



NORTH &
NORTHWEST
COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE

Annual Report

2024-2025





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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FACEBOOK



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Welcome to our Annual Report

**A message from
the team**



The North & North West Community Legal Service Inc is funded by the Australian Government, NSW Government and the Public Purpose Fund through the community Legal Centres Program 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.



Solicitor/Acting Principal 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.



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

Pauline Sazdanoff

Pauline has worked for a number of years in both the Community Legal Centre (CLC) sector as well as private practice. She graduated from the University of New South Wales with a Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Laws degree. Pauline is passionate about assisting those in the community who require it the most, including the disadvantaged and most vulnerable.





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 (to 5th March 2025)

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 & Coordinator Support

Natasha Macgregor

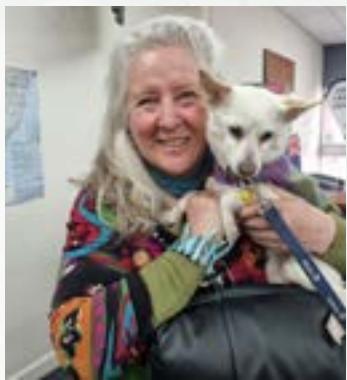
Natasha joined the Service in 2019 under a traineeship position. After completing her 12-month traineeship she then moved into the role of Administrative Assistant, and more recently extended her role to Coordinator Support. Natasha has also successfully undertaken a secondment role of Legal Support Officer for a contracted period during times of high-demand on the legal team. Natasha loves her frontline work with clients, offering respect and care to everyone who connects with the Service. Natasha has a love and passion for animals and cooking.



Administration Assistant

Caitlin Kennedy

Caitlin joined the NNWCLS team in 2024 as an Administration Trainee – Certificate III Business. Caitlin was seconded to the Administration Assistant role for a period after which time, and when her traineeship was complete, she remained in the AA role. In her spare time, Caitlin enjoys travelling and being at the beach.



Temp Administrative Assistant (to 23rd May 2025)
Clare Campbell (with Pearl)

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".





Working together to assist everyone in our catchment



Our Management Committee



Chairperson

Ms Bronwyn Pearson

MAICD, CAHRI, AMICDA

Bronwyn is a distinguished Human Resources specialist with over 25 years of experience providing strategic and operational HR advice and solutions to both public and private sectors. She holds postgraduate management qualifications in human resource management and has achieved Certified Professional Member status with the Australian Human Resources Institute (CAHRI).

Her expertise spans strategic HR, change management, employee relations, workforce planning, performance management,

organisational development, executive coaching, negotiation, mediation, and specialist recruitment. Bronwyn excels in helping businesses navigate complex legal requirements related to employment and people management.

Bronwyn is dedicated to supporting regional businesses in meeting their employer obligations and attracting, retaining, and developing the right staff, which she believes leads to stronger, sustainable communities.

Community involvement is central to Bronwyn's vision. She has served on the board of several regional organisations that share her values of integrity and commitment to community. She is the Chairperson of the North & North West Community Legal Service Management Committee and has served as the Job Coordinator for the Far West Orana region under the Australian Government's Local Jobs Program. In these roles, Bronwyn collaborates with local stakeholders to develop place-based strategies that address employment challenges and provide opportunities for the unemployed or those at risk of unemployment.

Bronwyn's achievements include winning the 2015 Best New Business award from the Armidale Business Chamber, followed by the 2016 winner of the Excellence in Business Ethics award. In 2018, she won the Outstanding Business Leader category in the Armidale Business Chamber Awards and was also named the Regional Winner for Outstanding Business Leader by the New England North West Business Chamber. In 2021, Bronwyn received the Excellence in Small Business award from Business NSW and the Excellence in Professional Services Award from Women in Altitude. Most recently, in 2024, she won the Business Consultancy award at the Australian Small Business Champion Awards.



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 six 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.



General Member

Dr Guy Charlton

BA, JD, Economic, Politics and Law

Guy is an Associate Professor lecturing in Indigenous Law, Law in Context, Corporate and Business Law at the University of New England. His research interest includes comparative Indigenous Law, Corporate Law, Constitutional and Human Rights Law, and Property Law. Prior to his position at UNE he was a Senior Lecturer in Law at AUT, Auckland New Zealand where he lectured in Indigenous Law, torts, Local Government Law and property.

Guy is from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA where he practised law with Attorney Andrew Morgan as a general practitioner with Charlton and Morgan Ltd. He holds degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Madison (BA, JD Economic, Politics and Law), the University of Toronto (MA International Relations) and Auckland University (PhD). Guy has also worked or taught units at Curtin University Law School in Perth, Western Australia and City University of Hong Kong, Auckland University and National Chengchi University, Taipei, Taiwan.



General Member

Ms Caroline Coupland LLB, Grad Dip Legal Practice, GAICD

Caroline is an internationally accredited In-House Counsel. She has nearly 20 years' experience working as a lawyer in both the commercial and government sectors. She commenced her legal career as a litigator in the Supreme and District Courts before moving interstate and overseas, later moving to commercial law.

Her private sector law experience has largely been with national law firms and more recently with start-ups including working with the Cape York Land Council on a bespoke

contract with multiple stakeholders. She was a lawyer in both the Compliance Directorate and Funds Management team at the Australian Securities and Investments Commission in Sydney for 6 years and worked on the review of one of the largest corporate collapses in the country's history.

While working at Parliament House in Canberra she initiated, through the Clerk for the 39th Parliament, the introduction of a quota system for speaking times for independent members. She has a keen interest in Corporate Governance and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. She has served on several boards: as the company secretary of an agricultural company, an international joint venture company in the defence sector and currently for an Alliance20 social services organisation; she has also served on the board of the St Kilda Legal Service in Melbourne and for 6 years as a non-executive director on the board of a disability organisation in Armidale. She currently serves on the CSIRO Livestock Animal Ethics Committee and Women's Shelter Board. She has a keen interest in social equity: working evenings as a volunteer lawyer for community legal centres in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane and as a defence lawyer for street sex workers in the Melbourne "Loiter Court". She also has an interest in First Nations' welfare, assisting with one of the northern Mob's fire management projects and having lived and worked for a short period on Palm Island on the StVdP program there.

Her interests include marine science in which she has done studies and worked for a year and a half as a diver for Reef Check International, she has experience in ESL having lived for a year in southern Italy and she has three (much loved) daughters including one with Williams Syndrome.

A photograph showing several hands of different skin tones working together to assemble a large red puzzle. The puzzle pieces are interlocking gears. The hands are positioned in the upper left and center of the frame, with the background being a dark, out-of-focus image of the puzzle.

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 (Office base location)

- » **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

- » **The Creative Arts Centre**

83 Chandos Street
Gunnedah

- » **Go Co**

80 Marquis Street
Gunnedah

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 legal assistance

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 (NEWTAAS). The sudden growth in the Service required it to relocate from shared accommodation in the Armidale Neighbourhood Centre to its own premises in the Minto Building in Rusden Street Armidale. It also opened offices in Dubbo and Broken Hill for the tenancy service, both co-located with the Community Legal Centres in those cities.

From July 2004 to September 2005, 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.

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 which required larger premises. The office is now located at 215 Beardy 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 extended to 17 clinics each month in 12 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 provided the Moree community, and surrounding districts with high legal need, ongoing support. It was a most successful project surpassing all outcomes and goals set through strategic planning processes.

2025

After 32 years of servicing our catchment with free legal advice and assistance, the North & North West Community Legal Service continues to be a reliable and well-respected legal organisation amongst its stakeholders. We continue to be a valuable and integral link within the client services referral pathways in our catchment.

Currently NNWCLS is assisting more clients than ever before, so while our connection to our stakeholders is a vital part of our framework, it's our clients who remain at the heart of everything we do. Their positive experience, while engaging with us, is our priority. We pride ourselves on our holistic approach to our work by offering all our clients respect, sensitivity to their legal problems, and support throughout their journey with us ensuring that our values and mission remains the same year after year:

"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:

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

Family Law issues

We predominately assist clients in the Family Law space with:

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

54% of Family Law advice work is with Parenting arrangements

Employment and workplace issues

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

7% of Civil Law advice work related to Employment issues

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.

5% of Civil Law advice work related to assistance in bankruptcy, debt owed to/by clients

Consumer Complaints

11% of Civil Law advice work is for Consumer Complaints eg:

- Disputes with insurance companies
- Refunds for products and services

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.

390 Wills, POA & EG documents drafted

a glance in 2025

Traffic Offences

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

**38% 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**

Neighbourhood disputes

We have provided a diverse range of advice and services to clients in this area, including issues related to access to property, dogs and surveillance. However, recurring neighbour complaints about noise and overhanging trees remain a consistent concern.

**6% of Civil Law advice
was assisting clients with
neighbourhood disputes**

Criminal Law

We assisted clients with:

- Acts intended to cause injury
 - Theft
 - Fraud
- Property damage
- Offences including weapons

Discrimination

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

**We assisted 3 clients
with discrimination
matters this year**

Apprehended Violence Orders

We helped clients apply to vary AVO conditions due to changed circumstances. Additionally, we represented clients (both applicants and defendants) in numerous AVO matters. We also advised defendants to ensure they understood conditions, reducing breach risk.

**We assisted 142 clients
with ADVO/APVO**

Chairperson's Report

It has been an honour to again Chair the North & North West Community Legal Service (NNWCLS) Management Committee over the last 12 months.

Our small but dedicated team has again delivered high-quality legal assistance across a vast rural and regional footprint, maintaining accessibility for communities who most need free and confidential legal help.

NNWCLS provided assistance to almost 1,000 clients in the last financial year, with the Service meeting or exceeding targets across almost every delivery mode. Court/tribunal matters were 50% above target, and other representation matters opened were above by 60%.

In addition, Community Legal Education (CLE) and stakeholder engagement were notable successes, with 54 CLE activities and 62 stakeholder engagements both showing significant increases against their targets. CLE activity included 46 episodes of the Law Matters radio program and multiple targeted Wills/POA sessions for seniors and Aboriginal groups, strengthening early engagement and legal literacy. Community expos, radio campaigns and social media continued to be effective referral pathways.

NNWCLS kept the focus firmly on priority and high-need clients. Demographic outcomes for 2024–25 demonstrate our effective reach to vulnerable groups. Clients experiencing domestic and family violence comprised 32.5% of the caseload, reflecting both the regional need and the Service's accessible pathways for those at risk.



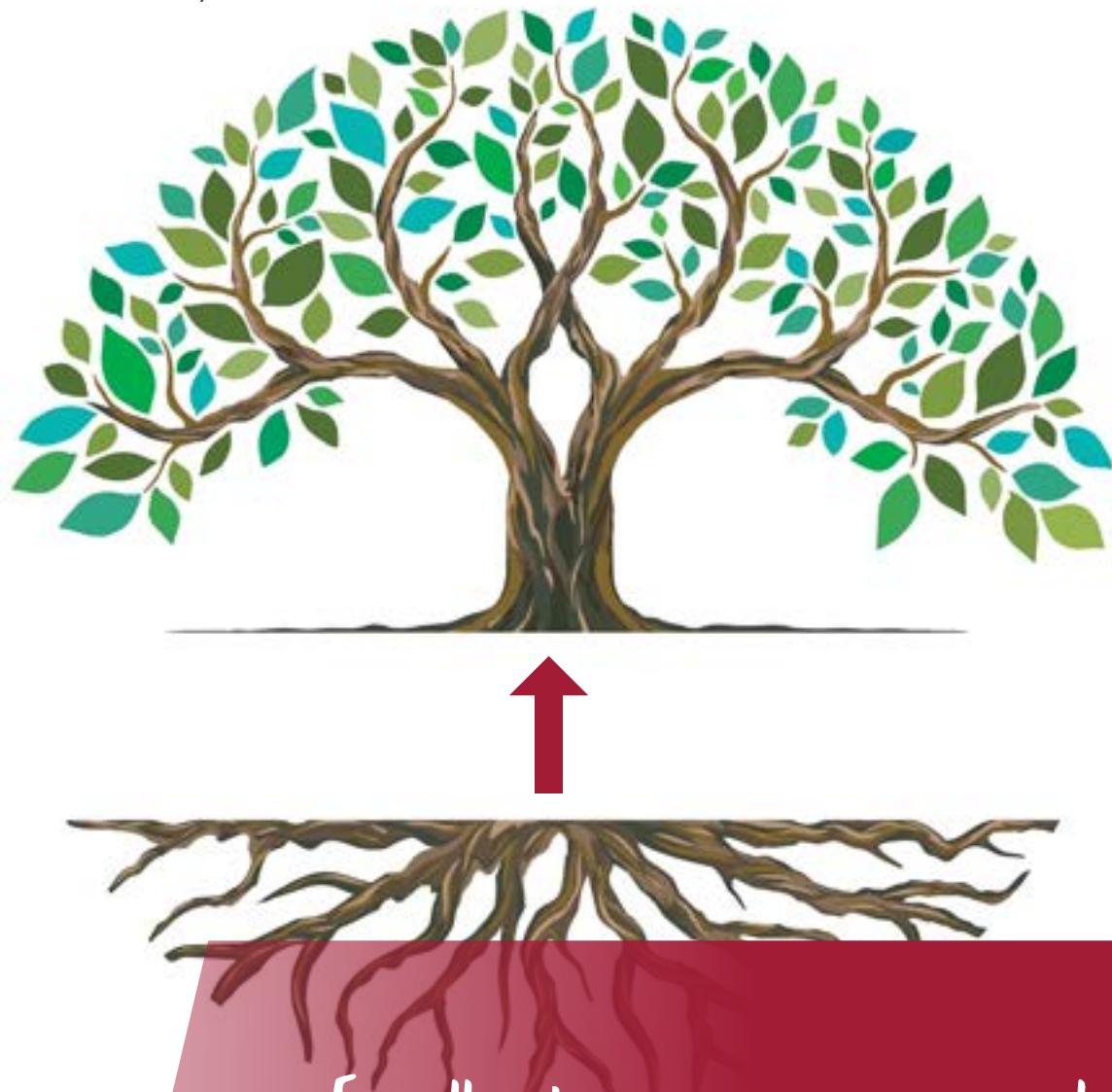
Wills, powers of attorney and enduring guardianship remained the most common service type, but protective order matters (AVO/ADVO) entered our Top 10 for the first time, ranking second and signalling increased demand for safety-focused work and court liaison support. Court and tribunal work also increased markedly, and a representative case study demonstrated successful negotiation for an aged client, resulting in full waiver of a previously large letter of demand and substantial stress relief for the client.

Staffing changes during the year included parental leave for our Principal Solicitor and Administrative Assistant; Senior Solicitor Ben Graham acted in the Principal Solicitor role and a part-time administrative appointment supported continuity. Ben, Donna and Clare left the Service in the past year, and we acknowledge their contributions. The Management Committee expanded to seven members, strengthening our governance capacity with expertise in law, HR and business and financial management. We welcomed site visits from sector colleagues and engaged directly with our local state and federal representatives, the NSW Attorney General and Legal Aid NSW to advocate for sustainable funding, given the dire prospects for CLC funding which emerged across the year.

Sustained high demand remains our principal challenge and places pressure on staff workloads and wellbeing. While volunteer interns and an expanded pro bono register provided important assistance, accommodating every increasing demand with current resourcing is not sustainable long term. The Management Committee will continue advocacy for funding uplifts, monitor workload and wellbeing indicators, and refine targets in the next funding cycle to ensure continued quality service delivery.

I thank my Management Committee colleagues, our Principal and solicitors, administrative staff, volunteers and partner organisations for their commitment and professionalism. Their work underpins NNWCLS's role as a lifeline for many across our region.

Bronwyn Pearson
Chairperson



**Excellent governance equals
excellent service delivery**

Principal Solicitor's Report

"Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall." Confucius.

I have always admired our clients for their resilience. Their will to continue moving forward, regardless of the adversity thrust upon them, has left me regularly in awe. The strength of the human spirit and capacity to share and engage is heart-warming and it is a privilege and honour to witness this in our client's journey.

This year has, more than those before, tested and demonstrated the resilient capability of our staff. Funding uncertainty, unfortunately, has always been an element of working in the Community Legal Centre Sector, and one that has caused significant concern at all levels of service delivery and administration. As much as this causes concern, it also breeds a level of complacency, knowing that we had been in the same position many times before, and yet we continue. Having developed this mindset, it was perhaps even more difficult to digest the reality of having to embark on a workforce change process, during this reporting period.

This process stretched our staff in more ways than I could have foreseen. The impacts continue to be felt, and I imagine will do so for months to come. However, proudly this didn't impact on client service delivery, even once. We continued to show up each day, driven to fulfil our Service purpose and objectives, passionate and vested in our client experience and outcomes.

Our team rallied around each other in support and solidarity, united by our shared vision and goals. The process broke us in some ways, but through resilience and courage we have come together with hope for what we are becoming.



Interestingly, a workforce change process, and a new funding cycle created an unprecedented opportunity to reconsider the way we work, and how we delivery our Service objectives. Staff burnout and vicarious trauma are two topics that have been covered in countless meetings and training opportunities throughout my career. Even being something we are so conscious of, I felt it was a real and present issue for our Service, that could not be adequately addressed under our historical structure.

As leaders, Sandy and I, with staff consultation and feedback, determined a new path forward, one that may bend and twist as we travel, but changing the way we operate was no longer a choice, but a necessity. I am hopeful that this will lead to more manageable workloads, better job satisfaction and improved communication and support pathways. It is my belief that such improvements will directly and positively impact client experiences and outcomes.

Service Provision

Despite the setbacks experienced this year, our small team assisted 822 clients, providing almost 600 advice sessions, opened 475 files and delivered almost 60 legal education sessions, amongst

other deliverables including the court liaison program and our extensive outreach program. These statistics are outstanding, and a reminder of the volume of increasing and unmet need in our catchment.

Our legal team operated during this period, with only 3.1 Full time equivalent solicitors. In previous years, we operated with 4 FTE solicitors. Having reduced staff, increased workloads, wait times and scheduling challenges, but our team has met this with a quiet resolve to deliver their best each day.

Civil law assistance has remained the biggest area for advice and ongoing assistance. This generally represents such matters as Wills, Enduring Power of Attorney and Enduring Guardianship, neighbourhood disputes, Apprehended Violence Orders, employment issues, motor vehicle accidents, consumer complaints, credit and debt issues and more!

Changes were made to several policies, which we review regularly. Of note we amended the Drafting of Wills policy to encompass our new "Wills Kit" style document that allows our practitioners to complete a Will, by hand and executed on the day of instructions, with the intention of drafting a Will with the same instructions and later executing on our return to the client at their place of residence our outreach venue. This was to ensure that a client has a valid Will from the time of taking instructions, as delays created by distance and scheduling may mean that a client cannot see our Solicitor for up to 2 months (on our bi-monthly circuits).

Similarly, our Home Visits policy was amended, acknowledging the reduction of our staff and difficulty in having two staff available (previous policy) to attend home/ Aged Care Residential Facilities (ACRF) and hospital visits, outside of Armidale. Staff are now able to visit an ACRF or Hospital on their own, when a second staff member is unavailable,

noting that each facility would have several staff members present.

Our team also initiated a volunteer recruitment drive, partnering with the UNE School of Law; a social media campaign resulted in the induction of three additional volunteers, totalling 6 over the financial year. For the first time we had two volunteers assisting us at our outreach venues: Tamworth, Inverell and Moree. We are grateful for the contribution of each of our volunteers and acknowledge the impact their work had on providing accessible and timely legal advice and assistance to our clients. Of note, circuit volunteers increased our ability to witness Wills and deliver home visits for those who are unable to access our office or outreach venue.

We utilised our expanded pro bono network, making more referrals than before. This allowed our clients to achieve outcomes that fall outside our service guidelines; whereby teams of specialist solicitors provided meaningful and practical assistance. I acknowledge and thank the support of our pro bono partners and their generosity in sharing their expertise and time.

Another significant change has been our transition to Actionstep, which has presented both challenges and improvements to our systems. We have reached a stage of staff competence that will now allow us to begin the transition to online records, beginning with the transition of all advices. I predict that this online system will reduce the administrative burden upon staff, resulting in increased ability to meet client demand.

Highlights

We were delighted to host our colleagues from Legal Aid NSW, Civil Law team, Tamworth office, Jamie and Demelza. We have been fortunate to share a collaborative and friendly working relationship with them over the years

but felt privileged to be able to host them at our offices for a morning tea. Such discussions are key in ensuring that service gaps are met, and appropriate referral pathways are established and maintained.

Caitlin completed her TAFE qualification, obtaining a Certificate III in Business Administration. Feedback received from the Trainee Coordinator was overtly positive, praising Caitlin for the quality of her work submitted.

All our staff were supported and encouraged to participate in learning and development opportunities. Some sessions our staff connected to included Actionstep User training, the Child Youth and Families Conference, Leading a Mentally Healthy Workplace and Portable Long Service Leave.

Conclusion

This year has been particularly challenging for me, for several reasons, and I'd like to thank my colleagues, for their support of me and each other. The strength we have as a team makes a hard job, easier.

Further I acknowledge the team's

commitment to our clients and service delivery. I appreciate the Solicitor's willingness to take on additional circuits, expos and Community Legal Education as required, despite their heavy caseloads. Working with each member of our team brings me pride and joy and I am genuinely grateful for their contribution to our Service.

Thank you also to our Management Committee. We are fortunate to have a team of volunteer professionals, all experienced and qualified in their respective fields, who generously share their time and experience to ensure the Service operates under good governance and leadership.

The coming year has already proven to be exciting, rewarding and hopeful and I look forward to sharing the continued great work of our Service team.

Terri Coleman

Principal Solicitor



Coordinator's Report

Where the Service sits right now is the result of everyone's hard work throughout the year, and a year from now, will be the result of our hard work today.

This year represents the final year of an incredible 3-year funding cycle, and everyone's hard work is shown in our impressive outcomes.

We are a team that continually rises to every challenge as we balance ongoing increased demand on our Service, against financial constraints and uncertainty. Year on year we embed ourselves into our community to ensure we know and understand the people to whom we assist. In doing so, this year has been very apparent that clients are feeling the impacts of increased cost-of-living, where "shrinkflation" has been felt amongst everyday household products, resulting in more of our community than ever before at risk, or living with, financial hardship. With our Commonwealth Attorney General setting a benchmark for our Sector to assist no less than 88% of clients living with financial disadvantage, and that we have reported 99% this year, is telling of the current financial climate of our catchment. However, this high percentage is the very reason our Service exists: to increase access to the legal system for those with least means and power to help themselves.

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



Let's break things down through our statistics:

Over our 3 year funding cycle:

At the completion of a "termed cycle", fabulous broad data analyses can be drawn to derive valuable insights, uncover trends, and identify relationships to inform decisions and improve processes. This 3-year funding cycle, compared to our last, has seen an incredible uplift in our overall productivity, and while there has been no increase to our staffing structure or funding level, rising to meet demand, and doing it most successfully, is reflected in a comparative analysis.

Supporting evidence:

We assisted 12% more clients in this 3-year cycle than our previous, while an impressive growth in our Court Liaison Program saw an increase of 150%. We provided 18% more legal advices, and 24% more Legal Education sessions. Furthermore, we worked with more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) clients than in our entire 30-year history being 20.5%, which we are most proud as our overall catchment ATSI population is 12%. While our assistance to clients at risk or living with domestic and family violence reached a staggering 32.5% within a catchment that saw DV crime statistics increase by 8.4%.

It's one thing to increase productivity over 1 year, but to identify continued, ongoing growth over several years speaks to the strength of our structure with flexibility, our long-term goals morphing with trends, executed by a synergistic team that strives to enhance our work year after year.

And this year alone?

After setting our yearly targets, and throughout the year engaging in reflective, accountable practise to meet them, impressively all targets were surpassed ie:

- 65% more case files opened
- 53% more Court work
- 33% over in Legal Tasks
- 57% more Community Legal Education sessions
- 72% over target in engagement with stakeholders

Equally as important is tracking our client demographic percentages ensuring that we're reaching our most vulnerable clients across our entire catchment. And engaging with our catchment occurs through our Outreach Program which continues to be an impressive and integral part of our Service.

When doing a deep dive into the demographic statistics of our individual clinic locations, we see multiple indicators of socioeconomic disadvantage across client groups supporting the high need for our Service in these regions. And, as previously mentioned in our "benchmark", the apex common denominator of disadvantage is financial with almost all Outreach locations recording 100% of clients experiencing financial disadvantage at the time of client engagement. This is staggering.

Breaking down Outreach clinics we see:

Tenterfield recording the highest number of multiple vulnerable client groups ie: 71% Older Persons, 43% Disability clients, and 43% Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) clients. With our highest DV indicated clients showing 43% living with or at risk of domestic/family violence. This indicates a particularly high prevalence of legal need and disadvantage in this region, that which we respond to and service well.

Glen Innes has our highest number of male clients, with a staggering measure of risk of homelessness at 40%, while D/FV sits at 33%. These numbers are influenced by our work at the Glen Innes Correctional Centre, however they demonstrate our positive presence in this facility and this region.

Quirindi and Werris Creek predominantly saw older clients and a higher volume of female clients, with 23% identifying as ATSI, our lowest D/FV at 18% and a surprisingly low disability and mental illness number, and no clients indicating a risk of homelessness.

In our Clinics out west, **Gunnedah** is our second highest-ranking of D/FV location showing 35%, while we assisted a higher number of female clients, and recorded 100% financial disadvantage, with a high risk of homelessness. In **Narrabri** we have our highest volume of female clients being 81%, with a quarter of clients being older persons and a quarter recording a disability or mental illness. We assist a higher-than-average ATSI population in Narrabri, while 19% of clients are at risk of homelessness and 19% D/FV.

Moree reports multiple, simultaneous disadvantaged priority groups showing a high ATSI percentage of 33%, older persons of 42%, 65% female clients, D/FV at 23%, with homelessness sitting at 12%. We do so much good work in these high-need regions out west.

Towns within our catchment that are the most closely matched, when comparing client demographic and priority groups, are **Armidale** and **Tamworth**. While the population size varies considerably, the similarities with our client profiles are quite remarkable ie: we assisted more female clients in both towns, Armidale is slightly ahead on disability and mental illness indicated clients, while Tamworth's D/FV client number is marginally higher at 33%, Armidale at 29%. All other priority client groups, right down to the risk of homelessness, are astoundingly the same.

What we deduce from this data is that our Service, and Outreach Clinics, are well-placed in a catchment that indicates multiple vulnerabilities, while our connections to stakeholders is successful as we continually see referred, new clients walk through our doors. Our only challenge - meeting the ever-increasing demand on our Service on an under-resourced playing field, while also battling the urbanormativity narrative that sees RRR Centres, such as ours, not a forerunner for increased funding within a business structure that requires significant investment into Outreach functionality.

Grassroots operations:

Within the back-of-house operations this year, it was certainly dominated by tracking funding announcements for 25/26 and beyond ie: the next 5-year funding cycle. The Sector was not advised of individual Centres' levels of funding until the end of June 2025 which, because of the lateness of this announcement, had our Service leaning into our flexible work/plan practises, while being ready to respond swiftly and seamlessly to

transition from one financial year to the next with little interruption. While from the outside this transition appeared effortless, it only occurred because of our dedicated and supportive Management Committee and our passionate and eager staff, of which is fronted by a principal, who is best described as a leader, in our Principal Solicitor, Terri Coleman. What a team!

In closing:

While client numbers and statistics were impressive this year, the year came with many challenges that I commend everyone for their commitment to the purpose and values of our Service, while passionately leaning into their individual roles. And, within a complex year, receiving positive feedback from our administrator Legal Aid NSW on the work for 24/25 was appreciated. Legal Aid commended us on an outstanding year further saying that our Service exemplifies the importance of collaborative practice, community connection and knowledge, while commenting on the impressive breadth of our work conducted through our Outreach Program. From our peers, we are continually described as a high-performing, impressive Centre, and our success right now is the result of our hard work throughout the year.

I am so immensely proud to be a part of this amazing team!

Congratulations everyone.

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, casework, 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 190,289 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 and Glen Innes. We operate bi-monthly clinics in Tenterfield 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 residences 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 residential aged care facility 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



SCAN ME

Glen Innes each month on list day.

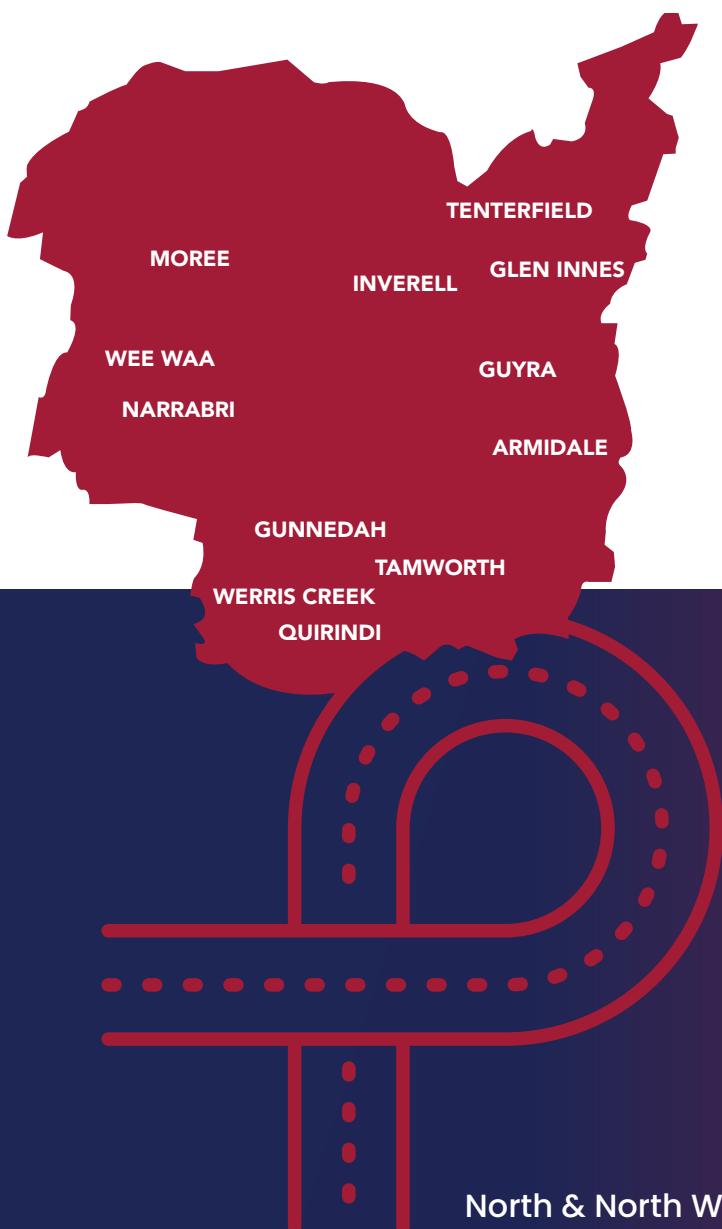
NNWCLS has expanded significantly since 1993 and when considering Service growth, much consideration is given to the vulnerable demographic of our regions as well as indications of high domestic and family violence statistics in communities. We ensure that, for these regions, we have a prominent presence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

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.



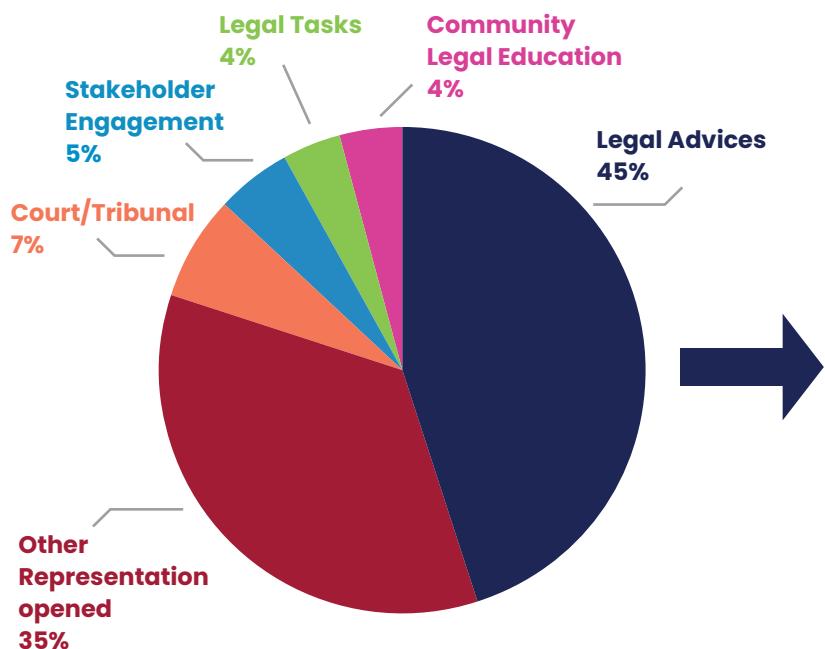
TRAVELLING
up to
40,673  **kms**
this year

Our Statistic Profile for 2024/2025

National Legal Assistance Program Funding

822 Clients

Service delivery snapshot:



Service delivery drill-down:



Client Demographic:

 55% Female
 45% Male

 99% experiencing financial disadvantage

 20.5% Identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

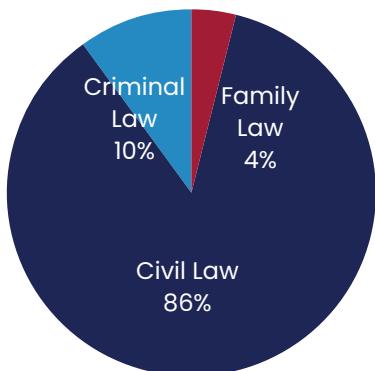


25% reported a disability or mental illness

 33.5% Older Persons (+65)

 32.5% experiencing Domestic violence

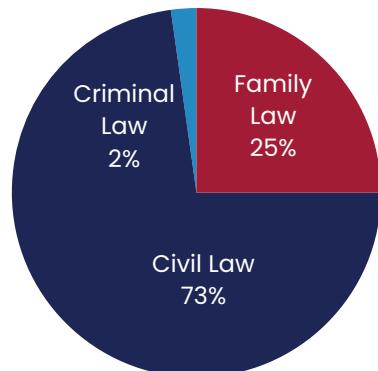
Representation Services given by Law Type...



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

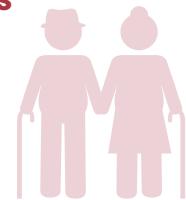
Demographic drill-down on Problem types

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander



- Wills, POA, EG
- ADVO/APVO
- Child Contacts/planning

Older Persons +65 years



- Wills, POA, EG
- Guardianship for adults
- ADVO/APVO
- Consumer Complaints

Disability indicated clients



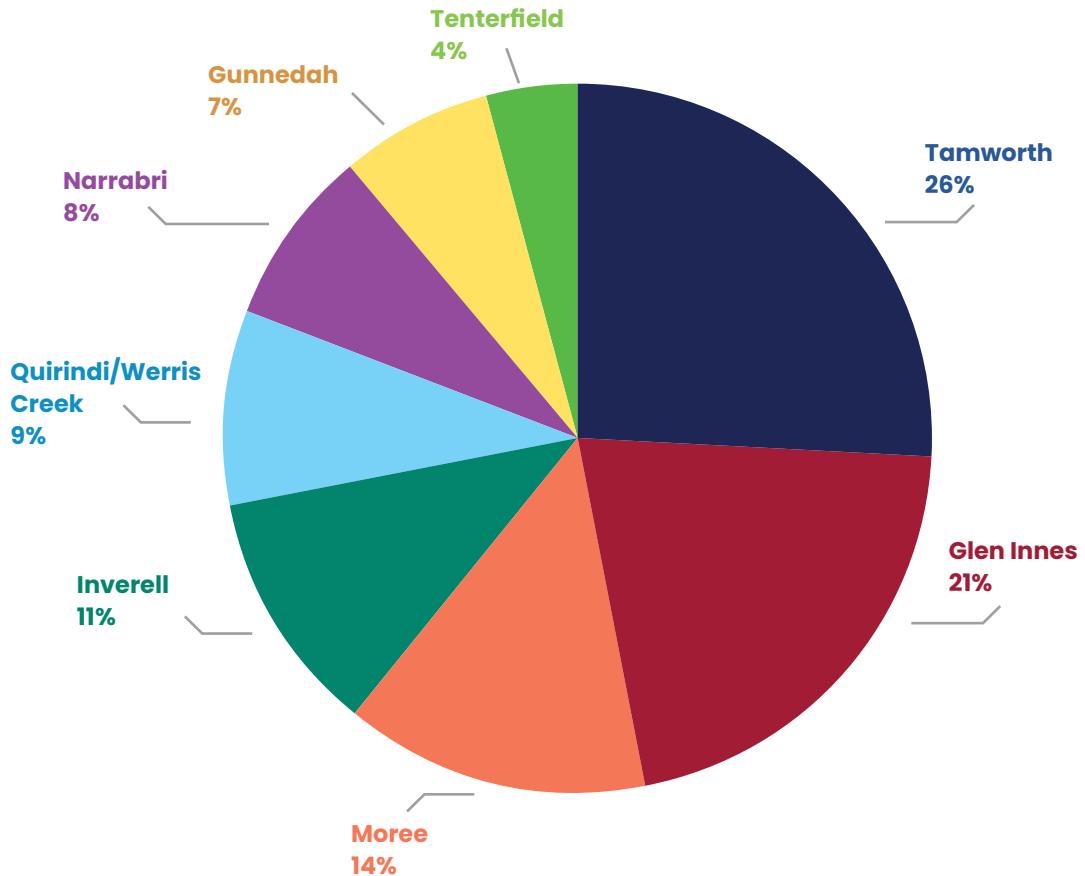
- Wills, POA, EG
- ADVO/APVO
- Roads & vehicle reg. offences
- Consumer Complaints

CALD client group



- Wills, POA, EG
- ADVO/APVO
- Child Contacts/planning
- Roads & vehicle reg. offences

Outreach Program drill-down:



Top 10 problem types of total clients

1	Will, Power of Attorney, Enduring Guardianship	6	Divorce/Separation
2	ADVO/APVO	7	Employment issues
3	Roads & Traffic regulatory offences	8	Neighbourhood disputes
4	Child contacts/contact orders/residency	9	Court Support
5	Consumer issues	10	Credit/debt issues



Sector-wide results of 41 Community Legal Centres in NSW for 23/24

60,009

Clients

* Sector-wide results

* NNWCLS results for same year

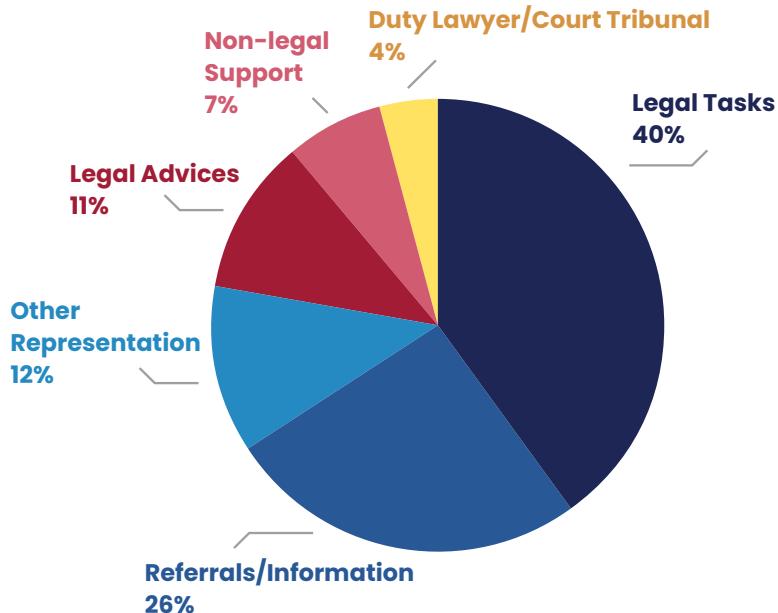
 55% Female / 49%
44% Male / 51%
1% Other/Unknown

 71% / 98% experiencing
financial disadvantage

 10% / 19% Identified as
Aboriginal or Torres
Strait Islander

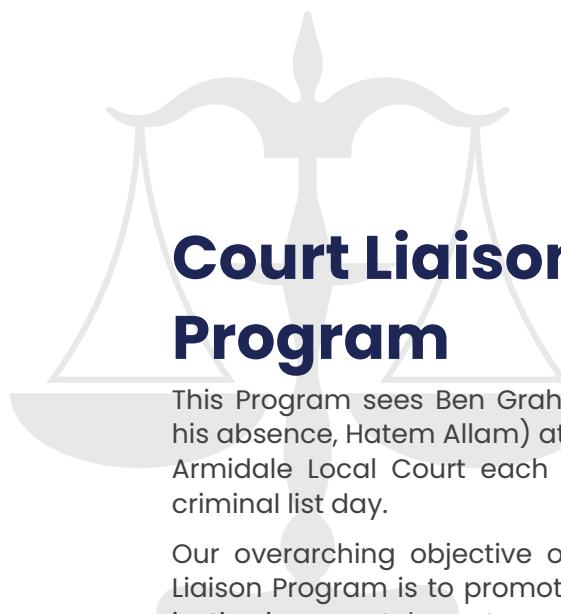
 17% / 39% experiencing
domestic or family violence

Service delivery snapshot of all CLC's in NSW



North & North West Community Legal Service 23/24 at a glance

Legal Advices	33%
Other Representation	26%
Legal tasks	4%
Court/Tribunal	4%
Referrals/Information	33%



Court Liaison Program

This Program sees Ben Graham (and in his absence, Hatem Allam) attending the Armidale Local Court each Monday on criminal 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 Strategic Planning processes 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:

- **38%** - Traffic and vehicle regulatory offences
- **33%** - Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders
- **29%** - Court Support



Community Legal Education

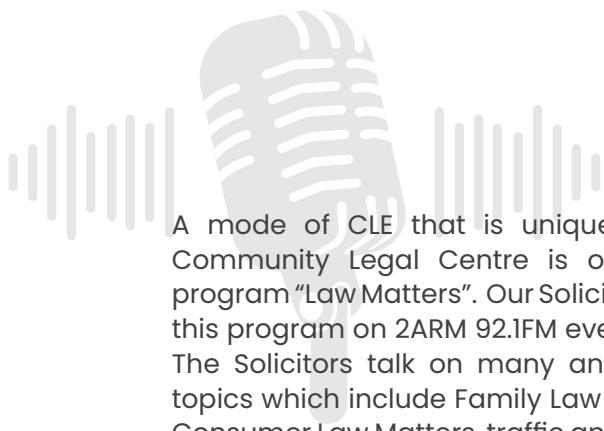
Community Legal Education (CLE) is an important part of our yearly Strategic Planning. The purpose of CLE is to increase our community's knowledge of particular areas of law that would be specific to their personal needs, or to their organisation's upskilling.

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:
 - » Armajun Disability Group – Armidale ATSI Health Centre
 - » Armajun Men's Group – Armidale ATSI Health Centre
 - » Social Wellness Centre Seniors Group – Gunnedah
 - » Inverell Parkinsons Support Group – Inverell
 - » Aged Care Network – Tamworth
- Domestic/Family Violence legal education to:
 - » Young Refugee Women's Group – Armidale
 - » Armidale Domestic and Family Violence Steering Committee Safe Connections event





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 staff 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 enhances the work we do with our clients as we're meeting their non-legal needs also with appropriate referrals resulting in swift and positive resolutions for our clients' issues.

This year we have participated in:

- Interagency Meetings
 - » Regional
 - » Indigenous
 - » Multicultural
 - » Youth
- Family Law Pathways Network
- Armidale Domestic Family Violence Steering Committee
- Cooperative Legal Service Delivery, Moree
- Community Drug & Alcohol Action teams
- Youth Community Voice Network Meeting
- Child Youth and Families Conference Meetings
- PACT (Preparing All Community Together – natural disasters) Community Network 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

Family Law Pathways Network Mock Trial Competition

Our Solicitor, Hatem Allam, attended the Family Law Pathways Network (FLPN) Mock Trial Competition in Tamworth. Hatem was the judge at this High School competition that saw students participating from across Tamworth, Quirindi and Gunnedah.

Hatem enjoyed being a part of this wonderful event while the FLPN was grateful for our involvement.



Expos 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.

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

- Lifesaver Day (O Week) – University of New England
- International Women's Day – Armidale Servies Club
- Walhallow Village Service Connect Day – Walhollow (near Quirindi)
- Guyra Community Information Day – Guyra Recreational Grounds
- Minimbah Aboriginal Preschool and Primary School NAIDOC event – Armidale
- NAIDOC stall in Centro Shopping Centre – Armidale
- Glen Innes Youth Day – Glen Innes High School
- Armidale Domestic and Family Violence Steering Committee campaign for DV awareness month
- Elder's Olympics Welcome Expo – Inverell
- Wallabadah Service Connect Day – Wallabadah



Increasing accessibility, breaking down barriers and increasing referral pathways



Law Reform

This year we engaged in 1 Law Reform Activities ie:

- Stop the Bill Shock
 - » This related to accessibility to affordable and environmentally responsible energy sources. In our catchment, communities experience extreme temperatures which results in higher than usual energy consumption. This creates significant financial distress to our clients and contributes to their risk of legal need, adverse health issues, and the potential risk of homelessness.

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 residential aged care facility or in their homes, to give advice or to sign or witness documents.



- We provided language interpreting services in languages of Arabic, French, Korean, Kurdish, Mandarin, Persian, Nepali and Filipino for assistance during appointments. We also provided Auslan Services for our deaf clients. All interpreting services are funded by Legal Aid NSW.
- Physically accessible office spaces with ramp and lift access and wide hallways for mobility aides



**Removing barriers
for all...**



Intern Volunteer Program

Terri, Ben and Pauline worked together coordinating and securing the assistance of enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers from the Law School at the University of New England.

This year we engaged more Interns than we have in many years and their contributions to our client work was well-appreciated and significant. While assisting the solicitors with research and administrative tasks at our base office Interns also accompanied Solicitors on Outreach while also attending Court through our Court Liaison Program.

We are grateful and thank our Intern Volunteers for their contribution this year: Bethany Karnaghan, Tenzin Dorji, Tracy Carlos, Ruvimbo Dube, Tyler-Jane Neal, and Olivia Fitz-Roy.



Bethany Karnaghan



Tenzin Dorji



Ruvimbo Dube

Staff Training & Development

Our staff participated in over 35 training sessions this year that were relevant to their type of work, be it administrative or legal.

Some of this year's training included:

- Actionstep Database Training
- Fundamentals of GenAI for lawyers
- Understanding "Best Interest of the Child" and "Parental Responsibility"
- Uncertainty about the terms of a Will and Family Provision claims
- "Respect at Work: Helping you to support migrant workers"
- "Respect at Work: Employment Law"
- Underpayment of wages; award coverage, classification and drafting for recovery
- Navigating the media with Maura Angle
- Risk Management training
- Homelessness Training
- Working alongside the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions
- Leading a Mentally Healthy Workplace
- How to Assist Women with the Law
- Portable Long Service Leave
- LGBTQIA+ Practice, knowledge, and clients
- Productivity in Practice



Case Studies

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

Pheobe - Motor Vehicle Accident

Pheobe, an elderly woman, contacted our office with the assistance of another service provider. She attended our Armidale office and disclosed to our Solicitor that she had been involved in a car accident. She received a letter of demand from a solicitor to pay the damages of \$37,000. Pheobe admitted to us that she was the at-fault driver.

Pheobe had sought help from another service provider, prior to coming to NNWCLS. They had written to the other party's solicitor asking them to consider Phoebe's financial hardship. However, the request was refused. The service provider then referred Phoebe to us.

We wrote to the solicitor and explained Phoebe's circumstances, we noted that she received an aged pension, and that she does not have any assets. We requested that they waive the full amount based on her financial hardship.

The solicitor responding, agreeing to reduce the amount owed to \$20,000.00, requiring monthly instalments of \$200.00. We made further representations on Phoebe's behalf, arguing that Phoebe's limited financial capacity would not allow her to pay the required amount of \$20,000.00. Such a financial burden would extend her current financial hardship to an unmanageable point.

The solicitor responded, agreeing to waive the full amount and close her file. This meant that Pheobe did not have to make any repayments and would no longer be pursued for the debt.

Pheobe was elated at the outcome, noting how much relief our assistance brought to her during such a stressful period.

Rachel - Neighbourhood Dispute/ Apprehended Personal Violence Order

Rachel is a young Indigenous woman who lives with an intellectual disability. She lives independently in a flat of her own. She had been experiencing some trouble with one of her neighbours, Ross, who had been harassing her and calling her names. Rachel had contacted the Police several times about Ross's behaviour, but they declined to intervene.

Rachel was talking to her friend Monica about her experience, who then accompanied Rachel to the Local Court House to make an application for an Apprehended Personal Violence Order (APVO).

During our Service's regular outreach to the Local Court, we connected with Rachel. We provided court support and assistance to Rachel on the day, and we discovered that the APVO had not been served on Ross. We sought an adjournment and assisted Rachel to ensure the APVO was properly served.

Once service was completed and we had provided Rachel with legal advice, we accompanied her to court again. On this occasion Ross elected to consent to the APVO without admission.

Rachel was pleased with the outcome of her matter and shared that having the APVO helped her feel safe and more protected.

Joey - Underpaid Wages.

Joey contacted our Service using our "Make an Appointment" function on the website. Consequently, a face-to-face appointment was made at one of our outreach venues.

Joey instructed the Solicitor that they had been working casually as a cleaner at the "Central Perk" Motel for the last 2.5 years. They stated that a conversation with one of their colleagues led them to question if they had been paid correctly. It was suspected that Joey had been underpaid, and they believed their employer owed them some money.

We undertook to research Joey's Award and compared that with the wages they had received. It became apparent that Joey had been underpaid. With the assistance of a Service Volunteer, we were able to track the correct pay rate for the entire period of Joey's employment. We then calculated the wages due for each week worked over this period. Subsequently a letter of demand was drafted seeking payment of \$3,500.00 and sent to the Motel.

Joey contacted our Service that same day, shocked that the employer had transferred the entire sum to their bank account, upon receiving the letter. Joey indicated that receiving the money was timely as car registration had fallen due in addition to receiving a big electricity bill, and thanked the Service for the assistance.

Chandler – Will, Enduring Power of Attorney and Enduring Guardianship

Chandler was admitted to the local hospital receiving treatment for cancer. He was receiving palliative care and was connected with a social worker. During his sessions with the social worker, he revealed that he had never done a Will. Consequently, the social worker contacted our Service seeking an urgent

appointment at the hospital.

Our staff attended the hospital the next day and met with Chandler in his room. We took his instructions and provided legal advice in relation to a Will, Enduring Power of Attorney and an Enduring Guardianship; returning to the office to draft the documents before returning that afternoon to execute and witness them.

After execution, Chandler's appointees attended the office to accept their appointments. Certified copies were made, and those with the originals were hand delivered to Chandler at the hospital.

Chandler and the social worker were grateful for the quick response by the Service to ensure he had access to such documents, particularly with his rapidly declining health.

Gary - Vary an Apprehended Domestic Violence Order

Gary approached our Service at the Local Court after being referred by the Court staff. He had attended the Court in relation to matters relating to his adult son, Patrick.

Patrick was charged with several serious offences, which resulted in him spending some time incarcerated. The Police had also applied for an Apprehended Domestic Violence Order (ADVO) to protect Gary, from Patrick.

For Patrick to be released from Prison he was required to provide an address that he could be released to. Gary instructed our Solicitor that he had listed his home address for his son's release; however, the Police refused this, arguing that as Gary is a protected person under the ADVO, it would not be safe for Patrick to reside there.



We made some representations to the Police to accept Gary's address as a release address; however, the Police did not agree and continued to refuse this.

We made new representations to the Police noting that Gary had nowhere else to go and explained why it would be in Patrick's interests to have Gary released to his address.

The Police agreed, and consequently the Court made an order to vary the ADVO, to allow Gary to stay at his parents' house, with Patrick.

Patrick was grateful for the assistance of our Service and remarked that he was hopeful that this was the greatest opportunity his son had at rehabilitating and to strengthen their bond as a family.

Bob – Money Owed To

Bob is a refugee from a non-English speaking country. He had gained employment at a local "diner". His boss Mr Krabs had asked him to provide his bank account details for the purpose of paying his wages. Bob decided to attend his bank and asked the teller to write down his account details, due to his limited English. He then provided that note to Mr Krabs.

Mr Krabs paid Bob's wages into his nominated account; however, they were not received by Bob. Bob went to the bank immediately and discovered that they had previously provided the incorrect account details. Mr Krabs lodged a mistaken internet payment with the bank, but the wages were still not recovered.

Almost 9 months later, Bob was referred

to our Service, by a friend. We provided advice about his rights and agreed to draft a letter of demand to his bank. We requested a refund of his wages, arguing that Bob was facing financial hardship due to the length of time that the matter had remained unsolved. We argued that Bob's loss was a result of their negligence and consequently sought compensation.

Several days later the bank agreed to pay Bob his wages and an additional \$1,000.00 in compensation. Bob was pleased to receive his wages and have his matter resolved.

Daphne – Separation and Children

Daphne was referred to our Service through the local Women's Shelter. She had recently left her partner and had sought accommodation for herself and her three young children.

Daphne attended our office seeking legal advice about domestic violence, separation, and her children. After providing Daphne with legal advice, we referred her to Legal Aid NSW to start a solicitor aided mediation in relation to the children. Additionally, we assisted her in lodging an Application for Counselling and a Recognition payment from Victims Services. We later updated her Will, Enduring Power of Attorney and Enduring Guardianship, and provided a letter of support for Daphne and her children to be provided safe and secure housing



Highlights for the year

Our Administrative Assistant, Caitlin Kennedy, obtained a Certificate III in Business Administration

Caitlin successfully completed the Certificate III in Business through TAFE. Caitlin joined our team under this traineeship and upon her completion of the course, Caitlin was then advanced into the role of Administrative Assistant.

Congratulations, Caitlin!



Visit from Sarah Marland – Executive Director of CLCNSW

We had the pleasure of Sarah visiting our Centre in July 2024. It's been some time since we've had a representative from Community Legal Centres NSW visit our centre, so it was wonderful to show Sarah around our office and spend time with her sharing all the incredible work our Service and staff undertake each and every year.

Prior to visiting our office, Sarah spent time in our catchment connecting to other service providers. Sarah said that the feedback she received about our centre indicated that we are a significant link in the vital services in our region commenting that "you're clearly a well-loved service".

Sarah too shared with us all the great work that CLCNSW is doing, particularly their increased tireless work advocating to Government for sufficient and ongoing funding for the sector.

Having the opportunity to thank Sarah, face to face, for her leadership of NSW Centres was wonderful, and we look forward to her next visit.





Visit from Legal Aid NSW

In September 2024 Lila Sullivan, Manager of the Community Legal Centres Program Unit with Legal Aid NSW, and her colleague Julia Cordina, Senior Policy & Project Officer of the CLCPU attended our office for a long-overdue get together. Again, this was a wonderful opportunity to share first-hand all the outstanding achievements of NNWCLS. Lila and Julia commented that our Service is a high-performing Centre, going on to say they always love reading our detailed and informative Progress Reports that speak to the fabulous ways in which we connect with our community and are impressed with our extensive Outreach Program. They further commented that it was very apparent that our clients are at the heart of everything we do and offered congratulations to our entire organisation. We hope to host another visit from the CLCPU team soon.



We met with Mr Brendan Moylan, MP – Member for Northern Tablelands

In April 2025 Terri (Principal Solicitor), Sandy (Coordinator) and Members of the Management Committee met with our new local Member, Mr Brendan Moylan MP, asking for his support during Parliamentary discussions for our sector's funding (and more specifically NNWCLS) while reminding him of our work in our catchment and particularly his hometown of Moree. It was a wonderful get-together. Mr Moylan was impressed with our work and that we embed ourselves so completely into our catchment through our Outreach Program. We appreciated the time Mr Moylan gave to us and we look forward to an ongoing, supportive relationship.



We met with Mr Phillip Kelly, Chief of Staff, Attorney General's Office

Following our meeting with Mr Moylan, a zoom meeting was set up by him for Terri, Sandy, and Members of the Management Committee to virtually meet with Mr Phillip Kelly prior to Parliamentary Sittings on 28th May 2025. Mr Kelly was very engaging and eager to hear of the work of NNWCLS and ascertaining our asks of Government. An uplift in our funding was the major topic of the discussion, which was timely due to the upcoming State Budget, while requesting his ongoing support and advocacy for the Sector as a whole. This too was a valuable meeting of which we were very appreciative of Mr Moylan organising it, and Mr Kelly for willingly participating at such a busy time.



Gratitude from clients

This year, more than any other year, we received small tokens of gratitude from clients that included chocolates, cards, and money donations. While this is something that we never expect, when gratitude is offered, it goes a long way to lift the spirits of everyone, not just the staff member to whom the gift was directed. While we must measure our performance against statistics and benchmarks, it's client satisfaction and service-quality that brings us all the most satisfaction.

Something small to say thank you for being so patient and taking your time with me.

I'm sincerely grateful for your expert assistance that resulted in a positive outcome. Thank you!

Throughout the entire process your compassionate support meant a lot.

Your advice and assistance are sincerely appreciated. Thank you!

Thank you for the positive impact you've had on my life!



Support

Annual Donations Program – Tamworth Regional Council

We were a successful applicant in this Donations Program this year that saw the Tamworth Regional Council contributing to the costs and promotion of our fortnightly Outreach Clinic in Tamworth. This Donations Program is aimed to support not-for-profit organisations, charities and community groups in the Tamworth LGA ensuring that their community continues to have access to vital services. The criteria for this funding opportunity was wide and varied, demonstrating the Council's commitment to the versatility of services that would benefit their residents. We thank the Tamworth Regional Council for their recognition that NNWCLS forms an essential link in the chain of their local community's needs.



Pro bono partnerships

Pinnacle People Solutions

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.



Legal firm support

We are deeply grateful to our pro bono partners for extending their support to clients with matters beyond our scope. Their commitment ensures that those in need receive timely and appropriate legal advice, regardless of financial means.



Professional Development resource

We have been fortunate to secure the online training program, that is BenchTV, free of charge. BenchTV generously donated our Service with an ongoing subscription to their legal training activities. BenchTV helps Australian legal practitioners fulfil their annual compulsory Continuing Professional Development (CPD) by hosting online broadcasts comprising of discussions of various legal topics pertinent to the profession, and even to the general public, within the legal context. This training tool has been of significant benefit to our Solicitors in gaining their yearly CPD points.



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

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025**

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

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

	Note	2025	2024
		\$	\$
Revenue	2	1,054,853	905,467
Other income	3	(1,415)	(2,195)
Interest revenue calculated using the effective interest method		21,787	16,717
Administration costs		(124,280)	(94,621)
Depreciation expense	4	(29,161)	(26,847)
Employee benefits expenses		(883,001)	(757,219)
Occupancy expenses		(30,233)	(29,670)
Other expenses		(37,626)	(25,314)
Deficit before income tax expense		(29,076)	(13,682)
Income tax expense	1	-	-
Deficit after income tax expense		(29,076)	(13,682)
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax		-	-
Total comprehensive deficit for the year		(29,076)	(13,682)

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

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT 30 JUNE 2025

	Note	2025	2024
		\$	\$
ASSETS			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	5	146,263	276,983
Trade and other receivables	6	1,504	5
Financial assets	7	467,338	445,551
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		615,105	722,539
NON CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, plant and equipment	8	75,324	-
Right-of-use assets	9	338,452	357,952
TOTAL NON CURRENT ASSETS		413,776	357,952
TOTAL ASSETS		1,028,881	1,080,491
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	10	17,428	12,841
Provisions	11	225,698	251,206
Lease liabilities	12	18,171	16,258
Other liabilities	13	350	350
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		261,647	280,655
NON CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Lease liabilities	12	357,819	365,718
Provisions	11	12,748	8,375
TOTAL NON CURRENT LIABILITIES		370,567	374,093
TOTAL LIABILITIES		632,214	654,748
NET ASSETS		396,667	425,743
EQUITY			
Accumulated funds		396,667	425,743
TOTAL EQUITY		396,667	425,743

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

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

	Accumulated Funds \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 July 2023	439,425	439,425
Total comprehensive deficit	(13,682)	(13,682)
Balance at 30 June 2024	425,743	425,743
Total comprehensive deficit	(29,076)	(29,076)
Balance at 30 June 2025	396,667	396,667

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

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

	Note	2025	2024
		\$	\$
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Receipts from customers		1,158,508	995,622
Interest received		21,787	16,717
Payments to suppliers and employees		(1,164,870)	(993,480)
Interest paid		(31,972)	(32,401)
Net cash used in operating activities	14 (b)	<u>(16,547)</u>	<u>(13,542)</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Payment for plant and equipment		(76,000)	-
Payment for investments		(21,787)	(57,967)
Net cash used in investing activities		<u>(97,787)</u>	<u>(57,967)</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES			
Repayments of lease liabilities		<u>(16,386)</u>	<u>(14,329)</u>
Net cash used in financing activities		<u>(16,386)</u>	<u>(14,329)</u>
Net decrease in cash held		(130,720)	(85,838)
Cash at the beginning of the financial year		<u>276,983</u>	<u>362,821</u>
Cash at the end of the financial year	14 (a)	<u>146,263</u>	<u>276,983</u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

Note 1: 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 within the relevant notes to these financials.

Accounting Policies

The material accounting policy information adopted in the preparation of the financial statements are set out within the relevant notes to these financials. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

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.

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.

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 INCORPORATED
ABN 35 931 742 739

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

	Note	2025	2024
		\$	\$
Note 2: Revenue			
Other revenue			
Government funding - AASB 1058		1,044,601	897,299
Other revenue - AASB 1058		10,252	8,168
Total revenue		1,054,853	905,467
<i>Grants - AASB1058: Income of Not-for-Profit Entities</i>			
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.			
<i>Volunteer services</i>			
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.			
Note 3: Other income			
Other income			
Gain/(Loss) on lease modification		(1,415)	(2,195)
Total other income		(1,415)	(2,195)
Note 4: Expenses			
Deficit before income tax includes the following specific expenses:			
Depreciation expense		29,161	26,847
Note 5: Cash and Cash Equivalents			
Cash at bank		146,253	276,973
Cash - other		10	10
		146,263	276,983
Note 6: Trade and Other Receivables			
Sundry receivables		1,504	5
		1,504	5
Note 7: Financial assets			
Term deposits - at amortised cost		467,338	445,551
		467,338	445,551

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

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

	Note	2025	2024
		\$	\$
Note 8: Property, Plant and Equipment			
Plant and equipment - at cost		64,424	64,424
Less: Accumulated depreciation		(64,424)	(64,424)
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Motor vehicles - at cost		128,945	52,945
Less: Accumulated depreciation		(53,621)	(52,945)
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Total Plant and Equipment		75,324	-
		<hr/>	<hr/>

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.

Note 9: Right-of-use Assets

Right-of-use Land & Buildings	413,918	404,934
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(75,466)	(46,982)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	338,452	357,952

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.

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

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

	Note	2025	2024
		\$	\$
Note 10: Trade and Other Payables			
CURRENT			
Sundry payables and accrued expenses		17,428	12,841
		17,428	12,841
Note 11: Provisions			
CURRENT			
Provision for employee benefits		148,704	177,893
Provision for locum's and salaries		171	(283)
Provision for redundancy		76,823	73,596
		225,698	251,206
NON-CURRENT			
Provision for long service leave		12,748	8,375
		12,748	8,375

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.

Key Judgement: Employee Benefits Provision

As discussed above, 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.

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 2025

	Note	2025	2024
		\$	\$
Note 12: Lease liabilities			
CURRENT			
Lease liabilities		18,171	16,258
		18,171	16,258
NON-CURRENT			
Lease liabilities		357,819	365,718
		357,819	365,718

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.

Key Judgement: 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.

Key Judgement: 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.

Note 13: Other Liabilities

CURRENT

Other liabilities		350	350
		350	350

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

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

	Note	2025	2024
		\$	\$
Note 14: Cash Flow Information			
(a) Reconciliation of cash			
Cash and cash equivalents		146,263	276,983
		146,263	276,983
(b) Reconciliation of cash flow from operations with deficit from activities after income tax expense:			
Deficit after income tax expense		(29,076)	(13,682)
Non cash flows in surplus:			
Depreciation		29,161	26,847
(Gain)/loss on lease modification		1,415	2,195
Changes in Assets and Liabilities:			
(Increase)/decrease in trade and other receivables		(1,499)	(5)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors and accruals		4,587	(117)
Increase/(decrease) in provisions		(21,135)	(28,780)
Cash flows from/(used in) operations		(16,547)	(13,542)

Note 15: Economic Dependence

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

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

Note 16: Contingent liabilities

The association had no contingent liabilities as at 30 June 2025 and 30 June 2024.

Note 17: Commitments

The association had no commitments for expenditure as at 30 June 2025 and 30 June 2024.

Note 18: Related Parties

Key Management Personnel

Key management personnel compensation	519,656	594,135
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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.

Receivable from and payable to related parties

There were no trade receivables from or trade payables to related parties at the current and previous reporting date.

Loans to/from related parties

There were no loans to or from related parties at the current and previous reporting date.

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

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

	Note	2025	2024
		\$	\$
Note 19: Auditors' Remuneration			
Audit of the financial statements		8,550	8,250
Other allowable services		1,500	1,500
		10,050	9,750

Note 20: 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 INCORPORATED
ABN 35 931 742 739

STATEMENT BY THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

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 2025 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: 24 October 2025

**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 2025, 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 material 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 2025 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 11 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 2025 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.

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

ABN 35 931 742 739

- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Association's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the committee.
- 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 concernEvaluate 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: 24 October 2025

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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 - 19 is in accordance with the books and records of the association which have been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in our statutory audit of the association for the financial year ended 30 June 2025. 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
ARMINADE NSW 2350

Dated: 24 October 2025

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

**DETAILED INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025**

LEGAL SERVICE	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Income		
Government funding		
Commonwealth funding - One off	97,934	595,092
CLCP funding	946,667	302,207
Service generated income	27,495	19,963
Total Income	1,072,096	917,262
Expenditure		
<u>Salary & Wages</u>		
Salaries and wages	786,700	595,009
Superannuation contributions	92,086	67,060
	878,786	662,069
<u>Salary Related Expenses</u>		
Provision for annual leave	(16,667)	(10,935)
Provision for long service leave	(12,001)	(4,239)
Provision for relief wages	3,850	(262)
Provision for redundancy	3,226	(8,460)
Staff training	11,463	306
Staff recruitment	195	695
Staff labour hire	858	-
HR contracting	9,800	-
Workers compensation insurance	3,491	2,963
	4,215	(19,932)
<u>Other Operating Expenses</u>		
Accounting and finance fees	12,750	11,325
Communications	6,722	5,202
Depreciation expense	29,161	26,847
Insurance	13,686	12,867
Interest - ROU assets	31,972	32,401
Office overheads	26,707	18,305
Library, resources and subscriptions	38,546	12,148
Other premises costs	15,334	13,751
Programming and planning	8,940	8,806
Rent	2,738	2,139
Repairs and maintenance	1,213	1,502
Minor equipment	-	-
Travel	33,531	16,902
	221,300	162,195
Total Expenditure	1,104,301	804,332
(Deficit)/Surplus	(32,205)	112,930

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

DETAILED INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

DOMESTIC, FAMILY and SEXUAL VIOLENCE FUNDING	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Income		
Total Income	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Expenditure		
<u>Salary & Wages</u>		
Salaries and wages	<u>-</u>	94,609
Superannuation contributions	<u>-</u>	10,604
	<u>-</u>	<u>105,213</u>
<u>Salary Related Expenses</u>		
Provision for annual leave	<u>-</u>	6,397
Provision for long service leave	<u>-</u>	2,000
Staff training	<u>-</u>	1,473
	<u>-</u>	<u>9,870</u>
<u>Other Operating Expenses</u>		
Accounting and finance fees	<u>-</u>	500
Communications	<u>-</u>	1,000
Insurance	<u>-</u>	300
Office overheads	<u>-</u>	3,000
Library, resources and subscriptions	<u>-</u>	443
Other premises costs	<u>-</u>	1,250
Programming and planning	<u>-</u>	1,900
Travel	<u>-</u>	3,200
	<u>-</u>	<u>11,593</u>
Total Expenditure	<u>-</u>	<u>126,676</u>
Deficit	<u>-</u>	<u>(126,676)</u>

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

DETAILED INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

OTHER INCOME	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Income		
Service generated income	<u>3,129</u>	<u>2,727</u>
Total Income	<u>3,129</u>	<u>2,727</u>
Expenditure		
<u>Other Operating Expenses</u>		
Programming and planning	-	1,174
Rent	-	1,489
	-	2,663
Total Expenditure	-	2,663
Surplus	<u>3,129</u>	<u>64</u>



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