



NORTH &  
NORTHWEST

COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE

# Annual Report

2022-2023





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## Acknowledgement of Country

**We begin our Annual Report by acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our Service operates. We would like to pay our respect to the Elders, past, present, and emerging.**

The North & North West Community Legal Service Inc (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 service to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



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## Welcome to our Annual Report

### QR Code instructions

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



SCAN ME

### From the team of North & North West Community Legal Service Inc

The North & North West Community Legal Service Inc is funded through the Community Legal Centres Program by the Federal Attorney General and the NSW Attorney General administered by Legal Aid NSW.

**We are an accredited member of Community Legal Centres Australia.**



# Our Armidale Team



## **Principal Solicitor**

### **Terri Coleman**

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 Steele**

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 pass-time is playing her piano.



## **Solicitor**

### **Stanley Tao**

Stanley graduated from the University of Sydney with Bachelor of Laws. He joined the Service after having worked with disadvantaged clients at various community legal centres previously. He is determined to make a difference in the lives of vulnerable and marginalised people within our community. Stanley is passionate about Court Advocacy, Succession Law, Employment Law and Family Law. He also enjoys playing table tennis and badminton in his spare time.



## **Solicitor**

### **Ben Graham**

Ben joined the Service after working in Private Practice since 2015. Ben believes in access to justice and procedural fairness for all members of society. He is passionate about Criminal Law, Children's Law (Care and Protection), Family Law and Succession Law. In his spare time he enjoys attending community events, camping and reading fiction.







### **Solicitor**

#### **Hatem Allam**

Hatem graduated from the University of Canberra with a Bachelor of Laws. Hatem is very passionate about access to justice and helping disadvantaged clients, believing that everyone should have a fair go and not be discriminated against. He enjoys supporting disadvantaged clients and being their voice. Hatem is passionate about Family Law, Employment Law, Consumer Law, Power of Attorney and Enduring Guardianship. In his spare time Hatem enjoys reading, cooking, and spending time with his family and friends.



### **Legal Support Officer and Bookkeeper**

#### **Donna Gilbert**

Donna finds the service that NNWCLS provides to the community is invaluable and also extremely rewarding on a personal level. Donna has been employed with the Service for 7 years in total and is now employed as a Legal Support Officer and also combines this position with bookkeeping. The most rewarding part of her job is assisting the Solicitors to enable them to provide the utmost professional service that the community need. 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 is a privilege.



### **Administrative Assistant/Legal Support Officer**

#### **Natasha Macgregor**

Natasha joined the Service in 2019 under a traineeship position. After completing her 12-month traineeship she then moved into the role of Administrative Assistant. This year Natasha has been in a secondment role of Legal Support Officer, which she has enjoyed. Natasha has a love and passion for animals and cooking.



### **Administrative Assistant (July 2022 to December 2022)**

#### **Camellia Peacock**

Camellia joins our office with a passion for participating in team activities and working towards helping the community. Camellia feels that her role as Administration Assistance allows her to fulfill this passion in her work. Camellia comes to us with a history working in hospitality and finds that her experience in customer service allows her to swiftly assist our clients in meeting their needs and achieving their goals.

In her spare time Camellia enjoys playing football in the local Women's Rugby League competition and going to the gym.

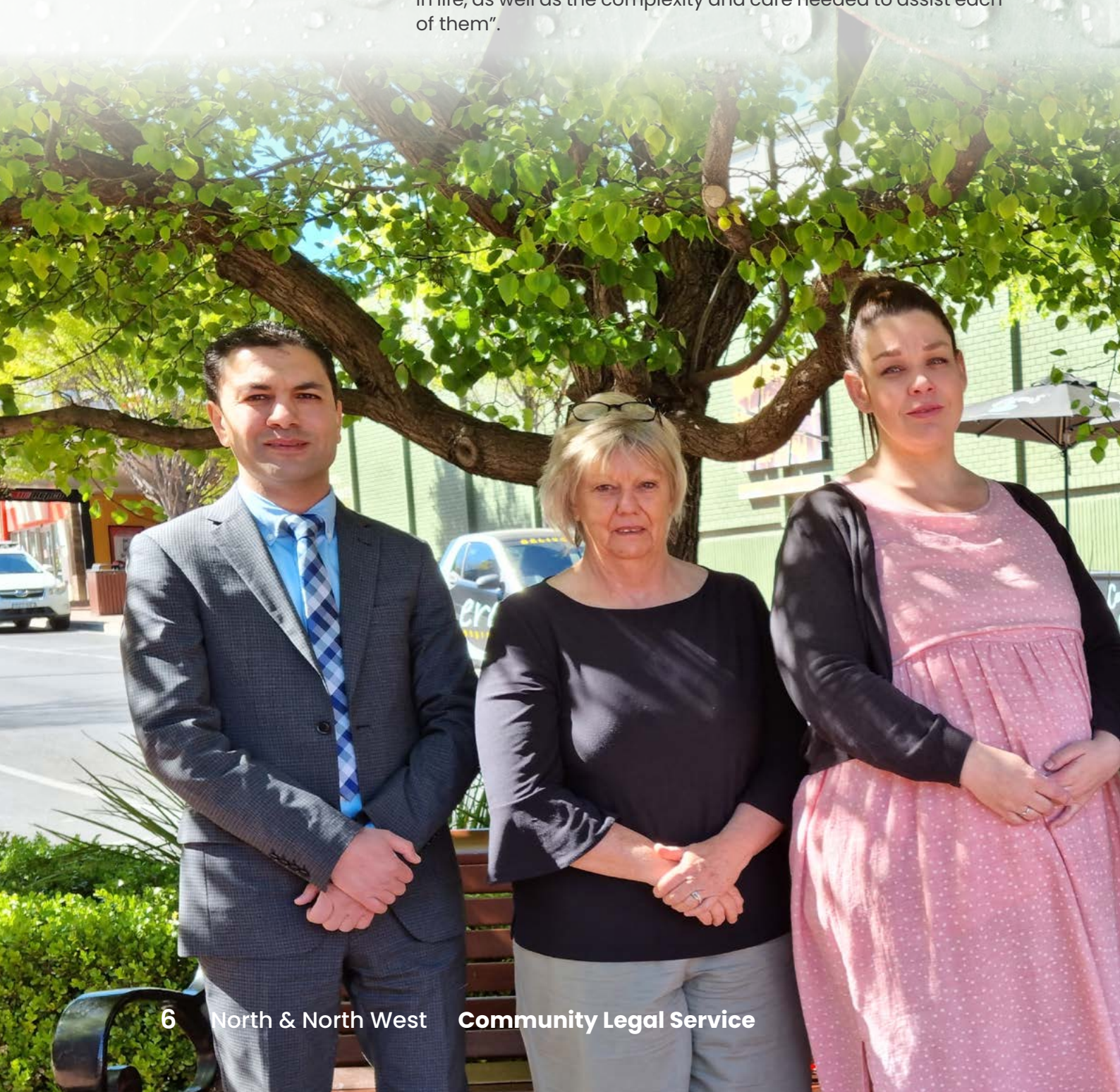




**Administrative Assistant** (January 2023 to June 2023)

### **Clare Campbell (with Sally the Lionheart)**

Clare and her service assistant, Sally, came to us through labour hire and professional recruitment service, Speedie Staff Solutions. Clare has a broad background in administrative work with a Federal Member of Parliament, UNE Executive and local government, and she was uplifted to be working with such a dedicated, skilled and caring team as NNWCLS. "It's truly been a privilege to work in such an important sector and gain some insight to clients with varying degrees of need, all doing the best they can with their opportunities and challenges in life, as well as the complexity and care needed to assist each of them".





Passionately working  
together to bring free legal  
services to our community





# 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, executive coaching, negotiation, mediation and specialist recruitment. Assisting businesses to navigate the increasingly complex legal requirements around employment and people management is one of her specialities.

Bronwyn believes that helping regional businesses meet their obligations as employers, as well as attracting, retaining, and developing the right staff, leads to stronger, more 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 sits on the Board of several regional organisations that share her values of integrity and commitment to community. Bronwyn was appointed Employment Facilitator for the New England and North West Region and is currently the Employment Facilitator for the Far West Orana region as part of the Workforce Australia Local Jobs Program, an Australian Government Initiative. Through that program, Bronwyn works with local stakeholders to establish 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. She has gone on to win several awards in the following years, including the 2021 Excellence in Small Business award with Business NSW, and the 2021 Excellence in Professional Services Award with Women in Altitude. She has also received an Excellence award for the 2022 and 2023 Australian HR awards, HR Champion of the Year (CEO).





### **Treasurer**

#### **Dr Kip Werren**

**BFA LLB (First Class Hons) (UNE), Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice (The College of Law), PhD (WSU), CPA of CPA Australia, Fellow of the Institute of Public Accountants, Solicitor of the Supreme Court of New South Wales.**

Dr Kip Werren has experience in professional legal practice and professional accounting practice. He continues to provide advice in the areas of business structures, estate planning, property law, corporations law and commercial law. He supports social justice and the building of strong communities through his board work and consultancies.



### **Secretary**

#### **Ms Anne Rix**

**MHS; Graduate Diploma/SW; Graduate Diploma/ED (SEC.TEACH)**

Anne Rix is the Secretary of the NNWCLS Management Committee. She has long-standing involvement with the organisation, and greatly values its work with communities throughout the region.

Anne has been employed in human services in New England North West for over 25 years and is the General Manager of New England Family Support

Service. Her qualifications include Master of Human Services Management (Charles Sturt University), Graduate Diploma in Social Welfare (NSW Rural Health Education Research Centre) and a Graduate Diploma in Education (Secondary Teaching) from the University of New England.

Anne worked for the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) in Partnerships and Planning, and in Ageing Disability and Home Care. In 2010, she became Director Partnerships and Planning for the New England North West Region, working closely with NGOs across the region to implement reform in child protection, targeted early intervention, and specialist homelessness services. Anne's last role in the Department was as Principal Project Officer NDIS Transition, overseeing the transfer of ADHC clients, staff, programs, and equipment to the National Disability Insurance Scheme. After leaving public service, Anne joined Homes North as Project Manager-Transformation, facilitating the Social Housing Management transfer of FACS Housing stock and tenants from the Department to the community housing provider. During the past four years with New England Family Support Service, Anne achieved significant financial growth in the organisation and expanded the number of projects delivered by the agency, including a philanthropic partnership with Mazda Foundation to deliver a rural recovery initiative throughout NENW.



### **General Member**

#### **Dr Christine Perrott**

**BA, DipEd, MEd(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 (executive committee), thesis editing assistance to postgraduates and member of the Duval College Senior Common Room.

In July 2021 her third book was published, 'We Survived': Collected Memories of School Days at PLC Armidale, 1936–1964, Ed. Christine Perrott, Leschenault Press.

Her 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.



### **General Member**

#### **Mr S Paul Akon**

**BA (USyd); LLB (USyd); Assoc M Resolution Institute**

Paul has practised law in Sydney and in regional NSW for over 35 years.

In 1969, he began his law career in Sydney as an articled clerk for two years.

In 1971, he gained admission as a solicitor. He then worked as a graduate lawyer with a large commercial firm in Sydney for five years.

In 1977, Paul started as an employed solicitor at a regional firm in Forbes, NSW. In 1978, he became a partner in that firm. He practised there, as such, for 20 years, primarily in advocacy and litigation.

In 1998, Paul trained as a mediator. For the next 12 months he was engaged in a mediation project for local government in the NSW Northern Rivers region.

In 2000, Paul took up a position for three and a half years with NSW Police Legal Services as a senior lawyer. While there, he led the Special Projects Unit. And, he received a Commissioner's Unit Citation. He was the first civilian in the history of NSW Police to receive such a prestigious award. He followed this up with 18 months at the NSW Dept of Environment as a senior legal officer. While there, Paul received recognition from the departmental secretary for rapidly and successfully concluding an enterprise agreement.

In 2006, Paul moved to Armidale. He was a locum tenens at the Armidale Aboriginal Legal Service for the first half of the year.

In July of that year Paul began as a law lecturer at UNE School of Law. Paul has been teaching there full time for the last 17 years. And, he continues to do so.





Working together for our  
community respecting  
each individual through  
our service delivery

## 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

## Our Vision...

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



## Who do we help?

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

### We can help with:



- Family Law issues (excluding property settlement, maintenance)



- Family/Domestic Violence matters



- Consumer Complaints



- Credit and Debt issues



- Discrimination



- Employment Law



- Traffic and vehicle regulatory offences



- Criminal Law



- Victims Services



- Wills, Power of Attorney, Enduring Guardianship



- Neighbourhood Disputes



- Probate Advice



- 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

We help our  
community  
understand  
their legal and  
social rights

# Find us at our Outreach locations

## ARMIDALE

**Armidale Courthouse**

## GLEN INNES

» **Community Centre**

268 Grey Street  
Glen Innes

» **Glen Innes Library**

71 Grey Street  
Glen Innes

**Glen Innes Correctional Centre**

**Glen Innes Courthouse**

## GUNNEDAH

» **Go Co**

80 Marquis Street  
Gunnedah

## GUYRA

» **The Guyra Hub**

160 Bradley Street  
Guyra

## INVERELL

» **Inverell Library**

55-59 Campbell Street  
Inverell

» **Linking Together Centre**

16 Waratah Avenue  
Inverell

## NARRABRI

» **Narrabri Library**

8 Doyle Street  
Narrabri

## QUIRINDI

» **Quirindi Council Chambers**

60 Station Street  
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

## WEE WAA

» **Wee Waa Library**

106 Rose Street  
Wee Waa

## WERRIS CREEK

» **Werris Creek Library**

59a Single Street,  
Werris Creek





Travelling across 99,144 sq klms  
removing barriers to give rural  
communities access to free  
face-to-face legal advice



TOMORROW ►

◄ YESTERDAY

# HISTORY

## 1993

**The North & North West Community Legal Service Inc was established in April 1993.**

The Service was initially known as 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 north west regions of NSW. The resulting submission to the Commonwealth Government was successful and 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.

## 2002

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 (NEWTAAAS). 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, NNWCLS took on the temporary auspice of the Western Aboriginal Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service, with offices in Dubbo, Broken Hill and Bourke.

## 2005

In April 2005, 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.



# ORY

## 2007

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.

## 2017

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 Beady 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. Our Outreach Program extends to 17 clinics each month in 11 towns and is covering more distances and population base than ever before.

## 2019

In 2019, using State One Off Funding that was granted to the Service in 2017, a branch office was set up in Moree until funding completion in 2021 and its subsequent closure. This was a significant expansion of the Service's usual service delivery model, and one that allowed the Moree community, and surrounding districts with high legal need, ongoing support. It was a most successful project achieving all outcomes and goals set through strategic planning processes.

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"*

### **Domestic and Family Violence**

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

- Parenting arrangements
- Wills, POA & EG
- Apprehended domestic violence order
- Separation/Divorce

### **Family Law issues**

We predominately assist clients in the Family Law space with:

- Parenting arrangements
- Divorce/separation
- Domestic/Family Violence

**54% of Family Law work is with Parenting arrangements**

## **Our work at 2022 -**

### **Employment and workplace issues**

We assisted clients with unfair dismissal, general protection claims and underpayments.

**6% of our overall Civil Law work related to Employment issues**

### **Consumer Complaints**

**7% of our overall Civil Law work is for Consumer Complaints eg:**

- Refund for products or services
- Subscription services

### **Credit and debt issues**

We assist clients with varied credit and debt issues, including money being owed to them, money being owed by them, and bankruptcy.

**We assisted 48 clients with bankruptcy, and money owed by/ to them.**

### **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, we continue to assist clients on Centrelink benefits (on a case-by-case basis) who own their own homes and find it difficult to afford to have their Will drafted.

**521 Wills, POA & EG documents were drafted – 120% increase on last year.**



### Traffic Offences

We represented many clients for licence appeals and traffic offences. Representations from our Service led to reduced penalties for our clients and a more positive Court experience.

**69% of our Court work was assisting clients with traffic and vehicle regulatory offences**

### Victims Support

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

**Victims Support can assist with counselling and financial assistance.**

## a glance in 2023

### Criminal Law

We assisted clients with:

- Acts intended to cause injury
  - Fraud
- Property damage
  - Sexual assault
  - Theft

**17% of our overall assistance is for Criminal Law**

### Discrimination

We assisted clients with their disability discrimination complaints with Anti-Discrimination NSW and the Australian Human Rights Commission.

**We assisted 5 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 continues to be a constant every year.

**7% of Civil Law advice assists clients with neighbourhood disputes**

### Apprehended Violence Orders

We helped clients apply to vary their AVO conditions following changes in their personal circumstances. In addition, we provided court representation for some AVO matters.

We also provided advice to defendants with the view to decreasing the chances of a breach occurring.

**27% of AVO work was assistance in Court**

# Chairperson's Report

*The North & North West Community Legal Service (NNWCLS) has had another outstanding year of providing essential legal services to the most vulnerable in our community.*

With demand higher than ever and increasing, the team has continued to deliver high quality services.

I particularly wish to congratulate Sandy Steele, who recently celebrated 10 years of service with us, leading and supporting significant change and growth in the Service over that time in her role as Coordinator. Sandy continues to impress and inspire both staff and the Management Committee with her talent, commitment and enthusiasm for our work. I am immensely appreciative of her dedication and achievements, and excited to see her ongoing contributions to the Service.

The case load of the service has increased again this year, by 29%, with a milestone 1000 clients provided with outstanding service to meet their often-complex legal needs. In addition to regular service provision, information outreach to the community including seminars, presentations and the recommencement of the Law Matters radio program on local community radio have enabled the service to reach even more across our area. Our successful grant application to the Department of Communities and Justice to support our work in family, domestic and sexual violence for the coming two years is another notable achievement and will further support the established work of the Service in family and domestic violence.

Behind the scenes, the Management Committee has been working hard managing our governance obligations, addressing staff pay and conditions, and dealing with ongoing funding strategies in a climate of frequent industrial relations



legislation updates. We engaged in further governance training in May through participation in the Boards, Governance and Leadership program, provided to us by the Institute for Community Directors Australia (ICDA). I applaud the work and commitment of my fellow Management Committee members to this vital community Service and thank them for their ongoing efforts and expertise.

As Terri commences a period of parental leave for the coming 12 months, I wish her and her beautiful family a safe and happy time as their family unit expands to welcome another tiny human. Ben Graham will be stepping up into the Principal Solicitor role during this time, and I look forward to working with him in leadership of our organisation through what will no doubt be opportunities for further growth, challenge and opportunities.

It has been an honour and privilege to Chair the NNWCLS Management Committee again this year and witness the dedication and outstanding efforts of staff to not only continue, but extend, services. I am continually inspired by both the wonderful achievements of NNWCLS, and the unwavering dedication of its staffing team and Management Committee. Congratulations and appreciation to all.

**Bronwyn Pearson**  
**Chairperson**





*Excellent governance equals  
excellent service delivery*



# Principal Solicitor's Report

*16 years ago, I joined the Service as an eager, perhaps naive student volunteer, excited to have an opportunity to be given a glimpse into the CLC sector.*

I could never have imagined that I would be celebrating one of the biggest years our Service has achieved, as Principal Solicitor, in 2023.

I am overwhelmed with pride and gratitude when I reflect on "the year that was" and feel a need to express my respect and appreciation for our Management Committee, my colleagues, and volunteers. The success of the Service in providing quality, free and accessible legal assistance to so many deserving clients is a testament to each of us, and the contribution that we make.

This year has seen our staff stretch themselves beyond what I thought was possible, working tirelessly day in and day out to ensure that we were able to meet our ever-increasing demand, as best as possible. Having seen over 1000 clients in this period is monumental and deserves a moment of recognition.

Congratulations to our Administrative and Support staff for ensuring that each contact made by a client is welcomed with an empathetic and understanding response; ensuring that appointments are scheduled, and appropriate referrals are made. The support provided to our Solicitors allow them to be able to focus on client delivery and increases the outputs achieved. Our website contact form is being submitted almost daily as people seek assistance from our Service at their convenience, in addition to significant increases in telephone and face to face contact.

Congratulations to our Legal staff for ensuring that each advice, representation, legal task, and referral meets the needs of our clients and ensures the best possible outcomes are achieved, for them. We have received unprecedented positive feedback from clients, expressing their gratitude and appreciation for the assistance they have received from our Solicitors.



Congratulations to our Management Committee on ensuring that the governance of the Service remains ethical and appropriate. The unwavering support of our team is appreciated and acknowledged. The skills and knowledge so generously shared by our Management Committee are second to none and their generosity of time and expertise is unwavering. I would like to particularly acknowledge the extended length of Service from Bron and Kip and their outstanding contributions to the Service's success.

I am of the view that workplace morale is at an all time high, as we support each other to reach unprecedented levels of service delivery, whilst upholding our high standards of practice and ethics. For me, personally, this has been my first year as a working mother. I was warned that this would ignite within me a new ability to multitask, prioritise and increase productivity, simply out of necessity and I would like to think that this has been the case. With increased success, and outputs we have experienced unprecedented demand on all staff within our organisation, which has challenged each of us in our roles.

In May I was privileged to be able to share in the success of my colleague, Sandy, recognising and celebrating her 10 years of service to the organisation. A memorable evening was had by Management Committee and staff as we surprised Sandy with a celebratory dinner to



acknowledge her contributions and success over the past decade. During that time, we have seen significant change and growth within the Service, and the Sector as a whole. Sandy's role as Coordinator has grown, each year, encompassing new tasks and obligations and without a doubt Sandy has risen to the occasion each time. Congratulations Sandy on all you have achieved on behalf of the Service and for all that you continue to do to contribute to a supportive, friendly, and happy workplace.

In my role as Principal Solicitor, this year, I have particularly enjoyed the opportunity to connect with community, clients, and stakeholders. Attending Interagency meetings provides countless opportunities for connection, referral pathways, promotion, and collegiality. I see so much value in these connections to ensure that clients that need our services can access us with ease and ensuring that those that we are assisting are receiving a service that considers their needs holistically.

Additionally, being able to participate in expo's has been wonderful; connecting with clients, sharing information about our Service, and breaking down barriers to improve our accessibility are just some of the positive outcomes of our participation. I've also been delighted at the community legal education requests and recommendations that we have accepted from stakeholders. We received a record number of requests for our presentation about Wills, Power of Attorney, Enduring Guardianship and Advanced Care Directives, which saw us travelling throughout our catchment to deliver this information in an accessible and engaging manner. I thoroughly enjoy the opportunity to share information throughout our communities to increase engagement with our Service and ensure succession planning is in place for all, at no cost.

In addition to these requests, we have been delighted to have been able to reinstate the "Law Matters" radio program on 2AD community radio, with Ben and Hatem having surpassed all expectations during their training, injecting a sense of enthusiasm and joy into each broadcast.

Some years ago, we entered a pro bono partnership with Bartier Perry Lawyers, in which they extended an offer for our Service to be able to seek assistance and make referrals to their team, with the view of increasing services available to our clients. This year has seen our Solicitors make a record number of referrals through this program, much to the delight of our clients. Such referrals have included a complex estate matter, a commercial leasing issue for a not-for-profit organisation, a civil property dispute and a property nuisance matter. Having access to this referral pathway has been a welcomed and valuable addition to the assistance provided by our Service and I thank Bartier Perry for their contribution.

The future for the Service is of a mixed nature; increasing costs and budgetary constraints remains a constant source of stress and concern, whilst the current economic climate can only contribute to every increasing demand for our services. Managing staff workloads whilst meeting our purpose and aims can be challenging. Having a committed staffing team and Management Committee has been key to our previous success and I believe will continue to be so, as we consider opportunities for varied and increased funding, expansion, and growth.

This coming year will see the addition of an Administrative Trainee to our administrative support team, to help alleviate the increasing demands on our triage processes. Additionally, it will see me step away temporarily from my role as I embark on a further period of parenting leave, seeing Ben move into the role of Acting Principal Solicitor. I leave with immense pride in the Service and Staff and have so much faith in their ability to continue working and achieving in this space.

In summary, I would like to acknowledge and thank all of whom have contributed to or accessed our Service over the past 12 months. It has been a privilege to work alongside my colleagues as Principal, and I value their contribution and support.

## Terri Coleman

**Principal Solicitor**

# Coordinator's Report

*This year was always going to be one of our best!*

*And our end-of-year outcomes proved to be just that!*

It's incredible what can be achieved by our team when staff numbers are at full capacity, service delivery is uninterrupted, and we have a group of employees passionate about their work and eager to enrich the lives of our clients through legal assistance.

This year's outcomes are incredible and demonstrate that the purpose and objective statement that we operate under is as relevant today as the day the Service began in 1993.

It is with much pleasure that I present to you the year that was, from the perspective of my position as Coordinator, on behalf of my hardworking colleagues.

## **Funding:**

This year represents the beginning of our next 3-year funding cycle. Financially speaking, and from a budgetary planning position, it was a difficult start to the year as our Tender results from Commonwealth government weren't announced until part way through our first 6-month period; after the October 2022 Federal Budget.

Right off the bat, this uncertain position highlighted our strengths and flexibility from our Management team and staff that ensured unwavering services to our community until funding results were in.

During these months our previously confirmed successful grant application through the Department of Community & Justice for work in the space of Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence under a 2 year contract came with relief. Our work in family and domestic violence increases every year so receiving this additional funding to do this work will provide significant benefits for our clients.



Seeking out additional funding sources has gradually become an integral part of our financial management as the Legal Assistance funding pools, from which we receive our baseline funding, are becoming more and more over-subscribed.

Meanwhile, the results of the October Federal budget gave no apparent pathways to enhancements to the current CLC sector funding, and as such our Service's funding remains the same, however the demand for our Service, and operational costs, continue to rise.

With our financial vision now clear to 2025, our team will do what it does best; get on with the job of delivering a professional legal service to our catchment.

## **End-of-year statistics:**

While analysing targets and statistics sounds very clinical, the resultant outcomes play important, unbiased, roles in our planning. We measure our efficiencies and effectiveness of external operations like promotional work, community and stakeholder engagement, and of course our internal work in legal services given to clients. The targets we set at the beginning of each year are not limits we put upon our work, but rather one piece of the puzzle that moves us towards our goals.



My colleagues will agree that it's been a monumentally busy year, and here's why...

### **Our results:**

- **Compared to last year:**
  - » Overall client numbers increased this year by 29% (1,005 clients)
  - » Overall total services to clients increased by 42% (3,079 services)
  - » Volume of incoming telephone calls at reception by up to 117%.
- **Against our targets set:**
  - » Court Liaison Program – 66% above target
  - » JP Services and Legal Tasks – an incredible 493% above target
  - » Referrals made by our Service to other service providers – 42% above target

Of particular note is our casework files opened. This year we exceeded our target by 137% and we opened twice as many files as last year (672 files, compared to 320 files last year). This result is especially impressive as for every 1 casework file opened represents between 5 and up to 50 hours of Solicitor work. This alone is an incredible statistic by our team that speaks to the level of ongoing support our Service provides to our clients.

And of course, every statistic we have recorded has passed through all aspects of our organisation confirming that each staff member's role is a valuable link in our Service's chain.

### **Why demand increase:**

An ever-increasing awareness of our Service brings about demand increase, which is something we consciously invest in every year.

However, this year we have seen other competing factors such as fire and weather events that increased client numbers in those affected regions. While the redirection in problem types from the Legal Aid NSW Civil Law division, and the Aboriginal Legal Service cessation of

programs due to insufficient funding from the Budget saw referrals to our Service increase exponentially to fill these new-found gaps in legal services.

No matter the factors, Attorney General, The Hon Mark Dreyfus, informed the Sector at the National Conference in March 2023 that Community Legal Centres lead the way in closing the gap for legal assistance to Australia and further saying that it's clear to government that the sector rises to every challenge when advocating and working for their clients. NNWCLS is certainly an example of this.

To wrap up this monumental year, it is only fitting to congratulate those who made such results possible, and that of course is our incredible team. Each and every one of you is a pleasure to work with, and a valued team player.

Thank you to the Management Committee for the time you freely give to oversee the governance of our Service and for the support you continually offer to Terri and myself. Also a special mention to our Treasurer, Dr Kip Werren, who makes himself available at any moment on any given day. Thank you, Kip.

Also last, but certainly not least, I would like to offer a sincere thank you to our Principal Solicitor, Terri Coleman, for her hard work, leadership and support of each individual staff member this year. Terri's commitment to her "open door" policy is commendable as she manages her own heavy workloads while openly and continually supporting us all. We wish Terri every best wish as she leaves us for the next 12 months on her Parental Leave.

Again, congratulations everyone, this year was indeed one of our best!

**Sandy Steele**  
**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.**

From our office based in Armidale we provide legal 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. This help includes legal advice, information and some court representation. We aim to help clients to be better informed of their legal and social rights and responsibilities and of the options available to them.

We also operate an extensive Outreach Circuit Program throughout our catchment, supporting a population base of approximately 185,560 people



over an area of 99,144 square kilometres. Every month our legal staff spends up to 39 hours in travel time alone to service our catchment. We have monthly clinics

in Werris Creek, Quirindi, Gunnedah, Narrabri, Wee Waa, Inverell, Glen Innes and Tenterfield. We operate bi-monthly clinics in Guyra and at the Glen Innes Correctional Centre, while our clinic in Tamworth is run on a fortnightly basis. Providing 2 clinic venues whilst visiting Tamworth, Inverell, Glen Innes and Moree ensures ease of accessibility to residents at either ends of these towns.

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 receive legal assistance. Furthermore, home, hospital, or nursing home visits are made available to our most vulnerable clients ensuring accessibility for everyone.

In addition to our Outreach Program, we operate a Court Liaison Program in Armidale every Monday on list day and in Glen Innes each month on list day.





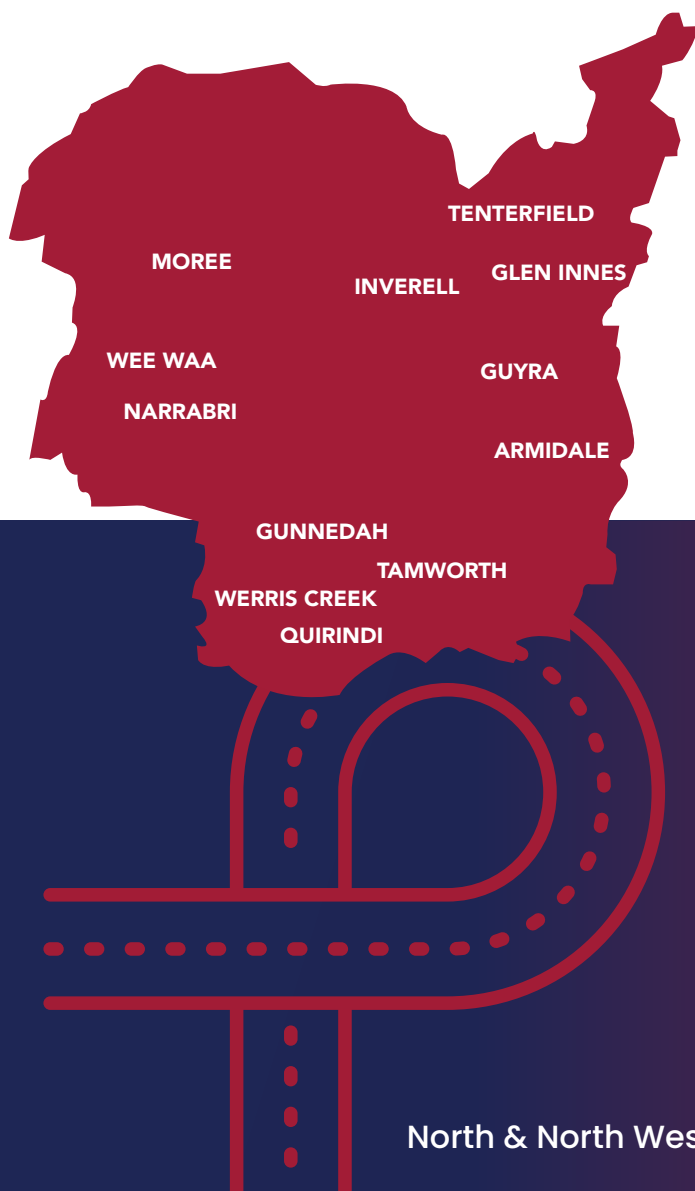
NNWCLS has expanded significantly since 1993 and when considering Service growth, much consideration is given to the vulnerable demographic of our regions as well as indications of high domestic and family violence statistics in communities. We ensure that, for these regions, we have a prominent presence 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 into vulnerable communities is paramount as we've recognised that legal problems are particularly

prevalent among socially disadvantaged groups and may be 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.



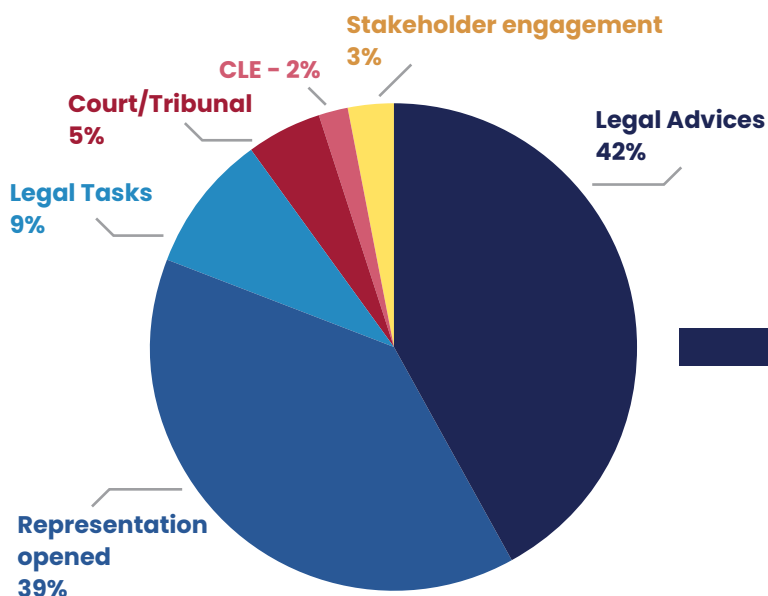
**TRAVELLING**  
up to  
**38,544** kms   
each year

# Our Statistic Profile for 2022/2023

# 1,005

Clients

## Service delivery snapshot:



## Client Demographic:



**56%** Female  
**44%** Male



**99%** experiencing financial disadvantage



**19%** Identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander



**25%** reported a disability or mental illness



**12%** at risk of Homelessness



**24%** experiencing Domestic violence

## Service delivery drill-down:

Legal Advices  
 **720**

Representation Opened  
 **672**

Representation Closed  
 **571**

Legal Tasks  
 **151**

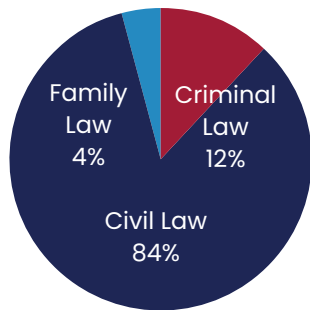
Court/Tribunal  
 **90**

Stakeholder Engaged  
 **43**

Legal Education  
 **26**



## Representation Services given by Law Type...



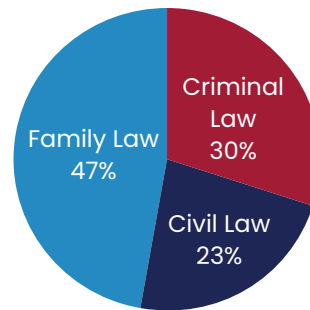
### Top problem within Law type:-

**Family Law** – Divorce/Separation

**Civil Law** – Wills and Estates

**Criminal Law** – Traffic and vehicle regulatory offences

## Advices given by Law Type..



### Top problem within Law type:-

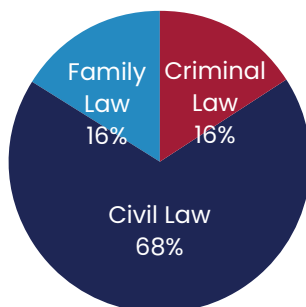
**Family Law** – Parenting arrangements

**Civil Law** – Wills and Estates

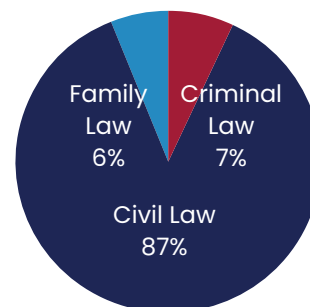
**Criminal Law** – Traffic and vehicle regulatory offences

## Demographic drill-down on Law types

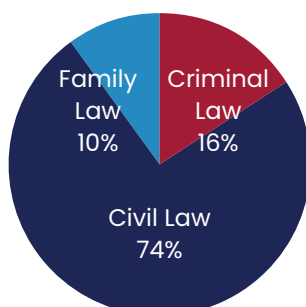
### Indigenous Australians



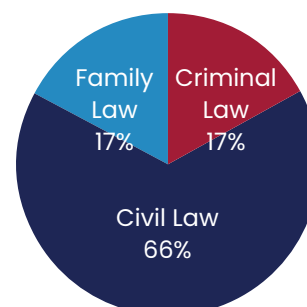
### Older Clients (65+)



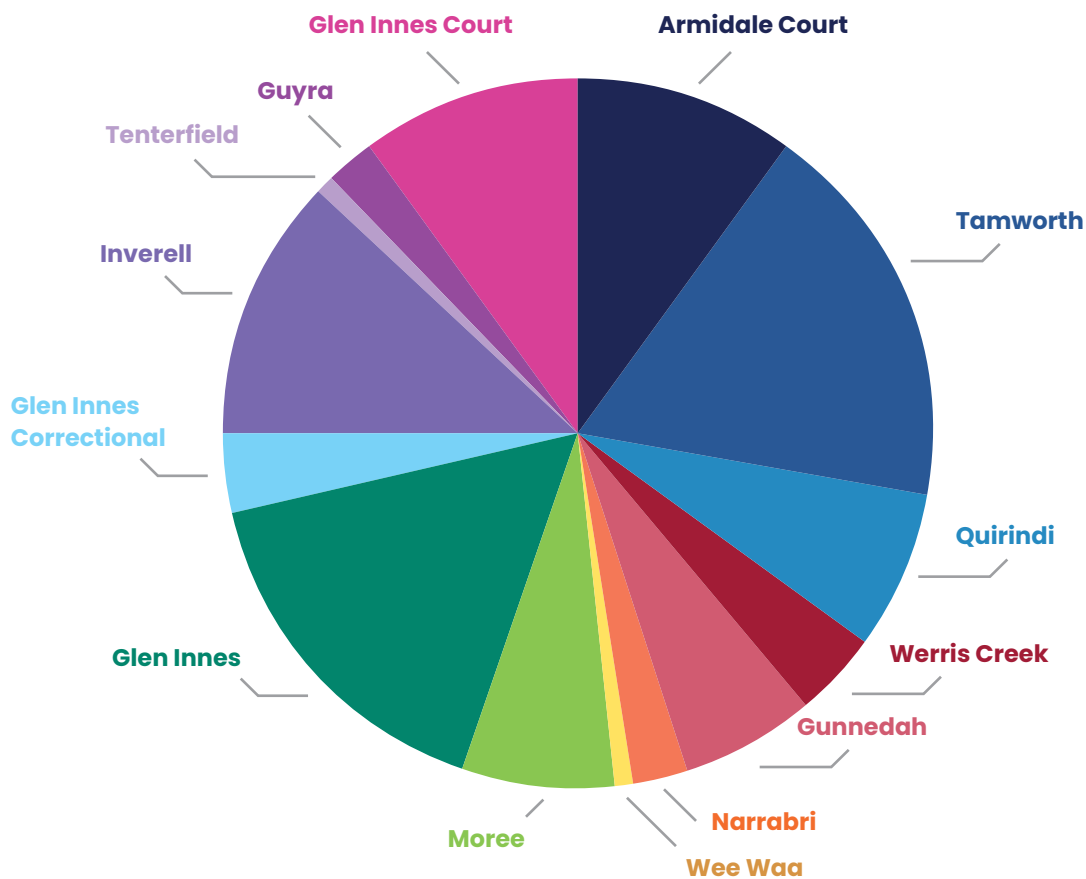
### Disability Indicated Clients



### Homelessness Risk



# Outreach Program drill-down:



## Top 10 problem types of total clients

- |   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| <b>1</b> Will, Power of Attorney, Enduring Guardianship | <b>6</b> Employment Law issues  |
| <b>2</b> Road traffic and motor vehicle offences        | <b>7</b> Divorce/Separation     |
| <b>3</b> Family or domestic violence orders             | <b>8</b> Other Civil            |
| <b>4</b> Parenting Plan                                 | <b>9</b> Neighbourhood disputes |
| <b>5</b> Family Law other                               | <b>10</b> Credit and debt other |





# Sector-wide results of 41 Community Legal Centres in NSW for 21/22

## 51,000 Clients

### \*Sector-wide results

### \* NNWCLS results for same year



**54%/55%** Female  
**44%/45%** Male  
**2%** Other/unknown



**74%/99%** experiencing financial disadvantage

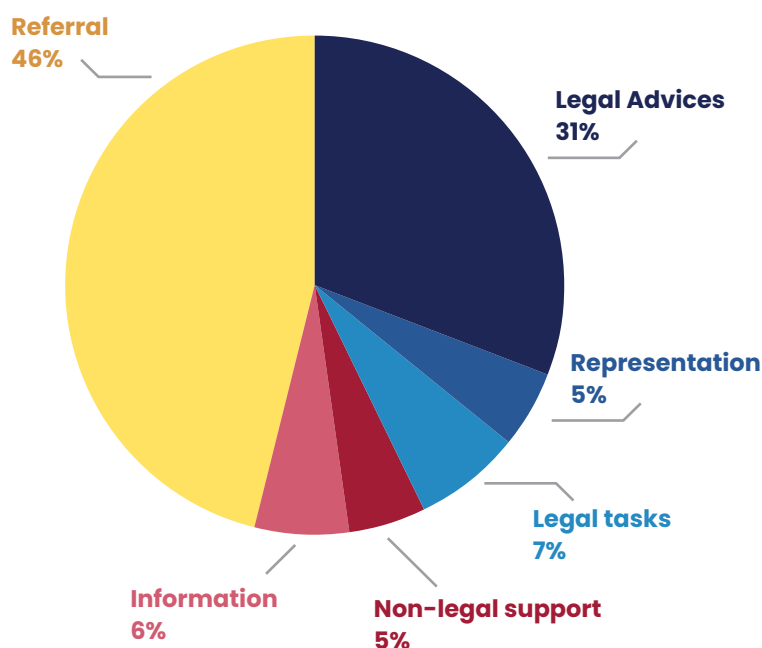


**8%/19%** Identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander



**23%/24%** experiencing domestic or family violence

## Service delivery snapshot of all CLC's in NSW:



### North & North West Community Legal Service 21/22 at a glance

Legal Advices	59%
Representation	27%
Legal tasks	5%
Court/Tribunal	2%
CLE	3%
Stakeholder engagement	4%

# Court Liaison Program

This Program sees Stanley Tao attending the Armidale Local Court each Monday on list day. While Ben Graham attends the Glen Innes Local Court monthly on list day.

Our overarching objective of our Court Liaison Program is to promote access to justice in our catchment.

From a practical perspective, our Solicitors direct court users to the Duty Solicitor and assist 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. Our Solicitors may advise/represent clients in matters that fall outside of the duty solicitor guidelines or for those who cannot afford a private practitioner.

Consultation with our Stakeholders during our Strategic Planning process indicated that defendants of ADVO's would benefit from education about their Orders to reduce any risk of breach. This education has become an important part of this Program as an increase in breaches is reported through the NSW Recorded Crime Statistics in our region.



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

- **69%** - traffic and vehicle regulatory offences
- **26%** - Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders
- **5%** - Other Civil Law problems





# 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. In addition to valuable information gained from each CLE session, these workshops also become a great introduction of our Practitioners. Participants become comfortable through an interactive method of education and feel confident to make contact with our Service, having already met our Solicitors.

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

- Will, Power of Attorney, Enduring Guardianship to:
  - » National Servicemen Society Armidale
  - » Inverell Linking Together Centre
  - » Carer's Gateway Future Planning Workshop Tamworth
  - » Werris Creek Library
  - » Gunnedah Winanga Aboriginal Child and Family Centre
  - » Armidale Carers' Group
  - » Tamworth Aboriginal Medical Centre
  - » Care for Seniors Gents Group Armidale
  - » Vision Australia's Support Group
- Workplace rights – CALD group, Tamworth
- Enterprise Agreement – CALD group, Tamworth
- ADVO, Fines & Licence Suspension, POA/EG – Freeman House, Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation
- Let's Talk About Drugs and Alcohol – Community Drug and Alcohol Action Team
- Understanding Tech Facilitated Abuse – eSafety Commissioner



A mode of CLE that is unique to our Community Legal Centre is our radio program "Law Matters". Our Solicitors host this program on 2ARM 92.1FM every week. 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 and human rights interest.

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 "Law Matters".

Our Facebook activity saw an increase in reach and engagement this year. While our Facebook page promoted our work throughout our catchment it also promoted local community events and state and nation-wide commemorations. But the big winner from Facebook is the client-contact that follows when clients reach out for legal assistance having seen our posts that are relatable with a personable and friendly approach.

This Facebook activity had a flow-on effect with increased traffic to our website by up to 54%. Our website feature – "Request

a free appointment", has proven to be most efficient, particularly during times of increased demand or Service enquiry outside of trading hours. From this point clients can provide a significant amount of information resulting in a swift process when our administration staff call to confirm the appointment.



Empowerment  
through  
education...





# Community Groups involvement

Our Solicitors participate in many Interagency meetings throughout the year, either face to face or via Zoom. These meetings are such an important part of our Service's framework, as referral pathways from other organisations strengthens our communities access to free legal services. This collaborative practice also enriches the work with our clients assisting to meet their non-legal needs resulting in swift and positive resolutions to our clients' issues.

## **This year we have participated in:**

- Family Law Pathways Network
- New England Multicultural interagency
- Armidale Domestic and Family Violence Steering Committee
- Armidale Interagency
- Armidale Aboriginal Interagency
- Disaster Recovery Team – Legal Aid NSW
- Moree CLSD
- Armidale Local Court Users' Forum
- Helping Children and Families Association
- Indigenous Family Liaison Officers of the Federal Circuit and Federal Court of Australia
- Community Drug and Alcohol Action Team, Armidale (CDAT)
- Closing the Gap Community Workshop, Armidale
- Knowmore Legal Service meeting

*Our staff attended and spoke at Interagency meetings throughout our catchment to initiate discussions on how best our Service can meet clients' needs of other services*

## Expo's in our region

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 engagements is the greatest way to achieve this.



*Increasing accessibility, breaking down barriers and increasing referral pathways*

# This year we have participated in the following Community Expos's

- DV Remembrance Day Stall
- Gunnedah Youth Expo
- UNE Lifesaver Day – O Week
- Day in the Dale
- One Stop Shop Coledale, Tamworth
- One Stop Shop, Nundle
- Disability Expo, Tamworth
- Tamworth Homelessness Connect Day
- NAIDOC Week Community Day, Ashford
- Indigenous Literacy Week, Tamworth
- Paint the Town Purple, Armidale
- Reconciliation Week event – hosted by Probation and Parole and Family and Community Services
- Reconciliation Week event – NNEWCLS





# Law Reform

## **This year we engaged in 4 Law Reform Activities:**

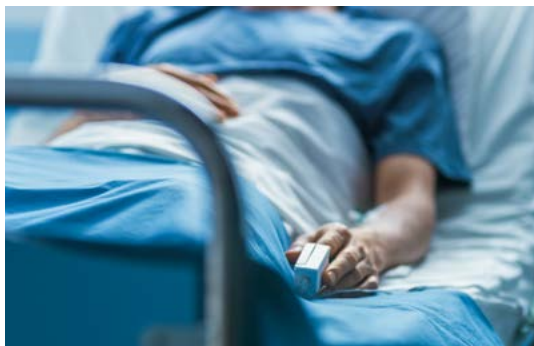
- Open letter – review of Victims Rights and Support Act 2013
- Submission Senate Inquiry into the Family Law Amendment Bill
- Open letter – Aboriginal children belong with family
- Open letter – National Compensation Scheme

## 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:**

- 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 Automated Telephone Interpreting Service (ATIS), as funded by Legal Aid NSW, to our clients who are Culturally and Linguistically Diverse and those requiring Auslan Interpreters. This year 61% of our CALD clients received an interpreter to assist with their appointment.

- Physically accessible office spaces with ramp and lift access and wide hallways for mobility aides

*Removing barriers  
for all...*

# Volunteer Program

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.

Elham Ghaffari has been a valuable part of our team this year, assisting the Solicitors with research and administrative tasks. We are grateful and thank Elham for her contribution this year.



# Staff Training & Development

Our staff participated in over 20 training sessions this year that were relevant to their type of work, be it administrative or legal.

## Some of this year's training included:

- Prisoners' Rights Working Group
- Employment Law Network
- Health Justice Partnerships
- Financial Management
- Family and Kinship, Sorry Business and Cultural Leave
- Practice Management Course
- Disability Awareness training
- Victims of Crime and Domestic Violence
- Lighthouse Project, Family Law
- Radio Broadcast training
- Cyber Security – Protect your business from scams
- In-house staff training day
- A crash course in motor vehicle accidents: legal and insurance avenues explained
- Managed retreat – Climate change and catchment planning
- Building strong, safe workplaces
- Aboriginal Cultural training
- Governance and Leadership training
- Understanding Tech Facilitated Abuse in D/FV situations
- High Conflict training





# Case Studies

*\*Names and personal information have been amended to ensure client confidentiality is maintained.*

## **Margaret – Total and Permanent Disability (TPD) claim**

Margaret called into our office, seeking an appointment for assistance with a matter relating to a previously sustained psychological injury at work. Margaret scheduled a face-to-face appointment in our office in which she instructed us that she had ongoing mental health issues, from her workplace injury and that she had attempted numerous times to make a Total and Permanent Disability claim through her superannuation trustee. Unfortunately, none of them were successful.

Our Solicitor agreed to act for Margaret and attempt to make a claim on her behalf. To ours and Margaret's delight, on this occasion she was successful in having her TPD claim approved, which saw her receive a payment of \$60,000.

## **Fred – Aboriginal Community Benefit Fund – also known as Youpla Group**

Fred is an Aboriginal elder. He was paying Aboriginal Community Benefit Fund (ACBF) to cover his and his wife's funerals, for over 25 years. In total, he had paid \$30,000.00. In 2020, Fred heard in the media that ACBF was about to collapse. Consequently, Fred called our office seeking an appointment. He instructed our Solicitor that he wanted to get his money back.

Our Solicitor assisted Fred to make a complaint to the Australian Financial Complaints Authority, which resulted in \$15,000 being returned for the premiums that he had paid. Unfortunately, the premiums that had been paid in relation to his wife, were not returned as they had separated, and she had since lost her capacity.

In March 2022, ACBF (also known as Youpla Group) entered liquidation. Our Solicitor, who had originally assisted Fred, contacted him to inform him of the creation of the Youpla Group Funeral Benefits Program, when it was introduced by the Treasury in September 2022; providing him with the relevant forms and information sheets, to make an application.

Sadly, the following year his wife passed away. Fred contacted the Treasury, which ensured that the burial and funeral costs were covered, in full, by the Youpla Group Funeral Benefits Program.

## **Kane – Traffic Matter**

Kane first saw our Solicitor at our Court Liaison Service. He lives on his own, out of town and his only income source is a disability pension. He sought assistance from our Solicitor after having lost his licence for having medically prescribed marijuana in his bloodstream, while driving. He had previously been sentenced for this offence; to twelve months off the road under statutory minimum laws.

Our Solicitor met with Kane and listened to his circumstances and agreed to complete an appeal application. We assisted Kane to prepare for court, gathering and compiling evidence. We also appeared for Kane in court, which resulted in him receiving a non-conviction bond, allowing him to continue driving to access medical assistance and basic utilities. Kane was very grateful for our assistance, especially given his isolation and proximity to general services.

## **Emma – Employment Issue**

Emma contacted our Service after hearing an advertisement on her local radio station. She used our website contact form to seek an appointment with our Solicitor when they were next in her town.

Emma attended her Outreach appointment and explained to our Solicitor that she had been working for a large company for over a decade, and that she had recently been made redundant due to a restructure. During the redundancy process the company had failed to pay Emma the entitlements she was owed.

We agreed to contact Emma's previous employer on her behalf in relation to her owed benefits. This led to lengthy negotiations, in which we continued to act for Emma. Ultimately, the Company accepted our position and agreed to pay the outstanding entitlements to Emma; the total value of which was over \$50,000.00. Emma expressed her gratitude for our assistance and noted that receiving the payment had allowed her to move with confidence into the next phase of her working life.

### **Hazel – Estate Matter**

Hazel is a single elderly woman, who had been devastated by the loss of her close friend, whom she had known for many years and spent many months travelling Australia together.

Hazel had been surprised and delighted to learn that her friend had gifted her a caravan in their will; to the value of \$30,000.00. Despite the grief she felt for losing her companion, she felt they had created so many special memories together in the caravan, that it held significant sentimental value for her.

The executors of the estate were refusing to provide Hazel with the caravan. When Hazel approached us, she explained that she felt she had tried everything to resolve the situation and didn't know what more she could do.

Our Solicitor agreed to write to the legal representative of the Estate, on Hazel's behalf, to resolve the situation. As a result, the legal representative responded favourably, and we were able to negotiate for the caravan to be provided to our client.

### **Taylor – Car accident**

Taylor, a student, had her Provisional P1 Licence (Red P Plates). Unfortunately, Taylor was involved in a car accident, which led her to seek help from our Service.

Upon meeting with our Solicitor, Taylor recalled that she felt shocked and confused when the accident had occurred, not having been in that situation before. At the time, she exchanged her contact details with the other driver. Taylor noted that she did not have insurance to cover damage to her vehicle or any third party, at the time of the accident, and that both vehicles had incurred significant damage and were subsequently written off.

Months after the accident, Taylor received a letter from the other driver's insurer claiming that she was at fault; demanding her to pay them over \$11,000.00. Taylor was studying full-time and working a casual job. She was solely responsible for all her financial expenses and could not afford to pay this amount to the insurance company, although acknowledged that she was at fault.

Taylor determined that she would be able to make an offer of \$7,000.00, to the insurer. Our Solicitor gathered the information from Taylor and determined that there was contributory negligence from the other driver and, also, that there was a significant lapse in time between the car accident and the time of declaring that the other driver's vehicle had been written off. Additionally, the insurance company had claimed for items that were not necessary and/or reasonable.

Consequently, our Solicitor provided Taylor with legal advice and agreed to enter negotiations with the other driver's insurer on Taylor's behalf. Ultimately the insurer accepted an offer for Taylor to pay a total of \$3,000.00 in instalments of \$50 per fortnight.



Taylor expressed her immense relief in having been able to negotiate a payment plan that was manageable and delighted to learn that she wasn't liable for the total amount of \$11,000.00 originally sought.

### **Mark – Consumer Complaint**

Mark contacted our office, after seeing a post on Facebook, to make a phone appointment to get some help with a consumer complaint. Mark had a keen interest in stamp collecting and had found a wonderful display folder online, that he purchased straight away. He had purchased the folder from an Australian Company and paid online at the time. Unfortunately, Mark never received the folder.

When Mark spoke to our Solicitor, he expressed his despair about the situation and noted that he had tried contacting the Company several times by email to resolve the situation, seeking that they deliver the product or refund him, but that he had not had any success.

Our Solicitor agreed to draft a letter of demand on Mark's behalf and send it to the Company, requesting that they refund our client's money. Unfortunately, the letter was returned to us, in the post, as the Company was no longer operating.

Our Solicitor then obtained the Company Director's contact details and sent the letter of demand directly to them. The Director responded denying any responsibility and claimed that they were no longer associated with the Company.

In response, our Solicitor asserted that as the Director who was managing the company at the time of the order being placed and receiving the money from Mark, they were responsible to refund the money to him. Within two days Mark received the refunded money into his bank account.

### **Yasmin – Divorce**

Yasmin is a single mother of one child. She attended our office seeking assistance with domestic violence and applying for a Divorce. Yasmin was living in Australia on a temporary visa.

Yasmin disclosed to our Solicitor that she had been in an abusive relationship, and had experienced domestic violence perpetrated by her husband. She reported that an Apprehended Domestic Violence Order (ADVO) was placed on him to protect her and her daughter. Further, the husband had moved interstate and indicated to Yasmin that he was not willing to sign any Divorce documents.

Yasmin was very distressed and wanted to end her abusive relationship. She also expressed that she was concerned that her husband would not agree to the Divorce and that she would be stuck with him forever.

Our Solicitor advised Yasmin about the ADVO, separation, parenting, and a Divorce application.

Because Yasmin was on a temporary visa, she had limited financial means and was worried about the application fees. We provided a letter to the court confirming that Yasmin was receiving assistance from our Service which made her eligible for the reduced fee.

As Yasmin was married overseas and was a newly migrant to Australia, we assisted her to gather evidence to satisfy the proof of jurisdiction. Additionally, we arranged service through a Professional Process Server who served the documents on her husband, and the Divorce application was successful.

### **Smith Family – Will, Enduring Power of Attorney and Enduring Guardianship**

A Social Worker based at one of our Outreach location's hospitals, contacted our Service seeking assistance for an Indigenous family they had been working with for some months. The family included several members who required ongoing medical care and assistance to overcome health issues and ongoing disability.

The Social Worker was concerned that none of the adult family members had ever considered drafting a Will, Enduring Power of Attorney or Enduring Guardianship, and considered them to be particularly vulnerable. In addition, they lived on a property outside of town and did not have access to a motor vehicle, consequently they would find it very expensive and difficult to attend to an appointment in town.

Our Service agreed to attend to the family home and assist all 5 adult family members with their documents. Upon agreeing to a date and time our Solicitors travelled to the clients' home where they sat with each family member individually, explaining the nature and effect of each document and subsequently taking their instructions.

Our Solicitors returned to the office whereby they drafted each client a Will, Enduring Power of Attorney and Enduring Guardianship, before returning to their home to execute the documents. Following this, the Solicitors wrote to the clients' appointees, arranging acceptance and finalisation of the documents.

Once complete the original documents and certified copies of each were provided to the clients, for safe keeping.

### **Louise – Child Contacts**

Louise is a young mother of three children, who had recently separated from her partner. She had been the children's primary carer and responsible for their day-to-day care. Her partner had always worked away for lengthy periods and had not been very involved in the children's care. However, since separating he had resigned from his position and was seeking to spend more time with the children.

Louise scheduled an appointment with our Solicitor and explained that she wasn't sure how to move forward or what was the right thing to do. She noted that the children loved their father and were always excited to spend time with him and that she didn't want to see this end but admitted that she was nervous about him caring for them for extended periods, not having done so before.

Our Solicitor was able to provide Louise with advice around separation and parenting and explain the options that were available to her. As a result, our Solicitor made a warm referral to a Family Relationship Centre to facilitate a mediation for Louise and the children's father. Prior to the mediation Louise held a further appointment with our Solicitor to prepare for the mediation and consider the advice previously received.

As a result, Louise reported that she felt confident going into the mediation and clear on the issues that needed to be addressed and resolved. She was delighted to share that she was able to reach an agreement with the children's father that saw the time he spent with the children slowly increase over time, which she felt was in the children's best interests and most appropriate for their circumstances.



# Highlights for the year

**This year our Coordinator, Sandy Steele, reached a milestone of completing 10 years with the Service.**

The staff and Management Committee hosted a surprise celebration for Sandy at "The Cottage – Bar & Restaurant, Armidale" to commemorate this wonderful occasion. Sandy's husband Rick skilfully got Sandy to the venue under the ruse of date-night.



Sandy joined the NNWCLS team in 2013 after relocating from Grafton and brought with her experience in financial management, report writing and statistical analysis. "While this position feeds into the wheelhouse of everything that I enjoy in my working life, it became apparent very early on in my employment that I was a part of a dynamic team that did incredible work for the community while supporting one another. I felt very lucky to be a part of this very special group of people and still do today", says Sandy.

During Sandy's time with the Service there has been incredible growth with increased staffing numbers, relocation

to a bigger office in a prime part of town, while increased funding opportunities saw the Service expand in a new direction that was a branch office at Moree for 12 months, amongst many other successes.

"I feel proud in knowing that I played some part in these changes. Growth and change don't just happen by accident, they come from the hard work of our passionate leaders in Terri and the Management Committee and from all the team playing their part; and that's why NNWCLS is, and always will be, such a successful service!"

Congratulations, Sandy, on this wonderful milestone!



## National Conference – Hobart

The National Community Legal Centres Conference was held in Hobart this year at the magnificent Hotel Grand Chancellor. This year's theme was "Reconnecting and Reimagining". Sandy, Stanley, Ben and Hatem represented NNWCLS staff of which they were thankful for the experience and brought back some valuable information and ideas.

The Conference was a 3 day event consisting of network meetings with other Centres in Australia; four Plenary sessions with incredible speakers such as Bob Brown former leader of the Australian Greens; Michael Mansell Tasmanian Aboriginal leader; and Commissioner Alastair McEwin AM (just to name a few), and 20 breakout sessions on pathways to justice; sustainable sector; strong organisations; client and community; and recharging skills and knowledge. This was an incredible event that was a privilege to be a part of.





## Our Solicitor, Ben Graham, gained his Practice Management Certificate



Ben successfully completed the Practice Management course through The College of Law in Sydney. This will now allow Ben, 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, Ben!

## 2 weddings, and a baby on the way!



Terri and Joey's baby, that we have been eagerly awaiting, arrived on 8th October 2023.

Gorgeous little Maeve Stephanie Coleman is healthy and happy, and her big sister Everleigh couldn't be more excited.

Looks like limited sleep will be on the cards for Terri and Joey. Congratulations!

Natasha and her partner, Andrew, married on 18th March 2023 on the beautiful grounds of the Saumarez Homestead, Armidale. They were surrounded by their family and friends sharing this wonderful occasion.



Sandy and her long-term partner, Rick, finally married on 1st July 2023. They celebrated an intimate wedding with their 4 beautiful children and their partners at the gorgeous Peterson's Winery, Armidale.

# Support

**Our Service is fortunate to have received Pro bono assistance from Pinnacle People Solutions for many of our Human Resourcing requirements.**



Pinnacle People Solutions is a regionally- based business that provides whole of organisation HR Solutions including specialist recruitment, risk assessment and mitigation strategies, workforce planning, succession planning, HR and WHS audits, framework builds, Industrial and Workplace relations support, executive coaching, team building programs and HR training and education.

Our Service is grateful to have received pro bono support from Pinnacle People Solutions, which has involved recruitment assistance, executive coaching, risk management and general Human Resourcing support. This ongoing support highlights the commitment Pinnacle People Solutions has in assisting regionally based not-for-profit organisations to manage their HR needs.

**Our Service chooses to bank with Regional Australia Bank, Armidale. We have been a member of this financial institution for many years.**



In 2015 we became a member of their Community Partnership Program. The Program, now supporting almost 1600 registered groups and causes, allows Regional Australia Bank members to select a local community group, such as us, that they wish to support and in doing so Regional Australia Bank will donate 0.75% of the members' average annual balance to that community group on behalf of the member.

At the end of this financial year, we were presented with a Certificate from the Regional Australia Bank and a credit bonus deposited into our account to the value of \$3,600.18. This Program certainly is proof of Regional Australia Bank's commitment to its members and its community. We appreciated being involved and receiving this support through this Program, that in total has now allocated to the community more than \$2 million in donations.

**Bartier Perry Lawyers: We have a pro-bono service engagement with this leading law firm based in Sydney.**



Bartier Perry Lawyers has a proud 80-year history of providing legal services to businesses, private clients, insurance and government department and agencies. Their scope of work for our clients is to provide specialist legal assistance, on a pro bono basis, when legal problems are outside our matter types.

Over the past 12 months we have referred several of our clients to Bartier Perry Lawyers whose legal team were able to assist with specialised and complex legal issues. This pro bono partnership is a valuable extension of our work for our clients who, on most occasions, would not have had the opportunity for specialist help.



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

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**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023**

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

**STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023**

	Note	2023 \$	2022 \$
Revenue	2	874,239	1,019,746
Other income	3	10,525	785
Interest revenue calculated using the effective interest method		1,535	1,703
Administration costs		(126,072)	(94,648)
Depreciation expense	4	(32,970)	(50,570)
Employee benefits expenses		(759,112)	(731,965)
Occupancy expenses		(33,524)	(23,312)
Other expenses		(31,277)	(12,026)
<b>(Deficit)/Surplus before income tax expense</b>		<b>(96,656)</b>	<b>109,713</b>
Income tax expense	1(a)	-	-
<b>(Deficit)/Surplus after income tax expense</b>		<b>(96,656)</b>	<b>109,713</b>
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax		-	-
<b>Total comprehensive (deficit)/surplus for the year</b>		<b>(96,656)</b>	<b>109,713</b>



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

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION**  
**AS AT 30 JUNE 2023**

	Note	2023 \$	2022 \$
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	5	362,821	564,603
Financial assets	6	387,584	251,327
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>750,405</b>	<b>815,930</b>
<b>NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Property, plant and equipment	7	-	5,349
Right-of-use assets	8	366,573	177,656
<b>TOTAL NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>366,573</b>	<b>183,005</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>1,116,978</b>	<b>998,935</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Trade and other payables	9	12,958	7,144
Provisions	10	271,680	252,800
Lease liabilities	11	14,160	31,572
Other liabilities	12	350	350
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>299,148</b>	<b>291,866</b>
<b>NON CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Lease liabilities	11	361,724	156,431
Provisions	10	16,681	14,557
<b>TOTAL NON CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>378,405</b>	<b>170,988</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<b>677,553</b>	<b>462,854</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>439,425</b>	<b>536,081</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>			
Accumulated funds		439,425	536,081
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>		<b>439,425</b>	<b>536,081</b>

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

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	Accumulated Funds \$	Total \$
<b>Balance at 1 July 2022</b>	426,368	426,368
Total comprehensive surplus	<u>109,713</u>	<u>109,713</u>
<b>Balance at 30 June 2022</b>	<u>536,081</u>	<u>536,081</u>
Total comprehensive deficit	<u>(96,656)</u>	<u>(96,656)</u>
<b>Balance at 30 June 2023</b>	<u>439,425</u>	<u>439,425</u>



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

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023**

	Note	2023 \$	2022 \$
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Receipts from customers		961,876	1,133,474
Interest received		1,535	1,703
Payments to suppliers and employees		(984,820)	(1,028,768)
Interest paid		(25,984)	(9,861)
Net cash (used in)/provided by operating activities	13 (b)	(47,393)	96,548
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Payment for investments		(136,257)	(1,499)
Net cash used in investing activities		(136,257)	(1,499)
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Repayments of lease liabilities		(18,132)	(35,662)
Net cash used in financing activities		(18,132)	(35,662)
Net (decrease)/increase in cash held		(201,782)	59,387
Cash at the beginning of the financial year		564,603	505,216
Cash at the end of the financial year	13 (a)	362,821	564,603

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

**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 association. 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 2023

**(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 association 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 association 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 association 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 comprehensive income.

Where it is not possible to estimate the recoverable amount of an individual asset, the association 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 association has a present (legal or constructive) obligation as a result of a past event, it is probable the association 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 2023

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**(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 association'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 association receives a number of funding streams that do not contain sufficiently specific performance obligations. Where there are no sufficiently specific performance obligations present, the association 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 association 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 association 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 comprehensive income.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

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**(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 association 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 association'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 association 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 association 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.

**(o) New or Amended Accounting Standards and Interpretations Adopted**

The incorporated association 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.

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

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023**

	Note	2023 \$	2022 \$
<b>Note 2: Revenue</b>			
Other revenue			
Government funding - AASB 1058		870,703	1,010,574
Other revenue - AASB 1058		3,536	9,172
Total revenue		874,239	1,019,746
<b>Note 3: Other income</b>			
Other income			
Gain on lease modification		10,525	785
Total other income		10,525	785
<b>Note 4: Expenses</b>			
Surplus before income tax includes the following specific expenses:			
Depreciation expense		32,970	50,570
Remuneration of auditor		8,900	8,200
<b>Note 5: Cash and Cash Equivalents</b>			
Cash at bank		362,811	564,593
Cash - other		10	10
		362,821	564,603
<b>Note 6: Financial assets</b>			
Term deposits - at amortised cost		387,584	251,327
		387,584	251,327
<b>Note 7: Property, Plant and Equipment</b>			
Plant and equipment - at cost		64,424	64,424
Less: Accumulated depreciation		(64,424)	(64,134)
		-	290
Motor vehicles - at cost		52,945	52,945
Less: Accumulated depreciation		(52,945)	(47,886)
		-	5,059
Total Plant and Equipment		-	5,349
<b>Note 8: Right-of-use Assets</b>			
Right-of-use Land & Buildings		385,754	277,919
Less: Accumulated depreciation		(19,181)	(100,263)
		366,573	177,656



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

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023**

	Note	2023 \$	2022 \$
<b>Note 9: Trade and Other Payables</b>			
CURRENT			
Sundry payables and accrued expenses		<u>12,958</u>	<u>7,144</u>
		<u>12,958</u>	<u>7,144</u>
<b>Note 10: Provisions</b>			
CURRENT			
Provision for employee benefits		176,628	167,090
Provision for locum's and salaries		12,995	9,794
Provision for redundancy		<u>82,057</u>	<u>75,916</u>
		<u>271,680</u>	<u>252,800</u>
NON-CURRENT			
Provision for long service leave		<u>16,681</u>	<u>14,557</u>
		<u>16,681</u>	<u>14,557</u>
<b>Note 11: Lease liabilities</b>			
CURRENT			
Lease liabilities		<u>14,160</u>	<u>31,572</u>
		<u>14,160</u>	<u>31,572</u>
NON-CURRENT			
Lease liabilities		<u>361,724</u>	<u>156,431</u>
		<u>361,724</u>	<u>156,431</u>
<b>Note 12: Other Liabilities</b>			
CURRENT			
Other liabilities		<u>350</u>	<u>350</u>
		<u>350</u>	<u>350</u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	Note	2023 \$	2022 \$
<b>Note 13: Cash Flow Information</b>			
(a) Reconciliation of cash			
Cash and cash equivalents		<u>362,821</u>	<u>564,603</u>
		<u>362,821</u>	<u>564,603</u>
(b) Reconciliation of cash flow from operations with surplus/(deficit) from activities after income tax expense:			
Surplus/(deficit) after income tax expense		(96,656)	109,713
Non cash flows in surplus:			
Depreciation		32,970	50,570
(Gain)/loss on lease modification		(10,525)	(785)
Changes in Assets and Liabilities:			
(Increase)/decrease in trade and other receivables		-	12,500
Increase/(decrease) in creditors and accruals		5,814	(4,407)
Increase/(decrease) in provisions		<u>21,004</u>	<u>(71,043)</u>
Cash flows from operations		<u>(47,393)</u>	<u>96,548</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 2023 and 30 June 2022.

**Note 16: Commitments**

The association had no commitments for expenditure as at 30 June 2023 and 30 June 2022.

**Note 17: Related Parties**

Key Management Personnel

Key management personnel compensation	<u>496,728</u>	<u>355,407</u>
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The totals represent the remuneration paid to key management personnel (KMP) of the organisation.

Other Related Parties

Transactions between related parties are on normal commercial terms and conditions no more favourable than those available to other parties unless otherwise stated.

**Note 18: Events After the End of the Reporting Period**

No 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.

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

**STATEMENT BY THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023**

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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 attached financial report:

1. Presents a true and fair view of the financial position of North & North West Community Legal Service Inc as at 30 June 2023 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:



Treasurer



Chairperson

Dated: 23 October 2023



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

**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 2023, the statement of 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 2023 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.

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**INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT  
TO THE MEMBERS OF  
NORTH & NORTH WEST COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE INC  
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 2023 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.

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

**ABN 35 931 742 739**

- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the committee.
- 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)  
134 Taylor St  
ARMIDALE NSW 2350

Dated: 23 October 2023

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

**ABN 35 931 742 739**

The additional financial data presented on pages 17 - 21 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 2023. 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)  
134 Taylor St  
ARMIDALE NSW 2350

Dated: 23 October 2023

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

**DETAILED INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023**

<b>LEGAL SERVICE</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>Income</b>		
Government funding		
Commonwealth funding	<b>581,477</b>	567,295
NSW state funding	<b>284,226</b>	272,137
Service generated income	<b>15,596</b>	8,500
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>881,299</b>	847,932
<b>Expenditure</b>		
<u>Salary &amp; Wages</u>		
Salaries and wages	<b>604,276</b>	656,670
Superannuation contributions	<b>63,248</b>	65,720
	<b>667,524</b>	722,390
<u>Salary Related Expenses</u>		
Provision for annual leave	<b>3,329</b>	(6,711)
Provision for long service leave	<b>7,424</b>	(26,868)
Provision for relief wages	<b>908</b>	4,078
Provision for redundancy	<b>6,141</b>	(8,779)
Staff training	<b>3,874</b>	501
Staff recruitment	<b>-</b>	3,060
Staff labour hire	<b>44,848</b>	1,523
Workers compensation insurance	<b>2,429</b>	2,629
	<b>68,953</b>	(30,567)
<u>Other Operating Expenses</u>		
Accounting and finance fees	<b>11,326</b>	10,800
Communications	<b>6,746</b>	6,573
Depreciation expense	<b>32,970</b>	47,222
Insurance	<b>14,114</b>	11,538
Interest - ROU assets	<b>25,984</b>	8,878
Office overheads	<b>21,928</b>	17,452
Library, resources and subscriptions	<b>10,268</b>	9,777
Other premises costs	<b>15,500</b>	9,994
Programming and planning	<b>14,385</b>	9,349
Repairs and maintenance	<b>3,709</b>	957
Minor equipment	<b>268</b>	-
Travel	<b>31,008</b>	11,126
	<b>188,206</b>	143,666
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>924,683</b>	835,489
<b>(Deficit)/Surplus</b>	<b>(43,384)</b>	12,443

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

DETAILED INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	2023 \$	2022 \$
<b>COVID FRONTLINE &amp; ICT SERVICES</b>		
<b>Income</b>		
<b>Total Income</b>	-	-
<b>Expenditure</b>		
<u>Salary &amp; Wages</u>		
Salaries and wages	-	35,021
Superannuation contributions	-	3,502
	-	38,523
<u>Salary Related Expenses</u>		
Provision for annual leave	-	1,171
Staff recruitment	-	295
Workers compensation insurance	-	150
	-	1,616
<u>Other Operating Expenses</u>		
Accounting and finance fees	-	500
Communications	-	600
Depreciation expense	-	3,348
Insurance	-	300
Management expense	-	3,160
Interest - ROU assets	-	983
Office overheads	-	3,925
Library, resources and subscriptions	-	1,000
Programming and planning	-	1,550
Travel	-	900
	-	16,266
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	-	56,405
<b>Surplus/(deficit)</b>	-	(56,405)



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

DETAILED INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

DOMESTIC, FAMILY and SEXUAL VIOLENCE FUNDING	2023 \$	2022 \$
<b>Income</b>		
NSW state funding	-	151,250
<b>Total Income</b>	-	151,250
<b>Expenditure</b>		
<u>Salary &amp; Wages</u>		
Salaries and wages	20,484	-
Superannuation contributions	2,151	-
	22,635	-
<u>Other Operating Expenses</u>		
Library, resources and subscriptions	1,845	-
Programming and planning	29	-
	1,874	-
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	24,509	-
<b>(Deficit)/Surplus</b>	(24,509)	151,250

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

**DETAILED INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023**

<b>OTHER INCOME</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>Income</b>		
Legal Aid additional funding	<b>5,000</b>	6,893
Service generated income	-	3,160
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>5,000</b>	10,053
<b>Expenditure</b>		
<u>Other Operating Expenses</u>		
Office overheads	-	2,764
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	-	2,764
<b>Surplus</b>	<b>5,000</b>	7,289

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

DETAILED INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

OTHER INCOME	2023 \$	2022 \$
<b>Income</b>		
SSTF funding	-	13,000
<b>Total Income</b>	-	13,000
<b>Expenditure</b>		
<u>Other Operating Expenses</u>		
Office overheads	817	17,075
Library, resources and subscriptions	32,946	789
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	33,763	17,864
<b>Deficit</b>	(33,763)	(4,864)







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