRS)

Through the efforts of RLC volunteers, the IDRS was established to ensure that people with intellectual disabilities have a greater opportunity to exercise their rights.

1988–1990 – Development of the Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Scheme (WDVCAS)

RLC established the concept and developed the Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Scheme, in conjunction with the South Sydney Domestic Violence Committee.

The WDVCAS commenced in March 1990, with solicitors and support workers from RLC, Kingsford Legal Centre and local women's services. The RLC model for Women's Domestic Violence Support schemes provided the pro-forma for design and funding of court assistance schemes across the state.

1989 – Representation of the Family of David Gundy at a Coronial Inquest

Mr. David Gundy was an Aboriginal man killed in his own

bedroom in April 1989 during a police raid, despite not being wanted by police for any offence. RLC acted for Mr. Gundy's brothers and sisters as government funding for representation at the inquest was refused.

1990–91 – Reduction of prison terms for over 1,500 NSW prisoners

In *Bates v The State of New South Wales* in the Supreme Court and *The State of New South Wales v Bates* in the Court of Appeal, RLC successfully represented a prisoner in a test case on the correct calculation of remissions. The decision was responsible for the reduction of prison terms for 1,670 prisoners in NSW.

1991–92 – Test cases against the Department of Housing

RLC ran the first of a number of test cases against the Department of Housing regarding tenants being issued no grounds evictions. This first matter was settled on terms favourable to our client. The issue was eventually litigated in *Nicholson v NSW Land and Housing Corporation*, in which Stoddard J held that the Department of Housing could not evict a tenant without grounds as the principles of natural justice applied to prevent the Department depriving tenants of the right to a fair hearing.

1993-95 – Successful case against the State Bank affecting over 300,000 NSW borrowers

RLC initiated legal action against the State Bank of NSW in order to deal with a vast array of breaches of the *Credit Act* by the bank. The case amounted to the most comprehensive investigation of a major bank's personal lending practices yet carried out in Australia.

1994 – Drug Law Reform Project

RLC's Drug Law Reform Project began in 1994. RLC recognised the failures of prohibition, proposing an alternative harm reduction model for controlled availability of drugs. Although controversial, this work was well received in health, legal and community fields.

1996 – RLC awarded for dedication to prevention of domestic violence

RLC received a Special Award for dedication and commitment to prevention of domestic violence from the NSW Minister for Community Services, Ron Dyer, MLC. The award was made on National Stop Violence Against Women Day 1996, and presented to the Redfern Domestic Violence Court Assistance Scheme.

1997 – The birth of Rentwatchers

Rentwatchers was a broad-based coalition founded by RLC, involving Shelter, Tenants Union, TAAP services, Local Councils, Social Change media, private tenants and other groups. Rentwatchers were campaigning against unfair rent increases and evictions in the lead up to the Sydney 2000 Olympics.

1997 – Launch of Tenant's Guides

RLC's Tenants Service launches *Going thru the Roof: a tenant's guide to fighting rent increases in the Residential Tenancies Tribunal*, and the first edition of the *Share Housing Survival Guide*.

1999–2000 – Assistance for tenancy clients affected by the Olympic Games

RLC's Tenancy Advice team assisted many clients affected by increased rent prices and evictions, both in the lead up to and during the Sydney Olympic Games, advocating for tenants' rights to secure and affordable housing.

2008 – Establishment of Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association (SUPRA)

Commenced operation of a branch office at SUPRA, providing free, confidential legal information, advice and advocacy to postgraduate students from any of Sydney University's campuses and affiliated campuses of the Sydney College of the Arts, The Conservatorium of Music, Orange Agricultural College and Camden Farms.

2008 – Establishment of TAFE (Sydney Institute) Legal Service

RLC commenced operating the only legal service based at a TAFE college in Australia, providing free, confidential legal information, advice and advocacy to students who are members of the Student Association and eligible TAFE staff at the eight colleges of Sydney Institute of TAFE.

2008/09 – "Stolen Wages" Cases

RLC represented a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients seeking compensation for their removal from their homes and the subsequent abuse they endured in institutional care colleges of Sydney Institute of TAFE.

2010-12 – Drafting the Shadow Report to the United Nations on Australia's implementation of CRPD

RLC was one of the lead agencies involved in drafting this report on Australia's implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ('CRPD').

2011 – Establishment of a state-wide International Student Service

RLC commenced a specialist state-wide international student advice service in response to the increase in the number of vulnerable international students seeking assistance.

2012 – Establishment of a state-wide service in both police powers and administrative law

RLC has a long history of advocating for police accountability, and continues to do so today as the only community legal centre in NSW with a dedicated police powers practice area.

2013 – Establishment of the Unfair Dismissal Advocacy Scheme

Through RLC's partnership with Clayton Utz solicitors, this

scheme was set up in order to provide advice and advocacy to people bringing unfair dismissal claims to the Fair Work Commission. It has since been expanded to include general protections matters.

2014 – Establishment of Millers Point Tenants' Service

RLC established a service to provide assistance to tenants of Millers Point impacted by Housing NSW's decision to relocate residents from the area.

2014 – Implementation of the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Safer Pathway Program

The Sydney WDVCAS is the host of the Waverley Local Coordination Point, which, along with Orange, is one of two launch sites for the Safer Pathway Program.

2015 – Establishment of first hospital-based Health Justice Partnership program in NSW

RLC and Sydney Local Health District's Aboriginal Health Justice Partnership provides legal services to patients based at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital.

2016 – Addressing exploitation of international students in the workplace.

RLC's international student service worked with the media to draw attention to systemic levels of exploitation of international students in the workplace, assisting many students including some of those involved in the widely reported 7-Eleven 'cash back' scheme.

2016 – Expansion of the 'Safer Pathways' program

Commenced operation of a new Local Coordination Point in the Newtown area, offering wrap-around services to assist victims of domestic violence with welfare and legal needs.

RLC continues its commitment to providing legal services to the most disadvantaged in the community, to seeking reform of the law where necessary, and to breaking down the mystification which surrounds the legal system.

For more on RLC's achievements, please visit <http://rlc.org.au/about-us/achievements-and-highlights>



Celebrating 40 Years!

On 27 April 2017, Redfern Legal Centre hosted its 40th Birthday Fundraising Dinner at Sydney Town Hall. More than 280 people attended the fully-booked event, enjoying a fabulous evening of networking, speeches, food and dancing. It was humbling to see so many friends and colleagues come together to mark this key milestone in RLC's history.

We are happy to announce that the event raised over \$34,000 to support the work of Redfern Legal Centre! These funds came from sponsorships, ticket sales, a raffle, a silent auction, and merchandise sales. As always, every dollar raised will help us to continue to provide free legal services to the vulnerable people we assist.

A selection of photos from the night appear on the following pages. More photos are available on RLC's Facebook page at: <http://bit.ly/RLC40thpics>

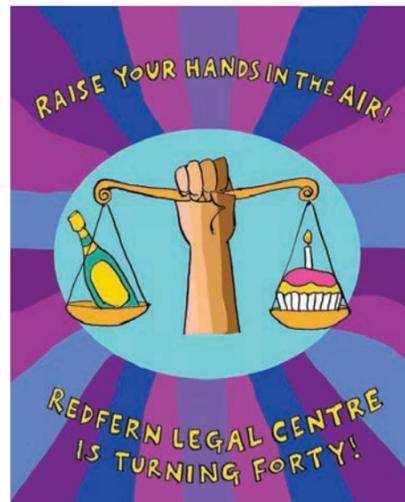
Thank you to our many guests, generous bidders, sponsors and auction item donors for making the night a success – and so much fun! It truly was a team effort, and we would like to say thank you to:

Our Sponsors:

DLA Piper,
Ashurst,
Maurice Blackburn Lawyers,
Fragomen,
New South Wales Bar Association,
HandUp Foundation and the City of Sydney.

Our speakers:

Hon Justice Virginia Bell AC,
Hon Justice John Basten,
Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, and
Cr Philip Thalys.



Our MCs:

Wendy Harmer, and
Veronica and Lewis from Triple J.

In-kind donors:

Calabria Family Wines,
Coca-Cola,
Batlow Cider,
James Squire,
Fiona Katauskas
(for designing the event invitation), our
band The Pragmatics,
John Dennis, and
D'Alton Baker Productions.



During our 40th birthday celebration we auctioned off a range of fabulous prizes gifted to RLC by generous donors.

Pictured: Angus Robilliard (South Cares) with Finn O'Keefe (RLC Communications and Volunteer Manager).

South Cares donated an Indigenous Rabbitohs jersey and a Game Day Experience for two to RLC's 40th birthday auction.

REDFERN LEGAL CENTRE

CELEBRATING FORTY YEARS

THURSDAY 27th APRIL 2017
6:30pm - 11pm
SYDNEY TOWN HALL

MCs WENDY HARMER & TRIPLE J'S VERONICA & LEWIS
WITH SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER JUSTICE VIRGINIA BELL AC

★ FABULOUS AUCTION PRIZES! ★ DANCING! ★
★ LIVE KARAOKE (FOR A PRICE!) ★
★ MOTOWN, SOUL, ROCK, MOD & 60'S - 80'S POP BY THE PRAGMATICS ★

TICKETS \$200. FOR BOOKINGS VISIT bit.ly/rlc40th OR CONTACT
LIZ CLARK 029698 7277, liz@rlc.org.au BY 15th APRIL 2017

Maurice Blackburn Lawyers Since 1919

DLA PIPER

ashurst

CITY OF SYDNEY

FRAGOMEN WORLDWIDE

NEW SOUTH WALES BAR ASSOCIATION

THE HAND UP FOUNDATION

RLC's 40th birthday invitation, designed and illustrated by Fiona Katauskas.

40th Birthday Dinner photos

RLC's 40th Birthday Fundraiser, Sydney Town Hall, 27 April 2017. Photos by John Dennis.



Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service

RLC's Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (Sydney WDV CAS) assists women and children in court proceedings for Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders (ADVOs) proceedings at Downing Centre, Newtown and Waverley Local Courts.

Sydney WDV CAS also hosts the Waverley and Newtown domestic violence Local Coordination Points (LCPs) and Safety Action Meetings (SAMs), which cover the Eastern Suburbs and Inner West as part of the NSW Government's domestic violence service delivery model, Safer Pathway.

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

In May 2017, Sydney WDV CAS began hosting the social support element of the newly-launched Family Advocacy and Support Service (FASS) at the Sydney Registry of the Family Court. FASS is a specialist family violence service that provides legal and social support services to clients affected by family violence as their case moves through the family law courts.

Sydney WDV CAS continues to be at the forefront of domestic violence law reform and policy work in NSW through representation on statutory boards and committees, participation in decision-making forums, and written submissions.

Sydney WDV CAS at court

Sydney WDV CAS is based at the Downing Centre Court and attends both Waverley and Newtown Local Courts weekly on AVO list day.

On ADVO list days, the service provides a holistic service to women and children victims of domestic violence. The Sydney WDV CAS team works with a roster of around 40 seconded workers from local agencies, as well as a social worker from Centrelink who assists women to access payments and with officers from Victims Services, who provide face-to-face assistance to victims at the Downing Centre Court.

Thank you to the following agencies and services who provide

seconded workers to work with Sydney WDV CAS on ADVO list day:

- Leichhardt Women's Community Health Centre
- Rozelle Neighbourhood Centre
- Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Service
- The Women and Girls Emergency Centre
- Staying Home Leaving Violence
- Moving Out/Moving On
- Barnardos Family Referral Service
- Bondi Beach Cottage
- Junction Neighbourhood Centre
- The Deli
- Jewish Care
- WEAVE
- Lou's Place
- Benevolent Society, and
- YWCA.

Legal advice and representation is provided to clients on AVO list day by practitioners from the Legal Aid NSW-funded Domestic Violence Practitioner Scheme.

Thank you to the following solicitors who provide this legal advice and representation to our clients:

- Narelle Butler
- Louise Coorey
- Denise Kaiti
- Veronica Love
- Nanette Reuben
- Chamindri Veitch, and
- Theo Voros.



NSW Domestic and Family Violence Reforms: It Stops Here – Safer Pathway

Waverley and Newtown Local Coordination Points

As part of the Safer Pathway element of the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Reforms, Sydney WDV CAS has hosted the Waverley Local Coordination Points (LCP) since October 2014, and the Newtown LCP from November 2016. These reforms are a whole-of-government response to provide a strategic, coordinated and timely approach to assisting victims of domestic violence.

The Waverley and Newtown LCPs receive referrals from NSW Police for all victims assessed as being either 'at threat' or 'at serious threat' of domestic violence in the Botany Bay, Eastern Beaches, Eastern Suburbs, Rose Bay, Leichhardt, Newtown and Marrickville LACs.

These referrals are received through an electronic platform, the Central Referral Point (CRP). Those who have been referred are contacted by the LCP workers within 24 business hours and offered case coordination, specialist advice, court advocacy, assistance and referrals.

Victims assessed as 'at serious threat' are placed on a fortnightly Safety Action Meeting (SAM), which is coordinated by the LCP. At the SAM, a team of designated decision makers from agencies such as NSW Police, Health, Education, Corrections, and Family and Community Services, together with local non-government agency representatives, meet to exchange information and devise a safety action plan for agencies to implement on behalf of victims in order to mitigate the risk to their safety.



To celebrate International Women's Day, our domestic violence team knitted pussycat hats, which they wore proudly during their busy AVO listing day at Downing Centre.

Case Study: – Margo*

Police were called to Margo's home due to an argument between her and former partner James, father of her eight-year-old son, Josh. The incident was recorded by police as 'no offence – verbal argument'. Margo was referred to the Local Coordination Point (LCP)** by the police, who did not apply for an AVO.

When the LCP Intake and Referral Officer rang Margo, she gave details of a long history of unwanted contact from James, including recent stalking behaviour. The Intake and Referral Officer assessed Margo as being at serious threat, referring her case to the local Safety Action Meeting (SAM).**

The Intake and Referral Officer arranged for Margo to speak to the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (WDV CAS)* and to the Domestic Violence Practitioner Scheme (DVPS) solicitor on the AVO list day at court the following day. A referral was also made for Margo to see the social support worker at the Family Advocacy and Support Service (FASS)** at the Family Court.

When Margo spoke to the DVPS solicitor, she was advised she had strong grounds for an AVO application, and was told she should go back to police with the grounds written up by the solicitor. The WDV CAS made a warm referral to Victims Services for counselling for both Margo and Josh.

When Margo returned to police, based on the detailed information now provided, a provisional order was made and the AVO was listed for Waverley Court the following week. The DVPS solicitor assisted Margo to write up an agreement regarding James' contact with Josh to attach to the conditions of the AVO, and then James agreed to a final AVO.

With Margo's permission, information was exchanged between the WDV CAS and the FASS, and security arrangements were put in place when her family law matter was first heard in court. The FASS social support worker also referred Margo to the FASS solicitor for advice regarding family law.

At the local Safety Action Meeting (SAM), a safety action plan was devised, including a safety audit of Margo's home which resulted in CCTV cameras being installed by Staying Home Leaving Violence.

Margo contacted Sydney WDV CAS and expressed her thanks for all the assistance and said she now felt much safer and more confident about her future.

Margo's story highlights the essential role legal and social support professionals play in creating a safe environment for victims of family violence to share experiences and access urgently needed security and support. Without this integrated care, clients like Margo would fall through the cracks, remaining vulnerable and unassisted.

* Name has been changed

**The Local Coordination Point, the Safety Action Meeting, the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service and the Family Advocacy and Support Service are all part of Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service at Redfern Legal Centre.

NSW Domestic Violence Justice Strategy

In areas where Safer Pathway has not yet been rolled out, the NSW Domestic Violence Justice Strategy still operates. The area covered by the Police Local Area Commands feeding into the Downing Centre Court are not yet part of Safer Pathway, but are covered instead by the Justice Strategy. Under the Justice Strategy, Police refer victims to their local WDVCS via the Central Referral Point, the same electronic platform used to make LCP referrals. In this model, there is not the option to refer clients assessed as at 'serious threat' to a Safety Action Meeting.

It is anticipated that the Downing Centre catchment area will be part of the future rollout of Safer Pathway. Until then, victims will be contacted via referrals through the Central Referral Point and offered specialist advice, court advocacy, assistance and referrals to appropriate agencies.

Sydney WDVCS and Prosecutor Pre-Hearing Clinics

Sydney WDVCS and the Police Prosecutors Office have continued to work together to provide pre-hearing clinics at the Downing Centre and Waverley Local Courts. These clinics are held monthly, with an invitation sent to all Sydney WDVCS clients with a defended hearing scheduled for the following month.

The clinics provide an opportunity for victims to hear information from a trained domestic violence prosecutor prior to their hearing date. Clients report they feel far more confident about giving evidence on the hearing date and are much better prepared for the ordeal of cross-examination after attending these clinics

Family Advocacy and Support Service at the Sydney Registry of the Family Court

The Family Advocacy and Support Service (FASS) is funded by the Federal Government and in NSW, the FASS is administered by Legal Aid NSW. The Sydney WDVCS Coordinator spoke at the launch of the NSW FASSs in May to guests including the Federal Attorney General, George Brandis, and senior judges of the Family Court.



Coordinator of Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service, Susan Smith speaking at the NSW FASS launch, Parramatta Family Court of Australia, May 2017.

At the Sydney Registry of the Family Court, the FASS is made up of Legal Aid family law solicitors and social support workers from Sydney WDVCS. FASS lawyers provide duty services to clients to assist with their family law and family violence issues, and the social support workers assist clients with their social welfare and other support needs. As part of the FASS there is a second support service that assists men affected by family violence with their social and welfare needs.

The two Sydney WDVCS team members providing the service at the Sydney Registry are experienced WDVCS workers who provide safety planning, court support and appropriate referrals to women. To date, many of the FASS clients have been previous or current WDVCS clients and the ability to share information, support and advocacy across jurisdictions, combined with the ability to access legal advice from the family law solicitors is proving invaluable to clients.

Working for Change

RLC's Sydney WDVCS team has once again been at the forefront of domestic violence law reform in NSW, principally through the Coordinator's membership of three NSW statutory boards, the NSW Domestic Violence Death Review Team, the NSW Victims Advisory Board and the NSW Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault Council, and also through invitations to team members to attend domestic and family violence related consultations and round tables.

The Sydney WDVCS has, among other recommendations, lobbied for a review of the NSW offence of strangulation in the context of domestic violence and for the implementation of specialist domestic violence court lists to bring together specialist domestic violence magistrates, prosecutors and advocates at all NSW courts.

The two Sydney WDVCS team members providing the service at the Sydney Registry are experienced WDVCS workers who provide safety planning, court support and appropriate referrals to women. To date, many of the FASS clients have been previous or current WDVCS clients and the ability to share information, support and advocacy across jurisdictions, combined with the ability to access legal advice from the family law solicitors is proving invaluable to clients.

NSW Domestic Violence Death Review Team at the Coroners Court

The Domestic Violence Death Review Team (DVDRT) is a multi-agency committee that undertakes comprehensive analysis of deaths occurring in NSW in the context of domestic violence in order to identify issues, trends and patterns, and to make recommendations to reduce the likelihood of deaths occurring in similar circumstances in the future. The Sydney WDVCS Coordinator is one of only two members of the team that works directly with clients. Many of the issues identified in the context of these deaths are issues that arise for Sydney WDVCS clients.

The DVDRT is convened by State Coroner Michael Barnes and the next team report, including recommendations to Government and other commentary, is due for release in November 2017.

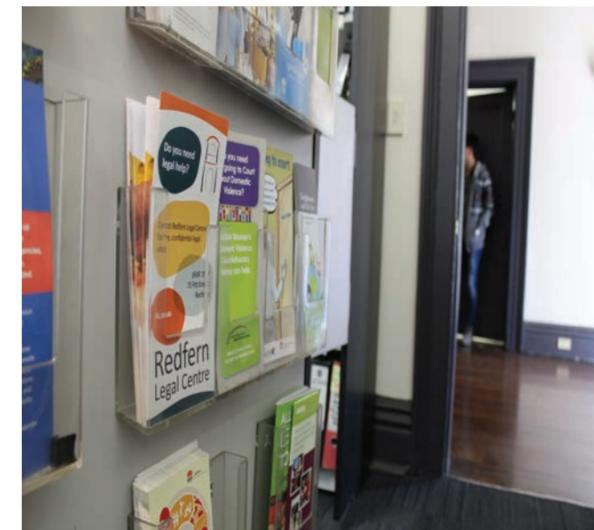
NSW Victims Advisory Board, Department of Justice

The Victims Advisory Board provides advice to the Attorney General on the needs of victims of crime and on key reform proposals to improve the criminal justice system for victims. Much of the work of the Victims Advisory Board has been focused on the appropriate provision of services to victims of domestic violence.

NSW Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault Council

The NSW Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault Council provides specialist policy and law reform recommendations to the NSW Government and provides information and specialist advice directly to the Minister for Domestic and Family Violence, Pru Goward.

In the past twelve months, the Council has been focused on issues relevant to the work of Sydney WDVCS: the roll out of Safer Pathway, which ensures victims of domestic violence receive a consistent and integrated multi-agency response; the introduction of GPS tracking devices for offenders; and the development of a sexual assault strategy for NSW.



Other invitations to contribute ideas and participate in decision-making processes

The Sydney WDVCS team has participated in numerous other roundtables and consultations in the past year, including:

- a Human Rights Commission Roundtable with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Domestic Violence
- a review by Women NSW of the Domestic Violence Service System
- a consultation for the development of a NSW Domestic and Family Violence Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy
- a consultation at Fair Trading for the review of the *Residential Tenancies Act*
- a consultation at Family and Community Services' Family Violence and Multicultural Communities, and
- a review of victims support services in NSW conducted by the Community Restorative Justice Centre.

Gilbert + Tobin Pro Bono Partnership

Sydney WDVCS is very grateful for all the assistance provided by our pro bono partner Gilbert + Tobin Lawyers. In the past twelve months Sydney WDVCS data has been entered to a new database, designed by Gilbert + Tobin after the implementation of the information barrier between RLC and the WDVCS.

On a more practical note, Gilbert + Tobin has provided a huge amount of administrative assistance to the WDVCS. Every month, Gilbert + Tobin provide copies of all the WDVCS client intake forms and the information packs specially collated for individual courts. This assistance is invaluable and saves the WDVCS a huge amount in stationery costs and many hours of photocopying time.

For all of this assistance we are particularly grateful to the support of the following Gilbert + Tobin personnel:

- Michelle Hannon, Partner, Pro Bono Service
- Tamara Sims, Lawyer, Pro Bono Services
- Madeline Perry, Applications Analyst, and
- Jen Davidson, Assistant to Michelle Hannon.



L-R: Susan Smith, Solicitor and Coordinator, Sydney WDVCS; Susannah O'Reilly, Solicitor in Charge, Domestic Violence Unit, Legal Aid NSW; Michelle Jones, Manager, Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program, Legal Aid NSW; Richard Funston, Deputy CEO, Legal Aid NSW; Senator The Hon George Brandis QC, Attorney-General; Kylie Beckhouse, Family Law Director, Legal Aid NSW; Judge Louise Henderson, Federal Circuit Court of Australia and The Hon. Justice Garry Foster, Family Court of Australia, at the NSW FASS launch, Parramatta Family Court of Australia, May 2017.

Credit, Debt and Consumer Complaints

During the 2016-2017 financial year, Redfern Legal Centre's Credit, Debt and Consumer Law Advice Service provided advice and casework to clients on a range of issues, including:

- responsible lending practices of financial service providers who breach the *National Consumer Credit Protection Act*
- unsolicited selling of insurance products to vulnerable consumers
- financial abuse and hardship applications
- payday loans and consumer lease agreements
- complaints to the various ombudsman services
- consumer guarantees under the Australian Consumer Law
- consumer claims in the New South Wales Civil and Administrative Tribunal
- defending claims in the Local Court, and
- recovery of debt or goods in the Local Court.

Working for Change

Domestic Violence and Financial Abuse

Redfern Legal Centre (RLC) continues to advocate for better legal solutions for victims of domestic violence and financial abuse. Over the last financial year, we have assisted numerous clients with significant debts incurred in the context of abusive relationships.

To raise awareness about this widespread but underreported form of domestic violence, we ran a national community legal education webinar for community workers, financial counsellors and lawyers. As well as highlighting the impacts and common warning signs of domestic abuse, the webinar discussed new tools advocates can use to negotiate appropriate hardship arrangements, such as the Financial Ombudsman Service Approach to Joint Facilities and Family Violence.

RLC also advocated for, and assisted in drafting, a new industry guideline on financial abuse. Released by the Australian Bankers' Association in November, this guideline provides banks with a framework to develop internal policies and procedures to support financial abuse victims.

Small Amount Credit Contract Review: Payday Loans and Consumer Leases

In November, the Australian Government released its response to the final report of the independent review into small amount credit contracts (SACC). To date, none of the recommendations have been legislated. RLC continues to advocate for greater protections for our clients caught in a 'debt trap', where financial hardship is perpetuated through repeat unsuitable lending.



In January, Labor member for Perth and Shadow Minister for Consumer Affairs, Mr Tim Hammond MP, visited RLC to learn more about our Credit and Debt Consumer Law Advice Service. Pictured from left: Will Dwyer (former RLC Credit and Debt Solicitor), Jacqui Swinburne (RLC Acting CEO), and Tim Hammond MP.

In November, the Australian Government released its response to the final report of the independent review into small amount credit contracts (SACC). To date, none of the recommendations have been legislated. RLC continues to advocate for greater protections for our clients caught in a 'debt trap', where financial hardship is perpetuated through repeat unsuitable lending.

Case Study: Unravelling the Debt Spiral

Megan* and her four young children were left with nothing but the clothes on their backs when their home was burnt down in a vicious act of domestic violence by Megan's ex-partner, who ignored the ADVO that was supposed to protect her. Megan had to rebuild her life and was struggling to find enough money each week for rent and basic living expenses. She was falling further and further behind in her rental payments, and was a prime target for the exploitive practices of lenders who prey on vulnerable consumers.

When Megan first came to RLC she was trapped in a cycle of debt with six different payday lenders, three different rental companies, and owed tens of thousands of dollars in overdue bills. The persistent pressure from debt collectors exacerbated Megan's anxiety and depression.

RLC has been assisting Megan with complaints about the unsuitable loans and rental agreements as well as hardship applications to waive her unpaid bills. To date, RLC has assisted Megan to waive almost \$15,000 of debt.

This case illustrates the way domestic violence and debt matters often intersect. In this instance, Megan's domestic violence matter was resolved prior to RLC taking on the case; however, our credit and debt and domestic violence teams frequently work together to support clients with multiple and overlapping legal issues.

* Not her real name.

RLC in the Media

Damaging cost of consumer leases like Radio Rentals

By Tony Ibrahim, CHOICE, 27 March 2017.

Norma Wannell was accompanying her friend to a Radio Rentals store selling home appliances in November of 2013.

"We just happened to see Dyson vacuum cleaners. I was in desperate need of a good vacuum cleaner at the time.

"So I signed up."

Later she would describe this decision as "the beginning of the end". ...

The contracts used by consumer leases, such as Radio Rentals, are deliberately complex, says Laura Bianchi, a credit and debt solicitor at Redfern Legal Centre.

"The terms and conditions of consumer lease contracts go to great lengths to bury crucial information.

"Many consumers are under the mistaken belief that once they pay off the value of the good being leased, they will become the owner. Instead they end up paying much more than the item was ever worth," Bianchi tells CHOICE.

(Full article available at: <https://www.choice.com.au/money/credit-cards-and-loans/personal-loans/articles/the-damaging-cost-of-radio-rentals-270317>)

Australian Consumer Law Review: Final Report and Stakeholder Consultations

In December 2016, RLC made a further submission in response to the interim report for the five-year review of the Australian Consumer Law (ACL). Our submission reinforced our recommendations to improve consumer protections and improve the efficacy of the dispute resolution process. The submission can be accessed on the RLC website at: <http://rlc.org.au/publication/submission-review-australian-consumer-law>.

The final report was released in March 2017 and many of the recommendations align with previous submissions made by RLC. Of particular significance to many clients are the proposals in relation to threshold requirements for unsolicited consumer agreements. The report also recommended that where goods fail to meet consumer guarantees within a short period of time, a consumer is entitled to remedies of a refund or replacement without needing to prove a 'major failure'. RLC also supports the proposal for a significant increase in the maximum penalties for a breach of the ACL in the hope this will encourage greater compliance.

Following publication of the final report, RLC was invited to participate in a series of ACL Review stakeholder consultation meetings with NSW Finance, Services and Innovation. We will continue to advocate for the implementation of the proposals.

Case Study: More debt is no solution to manage debt!

Sabbir* migrated to Australia from Bangladesh in the late '90s and commenced working 20 hours per week at a local restaurant. One day at work, he was offered a credit card by a regular customer who worked at a nearby bank. At that time, Sabbir had limited understanding of English and no experience with card-based payment systems. Without requesting any proof of income, the customer returned later that day and handed Sabbir a credit card with a \$2,000 limit.

Sabbir didn't use the card for many years, however the bank would regularly offer credit limit increases despite the fact that his visa conditions changed and he was no longer able to work in Australia. Sabbir, his wife and two young daughters were relying on financial support from their family and friends.

When Sabbir regained his work rights, he started working as a taxi driver, but his income was slowly declining as competitors entered the market. He was working six-days-a-week and earning less than he would have been receiving on a Centrelink pension. His credit card repayments were unmanageable, so he approached the bank for hardship assistance. To "help" Sabbir deal with his credit card debt, the bank signed him up for a new personal loan. The bank employee filled out the loan application stating on the form that the loan was for a holiday, but the loan money was transferred entirely into Sabbir's credit card account.

Suddenly Sabbir was managing two debts with all the associated interest, fees and charges. When Sabbir sought assistance from RLC, he was paying \$950 a month interest and was in such extreme financial difficulty that he could not afford food and clothing for his children. He was tired, stressed and being harassed by debt collectors who would call up to 3 or 4 times each day.

RLC investigated Sabbir's debt and advised him that the bank had breached their lending obligations. RLC assisted Sabbir to make a formal complaint detailing his financial hardship. After lengthy negotiations, the bank agreed to waive almost \$60,000.

Sabbir and his family now have hope for the future and plan to start a new chapter in regional NSW.

* Not her real name.

Police and Government Accountability

An effective police complaints system is critical to achieving an accountable police force, and for maintaining public confidence in the law. In the last year, RLC's Police and Government Accountability practice assisted a significant number of people with complaints about police or government processes.

In addition to carrying out ongoing casework, throughout the year the practice advocated for a range of law reform measures, with the aim of achieving a fair and effective balance between police and justice enforcement powers and the rights of the individual.

Policy work

Police given new 'shoot-to-kill' powers

In June 2017, police were given new powers under the *Terrorism (Police Powers) Act 2002* (NSW) to use lethal force in declared terrorist incidents. RLC is concerned that the new provisions arguably allow police to use lethal force against *anyone* at the incident – not just suspected terrorists – and that police using lethal force will be immune from criminal liability. Police are yet to utilise these new powers but RLC will maintain a watching brief.

New oversight body

On 1 July 2017, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission (LECC) was established. The LECC replaces the police branch of the NSW Ombudsman and the Policy Integrity Commission.

The LECC arose out of the 2015 report by former NSW Shadow Attorney General, Mr Andrew Tink AM *Review of Police Oversight*. In addition to making a formal submission to the review, RLC and UNSW Law held a public forum exploring the current system of police oversight.

Although the LECC claims that it "provides the NSW public with a simplified, strong, fair and impartial system of law enforcement oversight in NSW", RLC has some concerns about the new legislation. The LECC will only investigate "serious misconduct", ie. misconduct that rises to the level of a criminal offence or corrupt conduct. This means that much of the misconduct we see, being unlawful but not an offence, may not have the benefit of a LECC investigation. For example, unlawful stop and searches, unlawful arrests and excessive force. In addition, the LECC may not have the same powers to conduct investigations in the public interest as its predecessor (for example, the Ombudsman's 2012 report into Taser use).

ALRC inquiry into the incarceration rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

In March, the Police Powers practice took part in an initial consultation on the Australian Law Reform Commission Inquiry into the Incarceration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This meeting will help inform RLC's submission to the inquiry, made in September 2017.

Proposed 'policing hub'

The practice is also working on a new 'policing hub' that will provide information and resources to individuals and practitioners in the area of police misconduct. One of the features of the hub will be a series of 'FAQ' factsheets, the first of which was published on the RLC website in June. Using an easy-to-read question and answer format, this factsheet addresses many questions commonly raised by our clients and the wider community about dealing with the police. More factsheets are planned for publication over the coming year.



Students studying in the UNSW Police Powers Clinic at RLC.



Advice and Casework

RLC's Police Powers solicitor provides advice to clients on minor criminal matters, complaints against NSW Police, and civil claims against the State of NSW on a range of policy and government accountability matters.

During the year, RLC represented clients on matters such as:

- the arrest and overnight detention of a vulnerable Aboriginal client for breaching a bail condition that was not a new offence itself and for which she would not have received a term of imprisonment;
- the arrest of our client for the use of language that would not have risen to the level of criminality required by the offensive language provisions;
- the repeated stopping and searching of an Aboriginal client without any clear reason, raising issues about whether he was stopped due to his Aboriginality;
- the use of excessive force by police when detaining a client under s 22 of the *Mental Health Act*, causing her unnecessary injuries;
- the failure by police to record the use of force against a client, despite her receiving observable injuries, and
- the unlawful collection of a DNA sample by police from a client when he was not an 'untested former offender'.

Case Study: Offensive language

George * was walking along a quiet residential street in Sydney. George usually takes this road to TAFE in order to avoid the busy streets. George was wearing a backpack and a black hoodie. Two police officers, conducting patrols in the area at the time, stopped George. Without giving George any reason for being stopped and questioned, the police officers insisted that George explain why he was in the area.

After asking several more times and without giving George any reason for being stopped, George eventually answered with "none of your fucking business". George was immediately placed under arrest for offensive language.

Only a few moments later, the police officer himself used the word "fucking". After being detained and forcibly searched, George allegedly committed a further offensive language offence. He was subsequently issued with a CIN (criminal infringement notice).

RLC assisted George in challenging the CIN in the Local Court. It was argued that the statement "none of your fucking business" was not offensive, and even if it was offensive, an arrest was improper. The Local Court disagreed, finding that the statement was objectively offensive and that an arrest for the offence was proper to prevent the "repetition of the offence". RLC has lodged an appeal in the District Court.

Although receiving an infringement notice for offensive language may seem like a relatively minor matter, it is an important systemic issue. RLC is concerned about the improper use of the arrest power for offensive language as well as the frequency in which CINs are issued by police for language that is not offensive, and in respect of language directed only at police.

Although George is not Aboriginal, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are significantly over-represented in offensive language cases and moreover, a CIN or arrest for offensive language can be the precursor to more serious criminal charges (such as resist arrest or assault police). It is for these reasons that the offensive language provisions are under consideration by the Australian Law Reform Commission in the Inquiry into the Incarceration Rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

* Not his real name.

Police Powers UNSW Student Clinic

The practice has continued working with the University of New South Wales (UNSW) to provide a legal clinic for law students to undertake a practical unit of study assisting our solicitor to lodge complaints on behalf of clients. The work of the Police and Government Accountability practice would not be possible without the dedication and passion of the UNSW clinic students.

We would also like to thank our pro bono partners for their generous and ongoing support of the Police Powers practice.

Discrimination

Redfern Legal Centre's (RLC) Discrimination Practice advocates on behalf of individuals, proposes policy and law reforms, and engages in public debate to address systemic human rights issues disproportionately affecting our clients and our community.

Working for Change

The sell-off of public housing in Miller's Point

A key focus of our practice over the past year has been working to address the impact of the state government decision to sell off most of its public housing in Millers Point. We carry out this work in tandem with RLC's tenancy and housing team to boost our clients' negotiating position with Housing NSW.

We have advised and advocated for a number of Millers Point tenants facing relocation. Our approach has been to argue indirect disability discrimination for clients who may suffer serious disadvantage from being relocated from their current, stable accommodation. You can read more on this area of RLC's work in the Tenancy and Housing report on page 41.

Case Study: public housing relocation

Philip*, a Millers Point resident with complex health needs, received a notice from Housing NSW requiring him to move to new accommodation.

Philip was managing a range of physical and psychological disabilities, in part, with support from his local community; he was also studying. Because of the difficulty he faced when travelling more than a short distance at any time, he needed to live close to his education institution.

Housing NSW offered Philip alternative accommodation outside the Millers Point area, but none of the options he was given met his needs. RLC's tenancy team commenced working with Philip to challenge the offers of new accommodation. RLC decided there were grounds for a discrimination complaint on the basis of Philip's disabilities, which meant he was unable to comply with the request to relocate outside of Millers Point.

RLC attended a conciliation with Philip at the Australian Human Rights Commission. Subsequently we settled both Philip's tenancy and discrimination matters, in negotiation with Housing NSW. Philip agreed to move from his current accommodation to alternative housing in Millers Point, and will be given assistance with getting new furnishings, as well as extended time to vacate his old property, along with other terms to help him with the move.

While it was Philip's very strong wish to remain in the house he been living for 14 years, via a negotiated outcome, RLC was able to ensure that Philip could remain within his local community, close to his support network and place of study. This also meant that Philip did not have to go through the stress and uncertainty of lengthy legal proceedings.

This case demonstrates the way that health issues and other forms of disadvantage can make the prospect of relocation extremely difficult for some residents. For this reason, RLC's tenancy and discrimination practices work together to try and achieve the best outcome possible for vulnerable people living in public and social housing.

* Not his real name.



Submissions to Parliamentary Inquiries

In November 2016, the federal government commenced its 'Freedom of Speech' inquiry. RLC provided a submission to the inquiry and gave evidence to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights at its Sydney hearing in February 2017.

The inquiry had two main areas of focus: examining whether the operation of Part IIA of the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (Cth) (including sections 18C and 18D) impose unreasonable restrictions on freedom of speech, and looking at whether the complaints-handling procedures of the Australian Human Rights Commission should be reformed. At the heart of this matter was the operation of section 18C of the Act, concerning racial vilification, and whether it strikes an appropriate balance between the right to freedom of speech and the right to live free from racial discrimination.

Our submission and evidence centred on the experience of our clients, given close to half are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. We recommended that Part IIA of the *Racial Discrimination Act* should remain unchanged, arguing that the current provisions achieve a positive balance between protecting the right to freedom of speech and protection of an individual's right to live free of discrimination, harassment and vilification on the basis of race.

Much effort, public attention and debate was expended on this inquiry, and we were relieved to see the provisions remain in place, with some minor amendments to the complaints handling procedures of the Australian Human Rights Commission. On the day following the release of the 18C report, RLC's Discrimination Solicitor, Dr Linda Tucker, participated in a radio panel speaking on race vilification as part of a 2ser radio series examining the issue of freedom of speech in Australia. This panel is available as a podcast at: <https://player.whooshkaa.com/episode?id=94649>.



In August, RLC launched an employment, human rights and discrimination law student clinic, in partnership the University of Sydney. Pictured: RLC Employment and Discrimination Solicitor Dr Linda Tucker with clinic students.

Media and public speaking

In May, Linda was interviewed by seven students with intellectual disabilities for 2CHY podcast program *My Voice, My Ability, My Rights*, answering their questions about law and disability rights.

In June, Linda was invited to take part in the Australian Academy of Law Panel chaired by Law Council of Australia President, Fiona McLeod SC, on ethics in legal practice. A packed courtroom attended the event in which the perspectives of practitioners and ethicists sparked a lively debate on the ethical boundaries of legal practice.

Employment

Casework

RLC assisted clients with many unfair dismissal and general protections matters at the Fair Work Commission. The general protections complaints usually related to a dismissal that was either linked to discrimination or because the client had a workplace right, such as to personal (sick) leave.

We ran a general protections claim for a nurse with a previous psychiatric illness who was dismissed when preparing to return to work after time off due to her mental health issues. Our client was referred from our Health Justice Partnership at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. We obtained an excellent outcome where our client received the settlement she had asked for – meeting all economic loss between dismissal and her getting a new job. We also advised her to contest an earlier refusal of workers compensation and referred her to specialist practitioner who took on her matter.

When informed that her respondent had accepted RLC's settlement offer, our client was extremely happy, and made the following comments:

"I was at RPA to see my therapist and didn't know I could do anything. If it wasn't for your service at the hospital and Sue-Ellen, none of this would have happened."

My therapist said: 'Why don't you get legal advice?' I said I wasn't sure. She said 'Why not? It's free.'

The next Thursday I went to see Sue-Ellen at the hospital. She saw me straight away and that's how it all happened. Thank you so much."

The Clayton Utz Unfair Dismissal Scheme continues to operate, and our Employment Practice has been able to achieve quick, favourable settlements for many clients either before or at their conciliations at the Fair Work Commission.

We also were able to settle a complex District Court matter for a client who was a sex worker seeking to enforce payment for a contract with a private customer. This matter presented multiple legal and client challenges and involved a number of appearances and lengthy preparation but resulted in a good outcome for the client.

Education and training

As part of RLC's webinar series, RLC delivered a presentation on 'dodgy jobs', related to the rise of the 'gig' economy, where the employee often interfaces solely with a virtual workplace, directed by text message to undertake specific tasks, such as cleaning or food delivery, and is given little to no information about the employer.

This webinar drew on a common issue for our clients: where there is a breach of workplace laws in these arrangements, there can be a number of hurdles for the client: such as identifying the employer, and confirming their employment status – contractor or employee, permanent or casual, classification of the work. All of this aggravates the legal challenges in recovering entitlements and enforcing the employee's workplace rights. RLC's employment solicitor, Dr Linda Tucker, also delivered a separate webinar presentation on bullying, harassment and discrimination at work to community workers and legal practitioners.

Working For Change

In June, Together with RLC's international student Solicitor, Linda co-authored RLC's submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Inquiry into establishing a Modern Slavery Act in Australia.

Protecting international students at work

RLC is seeing increasing numbers of international student

clients experiencing underpayment and non-payment of wages and other entitlements, as well as frequent sham contracting issues. Supported by funding from the Fair Work Ombudsman's Community Engagement Grants Program, RLC's evening employment advice sessions now includes appointments for international students seeking help with employment matters.

In response to the failure of the current intersection of migration and workplace law to provide effective protection for vulnerable employees, RLC drew on the submission of academic and workplace law expert, A/Prof Joo Cheong Tham to *A National Disgrace: The Exploitation of Temporary Work Visa Holders* ('the Senate Report'), released in March 2016.

In consultation with A/Prof Tham and one of our pro bono partners, we wrote a proposal for a new Ministerial Direction aimed at introducing an alternative sanction to visa breaches by international students. We have promoted this initiative in the media and via a number of stakeholders and have had extensive support from professionals and organisations in this area, who have commended our proposal to the Immigration Minister. The federal government's new Migrant Review Taskforce, chaired by Professor Alan Fels, is now considering the proposal.

RLC in the media

In August 2016, Linda was interviewed for ABC TV's *Australia Wide* program regarding exploitation of interns in the workplace.



In May, RLC staff met with representatives from the Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO) to discuss our new dedicated employment law service for international students.

Pictured from left: Nick Shearer (Senior Engagement Officer) and Louise Peters (Director – Community Engagement) from FWO's Strategic Engagement and Stakeholder Relations Branch with RLC staff: Jacqui Swinburne (Acting CEO), Dr Linda Tucker (Discrimination and Employment Solicitor), Nick Manning (Community Engagement and Education Officer) and Sean Stimson (International Student Solicitor).

In April, RLC's proposal to amend section 499 of Australia's Migration Act attracted considerable media attention, with reports published in *The Guardian*, *Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Pie (UK)*, and radio 2ser, amongst others.

In May, Linda was interviewed by The Daily on Radio 2ser 107.3FM, in response to Transport Workers' Union secretary Tony Sheldon's comments that employers who underpay workers should be jailed for "wage theft".



Linda Tucker being interviewed at Radio 2ser, Sydney.



RLC Employment and Discrimination Solicitor, Dr Linda Tucker worked closely with RLC International Student Solicitor on workplace exploitation issues affecting international students.

Proposed laws unlikely to stamp out exploitation of underpaid workers, says legal experts

By Anna Patty. The Sydney Morning Herald, 7 March 2017.

The Redfern Legal Centre, which provides a statewide legal advice service to international students, said the new bill was unlikely to provide comfort to exploited workers.

The centre has submitted a proposal to the Migrant Workers' Taskforce, chaired by Allan Fels, suggesting the Minister for Immigration issue a special direction against cancellation of a visa as part of section 499 of the Migration Act.

Redfern Legal Centre solicitors Linda Tucker and Sean Stimson said this would allow students forced to work more than 40-hours per fortnight (outside their visa's limit) to raise a complaint without risk of losing their visa.

"Student employees will not come forward because the risk is their visa will be cancelled and that will always trump any other protections," Ms Tucker said.

"We are not saying it should be a free-for-all, we are asking for an alternative approach to sanctioning that breach which takes into account the context in which the breach occurred.

"We are proposing the introduction of a ministerial direction to give decision-makers a direction to not cancel a visa when a student has breached the 40-hour per fortnight condition."

(Full article available at: <http://www.smh.com.au/business/workplace-relations/proposed-laws-unlikely-to-stamp-out-exploitation-of-underpaid-workers-20170303-guqhdq.html>)

International Students Service

Redfern Legal Centre's (RLC) international student practice is the only specialist legal service catering exclusively to the 206,000 international students in NSW. We provide specialist legal advice, advocacy and casework relating to the complex socio-legal problems faced by international students, complemented by ongoing law reform and education work.

Our profile continues to expand via a number of new initiatives, a strong media and online presence, and positive word-of-mouth from past and present clients.

This year, our practice was busier than ever, frequently operating beyond capacity. This constantly high level of frontline engagement ensures we remain abreast of emerging issues, informing our wider advocacy efforts to the Australian community, government and the media about the needs and concerns of international students.

Practice funding

An innovative approach to advocacy, education and law reform has allowed RLC's international student practice to obtain additional funding from new sources. Alongside funding from StudyNSW and the City of Sydney, the practice was one of only six applicants across Australia to secure Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO) Community Engagement Grants Program funding.

As a result, our service has been able to expand at a critical time, enabling us to meet the increasing demand from students seeking legal advice and casework assistance with workplace exploitation issues.

Casework

International students require advice on a range of complex and often overlapping legal issues, including: tenancy and housing; employment law; disputes with education providers; visa exploitation; minor criminal matters; domestic violence and family law.

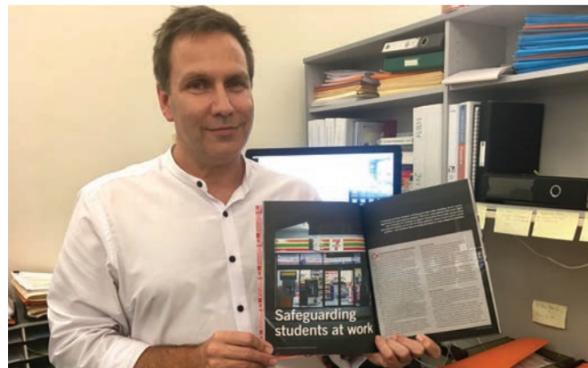
We continue to achieve successful outcomes for our clients on issues including:

- sharehousing, forced evictions and recovery of bonds;
- payment of unpaid wages, workplace entitlements and superannuation contributions;
- resolving enrolment issues where education providers failing to comply with the Education Services for Overseas Students Act had left students at risk of visa cancellation and associated consequences;
- seeking NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal orders for the refund of security deposits and overpaid rent from landlords and unregistered boarding house operators, and
- negotiating reduced or nil payments in exploitative lending practices.

Working for change

The practice remains a key player in roundtable talks with peak bodies involved in international student education in Austral-

ia about law reform and support for international students through legal services.



RLC's International Student Solicitor, Sean Stimson participated in a range of media activities throughout the year highlighting the exploitation of international students at work.

Employment Exploitation

International students are frequently locked into a cycle of working over the 40 hours per fortnight mandated by student visa policy in order to survive financially. Students are unlikely to report breaches of workplace laws when there is a risk to their visa status, which allows exploitative workplace practices to flourish.

We have continued to work on this systemic issue throughout the year, working with the media on a number of pieces highlighting our clients' experiences and our proposal for law reforms in this area.

The extensive media coverage and public and political discourse generated by RLC's work with international students facing exploitation within franchises of large companies including 7-Eleven and Caltex demonstrates how critical the practice's legal advice service and ongoing law reform efforts are.

In continuing efforts to stamp out workplace exploitation of international students, the practice has called for amendments to be made to section 499 of the *Migration Act 1958 (Cth)*.



These amendments would allow for international students to be given a warning or fine where there have been exploitative behaviours by employers, instead of an automatic visa cancellation, the first time a visa violation is reported.

These proposed amendments to the *Migration Act* were included in the submission filed to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade's *Inquiry into establishing a Modern Slavery Act in Australia*. The practice's submission, made at the request of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, also called for the introduction of contemporary anti-slavery legislation.



Sexual assault on Australian university campuses

The practice was ahead of the curve when it came to realising the severity and impact of sexual assault and harassment on university campuses, now a hot-button issue in the wake of the Australian Human Rights Commission's recent landmark report.

The international student practice partnered with the City of Sydney to establish a forum on the prevalence of sexual assault and sexual harassment, and patterns of non-reporting of sexual assault and sexual harassment at Australian universities and other education providers.

In recognition of our leading work in this area, RLC International Student Solicitor Sean Stimson was invited to join the advisory panel of INVEST – the international students' sexual violence experiences study – by the University of Melbourne in January 2017.

Partnerships

Our pro bono partners, Fragomen and McCabes Lawyers, generously continue to provide high-quality assistance in often-complex areas of law, including student visa issues.

Services NSW refers international students experiencing legal issues in NSW to RLC; the practice remains the only non-government legal service provider receiving such referrals.

Community engagement

The practice has built up strong relationships with the international student community, including two of its largest sectors, the Chinese and Indian communities. We monitor the shifting demographics of NSW's international student community, including data on new arrivals' nations of origin, allowing us to plan for service introduction and expansion.

For instance, our increased focus on engagement with students from South American nations, including Brazil, is a response to a 25% increase the number of Brazilian students studying in NSW since 2015.

Government and corporate engagement

The practice regularly engages with corporations and Australian and international governments, including the embassies of nations with student communities in NSW.



Volunteers researching cases for our weekly international student advice night, under the supervision of International Student Solicitor, Sean Stimson.

This included speaking engagements and attending other events, such as:

- **July 2016:** addressing members of NSW's International Education Advisory Board (IEAB) at StudyNSW's Business Case Workshop.
- **October 2016:** At the request of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), addressing some 100 members of NSW's Consular Corps, which allowed for greater engagement with all embassies.
- **October 2016:** at the request of StudyNSW within the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet, attending the awards celebrating outstanding contributions made by international students to communities in NSW, and acknowledging the organisations that support international students with community programs and initiatives.
- **November 2016:** engaging with government employees en masse at DFAT's annual networking event.
- **December 2016:** being invited to join a roundtable established by Woolworths to explore possibilities of ending worker exploitation within its domestic supply chains.
- **February 2017:** speaking at the Chinese Embassy in Sydney, and
- **March 2017:** in order to maintain the practice's profile of engagement with NSW multicultural communities, attending the NSW Premier's annual Harmony Dinner, which recognises contributions made by NSW's multicultural leaders.

Attendance at these events presents the practice with opportunities to advocate for students on a broader stage. One unparalleled opportunity our attendance at such events has brought about for the practice was the invitation to join the federal government's Migrant Workers' Taskforce (MWT) in February. The MWT was established to provide recommendations regarding employment law, including exploitation and wage fraud, with a particular focus on foreign workers, including students. Our participation provides the MWT with unparalleled insight into students' workplace experiences.

Legal education

The practice continues to conduct legal education for international students, the staff that support them and the wider community.

Seeking to highlight common legal issues, exploitative trends and possible remedies available to newly arrived international students, the practice attends events including university orientations and the Sydney Lord Mayor's annual meet-and-greet for international students.

The practice has also created a new law clinic, run as a university subject and internship program in partnership with the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS). Law students assist the practice's solicitors to prepare for and run the weekly advice night, and undertake legal research, client interviewing, and case management.

This highly successful clinic is now in its second semester. Testimonials from the previous student group highlight the benefit of receiving practical experience with real cases.

Online presence

The practice continues to build and maintain a strong, well-followed online presence with NSW's international student community and beyond.

By identifying emerging trends, the practice can continue to educate and inform the client base around those issues by creating new information resources relevant to them.

Social media engagement

The new video series 'Tip of the Week' is an example of this. Launched in April, it provides information on a variety of subjects in easily understandable, bite-sized chunks. Distributed via a dedicated Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/redfernlegalinternational/>), it is the most successful of RLC's social media projects; the videos have clocked up thousands of views, and multiple organisations are sharing this content Australia-wide, linking back to RLC. The videos are also available on RLC's YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/user/RedfernLegalCentre>)

'Self-service' legal app for students

The practice's 'self-service' legal assistance app, 'My Legal Mate' (MLM), designed specifically for international students, is in its final stages of development.

Giving users an interactive pathway to legal and non-legal remedies, MLM features tutorials and written materials provided to help international students understand their legal rights and responsibilities in Australia.

MLM has generated significant interest among potential stakeholders and has resulted in seed funding grants from the City of Sydney, StudyNSW and the Fair Work Ombudsman.

Tenancy and Housing

A new trend creating significant problems in the ever-murky waters of tenancy law has emerged in the form of universities and other education suppliers providing housing to international students.

This housing falls outside current legislation, including the Residential Tenancies Act and the Boarding House Act, instead falling into contract law. These matters present a unique set of problems within contract law, and the practice is assisting a growing number of international students seeking remedies for unjust contracts.

Another growing problem is high-quality accommodation being advertised to international students, only for landlords to claim 'safety concerns' requiring the students to move to inferior premises shortly after a bond and several weeks' rent have been paid.

These students end up living in unsafe, overcrowded, run-down premises whilst still paying the high rents for the original property. Meanwhile, the landlords proceed to move another group of international students into the high-quality accommodation, and the cycle repeats again. The practice is assisting an increasing number of clients with this issue.



In March we launched our UTS International Student Clinic. The course gives students hands-on experience working with RLC's clients, combined with structured learning activities to deepen and broaden their knowledge of law.

Problems with Education Providers

Complaints from international students who are experiencing issues with their educational provider fall into three main categories:

- refund complaints handling procedures
- transfers to another education provider, and
- education agent misconduct.

Numerous complaints have involved students requesting to change providers due to poor teaching and unfair treatment from teaching staff, but facing difficulties obtaining refunds for tuition fees due to harshly drafted payment policies; however, the practice's expertise around consumer law and relevant legislation including the *Educational Services for Overseas Students Act* allows its lawyers to assist student in obtaining refunds.

Disputes with education providers are treated as a matter of urgency, as any delay could impact on the expiry of the international student's student visa.

RLC's international student practice in the media

Maintaining the practice's public profile is crucial for its work as a voice for students and a driver of change, and the media plays a large role in this.

Following are just a couple of examples from the extensive media coverage the practice has generated across the past year:

Work visas: students often forced to breach conditions, lawyers say

By Naaman Zhou. *The Guardian*, 22 April 2017 (Full article available at:

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2017/apr/22/work-visas-students-often-forced-to-breach-conditions-lawyers-say>)

Stimson said: 'We found there was a business model that targets migrant workers and international students. And what is enabling this exploitation always comes back to the visa. There are laws that protect international students but, if you exceed your 40 hours, then the department of immigration under the Migration Act are entitled to cancel your visa. That is a big enough deterrent to not actually proceed.'

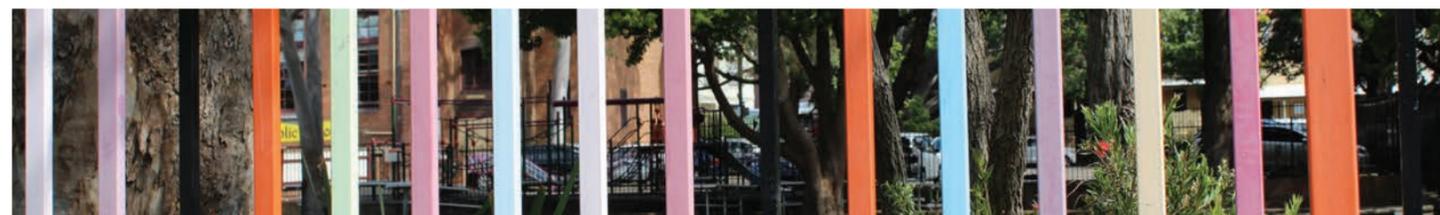
Calls to protect exploited foreign workers in Australia

By Anton Crace. *The PIE News*, 23 May 2017. (Full article available at:

<https://thepienews.com/news/aus-rlc-submits-foreign-workers-protection-amendment/>)

A proposal...submitted by Sydney-based Redfern Legal Centre, seeks to amend section 499 of the Migration Act to prevent the automatic cancellation of a student's visa when they have breached the terms as well as combat employee exploitation.

'In our experience, international students frequently have a visa issue associated with their legal problem, and fears about their visa status can prevent these students from seeking advice or asserting their rights,' said Sean Stimson, RLC international student solicitor... 'Employers have hidden behind the fact that international students are not going to pursue their employer because they are in breach of their visa conditions.'



Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association (SUPRA) Legal Service

Overview

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 Council and office bearers of SUPRA.

Advice, Assistance, and Representation

As the legal service is independent from 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 following areas:

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.

Over the 2016–17 financial 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 the 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 the last year, the legal service has helped many students to recoup 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.

Tenancy/Housing Matters

The last 12-months has seen the legal service provide advice and conduct negotiations on behalf of students regarding a variety of housing-related matters.

The service also provided assistance to, or arranged advocacy for, students with complex tenancy matters who needed to appear at the New South Wales Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT).



Community Legal Education

Information and education sessions

The legal service continues to provide community legal information and education sessions, both at USyd's main Camperdown campus and at external USyd campuses, such as Camden.

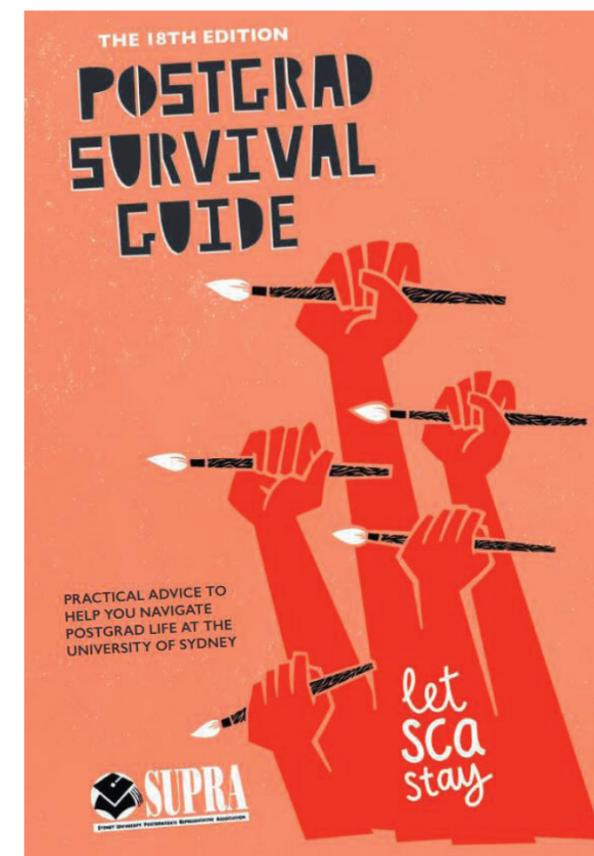
Topics covered include intellectual property law, traffic offences and fines, consumer contracts (specifically telecommunications service provider contracts), motor vehicle accidents (regarding property damage), as well as tenancy, privacy law, and employment.

Publications

The service wrote the Legal Section of SUPRA's 2017 *Postgraduate Survival Guide*. This included legal information on matters of interest to the postgraduate student population including cyberlaw, intellectual property law, contracts, privacy, consumer law, tenancy, and fines.

We also wrote the following sections of the *Thesis Guide*: 'Research Integrity'; 'Intellectual Property Law'; 'Harassment, Discrimination & 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 recording staff/other students at the University, the use of university ICT resources, avoiding or dealing with fines on public transport, and alerts about scams, such as Rental Scams. The service also produced a range of legal facts sheets in areas of special interest to postgraduate students.



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.

Internally, this year we contributed to progress campaigns as opposed to formal submissions. To this end we fed into the attempts to 1) improve special consideration matters, as well as 2) to improve plagiarism and academic dishonesty processes. Externally, we contributed to the international students travel concession campaign as well as to the SUPRA submission to the statutory review of the NSW Residential Tenancies Act 2010.

Case Study:

Ling* was an international student who started working at a kiosk in a local shopping centre, while she was studying. She was told she would be paid \$200 a week (earning \$20 an hour for 10 hours of work), and that she would be paid weekly.

In Ling's first week on the job, her employer asked her to work an extra 10 hours to cover Suzy*, another employee. Ling agreed to do so.

Later, Ling's boss told her Suzy had quit and he wanted Ling to keep working 20 hours a week, which Ling agreed to do. However, Ling was not being paid weekly; she worked there for four weeks before her employer finally paid her.

When Ling asked about her pay, her boss told her he had problems with his bank. When she finally received her pay, it was only half of what she should have earned. Her employer told her that her pay was correct as he had agreed to pay her \$200 a week for all the work she did.

He threatened to fire her and report her to Immigration if she took any action to recover her unpaid wages.

Once Ling found another job, she came to the service for advice. With assistance from the legal service, Ling was able to recover her outstanding entitlements.

Case Study:

Josie* was an international student. When she moved to a new residence, the landlord refused to give her back her bond. Josie took the landlord to NCAT, and NCAT ordered the landlord to pay the bond back to Josie. The landlord told Josie that she wasn't going to pay her back because she was not happy Josie had gone to NCAT.

With the service's assistance, Josie was able to take enforcement action and obtain a garnishee order against the landlord's bank account into which Josie used to pay her rent. Josie successfully received her bond money back in full.

Case Study:

Ben* had been driving his car down a suburban street when a driver parked at the side of the road suddenly opened his door, causing an accident.

The other driver told Ben it was his fault and that he would have to pay for the damages to the other driver's car door and mirror. The other driver then sent Ben a quote for \$2,460 and started calling him and texting him demanding payment.

The legal service was able to explain the law to Ben and the other driver and encourage the other driver to place the matter in the hands of his insurance company. With the legal service's help, Ben did not have to pay and was able to have his car fixed by the other driver's insurance company.

* Names have been changed.

Sydney Institute of TAFE Legal Service

Overview

Since 2008, Redfern Legal Centre (RLC) has worked in partnership with TAFE - Sydney Institute, providing legal advice and assistance service to students and staff. Based at Ultimo, the legal service has maintained support to all colleges and campuses of the Sydney Institute, including:

- Eora College
- Design Centre Enmore
- Gymea College
- Loftus College
- Petersham College
- Randwick College
- St George College, and
- Ultimo College.

In 2016–2017, the service continued to operate on Mondays and Wednesdays, staffed by one RLC solicitor and a volunteer legal assistant; in addition, the legal assistant was also available on Tuesday afternoons to field inquiries and make appointments.

We maintained an active presence on campus throughout the year, participating in student information events such as O Week at Ultimo College and holding legal service visits and advice clinics at other campuses, in conjunction with Careers Connect.

This year, the service continued to assist students with a wide range of legal matters, with a particular focus on providing help to vulnerable students. We also worked closely with TAFE counsellors, who referred clients to us and sought information on particular legal issues.

Tenancy and Housing

We assisted students with a broad range of tenancy matters throughout the year. Common issues included claims for bond

and requests for help from students facing eviction from student accommodation and other rental properties. We also continued to assist in other areas such as helping to facilitate completion of essential repairs, and clarifying the legal rights of students in living in share-housing accommodation.

Employment

We provided advice to student on a range of employment-related matters, including assistance with recouping unpaid entitlements, and assistance with possible unfair dismissal claims.

Traffic and Transport Fines

We received a steady flow of inquiries from students who had allegedly committed traffic offences and – in some cases – who had reached the demerit point threshold where licence suspension followed. We helped students and staff to understand options for seeking leniency, or avenues for challenging a matter in court, where appropriate. Common penalty notice offences included 'proceeding through red light', 'turning left from the wrong lane' and 'not wearing a seatbelt'.

There were also instances of students being fined for not having a valid transport concession ticket. As well as advising students on the relevant procedure and options, we submitted online requests for review to State Debt Recovery for students with language difficulties. We also provided referrals to the TAFE Work and Development Order coordinator for students who appeared to meet the relevant criteria, including experiencing severe financial hardship.

Credit and Debt

Students continued to approach us in relation to matters where they were

owed money for goods and services, or where a debt was owed to a finance company under a credit contract. We helped many students understand their options to recover money owed to them and also to avoid immediate legal action where a debt is owed.

Many issues in this category related to money claimed by or against motorists following a collision, with complications arising where at least one of the parties was uninsured. We assisted uninsured students on multiple occasions to understand their legal rights in seeking to recover amounts for damage sustained in car accidents, and also in resisting claims from the other party in such accidents.

As many students are not insured for accident damage they can experience a power imbalance when faced with claims from the other driver's insurance company. We helped a number of students to communicate effectively in this situation and negotiate an appropriate outcome.

Social Security

Our assistance in this area commonly includes advising students on the best approach to respond to Centrelink denial of applications and suspension of payments, as well as helping student to get their Centrelink debt reduced.

This year, we assisted one student on multiple occasions, where Centrelink had cancelled their Newstart allowance and raised a significant debt alleging undeclared assets, working in conjunction with Welfare Rights Centre.

We also advised a student who had received a "robodebt" letter from Centrelink, and assisted another to have her suspended disability benefit payments reinstated. Where appropriate, we provided referrals to the specialists at Welfare Rights Centre.

Family Law

We receive many requests for advice about a range of separation-related matters throughout the year, including from international students. We assisted a number of clients, in both married and de facto relationships, to understand their rights on separation. This was primarily in relation to division of property, but we also received inquiries on pre-requisites for divorce, parenting plans and family violence.

We provided focused assistance to multiple vulnerable clients who had experienced domestic violence, working together with TAFE counsellors on some of these matters.

Closure of the Sydney Institute of TAFE Legal Service

On 30 June 2017, the service ceased operations due to funding constraints on the Student Association; however –

as our long history demonstrates – this service has been of great benefit to students. RLC and TAFE are dedicated to investigating new ways of working together into the future, to meet the legal needs of students.

Thank you to our TAFE PLTs:

- Rebecca Li
- Kirstin Attard.

Case Studies

Case Study: Debt following a car accident

Jai* was involved in a minor collision when the car he was driving clipped the rear bumper of another car causing very minor damage to the other car.

Jai admitted the accident was his fault but was shocked to receive a demand from the other driver's insurance company for an amount well in excess of his own estimate of the other car's repair cost. Jai was driving a friend's car at the time, and the friend refused to claim on his own insurance as he would have to pay the excess and would lose his no-claim discount on renewal.

Before long, Jai was receiving demands from a debt collector, along with threats of legal action.

We advised Jai on his options for dealing with the other party insurer and debt collector, including the possibility of legal action being commenced against him. As Jai's written English was limited, we helped him correspond with the debt collector offering a compromise solution. After a number of iterations, a satisfactory outcome was reached.

* Not his real name

Case Study: Rose's Story: Centrelink debt significantly reduced

Rose* was a mature age student who had suffered a workplace injury 15 years earlier, for which she was awarded a very modest amount of weekly compensation. A few years later she underwent a major operation for serious medical condition and started receiving the Disability Support Pension (DSP). The DSP payment amounts were reduced by the small workers compensation payment, per the relevant legislation.

In 2013, following major changes to the workers compensation regime in NSW, Rose's compensation payments unexpectedly increased dramatically pending a re-assessment of her work capacity. Because of this, for a period of three months, Rose received both the DSP at the existing rate and the increased workers compensation payment. This was a very confusing period for Rose, who faced many health issues, and by the time the situation had been clarified, Rose had incurred a Centrelink debt of over \$5,000.

We provided assistance to Rose, who unsuccessfully challenged the requirement to repay this debt internally within Centrelink and also at the Social Services & Child Support Division of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT). We then drafted detailed submissions, highlighting Rose's deteriorating health and financial hardship, to support Rose's appeal to the General Division of the AAT. Prior to the hearing, Centrelink offered to settle the matter on favourable terms, to Rose's relief.

*Not her real name



Tenancy and Housing

Inner Sydney Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service (ISTAAS)

RLC has been providing legal assistance to people with tenancy and housing problems since it first opened its doors over 40 years ago. Today, we perform this work under the banner of the Inner Sydney Tenants' Advice and Advocacy Service (ISTAAS).

The most common way tenants reach ISTAAS is through its phone advice service, which, as in previous years, received a very heavy volume of calls. ISTAAS also saw tenants face-to-face on 927 occasions: either at the RLC office, or by solicitors and advocates attending outreach services or visiting tenants in their homes.

As in previous years, ISTAAS has worked hard to focus its limited resources to where the need is the greatest. Of the tenants we assisted in 2016–17, 33% were social housing tenants and a further 32% were living in a share house, a boarding house or were paying rent under some type of less formal arrangement. The vast majority of clients for whom ISTAAS performed complex casework were from these cohorts and the most common matter we assisted clients with was the eviction from their home.



Working for Change

The sell-off of public housing in Millers Point

ISTAAS has continued to provide support and assistance to public housing tenants being forcibly moved from Millers Point and The Rocks. This has been very traumatic for our clients suffering dislocation, especially those with significant disability and mental health issues and those that have lived in the area for generations.

With funding from the City of Sydney, ISTAAS has been able to closely assist many the tenants affected by the relocations. RLC advocates and solicitors have represented tenants in 35 hearings at the Housing Appeals Committee on the question of whether an alternative property offered to the tenant was reasonable or not. Tenants can be evicted and lose their social housing assistance if they refuse two reasonable offers of alternative properties. More than 50% of these appeals were successful, meaning our clients became entitled to a further offer of housing.

RLC in the Supreme Court

RLC commenced proceedings in the Equity Division of the Supreme Court on behalf of two Millers Point tenants who were being evicted from their homes, seeking declarations that they had attained a life tenancy. One of those matters has been settled on confidential terms and the other: *Parslow v NSW Land & Housing Corporation* is expected to be heard by the Supreme Court in early 2018.

Thursday 13 April, 2017 | FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Elderly Millers Point tenant files in NSW Supreme Court to fight eviction

Sally Parslow, a Millers Point public housing tenant is today filing an application in the Supreme Court of NSW to stop her eviction by the NSW Land & Housing Corporation.

The action comes after the Corporation started legal proceedings to evict the 74-year old pensioner from the Millers Point home that she has lived in since 1976.

Ms Parslow, who is being represented by Redfern Legal Centre, will argue that the NSW Maritime Services Board, before it transferred the property to the Corporation, made a tenancy agreement with her in the 1980's on the mutual understanding that she could stay there for life.

Ms Parslow has built her life in the property and has invested her personal savings keeping her home well-maintained and preserving its heritage value while the Corporation has failed to carry out basic maintenance.

Ms Parslow says, "The place was in extreme disrepair when I moved in. I have put my life into caring for this property and I thought I'd die here, the government shouldn't be able to do this".

Ms Parslow has not accepted offers of other properties by the Corporation because she believes she has a legal right to stay in her home and if she were forced to move it would have a devastating impact her health and wellbeing. Because of this, the Corporation has applied to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal to evict her.

Melanie Bradfield, solicitor from the Redfern Legal Centre says, "it is a shame that any public housing tenant in Millers Point would be forced to leave their home, we believe Ms Parslow has a legal case to stay".

In March 2014, the NSW Government announced the sale of all public housing properties in Millers Point, Dawes Point and the Rocks and the forced relocation the public tenants from their homes. There are still 35-40 residents who remain, including Ms Parslow.

The NSW government has so far made \$392.59 million from the sale of the public housing properties and is on track to far exceed its original \$500 million sales target.

Elderly resident Sally Parslow's last-ditch fight to stay in Millers Point

By Lisa Visentin. *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 April 2017.

Ms Parslow is one of three tenants remaining on the street and the state government is eager to see her house sold while the market is roaring.

On Wednesday, lawyers from Redfern Legal Centre will apply for an injunction in the NSW Supreme Court, hours before the Land and Housing Corporation will seek orders to evict her in the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

If granted, the injunction would buy Ms Parslow's lawyers time to mount a case before the court that she has a claim to equitable life tenancy over the home.

Central to her claim is the mutual understanding she believed she reached with the Maritime Services Board in the 1980s, before ownership of the house was transferred to the Housing Corporation.

"It was the understanding of all the people who lived in the community at the time," Ms Parslow said. "I can't believe they are trying to evict me."

While her claim is grounded in the notoriously complex juncture of equity and property ownership rights, her lawyers are confident she has a legal right to remain in the home.

"Sally does have a very particular situation where this claim is open to her. Not all of the tenants in Millers Point have that kind of claim. It is a very particular claim," solicitor Melanie Bradfield said.

(Full article available at: <http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/elderly-resident-sally-parslows-lastditch-fight-to-stay-in-millers-point-20170414-gvkwfs.html>)

The survey revealed that large numbers of tenants didn't make complaints or ask for repairs to be done because they feared that the rent would be increased or they would be evicted.

RLC has joined a coalition of over 80 legal and community organisations calling for an end to 'no grounds' evictions as part of the Make Renting Fair Campaign.

When Andrew reported mould to his landlord he didn't expect to be evicted

By Lucy Cormack. *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 May 2017.

Redfern Legal Centre solicitor Kimberley Mackenzie said fear of a no-grounds eviction was common among clients.

"The overwhelming majority of tenants we speak to are fearful that their landlord might evict them if they take action to challenge rent increases or go to the tribunal about repairs," she said.

"Unfortunately ... a landlord currently has the option of terminating the tenancy without needing to give a reason if they are not in fixed-term agreement or when the fixed term ends."

Ms Mackenzie said Redfern Legal Centre strongly advocated for no-grounds eviction notices to be abolished.

(Full article available at: <http://www.smh.com.au/business/consumer-affairs/tenants-fear-eviction-for-challenging-rent-reporting-repairs-20170521-gw9mb6.html>)



Image: Mushrooms in Gaye's bedroom

Case Study: Mushroom in Gaye's room

The bedroom ceiling in Gaye's* public housing unit continually leaked. In the past when she reported it to Family and Community Services (FACS) Housing, a contractor would be sent to clear the building's gutters. When the leaking came back for the fourth time, Gaye called FACS Housing but this time nobody came. The leak worsened with water streaming down the walls to the carpet. She called again and again, and even had her social worker from the hospital write to FACS Housing pleading for the issue to be fixed. Her bedroom furniture had become wet and mouldy and large mushrooms grew out of her carpet. Gaye, an aged-pensioner, was recovering from surgery and had to sleep on the small couch in the living room. The unit was like this for several months.

Gaye contacted RLC who made an application to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) on her behalf. NCAT ordered FACS Housing to carry out a number of repairs and awarded Gaye \$11,000 in compensation. FACS Housing failed to do most of the repairs and even failed to pay Gaye her compensation by the deadline ordered by NCAT.

RLC has seen a number of repair matters like Gaye's where FACS Housing, the government housing provider, has failed to comply with NCAT orders for repairs. One year later, Gaye's matter is still not resolved.

* Not her real name.

Time to get rid of no grounds evictions

In February, the first ever national survey of renters revealed what RLC has known for a long time: that there is widespread anxiety, insecurity and discrimination in the rental market.

Health Justice Partnership with RPA



Founded in 2015, Redfern Legal Centre's Health Justice Partnership (HJP) with Royal Prince Alfred (RPA) Hospital is now well established. The service continues to provide patients with accessible legal advice in the hospital setting, and assistance with ongoing casework.

We provide our service to patients by drop in, by appointment and on the hospital ward. We assist clients with all types of legal issues and our work continues to be varied. For those matters where we are unable to provide casework assistance, we ensure that a 'warm referral' to a suitable legal service is made. By intervening early in the legal process, we help ensure that the issue is clearly identified and that the client engages with appropriate assistance, always with the aim of trying to prevent the matter from escalating.

Over the past year, we have helped many women who had been the victims of domestic violence, and several who have suffered violence in the form of financial abuse. Now recognised as another form of domestic violence, financial abuse includes coercion to take out credit, forced co-signing for loans, or the use of the credit card 'tap and go' feature without authorisation from the women.

Although women are sometime able to leave these abusive relationships, they remain burdened by debt; for some clients we have seen, this has been in excess of \$40,000 with five different creditors. As many of our clients are reliant on Centrelink payments this magnitude of debt is overwhelming, with little prospect for repayment.

On behalf of the client, we represent the history of violence they have experienced, their social situation and their current financial circumstances. We have been successful in complete waivers of the debt, renegotiating the terms of the debt – or at the very least – placing the debt collection on hold. We are encouraged to note that several financial institutions have now released policies on how they deal with financial abuse.



L-R: RLC Health Justice Partnership (HJP) & Care Partners Solicitor, Sue-Ellen Hills and Elaine Doherty, Nursing Unit Manager, Drug Health Services.



A significant part of our work at RPA Hospital is assisting expectant parents who have been identified by Family and Community Services (FACS) as having child protection concerns. These concerns may be related to drug and alcohol use, a history of domestic violence, mental health conditions or other social issues.

For these parents, it can be a confusing and confronting time to realise that – unless concerns are minimised so that FACS see no child protection issue – their newborn baby could be assumed into care. Our role is to assist the client in understanding why FACS is involved, and how the issues and concerns in their life can be perceived as safety or risk issues.

We explain the parameters that FACS are required to work within, specifically their role in working with families early to ensure the baby is safe and child protection concerns are mitigated through the provision of services and support. If required, we advocate for the client with FACS when information is incorrect, necessary services aren't provided, or expectations are unrealistic. We have had many instances where a collaborative effort between RPA Health, social work staff and our solicitor has enabled babies to remain with their mothers, while without our intervention, this may not have occurred.

We have assisted mothers who have given birth at RPA who are homeless, have alcohol and drug health concerns and have had little access to antenatal care. We have successfully advocated to FACS on behalf of these women, allowing them to be discharged together with the baby to a residential rehabilitation centre.

We have worked with parents who have had previous children removed from their care, and have successfully rebutted the presumption that other children should also be removed from their care. This has been achieved by having clients work with the solicitor, allowing them to understand the process and what will be required of them by FACS, and outcomes that can be achieved.

This service continues to promote access to justice for many disadvantaged clients, one of the core roles of a community legal centre. By collaborating with health professionals, our HJP program is creating new opportunities to identify legal issues in people's lives, and working towards making improvements in their health.



Redlink Outreach Project

Working in collaboration with Legal Aid NSW, Redfern Legal Centre (RLC) has been running a weekly law clinic at the Redfern Housing Estate since July 2015.

The clinic is part of the NSW Department of Family and Community Services' (FACS) RedLink Outreach Service, first developed in 2014. RedLink brings together a range of community service providers including health, legal, social, and housing services – into one local service hub to improve the health and wellbeing of residents in social housing in Redfern by providing wrap-around services within the community.

With more than 1500 residents, the Redfern Towers are the most concentrated public housing estate in NSW; for this reason, RedLink is headquartered at the McKell Building on Walker Street, Redfern.

By focusing on early intervention wherever possible, RedLink aims to break the cycle of disadvantage, tackling complex, entrenched problems such as intergenerational disadvantage, debt stress, social isolation, and alcohol and drug dependence.

RedLink includes a variety of weekly activities. On Tuesdays, a legal clinic is staffed alternately by solicitors from RLC and Legal Aid NSW. Solicitors help clients with a range of complex legal issues, including tenancy matters, the inability to pay fines, and matters related to employment, and discrimination.

These formal advice clinics are supplemented by a weekly morning tea. Held in a café every Friday, these gatherings have a more relaxed community atmosphere, allowing residents to get to know each other and to speak with the RedLink team in a more informal setting. These informal encounters help build trust and confidence in the program, making it easier for community members to attend the more formal clinic sessions.

Many problems, including those of common or 'everyday' occurrence, have legal remedies or contain legal issues. RedLink solicitors also help clients, community workers, and Housing NSW staff to identify legal issues.

Case Study: Roy's story

Roy* was an Aboriginal man who was regularly seen around Poets Corner. He was referred to the Redlink Law Clinic in late 2015 and attended with his social worker who was assisting him to get support.

He had received a warning letter from his public housing provider regarding unauthorised occupants, high numbers of visitors, verbal abuse towards security staff, intimidating neighbours, vandalism and anti-social behaviour. The public housing provider were close to issuing a notice of termination to end his tenancy.

Supported by the social worker, the solicitor discussed the issues with Roy as well as the serious threat to his tenancy he was facing. Roy had been homeless himself and found it difficult not to allow other homeless people to stay at his house. He felt that he needed support to stop this as well as to get rid of the unauthorised occupant.

After discussing the matter with Roy and his support worker, he agreed that it would help him to be moved to another inner city area that was away from Poets Corner. This would also help him to evict the unauthorised occupant.

Working with the social worker was a tremendous support as she assisted Roy to get involved in other types of social activities, undergo rehab and attend both his health and legal appointments.

Roy was then moved into a permanent tenancy in another inner city area, was able to improve his health, and greatly reduced his alcoholism. He also participated in positive social activities as an Aboriginal leader.

This case study is just one of many that shows the benefits, of health and legal services working together to support vulnerable people, government departments and the community generally.

* Not his real name.

Glebe Legal Outreach and Advice Service

The Glebe Legal Outreach and Advice Service (GLOAS) first launched as a pilot program in July 2016.

It operates out of the 'Have a Chat Café' (HCC) in Glebe's Old Fire Station on Mitchell Street every Thursday between 9:30am and 12pm, and both pre-booked appointments and drop-ins are welcomed by the clinic staff.

The legal clinic provides confidential legal services, alongside legal information sessions on issues identified as relevant by the local community. Legal information sessions covered topics including Centrelink debt, and planning for the future with Wills, Enduring Powers of Attorney and Guardianship. These sessions have provided a safe place for people to obtain information without having to identify themselves, and in turn, have prompted people to feel safe following up with action.

The service is staffed by Redfern Legal Centre and Legal Aid NSW solicitors, and aims to build relationships between legal professionals and the Glebe community. GLOAS is supported by the Glebe Community Development Project (GCDP), which dedicates approximately six hours a week to the legal outreach service.

The clinic was established in recognition of the need for a targeted legal advice service in the area to address the often-complex legal needs experienced by Glebe residents. Approximately 20% of Glebe's population are lower-income social housing tenants, and around 3% of Glebe's population identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

The service is a direct response to multiple studies illustrating the community's need for legal services, including in civil, criminal and consumer law. It recognises that contacting an unfamiliar service and needing to travel even across a few suburbs can act as a barrier to low income and otherwise disadvantaged members of the community.

Have a Chat Café

HCC provides a safe community space for people to access services and assistance, and to come together for affordable, quality coffee and food. It also provides free food for those struggling with food security issues, working collaboratively with food rescue organisations and local businesses.

Many of HCC's regular customers live on the Glebe Housing Estate, and the community's comfort and familiarity with the location was part of the reason for its selection for the clinic. This was a successful approach, as 87% of GLOAS clients felt comfortable accessing legal services at HCC. (Only three clients did not show up for scheduled appointments, further demonstrating the community's level of comfort with the venue.)

Legal appointments are carried out with a view to maintaining client confidentiality with interviews taking place in a private room.

Clients

Clinic lawyers saw almost 70 clients across 26 weeks between September 2016 and April 2017. This is a high attendance rate for a fledgling service and a period that included a large number of public holidays such as Christmas, New Year, Australia Day, Easter and ANZAC Day.

The most common legal issues clients sought advice on included tenancy; consumer matters; future planning, such as wills and Enduring Power of Attorney documentation; debt-related matters; and family law.

More than 30% of GLOAS' appointments were drop-ins and 73% of clients lived in Glebe or neighbouring suburb Forest Lodge. Both these statistics illustrate an ongoing need for such a legal service in the Glebe community.

A survey of clients also demonstrated the service was assisting a large number of marginalised and vulnerable people, many of whom would have faced challenges accessing legal assistance. For example, almost 50% of clients live with a physical or psychosocial disability, and 15% identified as coming from a culturally and linguistically diverse background. Only 8% of clients received an income of more than \$40,000 annually.

If you have a client who you think may benefit from attending the Glebe service, contact the Glebe Community Development Project on **(02) 9571 6453**.

Community Engagement and Education

This year, RLC continued to participate 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 hosted stalls at NAIDOC celebrations at Redfern Aboriginal Medical Service and at the National Centre for Indigenous Excellence; we also attended the annual *Yaban* Festival in Prince Alfred 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 our community.

Community Legal Education

Our community worker training program was particularly busy this year, with 14 separate webinars and short videos, presented to a total audience of several hundred people. Webinars included:

- Domestic Violence and Tenancy
- Help Your Clients with Payday Loans
- Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination at Work
- Effective Complaints about Education Providers
- Navigating Legal Assistance: Getting the Help Your Clients Need
- Changes to Anti-Social Behaviour Laws in Public Housing, and
- Financial Abuse in Domestic Relationships.

Our annual subscription option has been 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. This year, we also launched a set of six videos on social housing, produced at almost no cost by

RLC's tenancy team, with the assistance of a very skilled and dedicated volunteer.

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



RLC at Sydney Homeless Connect, Sydney Town Hall, June 2017.



RLC Community Engagement and Education Officer, Nick Manning delivering a live-stream CLE webinar.

Our Clients and Services (Statistics)

During the 2016–17 financial year, Redfern Legal Centre assisted a total of 4,646 individual people through the provision of 7,198 separate incidences of legal advice and/or casework.

In addition, our Volunteer Legal Assistants provided 2,017 occasions of information and referral at our front desk, ensuring clients were able to connect with services appropriate to their legal and non-legal needs.

Due to the holistic service delivery model employed by Redfern Legal Centre, clients may receive casework services from a number of practices, and therefore, be counted in more than one set of statistics.

During the year, community legal centres transitioned to a new cloud-based reporting tool, which is still being implemented. Figures reported here are based on current available data only. We do not yet have access to adequate demographic data.

General Legal Team

Our General Legal team assisted 1,350 clients in a total of 2,055 advices and cases. This team comprises of our:

- Police Powers Practice
- Credit, Debt and Consumer Complaints Practice
- Employment and Discrimination Practice
- International Student Advice Service
- Sydney Institute TAFE Service
- University of Sydney Post Graduate Association Service (SUPRA)
- Outreaches at Redlink and Glebe
- Health Justice Partnership at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (RPA), and our
- Care Partners Service.

Inner Sydney Tenant's Advice and Advocacy Service (ISTAAS)

In 2016–17, ISTAAS assisted 2,072 tenants across Inner Sydney. The service gave 3,016 advices, advocated on behalf of its clients on 1,720 separate occasions and represented tenants at 210 hearings and conciliations in the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. ISTAAS solicitors also represented two clients in the Supreme Court of NSW.

- 38% of matters were about termination
- 24% about repairs
- 31% about bonds
- 33% of persons assisted were in social housing
- 32% were living in a share house, a boarding house or were paying rent under some type of less formal arrangement
- 110 tenants assisted at duty advocacy
- We represented at an NCAT hearing or conciliation 100 times
- 42 evictions prevented (that we know of)
- Assisted 26 clients to obtain compensation or other payment from their landlord (that we know of).

- Assisted 26 clients to obtain compensation or other payment from their landlord (that we know of).

Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Service (Sydney WDVCS)

- During the 2016–17 financial year, Sydney WDVCS provided assistance to 2,868 clients in 5,136 individual matters.
- 1,155 clients sought ADVOs (956 police applications and 199 private applications) and 819 final ADVOs obtained by clients
- 819 clients were granted final Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders by the courts
- 652 clients (23%) identified as culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD). Largest CALD groups were Chinese (72) and Thai (33). 29 clients were on spousal visas.
- 194 clients (7%) identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- 15 clients were over 80 years of age
- 27 clients were younger than 16 years of age.

Top 10 problem types for 2016–17

- Domestic Violence and Apprehended Violence Orders
- Tenancy and Housing Law
- Other Civil Law including Government Administrative Law, Police Complaints and Fines*
- Employment Law
- Credit & Debt
- Consumer Law
- Traffic and Vehicle Regulatory Offences
- Child Protection
- Discrimination
- Motor Vehicle Property Damage

* We are currently unable to separate out these problem types on the new CLASS database.

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 funds 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.
- Legal Aid NSW funds the new 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.
- The NSW Office of Fair Trading funds the Inner Sydney Tenants Advice & Advocacy Service.
- StudyNSW funds the state-wide International Student Service.
- The Office of the Fair Work Ombudsman funds the International Student Employment Law Service and assists with development of the employment section of an interactive app for International Students.
- The Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association (SUPRA) funds the SUPRA Legal Service through funds received from the Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF).

- The Sydney Institute of TAFE funded the legal service for its students.
- 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 funded a course module on Housing Law, and continued to support course modules on Police Powers.
- University of Sydney Law School funded Social Justice clinical placements, whereby RLC provides high quality Experiential Learning for law students.
- University of Technology Sydney supported RLC to provide Legal Internship programs relating to areas of law affecting international students.
- City of Sydney Council continued to provide assistance to provide advice and advocacy for Millers Point tenants.
- Gandevia Foundation supported our Health Justice Partnership with the RPA Hospital.
- Western Sydney University provided a contribution to the International Students Service.
- Apple matched the volunteer hours of one of their employees.
- Microsoft provided discounted software.

Our Board of Directors



Amy Munro Chair

Amy Munro is a barrister practising from Eleven Wentworth in Sydney. 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 Tenant Advocate with the Inner Sydney Tenants' Advice and Advocacy Service and the Project Manager of the Share Housing Survival Guide. Amy was elected to the Board in 2010.



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 Inner Sydney Tenants' Advice and Advocacy Service before becoming a Director of the Board.



Peter Stapleton

Peter Stapleton, a retired partner of Ashurst, remains active in social justice. Peter was instrumental in establishing Blake Dawson Waldron's (now Ashurst) national Pro Bono Practice. Peter was initially involved with Redfern Legal Centre as a volunteer when it was established. Peter was Chair of the RLC Board for a number of years. Despite his grey hairs, Peter still seeks to assist the Centre achieve its primary goal of helping vulnerable people access justice. Peter is a Director of the Board of the Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ACT and is the Chairman of the National Pro Bono Resource Centre. Peter was awarded the Justice Medal in 2006.



Kristin Van Barneveld

Kristin van Barneveld began volunteering at RLC in 2005 as a student and went on to provide evening advice as a solicitor on employment matters. Kristin has been a Director of the Board since 2006. After many years working at the University of Sydney, Kristin has since worked for various unions providing legal, industrial and policy advice. Kristin is currently Director of Policy and Research at the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU).



Paul Farrugia

Paul Farrugia is a partner in a small, suburban legal firm. Paul graduated from the University of Sydney with an LL.B. and has been involved with Redfern Legal Centre since 1978 as a Volunteer Solicitor, Management Committee member and a Director. In recognition of his service to RLC, Paul received the Law Society Pro Bono Solicitor of the Year Award in 1993.

Paul stepped down from his role as a director on the Board of RLC in December 2016. The Board thanks Paul for his tireless dedication to the work of RLC over many decades, and wishes him well in his next steps.



Sally Giblin

Sally Giblin is a Senior Manager at PwC's 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. Sally began her association with RLC as a Board Observer on the RLC Board as part of The Observership Program, which facilitates the involvement of young, talented and energetic individuals in a structured experience on not-for-profit boards.



Alison Aggarwal

Alison Aggarwal is Director, Women's Economic Security at the federal Office for Women. Previously she was a Principal Advisor/Manager on gender equality at the Australian Human Rights Commission. She has worked on the Commission's Australian Defence Force Cultural Reform project, led the work of the Sex Discrimination Team and previously was a Senior Policy Officer with the Social Justice Unit. 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. Alison provides human rights training in Australia and internationally.



Our Volunteers

In 1977, Redfern Legal Centre (RLC) first opened its doors thanks to the vision of a passionate team of volunteers. In our 40th anniversary year, it seems only fitting that this team is now the largest it has ever been, with 240 volunteers working with us in the last financial year.

RLC's volunteers play a crucial role in meeting the legal needs of our community. This work cuts across all areas of our organisation, including domestic violence and family law advice, tenancy and housing advocacy, credit and debt advice, assistance with employment issues, discrimination and police complaints, and legal support for international students.

When an individual first makes contact with us, it is our volunteers who welcome each person in. These dedicated legal assistants work tirelessly and methodically to document and categorise each inquiry, always with an empathetic ear and an eye for detail. Our reputation as a welcoming and accessible centre is thanks largely to the tenacity and skill of our front desk team.

Once a client's legal issue has been assessed and booked in for advice, our volunteer solicitors, Practical Legal Trainees (PLTs), and clinic students set to work, conducting research and teasing out the often complex and overlapping issues of each case. All this work happens under the guidance of RLC solicitors and other staff, but the simple fact is we would not be able to process the volume of inquiries we do without our volunteer team.

Our volunteers don't just keep the wheels turning during client intake and advice. Our PLTs and other specialist placements work on countless other projects at RLC. They assist in the development of policy advice, government submissions, and law reform; they drive projects to ensure that we maintain a strong voice within our community; and they complete the numerous (and often unglamorous) daily administrative tasks required to keep our busy legal centre running efficiently and effectively.

The calibre of volunteers that RLC continues to attract is outstanding, and their dedication to our work is inspiring. Our volunteers attend RLC whilst juggling very busy lives –including work, family and study – because they hold a deep commitment to social justice, and to keeping essential legal services free and accessible.

RLC is extremely grateful for the expertise, passion and skill of our volunteer team. On behalf of all of us, a huge and heartfelt THANK YOU! Thanks also to outgoing Communications and Volunteer Manager, Sophie Farrell, who departed RLC this financial year, after five years with the organisation.

Following is a list of volunteers who have supported us this financial year:



- | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Eda Gunaydin | Judi Read | Nick Condyllis | Stephanie Gausson |
| Edward Cooke | Juhi Jin | Nicole Sammel | Stephanie Tang |
| Elaine Mee Yeo | Juka Sun | Nikila Kaushik | Susan Duric |
| Elaine Yeo | Julian Charters | Patrick Trieu | Tadross Gabriel |
| Eliza Ginnivan | Julie Helfenstein | Paul O'Hearn | Tayla Williamson |
| Elleni Zacharia | Kamani Krishnan | Paula Stafford | Tehneya Deweerd |
| Eloise Kneebone | Karolyn Liu | Paulina Fusitu'a | Telisha Stevenson |
| Erika Aligno | Karyn Wee | Pedram Mohseni | Tess Dellagiacomia |
| Farah Al Majed | Kate Duke | Peerce McManus | Tiffany Ha |
| Ferdous Bahar | Kate McCallum | Philippa Meikle | Tim Capelin |
| Gayatri Nair | Kate Sammut | Philippa Noakes | Timothy Forrest |
| Georgia Pick | Kathleen Carmody | Phillip Zixiao Chen | Ting Lim |
| Georgina Meikle | Katie Sutherland | Pip Abbott | Tiru Vallal |
| Georgina Rullis | Kerry O'Brien | Prasad Sarathchandra | Tom Baena |
| Hannah Farrell | Kirstin Attard | Prue Bolton | Toobah Choudhari |
| Huong Tran | Kripti Bhatt | Rachael Li | Tori Karraz |
| Ilkay Antepuzumu | Laila Ali | Rafi Alam | Trent Morfis |
| Ingrid Ibbett | Laura Joseph | Rebecca Barry | Vanja Bulut |
| Irene Fu | Lauren Mendes | Rebecca Li | Vasili Maroulis |
| Isabella Van Leer | Lauren Musgrave | Retired Judge Kenneth Raphael | Veronica Clark |
| Ishani Banerji | Lawrence Leung | Rita Caruana | Vijay Prakash |
| Isobel Blomfield | Leanne O'Reilly | Rohit Sud | Xiang Li |
| Isobelle Waller | Lexie Henderson-Lancett | Rory McLeod | Yi Weiliu |
| Jacqueline Wong | Lik Wong Yu | Roy Chen | Zoe Bennett |
| Jae Ho Lee | Lily Jones | Ruimin Gao | |
| Jane Liu | Lily Shang | Sahar Dickson | |
| Janet Simpson | Lindsay Blackburn-Hart | Sam Lavery | |
| Jason O'Neil | Liz Jones | Samuel Akon | |
| Jaspreet Nagra | Lola Imawan | Samuel James Molloy | |
| Jennifer Ma | Lorraine Rivlin | Sara Virk | |
| Jennifer Wu | Luckme Vimalarajah | Sarah Abdou | |
| Jennifer Zadel | Luyao (Lucy) Zhou | Sarah Avery | |
| Jennifer Zhan | Madeline Bow | Sarah Elise Horton | |
| Jenny Xu | Manroop Sooin | Sarah Elmasri | |
| Jessica Jin | Margaret Jones | Sarah Schwartz | |
| Jessica Lam | Matthew Coleman | Sarah Sultani | |
| Jessica Light | Matthew Kozlowski | Senid Basic | |
| Jessica Marie Dusevic | Matthew Lemaire Thompson | Serena Trang | |
| Jessica Ng | Matthew Mewing | Shaun Chng | |
| Jessie Shu | Max Moffat | Shaun Croner | |
| Ji-Beom Jang | McKenzie Moore | Shayne Beckham | |
| Jia Yi Lee | Megan Hosiosky | Shelby Van Ooran | |
| Jie Nin Liang | Melinda Bolton | Shirley Yeung | |
| Jimmy Ngo | Melissa Phang | Shona Scully | |
| Joanna Connolly | Michael Gibson | Sidnie Sarang | |
| Jon-Pierre Elias | Michael Windsor | Smeetha Jayakumar | |
| Jonathan Marlton | Nathalie Jones | Sofia Bahas | |
| Jonathan Swanton | Nathania Pereira | Stanley Viatos | |
| Josh Kang | Nawsheen Choudhury | Stefanie Vogt | |
| Joyce Shi | Nicholas Commins | Stephanie Choong | |
| | Nicholas Simpson | | |



- | | | | |
|------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| Aaron Perera | Ameisa Konneh | Ben Salon | Chitra Rangarajan |
| Adrienne Michael | Amelia Jenner | Bernie Lai | Chloe Andrews |
| Ahmed Taleb | Angela Harvey | Bianca Holliday | Chris Hill |
| Aiko Wadley | Angela Wong | Brendan Hancock | Christina White |
| Alena Wilson | Anita Yu Yan Wu | Brian-John Attard | Christine Weekes |
| Alexandra Roach | Anna Harley | Bronte Sevil | Christopher Lees |
| Ali Zein | Anna Holtby | Callum Hair | Claire Stimpson |
| Alice Cho | Anna Kedves | Camilla Clemente | Dalyna Khong |
| Alice Chong | Anna Marquard-Karp | Carla Cristina Massai Fedatto | Danuzia Pontes |
| Alina Kaye | Annie He | Carla Ianni | David Sulan |
| Alison Pooley | AP (Anupam) Parashar | Caron Wadick | Dean Tyler |
| Alison Smith | Aritree Barua | Catherine Lobb | Destiny Valencia |
| Allison Lenard | Athena Jayaratnam | Catherine Young | Dominic Longhurst |
| Ally Hammond | Athurshen Jeyakumar | Cecilia Ngu | Dominic Tran |
| Alvin Sharma | Belinda Ramsay | Charlotte van Beek | Dominic Wilcox |
| Amanda Brooker | Ben Day | | Dong Hop Dao |

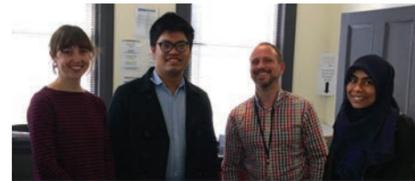


Our Staff 2016–17

Inner Sydney Tenancy Advice & Advocacy Service - Tenancy & Housing Team

Inner Sydney Tenancy Advice & Advocacy Service

Lindsay Ash	Tenants' Advocate
Melanie Bradfield	Tenants' Advocate
Max Dixon	Tenants' Advocate
Un-Ai Jo	Tenants' Advocate
Kimberley Mackenzie	Tenants' Advocate
Tom McDonald	Acting Coordinator
Hayley Stone	Tenants' Advocate



Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Service – Domestic Violence Team

Nicola Boiteux	Intake & Referral Officer
Kath Chegwiddden	Assistant Coordinator
Tanja Djordjevic	Specialist Worker
Tatiya Hastie	Specialist Worker
Katie Henderson-Brooks	Intake & Referral Officer
Leah Holmes	Intake & Referral Officer
Kate Hunter	Admin Officer
Fiona Koutsoukis	Safety Action Meeting Coordinator
Rayila Maimaiti	Specialist Worker
Sidnei Pettit	Intake & Referral Officer
Helen Shelton	Assistant Coordinator
Susan Smith	Coordinator
Amie Stevenson	Intake & Referral Officer
Janice Waring	Assistant Coordinator; Family Court Support
Charmaine Weldon	Specialist Worker
Alena Wilson	Intake & Referral Officer; Assistant Coordinator



General Team

Zoe Adler Bishop	Communications and Volunteer Manager
Laura Bianchi	Credit and Debt Solicitor
Hilary Chesworth	Administrator
Liz Clark	Fundraising Manager
Trevor Collier	Solicitor TAFE Branch
Will Dwyer	Credit and Debt Solicitor
Sophie Farrell	Communications and Volunteer Manager
Sue-Ellen Hills	HJP Project Officer Care Partners
Nick Manning	Community Engagement and Education Officer, Front Desk Supervisor
Elizabeth Morley	Principal Solicitor
Finn O'Keefe	Communications and Volunteer Manager



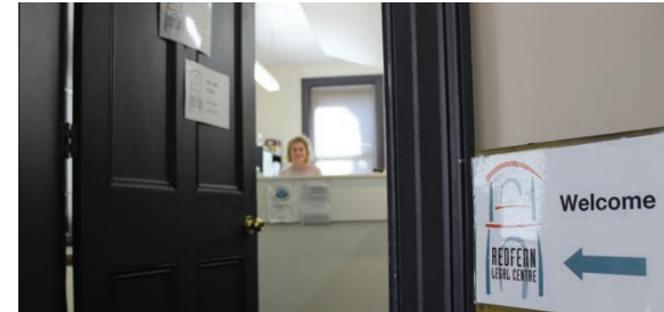
Sophie Parker	Solicitor, Police Powers and Administrative Law
David Porter	Senior Solicitor, Police Powers & Admin Law
Joanna Shulman	Chief Executive Officer
Sean Stimson	International Students' Service Solicitor
Jacqui Swinburne	Acting Chief Executive Officer
Linda Tucker	Employment and Discrimination Solicitor
Ingrid van Tongeren	Solicitor SUPRA Branch
Wendy Wang	Administration Officer
Joanna Shulman	Chief Executive Officer
Sean Stimson	International Students' Service Solicitor
Linda Tucker	Employment and Discrimination Solicitor
Ingrid van Tongeren	Solicitor SUPRA Branch
Wendy Wang	Administration Officer



Casual staff 2016–17

Inner Sydney Tenancy Advice & Advocacy Service - Tenancy & Housing Team

Amanda Brooker	Tenancy Adviser
Elizabeth de Freitas	Tenancy Adviser
Kim Meddows	Tenancy Adviser
Catherine Young	Tenancy Adviser



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

Katie Davern	Information & Referral Officer
Carly Guymer	Information & Referral Officer
Lisa McKay	Admin Assistant
Brigid McManus	Admin Assistant
Jessica Provost	Admin Assistant
Joanna Wilcox	Admin Assistant
Elaine Mee Yeo	Admin Assistant



General team

Melinda Bolton	Supervisor, Day Information Service
Jack Fu	Cleaner
Tess Gibney	Locum Communications Officer
Smeetha Jayakumar	Admin Assistant
Lily Jones	Supervisor, Day Information Service
Ameisa Konneh	Supervisor, Day Information Service
Kamani Krishnan	Locum Solicitor
Lauren Musgrave	Supervisor, Day Information Service
Shona Scully	Supervisor, Day Information Service
Catherine Young	Supervisor, Day Information Service



Consultants

Adaptive Solutions	IT support
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Secondment – Millers Point Service

Martin Barker	Tenants Advocate
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Awards and Recognition

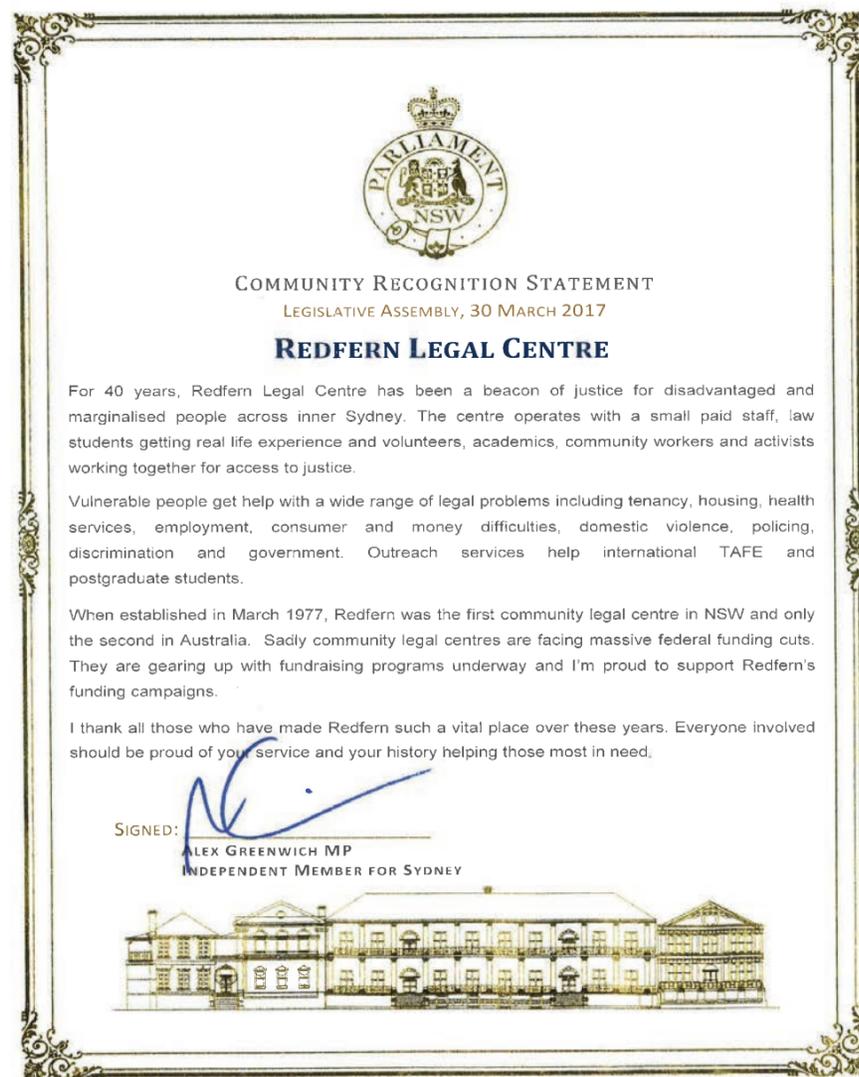
Nominated for 2016 Justice Awards for Aboriginal Health Justice Partnership (Community Legal Centre Award) (October 2016)

The Law and Justice Foundation's annual Justice Awards recognise the contributions of individuals and organisations to improving access to justice in NSW.

The Aboriginal Health–Justice Partnership (HJP) between Redfern Legal Centre (RLC) and Sydney Local Health District is the first hospital-based HJP in NSW. The partnership directly assists people who may not otherwise seek legal support and also trains health care workers so they can provide patients with legal referrals at an earlier stage.

Community Recognition Statement, Alex Greenwich, Legislative Assembly (March 2017)

In the lead-up to our 40th birthday celebrations, Alex Greenwich MP delivered a speech in the NSW Parliament paying tribute to RLC's 40-year history. Mr Greenwich's Community Recognition Statement is reproduced in full below:



RLC honoured at 11th Annual Redfern and Waterloo Volunteer Awards (May 2017)

On 24 May 2017, RLC was invited to attend the 11th Annual Redfern and Waterloo Volunteer Awards. The awards are a chance to honour all the volunteering that takes place across the local communities in the Waterloo-Redfern area.

The ceremony, held as part of National Volunteer Week, was attended by more than 200 guests.



Superintendent Luke Freudenstein (Redfern Police), Gemma Rygate (CEO of the Centre for Volunteering), Cecilia Ngu (RLC Volunteer Legal Assistant), and Finn O'Keefe (RLC Volunteer and Communications Manager) at the 2017 Volunteering Awards, May 2017.

Our Financials

REDFERN LEGAL CENTRE
ABN 31 001 442 039

DIRECTORS' DECLARATION

The directors of the company declare that:

1. The financial statements and notes, as set out on pages 8 - 20, 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 2017 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 2017 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 2017 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 2017; 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 of the fundraising appeals.

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

Director:



Amy Munro

Dated this

11th day of October 2017

Auditor's Report



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 2017, 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 2017 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 2017, but does not include the financial report and our auditor's report thereon.

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

Auditor's Report



REDFERN LEGAL CENTRE
ABN 31 001 442 039

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

Other Information (Continued)

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.
- 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.

Auditor's Report



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)

- 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.

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.

Report on Other Legal and Regulatory Requirements

In our opinion:

- (a) the financial statements of the company show a true and fair view of the financial results of charitable and fundraising activities for the year ended 30 June 2017;
- (b) the financial statements and associated records of the company have been properly kept during the year in accordance with the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991;
- (c) money received as a result of charitable and fundraising activities conducted during the year has been properly accounted for and applied in accordance with the Act; and
- (d) there are reasonable grounds to believe the company will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.


MARK GODLEWSKI

Partner

Date: 11 October 2017



PITCHER PARTNERS

Sydney

Comprehensive Income

REDFERN LEGAL CENTRE
ABN 31 001 442 039

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017

	Note	2017 \$	2016 \$
Revenue	3	3,057,169	2,479,020
Less: expenses			
Advertising expense - Program Related		(3,140)	(2,476)
Fundraising and venue costs		(49,034)	(735)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	4	(27,249)	(23,253)
Employee benefits expense		(2,499,080)	(2,125,278)
Telephone		(26,327)	(25,959)
Occupancy expense		(168,056)	(65,965)
Repairs and maintenance expense		(23,851)	(11,400)
Consultancy - Program Related		(72,638)	(67,137)
IT Support		(35,801)	(30,652)
Travel & Accommodation		(18,672)	(23,306)
Printing and stationary		(19,289)	(13,868)
Other expenses		(72,344)	(60,449)
		<u>(3,015,481)</u>	<u>(2,450,478)</u>
Surplus		41,688	28,542
Other comprehensive income for the year		-	-
Total comprehensive income		<u>41,688</u>	<u>28,542</u>

Financial Position

REDFERN LEGAL CENTRE
ABN 31 001 442 039

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2017

	Note	2017 \$	2016 \$
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	6	929,047	835,115
Receivables	7	62,552	39,387
Other financial assets	8	700,000	500,000
Other assets	10	21,860	23,102
Total current assets		<u>1,713,459</u>	<u>1,397,604</u>
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	9	55,654	32,477
Total non-current assets		<u>55,654</u>	<u>32,477</u>
Total assets		<u>1,769,113</u>	<u>1,430,081</u>
Current liabilities			
Payables	11	748,563	522,738
Provisions	12	415,665	357,222
Total current liabilities		<u>1,164,228</u>	<u>879,960</u>
Non-current liabilities			
Provisions	12	116,982	103,906
Total non-current liabilities		<u>116,982</u>	<u>103,906</u>
Total liabilities		<u>1,281,210</u>	<u>983,866</u>
Net assets		<u>487,903</u>	<u>446,215</u>
Equity			
Retained surplus	13	487,903	446,215
Total equity		<u>487,903</u>	<u>446,215</u>

Equity Changes

REDFERN LEGAL CENTRE
ABN 31 001 442 039

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017

	Retained Surplus \$
Balance as at 1 July 2015	417,673
Surplus for the year	<u>28,542</u>
Total comprehensive income for the year	<u>28,542</u>
Balance as at 1 July 2016	446,215
Surplus for the year	<u>41,688</u>
Total comprehensive income for the year	<u>41,688</u>
Balance as at 30 June 2017	<u>487,903</u>

Cash Flows

REDFERN LEGAL CENTRE
ABN 31 001 442 039

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017

	Note	2017 \$	2016 \$
Cash flow from operating activities			
Receipts from funding agreements and grants		3,220,378	2,647,680
Receipts from other income sources		278,107	31,582
Payments to suppliers and employees		(3,192,066)	(2,675,134)
Interest received		<u>37,937</u>	<u>42,727</u>
Net cash provided by operating activities		<u>344,356</u>	<u>46,855</u>
Cash flow from investing activities			
Payment for property, plant and equipment		(50,425)	(16,007)
Payment for other financial assets		<u>(200,000)</u>	<u>-</u>
Net cash provided by / (used in) investing activities		<u>(250,425)</u>	<u>(16,007)</u>
Reconciliation of cash			
Cash at beginning of the financial year		835,115	804,267
Net increase in cash held		<u>93,931</u>	<u>30,848</u>
Cash at end of financial year		<u>929,046</u>	<u>835,115</u>

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