



# Annual Report

2019-2020





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## Acknowledgement of Country

**We would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land. We would also like to pay respect to the Elders, past, present, and emerging.**

The North & North West Community Legal Service (NNWCLS) acknowledges the importance of developing strong effective relationships based on mutual respect and trust with the Australian Indigenous peoples. NNWCLS is committed to ensuring that the perspectives, values and experiences of our staff, clients and stakeholders are valued, respected and acknowledged in all levels of service delivery.

NNWCLS believe that respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures, lands, and histories form an important basis to establish a safe and healthy environment that is sensitive towards the needs of Australian Indigenous peoples. NNWCLS is committed to creating a more inclusive and culturally appropriate environment that will ultimately create increased quality and culturally appropriate legal services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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*From the team of North & North West Community Legal Service Inc →*



### QR Code instruction

With your iPhone, open your camera and hover your phone over the QR Code. Click on the tab that appears at the top of your screen, and let the story begin.



### Hazel Green (Welcome to Country)

Hazel is a proud Gumbaynggirr woman who has worked extensively in our region for many years and continues to do so during retirement. She and her husband Cyril jointly received the Armidale Australia Day Senior Citizens of the Year Award in 2014. The following year, Hazel was awarded the Order of Australia medal (OAM). Hazel has been a Board Member for various community organisations including NNWCLS. She is a very kind, caring and compassionate woman who is passionate about helping people and bringing them happiness.







## Our Armidale Team



### Principal Solicitor

#### Terri King

Terri has a long history with the Service, initially beginning as a student volunteer, before commencing employment in 2009. She has a strong passion for working with survivors of domestic and family violence and sexual assault with long standing involvement in local committees and community events. She has a particular interest in Victims Services, Family Law and Estate Planning.



### Coordinator

#### Sandy Watt

Sandy joined the Service in 2013 after relocating to Armidale from the North Coast. Sandy feels privileged to be the Coordinator of the Service as she reports to Legal Aid NSW and CLCNSW on all the great work that her colleagues achieve throughout each year, and of this she is immensely proud. Her love of finances, statistics and reporting against targets is certainly fulfilled within her role. Sandy's favourite past-time is playing her piano.



### Solicitor

#### Stanley Tao

Stanley joined the Service after having worked with disadvantaged clients at various Community Legal Centres. He is determined to make a difference in the lives of vulnerable and marginalised people within our community. Stanley is passionate about Succession Law, Employment Law and Family Law. He also enjoys playing table tennis and badminton in his spare time.



### Solicitor

#### Niel van der Linde

Niel completed his Bachelor of Laws at the University of Tasmania and his Graduate Diploma of Legal Practice at the College of Law. He completed his practical placement at a Community Legal Centre and soon realised his passion for assisting members of the community. He has a particular interest in Criminal Law, Family Law and Estate matters and joined the Service in mid 2018 after 2 years of working in private practice. Niel also has an active interest in rugby union.



### Solicitor

#### Nicholas Forrest

Nicholas is a New England local who has joined the team after 3 years with the Aboriginal Legal Service. He is passionate about Criminal Law, Administrative Law and helping those who have been historically disenfranchised from the legal system.

In his spare time, Nicholas likes to bake bread and spend time with his family.



### Legal Support Officer & Bookkeeper

#### Donna Gilbert

Donna joined the Service in 2013 as Administration Assistant. Donna left the Service for a short period and returned as the Legal Support Officer and has since added to her Support role, that of Bookkeeper. She finds that the service NNWCLS provides to the community is invaluable and extremely rewarding on a personal level. The most rewarding part of her job is assisting the Solicitors to provide the utmost professional service that the community needs. Donna also enjoys interacting with the community and being able to help people in need. She sees being a team member of this much needed Service a privilege.



## Our Moree Team



### Administrative Assistant Bailie Rolff

Bailie has been with the Service since 2015. She says that the best part of her job is the connection with her local community and being able to be a part of the process in helping people in need. Bailie has been working in Administration for the past 10 years including other roles in WHS and workplace injuries. She enjoys spending her free time doing art and outdoor activities.

Bailie resigned from our team in November 2019, taking a position in her hometown of Guyra. We wish Bailie well, and thank her for her dedication to her position while with us.



### Trainee – Cert III Business (Legal) Natasha Carey

Natasha joined the Service after completing her Higher School Certificate in 2016 locally and having worked as an Administration Assistant and in retail for 3 years. Natasha has completed a traineeship with the Service and has since moved into the role of Administration Assistant. Natasha has a love and passion for animals and cooking.



### Solicitor Jonathan Wong

Jonathan completed a Bachelor of Laws with First Class Honours and a Graduate Diploma of Legal Practice at the Australian National University. Prior to joining the Service, Jonathan worked in private practice and was a tutor with the University of Queensland. He has a particular interest in Succession Law, Employment Law, Consumer Protection Law, and Debt Recovery. Jonathan speaks English, Malay, Indonesian, Mandarin Chinese and Moroccan Arabic. When he is not at work, he enjoys playing Scrabble and learning new languages.



### Administrative Assistant Anne Towney

Anne has recently started work with the Service, in the Moree office. She has had a varied working life having been employed in Employment Services, Child Care, Aboriginal Land Councils, an Aboriginal Community Development Employment Program and an Aboriginal Medical Service. The positions Anne has held include Employment Consultant, Bookkeeper, Coordinator and Finance Officer. Anne enjoys working with the not for profit sector and looks forward to supporting community members through her work with NNWCLS.

Working  
together for  
our community

Respecting each  
individual  
through our  
service delivery





## Our Management Committee



### Chairperson

#### Ms Bronwyn Pearson

Bronwyn is a multi-award-winning Human Resources specialist with more than 25 years' experience providing strategic and operational human resource advice and solutions to both the public and private sectors. Along with post graduate management qualifications in human resource management Bronwyn has achieved Certified Professional Member status with the Australian Human Resources Institute (CAHRI).

Bronwyn is skilled in strategic HR, change management, employee relations, workforce planning, performance management, organisational development, policy, negotiation, mediation and specialist recruitment. She is also a highly reputable careers coach, with her clients achieving outstanding results. Assisting businesses to navigate the increasingly complex legal requirements around employment and people management is one of her specialties.

Bronwyn believes that helping regional businesses meet their obligations as employers, as well as attracting, retaining, and developing the right staff, leads to stronger, sustainable communities. As a regionally-based business Pinnacle People Solutions' business model recognises the unique challenges individuals and businesses in regional communities face and understands how to deal with these directly.

Giving back to the community is central to Bronwyn's business vision. Bronwyn mentors four-to-six young people annually to assist them with entry into the workforce. Bronwyn sits on the Board of several regional organisations that share her values of integrity and commitment to community. In addition to holding the position of Chairperson at NNWCLS Bronwyn is also a Director on the Board of the New England Conservatorium of Music. Bronwyn was appointed Employment Facilitator for the Northern Inland Region for the Regional Employment Trials Program. In one of only 10 regions selected for the Program by the Australian Government, Bronwyn works with local stakeholders across the region to develop place-based strategies to address employment challenges and provide opportunities for those who are unemployed or at risk of unemployment.

In 2018 Bronwyn won the Outstanding Business Leader category in both the Armidale Business Chamber and the New England North West Region Business Awards, going on to represent at State level.



### Secretary

#### Ms Kathy Padgen

Ms Kathy Padgen was born in England and arrived in Australia in the early 70's after a number of years living in the Middle East and South Africa. Career highlights include Legal Publishing and Communications. Kathy is a retired Public Servant having worked for the benefit of children and single parents as a Senior Case Officer for a Federal Agency. Since moving to Armidale, Kathy has fulfilled the role of Station Manager/Public Officer of the Armidale Community Radio Station.

In May 2018, after 10 years, she retired from this role to concentrate on a new venture to bring industry and employment to the New England region. Kathy has a strong sense of community justice and involvement.



### Treasurer

#### Dr Kip Werren

BFA/LLB(Hons), PhD(WSU)

Dr Kip Werren has been part of NNWCLS since 2012. Kip is a lecturer in the School of Law, University of New England. Kip has practised and continues to practise as an Accountant and a Lawyer principally in the areas of commercial law, conveyancing, asset protection, estate planning, business structures, and taxation.

Kip has completed a PhD dissertation titled Utilising Taxation Incentives to Promote Private Sector Funded Conservation.

**Committee Member****Ms Bronwen Jackman**

LLM, SAB (Dip. Law)

Ms Bronwen Jackman is a legal academic at UNE School of Law. Bronwen lectures in evidence law, employment law and property law. Her research interests include international environmental law and property law. Bronwen has extensive experience in community organisations within the New England area including the former Armidale Women's Shelter and Women's Centre. She has experience on management committees such as the Women's Shelter.

After taking a leave of absence from academia a few years ago Bronwen assumed the position of Coordinator of the Armidale Domestic Violence Advocacy Service funded by Legal Aid NSW. This position allowed her to assist women in domestic and personal violence situations and to assist them through all the processes relating to obtaining orders and going to court. It was a position that allowed Bronwen access to local magistrates, police, and court personnel. Bronwen has a commitment to social justice and a specific commitment to her community.

**Committee Member****Mr Paul Sattler**

BA(Hons) LLB(Hons) (NE)

Mr Paul Sattler came to the School of Law from practice, and currently teaches in Equity and Trusts, and Succession Law. In practice, Paul specialised in criminal law, and his main areas of research include evidence law and its application in the criminal and civil processes. Since 2012 Paul was a contributing author to Eburn and Hayes Criminal Law and Procedure in NSW, the 6th edition of which is due for publication in late 2019. Paul is a member of the Law Society of New South Wales and President of the Senior Common Room of Earle Page College.

**Committee Member****Ms Christine Perrott**

BA, Dip Ed, MA(Hons/medal), PhD, FACE

Christine is a retired teacher educator passionate about social justice and protecting our heritage and natural environments. She is a volunteer with the Helping Children and Families Association (HCFA) where regular visits to at risk families with young children make clear the value of a Community Legal Service. Other volunteer commitments are Friends of the Old Teachers College (vice President), thesis editing assistance to postgraduates and Duval College Senior Common Room.

Christine's recreation pursuits include going to concerts, films, galleries and museums; travel; gardening; writing letters to The Sydney Morning Herald; fishing; intricate garment knitting; reading; and daily cryptic crossword puzzle solving.

Striving for  
a more just  
and equitable  
society for all





## Our Purpose ...

- to provide advice, assistance and support to people in the North and North West region of New South Wales who have least access to the legal system and the least power to help themselves
- to provide our services in a manner that increases people's understanding of the law and their legal rights
- to deliver these services in a way that respects each individual
- to provide community education with the aim of increasing people's knowledge and understanding of the law and their legal rights
- to be responsive to the needs of the community we serve

## Our Objectives ...

- to increase access to the legal system and policy development for people from traditionally disadvantaged sectors of the population
- to help clients to be better informed of their legal and social rights and responsibilities and the options available to them
- to refer clients to other legal and non-legal services when our services are not able to assist them with their issue
- to work towards a more just, equitable and accessible society for all people
- to ensure staff in our services will maintain high standards of professional conduct and service

## Who do we help?

*Everyone living in the north and north west of New South Wales can access our Service for free and confidential legal advice and assistance*

### We can help with:



- Family Law issues (excluding property settlement, maintenance)



- Domestic Violence matters



- Consumer Complaints



- Credit and Debt issues

- Discrimination

- Employment Law



- Criminal Law



- Victims Compensation



- Wills, Power of Attorney, Enduring Guardianship



- Neighbourhood Disputes

- Probate

- Apprehended Violence Orders

### We help you if you:

- Are not sure of your legal rights and responsibilities
- Are not sure where to go for assistance
- Are unable to pay for advice from a private Solicitor



Our vision...

*"To give assistance to anyone who is having difficulties accessing or is unsure how to access the legal system"*

*We help our community understand their legal and social rights*



## Find us at our Outreach locations

### GLEN INNES

- » **Community Centre**  
268 Grey Street  
Glen Innes
- » **Glen Innes Library**  
71 Grey Street  
Glen Innes

Glen Innes Correctional Centre

### GUNNEDAH

- » **Go Co**  
80 Marquis Street  
Gunnedah

### GUYRA

- » **The Guyra Hub**  
160 Bradley Street  
Guyra

### INVERELL

- » **Inverell Court House**  
Otho Street  
Inverell
- » **Linking together Centre**  
16 Waratah Avenue  
Inverell

### NARRABRI

- » **Narrabri Library**  
8 Doyle Street  
Narrabri

### QUIRINDI

- » **Quirindi Home Support Services**  
Cnr Station & Dalley Streets  
Quirindi

### TAMWORTH

- » **Tamworth Community Centre**  
Cnr Peel & Darling Streets  
Tamworth
- » **Coledale Community Centre**  
2B Kenny Drive  
Tamworth

### TENTERFIELD

- » **Tenterfield Community Hub**  
204 Rouse Street  
Tenterfield

### UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND

- » **Uni4me office**  
– near the Commonwealth  
Bank ATM

### WALCHA

- » **Walcha Community Hub**  
21E Fitzroy Street  
Walcha

### WEE WAA

- » **Wee Waa Library**  
106 Rose Street  
Wee Waa

### WERRIS CREEK

- » **Werris Creek Library**  
59a Single Street, Werris Creek



Our catchment stretches  
across 99,144 sq klms

Removing barriers, giving rural  
areas access to free legal advice





## History

### The North & North West Community Legal Service Inc (NNWCLS) was established in April 1993.

The Service was initially known as the Armidale Community Legal Service and was run solely by volunteers and lead by Jennifer Crew.

In 1995 Jennifer Crew, Ted Wright, and Rhonda Weinand began research and consultation with the community to establish the need for a funded Community Legal Centre to service the whole New England and the north west regions of NSW. The resulting submission to the Commonwealth Government was successful and the North & North West Community Legal Service Inc was created. The Service was officially opened by Rt Hon Ian Sinclair in Armidale on 22nd April 1996.

With the office based in Armidale, Outreach clinics were soon established to service the communities throughout the catchment of the New England and north and north west of NSW. The Service began as a generalist service, and continues to be today, allowing for advice

and assistance to be given across a large scope of problem types.

In April 2002 the Service became the auspice for the Northern Regional Tenant Resource Service (NRTRS) and in October 2002 became the auspice for the New England and Western Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service (NEWTAAS). The sudden growth in the Service required it to relocate from shared accommodation in the Armidale Neighbourhood Centre to its own premises in the Minto Building in Rusden Street Armidale. It also opened offices in Dubbo and Broken Hill for the tenancy service, both co-located with the Community Legal Centres in those cities.

From July 2004 to September 2005, the NNWCLS took on the temporary auspice of the Western Aboriginal Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service, with offices in Dubbo, Broken Hill and Bourke. In April 2005, the NNWCLS became the auspice for the Armidale Community Cottage.

In September 2005, the Western Aboriginal TAAS was handed over to an Aboriginal organisation, MurdiPaaki Regional Enterprise to auspice, and in January 2006, the Northern Regional Tenant Resource Service self-incorporated to become an independent Service, Northern Links.

In May 2007, the North & North West Community Legal Service moved to new premises in Faulkner Street, Armidale while NEWTAAS remained at the Minto Building and from 1st July 2010, NEWTAAS also successfully self-incorporated.

The Service remained in Faulkner Street until October 2017 when additional funding was received, giving the Service an opportunity to expand its current staffing levels requiring larger premises. The office is now located at 215 Beardsley Street which is in a busy area of Armidale giving

great exposure to the community and easy access for clients. With expansion in staffing levels came growth into new regions. Currently our Outreach Program has extended to 19 clinics each month in 13 towns and is covering more distances and population base than ever before.

In 2019, using State One Off Funding that was granted to the Service in 2017, a branch office was set up in Moree. This is a significant expansion of the Service's current service delivery, and one that allows the Moree community and surrounding districts with high legal need, ongoing support.

Opening this branch office has taken the Service to new heights, and while much growth and change has occurred for the Service since its inception, our values and mission remains the same:

*"To create a fairer, more just society by providing free and confidential legal advice and support to all"*



MOREE



ARMIDALE



## Chairperson's Report

*The North and Northwest Community Legal Service (NNWCLS) has had another red letter year of outstanding work and service to our communities.*

The North and Northwest Community Legal Service (NNWCLS) has had another red letter year of outstanding work and service to our communities. 2020 has certainly gone above and beyond to raise the barriers and challenges to our service delivery, and I am so proud of the Coordinator, Principal Solicitor and team in continuing to deliver excellent service to clients across the region under difficult circumstances. As we move to the "new normal", which will bring its own challenges and difficulties, I am excited to see how the service continues to evolve and develop to ensure the needs of our communities are met into the future.

COVID-19 brought about a new era of service delivery for NNWCLS as the team shifted almost seamlessly to a remote model, with staff working from home and clients serviced electronically. Whilst this change has been extremely challenging to implement and educate clients about, it has resulted in a significant increase in productivity, and a trade-off between increasing accessibility via online interaction and increasing barriers to access without the face to face opportunities to connect. The team has worked tirelessly to reach clients in as many ways possible, but this necessary change in communication style has only further highlighted the need, particularly in regional and rural communities, for in-person interactions. It is expected that as restrictions continue to lift, there will be a surge in requests for assistance.



Community Legal Centres NSW, Community Legal Centres Australia and Legal Aid NSW have provided significant support through the pandemic and this has been invaluable to ensuring our consistent service delivery with assistance to both staff and management in dealing with the transition. I thank these organisations for their ongoing aid.

On a Commonwealth level, our funding has remained on par with previous years, however, the State Government funding has been reduced significantly. It was fortunate that NNWCLS was permitted to carry over the funds to open the planned Moree branch office and I am delighted that we now have had a Solicitor and Administrative Assistant join the team in this new location where we can continue our outreach to service and effectively engage our communities. The opening of the Moree branch, coupled with the recruitment of a Social Worker, an integral and valuable asset to the Service, together with our IT services upgrade, no doubt shows our resilience, innovation and positive evolution in a challenging environment. The way that we have leveraged online service delivery in this timeframe gives me confidence that there are many more opportunities yet to come.

There is a clear need in our region for accessible legal services so as part of the Community Legal Centres Roadshow, I met the Hon. Adam Marshall MP, Member for Northern Tablelands at NSW Parliament House, along with Treasurer Kip Warren, to urge his support for increasing funding particularly to NNWCLS. Without funding support, there would be a quantifiable loss to the community, and we do not want to be defined by that narrative. We want to be able to strengthen the foundation of our services with sufficient funding in order to execute effective and informed solutions for our communities. He was receptive to this message and I continue to be hopeful that this relationship will bear fruit in the future.

It has been an honour and privilege to chair the NNWCLS Board once again this year and witness the dedication and considerable efforts of staff to not only continue, but extend, services, particularly during the triple whammy that has hit our region this year of drought, bushfires and COVID-19. I am continually inspired by both the wonderful achievements of NNWCLS, and the unswerving dedication of its staffing team and Board. Congratulations to all of you.

**Bronwyn Pearson**  
**CHAIRPERSON**







Helping those who have least access to the legal system and the least power to help themselves



## Principal Solicitor's Report

*Moving into this year, the accessibility of our Service became an area of focus for me. My goal: to remove the barriers people face when accessing legal assistance. I did not for a moment expect for our accessibility to be challenged in such a new and overt way.*

This year has again proven to be one of difficulties, triumphs, change and growth. For which, if you read over my past reports, I am sure could be said for any of the last 5 years. However, as many would be able to attest to, COVID-19 has bought about a new era of service delivery, working conditions and hurdles. Our Service has always been responsive to our catchment communities: seeking opportunities to work collaboratively with Service Providers, amending our casework guidelines to meet changing legal need, developing community legal education projects and so on. Adapting to overcome the challenges created by a global health pandemic, was one we had not dealt with previously.

Like many organisations we shifted to a remote model, all staff working from home, and all clients being serviced electronically. This bought about new challenges, increased barriers to accessibility and a greater dependence on information technology.

There was a clear shift, in how we connected with our clients. We became heavily reliant on social media and our website to share information and connect; our traffic to both increased dramatically. We utilised radio advertising to ensure clients understood that although our



Outreach clinics were paused our Service was still available to help. We continued to connect to interagency meetings to build and strengthen our relationships with other Service Providers. We worked on collaborative projects, factsheets, sought grants to increase services, increased client contact methods, participated in law reform and continued to communicate via Facebook, our website and radio. We shared staff profiles, increasing our relatability, and building connections. Our usual face to face opportunities to connect, and breakdown barriers had been removed: expo's, fun days, outreach, community legal education presentations and so on.

Realistically, nothing can replace our physical presence. A social media campaign, although important, can never be as accessible as a smiling face and friendly chat in an informal setting. As a Service our greatest strengths are our clients and staff. The relationships we have, the outcomes we achieve and the consequent connections to our community. Our clients teach us, challenge us, reward us, and promote us. Continuing to remain accessible, regardless of the conditions around us; fire, flood or health pandemic, will continue to be a priority.

This period has really confirmed my view that Outreach circuits are of paramount importance in terms of connection to clients and success of service delivery.





We have always worked under the premise that our client groups prefer face to face legal advice and assistance. Moving to a remote working model has highlighted the desire, need, and ease of an in-person service in a client's local community, to that of a telephone call or video conference. Many client's electing to hold over their matters, wherever possible, until a face to face connection can be restored. Thankfully, our flexibility and communication with clients have allowed service delivery to continue for most. We have continued to see infirm clients at home and in hospital when video conferencing is not appropriate or accessible. We are excited to travel throughout our catchment, once again to provide this most valuable and accessible service delivery model as COVID-19 restrictions ease.

Whilst overcoming the challenges and barriers brought about by the global health pandemic, our Service continued to focus on service delivery and meeting client need. We successfully opened our second office, located in Moree NSW. The office hosts an administrative assistant and a solicitor, operating four days per week. The office provides an enhanced ability to meet client need in the North West of our region. The changes brought about, in terms of workplace practices and methods, have led to an easier transition between the offices. The remote practice has also allowed our two physical offices to work as if they were physically co-located together. Leading to more timely and effective legal assistance services and increased capacity, for our clients.

Our Service continues to grow and evolve. Moving forward we will see the Service expand again with the inclusion of a Social Worker, employed to specifically address the impact of COVID-19 on our client groups. Introducing this role to our Service will be the first step in shifting to a multi-disciplinary team model; providing for social work services for non-legal matters, short term casework management and counselling to clients experiencing vulnerabilities, to support the resolution of their legal matters.

This is an exciting addition that I predict will see faster and better outcomes for our clients, better addressing the diverse and complicated needs they sometimes present with; legal and non-legal.

Additionally, our website will be undergoing some considerable changes; allowing clients to engage with the Service via an online interactive survey. This will allow the Service to capture all information required from a client to move to scheduling them an appointment. The flexibility of an online format will mean that clients can establish contact and begin the process of scheduling an appointment in a non-confrontational way without being restricted by the availability of our staff to answer the phone, or the hours of operation of the office. Client's will have more freedom to contact the Service at a time most suitable for them, without having to make, what some may experience as a difficult phone call. This addition will work to improve accessibility of our Service and work towards breaking down those potential barriers client's experience that may prevent or postpone them seeking legal assistance.

The resilience of our staff and Management Committee during this period is to be commended. I am grateful of the support of my peers, the work ethic displayed and ability to remain flexible. The positive and open attitudes have allowed for a relatively smooth transition of work practices and little disruption to the availability of services to clients. Additionally, the support from NSWCLC's, CLCA and Legal Aid NSW has allowed staff to focus on service delivery whilst management were supported and guided throughout the pandemic.

**Terri King**  
Principal Solicitor

## Coordinator's Report

*We would be correct in thinking, at the beginning of this year, that the year ahead will play out exactly as our Strategic Planning suggested. And why should we think otherwise.*

We commenced the year, as we do every year, with our sights set firmly on increased productivity and outcomes, while a strong business model in place would support this goal and see us travelling across our entire catchment to meet the legal needs of our community.

With our Commonwealth Funding similar this year to previous years, we knew our targets against this funding were achievable with hard work and dedication from our passionate staff. However, having received a cut of 20% to our State and Public Purpose funding from the NSW Attorney General through Tender, with an expectation to reach the same targets as last year, the ensuing year would require one eye on deliverables and one eye fixed firmly on the budget.

"Start how you intend to finish" - this would be our year. In order to reach our targets, and complete all our planned projects on less funding, we needed to start the year strong and remain focused on our goals and end the year with this same intensity. Knowing the work required to reach the end game, certainly sets the pace to start the year.

However, even the most thought-out strategies don't always go to plan.....

This year will become a part of our history for very different reasons than reaching targets set and achieving milestones with new projects. This year would become a year that flexibility and fast-paced change from all, were key. We could never have predicted how the year was to unfold and with a community that



was already hurting from drought, water shortages and destroying fires mid-year, we then found ourselves in the midst of a global health pandemic. Our operations' framework had to change swiftly and with flexibility, to ensure continued service to our community, while keeping staff and clients safe.

So, let's break down this year that would become an impressive part of our Service's history. At the close of last year, we embarked on a Tender process to secure our State and Public Purpose funding until June 2022 which was new territory for us. Although it was a process that was well supported by Community Legal Centres NSW, there was no doubting the intensity of what was required in order to be a successful applicant. With 41 Centres vying for their share of a three-year allocation of \$40.4 million, the recommendations from an independent Evaluation Panel to the NSW Attorney General concluded that our Service would receive 20% less funding than was applied for, however targets must remain the same. A disappointing outcome for us, but in the nature that drives our service delivery to our community, we just got on with the job at hand.

While NSW Government funding cuts have been disappointing, their approval of our submission to carry over State funds from previous years for a project to open a branch office in Moree was welcome news. This approval came with the full support of Legal Aid NSW



as we demonstrated the gaps of legal assistance in this region that could be accommodated by our Service. There is a significant gap in Moree for free assistance with estate planning, that our Service can provide. While offering estate planning to the entire community, working with WDVCS and Thiyama-Li will benefit their clients who are leaving domestic and family violence relationships, when updating these documents is so important. As a generalist service, we will work with other legal services whose problem types are similar to ours, in times of client conflict. Our family law work will be an excellent extension of the civil law work that ALS provide, as we work together for the Indigenous community.

There is no doubting the legal need for NNWCLS on the ground in Moree and after a lengthy recruitment process, that can be synonymous for a rural area, we welcome Solicitor Jonathan Wong and Administrative Assistant Anne Towney to our team, and we look forward to the positive outcomes our Service will have on this community.

Riding the funding rollercoaster can certainly be a bumpy, rough ride so when the opportunity presented itself for our Service to connect with parliamentarians and improve relationships with local members, in the form of the Community Legal Centres Roadshow at the NSW Parliament House, we jumped at the chance. This was a prime opportunity for our sector as a whole to speak to the Attorney General and Shadow Attorney General of the impacts that funding cuts were having on our service delivery.

But more importantly, this was an opportunity for our Chairperson Bronwyn Pearson, and Treasurer Kip Werren to meet with The Hon. Adam Marshall MP, Member of the Northern Tablelands (our local Member) and remind him of the work our Service provides to the north and north west of NSW. They brought to Mr Marshall's attention what funding cuts look like to the community that he represents. Since 2017/2018 our funding has decreased by 36%.

Without carried forward funding this would represent a loss of:

- 2 staff members
- 300 clients we would have to turn away
- 18 lost opportunities of Legal Education projects to our community

Bronwyn and Kip reported the positive response from Mr Marshall at the completion of their meeting as they urged for his support of continued and increased funding to the CLC Sector, but particularly a topping up of funding that had been lost in his own backyard. We look forward to positive outcomes from government from this sector-wide engagement.

As we reach mid-year, tracking our statistics and budget proved positive; that we were ahead on our measurables and coming in under budget. We showed increased statistics in all areas of service delivery, including an impressive increase in representation work of 40%. While our face to face advices came in slightly under, by 14%, there was no doubting our plan for increased productivity was on track, as we entered the 2nd half of our year.

But then came March 2020: The full effects of the global pandemic, that is COVID-19, had closed our office doors. Fortunately, the transition to a virtual office occurred quickly, with our historic yearly attention to technology upgrades serving us well. Although the transition was swift, without the flexibility and willingness of the staff to learn new routines and processes, it could not have worked as seamlessly. Congratulations everyone on this success. Our statistics were on track leading up to COVID-19 however to continue the trajectory, creativity of Service promotion and client engagement was paramount. The foreign concept of virtual zoom meetings soon became a part of our everyday life and government change to witnessing documents through the new video conferencing regulations assisted our legal team in moving forward with their client work.

The Commonwealth government acted quickly with financial support of our sector. We received Information and Communication Technology (ICT) funding assistance for the transition of staff working from home as well as gaining the opportunity to apply (Tender) for funding for frontline service projects, and further enhancements to ICT processes.

When researching the impacts that COVID-19 was having on our community and how our Service would respond, we learned that, alarmingly, a large portion of the community were putting off their legal issues to focus on financial survival which would create a wave of increased demand on our Service when social distancing restrictions eased. Mental health concerns for organisations' clients was evident in this research. There was a recognition of increased family and domestic violence and potentially a cycle of violence, created by social isolation, that would be difficult for victims to escape. Our community was experiencing job losses, unfair dismissals and credit and debt issues that will require our immediate attention once brought to our Service. All this evidence showed us that an increase in staff would be necessary to meet an increase in demand, and particularly a Social Worker, being an excellent addition to the services our legal team offer our clients. The Assessment Panel reviewing all Tenders agreed with our findings, and gave their recommendation to Mr Mark Speakman, who then approved the employment of a Social Worker to our Service as well as an additional amount to upgrade our website allowing potential clients to initiate their appointments while browsing our site. These are exciting new times ahead for us and our community!

As we close the year, we acknowledge the redirection of our face to face statistics to telephone/online work, showing a 73% increase in productivity using this technology. These changes in statistics is indicative of closing our doors to the public, however a tribute to our exploration of new service delivery models in order to continue to service our catchment.

Our year didn't play out exactly as our Strategic Plan suggested, however "Start how you intend to finish"? – absolutely! There is no other year since our inception in 1993, that this has been a truer reflection of our operations. We have created a part of our Service's history that is commendable to the staff and Management Committee who have gone above and beyond to keep the doors open, albeit virtual.

I would particularly like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the staff, to thank our Principal Solicitor, Terri King, for her leadership during COVID-19. Terri ensured we stayed connected as a team, felt supported and appreciated, and for this we are all thankful.

Congratulations to my workmates on this year's achievement in keeping our Service connected to the community, while navigating a scenario that could never have been planned.

**Sandy Watt**  
Coordinator





## The Work of our Legal Service

**The North & North West Community Legal Service Inc is a free and confidential legal advice and assistance service.**

We provide advice, assistance and support to people living in the New England and the north and north west region of NSW. We help those who have least access to the legal system and the least power to help themselves. We aim to help clients to be better informed of their legal and social rights and responsibilities and of the options available to them.

Our office is based in Armidale, with the recent opening of a branch office in Moree. We provide legal advice, information, casework and some Court Representation. We also operate an extensive Outreach Circuit Program throughout our catchment, supporting a population base of approximately 181,555 people over an area of 99,144 square kilometres. Our Outreach Circuit consists of monthly visits to Walcha, Werris Creek, Quirindi, Gunnedah, Narrabri, Wee Waa, Inverell, Glen Innes, Glen Innes Correctional Centre, Tenterfield, Guyra and the University of New England. While our clinic in Tamworth is run on a fortnightly basis as the need is high in this region and more frequent visits are

required. We operate 2 separate clinics while visiting Tamworth, Inverell and Glen Innes to ensure ease of accessibility to residences at either ends of these towns. Our Outreach Program is far-reaching! In travel time alone, our Legal Staff spends up to 41 hours every month in the car enroute to their clinics.



This is certainly a commitment from our Solicitors giving these community members the opportunity to have face to face appointment time for legal advice.

However, when face to face appointments aren't possible for clients, we offer telephone appointments to everyone in our catchment taking away any possible barrier that may impede our communities' opportunity to seek legal help. Furthermore, home, hospital, or nursing home visits are made available to our most vulnerable clients ensuring accessibility to everyone.

In addition to our Outreach Program, we also operate a Court Liaison Program in Armidale every Monday on list day. Because of its success, and the benefits to Court users on the day, we have extended this Program to Tenterfield each month.

NNWCLS has expanded significantly since 1993 and when considering Service growth, much consideration is given to the vulnerable demographic of our regions as well as indications of high domestic and family violence statistics in communities. We ensure that, for these regions, we have a prominent presence and an accessible location, while maximising promotional exposure keeping everyone well-informed of the work that we do. Stakeholder feedback also forms a large part of this research as we work collaboratively with other organisations to maximise services for our clients while strengthening referral pathways throughout our catchment.

Expanding our Service to our vulnerable communities is paramount. We've recognised that legal problems are particularly prevalent among socially disadvantaged groups and are especially elevated for people with multiple types of socioeconomic disadvantage, as our catchment statistics suggest. Research indicates that it is more likely that people experiencing multiple disadvantages are also experiencing multiple legal problems, confirming that our Generalist legal service is a perfect fit for our catchment.

In addition to advice and representation services, we also offer legal education sessions to our communities and groups. Our aim to increase people's knowledge and understanding of the law and their legal rights demonstrates the holistic approach we strive for in legal service delivery.



**TRAVELLING**  
up to —  
**34,000** kms   
each year





## COVID19 – Adapting to change

On 22nd January 2020, our country felt the ripple effect of the global pandemic that is COVID-19, as the virus made its way across the oceans and seas changing the way we live and function as a society. With currently 47.3million cases of the virus recorded worldwide and 1.21million deaths, learning a new way of living as individuals and the collective functioning as a society was a lesson learned at a rapid pace.

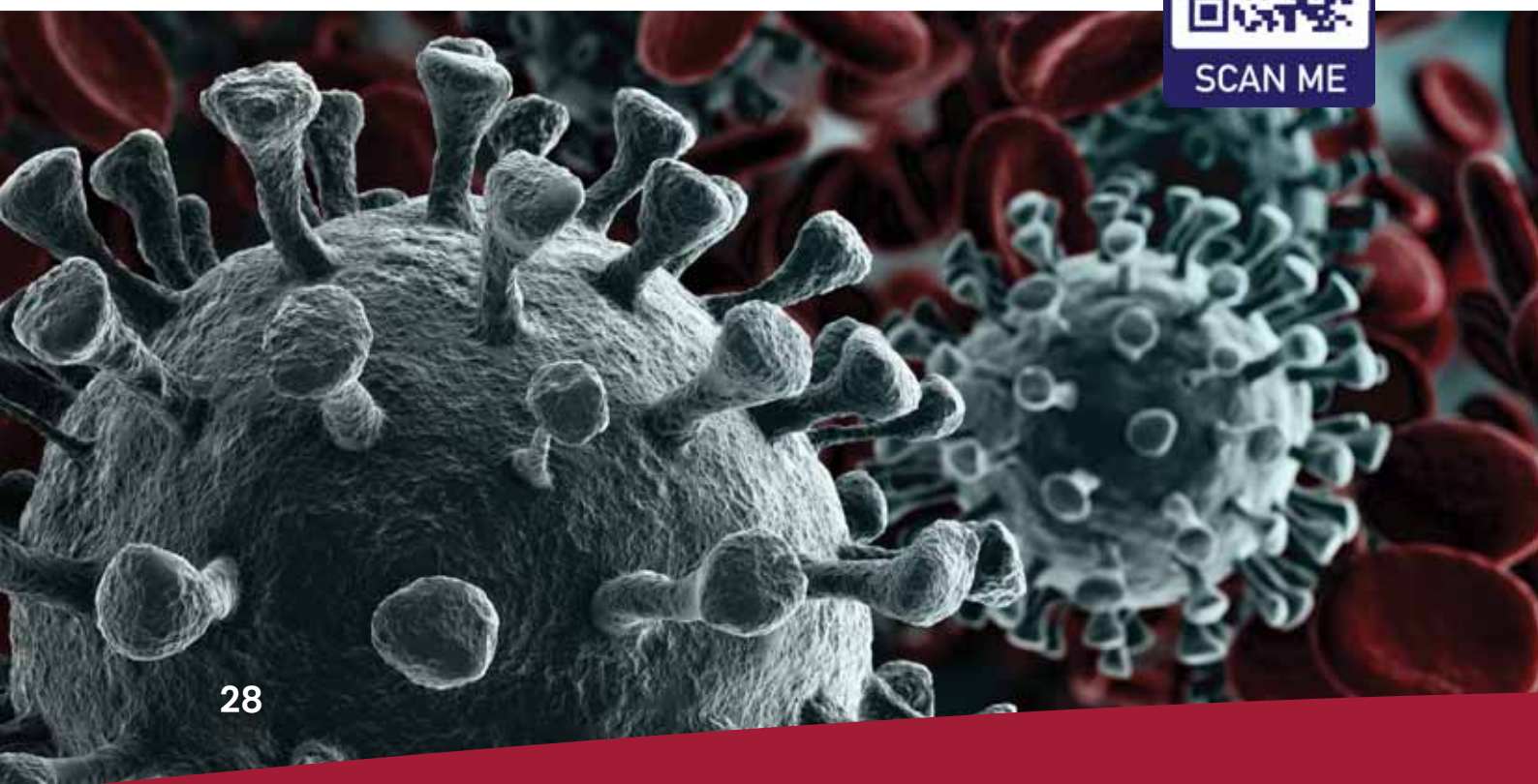
As Australia commenced its response to COVID-19, and confirmed cases were on the rise, lockdowns of states and towns commenced. In March, when lockdown regulations hit Armidale, our office closed its doors to the public and a new way of service delivery had to occur quickly in order to continue to provide our much-needed service to our community, and particularly to the most vulnerable in our society who were hurting as a result.

Working from home for all staff soon became the new normal. The flexibility and speed with which everyone settled into new service delivery, was commendable.

As in-house processes morphed, and our community became familiar with new ways to engage with each other, our client numbers began the steady incline utilising video conferencing, increased telephone advice opportunities and socially distanced face to face appointments when required. Our Service's attention each year to upgrading technology and exploring service delivery innovations served us well, as we transitioned to a virtual office.

There is no doubting the challenges that staff face while working from home, as family lives are juggled into the working day, new routines are established, and office spaces are shared with beloved pets. This period that we find ourselves in will sit at the top of our Service's history when recognising our outstanding achievements and milestones. We have been able to provide our community with the free legal services we speak of in our Purpose and Objective Statements, without fault, even through a global pandemic.

*Congratulations everyone!*







## Our Statistic Profile

In 2019/2020 the North & North West Community Legal Service:

Provided assistance to  
**817** clients

Provided referrals and information to  
**600** clients

Opened  
**608** New representation services

Closed  
**463** Representation services

Engaged in  
**10** Law Reform activities

Provided  
**597** legal advices

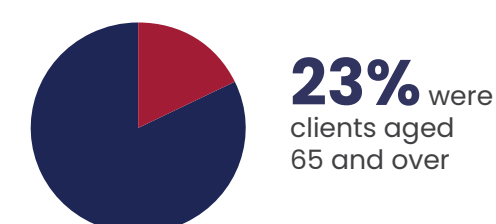
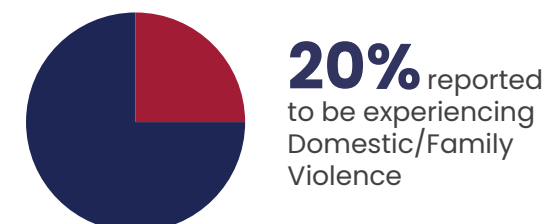
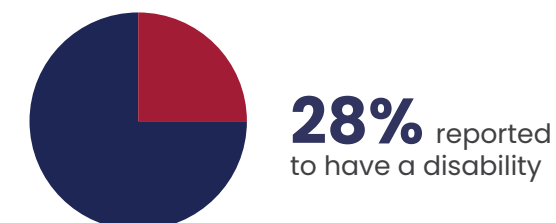
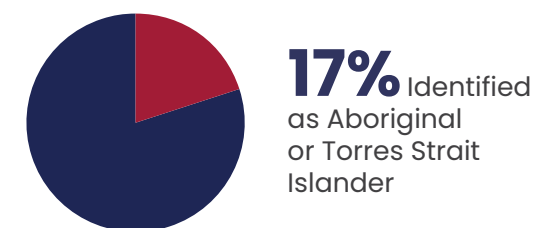
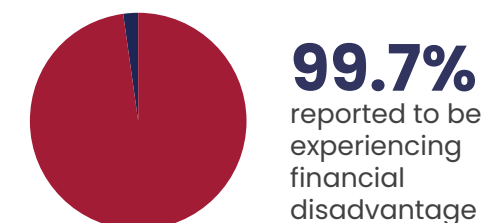
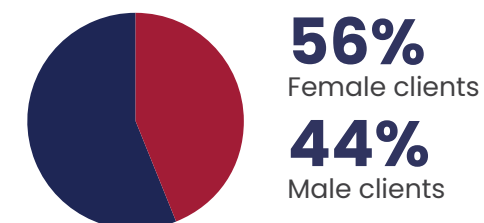
Provided court representation to  
**42** clients

Provided  
**40** Legal education projects

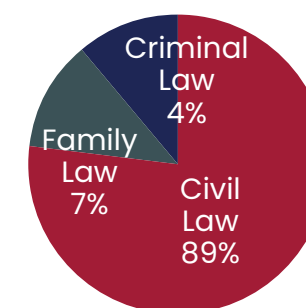
Provided legal tasks to  
**31** clients

Engaged  
**48** stakeholders for planning purposes

## Of these clients assisted..



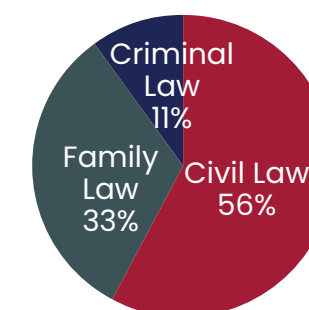
## Representation Services given by Law Type..



### Top problem within Law type:-

Family Law – Parenting arrangements  
Civil Law – Wills and Estates  
Criminal Law – Traffic and vehicle Regulatory offences

## Advices by Law Type..



### Top problem within Law type:-

Family Law – Parenting arrangements  
Civil Law – Wills and Estates  
Criminal Law – Traffic and vehicle Regulatory offences





## NNWCLS at a glance

As a Generalist Service we ensure our advice and casework guidelines reflect the needs of our catchment. Our Stakeholder and community feedback assists with current recognition of the areas of practice required, and we shape NNWCLS to meet the needs of our clients.

### Our work in the area of:

#### • Domestic and Family Violence

Clients who indicated that they were experiencing D/FV presented with the following top problem types:

- » Divorce
- » Parenting plan
- » Family or Domestic Violence Orders
- » Apprehended Violence Orders
- » Wills and Estate Planning
- » Child Contacts

20% of our overall work this year was to clients experiencing D/FV

#### • Family Law issues

We predominately assist clients in the Family Law space with:

- » Parenting arrangements
- » Divorce/Separation
- » Domestic/Family Violence

60% of Family Law issues are for advice and representation in Parenting arrangements

#### • Wills, POA & Enduring Guardianship

These documents can be drafted for anyone living in our catchment, with restrictions in place for Wills involving real property. However, this year it was recognised that people on Centrelink benefits who own their own homes were finding it increasingly more difficult to afford to have these documents drafted resulting in our expansion in this area to assist clients with real property on a case-by-case basis.

452 Wills, POA and Enduring Guardianship documents were drafted

#### • Consumer complaints

Just one example of a positive outcome in our consumer complaint work this year came when a financial institute waived the remainder of the loan for our elderly, illiterate client saving them \$8,000.00.

4% of our overall Civil Law work is directed to Consumer Complaints

#### • Employment and workplace issues

Owing to COVID-19, we observed an increase in non-genuine redundancies and unlawful stand downs. We also assisted clients with unfair dismissal, general protection claims and underpayments.

16% of our Civil Law legal advice assists clients with Employment issues

#### • Credit and debt issues

We are able to assist clients with varied credit and debt issues, including money being owed to them, money being owed by them, and bankruptcy. In response to COVID, we expanded our guidelines to allow our Service to assist sole traders with debt recovery matters.

We have assisted 92 clients with bankruptcy, debt recovery and money owed to/by our clients

#### • Discrimination

Our work in this space this year was predominately for assistance with racial discrimination, although there are many types of discrimination including disability, age, sexual orientation and gender.

We assisted 4 clients with Discrimination matters this year

#### • Neighbourhood disputes

Our work with clients in this area is largely for disputes about fencing. However, generalised neighbour complaints regarding noise and overhanging trees continue to be a constant every year.

3% of Civil Law advice assists clients with neighbourhood disputes

#### • Traffic Offences

We represented many clients for licence appeals this year including many young drivers having lost their licence due to speeding offences. Representations from our Service led to reduced penalties for our clients and a more positive Court experience.

61% of our Court work was assisting clients with traffic and vehicle regulatory offenses

#### • Criminal Law

This year saw an increase in ADVO related matters in the latter part of COVID-19, with most cases being defendants named in ADVO Applications. In most cases of ADVO/APVO assistance, matters crossed over into family law advice.

9.7% of our overall assistance is for Criminal Law

### • Apprehended Violence Orders

A large part of our AVO work this year was assisting clients to remove “No Contact” conditions and insert “Family Law and Parenting” conditions to allow defendants to have some contact with their children.

21% of AVO work was assistance in Court

### • Victims Support

We assist clients who have experienced an act of violence, including domestic and family violence, sexual and physical assaults, to make an Application for Support with Victims Services.

Victims Support can assist with counselling and financial assistance

### • Youth issues

Work with youth this year was:

- » 60% Criminal Law
- » 26% Civil Law
- » 14% Family Law

## Top 10 Problem types for total client numbers this year..

1. Wills, Power of Attorney, Enduring Guardianship
2. Road, traffic and motor vehicle regulatory offences
3. Divorce/Separation
4. Child contacts and contact orders
5. Employment Law issues
6. Family & Domestic Violence Orders
7. Parenting Plan
8. Credit and debt issues
9. Immigration Other Visa
10. Other Civil

## Court Liaison Program

Our Service attends Armidale Local Court on criminal list days (Mondays) in a court liaison capacity. Our overarching objective is to promote access to justice in the New England community.

From a practical perspective, our attending Solicitor, Stanley Tao, directs court users to the Duty Solicitor and assists them in their court experience on the day, e.g. welcome them to court; make sure they know where to go; ask if they have a solicitor etc. Stanley may advise/represent clients in matters that fall outside of the duty solicitor guidelines or for those who cannot afford a private practitioner.

Our Court Liaison Program is so successful in the Armidale area that we have taken it to Tenterfield on their list day each month.

Consultation with our Stakeholders in the Tenterfield region, to assist with the decision-making of this expansion, indicated that defendants of ADVO's would benefit from education about their Orders to prevent any risk of breach.

This education is now provided through this Court Liaison Program and by our Solicitor,

Niel van der Linde.



### Of the matters that we assist through these Courts:

- Traffic and vehicle regulatory offences = 61%
- Domestic Violence Protection Orders = 30%
- Parenting arrangements = 5%
- Other Civil = 4%







## Duty Lawyer Service

Our Solicitors do represent clients in court on certain matters, but the Service is not currently part of the duty lawyer service.

## Community Legal Education

Community Legal Education (CLE) is an important part of our yearly Strategic Planning. The purpose of CLE is to increase our community's knowledge of particular areas of law that would be specific to their personal needs, or to their organisation's upskilling.

Our Solicitors are passionate about educating our community, but not only does each CLE session educate its groups, it also becomes a great introduction of them individually as Practitioners. Participants become comfortable through an interactive method of education and feel confident to make contact with our Service, having already met our Solicitor.

### Some of the CLE's for this year included:

- Wills, Power of Attorney, Enduring Guardianship to.....
  - » Tingha Support group – Rural Outreach & Support Services
  - » Narrabri Dementia Support group – Narrabri Community Health
  - » Tingha Wills Clinic
  - » Moree Wills Clinic – Dhiyaan Aboriginal Centre
- Legal Aspects of the Workplace – TAFE Armidale
- Travelling overseas as a Refugee – Yazidi refugees at TAFE Armidale
- Many information sessions promoting our Service and what we do to groups:
  - » John Oxley Probus Club – Tamworth
  - » Tamworth Connect Community & Services – Salvation Army
  - » Moree Homes North Tenants Meeting
  - » Armidale TAFE Services Day →

A mode of CLE that is unique to our Community Legal Centre is our radio program "Law Matters". Our Solicitors, Niel van der Linde and Nicholas Forrest host this program on 2ARM 92.1FM (the local community radio station) for one hour on 3 Fridays of each month. The Solicitors talk on many and varied topics which include Family Law matters, Consumer Law matters, traffic and driving offences, ADVO's, domestic and family violence issues, neighbourhood disputes, bankruptcy, debts, refugees, social media and human rights interests.

The radio station broadcasts to a potential audience of 30,000 people. The topics not only inform people of their rights and responsibilities but encourage listeners to consider perceptions of legal issues.

Now that 2ARM FM streams all their programs online, no matter where you are, you can tune in to Niel and Nick and "Law Matters". Some of our clients say they listen out for every broadcast to learn something new about their legal rights.

We increased our activity on our Facebook page this year which saw a ten-fold increase in reach and engagement from Facebook users. While we promoted local community events, state and nation-wide commemorations, posts that drew the highest statistics were the personal interest posts ie: "Get to Know the Staff" profiles, with some fun facts about each staff member. Some visitors to our Facebook page even initiated their appointments with our legal team.

This increased Facebook activity had a flow-on effect to increased traffic to our website by up to 54%. With Divorce being our top appointments booked from the website, closely followed by Child Contact assistance, Credit/Debt issues and Employment Law appointments.



Increasing people's  
understanding  
of the law and  
their legal rights

Reaching our  
community in  
every way possible  
to educate





## Community Groups & EXPO involvement

**Our staff attended and spoke at Interagency meetings throughout our catchment to initiate discussions on how best our Service can meet the needs of each organisation's clients.**

Our Solicitors, Stanley, Niel and Nicholas participate in Interagency meetings in the towns of their monthly Outreach clinics. These face to face meetings are such an important part of our Outreach Program as confident referrals come from the community organisations present. These organisations, having already made a connection with the Solicitor, can confidently refer their clients knowing their clients are in good hands.

Our Principal Solicitor, Terri King meets with the Armidale Interagencies (including Youth, Indigenous and Multicultural), Domestic and Family Violence Steering Committee, Tamworth and Armidale Family Support, Community Drug Action Team, Justice Connect, Family Law Pathways, Community Health and Legal Aid Refugee Services meetings. Terri also attends the Cooperative Legal Service Delivery Program (CLSD) meetings in Moree work with Legal Service providers in

the north west. Terri has established great connections with these groups which results in many referrals to our Service and collaborative practice opportunities. In addition, Terri gains insight into what each organisation needs regarding legal assistance, and how we can further assist their clients.

Participation in Community Expo's is a great, cost-effective means to promote the work that our Service does, and it's an excellent opportunity for us to meet with the community in a relaxed atmosphere. It is a wonderful introduction of our Service and feedback from clients has indicated that putting a face to a name made walking through our doors, with sometimes overwhelming legal problems, an easier experience. Our Service is passionate about making this process easier for clients, and community engagement is the greatest way to achieve this.



**This year we have participated in the following Community Expo's:**

- NAIDOC Week – Stall in Armidale Central
- Tamworth Disability Links Expo
- Armidale Domestic and Family Violence Steering Committee – Family Fun Day in the park
- Life Saver Day – O Week at the University of New England





## Law Reform

This year we engaged in 10 Law Reform Activities, with all staff engaging in the #Standwithvictimssurvivors campaign.



## Access and Equity

Our Service has policies and practices in place to promote our work and to ensure access, equity and non-discrimination is achieved for our clients, and potential clients. Recognition of potential barriers for our demographic, and providing a solution, forms a large part of our assessment of our access and equity to our community.

### Our work removing barriers:

- While an elderly client was attending his appointment one rainy day, he mentioned his anxiety of walking up our ramp, fearing he may slip on the tiled surface. Upon the completion of his appointment, our staff assisted the elderly gentleman down the ramp and we immediately installed a non-slip carpet surface to ensure clients' safety in the future
- Our Home Visit Policy: Elderly, disabled or very unwell clients require our legal team to visit them in hospital, at their nursing home or in their homes, to give advice or to sign or witness documents.
- We provided the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) by telephone to 41% of our Culturally or Linguistically Diverse (CALD) clients this year for their appointments.



## Volunteers

Terri and Stanley worked together coordinating and securing the assistance of enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers from the Law School at the University of New England. Aaron Alexander and Sean Burton have been a valuable part of our team this year, assisting the Solicitors with research and administrative tasks. We are grateful for their contribution and look forward to their continued assistance next year.



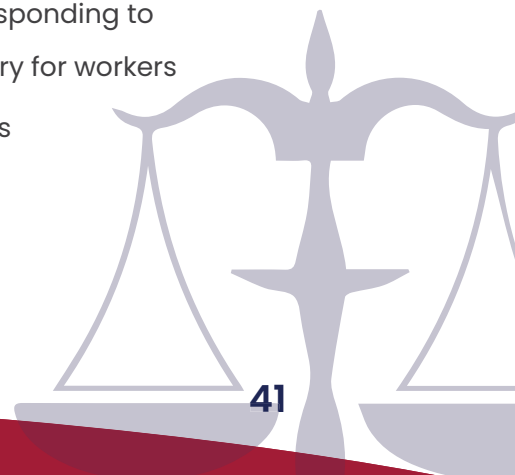
Aaron Alexander

## Staff Training & Development

Our staff participated in 27 training sessions this year that were relevant to their type of work, be it administrative or legal.

### Some of this year's training included:

- Culturally Responsive Training
- The gig economy – Employ. Law
- Practice Management Course
- Wills, POA & EG inhouse training
- Credit Law Toolkit
- Disability Awareness – Managers
- Social Media and Family Law
- Impact of Coronavirus –employees
- Triaging Domestic Violence clients
- Assisting self-represented litigants
- Assisting clients affected by substance abuse
- Social Enterprises for CLC's
- Technology, ethics and the law
- Assisting clients with disabilities
- Working with ATSI clients
- Governance during COVID-19
- Stimulus packages – COVID19
- New Accounting Standards
- Remote Legal Practice
- Fostering self-awareness and resilience
- Preventing and responding to psychological injury for workers
- Civil Law brush ups





## Case Studies

### No horsing around

Our client found a horse that had wandered onto her property and decided to keep it after posting notices of the missing horse and making extensive efforts to locate the owner around 4 years ago. Recently, the previous owner of the horse saw a picture of our client's daughter riding the horse, recognised it and was furious.

The horse was retrieved by the previous owner after conducting a DNA test to confirm the identity of the horse. Because the Police were involved, our client was worried whether she had committed the crime of larceny. Our Solicitor assured her that she was innocent of all wrongdoing because of the legal rule that a finder of an object who had made all reasonable attempts to find the true owner has the right to keep the object until the true owner shows up. Our client was relieved that she has a legal reason to avoid going to jail or paying a fine.

### Last-minute Court advice

Our client was served with a statement of claim for debt and trouble finding someone to assist. By the time the client found our Service, he had to respond the very next day. Our client was at a loss with what to do, and did not want to appear in court over a small debt.

Our Solicitor provided well-timed advice at the eleventh hour, advising our client (who was willing to pay the debt) to transfer the amount of money owed to the plaintiff's bank account online and to lodge a notice of payment at the online court registry. Our client is now debt-free and does not have to worry about going to court. Because the advice was given over the phone, our client did not have to leave the comfort of his home to resolve his legal issue.

### Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme

An elderly Aboriginal lady, who was part of the stolen generation, attended our Service. Her and two of her siblings were forcibly removed from their parents and were placed in an orphanage, where they suffered abuse. The client had already made an application to the Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme, but her application had been refused. We assisted the client in making another application and after some time, her application was approved.

The client received a personal letter of apology from the NSW Government and a \$75,000.00 recognition payment. The client was very grateful for the outcome, especially the letter of apology and the recognition of the injustice done to her.

### Domestic and Family Violence

A female client approached the Service during COVID-19 lockdown for assistance relating to domestic violence that she had experienced by her de facto partner. She had found herself homeless, her possessions were still at his property, and she was solely dependent on Centrelink for her income. Additionally, the physical injuries from the violence caused her ongoing pain, whilst she also struggled with the impact on her mental health.

Our Service provided ongoing assistance to the client for a Victims Support application and the return of her personal items stored at the home. However, she had numerous other needs including housing, and household items, mental health issues, and required financial assistance in addition to what was available through Victims Support.

The client reported that being homeless and isolated during COVID-19 had →

impacted on her symptoms of anxiety and PTSD, noting that issues from her childhood trauma and previous violent relationships have begun to impact on her wellbeing again. In addition to the legal assistance services our Solicitor provided, we have also assisted the client with referrals to a social housing provider, medical professionals, psychologist, and the Neighbourhood Centre.

### Employment Issue

A woman living in one of the Services outreach Centres made contact after being stood down by her employer due to COVID-19. She had been employed full time by the organisation for the previous 5 years and had been off sick for four days with a Doctor's Certificate, when the office first closed to the public. At the time, she was ineligible for COVID testing.

Upon returning to work she was asked to take annual leave for four weeks. Two days before she was due to return to work, she received an email stating that she had been stood down due to COVID-19 and that she would not be eligible for Job Keeper payments. She later discovered that she was the only employee who had been stood down from her branch.

Our Service determined that the client had been unlawfully stood down and assisted her further with this legal matter.

### Wills, Power of Attorney & Enduring Guardianship – Hospital Visit

A concerned family member contacted our Service on a Friday afternoon, regarding Wills, Power of Attorney and Enduring Guardianship. She advised that her elderly sister, Matilda was in Hospital with a heart condition and that Matilda had never had a Will, Power of Attorney or Enduring Guardianship documents drafted.

The family were told by the Doctors that Matilda was going to be flown to Sydney at any time for a pacemaker. Given the urgency of this matter our Service responded immediately. →







Our Solicitor and Legal Support Officer were at the Armidale Hospital taking Matilda's instructions within half an hour of the phone call. Keeping in mind that Matilda could be flown to Sydney at any moment, Matilda's documents were drafted that afternoon.

Our Solicitor and Legal Support Officer returned to the Hospital and Matilda was able to understand and sign her Power of Attorney and Enduring Guardianship documents.

However, due to stress and exhaustion that Matilda was experiencing, our Solicitor was unable to confirm capacity for the Will to be signed.

Matilda was flown to Sydney and she received her pacemaker the next day. A few days later Matilda returned to the Hospital. The family member contacted our Service to let us know of her elderly sister's return. Our Solicitor and Legal Support Officer attended the Hospital, and our Solicitor was able to confirm capacity and Matilda was able to understand and sign her Will.

Unfortunately, Matilda died 2 days later. Matilda's family were eternally grateful for our quick response.

### Time Share Scheme

Jason is an elderly man, who wishes to have holidays at an affordable price. His dream was to travel around Europe. A salesman persuaded him to buy a timeshare scheme, which was supposed to offer him cheap and flexible holidays. He used all his savings and paid around \$20,000 to join the scheme. He thought that his dream would come true.

Unfortunately, it costed him significantly more than booking through an ordinary travel agency. In addition, he had to pay ongoing annual fees as well. He tried to cancel the contract and get some money back. Unfortunately, the company refused on numerous occasions.

He then approached us and thought we would be his last hope. We lodged a formal complaint against the company with AFCA. We also represented Jason at the AFCA's conciliation conference. As a result, Jason had his contract cancelled and got most of his money back.

He told us that we certainly helped him realise his dream.

## Highlights for the Year

**This year we gained approval from Legal Aid NSW to open a branch office in Moree. Opening a branch office is a first for the Service!**



To ascertain legal gaps that our Service could adequately fill, we collaborated with other legal service providers in the region.

Research indicated a legal need for free assistance with estate planning that our Service can provide. This service is an excellent extension of the civil and family law work that Legal Aid provides in Moree, and an excellent extension of the Aboriginal Legal Service criminal law services. It was recognised that estate planning also benefited Thiyama-Li and WDVCS clients, as updating these documents is so important when leaving a domestic and family violence relationship.

As a generalist service, we're also able to work with other legal service providers whose clients' needs fall outside their

areas of work and fall within our expansive problem types. Giving the Moree legal service providers another option in times of conflict was also recognised as a game-changer for the community.

After providing our findings to Legal Aid NSW, it was agreed that utilising our State Funding, that was initially granted to us in 2017/2018 and again the following year, the Moree community would benefit from our Service having a constant presence on the ground, rather than our usual monthly Outreach Program.

After a positive recruitment process, we welcome Solicitor, Jonathan Wong and Administrative Assistant, Anne Towney to our team and we look forward to the positive impacts our Service will have on Moree and surrounding communities.





### Our Solicitor, Niel van der Linde, gained his Practice Management Certificate.

Niel successfully completed the Practice Management course at The College of Law in Sydney. This will now allow Niel, along with our Solicitor Stanley Tao, to step into the role of Acting Principal Solicitor when required and take on more supervisory roles within the Service.

Congratulations, Niel!



### Our Trainee, Natasha Carey, completed her traineeship - Certificate III in Business (Legal)

and upon our Administrative Assistant's (Bailie Rolff) resignation, accepted an offer of employment to take on this AA role. Natasha is an outstanding young Indigenous woman who has worked hard in becoming an efficient addition to the administration team.

Congratulations, Natasha!

**NORTH & NORTH WEST COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE INC**  
ABN 35 931 742 739

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020**

## We achieved Accreditation as a Community Legal Centre for another 3 years.

After a rigorous audit process of all our policies and procedures by our Peak Body Community Legal Centres Australia, we were awarded Accreditation until 2023!



### CERTIFICATE OF ACCREDITATION

*CLCNSW, a Certifier authorised by the owner of the Certification Trade Mark, Community Legal Centres Australia,*  
*confirms that*

#### **North and North West Community Legal Service**

*was assessed on 10 December 2019 under the National Accreditation Scheme for Community Legal Centres as providing Community Legal Services in conformity with the requirements of the NACLC Accreditation Criteria for Community Legal Centres and the NACLC Certification Rules and is granted renewal of a Licence to use the NACLC Certification Trade Mark in accordance with Licence Terms.*

Tim Leach, Executive Director, CLCNSW

7 May 2023

Date of expiry of Certification and Licence



**NORTH & NORTH WEST COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE INC**  
**ABN 35 931 742 739**

**STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020**

	Note	2020 \$	2019 \$
Revenue	2	<b>829,676</b>	803,656
Other income	3	<b>68,864</b>	13,972
Interest revenue calculated using the effective interest method		<b>6,615</b>	9,298
Administration costs		<b>(102,517)</b>	(62,093)
Depreciation expense	4	<b>(60,506)</b>	(17,647)
Employee benefits expenses		<b>(744,081)</b>	(653,644)
Occupancy expenses		<b>(26,908)</b>	(65,955)
Other expenses		<b>(27,279)</b>	(27,587)
<b>Deficit before income tax expense</b>		<b>(56,136)</b>	-
Income tax expense	1(a)	-	-
<b>Deficit after income tax expense</b>		<b>(56,136)</b>	-
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax		-	-
<b>Total comprehensive deficit for the year</b>		<b>(56,136)</b>	-

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

**NORTH & NORTH WEST COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE INC**  
**ABN 35 931 742 739**

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION**  
**AS AT 30 JUNE 2020**

	Note	2020 \$	2019 \$
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	5	<b>653,991</b>	719,196
Trade and other receivables	6	<b>62,500</b>	-
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>716,491</b>	719,196
<b>NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Property, plant and equipment	7	<b>34,380</b>	51,669
Right-of-use assets	8	<b>262,118</b>	-
<b>TOTAL NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>296,498</b>	51,669
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>1,012,989</b>	770,865
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Trade and other payables	9	<b>18,410</b>	25,603
Provisions	10	<b>250,441</b>	213,962
Lease liabilities	11	<b>44,311</b>	-
Other liabilities	12	<b>350</b>	418,576
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>313,512</b>	658,141
<b>NON CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Lease liabilities	11	<b>222,642</b>	-
Provisions	10	<b>10,605</b>	8,584
<b>TOTAL NON CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>233,247</b>	8,584
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<b>546,759</b>	666,725
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>466,230</b>	104,140
<b>EQUITY</b>			
Accumulated funds		<b>466,230</b>	104,140
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>		<b>466,230</b>	104,140

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.



**NORTH & NORTH WEST COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE INC**  
**ABN 35 931 742 739**

**STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020**

	Accumulated Funds \$	Total \$
<b>Balance at 1 July 2018</b>	104,140	104,140
Total comprehensive surplus	-	-
<b>Balance at 30 June 2019</b>	104,140	104,140
Adjustment on implementation of new accounting standards	418,226	418,226
<b>Balance at 1 July 2019</b>	522,366	522,366
Total comprehensive deficit	(56,136)	(56,136)
<b>Balance at 30 June 2020</b>	466,230	466,230

**NORTH & NORTH WEST COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE INC**  
**ABN 35 931 742 739**

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020**

	Note	2020 \$	2019 \$
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Receipts from customers		919,066	986,487
Interest received		6,615	9,298
Payments to suppliers and employees		(938,715)	(871,590)
Interest paid		(13,787)	-
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	13 (b)	(26,821)	124,195
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Proceeds from sale of plant and equipment		-	14,000
Payment for plant and equipment		-	(27,316)
Net cash used in investing activities		-	(13,316)
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Repayments of lease liabilities		(38,384)	-
Net cash used in financing activities		(38,384)	-
Net increase in cash held		(65,205)	110,879
Cash at the beginning of the financial year		719,196	608,317
Cash at the end of the financial year	13 (a)	653,991	719,196



NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020

**Note 1: Statement of Significant Accounting Policies**

The principal accounting policies adopted in the preparation of the financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

**Basis of Preparation**

In the committee's opinion, the incorporated association is not a reporting entity because there are no users dependent on general purpose financial statements.

These are special purpose financial statements that have been prepared for the purposes of complying with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and New South Wales legislation the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 and associated regulations. The committee have determined that the accounting policies adopted are appropriate to meet the needs of the members of North & North West Community Legal Service Inc.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the recognition and measurement requirements specified by the Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board ('AASB') and the disclosure requirements of AASB 101 'Presentation of Financial Statements', AASB 107 'Statement of Cash Flows', AASB 108 'Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors', AASB 1048 'Interpretation of Standards' and AASB 1054 'Australian Additional Disclosures', as appropriate for not-for-profit oriented entities.

Historical cost convention

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

Critical accounting estimates

The preparation of the financial statements requires the use of certain critical accounting estimates. It also requires management to exercise its judgement in the process of applying the incorporated association's accounting policies. The areas involving a higher degree of judgement or complexity, or areas where assumptions and estimates are significant to the financial statements, are disclosed in note 1.

**(a) Income Tax**

The committee consider that the association is exempt from income tax under Division 50-5 of the Income Tax Assessment Act of 1997.

**(b) Cash and Cash Equivalents**

Cash and cash equivalents includes cash on hand, deposits held at call with financial institutions, other short-term, highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and which are subject to an insignificant risk of changes in value. For the statement of cash flows presentation purposes, cash and cash equivalents also includes bank overdrafts, which are shown within borrowings in current liabilities on the statement of financial position.

**(c) Plant and Equipment**

Plant and equipment is stated at historical cost less accumulated depreciation and impairment. Historical cost includes expenditure that is directly attributable to the acquisition of the items.

Depreciation is calculated on a straight-line basis to write off the net cost of each item of property, plant and equipment (excluding land) over their expected useful lives as follows:

Plant and Equipment	15-25%
Motor Vehicles	25%
Office Furniture and Equipment	7.5%-30%

The residual values, useful lives and depreciation methods are reviewed, and adjusted if appropriate, at each reporting date.

An item of property, plant and equipment is derecognised upon disposal or when there is no future economic benefit to the company. Gains and losses between the carrying amount and the disposal proceeds are taken to profit or loss.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020

**(d) Right-of-use assets**

A right-of-use asset is recognised at the commencement date of a lease. The right-of-use asset is measured at cost, which comprises the initial amount of the lease liability, adjusted for, as applicable, any lease payments made at or before the commencement date net of any lease incentives received, any initial direct costs incurred, and, except where included in the cost of inventories, an estimate of costs expected to be incurred for dismantling and removing the underlying asset, and restoring the site or asset.

Right-of-use assets are depreciated on a straight-line basis over the unexpired period of the lease or the estimated useful life of the asset, whichever is the shorter. Where the company expects to obtain ownership of the leased asset at the end of the lease term, the depreciation is over its estimated useful life. Right-of use assets are subject to impairment or adjusted for any remeasurement of lease liabilities.

The company has elected not to recognise a right-of-use asset and corresponding lease liability for short-term leases with terms of 12 months or less and leases of low-value assets. Lease payments on these assets are expensed to profit or loss as incurred.

**(e) Economic Dependence**

North & North West Community Legal Service Inc. is dependent on government funding, for the majority of its revenue used to operate the business. At the date of this report the Committee has no reason to believe the government will not continue to support North & North West Community Legal Service Inc.

**(f) Impairment of Assets**

At the end of each reporting period, the company assesses whether there is any indication that an asset may be impaired. The assessment will include considering external sources of information and internal sources of information. If such an indication exists, an impairment test is carried out on the asset by comparing the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs to sell and value in use to the asset's carrying value. Any excess of the asset's carrying value of its recoverable amount is expensed to the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income.

Where it is not possible to estimate the recoverable amount of an individual asset, the company estimates the receivable amount of the cash-generating unit to which the asset belongs.

**(g) Employee Benefits**

Short-term employee benefits

Liabilities for wages and salaries, including non-monetary benefits, annual leave and long service leave expected to be settled wholly within 12 months of the reporting date are measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liabilities are settled.

Other long-term employee benefits

The liability for annual leave and long service leave not expected to be settled within 12 months of the reporting date are measured at the present value of expected future payments to be made in respect of services provided by employees up to the reporting date using the projected unit credit method. Consideration is given to expected future wage and salary levels, experience of employee departures and periods of service. Expected future payments are discounted using market yields at the reporting date on corporate bonds with terms to maturity and currency that match, as closely as possible, the estimated future cash outflows.

Defined contribution superannuation expense

Contributions to defined contribution superannuation plans are expensed in the period in which they are incurred.

**(h) Provisions**

Provisions are recognised when the company has a present (legal or constructive) obligation as a result of a past event, it is probable the company will be required to settle the obligation, and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation. The amount recognised as a provision is the best estimate of the consideration required to settle the present obligation at the reporting date, taking into account the risks and uncertainties surrounding the obligation. If the time value of money is material, provisions are discounted using a current pre-tax rate specific to the liability. The increase in the provision resulting from the passage of time is recognised as a finance cost.



**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020**

**(i) Lease liabilities**

A lease liability is recognised at the commencement date of a lease. The lease liability is initially recognised at the present value of the lease payments to be made over the term of the lease, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease or, if that rate cannot be readily determined, the company's incremental borrowing rate. Lease payments comprise of fixed payments less any lease incentives receivable, variable lease payments that depend on an index or a rate, amounts expected to be paid under residual value guarantees, exercise price of a purchase option or extension option when the exercise of the option is reasonably certain to occur, and any anticipated termination penalties. The variable lease payments that do not depend on an index or a rate are expensed in the period in which they are incurred.

Lease liabilities are measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. The carrying amounts are remeasured if there is a change in the following: future lease payments arising from a change in an index or a rate used; residual guarantee; lease term; certainty of an extension or purchase option and termination penalties. When a lease liability is remeasured, an adjustment is made to the corresponding right-of-use asset, or to profit or loss if the carrying amount of the right-of-use asset is fully written down.

**(j) Revenue**

The association recognises revenue as follows:

Grants - AASB1058: Income of Not-for-Profit Entities

The company receives a number of funding streams that do not contain sufficiently specific performance obligations. Where there are no sufficiently specific performance obligations present, the company recognises revenue on receipt of funds in accordance with *AASB1058: Income of Not-for-Profit Entities*.

Other Revenue

Other revenue is recognised when it is received or when the right to receive payment is established.

Volunteer services

The company has elected not to recognise volunteer services as either revenue or other form of contribution received. As such, any related consumption or capitalisation of such resources received is also not recognised.

All revenue is stated net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST).

**(k) Goods and Services Tax**

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO). in this case it is recognised as part of the cost of the acquisition of the asset or as part of the expense. Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO is included with other receivables or payables in the statement of financial position.

Cash flows are presented on a gross basis. The GST components of cash flows arising from investing or financing activities which are recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO are presented as operating cash flows included in receipts from customers or payments to suppliers.

Commitments and contingencies are disclosed on a gross basis.

**(l) Trade and Other Payables**

These amounts represent liabilities for goods and services provided to the company prior to the end of the financial year and which are unpaid. Due to their short-term nature they are measured at amortised cost and are not discounted. The amounts are unsecured and are usually paid within 30 days of recognition.

**(m) Provision for Redundancies**

Provisions have been raised for future redundancies, despite no legal or constructive obligation existing for these expenses at balance date. This does not meet the measurement and recognition criteria of AASB 137 "Provisions, Contingent Assets and Contingent Liabilities". These provisions are charged to the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income.

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020**

**(n) Critical Accounting Judgements, Estimates and Assumptions**

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts in the financial statements. Management continually evaluates its judgements and estimates in relation to assets, liabilities, contingent liabilities, revenue and expenses. Management bases its judgements, estimates and assumptions on historical experience and on other various factors, including expectations of future events, management believes to be reasonable under the circumstances. The resulting accounting judgements and estimates will seldom equal the related actual results. The judgements, estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities (refer to the respective notes) within the next financial year are discussed below.

Estimation of useful lives of assets

The company determines the estimated useful lives and related depreciation and amortisation charges for its property, plant and equipment and finite life intangible assets. The useful lives could change significantly as a result of technical innovations or some other event. The depreciation and amortisation charge will increase where the useful lives are less than previously estimated lives, or technically obsolete or non-strategic assets that have been abandoned or sold will be written off or written down.

Lease Term

The lease term is a significant component in the measurement of both the right-of-use asset and lease liability. Judgement is exercised in determining whether there is reasonable certainty that an option to extend the lease or purchase the underlying asset will be exercised, or an option to terminate the lease will not be exercised, when ascertaining the periods to be included in the lease term. In determining the lease term, all facts and circumstances that create an economical incentive to exercise an extension option, or not to exercise a termination option, are considered at the lease commencement date. Factors considered may include the importance of the asset to the company's operations; comparison of terms and conditions to prevailing market rates; incurrence of significant penalties; existence of significant leasehold improvements; and the costs and disruption to replace the asset. The company reassesses whether it is reasonably certain to exercise an extension option, or not exercise a termination option, if there is a significant event or significant change in circumstances.

Incremental Borrowing Rate

Where the interest rate implicit in a lease cannot be readily determined, an incremental borrowing rate is estimated to discount future lease payments to measure the present value of the lease liability at the lease commencement date. Such a rate is based on what the company estimates it would have to pay a third party to borrow the funds necessary to obtain an asset of a similar value to the right-of-use asset, with similar terms, security and economic environment.

Employee Benefits Provision

As discussed in note 1, the liability for employee benefits expected to be settled more than 12 months from the reporting date are recognised and measured at the present value of the estimated future cash flows to be made in respect of all employees at the reporting date. In determining the present value of the liability, estimates of attrition rates and pay increases through promotion and inflation have been taken into account.



NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020

(o) Changes in accounting policy, disclosures, standards and interpretations

New or amended Accounting Standards and Interpretations Adopted

The company has adopted all of the new or amended Accounting Standards and Interpretations issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board ('AASB') that are mandatory for the current reporting period.

Any new or amended Accounting Standards or Interpretations that are not yet mandatory have not been early adopted.

The adoption of these Accounting Standards and Interpretations did not have any significant impact on the financial performance or position of the company.

The following Accounting Standards and Interpretations are most relevant to the company:

*AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers*

The company has adopted AASB 15 from 1 July 2019. The standard provides a single comprehensive model for revenue recognition. The core principle of the standard is that an entity shall recognise revenue to depict the transfer of promised goods or services to customers at an amount that reflects the consideration to which the entity expects to be entitled in exchange for those goods or services. The standard introduced a new contract-based revenue recognition model with a measurement approach that is based on an allocation of the transaction price. This is described further in the accounting policies below. Credit risk is presented separately as an expense rather than adjusted against revenue. Contracts with customers are presented in an entity's statement of financial position as a contract liability, a contract asset, or a receivable, depending on the relationship between the entity's performance and the customer's payment. Customer acquisition costs and costs to fulfil a contract can, subject to certain criteria, be capitalised as an asset and amortised over the contract period.

*AASB 16 Leases*

The company has adopted AASB 16 from 1 July 2019. The standard replaces AASB 117 'Leases' and for lessees eliminates the classifications of operating leases and finance leases. Except for short-term leases and leases of low-value assets, right-of-use assets and corresponding lease liabilities are recognised in the statement of financial position. Straight-line operating lease expense recognition is replaced with a depreciation charge for the right-of-use assets (included in operating costs) and an interest expense on the recognised lease liabilities (included in finance costs). In the earlier periods of the lease, the expenses associated with the lease under AASB 16 will be higher when compared to lease expenses under AASB 117. However, EBITDA (Earnings Before Interest, Tax, Depreciation and Amortisation) results improve as the operating expense is now replaced by interest expense and depreciation in profit or loss. For classification within the statement of cash flows, the interest portion is disclosed in operating activities and the principal portion of the lease payments are separately disclosed in financing activities. For lessor accounting, the standard does not substantially change how a lessor accounts for leases.

When adopting AASB 16 from 1 July 2019, the company has applied the following practical expedients:

- applying a single discount rate to the portfolio of leases with reasonably similar characteristics;
- accounting for leases with a remaining lease term of 12 months as at 1 July 2019 as short-term leases;
- excluding any initial direct costs from the measurement of right-of-use assets;
- using hindsight in determining the lease term when the contract contains options to extend or terminate the lease; and
- not apply AASB 16 to contracts that were not previously identified as containing a lease.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020

*AASB 1058 Income of Not-for-Profit Entities*

The company has adopted AASB 1058 from 1 July 2019. The standard replaces AASB 1004 'Contributions' in respect to income recognition requirements for not-for-profit entities. The timing of income recognition under AASB 1058 is dependent upon whether the transaction gives rise to a liability or other performance obligation at the time of receipt. Income under the standard is recognised where: an asset is received in a transaction, such as by way of grant, bequest or donation; there has either been no consideration transferred, or the consideration paid is significantly less than the asset's fair value; and where the intention is to principally enable the entity to further its objectives. For transfers of financial assets to the entity which enable it to acquire or construct a recognisable non-financial asset, the entity must recognise a liability amounting to the excess of the fair value of the transfer received over any related amounts recognised. Related amounts recognised may relate to contributions by owners, AASB 15 revenue or contract liability recognised, lease liabilities in accordance with AASB 16, financial instruments in accordance with AASB 9, or provisions in accordance with AASB 137. The liability is brought to account as income over the period in which the entity satisfies its performance obligation. If the transaction does not enable the entity to acquire or construct a recognisable non-financial asset to be controlled by the entity, then any excess of the initial carrying amount of the recognised asset over the related amounts is recognised as income immediately. Where the fair value of volunteer services received can be measured, a private sector not-for-profit entity can elect to recognise the value of those services as an asset where asset recognition criteria are met or otherwise recognise the value as an expense.

*Impact of Adoption*

AASB 15, AASB 16 and AASB 1058 have all been adopted using the modified retrospective approach and as such the comparatives have not been restated. The impact of adoption on opening retained profits as at 1 July 2019 was as follows:

	Carrying \$	Reclassification \$	Carrying \$
Right-of-use assets	-	275,633	275,633
Lease liabilities	-	(275,633)	(275,633)
Other liabilities	(418,576)	418,226	(350)
Equity	<u>(104,140)</u>	<u>(418,226)</u>	<u>(522,366)</u>
Total	<b><u>(522,716)</u></b>	<b><u>-</u></b>	<b><u>(522,716)</u></b>

The following is a reconciliation of total operating lease commitments at 30 June 2019 to the lease liabilities recognised at 1 July 2019:

	\$
<b>Total operating lease commitments at 30 June 2019</b>	<b><u>130,000</u></b>
Recognition exemptions:	
Leases of low value assets	-
Lease with remaining lease terms of less than 12 months	-
Variable lease payments not recognised	-
Other minor adjustments relating to commitment disclosures	-
	<u>-</u>
Operating lease liabilities before discounting	130,000
Impact of discounting	<u>(56,722)</u>
Operating lease liabilities	73,278
Reasonably certain extension options	202,355
Finance lease obligations	<u>-</u>
<b>Total lease liabilities recognised under AASB 16 at 1 July 2019</b>	<b><u>275,633</u></b>

**NORTH & NORTH WEST COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE INC**  
**ABN 35 931 742 739**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020**

	Note	2020 \$	2019 \$
<b>Note 2: Revenue</b>			
Other revenue			
Government funding:			
Unexpended grants brought forward		-	335,733
Government funding		-	877,689
Transfer to unexpended grants		-	(418,226)
		<u>-</u>	<u>795,196</u>
Government funding - AASB 1058		<b>816,002</b>	-
Other revenue - AASB 1058		<b>13,674</b>	8,460
Total revenue		<b>829,676</b>	803,656
<b>Note 3: Other income</b>			
Other income			
Government subsidies		<b>68,864</b>	-
Profit on disposal of assets		-	13,972
Total other income		<b>68,864</b>	13,972
<b>Note 4: Expenses</b>			
Surplus before income tax includes the following specific expenses:			
Depreciation expense		<b>60,506</b>	17,647
Remuneration of auditor		<b>7,350</b>	7,000
<b>Note 5: Cash and Cash Equivalents</b>			
Cash at bank		<b>653,981</b>	719,186
Cash - other		<b>10</b>	10
		<b>653,991</b>	719,196
<b>Note 6: Trade and Other Receivables</b>			
CURRENT			
Sundry receivables		<b>62,500</b>	-
		<b>62,500</b>	-
<b>Note 7: Property, Plant and Equipment</b>			
Plant and equipment - at cost		<b>64,424</b>	64,424
Less: Accumulated depreciation		<b>(59,075)</b>	(55,023)
		<b>5,349</b>	9,401
Motor vehicles - at cost		<b>52,945</b>	52,945
Less: Accumulated depreciation		<b>(23,914)</b>	(10,677)
		<b>29,031</b>	42,268
Total Plant and Equipment		<b>34,380</b>	51,669
<b>Note 8: Right-of-use Assets</b>			
Right-of-use Land & Buildings		<b>305,337</b>	-
Less: Accumulated depreciation		<b>(43,219)</b>	-
		<b>262,118</b>	-

**NORTH & NORTH WEST COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE INC**  
**ABN 35 931 742 739**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020**

	Note	2020 \$	2019 \$
<b>Note 9: Trade and Other Payables</b>			
CURRENT			
Trade payables		<b>1,382</b>	8,221
Sundry payables and accrued expenses		<b>17,028</b>	17,382
		<b>18,410</b>	25,603
<b>Note 10: Provisions</b>			
CURRENT			
Provision for employee benefits		<b>156,554</b>	112,586
Provision for locum's and salaries		<b>27,714</b>	38,781
Provision for redundancy		<b>66,173</b>	62,595
		<b>250,441</b>	213,962
NON-CURRENT			
Provision for long service leave		<b>10,605</b>	8,584
		<b>10,605</b>	8,584
<b>Note 11: Lease liabilities</b>			
CURRENT			
Lease liabilities		<b>44,311</b>	-
		<b>44,311</b>	-
NON-CURRENT			
Lease liabilities		<b>222,642</b>	-
		<b>222,642</b>	-
<b>Note 12: Other Liabilities</b>			
CURRENT			
Unspent grant funding		-	418,226
Other liabilities		<b>350</b>	350
		<b>350</b>	418,576



NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020

	Note	2020 \$	2019 \$
<b>Note 13: Cash Flow Information</b>			
(a) Reconciliation of cash			
Cash and cash equivalents		<u>653,991</u>	<u>719,196</u>
		<u>653,991</u>	<u>719,196</u>
(b) Reconciliation of cash flow from operations with surplus from activities after income tax expense:			
Surplus from ordinary activities after income tax expense		(56,136)	-
Non cash flows in surplus from ordinary activities:			
Depreciation		60,506	17,647
(Profit)/Loss on sale of fixed assets		-	(13,972)
Changes in Assets and Liabilities:			
(Increase)/decrease in trade and other receivables		(62,500)	3,192
Increase/(decrease) in creditors and accruals		(7,191)	8,004
Increase/(decrease) in provisions		38,500	26,831
Increase/(decrease) in other liabilities		-	82,493
Cash flows from operations		<u>(26,821)</u>	<u>124,195</u>

**Note 14: Economic Dependence**

The ability of the association to continue as a going concern is dependent upon the continuation of the following:

The association is substantially dependent on the receipt of government funding.

**Note 15: Contingent liabilities**

The association had no contingent liabilities as at 30 June 2020 and 30 June 2019.

**Note 16: Commitments**

The association had no commitments for expenditure as at 30 June 2020 and 30 June 2019.

**Note 17: Events After the End of the Reporting Period**

The impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is ongoing. It is not practicable to estimate the potential impact, positive or negative, after the reporting date. The situation is rapidly developing and is dependent on measures imposed by the Australian Government and other countries, such as maintaining social distancing requirements, quarantine, travel restrictions and any economic stimulus that may be provided.

No other events have arisen since the end of the reporting period which significantly or may significantly affect the operations of the association, the results of those operations, or the state of affairs of the association in future financial years.

STATEMENT BY THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020

The committee have determined that the association is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in note 1 to the financial statements.

In the opinion of the committee the financial report as set out on pages 1 to 13:

1. Presents a true and fair view of the financial position of North & North West Community Legal Service Inc as at 30 June 2020 and its performance for the year ended on that date.
2. At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that North & North West Community Legal Service Inc will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Committee and is signed for and on behalf of the Committee by:



Kip Werren  
Treasurer



Bronwyn Pearson  
Chairperson

Dated: 18 November 2020



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**INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT  
TO THE MEMBERS OF  
NORTH & NORTH WEST COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE INC  
  
ABN 35 931 742 739**



**INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT  
TO THE MEMBERS OF  
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ABN 35 931 742 739**

**Other Information**

The committee is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information contained in the Association's annual report for the year ended 30 June 2020, 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.

**Responsibilities of Management and the Committee for the Financial Report**

The Committee of the Association are responsible for the preparation of the financial report and have determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 to the financial report is appropriate to meet the needs of the members and the *Associations Incorporation Act NSW 2009* and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and for such internal control as the committee determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

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

**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 Association's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the committee.

**Report on the Audit of the Financial Report**

**Qualified Opinion**

We have audited the special purpose financial report (the financial report) of North & North West Community Legal Service Inc. (the Association), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2020, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, the statement of changes in equity and the statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the statements by members of the committee.

In our opinion, except for the possible effect of the matter described in the basis for qualified opinion paragraph, the accompanying financial report of the Association is in accordance with the Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* (the ACNC Act), including:

- (a) giving a true and fair view of the Association's financial position as at 30 June 2020 and of the Association's performance for the year ended on that date; and
- (b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 1, the *Associations Incorporation Act NSW 2009* and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*.

**Basis for Qualified Opinion**

Attention is drawn to Note 1(m) in the financial statements 'Provision for Redundancies'. The recognition of this liability does not meet the recognition criteria as prescribed in AASB 137 "Provisions, Contingent Asset and Contingent Liabilities" and as such is a departure from the standard, we are therefore qualifying our opinion in respect of provisions and associated employee benefits expenses.

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 Association in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

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

**Emphasis of Matter - Basis of Accounting**

We draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling the Association's financial reporting responsibilities under the ACNC Act. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

*Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation.*

*The title 'Partner' conveys that the person is a senior member within their respective division, and is among the group of persons who hold an equity interest (shareholder) in its parent entity, Findex Group Limited. The only professional service offering which is conducted by a partnership is the Crowe Australasia external audit division. All other professional services offered by Findex Group Limited are conducted by a privately owned organisation and/or its subsidiaries.*

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**INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT  
TO THE MEMBERS OF  
NORTH & NORTH WEST COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE INC**

**ABN 35 931 742 739**

- Conclude on the appropriateness of the committee's 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 Association'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 Association 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 committee 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 the audit.

**CROWE AUDIT AUSTRALIA**

**Kylie Ellis**  
**Partner**  
Registered Company Auditor (ASIC RAN 483424)  
90 Rusden St  
ARMIDALE NSW 2350

Dated: 18 November 2020



**DISCLAIMER  
TO THE MEMBERS OF  
NORTH & NORTH WEST COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE INC**

**ABN 35 931 742 739**

The additional financial data presented on pages 19 is in accordance with the books and records of the association which have been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in our statutory audit of the association for the financial year ended 30 June 2020. It will be appreciated that our statutory audit did not cover all details of the additional financial data. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on such financial data and we give no warranty of accuracy or reliability in respect of the data provided. Neither the firm nor any member or employee of the firm undertakes responsibility in any way whatsoever to any person (other than North & North West Community Legal Service) in respect of such data, including any errors of omissions therein however caused.

**CROWE AUDIT AUSTRALIA**

**Kylie Ellis**  
**Partner**  
Registered Company Auditor (ASIC RAN 483424)  
90 Rusden St  
ARMIDALE NSW 2350

Dated: 18 November 2020

**NORTH & NORTH WEST COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE INC**  
**ABN 35 931 742 739**

**DETAILED INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020**

	2020	2019
LEGAL SERVICE	\$	\$
<b>Income</b>		
Government funding		
Commonwealth funding	544,288	538,028
Funds carried forward	-	335,733
NSW state funding	271,714	234,383
PPF funding	-	105,278
Government subsidies	68,864	-
Service generated income	20,289	31,730
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>905,155</b>	<b>1,245,152</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
<u>Salary &amp; Wages</u>		
Salaries and wages	629,517	571,731
Superannuation contributions	56,288	50,094
	<b>685,805</b>	<b>621,825</b>
<u>Salary Related Expenses</u>		
Provision for annual leave	14,139	11,654
Provision for long service leave	28,958	-
Provision for relief wages	-	-
Provision for redundancy	3,578	8,835
Staff training	3,732	2,616
Staff recruitment	1,965	2,648
Staff labour hire	3,524	4,068
Workers compensation insurance	2,380	1,998
	<b>58,276</b>	<b>31,819</b>
<u>Other Operating Expenses</u>		
Accounting and finance fees	11,199	8,300
Communications	7,220	5,619
Depreciation expense	60,506	17,647
Insurance	10,488	9,555
Interest - ROU assets	13,787	-
Office overheads	44,299	26,704
Library, resources and subscriptions	11,173	6,781
Other premises costs	11,377	11,737
Programming and planning	14,839	14,689
Rent	-	40,322
Repairs and maintenance	5,043	4,341
Minor equipment	1,228	-
Travel	26,051	27,587
	<b>217,210</b>	<b>173,282</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>961,291</b>	<b>826,926</b>
<b>Surplus/(deficit)</b>	<b>(56,136)</b>	<b>418,226</b>
Transfer to unexpended grants	-	(418,226)
<b>Surplus/(deficit) before Income Tax Expense</b>	<b>(56,136)</b>	<b>-</b>





**ANNUAL REPORT**  
2019-2020

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