

Annual Impact Report

2022 – 2023





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Introduction

Acknowledgement of Country

Justice Connect acknowledges the Wurundjeri and Boon Wurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation, and the Gadigal peoples of the Eora Nation, as the Traditional Owners of the Land on which we meet and work. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

About Justice Connect

In the face of rising unmet legal need, Justice Connect designs and delivers high-impact interventions to increase access to legal support and progress social justice.

We believe in a fair and just world, where people and communities are supported to engage with and fully participate in our legal and social systems, and avoid the negative impacts on their wellbeing or organisational health that flow from unresolved legal problems.



Letter from the CEO

I remember the moment in February this year when we had confirmation that a major step had been taken by Commonwealth, State, and Territory Governments to #FixFundraising. I paused, and reflected. It has been such a long road. I thought about the 10 years of work Justice Connect has led with a coalition of peak and professional bodies, the dozens of submissions made, the hundreds of hours spent in meetings with decision makers.

Finally, after far too long, there was formal commitment to creating a policy environment that removes debilitating fundraising red tape for 60,000 Australian charities, over half of which are entirely volunteer run. This reform will free up their time and resources so they can deliver more help to their communities at a time when it's needed more than ever.

This is just one story of impact among many throughout the 2022-2023 financial year.

Justice Connect's Annual Impact Report reflects our commitment to working with individuals and community organisations to increase access to legal supports and progress social justice.

It demonstrates how we are using our insights and expertise to push for system-level solutions, to democratise access to legal information, to develop tools and systems that stretch our help to more and more people. This year our report reflects the way in which our investment in data systems, practices, and evaluation has enabled us to look more deeply into the changes we are seeing.

One of the most striking stories of the last year has been the escalating housing crisis and the impact this has for people on the edge.

This year we delivered a 47% increase in casework services for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, and a 43% increase in social work support. Our digital tool helping renters at risk of homelessness, Dear Landlord, was viewed more than 60,000 times and resulted in the creation of almost 1,000 tailored documents. Behind these numbers exist powerful individual stories, such as that told by Rosa, who escaped a violent relationship with her

child and was facing homelessness, overwhelming debt, and a daunting tribunal hearing.

These stories matter. Take Anne's fight for fair wages. She arrived in Australia speaking English as her second language, and was underpaid at work. Our legal system seemed out of reach. We worked with pro bono lawyers to advise Anne about how to pursue the wages she was owed, and she received a \$20,000 award from court. Then we made a pro bono referral to provide support in getting her employer to pay up.

In addition to the support we provide people with financial legal needs, we continue to tackle elder abuse. The 2023 Intergenerational Report notes that over the next 40 years, the number of Australians aged 80 and over will triple – to more than 3.5 million people. This means we need to do more *now* to prevent elder abuse. **This year, we helped older people with 1,691 instances of specialised legal support,** whether that was providing legal advice, making referrals, or delivering ongoing casework. And we've stretched this help through upskilling others, running 47 training sessions with 634 healthcare workers. We've also set about building awareness of how older people can protect their rights as they age with our Conversation Guides, which we've brought to people and organisations both online and offline, achieving over 100,000 impressions.

We are working to extend our impact beyond important individual support, including through delivery of training, information, and digital tools for not-for-profit organisations. Last year we delivered 33 webinars, which were attended by 2,464 people, and ran 86 customised training sessions, reaching 1,277 people. We've had 34,342 views to our self-help tools for organisations,

an increase of 245%. A total of 1,280 documents were created, helping community organisations navigate complex legal requirements through customised and plain-language online legal support.

This report also shows what can be done through leveraging our legal experience and insights and making it go further with innovation and digital strategies.

Our Pro Bono Portal has been seven years in the making and should now be regarded as essential access to justice infrastructure. This system is designed to connect people and communities that need help with a vast and growing pro bono network, and is needed now more than ever.

The Pro Bono Portal now covers seven jurisdictions globally and has supported nearly 1,400 people around the world access justice. In Germany, it's helping people displaced by the conflict in Ukraine. In Hong Kong, it's helping close the justice poverty gap. In the Philippines, it's the central pro bono platform for all attorneys across the country. Over the past year we can be proud of the people and community organisations we've helped to achieve justice and navigate the law. At the same time, the data and stories point to the relentless pressure of legal need and the significant impacts of these issues.

We must continue to look for ways to prevent legal issues from arising, and stretch our support to be there for our community when it's needed the most.

To deliver this work we need expert staff who are highly committed and who can deliver critical services to the people and organisations who need us, groundbreaking innovation that stretches our help, and outstanding operational support. We need pro bono firms that stick with us and work across the many and varied contours of legal need. And we need partners who understand the problems we are tackling and back us to do incredible work.

To everyone who has supported us this year, thank you. This report is a record of significant impact due to your hard work, care, and commitment.



Chris Povey

CEO, Justice Connect



Letter from the Chair

It's becoming all too common to read, hear, and talk about the crises with which our community is contending with.

The housing crisis surges on, pushing more and more people into housing insecurity. Combined with the rising cost of living, it is becoming even more difficult for our community's most vulnerable to avoid getting caught in a web of challenges.

Disasters fuelled by climate change continue to intensify and our upcoming disaster season is forecast to plunge more and more Australians into loss and uncertainty. Legal problems do not go away, once the acute stage of a disaster is over. Recovery efforts from previous disasters continue long after crises abate.



As well as these persisting issues, we have seen the legal landscape affected by new and emerging problems. Financial scams are increasing and becoming more sophisticated, community organisations are facing waves of complex government reform on which they need advice, and construction companies are shutting down, leaving family homes incomplete.

Evidence from recent research, like the Victoria Law Foundation's Public Understanding of the Law Survey (PULS), shows everyday legal problems are clustering and spreading.

Right now, the rising needs of our community call for a robust, coordinated social justice response.

Justice Connect has spent the past year strengthening its ability to serve on the frontline of legal need. **I am proud that we have continued our work supporting individuals and community organisations with their legal needs through legal service delivery, digital innovation, and strategic advocacy to address root causes of legal need.**

This year, Justice Connect's board has welcomed a wealth of experience and expertise in its newest members: Brooke Massender and Laavanya Pari.

Brooke is the Global Head of Pro Bono for Herbert Smith Freehills, where she leads the strategic direction of pro bono services across a global network. She has over 20 years' experience working with a diverse range of pro bono clients, and is regularly sought out by non-profit, charities, social enterprises, and corporate executives for strategic and legal advice.

Laavanya is a Chartered Accountant and a graduate of the Australian

Institute of Company Directors with over 20 years' experience across a range of industries. She has provided senior leadership and financial expertise to campaigning and digital organisations, and held board positions across both the for profit and not-for-profit sectors.

The addition of Brooke and Laavanya represents an injection of pro bono strategy, legal practice, and financial management expertise that will propel Justice Connect to scaling our legal services and systems-level advocacy.

I also thank our Deputy Chair, Prof. Sarah Maddison, and our dedicated board members – Jidah Clark, Tristan Cutcliffe, Michael Horin, Vicki Jamieson, and Dr Crystal McKinnon – for their insights and hard work. After 9 years of dedicated service, I also thank Nicky Friedman for her valued contributions to Justice Connect's Board during her term which concluded in November 2022.

I acknowledge and commend the leadership of our CEO, Chris Povey, who has guided the organisation through a challenging period, and remained relentlessly focused on delivering effective legal services that increase access to justice for the people who need it most.

Achieving these impacts takes a concerted team effort. Though I can't name them all, I acknowledge and **thank all staff members for their passion and hard work that has stewarded the results we see in this Annual Impact Report.**

The Hon. Marcia Neave AO

Chair of the Board, Justice Connect

Introducing our inaugural Annual Impact Report

In previous years, our Annual Report and Impact Report were published separately. This year, we have chosen to combine them into our inaugural **Annual Impact Report**, acknowledging that Justice Connect’s activities, stories, results, and insights are inextricably linked.

The report provides a snapshot of some of the work we have undertaken over the last financial year to address legal need, prevent legal issues escalating, and empower the legal assistance sector.

In reading our inaugural combined Annual Impact Report, we hope you develop a sense of both the breadth and depth of our work helping people and organisations, and the real-world impact our work has on our community every day.

How we understand impact at Justice Connect

This report reflects our understanding of how we have:

- Implemented **our 2024 strategy**, which is designed to increase our reach, impact, and sustainability, guided by our three strategic directions:
 1. Extending the reach and impact of our services through **digital strategies**
 2. Amplifying and extending the impact of our work through **strategic engagement** to help drive systems-level change
 3. Achieving our purpose in the most **effective and financially sustainable** way.



View our 2024 strategy:

justiceconnect.org.au/our-2024-strategy

and

- Achieved the impacts described in **our theory of change**, which captures the ways in which we are focussed on the design, delivery, evaluation, and research required to deliver effective and high impact responses.




View our theory of change:


justiceconnect.org.au/theory-of-change





Throughout the report, we use the following icons to depict how our work relates to our categories of activity in our theory of change:


**Develop and deliver education and self-help resources**

**Community outreach**

**Complementary services**

**Legal services design and delivery**

**Legal sector improvements**

**Strategic engagement**

We expect these activities to achieve our four desired outcomes of:

Stronger & more effective **community organisations**

Improved **individual wellbeing**

Better **laws and policies**

Better **responses to legal need**

Our work is guided by our organisational values:

- **Client-centered:** We centre our work and our goals around the needs of the people and communities that benefit from our work.
- **Inclusive:** The law disproportionately impacts certain groups. It creates and perpetuates cycles of hardship, and it provides tools and skills to redress unfair power dynamics. To realise our purpose we must embrace different perspectives, experience and skills in our work, in our organisational culture and teams, and in our policies and strategic direction.
- **Collaborative:** We collaborate internally and externally because we know that together we are greater than the sum of our parts.
- **Responsive:** We look out for changes and we adapt and move easily and quickly in response.
- **Innovative:** We embrace innovation, curiosity and system-level thinking. We are not afraid to research, try, fail, and iterate.
- **Impactful:** We are evidence informed and rigorous in how we work, we look for opportunities to learn and improve, and can clearly demonstrate our impact.

Our year at a glance

Outreach

26,089,971

People reached through digital consumer outreach

↓ 25% from 34,625,779 ^

1,153,839

Unique website pageviews

↓ 26% from 1,562,650 ^

Enquiries



5,568

Enquiries

↓ 7% from 6,040 *

3,527

Intakes

↓ 20% from 4,423 *

Self-help

499,577

Views to our self-help resources

↓ 32% from 736,075 ^

93,035

Views to our self-help tools

↑ 36% from 68,117 ^

2,218

Documents generated by our self-help tools

↑ 12% from 1,973 ^



Advocacy

6

Law reform submissions

↓ 54% from 13



Service provision



7,817

One-to-one legal services

↑ 1% from 7,731

80

One-to-one intensive social work services

↑ 43% from 56

240

Education sessions

↓ 19% from 296

One-to-one legal services

932

Advice services
↓ 27% from 1,285

891

Casework services
↑ 44% from 620

759

Secondary consults
↓ 22% from 920

49

Facilitated referrals
↓ 31% from 71

603

Pro bono referrals
↓ 23% from 788

4,583

Information services
↑ 15% from 3,997

Pro bono work

47,779

Pro bono hours leveraged

↓ 10% from 53,219

\$19,331,676

Value of pro bono hours

↓ 6% from \$20,584,322



^ In FY23 we made the transition to using Google Analytics 4 as our key website analytics tool, due to the sunsetting of Google's previous Analytics tool Universal Analytics. In previous publications, website metrics were calculated using the Universal Analytics tracking methodology, which differs slightly from the new Google Analytics 4 methodology.

* In FY23 we updated our definition of an enquiry at Justice Connect. In previous publications, an enquiry reflected an interaction with our online intake tools as well as any offline enquiries we received directly. Now, it counts only completed submissions (both online and offline) that are triaged by our staff, allowing us to improve data accuracy and trend analysis.

How we support individuals





Delivering high-intensity supports in the face of a housing crisis

As Victoria’s housing and cost of living crises intensify, demand for our services rises alongside it.

Our specialist Homeless Law team is experiencing mounting demand to connect people facing homelessness with the help they need. When people have complex or interconnected needs, we tailor our services to offer a higher-intensity of support, such as providing ongoing representation or casework.

We provide intensive, integrated casework services to help people remain safely housed, from preventing evictions so people can stay in their home, to getting debts and fines waived so they can pay their rent.

Our expert lawyers work hard to advocate on our clients’ behalf, negotiating with rental providers and appearing in courts and tribunals, giving people a voice in what can be an intimidating system.

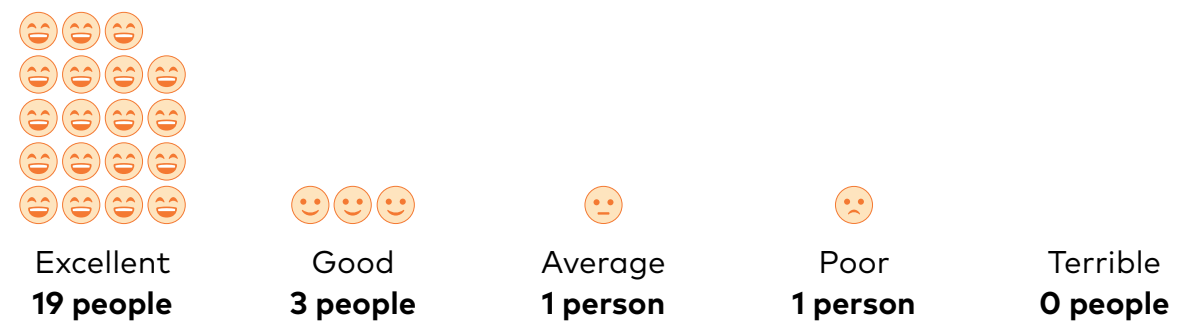
We delivered 593 casework services to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness in FY23 (↑47% increase)

In the face of this increased demand, our passionate team has maintained a high quality of service.



It’s the one organisation that made me start to have hope - once you have hope, then things change. I wasn’t sleeping before Homeless Law took over, but once they were involved I slept like a baby for the first time in years. They helped me get my family back on its feet, and now I’m not intimidated as a renter. For them to go out of their way to help me and my family, they’ll have my un-dying thanks and respect. Boy did I call the right service! – Client feedback

How they felt about the outcome



CLIENT STORY:

Rosa’s journey from crisis to stability

When Rosa* fled her rental property, taking her young daughter with her, her mind was focussed on getting them both to safety. They were forced to leave because of family violence perpetrated by Rosa’s ex-partner, and found temporary shelter through a refuge.

In the aftermath of this traumatic experience, Rosa’s mental health suffered. And although she was physically safe and away from the property, her name was still on the lease. By the time Rosa contacted Justice Connect, the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) had issued a possession order for rent arrears. Rosa also discovered that her ex-partner had stopped paying rent and had significantly damaged the property after she left.

Our expert tenancy lawyers advised Rosa about her legal rights and options. To help Rosa avoid homelessness and give her the best chance at securing safe housing for her and her daughter, she needed holistic support from our integrated legal and social work team.

Our lawyers advocated for Rosa at VCAT, who found that she was not liable for any damage or housing debts incurred by her ex-partner. The arrears were proportioned so that Rosa was not held responsible for rent after she fled the property, and VCAT made no adverse findings against her. This outcome meant no possession order was made against Rosa, and she did not have to worry about disclosing these proceedings as part of future rental applications. Our wraparound legal and social work advocacy also ensured that Rosa would not be ‘blacklisted’ by her rental

provider, and that she received positive rental references for her future rental applications.

At the same time, our social worker made sure Rosa was referred to specialised, ongoing family violence support, family law legal assistance, and housing pathways. We also sourced financial support to cover removal costs, so that Rosa and her young daughter could safely move and store their belongings.

Our combined legal and social work support offered Rosa and her child a path to regaining stability, and a chance to safely focus on their continued wellbeing.

Reflecting on the help she received, Rosa shared “the whole experience with Justice Connect has been life changing, from [the social worker’s] reassurance in day-to-day life, to the work my lawyers did for me. It has taken a massive load off my shoulders and I couldn’t be happier on our way to starting our new lives. Without you all, god knows where we would be!”

**All names in this story have been changed to protect their identity.*





Arming renters with digital tools to understand their rights and options

Our self-help tool for renters in Victoria – Dear Landlord – has remained a trusted, quality source of support during a tumultuous time of escalating housing and cost of living pressures.

The harrowing impacts of these compounding crises are seen directly in our data, with **Dear Landlord receiving 60,803 views** (↑5% increase) and **generating 938 unique documents** (↑12% increase).

Having safe, secure housing lays the foundation for someone's financial, mental, and relational wellbeing. That's why providing early help so that people can stay safely housed is an important part of our approach to homelessness prevention.

In order to help as many people as we can, we invest in building online self-help tools that people can use to understand their legal rights and take action at scale.



86% (n=22) said Dear Landlord helped them feel more comfortable accessing support services.

[It's] impacted me [a lot] because [I'm] not the type to look or ask for help. I tend to deal with things on my own. [Dear Landlord] has given me the confidence to approach and deal with things... and understanding things [a bit] better when asking for help.

– Dear Landlord user feedback

Our Dear Landlord self-help tool received **60,000+ views**, generating **900+ unique documents**



View Dear Landlord
justiceconnect.org.au/dear-landlord





Addressing interconnected needs with integrated social workers

Our 20 years' experience has shown us that people experiencing or at risk of homelessness often have both legal and non-legal issues that keep them trapped in the cycle of housing insecurity. Alongside our legal services, we deliver integrated social work to address a range of our clients' needs under one roof.

We have dedicated in-house social workers who work alongside some of the most isolated and vulnerable members of our community to support our clients with their interconnected non-legal needs.

At times, this involves keeping someone safe in family violence situations, assisting them to find secure housing, connecting them with mental health supports, or helping navigate substance dependence issues.



We provided **80** intensive non-legal services via our in-house social workers (up from 56 in FY22 – 43%)

Our social workers made 779 specialist referrals to services for clients

Our in-house social workers also made 779 expert referrals, including linking people to financial brokerage, court attendances, family violence support services, further legal support services, and other targeted assistance.



100% (n=9) of clients surveyed who received social work support described it as "excellent" or "good".

*You're the best [social worker!]
Can't thank you enough... always there when I really needed it.*
– Client feedback

The amount of support blew me out of the water - they helped me with my arrears, even with food vouchers, and they helped put us back on our feet. The difference they made over those months was just incredible. I was just trying to stay in my house, but didn't expect all the extra support - I couldn't believe it. – Client feedback

CLIENT STORY:

Clara's road to a safe and secure home

Clara* is a single mother of three, who was dealing with the compounding challenges of chronic health issues, financial abuse, and family violence, all leading to her facing the crisis of losing her home.

Clara had experienced homelessness before, and was determined to keep herself and her young children safely housed. Because Justice Connect had successfully assisted Clara in the past, she felt confident contacting our team for help.

Clara told us she had no one else to turn to. Our integrated social worker could see that Clara was trying to get back on her feet, but there were so many hurdles she was trying to jump, and trying to do all on her own. By working together, we knew we could help her navigate and resolve some of the issues she was facing.

Our social worker contacted Centrelink to explain Clara's circumstances and was able to advocate for her previously cancelled payments to be reinstated as a matter of urgency, and her entitlements back-paid. We provided Clara and her children with immediate financial relief and food vouchers while she waited for the payments to arrive. When our lawyers negotiated an affordable repayment plan for her rent arrears at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT), our social worker also secured brokerage to help Clara make these repayments. Through our holistic approach, we successfully resolved Clara's legal and financial problems, and

she said she no longer feared losing her housing or custody of her children. **With her legal and non-legal needs addressed, a weight was lifted off her shoulders.**

"Just thought I'd let you know I definitely feel the warm and fuzzies today, it's been years since I even felt something like this". Clara told our social worker.

With her housing secured, Clara was able to get back on her feet financially and have the stability to take steps towards improving her health.



**All names in this story have been changed to protect their identity.*



Each quarter, we produce a 'deep-dive' evaluation report to better understand our data and draw actionable insights from it.

IMPACT DEEP-DIVE:

Looking at how we provide high-intensity services

In Q3 FY23, we explored the impact of our higher-intensity services, which are tailored for people with complex needs, for example, people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, older people, people with accessibility needs, or small- to medium-sized community organisations. These services are often integrated with place-based services and draw on different modalities and specialised skill sets.

This research took a particular focus on people being supported with wraparound, legal casework and social work through our Homeless Law program. Drawing together 10 years' worth of client feedback collected through phone-based interviews, we were able to better understand the impact of our high-intensity services in preventing and ending homelessness.

Key insights from clients surveyed via this process between 2014-2023 (totalling 301 clients), include:



93% rated the quality of Homeless Law's integrated social work supports as excellent or good.



92% said that Homeless Law's lawyers helped them to better understand their legal options.



90% said that Homeless Law helped them to get a better outcome than they would have otherwise experienced.

Of the clients we had spoken to when completing our Q3 FY23 deep-dive (15), 100% said the assistance from Homeless Law had helped them to resolve their legal issue, with 90% feeling positive about the outcome and 10% with mixed feelings.

The phone interviews also give insight into the nuanced impact we're having on people's long-term wellbeing, with clients stating the assistance has helped them to feel safe and protected, feeling respected, and feeling hopeful again.

I was so grateful for the help and cried when I was told the great outcome. I am also no longer homeless and living in my car.
– Client feedback

If it wasn't for [Homeless Law] I'd be on the street, no doubt about it... Now I feel like I'm able to offer help to others. – Client feedback



Encouraging older people to plan for their later years

As Australia's ageing population grows, the prevalence of elder abuse also grows. As people age, they can grow more dependent on family members and carers. Unfortunately, this opens many up to the risk of elder abuse, especially where formal legal documents such as a Will, Power of Attorney, or Enduring Guardianship are not in place.

Preventing elder abuse begins with people thinking proactively about what they want for their older age, and putting documents in place to ensure those wishes can be enforced. Our Conversation Guides help facilitate these conversations by presenting common questions for people to think about in order to protect their rights, interests, and dignity as they age.

In the past 12 months, **we've brought our Conversations Guides to people and organisations both online and offline, achieving over 100,000 impressions.**



We saw a **313%** increase in older people attending our in-person workshops, run by our expert lawyers.



92% (n=78) of older people said they are more confident to plan for their future after the session.

We trained 70 community health workers on how to support their clients plan for their future.



95% (n=22) of community health workers we trained said they have a better understand of how to have conversations with their clients about future planning.

The content and information was extremely valuable and presented in a way that was easy to understand. The ability to ask questions throughout the session was appreciated. [The Justice Connect lawyer] was so experienced and knowledgeable and was very generous in sharing her expertise.
– Community health worker feedback



View our Conversation Guides
justiceconnect.org.au/conversation

Our Conversation Guides achieved over 100,000 impressions



Empowering people to represent themselves in court

Going to court by yourself can be extremely daunting. There are many complex processes in place, multiple deadlines, and documents to prepare.


Sometimes, a little bit of legal help can go a long way in demystifying the legal system and instilling confidence.

Our Self-Representation Service is there to support people who are representing themselves in Federal and Victorian courts by helping them prepare documents, appear in court, or enforce orders.

This year, we returned to both courts in-person. **We helped 118 people across Victorian and Federal jurisdictions through over 160 clinic appointments.** Our clinics help people with a range of advice services, from procedural advice and preparing documents, to advising about mediation and appeals. Our clinics also cover a wide range of areas of law, including employment, tenancy, property, public and administrative law, consumer law and more.

...the advice I received really helped me understand what to do, how to fill out the forms and what I can expect. The whole legal system is unknown to me and having some knowledge to proceed really gives me confidence and takes away some of the barriers which were previously in the way. Thank you for your help. – Client feedback

We also have a library of online resources providing a range of legal information about representing yourself in court. This year, this category of resources was viewed 28,858 times.

 **83%** of the people who used our self-representation resources rated them as "helpful".

We helped 118 people through over 160 clinic appointments

Our resources for representing yourself were viewed almost 29,000 times

CLIENT STORY:

Anne's fight for fair wages

Anne* is a recent migrant to Australia, with English as a second language. When she migrated to Australia, she was excited to advance her career with a paid internship with a company. The position was a 12-week placement paying \$30 per hour. Satisfied by the terms offered, Anne commenced working three days a week, and towards the end of her internship received a lump sum payment for her work.

The amount she was paid fell far short of the \$30 per hour promised, and far below the Award rate. She decided to make a small claim to the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia, to recover the pay she was owed.

Anne came to Justice Connect seeking advice on the underpayments and what to do to pursue her unpaid wages. Over multiple appointments, we gave Anne legal advice with the help of an interpreter. Anne was then able to make her claim and represent herself in court.

Anne was successful, and the Court ordered her to be paid almost \$20,000 in unpaid wages. Following the Court's ruling, Justice Connect connected Anne with a pro bono lawyer to ensure the orders are enforced and she is paid what she is rightfully owed.

Anne is now looking forward to continuing the early stages of her career, with greater awareness of her employment rights.



**All names in this story have been changed to protect their identity.*



Answering the community's simple legal questions online

Sometimes, people facing a legal issue may not need to see a lawyer. A simple answer or piece of advice may be all they need to learn about their rights, understand their options, and take action.

In March 2023, we re-opened Justice Connect Answers, an online legal clinic where people can have their simple legal questions answered for free. Our pro bono lawyers then log into the site and select which questions they'd like to answer. All communications between the clients and lawyers take place through the platform, and no ongoing casework is taken on. Where questions are ineligible or not appropriate, Justice Connect's team of in-house lawyers refer people to more appropriate services to best meet their needs.

In the 4 months since re-opening, we have helped 48 people with their legal questions, providing tailored legal advice, information, and referrals.



91% of eligible questions were answered via Justice Connect Answers (20% increase from initial pilot phase).

Pro bono lawyers using Justice Connect Answers have found that the platform offered an easy way for them to help clients at a time that suits them:

It is an accessible format, easy to use and accommodates other time demands. – Pro bono lawyer feedback

Among the many upsides, this service enables secondee lawyers to answer queries when they are able to and is extremely convenient. – Pro bono lawyer feedback

The platform is very user-friendly. – Pro bono lawyer feedback



View Justice Connect Answers
justiceconnect.org.au/jca

CLIENT STORY:

Tony's pursuit of his consumer rights

When Tony* purchased a television set online, he expected the unit to work seamlessly. Unfortunately, soon after he began using the TV, the free-to-air function stopped working.

Feeling frustrated, Tony was sure he was entitled to repairs or replacement of the faulty TV, but when he contacted the seller, they redirected him to the manufacturer.

When the TV manufacturer refused to replace the unit under warranty, due to the television being purchased online, Tony decided to turn to Justice Connect Answers to ask for help.

In his question, Tony requested guidance in negotiating with the seller, who was growing more combative and dismissive of his concerns.

We were able to quickly assure Tony that it was the seller who was responsible under Australian Consumer Law, and confirmed that his PayPal payment confirmation was sufficient proof of purchase.

We also walked Tony through the sellers' terms and conditions and gave advice about what steps to take to resolve the issue himself.

Armed with newfound knowledge, Tony felt empowered to negotiate the repairs independently. He got back in touch with the seller, read the advice we gave him aloud, and asserted his rights under the Australian Consumer Law. The seller then withdrew their rejection and provided a replacement TV.

Through discrete, once-off advice, Justice Connect Answers increased Tony's ability to self-advocate, by informing him of his rights and suggesting what form of compensation to pursue.

Tony found the online legal clinic easy to use, and was grateful for the assistance with his legal problem, which "would not have been resolved if not for the advice he received".



**All names in this story have been changed to protect their identity.*



Each quarter, we produce a 'deep-dive' evaluation report to better understand our data and draw actionable insights from it.

IMPACT DEEP-DIVE:

Looking at the location of people and organisations we help

In Q4 FY23, we challenged the assumptions we held about the location of the people and organisations we help, looking at Google Analytics data for users of our online self-help resources and tools, and de-identified address data for our one-to-one services.

We compared our service data to location data from the 2021 Census, and found we delivered proportionally fewer services to individuals based in regional and remote areas. While 2% of the population live in remote areas, and 26% live in regional areas, we delivered 0.3% of one-to-one services to people in remote areas and 18% to people in regional areas. Similarly, our self-help resources are used proportionally less by individuals in remote and regional areas (0.4% and 10% respectively).

The majority of our services delivered in remote and regional areas is through our disaster response work, as well as our online legal clinic Justice Connect Answers. For Seniors Law and Homeless Law, we expected to see lower

proportions of clients in regional and remote areas, due to their in-person outreach models (via Health Justice Partnerships, embedded community partnerships and co-located staff in urban areas).

By contrast, **for community organisations, we delivered proportionally more services to organisations in remote and regional areas compared to location data** available through the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC). While 3% of charities are located in remote areas and 27% are located in regional areas, 4% of our services were for organisations in remote areas and 38% were for organisations in regional areas.

Percentage of legal supports delivered by location

For individuals



For community organisations



How we support community organisations





Supporting Local Aboriginal Land Councils

Since 2016, our Not-for-profit Law program has been delivering the Local Aboriginal Land Council Service, providing targeted, practical, and culturally appropriate free legal assistance to the 120 Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs) across NSW.

The service provides LALCs with free legal advice on a large range of legal issues, including employment, governance, contracts, property, and non-claimant native title applications.

It also provides capacity building training in the areas of governance, employment, and contracts, as well as publishing plain language legal information resources on those topics.

In FY23 we delivered 103 services to 48 LALCs.

- 20 information services (↑ 67% increase)
- 22 advice services (↑ 83% increase)
- 61 pro bono referrals (↑ 85% increase)

Our data indicates that over 50% of LALCs using our service have made between 5-20+ enquiries, indicating that LALCs have trust and confidence in Justice Connect as a free, independent and high-quality source of legal assistance and have come to rely on the service to support their governance, legal and operational needs.



94% (n=17) of LALCs were happy with the legal help they got from Justice Connect.



88% (n=17) of LALCs felt more confident dealing with their legal issues after receiving free legal help.

We also conducted a range of face-to-face regional engagements, including bespoke training to 5 individual LALCs, and presenting at 6 regional forums.



91% (n=24) rated our training as "excellent" or "very good".

I found this to be very useful. Also, it was very interesting, and [the trainer] was fantastic, very engaging. – Training participant

Our expert service and training efforts have also been recognised by the NSW Aboriginal Land Council, who have incorporated our legal support, advice, and training into their three-year strategic plan.

We look forward to strengthening our ties with the LALC network, and see them continue to protect and foster the best interests of First Nations communities across NSW.





Keeping community organisations at the forefront of the law

Without adequate legal support, not-for-profit organisations would find themselves forced to divert their limited time and resources to navigate complex laws.

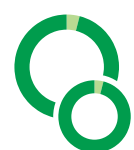
In order to support as many community organisations as we can, we run webinars and training sessions to equip organisations with the knowledge they need to prevent legal problems, comply with the law, and resolve disputes.

We delivered 33 webinars, which were attended by 2,464 people.

We ran 86 customised training sessions, reaching 1,277 people.

In addition to our suite of training on the most common legal issues not-for-profit organisations face, we respond to the emerging needs of organisations we support. When key reforms to workplace laws were announced as coming into effect on 1 July 2023, we produced and delivered a specialised webinar on upcoming changes which received 210 registrations.

People from community groups who attended our training and webinars were overwhelmingly satisfied with our service, with 92% of respondents saying the service was 'very good' or 'excellent' (sample size of 750 survey respondents).



96% reported higher levels of knowledge after receiving our training and webinars, and **90%** were more confident.

We also brought our training to more government stakeholders, to extend our reach to the public sector. This allowed us to provide training on governance principles for organisations in the

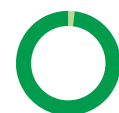
community services sector across Victoria, including family violence, disability services, and aged care.



96% of participants noted an increase in confidence.



97% of participants noted an increase in knowledge.



98% of participants rated training as excellent or very good.

I expected the training to be quite dry, but this was fantastic. I was very engaged in the learning. I had such poor knowledge going in and I feel so much more knowledgeable to have discussions with organisations about their governance. – Training participant

I have said it once and I will say it again the team at Justice Connect are the best. I have used their resources and services for years and [my team] are benefiting from some great capacity building. They completely get what it means to be a not-for-profit are so supportive of the cause related work and totally have our back. – LinkedIn comment

CLIENT STORY:

Thirrili secures legal protections for First Nations intellectual property

Thirrili Ltd is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander controlled not-for-profit organisation based in the Northern Territory, operating across all of Australia.

Drawing its name from a Bunuba word meaning power and strength, Thirrili provides crucial supports to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people suffering grief, loss, and trauma due to the loss of a loved one through suicide and other critical incidents.

Since its establishment in early 2017, Thirrili has been the national provider of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific postvention support and assistance. Thirrili Ltd embodies the true meaning of its name by operating from a strengths-based approach to provide support to empower the individuals, families, and communities it works with.

In the past year, we were able to assist Thirrili with referrals to our pro bono member firms for advice on a range of legal issues, from developing subcontracts, drafting commercial agreements incorporating Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property protections, and assisting with an urgent employment law matter.

When asked about legal support provided through Justice Connect, Annette Vickery, CEO of Thirrili, said: "I cannot thank you mob enough. Honestly, Governments never fund Aboriginal Controlled Community Organisations to access legal support. And yet we employ people, enter leases for accommodation, have any number of legal issues arise. Without Justice Connect we are sitting ducks to get ripped off and exploited by

better-resourced entities. The copyright advice [provided] allowed us to protect the Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property rights of artists who work with us, and whose art is sacred and belongs to their community."

Explaining the positive impact of free legal assistance on Thirrili, Annette stressed the importance of support with human resources issues, which allowed the organisation to be "culturally responsive and supportive of staff under workplace laws".

Thanks to the legal assistance provided by Justice Connect, Thirrili now has a clause in their contracts explaining the cultural significance and copyrights of Indigenous imagery used by the organisation, a clause Annette is immensely proud to have been able to add.

"The clause says we have bought the art or digital image, but we respect the sovereign right of Aboriginal communities to own and control the symbols and colours that are sacred to them. We have this clause written into contracts with Governments now: a step in getting Governments to acknowledge Aboriginal cultural ways of knowledge holding, being and doing."



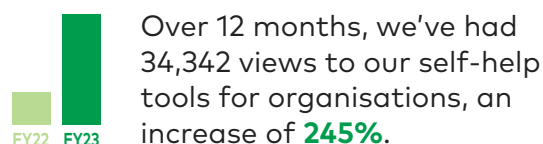


Catering to not-for-profits' legal needs with co-designed tools

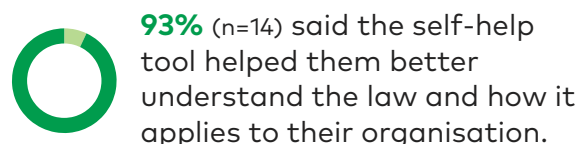
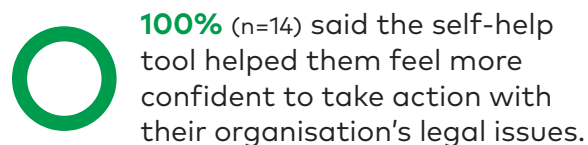
Under immense pressure to serve their communities, not-for-profit organisations are relying on us for free legal support more than ever. Our online self-help tools are a crucial way we can assist more small-to-medium not-for-profits at scale to:

- Get started with setting up a not-for-profit organisation
- Understand whether they can apply for Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status
- Learn how to work with volunteers
- Draft a constitution or rules to govern their organisation.

By answering a series of questions about their organisation, they receive bespoke, tailored legal information and documentation to help them take their next steps.



A total of 1,280 documents were created, helping community organisations navigate complex legal requirements through customised and plain-language online legal support.



This year, we saw **opportunities to make our suite of tools more**

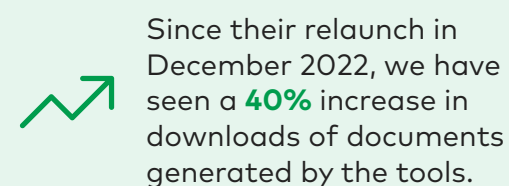
accessible and more visible to the over 600,000 charities and not-for-profit organisations that need access to free legal help and information.

We undertook an extensive human-centered redesign process, seeking to understand the key needs, motivations, and behaviours of community organisations seeking legal help online.

Human design in action

During our redesign journey, our users helped us unlock a powerful insight: their ability to digest information is greatly increased when they can see clear signposts of where they are in the process.

In response, we dissected the content into distinct bite-sized sections, and created informative summary pages that not only inform users of their current stage, but helpfully hint at what's to come.



View our self-help tools for community organisations
justiceconnect.org.au/nfp-sht



Each quarter, we produce a 'deep-dive' evaluation report to better understand our data and draw actionable insights from it.

IMPACT DEEP-DIVE:

Looking at how people use our self-help resources and tools

In Q2 FY23, we explored the impact we are seeing through our suite of 430+ self-help resources and 6 self-help tools, which received 592,612 views in FY23.

For this deep-dive, we took a particular focus on those created for community organisations by our Not-for-profit Law program. We used a combination of reach and demographic data, as well as deeper qualitative insights into the impact of our resources for a smaller number of our Not-for-profit Law users (about 170 people).

Our research confirmed our assumptions about how people use our self-help resources, which is often in tandem with other support from Justice Connect. For example, 71% of the organisations who received legal advice from Not-for-profit Law also used a self-help resource, while 91% of organisations who attended a webinar also used Not-for-profit Law's self-help resources.

Our self-help resources are equipping people with relevant information (98% agreed), and helping people to better understand the law and how it applies to their organisation (95% agreed). This increased to 100% for both indicators for users of our self-help tools. Our self-help tools further empowered people to understand how to take action with their legal issue (84% agreed) and feel confident to take action (93% agreed).

Community organisations told us they used our self-help tools to increase their awareness about their legal

responsibilities and legal problems they might experience in future, as well as resolve current legal issues. For organisations using our self-help resources or tools to resolve a current legal issue, 100% (n=17) said their issue was now resolved. Further, for organisations using our self-help resources or tools to prevent future legal issues, 93% (n=63) said their issue was successfully prevented.

Our research also revealed interesting insights around the long-term impact of our self-help resources and tools. 88% said that they had helped to improve their understanding of general organisational legal issues, 86% said self-help resources and tools had improved their organisation's ability to engage with stakeholders, and 78% said self-help resources and tools had improved their organisation's governance. Most interestingly, 67% said our self-help resources and tools also improved their own personal wellbeing, by reducing the stress and anxiety that comes from their responsibilities in the organisation.



Two thirds of people said our resources and tools improved their personal wellbeing

How we support community workers





Providing free technology for CLCs to respond to disasters

When disasters occur, communities need a swift, coordinated legal response.

Pro bono legal help has a valuable role to support on the ground assistance, so that issues arising out of disasters don't escalate. And as communities move into recovery, and more prolonged legal matters appear, the need for support doesn't recede.

That's why we are contributing to building a more connected, empowered, and responsive disaster legal assistance system with our Pro Bono Portal: a technology-driven system to match unmet legal need with the capacity in our network of 10,000 pro bono lawyers.

In FY23, we opened our Pro Bono Portal to Community Legal Centres (CLCs) across New South Wales and Victoria, to facilitate an on-the-ground local-first response.

CLCs can now use the Portal directly, for free, to connect their community

to pro bono support from law firms.

We ran over 20 support sessions with individual CLCs, to help them adopt the Portal to their needs.

Currently, **38 organisations are actively using the Portal to facilitate their pro bono referrals**, allowing them to directly connect with pro bono firms, have their clients' legal needs addressed, and grow their networks.

Our in-house disaster response team also made **63 referrals to our network of firms via the Portal**.

A firm that we've never worked with before was able to pick [the legal matter] up so that was a really good new connection and it meant that our client received the legal assistance that they needed.

– CLC user feedback

It's really functional, it's quick to use, we get access to a lot of firms that we wouldn't otherwise be able to connect with and it's quicker than sending email back and forth. – CLC user feedback

Most common areas of law for our disaster response:



- Property law (20)
- Insurance (16)
- Planning and local government (14)
- Torts and compensation (12)
- Consumer law (11)
- Housing and residential tenancies (9)



Each quarter, we produce a 'deep-dive' evaluation report to better understand our data and draw actionable insights from it.

IMPACT DEEP-DIVE:

Looking at the experience of pro bono lawyers in our network

In Q1 FY23, we looked at the value provided by our partner network of 10,000 pro bono lawyers, the experience these lawyers had with Justice Connect, and the outcomes they achieved for our clients.

After collecting data on over 110 matters referred in the last 12 months, we found that we had been underestimating the hours provided by our pro bono lawyers by approximately 30%.

Our research also highlighted important trends in the experience of pro bono lawyers at all stages of their career: for example, lawyers with more than 10 years post-admission experience identified that the skills they'd learned the most were better understanding the issues affecting people seeking help, and dealing with non-legal issues. Meanwhile, for lawyers with less than 10 years of post-admission experience, the most commonly identified skills they'd gained through pro bono work were client management, identification of legal problems, and writing and drafting skills.

Our research also gave us important insights into the outcomes achieved for our community. Alongside continuing

to ask the people we help about their satisfaction with their outcome, feedback from our pro bono lawyers helped us to understand some of the broader impacts from a legal perspective. In our research, **pro bono lawyers identified being able to help resolve the person's legal problem in 77% of matters**, and preventing emerging or escalating legal problems in about 65% of matters. The main reasons for poorer outcomes were mostly due to a lack of merit with a matter, losing contact with the client, or in rare cases, differing opinions of a good outcome between the lawyer and the client. When matters were resolved successfully, pro bono partners noted this translated into significant positive impact on the person's overall wellbeing, citing examples of people who'd been able to avoid deportation, remain safely housed, and avoid bankruptcy.

Top 5 skills gained by pro bono lawyers





Integrating healthcare and legal help to protect older people

People deserve equitable access to legal help at all stages of their life. To ensure elder abuse is identified and addressed, lawyers need to be accessible in places that older people already access and trust.

Through our Health Justice Partnerships model, we embed specialist lawyers in the community healthcare services. We train healthcare professionals to identify signs of elder abuse early, and intervene to protect their clients' rights, assets, and wellbeing.

This year, we helped older people with 1,691 instances of specialised legal support, whether that was providing legal advice, making referrals, or delivering ongoing casework.

We ran 47 training sessions with 634 healthcare workers, to build their capacity to spot the signs of elder abuse, and connect clients with help from Justice Connect.

We helped older people with specialised legal help on over 1,690 occasions

We ran 45+ training sessions with 630+ healthcare workers



92% (n=35) of workers said our Health Justice Partnership has improved their knowledge of elder abuse.

It is great to have a service that is able to come to the hospital with the team that [older people] trust already to assist them... This is an integral service in the detection and response of elder abuse.

– Community health worker feedback



CLIENT STORY:

Liang's timely link to legal support

In 2000, at the age of 50, Liang* moved to Australia on her own from Hong Kong. All her children lived overseas which meant she had no family support in her new country, but Liang found an active community amongst her neighbours at the public housing estate where she lives.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Liang started worrying about what might happen to her in the future if she lost the ability to make decisions for herself, and she began thinking about the need to put formal arrangements in place to protect her future.

But because she didn't know where to go to get information or support on putting these plans in place, Liang didn't take any action at the time.

It wasn't until three years later, after experiencing a health scare and undergoing major surgery, that Liang's attention turned, once again, to future planning. A sudden period of ill health heightened Liang's anxiety about what might happen to her in future if her health further deteriorated, and she could no longer make decisions for herself about her finances, healthcare, and lifestyle.

One day while attending a routine health appointment at cohealth, a community health service in Melbourne's west, Liang was relieved to learn that Justice Connect was running a free Power of Attorney clinic, where she could access information on how to plan for her future.

Liang went along to the initial information session, after which she booked an appointment with our specialist lawyer to complete her

Power of Attorney and Medical Treatment Decision Maker Appointment documents.

Liang was able to appoint a trusted friend to make decisions for her in the event she was no longer able to make them for herself. **Our free legal assistance has alleviated Liang's ongoing anxiety about the future, and brought her peace of mind, knowing that someone she trusts will be looking out for her down the track.**



**All names in this story have been changed to protect their identity.*



Strengthening community partnerships to respond to homelessness

Preventing and ending homelessness requires a coordinated, systems-level response.

For people facing homelessness, whether or not they are connected with legal help often depends on their support worker's knowledge of existing services.

That's why it's imperative we have strong community partnerships and a rigorous approach to community outreach so people who need help can be connected with assistance as soon as possible.

This year we attended 272 meetings or sessions with key partners across the homelessness and wider community sector to inform them of the ways we can help their clients. **We reached 1,610 community sector workers.**

We see the importance of strengthened community partnerships and co-located services reflected in our enquiry numbers:



10% increase in total enquiries to Homeless Law (FY22 = 1,291, FY23 = 1,424)



50% (708) of those enquiries were referred from outreach partners or community sector workers.

We met with key partners 270+ times

We reached 1,610 community sector workers with our work



Enabling Victorian workers on the frontline of homelessness

If you are experiencing or at risk of homelessness, it's likely you will have multiple, intersecting legal needs. In order to tackle these issues, community-based support workers are a vital link between people facing homelessness, and appropriate legal help.

However, the complexity of legal problems means frontline workers often face challenges understanding how to navigate the justice system, identifying legal problems, or connecting their clients with legal services.

With decades of experience behind us, and crucial insights from our community partners, we designed and built the Workers' Resource Hub to help. **The Hub puts accessible legal information and pathways to justice in the hands of support workers, no matter whether they're in the field or in the office.**

To embed the hub as a trusted source of legal information, we have incorporated it into our service delivery, referring support workers to the hub so they can navigate legal issues for their clients. We also use the hub to complement our

legal training for workers, training them to use the hub to find information and templates for use in their everyday work.

We hope the Workers' Resource Hub will grow to become a go-to resource for people working on the frontline of homelessness across Victoria, by aiding with early intervention and decision making for their clients before legal issues escalate.

By empowering the community services sector to better identify and address legal need, we can build the sector's capacity to identify legal issues, share legal information, and connect Victorians facing homelessness with appropriate legal help.



View our Workers' Resource Hub
justiceconnect.org.au/workers-hub



How we create change





Simplifying Australia's fundraising laws for thousands of charities

The ability for a charity to fundraise can directly affect the impact it has on its community.

But Australia's fundraising laws are complicated and out of date, developed years before the internet changed the fundraising landscape forever.

Charities are required to comply with seven different sets of fundraising laws, which poses a huge regulatory burden on organisations that already have limited time and resources.

That's why we've spent the last 10 years advocating for streamlined fundraising laws under our #FixFundraising campaign. Alongside a coalition of 8 peak bodies, we've worked tirelessly to get fundraising reform on the national agenda.

In February 2023, we reached an advocacy milestone of national importance: the Commonwealth, State, and Territory Treasurers committed to implementing a nationally consistent approach to charity fundraising.

Once implemented, the new National Fundraising Principles will drastically reduce the amount of costly and time-intensive paperwork charities must deal with to fundraise effectively.

Justice Connect, and our allies in the #FixFundraising coalition, will continue holding the respective Governments to account to ensure these crucial reforms are implemented as soon as possible.



#FixFundraising campaign timeline:

- **2008 – 2017:** Justice Connect makes numerous submissions to governments, enquiries, and commissions, calling for fundraising reform.
- **2017:** The #FixFundraising coalition is formed and with the support of 190 charitable organisations it calls on the Prime Minister to fix Australia's outdated fundraising regime.
- **2017 – 2019:** Proposals to make changes to fundraising laws through amendments to Australian Consumer Law are recommended but ultimately ignored by the government of the day.
- **2019:** All major political parties commit to #FixFundraising as part of their election platform.
- **Spring of 2020:** The COVID-19 pandemic creates unique challenges for fundraisers, once again highlighting compliance difficulties for organisations raising funds across various jurisdictions and online.
- **December 2020:** The harmonising of fundraising laws becomes a national agenda item, with the Treasurer announcing reforms to fundraising regulations to create a single, cross-border, recognised registration point for charities.
- **December 2021:** The Federal Treasurer announces charitable fundraising reform as one of its top 10 priorities for 2022.
- **October 2022:** Following the Federal election, the Commonwealth, State, and Territory Governments re-confirm their commitment to fixing fundraising laws with a national framework.
- **February 2023:** The Assistant Minister for Charities announces that the Commonwealth, State, and Territory Treasurers have agreed on a set of National Fundraising Principles to harmonise fundraising rules across the country, with implementation plans scheduled for release by July 2023.

#FIXFUNDRAISING IN ACTION:

Zahra Foundation explores newly unlocked fundraising opportunities

Imagine your family or community suffered a tragic, senseless loss. You can't bear to face the same experience, so you start a charity to fix the problem and you rely on much needed donations to progress this work.

Soon, you realise that having a 'donate here' button on your website means you need to comply with seven different sets of fundraising laws.

You feel overwhelmed and frustrated, like you might buckle under the mess of red tape.

This is a common theme we hear from our clients at community organisations across Australia doing vital work for their communities. Like the South Australian-based Zahra Foundation, which is focused on addressing the financial abuse and disadvantage women experience because of domestic violence, by providing specifically tailored programs and services that promote the economic empowerment of women.

Previously, Zahra Foundation's CEO Kelly-ann Tansley told our lawyers that the web of complicated and overlapping legislation across states and territories has disincentivised her organisation from expanding some of its programs to other locations.

This year, we were proud to let Kelly-ann know that thanks to the tireless advocacy from Justice Connect and its partners, charities like Zahra Foundation can look forward to

the harmonisation of fundraising laws across Australia through the implementation of the National Fundraising Principles.

Kelly-ann was delighted to learn about the success of our #FixFundraising campaign and the planned simplification of fundraising laws nationally. "I will be able to sleep better at night!" she said upon hearing the news.

This win means charities will be able to focus on directing more of the funds they raise towards their programs and services, instead of wasting precious staff time and resources trying to navigate and comply with complex fundraising requirements.

Kelly-ann is looking forward to being able to expand Zahra Foundation's programs to other jurisdictions without the burden of an excessive administration effort.

Justice Connect will continue working with the #FixFundraising coalition to continue to hold governments to account to release implementation plans, and make this much-needed change a reality.





Sharing our ethical artificial intelligence model with the legal sector


Artificial intelligence (AI) is exploding, disrupting industries everywhere. The future of AI is raising concerns about the ethics of using AI to solve real world problems.


For 3 years, we've been developing an AI model to increase access to justice, shining a light on how emerging technologies can be used to empower the community, and make finding help easier. We're committed to using technology in a way that is impactful, ethical, inclusive, and sustainable.

Research has found that when people search for legal help, they often struggle to correctly articulate their legal problem. This can make it difficult for people to identify the type of legal help they need, or even recognise that their situation may have a legal solution.

We have built a natural language processor that can diagnose legal problems within people's everyday language. The model was developed in partnership with the University of Melbourne, and has since been integrated into our own Intake Tool with strong results:

2,917 people have been supported with our AI to accurately categorise their legal problem.

 **88%** diagnosis accuracy across 12 legal categories.

 **15%** decrease in uncertain applications.

FY22 FY23

More people being off-ramped to more appropriate supports, earlier.

This year, we focussed on sharing our AI model with the legal assistance sector. We are currently offering a licence of our AI model to community legal centres to use in their own systems. Our AI model can be integrated into new or existing online tools to support the triage, identification, or diagnosis of legal problems in products such as intake forms, self-help resources, service-finders, and chatbots.

We're also working with other organisations, collecting thousands of supplementary natural language samples, to improve the way our AI model works for older people and First Nations peoples. By improving the way the model works for everyone, we're reducing bias in how people can access justice through AI-powered tools.

Our AI has helped over 2,900 people categorise their legal problem



Bringing pro bono technology to more countries across the world

Globally, over 5 billion people have a legal problem each year. 1.5 billion people cannot access justice, and 253 million people experience extreme conditions of injustice¹.

Over the last 7 years, we've designed, built, and evolved a tech platform to efficiently match unmet legal need with pro bono lawyers. Our Pro Bono Portal is revolutionising the pro bono landscape in Australia and beyond, with its reach and impact growing year on year.

Since 2020, the adoption of the Portal has grown rapidly both in Australia and internationally. Our partners around the world are reaping the benefits of the Portal in many different settings: from addressing the legal needs of people in their everyday lives, to assisting people seeking asylum due to conflicts in their countries of origin.

After this year's successful deployment in three new countries, the Portal now covers seven jurisdictions globally.

- In **Germany**, the Portal is being used to help people displaced from the conflict in Ukraine who are looking for legal help.
- In **Hong Kong**, the Portal will be used to help close the justice poverty gap and ensure that disadvantaged people facing a legal problem get the help they need.

- **The Philippines** is using the Portal as the central pro bono platform for all attorneys, leveraging Justice Connect's experience promoting pro bono.

Across the world, our Pro Bono Portal is currently used by:

- 2,171 users (↑55% increase)
- 52 legal services (↑108% increase)
- 720 law firms (↑35% increase)

This year alone, it has helped increase access to pro bono legal services for people worldwide, connecting 1,387 individuals (↑92% increase) with pro bono assistance across 1,653 matters (↑93% increase).

We look forward to continuing to grow the Portal's reach globally, and in doing so, improve our collective response to legal need.



View our Pro Bono Portal
justiceconnect.org.au/portal

Our Pro Bono Portal is now used in



Australia Hong Kong The UK The Philippines Ireland New Zealand Germany

¹ Measuring the Justice Gap, World Justice Project, 2019



Informing fairer laws for people experiencing homelessness

Through our years of casework insights from supporting Victorians experiencing or at risk of homelessness, we have seen the negative impact of enforcement-based approaches to public drunkenness.

We have also seen that public intoxication laws have disproportionately impacted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and people sleeping rough.

For years, we've been advocating for our community to have a health-based response to public drunkenness, that prioritises support over enforcement.

In January 2023, the Victorian Government decided not to introduce police powers to arrest or detain people in the decriminalisation of public drunkenness reform.

This long-overdue reform is testament to the tireless advocacy of the Day Family, the Dhadjowa Foundation, the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service, and the Human Rights Law Centre.

This reform means people experiencing homelessness will no longer be subjected to unnecessary trauma from an enforcement-first approach, and instead will receive a supportive health-led response to ensure their safety.



Co-creating better court experiences for people facing homelessness

We've been working with the Magistrates' Court of Victoria to develop a specialised bulk listing for people experiencing homelessness, so that their hearings can be held in a supportive environment.

The 'Homeless List' provides our clients the opportunity to have their criminal charges heard before a Magistrate with a specialised understanding of homelessness. The model builds confidence for our clients that Magistrates will listen, understand, and properly recognise their circumstances of homelessness and related vulnerabilities.

Through a series of six sittings, we provided integrated legal and social work supports to 25 clients with highly complex needs in relation to 60 sets of criminal charges.

All clients who went through this pilot also accessed our help with their civil legal needs, such as fines and debts, allowing them to have holistic support to resolve their legal issues.





Reimagining the tax landscape to remove red tape

Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status is a tax status granted to some not-for-profit organisations that allows them to receive donations that are tax deductible. This complex topic continues to be one of the most misunderstood and resource-intensive tax areas for not-for-profits.

As a charity and a DGR-endorsed organisation ourselves, we understand this from firsthand experience.

We have long called for simplifying DGR endorsement laws, where all charities registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) would automatically have DGR status approved.

In February 2023, we made a submission to the Treasury's consultation on DGR Registers reforms, supporting its proposal to simplify the administration of DGR categories

set out in the draft laws. This would ensure consistency, reduce red tape, and remove inefficiencies when deciding whether an organisation should have DGR status. We reiterated our calls for more extensive changes to DGR laws in a June 2023 submission to the Productivity Commission's Inquiry into Philanthropy in Australia.

We hope to see further simplification of the system, to allow not-for-profits to spend less of their precious time navigating red tape, and more time responding to their communities' needs.





Advocating for reforms to protect older Victorians from migrant and refugee backgrounds

As Victoria's population becomes more culturally and linguistically diverse, there is a growing need to gain a holistic understanding of how to adequately support our diverse communities of older people. 60% of all clients accessing our cohealth Health Justice Partnership were born in a country where English is not a primary language, and 43% of all clients required an interpreter.

When the Victorian Government launched an inquiry into support for older Victorians from migrant and refugee backgrounds, we took our data and insights from our work and made a series of recommendations to the Committee on how to best support our diverse ageing population.

When the Government's Final Report was handed down in August 2022, many of its recommendations directly reflected our own evidence and positions, including:

- **Ensuring older people can access holistic, specialist services**, such as Health Justice Partnerships, where cross-discipline support workers can collaborate to identify and address elder abuse.
- **Running culturally-appropriate awareness campaigns** to increase collective knowledge of signs of elder abuse, and how to protect yourself and plan for your future as you age.
- **Developing a state-wide elder abuse strategy**, and undertaking more effective research into the prevalence of elder abuse in culturally and linguistically diverse communities.



CLIENT STORY:

Magda's future wishes are protected

Magda*, a woman in her nineties, found herself in a challenging situation after a fall in her Sydney home led to a stay in hospital. Her son and legal guardian, Goran*, misrepresented her condition to the hospital staff, leaving Magda feeling unheard and disregarded.

For some time, Magda had been growing more and more unhappy with the decisions her son was making on her behalf, but she didn't know where to turn to for help.

During her hospital stay, she was offered a consultation with one of our lawyers who is embedded alongside healthcare workers to support older people with their legal needs.

Magda told us that as a migrant to Australia, with no other family to assist her, she appointed Goran as her attorney and guardian. Goran soon began to exploit this position, ordering Magda to give him her money so he could purchase a home in Italy, where he lives. Magda said no, but then Goran used the Power of Attorney to take the money out of her bank account.

Our lawyers helped Magda revoke the Power of Attorney and Enduring Guardianship documents, and put in place new arrangements with Magda's trusted friend. We made sure the healthcare workers supporting Magda recover knew that her friend was now the point of contact for any questions about Magda's care.

Magda now has peace of mind knowing she is protected from further abuse by her son, and can avoid more distress and legal problems now that her wishes are being respected.



**All names in this story have been changed to protect their identity.*



Understanding how the legal system can better help Victorians facing bankruptcy

As our community faces soaring living expenses and a surge in financial scams, an increasing number of people find themselves grappling with financial legal problems.

Recognising this mounting demand for legal support, we've begun the first piece of empirical research into the journey of Victorians to bankruptcy and how the legal assistance sector can better respond before problems escalate. Our team of researchers are investigating the needs, motivations, and behaviours of Victorians who have faced enforcement action due to unpaid debts, as well as looking at system-level solutions.

So far, we've heard directly from past clients and members of the community with lived experience of financial legal problems, and also conducted in-depth interviews with professionals working across the courts, financial counselling, and legal assistance sectors.

We look forward to continuing this research to help illuminate areas where the legal and financial support system can better support people facing financial legal problems.

Our initial findings suggest:

- Where debts are unsecured and unregulated, they are more likely to end up in Court immediately, since creditors don't need to comply with conduct rules that come with secure, regulated debts.
- The legal assistance sector must make it easier for people with debt to navigate the help-seeking journey.
- Financial legal problems are among one of the most common legal problems, and can affect people from a range of backgrounds, and the legal system must be equipped to respond to this growing legal need.



Our thanks & acknowledgements



Our people

There is an entire community of people that make our impact possible.

Staff

Our work is conducted by 77 staff across Australia. Our exceptional team has continued to deliver outstanding client-centred services, contributing to a deep cumulative impact on increasing access to legal support and progressing social justice.

Volunteers

Our volunteers include a diverse range of professionals, law students, and practical legal trainees. We extend our thanks to all 14 of them for their remarkable commitment and service.

Patrons

We offer a special thanks to our patrons whose support and commitment to our organisation has been vital to engaging new supporters and scaling our services to reach more individuals and not-for-profit organisations who need legal help.

- Emeritus Professor Gillian Triggs
- Ruth McColl AO
- Robert Fitzgerald AM



Our board

We are governed by an independent, skills-based volunteer board whose commitment to Justice Connect is crucial to our success.

Our directors for 2022-23 were:

- The Hon. Marcia Neave AO, Chair
- Prof. Sarah Maddison, Deputy Chair (current)
- Nicky Friedman, Deputy Chair (former; retired November 2022)
- Tristan Cutcliffe
- Jidah Clark
- Dr. Crystal McKinnon
- Michael Horin
- Vicki Jamieson
- Brooke Massender
- Laavanya Pari



Our members

Our valued network of over 10,000 pro bono lawyers offers their time, expertise, and dedication to prevent the negative consequences of legal problems experienced by individuals and not-for-profit organisations.

With their help, we can deliver impactful responses to unmet legal need, and improve the community's wellbeing.

- Abode Migration Lawyers
- Addisons
- Allen & Overy
- Allens
- ARC Justice
- Arnold Bloch Leibler
- Ashurst
- Baker McKenzie
- Banki Haddock Fiora
- Barry Nilsson
- Bartier Perry Lawyers
- Beaumont&Beaumont
- Carroll & O'Dea Lawyers
- CIE Legal
- Clayton Utz
- Clifford Chance
- Clyde & Co
- Colin Biggers & Paisley Lawyers
- Corrs Chambers Westgarth
- DLA Piper Australia
- FAL Lawyers
- Federation of Community Legal Centres (FCLC)
- Fragomen (Australia) Pty Ltd
- Hall & Wilcox
- Herbert Smith Freehills
- Hive Legal
- Hogan Lovells
- Holding Redlich
- HopgoodGanim Lawyers
- Inner Melbourne Community Legal (IMCL)
- JobWatch Inc
- Johnson Winter & Slattery
- Justin Moses
- K&L Gates
- King & Wood Mallesons
- Kingston Reid
- Lander & Rogers
- Law Institute of Victoria
- Maddocks
- Makinson d'Apice
- Maurice Blackburn Lawyers
- McCabes
- McCullough Robertson Lawyers
- MinterEllison
- Moulis Legal
- Nicholes Family Lawyers
- Norton Rose Fulbright Australia
- Public Interest Advocacy Centre Ltd
- Robinson Gill
- Ross Mackay, Sole Practitioner
- Russell Kennedy Lawyers
- Sparke Helmore
- The Victorian Bar
- Thomson Geer Group
- Transport Accident Commission (TAC)
- Webb Henderson
- Weir Legal and Consulting
- White & Case
- Wisewould Mahony
- Women's Legal Service VIC
- Woolf Associates Solicitors
- Wotton + Kearney



Our secondees

Our member firms offer invaluable support to our initiatives by providing secondees for three- to six-month periods.

These partnerships are critical to our capacity to provide timely and effective legal support to the community, and we thank each of our secondees for their valuable contributions.

- Arabella Close, MinterEllison
- Bec Cunningham, MinterEllison
- Braydon Poacher, Ashurst
- Emma Ladbury, Thomson Geer Group
- Isabella Harding, Sparke Helmore
- Jenny Pang, Herbert Smith Freehills
- Kristyna Moravec, Ashurst
- Laura Elliott, DLA Piper
- Mariah Pavlou, Herbert Smith Freehills
- Rezwan Attai, Sparke Helmore
- Romany Tauber, Australian Government Solicitor
- Stephen Somerville, Barry Nilsson
- Su Lwin, Thomson Geer Group
- Zach Moon, MinterEllison



Our funders

Our high-impact interventions for individuals and community organisations are made possible by the generous support of our valued funders.

- Ageing and Disability Commission
- auDA Foundation
- Australian Government Attorney-General's Department
- Australian Government Department of Social Services
- City of Melbourne
- Consumer Affairs Victoria
- Court Services Victoria
- Equity Trustees
 - Sector Capacity Building Fund
- Erdi Foundation
- Fidelity International Foundation
- Ian Potter Foundation
- Launch Housing
- Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation
- National Emergency Management Agency
- New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council
- New South Wales Government Department of Communities and Justice
- Perpetual
 - H & L Hecht Trust
 - Centenary Foundation
 - Ian Rollo Currie Estate Foundation
- Portland House Foundation
- Pratt Foundation
- Sidney Myer Fund
- StreetSmart Australia
- Telstra
- The Shine On Foundation
- Victoria Law Foundation
- Victoria Legal Aid
- Victorian Government Department of Families, Fairness, and Housing
- Victorian Government Department of Justice and Community Safety
- Victorian Legal Services Board + Commissioner



Our partners

Our last year's achievements would not have been possible without the collaboration and fellowship of our partners across the sector.

We also receive help in many ways from people and organisations, whether through reduced-fee services, access to facilities, or research.

- Accounting for Good
- Allens
- Australian Centre for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies
- Australian Men's Shed Association
- Baker McKenzie
- Caulfield Hospital, Alfred Health
- Clayton Utz
- cohealth
- Committo
- Community Legal Centres NSW
- Consumer Action Law Centre
- Corrs
- Council on the Ageing Victoria
- Council to Homeless Persons
- Culture Amp
- Diversity Council of Australia
- DLA Piper
- Domestic Building Dispute Resolution Victoria
- Equal Justice HK
- Equality Australia
- Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria
- FAL Lawyers
- Federation of Community Legal Centres
- Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand
- Health Justice Australia
- Hive Legal
- Holding Redlich
- Human Rights Law Centre
- IBP Philippines
- intelliHR
- JobWatch
- Lander & Rogers
- Lanrex
- Launch Housing
- Law Institute of Victoria
- LawWorks UK
- LinkedIn Learning
- LiveHire
- Maddocks
- Melbourne City Library
- Merri Health
- MinterEllison
- Mortgage Stress Victoria
- Neighbourhood Houses Victoria
- New South Wales Council of Social Service
- Norton Rose Fulbright Australia
- Performance Culture Consulting
- PILA Ireland
- PILnet HK
- Piper Alderman
- Public Interest Advocacy Centre
- Reed Consultants International
- Sacred Heart Mission
- Safetrac
- Seniors Rights Victoria
- Social Traders
- St Vincent's Health Network, Sydney
- St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne
- Strategic Shift Consulting
- Te Ara Ture
- The Dream Collective
- Tony Lang, barrister
- Uniting War Memorial Hospital, Sydney
- University of Melbourne
- UPJ Germany
- Vacro
- Vance Centre
- Vic Bar Pro Bono Committee
- Victorian Bar
- Victorian Council of Social Service
- Victorian Men's Shed Association
- Volunteering Australia





Our supporters

We recognise the many committed individuals, community groups, and organisations who support our work by making generous contributions to help achieve our purpose.

Individual donors

- Chris Paton
- Mitzi Gilligan
- William Pitt
- Fiona McLeay
- Andrew & Kerry Stephenson
- Nicky Friedman
- Stephen & Elizabeth Howard
- Lesley Hitchins
- Sarah Matheson AM
- Jonathan Casson
- Toby Carrodus
- Le Hume Family Trust
- Barbara Long
- Anonymous
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Organisation donors

- Josef
- HP
- Herbert Smith Freehills
- Peninsula Grammar - Year 2B
- Anonymous
- Anonymous
- Anonymous

Become a supporter

For information about supporting Justice Connect please contact:

Clea Lumley
Fundraising Lead
Clea.Lumley@justiceconnect.org.au



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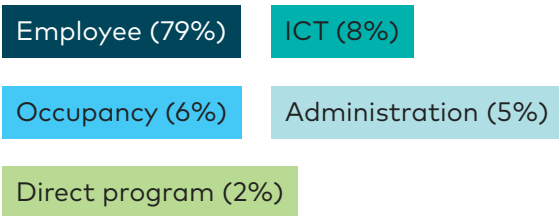
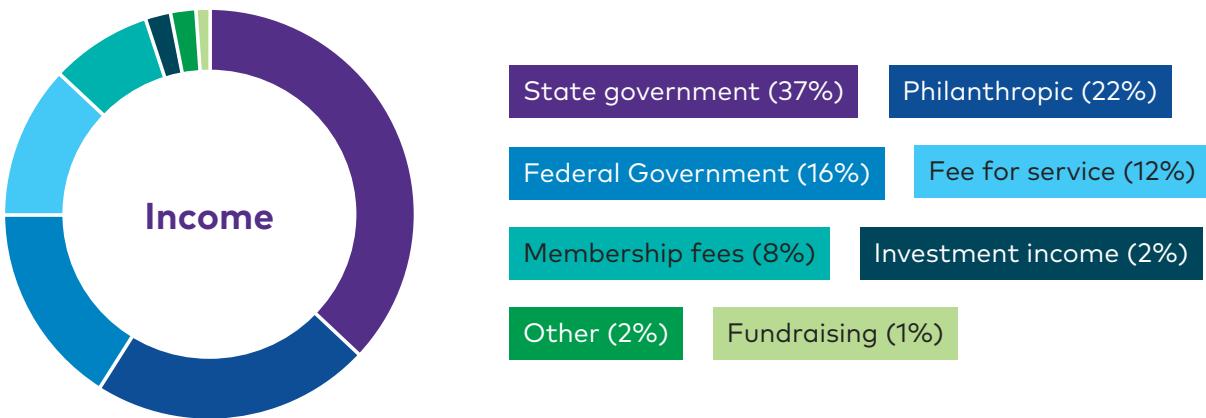
Our finances

The audited financial result for the 2022-23 financial year is a surplus of \$43,759. At 30 June 2023 we maintain healthy net assets and retained earnings of \$2,342,841.

Our work is made possible largely thanks to the financial support of our members and our partners in government and philanthropy.

Achieving our purpose in the most effective and financially sustainable way is one of our three strategic directions, enabling us to focus our limited resources on initiatives that achieve our strategy and build our organisational financial strength.

In 2022-23, our annual income totalled \$9,906,232, receiving funding from the diversified sources shown in the charts below. We also received a range of very generous in-kind support from our members which assisted in making our work possible through staff secondments, volunteer engagement, and donation of resources and facilities.



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Photos by Anna Carlisle.