



Annual Impact Report

2015 / 16

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Mitzi Gilligan (Chair) and Fiona McLeay (CEO)

Our Year in Review

CLOSING THE JUSTICE GAP

It is once again a pleasure to report a successful year for Justice Connect. In 2015-16, with our network of hundreds of lawyers we provided thousands of people with high quality, free legal advice, representation and training. This represents tens of thousands of hours of pro bono work for people and organisations who would have otherwise missed out. Our work helps to close the justice gap for people experiencing disadvantage and strengthens the capacity of the community organisations who work with them.

Across all our programs, we received 6,644 requests for assistance and provided legal advice or a referral to 2,268 people (including community organisations) and training sessions to 2,435 community organisations.

Our efforts to close the justice gap rely on the skill and hard work of our pro bono partners and members. To that end, we worked with 1,329 lawyers, including 212 barristers, to provide over 30,000 hours of pro bono legal work to our

clients. We also offered support and guidance to all these lawyers, providing specialist training to 1,134 people (more than double the previous year). Our members include law firms, corporate legal departments, community legal centres, university law schools, the Law Institute of Victoria, the Victorian Bar. We are grateful for our members' continued willingness to partner with Justice Connect and to support our vision.

We continued our efforts to challenge and change laws that increase or perpetuate the justice gap. Across all areas of our casework, we identified, and advocated to change, unfair laws and policies

Most notably, our Homeless Law and Seniors Law programs made submissions to Victoria's Royal Commission into Family Violence, highlighting the interconnectedness of family violence and homelessness, as well as the importance of considering elder abuse in the broader context of family

violence. The recommendations of both submissions were taken up in full or in part by the Commission's final report.

Our Not-for-profit program also had a big year, taking its lauded Information Hub national, as well as receiving a three-year, \$825,000 grant from the NSW Department of Family and Community Services to take our training and advice services even further into NSW.

Our Referral Service targeted the 'legacy caseload' of asylum seekers needing protection visas; Victoria's 'expungement scheme', allowing men who had been convicted under since-stricken sodomy laws to have those convictions removed; and helping transgender teenagers seeking hormone treatment receive the legal permission they require.

Our efforts in NSW continued to grow as our team expanded, coinciding with our move to the south end of Hyde Park. We're now co-locating with our good friends at the Public Interest Advocacy Centre.

Unfortunately, we were forced to discontinue the outreach efforts of our MOSAIC program in 2016. The combination of a challenging funding environment with a wide variety of refugee and asylum services all seeking government and philanthropic support led to the program being configured as a part of our Referral Service. MOSAIC's partner firms' commitment to supporting our clients through this change was an encouraging constant throughout this change.

Our fundraising efforts continued to improve, with philanthropic grants and donations making up 28% of our revenue – up from 24% the previous year. We are grateful for the support of our philanthropic partners, many of whom have supported our work for many years. We also receive significant support from the Victoria and Commonwealth governments and, for the first time, the NSW government. This support underscores the importance of the government funding for legal services and the key role that legal services can play in addressing disadvantage.

As we look for new ways to engage and raise awareness about justice issues, we debuted our 'Ridiculous Laws' events in May. This brought together some of Australia's funniest comedians with its best legal minds to bring a slightly more irreverent angle to the legal issues of the day, and pick apart those ridiculous laws that can impede people's access to justice. Both Melbourne and Sydney events were a great success, and we look forward to replicating them in 2017.

For the year, we registered total revenue of \$5,437,748. Due to increased investment in our NSW operations, as well as the Sydney relocation and the final stage of our Melbourne office refurbishment, our year end deficit was \$217,786, which was covered by our cash reserves.

I'm very proud to this year include our first full-year Impact Report as part of our annual report. The Impact Report reviews the impact of each of our programs, based on our theory of change approach to continuous monitoring and evaluation. The Impact Report and its recommendations will serve as a major assessment tool for us to continue our improvement.

Looking ahead to 2016-17 we will have two key areas of focus, beyond continuing our core work of building pro bono culture, delivering legal services and advocating for change. First, we are undertaking a comprehensive review of our strategy, to ensure that we are able to respond to the opportunities and challenges of social justice into the future. Secondly, we will begin work on an online Legal Help Gateway to greatly improve access to pro bono legal help, with funds received from Google as part of its Google Impact Awards. We're excited about what we can achieve in the next financial year and beyond.

As I look back on the past financial year, I'm once again inspired by the passionate commitment and professionalism of the Justice Connect staff, secondees and volunteers, including our board of directors. Thank you for your shared commitment to our vision of a just and fair world.

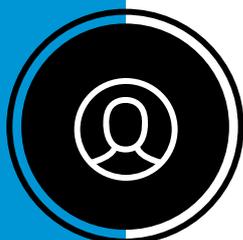


Program Reports

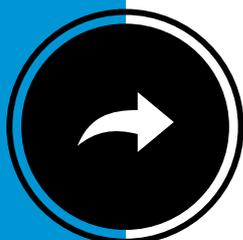
REFERRAL SERVICE

By matching thousands of pro bono lawyers with people experiencing disadvantage, the community legal sector and not-for-profits, Justice Connect's Referral Service helps close the justice gap by ensuring those who need legal help receive it.

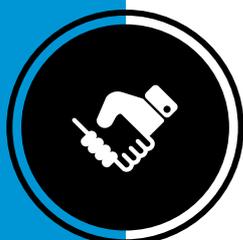
394
PEOPLE ASSISTED



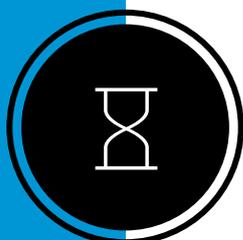
525
PRO BONO REFERRALS



187
PRO BONO
LAWYERS ENGAGED



11,000+
PRO BONO HOURS



Connecting vulnerable people with pro bono lawyers

In FY16 Justice Connect's Referral Service sought to improve its effectiveness in connecting people experiencing disadvantage with pro bono lawyers. Building on efficiencies implemented during the year, our strategy to build effective referral pathways from legal assistance sector has resulted in a 32.5% increase in referrals for pro bono assistance from the previous year.

ASYLUM SEEKERS

We worked with the Human Rights Law Centre and refugee advocates all around the country to protect refugees in Australia receive treatment associated with giving birth, general quality medical treatment and to be away from the constant threat of sexual assault, from Nauru and Manus Island.

The Federal Government's new 'fast track' process will, over the next 3 years, see 30,000 asylum seekers living the Australian community receive 'invitations' to apply for temporary protection. In response to this unprecedented legal need, the community legal sector and Victoria Legal Aid came together to form the Legacy Caseload Working Group.

In support of the pro bono response to this need, Victoria Legal Aid provided our service with funding to employ a lawyer who will work with the community sector and pro bono lawyers to co-ordinate pro bono assistance. The R E Ross Trust provided further funding over two years, to allow us to produce an evaluation of the legal response.

In NSW we worked with RACS to connect 'fast track' applicants connect with pro bono lawyers for assistance with judicial review of negative decisions.

GENDER DYSPHORIA

Working with the Royal Children's Hospital and the Gender Dysphoria Clinic there we were able to assist 7 young people to access treatment for their gender dysphoria. 'Gender dysphoria' is the medical term for people whose gender identity does not match the sex they were born. Australia is the only country in the world where young people under the age of 18 who have gender dysphoria are forced to apply to the Family Court of Australia for an order allowing them to undergo cross-sex hormone therapy, despite the young person, their parents and their treating physicians all agreeing with the need for treatment. Justice Connect is working to help young people and their families navigate the court system in order to access treatment for gender dysphoria. It is a long and expensive process, and delays in receiving treatment can be disastrous. The Royal Children's Hospital reports that around 1 in 3 young people without supported treatment for gender dysphoria will attempt suicide.

The gender clinic at the Royal Children's Hospital saw 18 new patients in 2014 when it opened, 170 in 2015, and is on track to see 250 new patients in 2016.

Our work supporting families will continue and will incorporate advocacy for reform court processes and law reform to eliminate barriers for young people seeking to access treatment. We will also engage work with community organisations in NSW to connect families with pro bono lawyers.

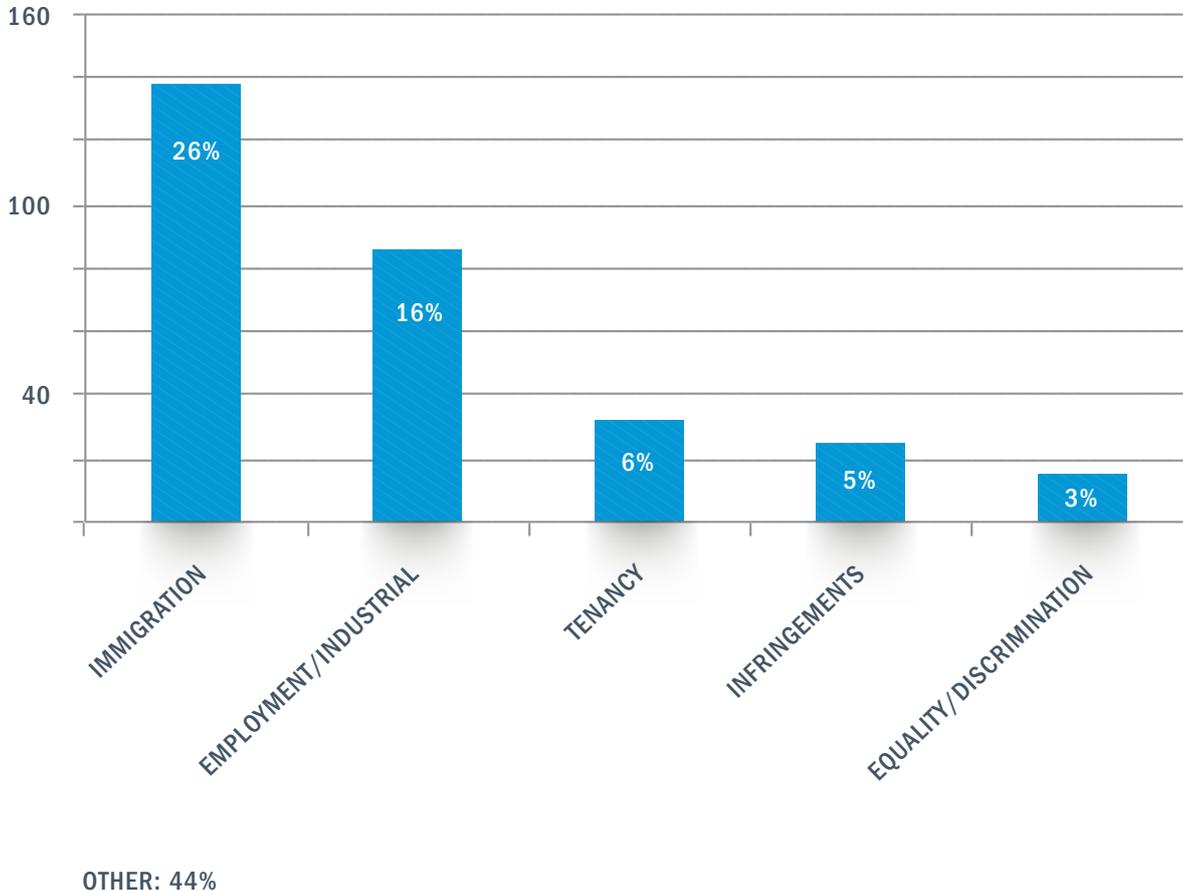
EMPLOYMENT LAW

In an effort to improve access to justice and address unmet legal need in employment law, we sought to collaborate with JobWatch to connect vulnerable workers with pro bono assistance. We piloted a secondment arrangement that saw a lawyer from Justice Connect work at JobWatch to triage requests for assistance and identify individuals needing pro bono legal representation with an unfair dismissal or general protections claim listed for conciliation or conference at the Fair Work Commission. The results of the pilot were so encouraging that we continue our work with JobWatch and commenced a similar collaboration with WestJustice. We were able to connect 60 more people with pro bono lawyers.



Our legal system is designed to balance a range of important, often competing interests within the constraints of time and resources. It is always a great privilege and pleasure to assist in resolving disputes as smoothly as possible, not only for the sake of the client but also the community as a whole.
(Barrister, Victorian Bar)

Referral Service referrals made during FY15/16





Sam's story

Sam, aged 16, was born female but identifies as male. He needs hormone treatment so he can complete his physical transition. Like many children with gender dysphoria, however, before Sam can have sole responsibility for making decisions about such medical treatment, he must apply to the Family Court for an Order.

The court process can be intimidating and time-consuming, particularly for children like Sam, who suffers from a number of chronic illnesses, including his mental health. Delays in receiving treatment can be disastrous for children experiencing gender dysphoria. Dr Michelle Telfer, Clinical Lead at the Royal Children's Hospital Centre for Adolescent Health (RCH), has explained that approximately 30 per cent of young people who are not supported in expressing and receiving treatment for gender dysphoria will attempt suicide.

Sam is being treated and supported by a range of physicians, including the RCH, who recommended that Sam's mother, Josephine*, contact Justice Connect for pro bono legal assistance. Through Justice Connect's Referral Service, the matter was referred to a team of pro bono lawyers, who took on the matter at no cost to Josephine.

Josephine was extremely grateful and pleased with the

assistance she received, saying that her lawyers were, 'absolutely wonderful, taking the time to explain the process and supporting us throughout.'

Sam's application was successful. The Family Court made an Order giving Sam the responsibility for making his own decisions relating to his medical treatment.

The case was equally rewarding for the lawyers. Sarah, one of the lawyers in Lander & Rogers's Family & Relationship Law team who handled the matter, said "It was a great learning experience, and great to be involved in an aspect of family law that we don't deal with on an everyday basis. Sam's family were lovely and deserving. Knowing the impact that the decision had on the child and the parents made it truly worthwhile."

Although Sam's case is uncommon, his mother's experience with Justice Connect is not. Pro bono intervention can make a significant difference to the lives of people with gender dysphoria.

Josephine thanked Justice Connect, adding, "Sam is now able to re-engage in life and present as male. His anxiety has reduced and he is more confident and motivated.

"Sam now has hope for the future ahead."

*names have been changed

SELF REPRESENTATION SERVICE

The Self Representation service provides legal assistance to unrepresented litigants who are experiencing disadvantage and cannot access legal representation.

636
ADVICES GIVEN



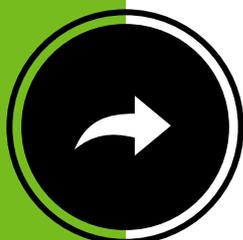
111
LAWYERS ENGAGED



391
APPOINTMENTS
CONDUCTED



837
LEGAL AND NON-LEGAL
REFERRALS MADE



The Self Representation Service has operated in the Federal and Federal Circuit Courts in NSW, Victoria, the ACT and Tasmania since August 2014. Our aim is to provide legal assistance to unrepresented litigants who are experiencing disadvantage and cannot access legal representation. This assistance takes the form of a one hour appointment to help individuals with on foot or contemplated/threatened proceedings in bankruptcy, Fair Work, human rights/discrimination or judicial review matters.

Appointments are usually delivered by pro bono lawyers whom we train and supports to provide unbundled advice. The appointments are discrete and task-oriented, providing advice including on merits and court procedures, and assisting with drafting court documents. The purpose of the advice is to empower clients to represent themselves in the best manner possible and conduct their own matters.

The Service entered its second full year of operation in 2015-2016.

Over the past year, we have also developed the way in which the 'unbundled' model of legal assistance can be used to provide as much assistance to clients as possible. Since its launch, the Service has used pro bono resources in the form of volunteer lawyers, as well as referring matters to barristers for pro bono advice on complex points of law. This year, the use of pro bono was extended to referring clients with Fair Work mediations in the Federal Courts to barristers to represent them. A number of these matters have successfully settled with this assistance available to self-represented litigants.

We have also sought to highlight potential areas for legal reform that impact our clients. This year we contributed to the Commonwealth Government's 'Improving Bankruptcy and Insolvency Law' proposals paper and advocated for reform to reduce the stigma attached to personal insolvency.

Looking ahead to the coming year, we will continue to expand the assistance offered to self-represented individuals by providing procedural advice to self represented asylum seekers in the Federal Circuit Court Migration List in Sydney. As the final year of the current funding agreement with the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department, 2016-2017 will also be focused on securing recurrent funding for the Service to continue to operate in the Federal Courts.



The Self Representation Service is great - it is really helping those members of the community often overlooked for legal help because they are not homeless, but might be only just surviving.
(pro bono lawyer)

“

I am so grateful the service was made available to me. Justice Connect was the only service willing to help me after an intense and robust campaign of appealing for assistance from absolutely everyone and every organisation I could ask for help

(SRS client)





Ben's story

Ben,* a young teenager, worked casually as a shop assistant at a local general store for a number of months. He was a diligent employee, often working without any breaks. Despite this, he was paid at irregular intervals and often had to ask his boss to get paid. Sometimes Ben was required to work more than ten hour shifts; he never received overtime pay. Worse still, his boss took money from his pay when there was damage to stock.

Ben knew this was wrong – both the way his boss was treating him and because of the wages he had not been paid – but he couldn't confront his boss about it. So he sought assistance from the Self Representation Service.

When Ben met with the Service, he told us that despite being underage, he was expected to sell alcohol to customers. This illegality raised a question as to whether the contract of employment was enforceable. We identified that Ben might be entitled to be paid at an adult's rate, as he was performing the duties of an adult when selling alcohol.

We helped Ben to work out what he might be entitled to, advised him how to bring his claim and assisted him in drafting his application. We then sought Counsel's advice in regards to the question of illegality and how this may impact on Ben's claim.

It can be daunting understanding legal information, particularly for a young person. Thanks to the guidance of the Service, Ben had the information he needed to reclaim the unpaid wages he was owed. With the assistance of his father, acting as a litigation guardian, he filed an application with the court, and was awarded over \$2,000 in unpaid entitlements.

However, the Service's work didn't stop at the judgment. Ben had difficulty obtaining payment from his former boss, so we helped Ben to file an enforcement warrant, which enabled the sheriff to promptly recover full payment.

The victory was even sweeter given that Ben's father told us that Ben had 'only hoped for \$400, but... was so thrilled with the \$2000 he was owed.'

He was very appreciative of the Service's assistance, 'If it wasn't for your people [the Service], we couldn't have done it.'

*name has been changed

HOMELESS LAW

Homeless Law is Justice Connect's specialist service providing legal and non-legal help to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

10 highlights for 2015–16

HOLISTIC SERVICES: PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS AND REDUCING THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF THE LAW

We're proud of our work providing high quality, high impact work that meets the legal and non-legal needs of a group of Victorians who would otherwise slip through the cracks of the justice system.

- » 445 new legal casework files (these clients received ongoing legal representation, including advice, negotiation and representation at courts and tribunals)
- » 48 women facing homelessness given legal representation and social work support through the Women's Homelessness Prevention Project
- » 86 Victorian prisoners assisted
- » 113 people received direct support from our in-house social workers
- » 111 evictions prevented
- » 88 people assisted with fines, infringements or charges related to homelessness
- » 45 clients received criminal legal advice or representation

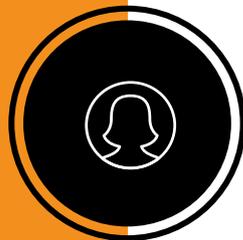
HIGHLIGHTING THE LINK BETWEEN HOMELESSNESS AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Continuing our work from 2014–15, we gave oral evidence on family violence and homelessness at the public hearings for the Royal Commission into Family Violence. We also released a 12-month report on the Women's Homelessness Prevention Project (WHPP), accompanied with stories from three perspectives: a client, a lawyer and a social worker, which can be found on our website.

445
CASEWORK FILES



48
WOMEN ASSISTED
THROUGH WOMEN'S
HOMELESSNESS
PREVENTION PROJECT



86
VICTORIAN PRISONERS
ASSISTED



EVIDENCE-BASED ADVOCACY IN HOUSING REFORM

We made five detailed submissions to the Victorian Government's review of the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic)*, including a joint submission with Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre on the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants, drawing on each organisation's work with victims of family violence who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Our persistent advocacy resulted in increased transparency of the Department of Health and Human Services' policies and operational guidelines and the amendment of these policies to allow 'temporary absence' for victims of family violence.

COURTING JUSTICE: CRIMINAL LEGAL REPRESENTATION FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

We welcomed a senior criminal lawyer to our team, allowing us to meet the criminal legal needs of our clients. This will improve the ability of our clients to get help with the criminal legal issues that too often accompany homelessness and put us in a stronger position to influence reform in this area.

CLOSING THE REVOLVING DOOR: CASEWORK AND ADVOCACY WITH VICTORIAN PRISONERS

We released our report on the first-year success of the Debt and Tenancy Legal Help for Prisoners Project. This included a number of recommendations to improve access to justice for Victorian prisoners, particularly the role of homelessness prevention in reducing the risk of reoffending. In the project's first 12 months, 96 Victorian prisoners received legal representation in relation to fines, debts and tenancies, and 25 of these clients avoided eviction and will now exit prison into safe housing instead of homelessness.

INCREASING OUR WORK WITH ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CLIENTS

We have worked to build our relationships with Aboriginal-controlled organisations. We worked alongside the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS) to prepare a section on culturally appropriate practice for pro bono lawyers, and our team members have undertaken cultural awareness training through Kellawan, a provider of cultural awareness training aimed at promoting and strengthening Indigenous culture and heritage. We have also opened 39 new matters for 28 clients who identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander – an increase of more than 129% since 2014–15.



45
CLIENTS RECEIVED
CRIMINAL LEGAL ADVICE
OR REPRESENTATION



113
PEOPLE ASSISTED BY IN-
HOUSE SOCIAL WORKERS



111
EVICTIONS PREVENTED



88
PEOPLE ASSISTED WITH FINES
AND INFRINGEMENTS

TRAINING AND SUPPORTING PRO BONO LAWYERS

We continue to develop the training, resources and support we provide to our 432 pro bono lawyers at our eight partner firms. Of the 163 pro bono graduates and lawyers who completed our survey, 87 per cent feel their work has made a difference for their clients. In response, we ran ten induction training sessions; in-firm workshops focussing on practical case studies and self-care and resilience; two masterclasses on Advanced Interview Techniques and Client Skills, and Human Rights Advocacy in Housing; and a new module for supervising lawyers.

CO-LOCATION WITH MAJOR HOMELESSNESS SERVICE PROVIDER AND TARGETED SERVICES

We have embedded a lawyer one day per week in specialist homelessness service, Launch Housing. Our 12-month report, 'Under one roof: Embedding legal services to make justice

accessible for homeless clients', identified that this integration has been highly effective. Nearly 90 per cent of Launch Housing case workers surveyed reported that having a lawyer on site made it easier for their clients to access legal assistance, and more than 60 per cent believed that their clients might not have otherwise been able to access legal services.

FAIR'S FARE: IMPROVING ACCESS TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT FOR HOMELESS VICTORIANS

Informed by 15 years of experience running fines and infringements files for our clients, we released a position paper, 'Fair's Fare: Improving access to public transport for Victorians experiencing homelessness'. The report was well-received, with many of our recommendations reflected in the subsequent reports of the Victorian Government and the Victorian Ombudsman. We will continue to be part of ongoing conversations with

government about improving the accessibility of public transport for our clients, particularly through the training of authorised officers on how to respond to people experiencing homelessness.

FINES REFORM AND REDUCING THE CRIMINALISATION OF HOMELESSNESS

We have continued to lead the way in advocating for reforms to reduce the negative impact of fines, infringements and charges on our clients. We influenced positive changes to the *Infringements Act 2006 (Vic)*, including adding family violence to the definition of 'special circumstances', and reinstating (and strengthening) the mechanism for prisoners to deal with their fines pre-release, so they can exit gaol without the burden of debt. We again represented people charged with begging as part of Operation Minta and have now consulted with 30 people who beg, or have begged, in Melbourne.



Stephanie's story

Stephanie* is a mother to two young boys and an adult daughter with a baby on the way. Her 11-year-old son Noah* has been diagnosed with ADHD and a mild intellectual disability. They live in public housing.

A neighbour of Stephanie's made continual complaints to the Office of Housing about Noah and the Office of Housing obtained a compliance order against Stephanie ordering her to control Noah's behaviour. Stephanie was worried that she would not always be able to control Noah and she asked to be transferred to a new property.

Stephanie was never transferred. Instead, she was visited by police who told her that they would return at the end of the week to evict her and her family. Stephanie didn't know how this had happened. She had missed one hearing, not knowing what it was about at the time. When she was on her way to a review hearing, she had received a call from the Office of Housing telling her that she didn't need to attend. She wasn't aware the order had been made until the police came knocking.

Distraught, fearing for her children's safety and unsure what to do, Stephanie contacted Homeless Law and explained her situation.

Time was of the essence: an application for permission to make a second review application had to be made in person, but there were no clinic appointments free and Stephanie was one hour away from Melbourne. Homeless Law staff made special arrangements for pro bono lawyers to meet Stephanie, and together, they made the application to VCAT and were successful in getting VCAT's permission to make a second application for review.

Over the next week, the lawyers gathered supporting letters from Noah's paediatrician and school social worker highlighting how important safe and secure housing was to his health and development. The lawyers negotiated with the Office of Housing, including with reference to Stephanie and her son's rights under Victoria's Human Rights Charter.

A negotiated outcome was reached and the Office of Housing agreed that Stephanie and her family would be provided with a new property in a new neighbourhood. The eviction matter was adjourned to allow this to happen. She was delighted. Instead of being evicted into homelessness – which seemed inevitable before she contacted Homeless Law – she and her children were able to set up a new home with a fresh start.

*Name has been changed

SENIORS LAW

Justice Connect's Seniors Law service provides free legal help to older people who are unable to afford a lawyer in relation to elder abuse and other issues associated with ageing.

261
ACTS OF LEGAL
ASSISTANCE



153
ATTENDEES AT TRAINING
SESSIONS FOR PRO BONO
LAWYERS



500 +
ATTENDEES AT
COMMUNITY LEGAL
EDUCATION SESSIONS



222
ATTENDEES AT
PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS
FOR HEALTH CARE
PROFESSIONALS



What we do

Seniors Law provides free legal help to older people who are unable to afford a lawyer in relation to elder abuse and other issues associated with ageing. Legal services are provided by our lawyers and pro bono lawyers from Justice Connect member law firms. We focus on addressing elder abuse and other issues associated with ageing. The objective of Seniors Law is to improve the ability of older Victorians to age with dignity and respect.

We assist clients with legal issues including guardianship and administration, housing, credit and debt, grand parenting, powers of attorney and making arrangements to live with family. While these legal issues are experienced by many older people, they also tend to arise in the context of elder abuse.

We do this in partnership with our health partners through two Health Justice Partnerships (HJPs). The Health Justice Partnership model focusses on creating systemic change of practice to address the social determinants of health, providing legal assistance within a healthcare setting and allowing for joint advocacy and policy change.

As Seniors Law can draw on the capacity and resources of pro bono lawyers, we can assist older people with these extremely complex matters that can involve extensive negotiations and protracted higher court litigation.

This year has been a successful one, having made great strides in improving access to justice and influencing policy development. Some of these highlights are detailed below.

Access to justice

HEALTH JUSTICE PARTNERSHIPS

Seniors Law has continued to grow. We have two HJPs (cohealth and St Vincent's Hospital (January 2016)) and funding to establish another two. This has been made possible by a three year grant from Equity Trustees and a grant from the New South Wales Department of Family and Community Services to develop a HJP with a focus on elder abuse in NSW, as well as funding from Perpetual Trustees for a 12-month pilot HJP between Seniors Law and Alfred Health (Caulfield Hospital).

With a lawyer located on site in a health setting, and incorporated as part of a client-centred service, relevant professionals can help address instances of elder abuse that require an immediate and flexible response. The partners and lawyers also become better at identifying subtle forms of abuse, earlier on, and are able to facilitate a more holistic, preventative response for clients.

Importantly, we are starting to build an evidence base to support the effectiveness of the model. For instance, 64 per cent of the requests for secondary consultations have come from professionals based at the same site as the lawyer. The partners have also reported:

- » Improved relationships between professionals
- » Better understanding of different sectors
- » Better collaboration
- » Changes in policies, procedures and practices
- » Improved capacity to address elder abuse within teams
- » Better reach to help disadvantaged clients

LAWYER IN A BUS PROJECT

The Lawyer in a Bus project was successfully completed in August 2015. The project delivered professional development to 46 aged care workers, community education to 28 residents and provided legal help to 26 older people. However, whilst feedback from staff and older residents was positive, client numbers were lower than hoped for. The results provide further evidence of the importance of addressing all of the barriers that older people face to disclosing elder abuse, and the need to build ongoing relationships and change practices to effectively address the mistreatment of older people. In response, we increased our focus on implementation of the health justice partnership model of a lawyer embedded in a health care setting.

LAW AND POLICY REFORM

The Seniors Law team has had a busy year, authoring or collaborating on submissions to five inquiries. We assisted the conference organisers and attended the 4th National Elder Abuse Conference, where we presented a paper on the cohealth partnership with cohealth. We also released our first year impact report at the session which was well attended and received very positive feedback. Seniors Law also presented a paper on Positioning Elder Abuse within the Royal Commission into Family Violence framework with Seniors Rights Victoria. In addition we presented 'Working Together: A Health Justice Partnership to Address Elder Abuse' with cohealth at the 13th Global International Federation of Ageing Conference in Brisbane on 21-23 June 2016.

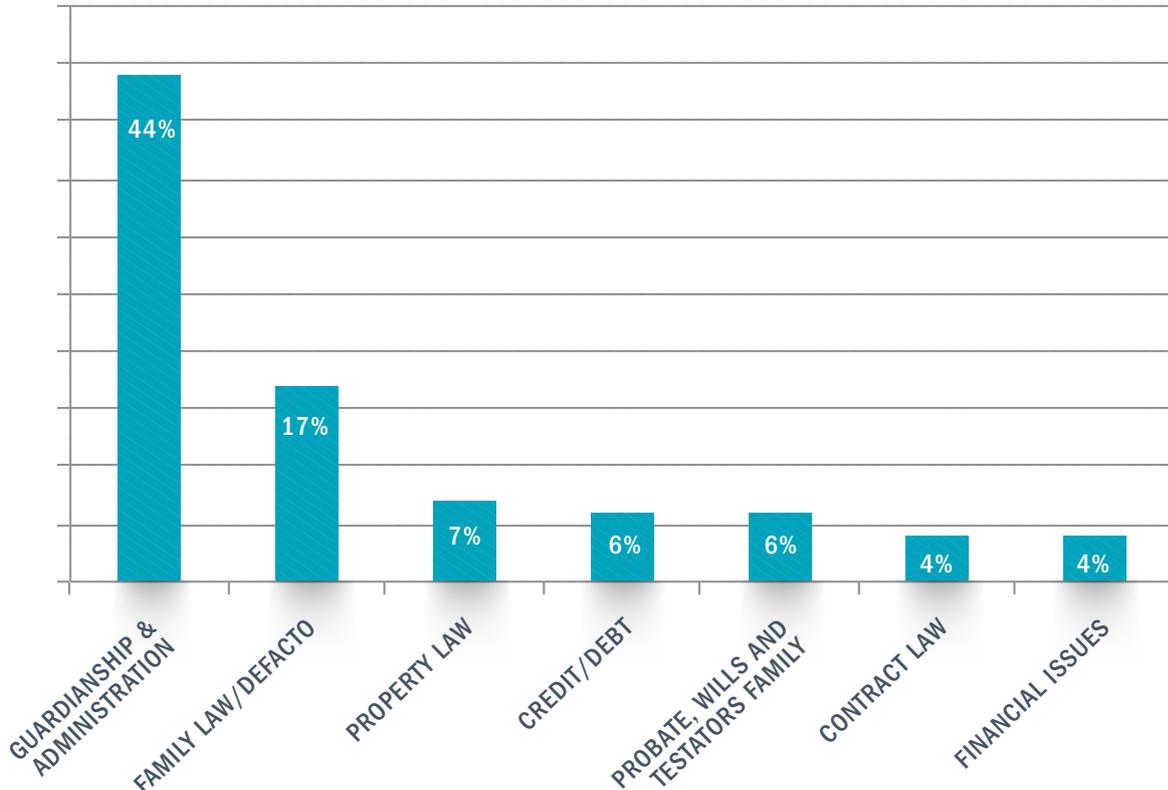
We have also had more direct engagement with government. The Seniors Law manager was invited to sit on the Victorian Government Elder Abuse Prevention Advisory Group and to present on the cohealth HJP at the first meeting of the newly constituted group on 22 March 2016. We met with government including the Department of Justice to discuss the Access to Justice Review, and with the Department of Health and Human Services, Ageing and Aged Care Branch to discuss our work. Finally, we attended a Ministerial Roundtable on Family Violence, with Minister Richardson.

Evidence is also emerging across both HJPs of the effectiveness of the model from the perspective of our health partners.



The beauty of having a lawyer is access to on site consultations.

Seniors Law enquiries received during FY15/16



OTHER: 12%



Maya's story



As she was getting older, Maya moved from her native country to Australia to be closer to her daughter, Gabby. As Maya speaks little English, has impaired hearing, and no formal education, she became increasingly reliant on Gabby, who lived with her.

One day, out of the blue, Gabby offered to hold onto Maya's valuables to keep them safe. While Maya was a bit confused about this request, she trusted Maya knew what was best and handed over her bank account details and two bags of valuable scarves she had collected during her younger days travelling. A few weeks later, Maya had second thoughts and asked for them back. In response, Gabby brushed her off: "what are you talking about, Mum?"

Mere months later, Gabby asked Maya for money to buy a car. Maya obliged. She just wanted her daughter to be happy. Later that week, Gabby arrived in the new purchase and asked her if she wanted to go for a spin. They did – Maya was driven to an aged care facility and left on a bench outside. Maya hasn't seen Gabby since.

While at the facility Maya developed depression, which she believes triggered a diagnosis of mild dementia. With no family, Maya was then subject to an order appointing an independent financial manager and guardian. She didn't like the facility – she couldn't eat the food she wanted and found it difficult to communicate with the staff.

Maya has a sister, Veda, who only recently found out about Maya's situation. She brings food in for Maya every couple of days – a welcome reprieve – and provides much needed company.

Veda attends a monthly craft group run by cohealth, a

community health organisation. Each month, the group hear about local services in the area. One month, Faith, a lawyer from Justice Connect Seniors Law, spoke to them about legal rights for older people. Faith is based at cohealth with workers and clients as part of a health justice partnership (HJP).

Afterwards, while weaving some baskets together, Veda told Faith about Maya's situation. Within days, Faith had arranged to meet with Maya. The first meeting was difficult: the manager initially refused the lawyer entry, an onsite Spanish interpreter was not available, and Maya found it difficult to speak to a Spanish interpreter over the phone because of her hearing difficulties and unique dialect.

Instead, Maya met with Faith and an onsite Spanish interpreter at cohealth's offices. At this meeting, Maya said she wanted to have Veda manage her affairs – but she really wanted her scarves back!

Using Justice Connect's network of pro bono lawyers, Maya applied for Veda to be her financial manager – someone who knew and cared for her. This required an application to a tribunal interstate. Justice Connect assisted by arranging onsite Spanish interpreters and rooms at cohealth in Victoria for Maya to communicate with her lawyers.

The pro bono lawyers prepared the application and appeared on Maya's behalf at various hearings before the tribunal, while she attended by telephone. After many hearings, Veda was finally appointed Maya's financial manager.

With Veda's assistance, Maya is finally empowered to manage her own affairs – but most importantly she has her scarves back.

NOT-FOR-PROFIT LAW

Not-for-profit Law 'helps the helpers', provides free or affordable legal information, advice and representation to Australia's 600,000 charities, not-for-profits and community groups.

200,000+
UNIQUE PAGE VISITS TO
THE NOT-FOR-PROFIT LAW
INFORMATION HUB*
- expanded to house
more than 200 free legal
resources and tools for
organisations nationally



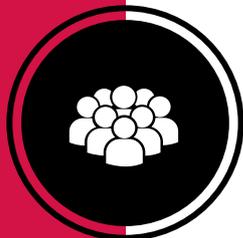
1,293
ORGANISATIONS
ASSISTED WITH PHONE
AND ONLINE ENQUIRIES



627
ORGANISATIONS
RECEIVED LEGAL ADVICE



2,435
REPRESENTATIVES FROM
ORGANISATIONS TRAINED,
WITH 67% FROM OUTER
METRO AND REGIONAL
AREAS



9
SUBMISSIONS TO INFORM
NOT-FOR-PROFIT LEGAL AND
REGULATORY REFORM



Highlights for 2015–16

NOT-FOR-PROFIT LAW'S ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION VALUED AT \$8.9 MILLION BY DELOITTE ACCESS ECONOMICS

Deloitte Access Economics evaluated the economic contribution of the NFP Law service in 2014-15. The report concluded that NFP Law made an estimated \$8.9 million contribution to the economy, comprising about \$5m in direct benefits (including the value of pro bono leveraged), as well as significant flow-on benefits for those using the services of the not-for-profits. Deloitte estimated that 8,000 additional client services will be able to be provided by community organisations over the next three years as a result of efficiency gains attributable to our service – that means 8,000 more people helped to find housing, supported with drug and alcohol issues or supported to care for someone living with a disability or terminal illness.

NOT-FOR-PROFIT LAW GOES NATIONAL

NFP Law launched its new-look national Information Hub (www.nfplaw.org.au). The website was significantly re-developed, including an option to filter information by one or more jurisdiction. With huge support from member firms, 52 new state and territory-specific resources were produced for TAS, QLD, WA, ACT, NT and SA, bringing the total number of resources on the Hub to over 220 (including 6 animated videos, recorded webinars and website tours). This means no matter where they are based, 600,000 not-for-profits now have access to free information on state and national laws that cover 70 topics – they can often resolve legal question themselves, take steps to reduce their legal risk and need for legal advice.

This year NFP Law had a 100% increase in enquires from outside NSW and Victoria – supported by a new national toll free number (1800 NFP LAW). For organisations with more complex legal matters. NFP Law works with law firms, barristers and pro bono clearinghouses across the country to deliver free legal assistance to community organisations.

FULL SERVICE MODEL WORKING SUCCESSFULLY TO HELP COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS ACROSS VICTORIA AND NSW

With nearly 1,300 community groups assisted via our legal enquiry service this year, and an increase of 50% in NSW, NFP Law's model is working well to support not-for-profit organisations with tailored legal and referral support. Overall we received fewer enquiries from organisations we are unable to assist via our advice service, demonstrating our 'triage' process is working well to direct organisations not ready for one-on-one legal advice to our other service areas (eg online resources, training). Visits to the Information Hub increased by nearly 50% on last year (to over 200,000 p/a) – blitzing our expectations – and we significantly boosted our online and face-to-face training offerings. This year's results demonstrate that we are efficiently allocating resources to best provide services to as many organisations as possible, reserving the limited pro bono advisory resources for those who need it most.

IN-HOUSE COUNSEL

For the first time we have harnessed pro bono legal assistance from a group of top-tier corporate legal teams. Some have taken direct client referrals, some have worked on new resources for our Information Hub and others have joined our lawyers to provide information and advice to small groups as part of training sessions. We have fostered the sharing of ideas about the why and how of pro bono for in-house lawyers in six forums (three in each of Melbourne and Sydney).

CUSTOMISED TRAINING SOCIAL ENTERPRISE GETS SERIOUS VIA THE CRUNCH

To support our financial sustainability and diversify our income, Not-for-profit Law runs a fee-for-service training arm which this year participated in Social Traders' acclaimed social enterprise incubator program, The Crunch. The Crunch program prompted us to engage more deeply with the theory and practice of social enterprise, and to more astutely analyse our social purpose, business model, market position and financial modelling. Valuable insights were gained, many of which may translate across other parts of NFP Law and Justice Connect. Following a rigorous vetting and selection process, we were pleased to be accepted to undertake part 2 of the Crunch process in 2017.

NEW WAYS OF REACHING NOT-FOR-PROFITS ONLINE

Described as a 'game-changer' in legal self-help tools for the community sector, NFP Law launched a new web application on our Information Hub for 'start-up' community groups (www.nfplaw.org.au/gettingstarted). The app guides users through a series of questions and produces a bespoke report with tips, further reading and assistance for framing a conversation with a lawyer. It condenses tens of thousands of words of legal resources into a 20 minute guided logic model. Delivered in collaboration with Melbourne University Law School and Neota Logic, this is the next step in our focus on using digital tools to support organisations to self-help.

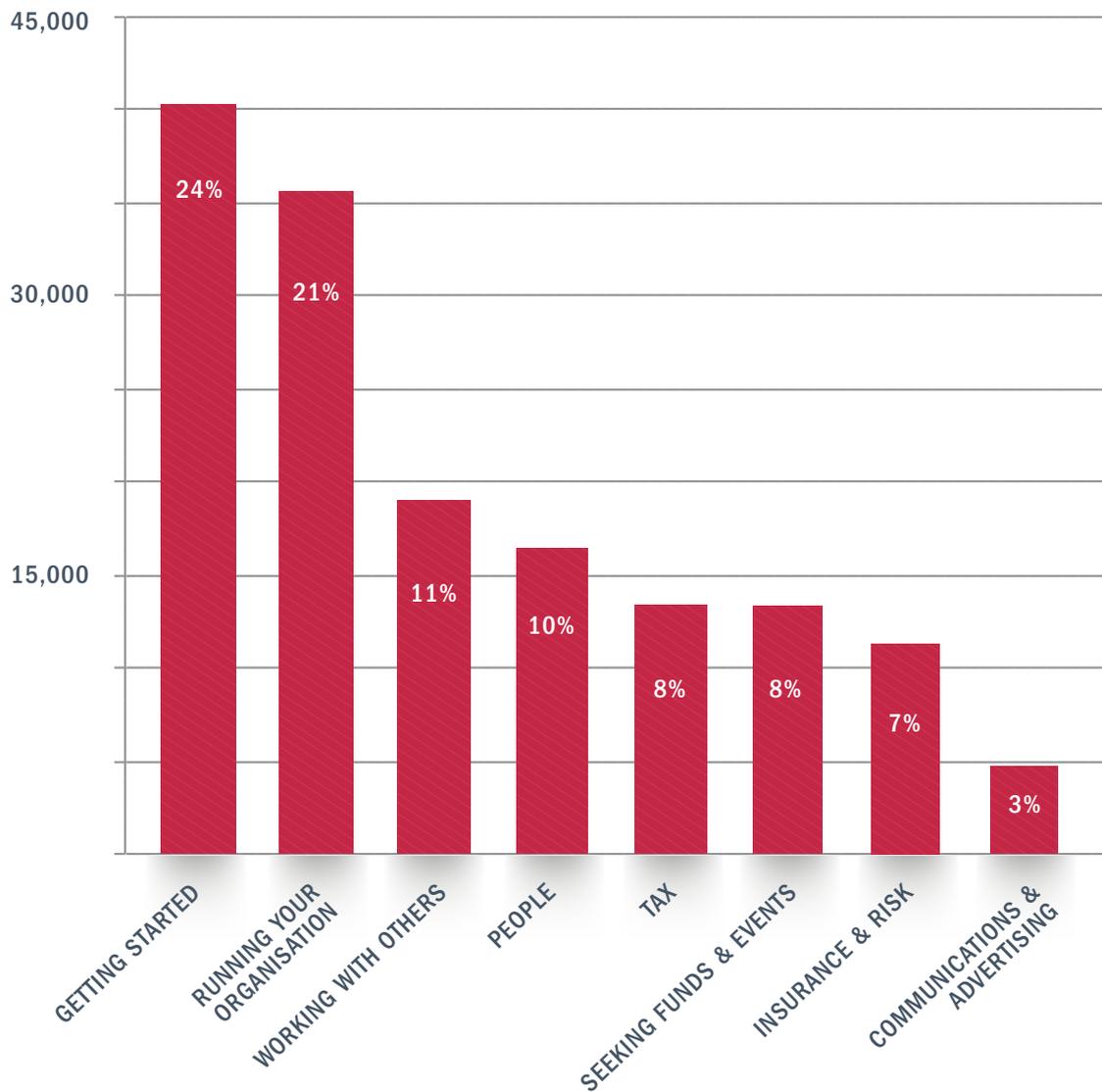
ADVOCACY WORK ON FUNDRAISING REFORM

Our Fix Fundraising campaign continues. After decades of advocacy by many in the sector to improve and harmonise the fragmented and outdated fundraising laws across Australia, in 2016 we took a new approach to fix fundraising laws by creating a coalition of influential reform partners. Our first joint step was to make a submission to the Review of the Australian Consumer Law (still underway) with input from Norman O'Bryan SC AM, calling for the use of the Australian Consumer Law (ACL) as a vehicle to harmonise fundraising laws. We also released a joint reform proposal with our partners, and have been signing up supporters to the campaign. Our submission to the ACL Review caught the attention of the NSW government, and we were one of only 8 parties invited to submit on a discussion paper about repealing NSW Fundraising Act – a course of action we support.

The ACL Review Interim Paper was recently released, substantially referencing our submission, and acknowledging for the first time that fundraising is already regulated by the ACL and that the ACL could play a critical role in fundraising reform. A further consultation is now underway focussed on the issue of fundraising regulation and the role of the ACL in fundraising regulation.

We will continue this important work to fix fundraising laws for charities and not-for-profits across Australia. Follow our progress at justiceconnect.org.au/fundraisingreform.

Not-for-profit Law
enquiries received
during FY15/16



OTHER:

CHANGING OR ENDING YOUR ORGANISATION - 2%

DISPUTES & CONFLICTS - 2%

REPORTING & COMPLIANCE - 2%

IMPORTANT AGREEMENTS - 2%



Neighbourhood Houses

The Thornbury Neighbourhood House (TNH) is a women-run not-for-profit community house. It opened in 1986 in response to the call for more recreational activities for local women, and is now a place for all members of the community. Their goal is to provide a positive and welcoming space for their community to engage in activities they enjoy and to connect with others.

In 2015, it became apparent to TNH's management committee that in order for the house to become a sustainable, proactive service, they would have to join with another organisation. They also recognised the need to become a more inclusive neighbourhood house, offering services to all members of the community. TNH began negotiations with Preston Neighbourhood House, which agreed to take over the management of the house on the condition that TNH paid out all of its liabilities beforehand. A key element of the agreement was that the separate identities of both houses be maintained. TNH needed urgent advice.

The details of corporate law were foreign to a small organisation like TNH. They were unfamiliar with the process of merging operations, winding-up and legal liabilities. A mistake could easily send the house

into insolvency and result in the loss of employee entitlements. Above all, the community could be robbed of a much needed service. But they certainly didn't have the money for legal advice.

Fortunately, TNH approached Not-for-profit Law. Not-for-profit Law placed the matter with Lander & Rogers, which provided high quality pro bono advice and support, working through the complex issues that the process would entail. Fiona Karmouche, from Lander & Rogers, found the matter very rewarding: '[I]t is a great experience to run a matter from start to finish, and very rewarding to see such a positive outcome for both our client and the community.'

The pro bono support ensured TNH could continue to provide an important service for the local community. Their management expressed their appreciation for the assistance provided by Lander & Rogers. Annabelle Morgan told us that "[they] were extremely helpful and generous with their time in assisting and advising us on the legal process.'

She said, 'Thank you so much from me and all members of the Committee of Management for your advice and assistance with this process.'

Our Organisation

OUR PEOPLE + OUR FINANCES



We exist to help build a world that is just and fair – where systems are more accessible and accountable, rights are respected and advanced and laws are fairer.

~

To achieve this we bring together a passionately committed group of people who are driven to assist individuals and community organisations to access justice.

Our individual and collective behaviour is guided by our principles of leadership, sustainability and effectiveness.

We hold ourselves to the highest standards of professional practice, driven by practical outcomes for our clients. We recognise our part in a network of people and organisations in the legal assistance sector. We seek to be generous in collaboration, sharing what we know and engaging with all our stakeholders and partners.

THE TEAM

We are able to achieve our vision and assist so many individuals and community organisations as a result of the passionate commitment of many people including:

STAFF

A list of our current dedicated staff can be found at justiceconnect.org.au/who-we-are/our-staff. At the end of the financial year, we had 53 paid staff (44.5 full time equivalent positions) working across our offices in Melbourne and Sydney as well as being located at many sites including courts, outreach locations and health settings.

SECONDEES

In 2015/16 we received invaluable support from firms that are recognised in the Acknowledgements section. The secondment program greatly assists Justice Connect and provides a valuable experience to participating firms and practitioners.



EMPLOYEES



EFT



FULL-TIME/PART-TIME RATIO



FEMALE/MALE RATIO

Rate of Turnover (12 months):
21%

Senior Leadership Team:
100% Female

Melbourne/Sydney Ratio:
79% / 21%

Avg. length of service (years):
2.6

Period of longest service (years):
11.4

Permanent/Fixed Term:
66% / 34%

VOLUNTEERS

The contribution made by volunteers is crucial to the operation of Justice Connect. We are assisted by a diversity of professional volunteers as well as students from university law schools and law graduates in Melbourne and Sydney who are undertaking their practical legal training. We extend our thanks to all of the talented and committed volunteers who made such a difference to our effectiveness this year.

PATRONS

We were delighted to have the continued support of our inaugural patrons Julian Burnside AO QC and Professor Gillian Triggs.

BOARD

We are governed by an independent, skills based volunteer board whose commitment to the organisation is crucial to our success.

The purpose of the Board is to promote and protect the interests and objectives of Justice Connect. In carrying out their responsibilities and exercising their powers, Board Members ensure they act honestly, fairly and diligently, in accordance with the law in serving the interests of Justice Connect and, where appropriate, the reasonable expectations of Justice Connect's stakeholders.

The key responsibilities of the Board are:

- » Strategy
- » Accountability
- » Risk Management
- » Compliance

Board members were active in three sub-committees in 2015/16 - the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee, the Nominations Committee and the Program Review Committee.

Our Directors for 2015/16 were:

- » Mitzi Gilligan: Chair
- » Gordon Renouf: Deputy Chair
- » Alexandra Rose
- » Carmel Mulhern
- » Geoff Rush
- » Nicky Friedman
- » Simon Lewis
- » Richard Wilson

Our Finances

The year ended 30 June 2016 was a year of investment in:

- » NSW programs and services including the identification and development of new programs and service models. The directors approved a \$175,000 investment from reserves in these activities
- » Rent, occupancy and refurbishment costs for a new Sydney office following notification that the old building would be sold with vacant possession
- » Completion of the third and final stage of Melbourne office renovations to provide flexible working space and additional workstations
- » Increased staff numbers as a result of new funding agreements

As a result of this investment we recorded a deficit for the 2015/16 financial year of \$217,786 representing 4% of our annual income. At 30 June 2016 we maintain health net assets and retained earnings of \$1,126,427.

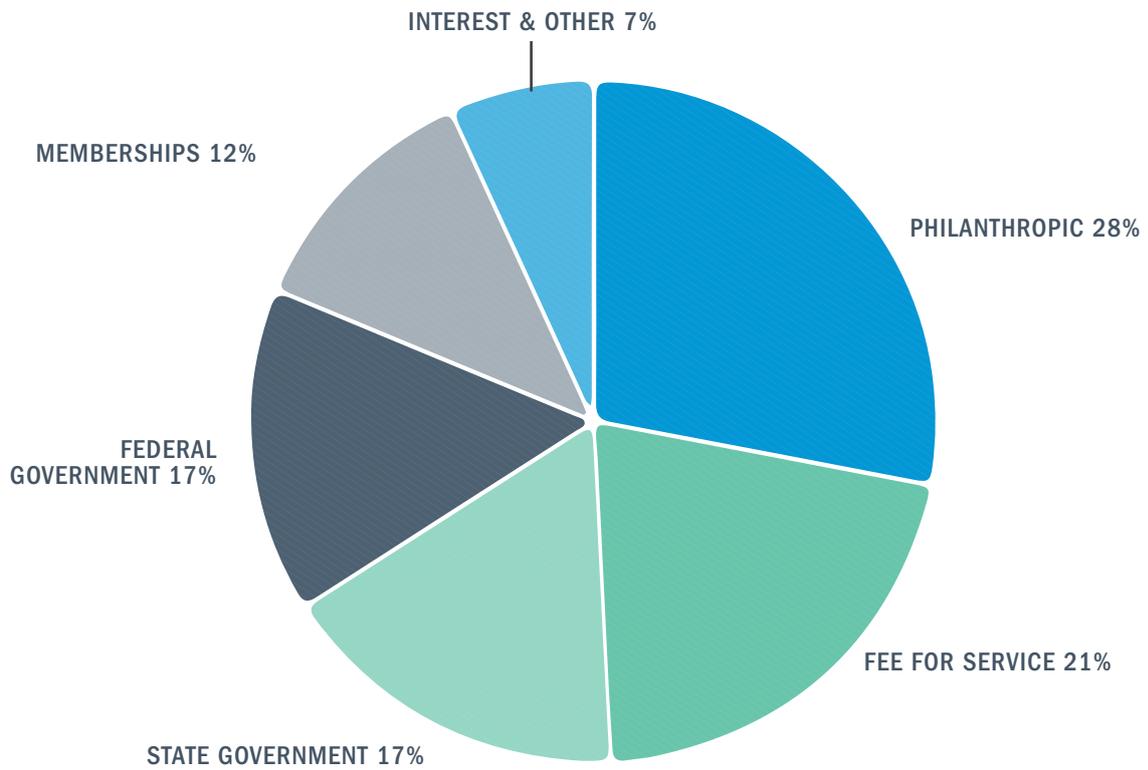
We have continued to diversify our funding sources and increase the number of funding partners. In 2015/16 we received funding from local, state and federal governments, memberships, philanthropic trusts and foundations, corporates, fee for services we provided and fundraising events. We also received a range of very generous in-kind support from our members which assist in making our work possible including secondment of staff, volunteer engagement and donation of resources and facilities.

GOVERNANCE

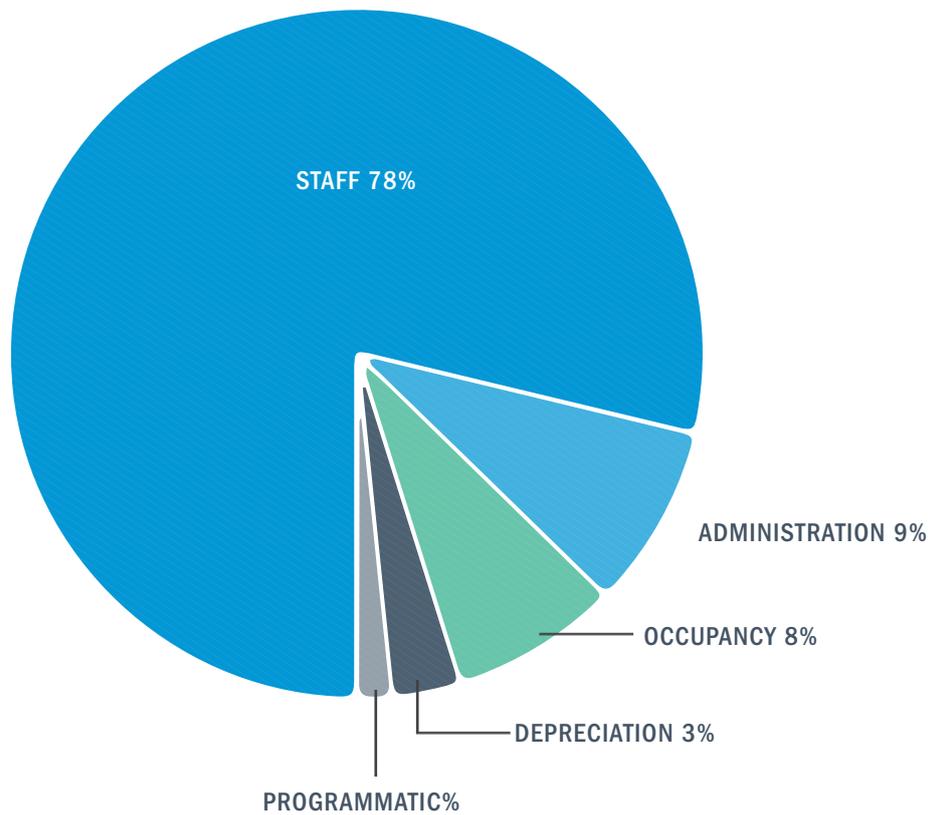
On 1 July 2013 Justice Connect became a company limited by guarantee. We are a public benevolent institution, endorsed by the Australian Taxation Office as a deductible gift recipient organisation. Our accounts are independently audited. A copy of our Constitution and Strategy is available at justiceconnect.org.au/who-we-are/our-story

A copy of our audited, annual financial report can be found at justiceconnect.org.au/who-we-are/annual-reports

Income FY15/16



Expenditure FY15/16



Thank You TO OUR SUPPORTERS

As a not-for-profit charitable organisation, Justice Connect relies on the ongoing partnership and financial support of our member firms, federal and state governments, philanthropic grant makers, corporate partners and individual donors to ensure the continued delivery of our services. The vital pro bono work of our member lawyers dramatically amplifies the impact of our programs, enabling access to justice for thousands of people and organisations.

We place great value on our relationships across the private, community and government sectors, and recognise that many of our achievements in the public interest have been built from the strong foundations of these partnerships.

We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the ongoing support and contribution of the following law firms, governments, professional legal associations, philanthropic partners and community groups, and the many individual donors that have supported us over the year.

PATRONS

We gratefully acknowledge the unstinting generosity of our patrons, Julian Burnside AO QC and Professor Gillian Triggs, whose support has ranged from hosting events, participating in our inaugural Ridiculous Laws comedy shows, helping to drive our first successful fundraising appeals, prompting donations in lieu of speaking fees and - most importantly - speaking out on behalf of all of us who share a commitment to human rights and access to justice.

LEGAL SECTOR PARTNERS

Law Institute of Victoria
Legal Services Board Grants Program
NSW Bar
Victorian Bar
Victoria Law Foundation
Victoria Legal Aid

GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Australian Government Attorney-General's Department
City of Melbourne
Melbourne Magistrates Court
NSW Government, Family & Community Services (FACS)
Seniors Rights Victoria
St John's Brokerage
Victorian Government, Department of Health and Human Services
Victorian Government Department of Justice and Regulation

PHILANTHROPIC PARTNERS

Equity Trustees
Gandel Philanthropy
Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation
Percy Baxter Charitable Trust, managed by Perpetual
Perpetual
Perpetual IMPACT Partnership, with funds from the following trusts:
Eric Norman Sweet Trust
The Fred P Archer Charitable Trust
H & L Hecht Trust
The Mabel and Franklyn Barrett Trust
The Samuel Nissen Charitable Foundation
The Sir James McNeill Trust
The Trust Company Australian Foundation
Phyllis Connor Memorial Innovation Fund, managed by Equity Trustees and Mr Norman Bourke
Portland House Foundation
Telematics Trust
The Ian Potter Foundation
The Marian and E.H. Flack Trust
The Myer Foundation
The R E Ross Trust
The Stanford Australia Dyson Bequest Scholarship, funded by the Dyson Bequest and Stanford Australia Foundation
Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation
William Buckland Foundation

INDIVIDUAL DONORS

We acknowledge and thank the many committed individuals who support the work of Justice Connect through generous contributions to our fundraising appeals, community events and specific projects. We also recognise our highly valued 'Justice Champions', who have thoughtfully chosen to make regular, monthly gifts towards our work.

SECONDEES

Alice Fishburn (Corrs Chambers Westgarth)
Amanda Vassallo (Corrs Chambers Westgarth)
Amy Williams (Corrs Chambers Westgarth)
Conor McNair (Sparke Helmore)
David McIndoe (Norton Rose Fulbright)
Genevieve Rock (Hall & Wilcox)
Kay Jamieson (Corrs Chambers Westgarth)
Lisa Donohue (Sparke Helmore)
Nicholas Mills (Minter Ellison)
Nicky Nicolaou (Australian Government Solicitor)
Rebecca Schot-Guppy (Hall & Wilcox)
Sue-Anne Thompson (Australian Government Solicitor)
Vanessa Bilowski (Corrs Chambers Westgarth)
Zan Mazharullah (Corrs Chambers Westgarth)

IN-HOUSE LAWYER PROJECT

ANZ
Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO)
Australia Post
Bendigo and Adelaide Bank
HP
Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE) Australia
Telstra Corporation Ltd
Vicinity Centres
Westpac

SITE HOSTS AND IN KIND SUPPORTERS

Auburn City Council
Australian Centre for Philanthropy and Non-profit Studies, Queensland
University of Technology
Australian Red Cross
Central City Community Health Service
City of Melbourne
Cohealth
Consumer Action Law Centre
Dorothy Impey Home
Federal Court of Australia

Froniditha Care
Grays
Health Justice Australia
Launch Housing
McLean Lodge
Melbourne City Mission
Metro Assist
Myer Family Company
Navitas
Neota Logic
Port Phillip Prison
Salvation Army in Geelong
Street Smart
St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne
Twin Parks Aged Care Centre
University of Melbourne Law School
Victorian Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders
Victorian Council of Social Services
Volunteering Victoria
Wintringham Gilgunya
Wintringham Lionsville Williamstown
Wintringham Port Melbourne Hostel

The following organisations have supported Justice Connect with funding of over \$100,000 in this Financial Year:



HOW CAN YOU HELP TO CREATE A FAIRER WORLD?



More info

Please contact Barb Taylor, Fundraising Manager

+61 (0)3 8636 4471

or giving@justiceconnect.org.au

justiceconnect.org.au/donate



Give time

Pro bono legal work is a powerful way to put your legal skills to work for the community and provide justice for those facing disadvantage.

Volunteers with a range of other non-legal skills are also highly valued and welcomed at Justice Connect. We have volunteer law students helping to staff our reception area, as well as volunteers with specialist skills in communications, fundraising, database administration, events and other areas.

To register your interest in volunteering, please contact hr@justiceconnect.org.au.



Give money

Make a tax deductible donation today to help someone experiencing disadvantage to have access to justice.

Donate through the Justice Connect website or your firm's workplace giving program, or contact us to learn more about our regular monthly giving program, Justice Champions

Please email giving@justiceconnect.org.au.



Give someone a reason to help

Fundraising can be a fun and rewarding way to involve friends, colleagues and family in supporting the vital services Justice Connect provides.

Host a trivia night or morning tea, or join a sponsored walk, run or ride to raise funds while you get fit!

Some lovely people have also chosen to ask friends and family to donate to Justice Connect in lieu of gifts for a special birthday or other occasion. We love that.



Make a gift in your Will

Provide lasting help for people experiencing disadvantage by making a gift to Justice Connect in your Will.

Bequests are one of the most profound and enduring ways to provide access to justice for people in need, while allowing Justice Connect to plan for the future with confidence.

Please call us for a confidential discussion about including a gift to Justice Connect in your Will.



Justice Connect's second annual Impact Report assesses and presents the evidence available to show the changes made to people's lives and to the capacity of not-for-profit organisations, from their access to justice through pro bono legal services.



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