

Making the law work

Annual Report
2017-18



Imagine a world where the law works. Where communities are fairer and more connected, where laws are better, community groups thrive and everyone has a fair chance at a better life.

Join us to make the law work for good.

Acknowledgement of country

Justice Connect acknowledges the Aboriginal people of the many traditional lands and language groups of Australia. It acknowledges the wisdom of Aboriginal Elders both past and present and pays respect to Aboriginal communities of today.

Contents

CEO Introduction	2
Chair Introduction	4
Our impact in 2017-18	6
Maggie's story, one year on	11
Barbara's story	12
John and Mary's story	15
Indigenous Employment Partners' story	16
Kelly's story	19
The Gateway Project	20
Pro bono perspective	22
Our people	26
Our finances	28
Thank you	29

"A relentless focus on impact"

Chris Povey, Justice Connect CEO



It was a little daunting to step into Fiona McLeay's shoes as Justice Connect CEO.

Over eight years, Fiona transformed Justice Connect from two separate PILCHs to a nation-spanning social justice organisation. Today, we're known as not only a leader in helping people and community groups struggling with a complex and frequently unfair system, but as an innovator in pushing ahead in developing new, better ways to help. Much of that growth in impact can be traced to Fiona's clear vision and the commitment of an incredible team to pursuing it.

That commitment was demonstrated by the new organisational strategy, Fairer and Better Lives, launched in November. It was the result of a year of work, and lays the foundation for a truly exciting future for Justice Connect.

Our new strategy points the way. We're relentlessly focused on making an impact for the people and organisations we help, and we do it three ways; by connecting people and organisations with legal help when they need it, by giving them the tools and skills needed so they can better navigate our legal system, and by challenging and changing unfair laws and systems.

A clear strategy is critical because the challenges facing the people and organisations we assist are immense. Our purpose is to create a fair and strong community. We tackle a number of major social issues including rising homelessness, employers underpaying staff, and the hidden pain of elder abuse. We work with organisations across the country and support them to deliver critical services and programs.

Underpinning all of our work is a deep and abiding connection with the Australian pro bono community and a growing network of non-legal partners such as in the healthcare sector. These partnerships are essential to our ability to reach the people and organisations that need legal help, and to tackle problems in a holistic and sustainable way.

These fundamentally important relationships put us in a strong position to connect people and organisations that have legal problems with the help they need. Now we're thinking about how the power of pro bono, combined with using new, digital tools, can drastically scale up our reach and our effectiveness, so we can make a bigger impact for more people.

The Gateway Project is major part of our strategy to connect more people with more help. The number of online enquiries has been steadily increasing, and we're receiving applications from people experiencing homelessness, older people – groups that many assume have limited tech capability. Stage two is due early next year; we're working hand in hand with our pro bono partners to build a

portal for lawyers where they will be able to access available matters, greatly speeding up the process, and leading to getting more of the right matters to the right lawyers.

We unlocked over 50,000 hours of pro bono work from some of Australia's best lawyers to help those who would previously have never dreamt of having such support.

Through all of this work, we gave legal help to 4,181 people and organisations during the year, not to mention the hundreds of thousands of people who visited nfplaw.org.au. We unlocked over 50,000 hours of pro bono work from some of Australia's best lawyers to help those who would previously have never dreamt of having such support.

We also make an impact in our work to change laws that only serve to make the legal system harder for people. In November, the landmark decision *Re: Kelvin* saw to it that young trans people could access the hormone treatment they needed without going through the family court. This came after years of work with the Family Court, and working with advocacy organisations like Transcend and Parents of Transgender Children.

But behind every one of our big wins this year are hundreds of smaller victories. There's the homeless mother who found stable accommodation thanks to pro bono legal help. There's young workers who were underpaid and, with pro bono help, were able to understand and stand up for their rights. There are elderly grandmothers who never would have thought about seeking a lawyer who, thanks to Justice Connect, have been able to put an end to elder abuse.

All of this great work is created by an incredible team here at Justice Connect. The staff, the volunteers, the Practical Legal Training students, and the secondees, whose passion for this work makes every day here exciting. Thank you to them, thank you to all of our funders and partners, and to you, for your ongoing support of our vision of a fairer and better community for all of us.

"The people we help are at the heart of our work"

Gillian Triggs, Justice Connect Chair



It has been nearly a year since I took on the role of Chair and can say without reservation that we need organisations like Justice Connect more than ever. Our community is confronted on a daily basis with a range of pressing social issues - homelessness, wage theft, people seeking asylum, and not-for-profits struggling with regulation. Amidst these challenges we know that lawyers and legal help are expensive and out of reach, and that effective partnerships to tackle these problems are of critical importance.

In this report, you'll see stories that demonstrate the impact of Justice Connect and our partners. You'll read about Maggie, who appeared in last year's report. After repeated bouts of homelessness, Maggie found her way to Justice Connect and now is safely housed, graduated from university and happily employed. Her story over the past two years is a testament to the work Justice Connect does.

You'll also meet Kelly, who was every child's favourite lollipop lady at her local school before being dumped by the council. Unsure how to even begin to deal with making a wrongful dismissal claim, it was Justice Connect supported by outstanding pro bono lawyers that put her on the path to a positive outcome.

I have met the people Justice Connect help, and the people we work with to build better, fairer lives and stronger communities. When visiting cohealth, one of our health justice partners, I saw the strength of our connection with the healthcare sector, and how that connection helps older people facing, or at risk of intergenerational abuse. And I met the family of one such victim, and was moved as they spoke about the effect that Justice Connect and cohealth's support had on their lives.

Underpinning all of this is our dedicated community of pro bono lawyers. You will read their stories in this report too. It is Justice Connect's deep, longstanding relationship with Australia's best firms and lawyers that attracted me to come on board as Chair; we all begin our own journeys as lawyers hoping to make a difference in the world.

I have met the people Justice Connect help, and the people we work with to build better, fairer lives and stronger communities.

The justice sector benefits enormously from the commitment of lawyers and law firms to social justice. The desire to do good, the belief that we have a responsibility to use the skills we're lucky to have acquired, the drive to leave the world better than we found it, all make us a formidable force

for positive social change. It is certainly what connects us all, and it is Justice Connect that does so much to help those dedicated lawyers step outside of the day-to-day and make the world better, and fairer for so many who otherwise could fall through the cracks.

Justice Connect recognises the immense commitment of the pro bono community to achieving change and has thought deeply about how to reach more people and connect them to help in innovative ways. Soon after the launch of the Gateway Project, we started to understand the considerable potential of this tool. A woman sleeping in her car used her mobile to connect with our pro bono community. A 71 year old woman left sleepless by her legal problems applied for help at 1am. The community is changing the way it seeks help, and we are changing the way help is delivered. The Gateway is vital tool with the potential to bring legal help to tens of thousands of people who otherwise would have been left with their problems unsolved; their voices unheard.

It is also demonstrated in our work with the nation's charities and community organisations - you will read about the Waminda Community Centre here as well. Each community group we help to navigate a complex web of laws and regulations is a group better prepared to go out into their communities and make them better and stronger. In this way, Justice Connect's impact ripples out, helping people lead fairer, better lives, even if they have never heard our organisation's name.

I thank you once again for your support of Justice Connect, and our work trying to help people and organisations who otherwise would be left behind.

Our impact in 2017-18

Client satisfaction

Justice Connect collects feedback from clients at the conclusion of the service provided. Overwhelmingly, ratings and comments were positive, along with constructive feedback regarding some areas clients felt could be improved.

94% Clients of the Domestic Building Legal Service were very satisfied with their appointment with a lawyer, giving an average satisfaction rating of 4.6/5.

90% of Homeless Law clients surveyed rated their overall experience as 'excellent' and indicated that they believed they achieved a better outcome than they otherwise would have, as a result of assistance.

94% Clients of the Self Representation Service gave an average satisfaction rating of 4.7/5.

100% of Not-for-profit Law clients who were assisted by the Governance Health Check Project were satisfied with the service and reported that the health check improved their understanding and increased their confidence.

Client impacts

Each year, Justice Connect conducts an audit of our impact, with a zero to six rating, six being a very high, positive impact on the client's life. Across the six program this year, 65 case stories were documented.


Average impact rating of 5.3 out of 6


48% of case stories rated 6/6 (Very high impact)

64% of case stories reported outcomes that were only possible through the program's assistance

With our 55 member firms and over 1,000 pro bono lawyers behind us, Justice Connect helped unlock 42,512 hours of free, pro bono legal help for the people and organisations we support. This equates to \$15.6 million in legal help.

Justice Connect's responses to requests for help

Last year saw a decrease of 10% in the number of enquiries received by Justice Connect, from 7,708 to 6,902. About nine out of ten enquiries, both this year and last, were either assisted by one of Justice Connect's programs or through Justice Connect making a referral to another legal service or to a support service that assists with non-legal issues. The drop from 2016-17 came as a result of an increasing focus on attracting helpseekers who were would be more likely to find pro bono help for. This was reflected in an increase in our rate of referral.



Services provided by Justice Connect

Justice Connect programs deliver a range of pro bono services to clients. More than one type of service might be received by a client as part of a holistic response. This year:

Legal assistance was provided to

2,104 clients (1,638 people and 466 not-for-profit organisations) and included:

1,257 one-off advices to 1,062 clients

436 new legal casework files opened; 10% Koori clients

954 Referrals to pro bono lawyers

Justice Connect's full Annual Impact Report can be found at justiceconnect.org.au/our-impact/

Legal information

We gave legal information 976 individuals and 906 representatives of not-for-profit organisations

Online resources

481,498 unique page views, increase of 37%

Social work support through Homeless Law Program

156 clients assisted

1,680 hours spent assisting clients by in-house social workers

Training on legislation and legal rights and responsibilities

1,410 individuals, and

2,240 representatives of not-for-profit organisations

Pro bono capacity and commitment

Justice Connect's role in partnering with the pro bono community is more than connecting people and organisations with lawyers. We also pride ourselves on our work helping pro bono lawyers improve.

1,034 We trained 1,034 legal professionals

Legal professionals trained reported:

- i high levels of satisfaction with the training,
- ii improved knowledge of topics covered,
- iii increased confidence to work with particular client groups.



Key insights

The number of referrals to pro bono lawyers was 3% higher than last year. The proportion of enquiries that were referred to a pro bono lawyer also increased, from almost one in eight enquiries to approximately one in seven

There was a 10% increase across the organisation in the number of enquiries addressed through legal information without advice (up from 1,706 to 1,882).

There was also an increase in the proportion of clients who reported that legal information was the appropriate response – more than one in four, compared with approximately one in five last year (up from 22% to 27%).

Unique page views of Justice Connect's online information resources increased by more than 35% since last year, up from 302,305 to 481,498.

Overall the number of clients provided legal assistance (advice, casework, or referral to a pro bono lawyer) was 15% lower than last year.

In November 2017, the Family Court found, in *Re: Kelvin*, that trans and gender diverse youth would no longer be required to seek a court order to access stage 2 hormone treatment. Justice Connect had long advocated for this, and worked closely with the Family Court to reduce the burden of the court process on trans youth.

In September 2017, the Melbourne City Council reversed its decision to impose a 'camping ban' in the city, which Justice Connect had argued would amount to an effective ban on homelessness. Justice Connect had advocated in public for the reversal as part of a large alliance of community organisation, and had worked with the Council to develop alternative proposals.

In July 2018 the Federal Government announced that registered charities will be exempt from paying a 'cost recovery levy' to ASIC, which Justice Connect recommended in a May 2018 submission.

The ongoing efforts of the #fixfundraising campaign continued to bear fruit, with the ALP adopting our position on fundraising regulation in its national platform, and the ACCC incorporating guidance based on our position into its advice to charities.



Legal help gave Maggie a fair chance at a better life, and when things started looking down, she knew she could give us a call and get right back on track.

Maggie's story, one year on

One year later, we return to Maggie's story, to see that the help she received to escape homelessness has led to a better life for her and her daughter.

When we first met Maggie over two years ago, she had fled from Brisbane to Melbourne with her daughter to escape family violence. We set her and her daughter up with stable accommodation, so she could focus on her study and getting her life back on track. When we first shared her story, she had almost finished her degree and was looking forward to finding a job.

Since then, Maggie's ex-partner stopped paying child support. Maggie fell a few weeks behind in rent payments, and her landlord tried to give her a 'no reason' eviction notice. Maggie was devastated. It seemed as though everything she had worked so hard for was falling apart.

Thankfully, Maggie knew eviction was a legal matter. And she knew she had Justice Connect's support. She called our social worker, Rachelle, and told her what had happened. Rachelle and the Justice Connect Homeless Law team jumped into action to prevent Maggie's immediate eviction.

We then worked to find Maggie some more stable accommodation, with a landlord she could trust. She now lives with her daughter in a women's only housing complex, where she has a big veranda and lovely neighbours. Maggie loves it there, but importantly, it gave her the security she needed while she finished her degree.

At the end of last year, at the same time as her daughter graduated High School, Maggie graduated university. She was thrilled and, amongst the celebrations, began looking for a job. Our friends at Fitted for Work provided her with new work clothes, and a professional mentor.

"I've found a full-time job now, in the field that I was studying at university," said Maggie.

Maggie has come a long way since she and her daughter struggled through a cycle of homelessness. Now, with support from Justice Connect, Maggie has built a better future for herself and her daughter. Legal help gave Maggie a fair chance at a better life, and when things started looking down, she knew she could give us a call and get right back on track.

Barbara's story

Every morning, Barbara* would wake up in her public housing home, prepare a cup of tea, and settle into a book—usually classics, but sometimes romance. Barbara loved literature. She was frugal with her pension, ensuring she could buy her favourite novels and poetry collections. Her books were her most prized possession.

One day, Barbara's oldest daughter, Tessa, called her in tears. Tessa had just broken up with her partner and didn't have anywhere to stay. Barbara invited Tessa to come and live with her until she could find somewhere more permanent.

Things were great at first, but Tessa's drinking problem soon became apparent.

"She was like two different people," said Barbara.

Tessa would come home drunk and yell, threatening to kick Barbara out of her own home. Then, the next morning, she would cook Barbara breakfast and apologise. The next week, Barbara returned home from the shops to find that Tessa had done some spring cleaning. She had thrown out most of Barbara's clothing, her knick-knacks and—devastatingly—Barbara's books were gone.

Barbara was distraught. She complained to her physiotherapist at cohealth about her daughter's behaviour. She said that Tessa was demanding to be on the lease and pressuring Barbara to give her power of attorney. Recognising the signs of abuse, the physio suggested that Barbara speak to a Justice Connect lawyer, Faith, who was part of the healthcare team at cohealth. Barbara was unsure at first—she wanted to give her daughter another chance—but deep down she knew she needed to protect herself.

"Barbara had options other than letting Tessa take control of her affairs. She could have protected her future by giving her other daughter, Michelle, power of attorney," said Faith.

Barbara asked for help writing an Enduring Power of Attorney, which would ensure Michelle was responsible for Barbara's wellbeing should Barbara's health decline.

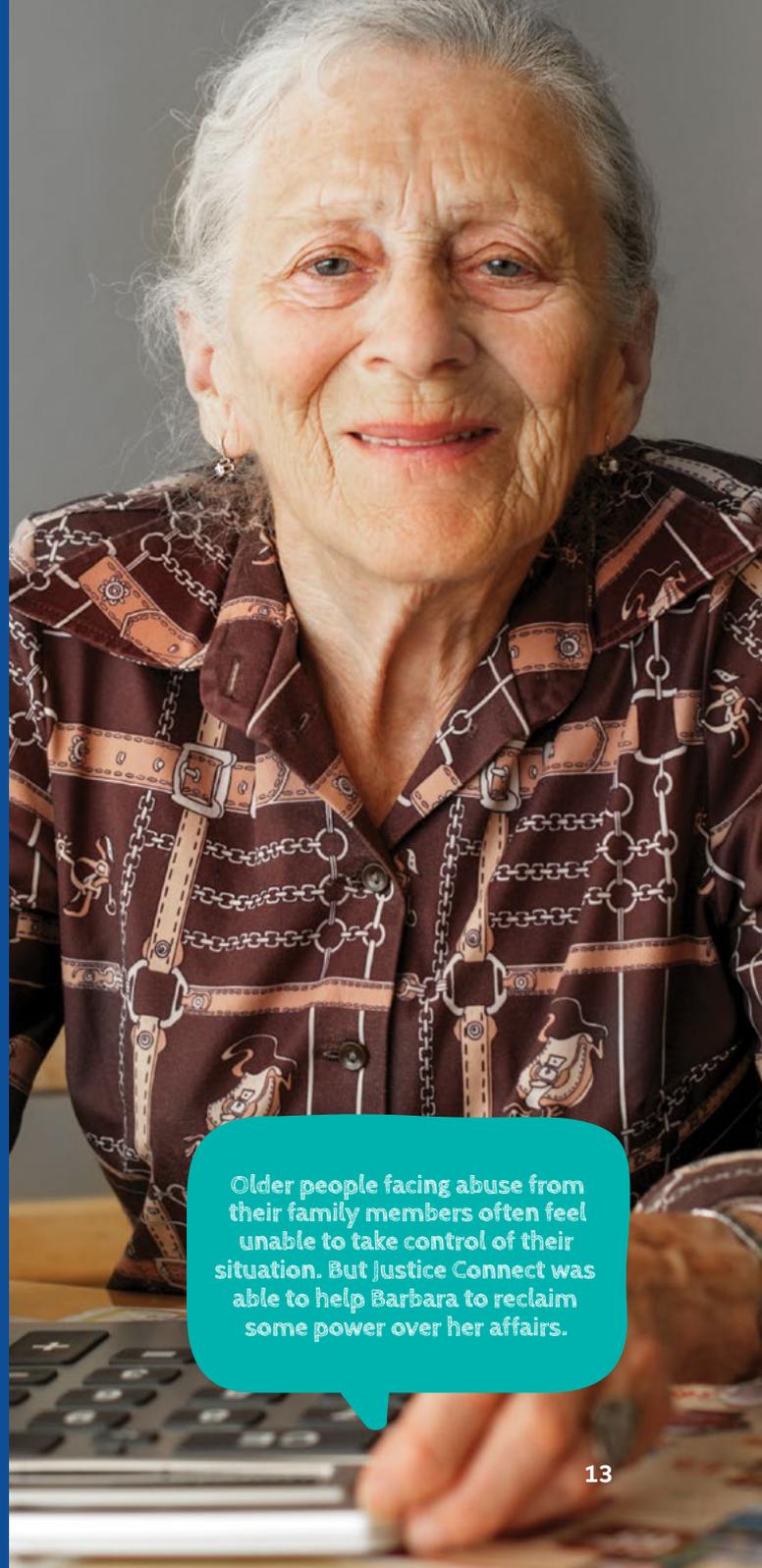
Unfortunately, Tessa found the documents and destroyed them. Barbara was scared, and felt she couldn't arrange the paperwork without Tessa finding out and getting upset. Faith assured Barbara that she had a right to protect herself against this abusive behaviour. She started looking for another way to protect Barbara's right to choose

her own power of attorney. Faith and Barbara drafted a second EPOA, and executed it amongst family members by post.

Today, Barbara has taken control of her property back, but still lives with Tessa.

"It's not uncommon for older clients to face a tough choice between two poor options," said Faith. "On the one hand, you can make your life a bit easier, but leave a family member homeless. Elder abuse is a complicated problem that cuts across various kinds of disadvantage. As lawyers we can only do so much. The best solution for Barbara is for more housing to be available, so Tessa would have somewhere else to go, and Barbara could be more secure."

*Names have been changed



Older people facing abuse from their family members often feel unable to take control of their situation. But Justice Connect was able to help Barbara to reclaim some power over her affairs.



Early legal help can prevent life's problems from spiralling, giving people peace of mind when things are hard.

John and Mary's story

Justice Connect works to provide legal solutions to people's real-life problems. Equally, we believe in the power of the law to prevent problems before they arise. Thanks to early intervention, John and Mary were able to keep their home as they enter retirement.

When John and his wife, Mary, bought their first home, they were ecstatic.

But despite both working full-time, their bank insisted their son go on the deed too. John and Mary thought it was unfair, but because they were both over 60, it was the only way they could secure the mortgage. Their son, Tim, agreed and Mary and John soon moved into their dream home.

Several months later, John and Mary realised that their son was struggling with an addiction. Without their knowledge, he had accrued over \$70,000 in debts.

"We just had no idea," said John, "we had no idea what to do."

John and Mary were stressed. They wanted to help their son, but the stress was unbearable. Debt collectors began harassing them, and John and Mary found themselves spending sleepless nights tossing and turning.

During a visit to cohealth, they mentioned their concerns to a social worker, Tess. Tess, who encouraged John and Mary to visit the Justice Connect lawyer, Faith, who was co-located at the healthcare clinic.

"Usually when we see these kinds of cases, the client has been trying to solve the problem privately for some time. They want to help their child, but they ultimately end up further and further in debt. Because John and Mary came to us early, we were able to ensure that their son's debts wouldn't affect their home."

Faith was able to connect John and Mary with a pro bono lawyer, who helped them protect their home from their son's debt collectors.

"[That help] was invaluable. We would have been forced to sell."

Early intervention means better outcomes for the client, and less work for the lawyer. That's why we partner with healthcare providers, to meet people who need help at a point before their problem spirals out of control. But unfortunately, too many legal services are unable to provide help until the situation is truly dire. Had John not gotten the help he needed early, he may have been forced to sell his home.

Early legal help can prevent life's problems from spiralling, giving people peace of mind when things are hard. Getting legal help meant that John and Mary could focus on caring for their son, without worrying about losing their home in the process.

"We're rapt," said John. "Because of that help, we were able to get a few hours' sleep."

Indigenous Employment Partners' story

Dennis Batty is the CEO and founder of Indigenous Employment Partners, a not-for-profit organisation that helps Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples connect with culturally safe employment, training and career pathways.

"We know that work lifts you out of poverty," said Dennis. "We know that work is the one thing that will help reduce homelessness, reduce family violence, reduce self-harm — all while increasing household income. Being able to do that is really important to us."

Dennis started Indigenous Employment Partners with co-founder Sara Stuart because he wanted to make a real difference in people's lives.

"I spent a lot of time growing the business, working with Aboriginal people and supporting them to get ready for work," said Dennis.

As the organisation grew, Dennis knew that they needed to go down the path of becoming an incorporated charity. What he didn't realise was that the process of incorporating was complex and confusing. He spent more time learning about the incorporation process and figuring out what he needed to do than he did helping people.

"Suddenly we were a man down," said Dennis. With all his time taken up by managing governance, he wasn't able to do the work he'd set out to do in the first place: helping Indigenous people find long-term employment.

Thankfully, Dennis came into contact with Justice Connect's Not-for-profit Law team, which specialises in helping community groups and charities understand their governance obligations.

"Community groups have to navigate complex laws," says Head of Not-for-profit Law, Sue Woodward. "They're actually more complicated than they are for small business. And yet community groups don't have access to lawyers to help."



Dennis spoke with Justice Connect about the requirements his organisation would have to meet to become a charity.

"I had no idea where to start," said Dennis. The team at Justice Connect was able to give Dennis the direction he needed, along with advice on which incorporation structure was best for him.

Despite being a small organisation, the support Dennis got from Justice Connect allowed Indigenous Employment Partners to reach more people, deliver more services, and connect with partners around Australia.

"The support we got from Justice Connect then allows us to work with people from Darwin, in the Kimberly, or in central New South Wales. It allows us to change people's lives everywhere. That's really important to us."

"We didn't want to focus on all that other stuff that takes us away from helping people. We wanted to focus on our core business. And Justice Connect helped us to do that."

"We didn't want to focus on all that other stuff that takes us away from helping people. We wanted to focus on our core business. And Justice Connect helped us to do that."



"They were always there with me, every step of the way."

Kelly's story

When Kelly saw an ad in the paper for a position as a lollypop lady, she knew it was perfect for her. Sure enough, it was a job she loved—and the kids loved her back. Every year she received handmade cards and boxes of chocolate from parents and students.

Then, in October 2017, Kelly's lung collapsed. She rushed to the local hospital where she was admitted and treated. The doctor told Kelly not to go back to work immediately, and gave her a medical certificate. Kelly spent the next few days at home recovering.

Three weeks before Christmas, Kelly received a text from her employer asking her to come in for a meeting. No one told her why, and no one suggested bringing a support person.

Unknown to Kelly, her medical certificate had been processed incorrectly. She had been overpaid by three days. When she arrived at the office, she was accused of stealing wages and abandoning shifts. Kelly tried to explain the mistake, but no one would believe her. She was told that she would no longer receive any shifts.

Kelly was devastated by the loss of her job. She knew that her employer hadn't treated her right, so she asked the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service for help.

VALS suggested that Kelly approach Justice Connect, who were able to connect her with lawyers working on a pro bono basis.

"They were always there with me, every step of the way," said Kelly. The lawyers listened to Kelly and helped her build a strong case. Along with having her concerns taken seriously, Kelly was able to find a resolution with her employer.

Kelly's distress was rightfully acknowledged and compensated. With pro bono legal support, she was able to fight for a fairer and better outcome.

The Gateway Project

A new era of legal help

In 2016 Justice Connect embarked on an ambitious digital transformation journey. Since then, we've made significant strides towards embracing the digital age. We've undertaken a huge program of user research, launched a new website, launched comprehensive online intake for all of our services. Several Justice Connect services have developed interactive web applications and self-help resources.

Now we're building our new pro bono portal, which will shortly be launched with a pilot group of firms and improve the ways we match unmet need with pro bono capacity. We've also commenced work on a new organisation-wide database and client management system that will transform the way we work, collect and analyse data.

We've undertaken a huge program of user research, launched a new website, launched comprehensive online intake for all of our services.

With our online intake system now online for a few months, we're reflecting on what we've learnt so far. Some early insights we've gained are:

- We've already had thousands of people reach and engage with the system.
- People appreciate applying for legal help out of hours and on weekends, when we see spikes in online applications.
- People who are culturally and linguistically diverse are using our online form, and some have told us that they prefer applying in writing than over the phone because they can take their time to express themselves.
- Older Australians are making it online and applying for legal help online.
- Use of our online intake system is currently around 60% on desktop and 40% on mobile or tablet.

We are currently running in-person testing of the user experience of our intake tool, and we will be rigorously evaluating the tool and its impact on help-seekers and our ability to reach and help more people. We look forward to sharing our findings.



**"We've made significant
strides towards embracing
the digital age."**

Pro bono perspective

Since its inception 25 years ago, Justice Connect's commitment to building a stronger, more connected community where people live fairer, better lives has been underpinned by the unwavering support of the pro bono sector.

Thousands of Australia's best lawyers offering their services to people who otherwise simply could not access them, has been fundamental to the impact that Justice Connect has made and continues to make. Here, we feature the stories of two such people, without whom we simply could not do what we do.



Dusan Stevic Minter Ellison

When Dusan Stevic started his six-month secondment with Justice Connect, he knew he was interested in pro bono. Now, after seeing the impact pro bono work can have first-hand, he's continuing to partner with Justice Connect on pro bono matters, alongside his commercial work at MinterEllison.

"You also learn a lot of things that you otherwise wouldn't," Dusan said, "You learn to deal with people. You learn to deal with conflict. It accelerates your legal development. But the main value is in having a huge impact on someone's life and helping someone who otherwise might have felt helpless."

After returning to MinterEllison, Dusan was asked to manage several matters through the Homeless Law clinic MinterEllison runs with Justice Connect. One of the highlights has been putting together a team to provide ongoing legal help to seven men who were facing eviction from their rooming house into homelessness.

"The provider didn't want to establish other options for the men who lived there," he said. "They just wanted to refurbish the property and boot them out. We took on seven of the residents, and another legal centre took on the eighth person."

Many of the men faced vulnerabilities that made it more challenging to find accommodation, or navigate the legal system. One of the residents spoke limited English, while another was over seventy.

One tenant struggled with addiction, which worsened when he received the notice to vacate.

"His doctor and his social worker said they'd never seen him like this," said Dusan. "It was directly related to his eviction."

Dusan pulled together a team of lawyers and graduates to help the men avoid eviction and find new accommodation. They spent the next few months negotiating with the housing provider, attending VCAT hearings and ensuring the men found alternative accommodation.

"Now we've successfully had them all rehoused. They all moved in – the last three moved into their new property last week."

Working alongside Justice Connect, Dusan was able to directly use his legal expertise to help others. And thanks to support from his firm, he can manage the pro bono work he's passionate about alongside commercial matters.

"It's definitely the most rewarding work I've done as a lawyer," he said. "Often the work isn't actually that difficult to do, but it makes such a big difference to the people who need it. It's so rewarding, I love helping people."



Heidi Nash-Smith Wotton + Kearney

Heidi has been a passionate advocate of pro bono work since her time as a junior lawyer, so when invited to develop and lead Wotton + Kearney's pro bono program from the ground up, she jumped at the opportunity.

"We didn't have a formal program when we started, so Justice Connect was crucial," Heidi advised, "At that stage we had no established relationships with community legal centres, or a clear idea of how to best get involved."

In the early days of program development, Justice Connect were integral in providing support and training to new members, referring vetted pro bono matters, and giving the lawyers a sounding board whenever they required advice about supporting clients, including in challenging situations.

"At that stage in our program, it was fundamental to have that relationship with Justice Connect—and that's continued on."

After the success of the program in Sydney, it was then expanded to Melbourne, and now, more than half of the firm's lawyers are involved in pro bono work across all of Wotton + Kearney's Australian offices.

One aspect that Heidi appreciates about her partnership with Justice Connect is the ability to get involved in different types of matters, including refugee rights, seniors' rights and support for self-represented litigants. Being able to work across a wide range of matters allows the firm to improve its impact.

"Everyone in the firm has different skillsets and capacity, so having different ways people can get involved is great for our lawyers."

Heidi strongly believes that pro bono has had a positive impact on her firm. Alongside the well-documented benefits like employee satisfaction, retention and recruitment, lawyers benefit from being able to use their specialist skills to have a tangible impact, often engaging across teams, offices and programs in the process.

"For firms who aren't already involved in pro bono, I would encourage them to do so," says Heidi. "Justice Connect is an incredible support and played a significant role in helping us develop our program. I believe the opportunity to partner with Justice Connect when you're first starting out is invaluable and I am grateful for all their assistance."



"For firms who aren't already involved in pro bono, I would encourage them to do so."

Our people

We make an impact because of the passion and dedication of our amazing people.

Staff

We employ talented, creative people with a passion for our work. We have 58 paid staff working in Melbourne and Sydney. They work at our offices, in courts, at outreach locations, in health settings and wherever else we need to be to access our clients. We proudly support flexible work arrangements with 48% of our staff working part-time. We also proudly support women in the legal sector with 83% of our staff and 88% of our senior leadership team being female and we have equal pay regardless of gender.

Secondees

Once again we received invaluable support from firms who provided secondees for 3 to 6 months during 2017/18. Feedback from our secondees, member firms and Justice Connect staff tell us that the secondment program greatly assists Justice Connect and provides a valuable experience to participating firms and practitioners.

Volunteers

We couldn't do our work without our volunteers who are crucial to the operation of Justice Connect. We have 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 impact this year.

Pro Bono Lawyers

Our 10,000+ pro bono lawyers are at the heart of our work. We can't thank them enough for their time, expertise and dedication to helping individuals and community organisations.

Our Patron

We were delighted to have the continued support of our patron

Julian Burnside AO QC

Board

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

Our Directors for 2017/18 were:

- Gillian Triggs (Chair), Emeritus Professor, former President of the Australian Human Rights Commission
- Gordon Renouf (Deputy Chair), CEO, Good On You
- Carmel Mulhern, Group General Counsel & Group Executive Corporate Affairs, Telstra
- Nicky Friedman, Head of Pro Bono & Community Programs, Allens
- Simon Lewis, Partner, Mutual Trust, The Myer Family Company
- Richard Wilson, Barrister, Victorian Bar
- David Bardsley, Director, Wealth Management and Superannuation, KPMG
- Mitzi Gilligan, Principal and Founder, Hive Legal (retired 23 Nov 2017)
- Geoffrey Rush, Partner, KPMG (retired 23 Nov 2017)

Our Finances

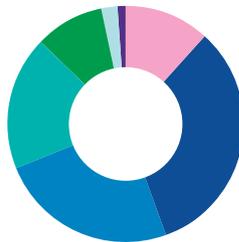
Our Finances

The audited financial result for the 2017/18 financial year is a surplus of \$73,880 representing 1.1% of our annual income. At 30 June 2018 we maintain healthy net assets and retained earnings of \$1,172,141.

We have continued to diversify our funding sources and increase the number of funding partners seeing our income grow on 2016/17 by 9% to \$6,667,454. In 2017/18 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.

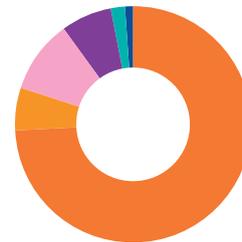
Income

- Federal Government 11%
- State Government 31%
- Philanthropic 23%
- Fee for Service 17%
- Membership Fees 9%
- Fundraising 2%
- Investment Income 1%
- Other 6%



Expenses

- Employee 75%
- Administration 6%
- Occupancy 10%
- ICT 7%
- Direct Program 2%
- Fundraising 1%



Thank you to our supporters

Justice Connect would like to express our heartfelt thanks to the following law firms, governments, professional legal associations, philanthropic partners, community groups, and individual donors for providing ongoing support for our work.

As a not-for-profit, we are reliant on the generosity of our supporters and the ongoing connections with our partner organisations to ensure the continued delivery of the life changing work that we do.

Our Patron

We offer a special thanks to our patron Julian Burnside AO QC, whose support has been a vital element in our supporter engagement and fundraising work. His commitment to human rights and access to justice has provided a tangible benefit to Justice Connect through his ongoing support of our work.

We recognise the vital support of our regular donors whose monthly gifts demonstrate their commitment to a fairer, more just world. Members' pro bono support through our relationships with lawyers and law firms provides thousands of hours of free legal help to our vulnerable client groups and not-for-profit organisations. In 2017–18, our partner lawyers undertook over nearly 50,000 hours of work for Justice Connect clients.

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Dushan Stevic -
Minter Ellison
Olivia Wright - Corrs
Chambers Westgarth



Other thanks

Justice Connect receives help in many ways from many people and organisations, whether through reduced fee services, access to facilities, research, joint advocacy, and through service delivery partnerships.

Allens Linklaters

Associate Professor Virginia Lewis, La Trobe University

Caulfield Hospital, Alfred Health

Central City Community Health Service

Centre for Social Impact, Swinburne University

City of Yarra

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New South Wales Council of Social Service

New South Wales Elder Abuse Helpline and Resource Unit

Norman O'Bryan SC

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Acknowledgements

Individual donors

Justice Connect gratefully recognises the many committed individuals who support the work we do through their generous contributions to our fundraising campaigns.

Justice Champions

Andrew & Kerry
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Geoffrey
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Jeannine
& Simon Lewis

Jon Webster

Julian Burnside
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Mitzi & George
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& Sue Noy

Stephen Sawyer

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Wendy & Rod Brooks

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Other major supporters

Craig Dowling SC

Joanna Renkin

Katrina L Tull

Nancy Price

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Our friends in the community legal sector

At Justice Connect, we are proud of the impact we make, every day, using the law to help people and organisations. But we are only one part of an enormous network of legal groups, dedicated to supporting our community with the legal help they need. They continue to deliver amazing results for the community. We want to acknowledge all of their excellent work.

For more information please contact **Pooja Dutt**, Development Manager
giving@justiceconnect.org.au OR justiceconnect.org.au/donate

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