

Annual Impact Report

2024 – 2025





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Introduction

Acknowledgement of Country

Justice Connect acknowledges the Wurundjeri and Boon Wurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation, and the Gadigal people 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 and chair

Access to justice in Australia remains deeply uneven.

Every year, the gap grows wider, while funding and resources struggle to keep pace.

The cost-of-living and housing crises pervade the legal issues that cross our desks: renters facing eviction, older people at risk of abuse, workers who have been treated unfairly, or community organisations fighting to stay open. Climate disasters are now part of the rhythm of our clients' lives, compounding hardship year after year. **It is a simple truth that unmet legal need overwhelms available services,** with nearly 80% of legal problems in Australia going unresolved¹.

Amidst it all, our Annual Impact Report shows the many ways in which Justice Connect has risen to that challenge.

It shares the stories of the people we help, painting a vivid picture of why legal help matters, and what's possible when innovation, compassion, and partnership meet real and growing need.

In FY25, alongside delivering services, running training, sharing information, building tools, and advocating for fairer laws, we set our new organisational strategy for 2028. This required us to think deeply about the ever-changing world in which we operate, our achievements and challenges, and what all of this means for the years ahead.



It's interesting how these reflections and strategic thinking led us back to the very start, to why we exist, and the work that still calls us forward. **At the core is a sustained concern for the people and community organisations facing legal need who have nowhere to turn.** That concern, and the drive to respond to it, sits at the heart of everything we do.

For the community organisations we support, we are often the only source of free legal help, giving them the guidance they need to keep delivering critical assistance to the broader community. One of the people we supported was Andrew. He wanted to set up an organisation to support families and caregivers of people living with Pathological Demand Avoidance, but wasn't sure where to start. **Andrew was one of thousands of people who used our online 'Getting Started Tool' to translate uncertainty into action.**

Beyond individual stories, this report is filled with important quantitative data. We've worked hard to strengthen how we ethically collect and use feedback to know that our services, information, tools, and platforms are having a positive impact. **In sharing back our evidence, stories, and case studies over the year, some key trends are clear: our work simultaneously targets multiple levels of the system.**

This year we have advocated for rental and fines reform, resisted laws that would punish rough sleepers, and delivered wraparound services for people experiencing homelessness and elder abuse. We helped people find legal answers online, and we were there in person when they turned up to court alone.

¹ Balmer, N.J., Pleasence, P., McDonald, H.M. & Sandefur, R.L. (2023). **The Public Understanding of LawSurvey (PULS) Volume 1: Everyday Problems and Legal Need.** Melbourne: Victoria Law Foundation.

Across everything we do, we collaborate deeply and closely with our community partners. The dedicated lawyers in our pro bono network show up every day – in clinics, in courtrooms, and behind the scenes – to provide advice and casework, accept referrals, train ethical AI models, and more. All to close the justice gap.

Our strategy process highlighted something we've known for a while: **that technology, when used thoughtfully and ethically, can reshape access to justice, expanding reach and impact for those most often excluded from the system.** From using AI to identify legal issues, to building tools that help renters facing homelessness, our innovation work is thriving. Internationally, our Pro Bono Portal is being used by thousands of people, and this year the volume of matters placed increased by almost 40%.

Our new strategy builds on years of learning, collaboration, and innovation. **It's about helping more people, more effectively, by placing people at the centre of everything we do, building practical legal capability, growing our reach and impact, and ensuring long-term financial sustainability.** None of this is possible without our staff, volunteers, partners, firms, funders, donors, and government supporters. Their commitment, expertise, and generosity allow Justice Connect to meet complexity with creativity and to turn insight into action.

We are proud to work alongside so many people who share our belief that access to justice should be within everyone's reach. Each partnership, each collaboration, helps us push the boundaries of what a modern legal service can be.

Chris Povey, CEO
Brooke Massender, Chair of the Board

Our 2028 strategy

We recently launched our new 2028 strategy, marking a bold new chapter for Justice Connect.

We have always been brave about doing things differently. We've pioneered new pro bono partnerships, launched groundbreaking programs, and built smarter, more practical legal help for people and community organisations.

But in recent years, the world around us has shifted rapidly. Climate disasters, the pandemic, the housing crisis, and cost-of-living pressures have collided to create unprecedented hardship.

Legal problems have become more complex, more urgent, and more common, just as help has become harder to find.

In response, we embraced change. We leaned into digital innovation, broke down internal silos, built new tools, and put the people we support at the centre of our design.

Our 2028 strategy builds on everything we've learned and sets our direction for the next four years: **helping more people, more effectively, and working toward a future where legal help is within everyone's reach.**

It's ambitious, but achievable, focused on what matters most and flexible enough to adapt as the world continues to change.

Together, we'll focus on achieving four key goals:



Centre people in the design and delivery of all we do.

We place the voices and stories of the people we support at the heart of our design process. We meet people where they are in order to create a more meaningful and accessible experience.



Understand and build practical legal capability.

To create lasting impact, we must equip people with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to navigate legal issues, ensuring they can engage effectively with legal support when they need it.



Grow our reach and impact.

As legal need continues to rise, we must expand the reach of our services while ensuring growth translates into measurable impact. This means assisting more people, prioritising underserved groups and areas, strengthening practical legal capability, and achieving positive legal and social outcomes.



Enhance our financial sustainability.

We will strengthen our financial resilience by diversifying revenue, reducing reliance on single funding sources, and securing new revenue streams.

This is a strategy shaped by listening and learning. **It's bold, human, and built to last, so that when someone needs legal help, Justice Connect is a click, a call, or a conversation away.**

Our 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.



How to read this report

For society, for the sector, for the system

We recognise that to increase access to legal support and progress social justice, we need to address the root causes of legal need, both at an individual and systemic level.

To holistically prevent and resolve unmet legal need, we work at three levels of intensity:



For society:

We address legal problems in the community with 1-to-1 legal and social work support. We also scale this support in a 1-to-many model through our digital tools, resources, training, and outreach.



For the sector:

We build capability across the pro bono and community sectors so that the access to justice ecosystem is better connected and more effective, and community organisations are supported to navigate their own legal issues.



For the system:

We work with institutions and decision makers to advocate for a fairer legal system, based on our evidence and trends we observe in our legal work.



Throughout this report, we have used iconography to highlight where our work sits across these levels of impact.

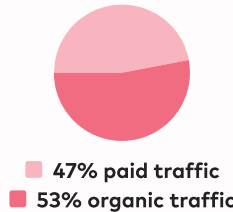


Our year at a glance

How we reached people

728,439

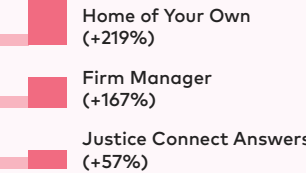
Clicks on our online outreach



1,272,705

Views to our website

Top three changes to views:



5,801

Enquiries received



How we built people's practical legal capability

1,762

Sector workers who attended our trainings

Most popular topics:

1. Tenancy, eviction prevention, and human rights advocacy
2. Introducing Get ePrepared
3. Client skills, cultural competency, and risk management

1,088

People who attended our trainings

Most popular topics:

1. Navigating financial legal problems
2. Introducing Get ePrepared
3. Future planning and elder abuse

5,280

Workers in community organisations who attended our trainings

Most popular topics:

1. Member disputes and committee conflicts
2. Psychosocial hazards in not-for-profits
3. Current legal issues for the Board agenda

457,636

Views to our self-help resources



Most popular for individuals:

1. Understanding Powers of Attorney
2. Understanding insurance, disasters, and how to make a digital inventory of your belongings
3. How to legally change your name

Most popular for community organisations

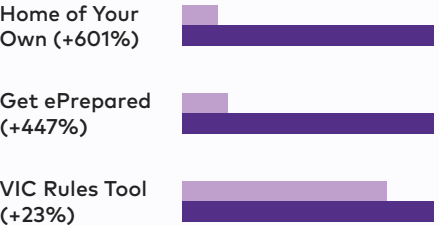
1. Responsibilities of the board and committee members
2. How to set up your organisation
3. Managing an organisation's rules or constitution

55,852

Milestones reached in our self-help tools*



Top three changes to self-help tool milestones:



How we helped people one-to-one

7,413

One-to-one legal services

↓ 7% from 8,000 in FY24 ^



1,073

One-to-one social work services

↓ 4% from 1,073 in FY24 ^



616

Secondary consults

↓ 31% from 888 in FY24 ^

65

Facilitated referrals

↓ 34% from 99 in FY24 ^



4,578

Information and simple referrals

↓ 1% from 4,634 in FY24 ^

590

Pro bono referrals

↓ 3% from 609 in FY24 ^



946

Advice services

↓ 14% from 1,094 in FY24 ^

629

Casework services

↓ 7% from 676 in FY24 ^

59,741 hours

Pro bono time leveraged in support of clients

↑ 10% from 54,216 in FY24 ^

\$25,728,452

Estimated value of pro bono time contributed

↑ 10% from 23,458,138 in FY24 ^

How we contributed to systems change

14

Written submissions to decision makers

22,918

Views to our campaigns, blogs, and media pages

Key advocacy moments in FY25:

- 1 We collectively advocated against the criminalisation of rough sleepers in the City of Port Philip.
- 2 We made a joint submission to the Victorian Law Reform Commission's Inquiry into AI use in Victorian Courts and Tribunals.
- 3 We celebrated a decade of our Women's Homelessness Prevention Project by launching our 10 year impact report: *Keeping more women and children safely housed.*

* A 'milestone' in our self-help tools describes when someone reaches a significant goal within the tool. This is defined individually for each tool, depending on its specific flows and outcomes. For example: in Dear Landlord, a Milestone is when someone successfully generates a letter using the tool.

Our FY24 numbers in this Annual Impact Report may differ slightly from numbers reported in our FY24 Annual Impact Report. While we try to ensure we're reporting up to date figures, file closure processes, client requests for file deletion, and improvements to our data systems can mean our numbers shift slightly.

Bridging the justice gap with technology

To meet the sheer scale of unmet legal need, the legal assistance ecosystem must be set up to identify, prevent, and respond to legal issues and deliver both maximum impact and reach.

Technology provides an immense opportunity to enhance and scale access to justice, both in improving the way we work, and connecting up the legal sector at large.

We harness technology where it makes sense to scale our reach, improve the experience of giving and getting legal help, and strengthen the entire access to justice ecosystem.

Our industry-leading innovation work has increased efficiencies in how people find and apply for our help, and how law firms around the world contribute to pro bono.

Work we are proud of

This chapter contains our stories of impact over the past year, and clients whose stories we changed for the better.



For society: We address legal problems in the community with legal and social work.

For the sector: We support and build capacity in the pro bono and community sectors.

For the system: We work with institutions and decision makers for a fairer legal system.



Cultivating digital and legal confidence

Confidence changes everything. When people know how to use digital tools and understand their legal options, they can act early, make informed choices, and avoid being overwhelmed when problems strike.

In FY25, in partnership with Telstra, we focused on giving people that confidence, building tools and resources that provide information and empower action.

Get ePrepared supports people to learn how to store electronic copies of their important legal documents, in case of disasters. This year we released a major upgrade shaped by feedback from people with lived experience of disasters. The result is a cleaner, simpler, and more accessible tool that makes it easy for anyone to learn how they can safely store their essential documents. For a parent fleeing their home without identification, or an older person navigating digital storage for the first time, this can mean the difference between rebuilding quickly and weeks of bureaucratic barriers. As one user told us:

This is a great idea [...] I fled without anything except for supplies for my son. Trying to find a rental without ID was a nightmare...

More than 5,000 people used Get ePrepared in FY25, and hundreds more joined workshops, downloaded kits to run their own group sessions, and shared the tool across their communities.

Alongside this, we scaled up SmartAssist, our AI-powered tool that helps people put their legal problem into words and discover the right legal resources for their situation. Built on our own ethical AI model, SmartAssist strips

away jargon and meets people where they are. **This year, nearly 47,000 people engaged with our SmartAssist resources,** including our animated video explainer on how to spot safe and ethical AI, or using the tool directly to identify legal issues and take the first step toward resolution.

We also tackled a persistent legal problem in disaster recovery: insurance claims. Many people are underprepared when it comes to proving what they have lost. **That's why we launched a series of six short videos guiding people through how to create a digital inventory of their home and contents.** It is simple, practical, and trauma-informed.



Since release, the videos have been completed almost 2,800 times, with **90% of surveyed users** (n=20) **saying they were helpful.**



Together, these initiatives supported 52,814 people in FY25, a **447% increase on last year.** More importantly, they gave thousands of people the skills and confidence to face the future on stronger legal footing.

In FY26, we will keep listening to our community's needs and build more resources that break down barriers, close the digital divide, and put legal confidence within reach for even more people.



**Explore
Get ePrepared**

prepare.apps.justiceconnect.org.au

IMPACT HIGHLIGHT

In FY25, our online outreach campaigns achieved **50,242,394 impressions.**

Our digital inclusion initiatives have supported 52,814 people in FY25



Improving our digital front door with smart AI technology

For people reaching out for legal help, the first step matters. If the entry point is confusing, time-consuming, or overwhelming, people may give up before they get the help they need. That's why in FY25 we began transforming our online intake pathway, creating a smarter, faster, and more intuitive 'front door' powered by our own AI model.

For people searching for legal help, the new tool is designed to give clarity early. Instead of being asked for pages of detail before seeing what services are available, people are guided to the right support sooner: whether that is one of Justice Connect's services, self-help resources or tools, or a referral to another more appropriate organisation. **It is a simpler, more human process that meets people where they are.**

For Justice Connect, the shift is just as important. Our old system was difficult to update, maintain, and keep secure. By moving to our own infrastructure, we now have control over how our Intake Tool looks, performs, and evolves. This means faster updates, stronger data security, and more flexibility to respond to feedback from our community of users and partners.

Building the new tool was a collaborative effort. From prototyping to user testing, we centred the voices of our clients at every step, including people experiencing homelessness, family violence, and varying levels of digital confidence.

Their insights shaped both the design and the content, making the tool intuitive and easy to use. One testing participant told us it was:

A lot easier than the government's forms I've dealt with a thousand times. Very simple, very to the point.

Our in-house legal experts also extensively tested the tool, ensuring rigour and accuracy.

Our new Intake Tool is about more than just Justice Connect. It's been built as a smarter, stronger pathway to justice for the whole legal assistance ecosystem. Many organisations have expressed interest in using our AI model to support their own legal intake, but struggle with the technological resources needed to build their own tools. Our goal is to make this ready-to-use system available to others, helping the entire sector connect people with the right legal help faster.

In FY26, we will continue to refine and expand our digital front door, ensuring that the first step towards justice is not a barrier, but a clear and confident path forward.



IMPACT HIGHLIGHT



In FY25, we launched a campaign on Meta and Google to increase understanding of ethical AI and how people can safely experiment with ours too. **These ads reached people 1,534,157 times.**



Designing secure, trusted platforms for the pro bono sector

Pro bono is an incredible force for good in the community, yet there is significant challenge in weaving the many different practices together. This is where the importance of simple, safe, and trusted digital systems is critical.

In FY25, we focused on building the kind of digital infrastructure that makes it easier for law firms, community legal centres, and partners across the world to collaborate and deliver more help.

Our Pro Bono Portal now supports pro bono work in 10 jurisdictions worldwide, including here in Australia, connecting thousands of lawyers to people who need free legal help.



Behind the scenes, we invested heavily in security. Multi-factor authentication, robust system upgrades, and carefully tested feature improvements mean the Portal is faster, more reliable, and ready to handle future demand.

Listening to our users was just as important. Based on feedback from firms, community legal centres, and our global partners, we added features that streamline day to day activities. New templates save time for staff posting matters, onboarding tours guide new users through the system, and more sophisticated analytics allow firms to visualise their impact. As one staff member explained:

The Opportunity Templates feature has streamlined this process, allowing me to spend more time drafting the important nuts and bolts of the Portal opportunities to secure pro bono referrals for our clients.

– Jake, Justice Connect staff member

Alongside the Portal, **we continued to expand Firm Manager, our purpose-built technology solution for law firms running pro bono practices.** Firm Manager takes away the complexity of coordinating matters, offering real-time dashboards, automated reporting, and easier lawyer engagement.

This year we worked closely with firms to strengthen Firm Manager's security provisions to meet the strictest confidentiality standards, improve analytics, and extend features that reflect each firm's priorities. In FY26, we'll be launching our new client survey tool, giving firms an easy way to measure both impact and client experience.

Together, the Portal and Firm Manager are reshaping the way the pro bono sector delivers justice. They make pro bono practice easier, more secure, and more sustainable, ensuring that firms of any size can contribute their generous expertise to communities who need it most.

One of the best things about Firm Manager is it is ever evolving and improving. We will have a catch-up session with Justice Connect and say 'it's going really well but would be really great if Firm Manager could do this...'. Then, before the next time we meet, that update has happened, Justice Connect have incorporated further updates [based] on feedback from other firms and are ready for the next round of feedback to further improve the product.

– Firm Manager user



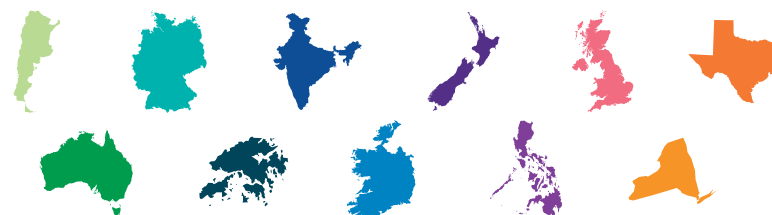
Learn more about our Global Pro Bono Portal
probonoportal.org



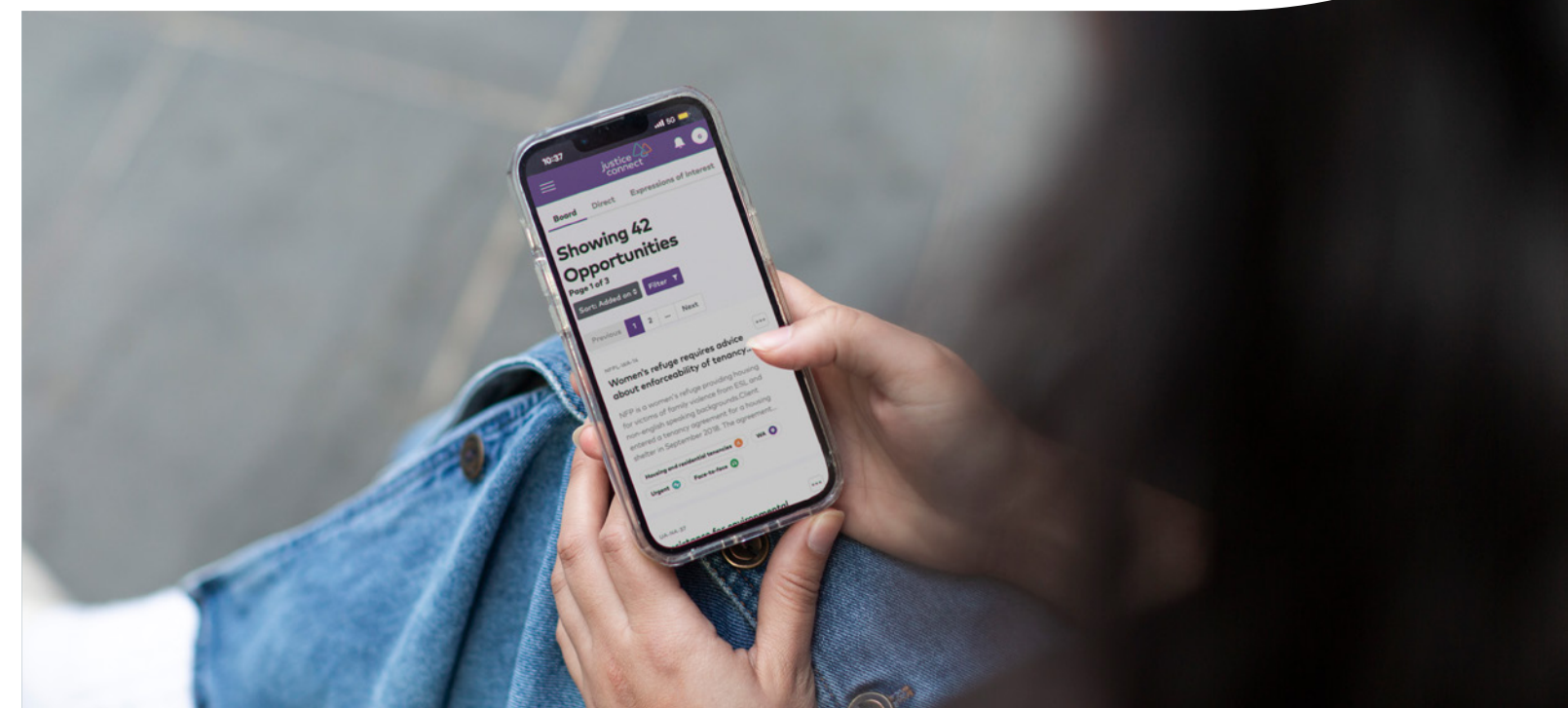
Learn more about Firm Manager
firmmanager.org

Where our Portal has been set up

Argentina
Australia
Germany
Hong Kong
India
Ireland



New Zealand
Philippines
United Kingdom
USA (New York)
USA (Texas)



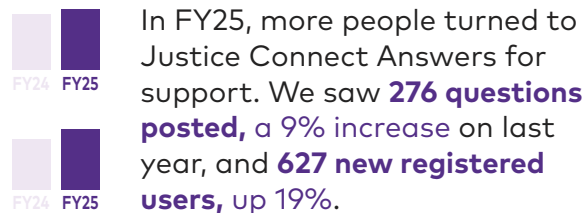


Answering people's legal questions online

Sometimes the biggest difference comes from a small but timely answer to a question. Justice Connect Answers is our free online legal clinic that gives people quick, practical advice from pro bono lawyers.

Too often, barriers like high fees, long distances, accessibility needs, or caring demands can stop people from getting legal help. **Justice Connect Answers cuts through these challenges, giving people free access to pro bono lawyers whenever and wherever they are.**

By providing clear advice at the right time, Justice Connect Answers prevents problems from escalating. It helps people understand their rights, take early action, and in many cases avoid having to go to court. **This makes it a powerful tool for early intervention, and a cornerstone of how we deliver online legal services at scale.**



The areas of law people asked questions about mirror the challenges our community are currently facing. **Questions about work and employment matters grew by 75%, housing and homelessness by 21%, and personal rights and safety by 19%.**

The evidence is clear: people using Justice Connect Answers have told us it is helping them take control of their legal problems, and giving them the support they need, when they need it.

Three out of four people said they would recommend Justice Connect Answers to others, rated their experience positively, and reported that the advice helped them understand their rights and obligations. The same proportion said the advice helped them know what action to take next, and that they received help in time to use it.

In FY25, 627 new users registered for Justice Connect Answers (up 19%)

Alongside growing demand, we continued to improve the service and promote it through targeted online outreach campaigns. These campaigns connected people searching for answers with an online pathway to lawyers who could provide them, expanding the reach and impact of the platform.

Justice Connect Answers is proving that a simple question and answer can change outcomes. **By meeting people online and on their own terms, we are removing systemic barriers to justice and giving people the confidence to navigate their legal problems with certainty.**

IMPACT HIGHLIGHT



Justice Connect won the Best Use of Data for Community Impact Award at the 2025 Infoxchange Australian Not-for-profit Technology Awards, recognising how we are using data in innovative ways to strengthen our mission, improve services, and deliver greater impact. Our winning application showcased three case studies: reaching priority communities through layered data analysis, supporting community organisations with online resources backed by data, and building a stronger diagnostic AI model.



PRO BONO SPOTLIGHT:

Ensuring justice stays ethical and human in the age of AI

Artificial intelligence (AI) is changing the way people interact with legal systems, but it can never replace human judgement. That's why our network of dedicated pro bono lawyers is playing a critical role in shaping Justice Connect's ethical AI tools, ensuring they are accurate, fair, and built with our community front of mind.

We've developed two platforms, called TAG and Consensus, where lawyers contribute their time and expertise to annotate data, test algorithms, and provide vital human oversight to improve our own AI model. **This work helps us make sure that our AI tools are accurately and fairly recognising legal problems more effectively, and guiding people toward the right kind of help.**



Consensus, launched in FY25, asks lawyers to review anonymised pieces of text, identify the most relevant area of law, and compare options to improve accuracy and provide human oversight. These decisions feed directly into our AI model, improving its ability to process complex and sometimes conflicting information. **In its first year, Consensus saw 16,772 submissions, and leveraged 634 hours of pro bono time, valued at more than \$250,000.**

Pro bono powered AI

In FY25, pro bono lawyers contributed nearly 1,300 hours, valued at \$515,000, helping us train AI tools that keep justice fair and firmly human.



634 pro bono hours (49%) on Consensus;

664 pro bono hours (51%) on TAG.



\$250,000 pro bono value (49%) on Consensus;

\$275,000 pro bono value (51%) on TAG.

In FY25, pro bono lawyers contributed nearly 1,300 hours helping to train AI tools

As our colleague from the University of Melbourne explained:

In developing the AI tool, we find that lawyers who annotate the data often disagree on the best areas of law that apply to a problem. Therefore, it is important to understand and consider their judgements holistically to build an accurate AI tool. The data that we get from Consensus helps with this understanding and provides a basis for devising the right approach to develop the tool. Justice Connect is an ideal partner for this work because it already has the resources for a successful execution such as large-scale real-world data, access to a large network of practising lawyers, and technical infrastructure.

– Kemal Kurniawan, School of Computing and Information Systems, University of Melbourne

Our original tool, TAG, continued to grow in FY25, with more than 4,000 unique samples annotated over 54,000 times. This equates to 664 hours of pro bono contribution, valued at over \$265,000. Updates to TAG made it easier for lawyers and staff to use, while a major retraining of our AI model improved performance across the board, especially in family and criminal law. This is significant because these are areas of law that Justice Connect does not support with, meaning our AI model can now better serve the broader legal assistance sector. Importantly, we focused on 'recall' (also known as sensitivity or true positive rate), which is the ability of the model to correctly identify all relevant cases within a dataset. **Performance increased by an average of 5%, giving us confidence that the AI will not leave behind anyone who is in need.**

Together, TAG and Consensus demonstrate how technology and pro bono expertise can work hand in hand. By combining human insight with machine learning, we are building tools that are not only smarter, but also fairer.



Helping not-for-profit organisations navigate the law

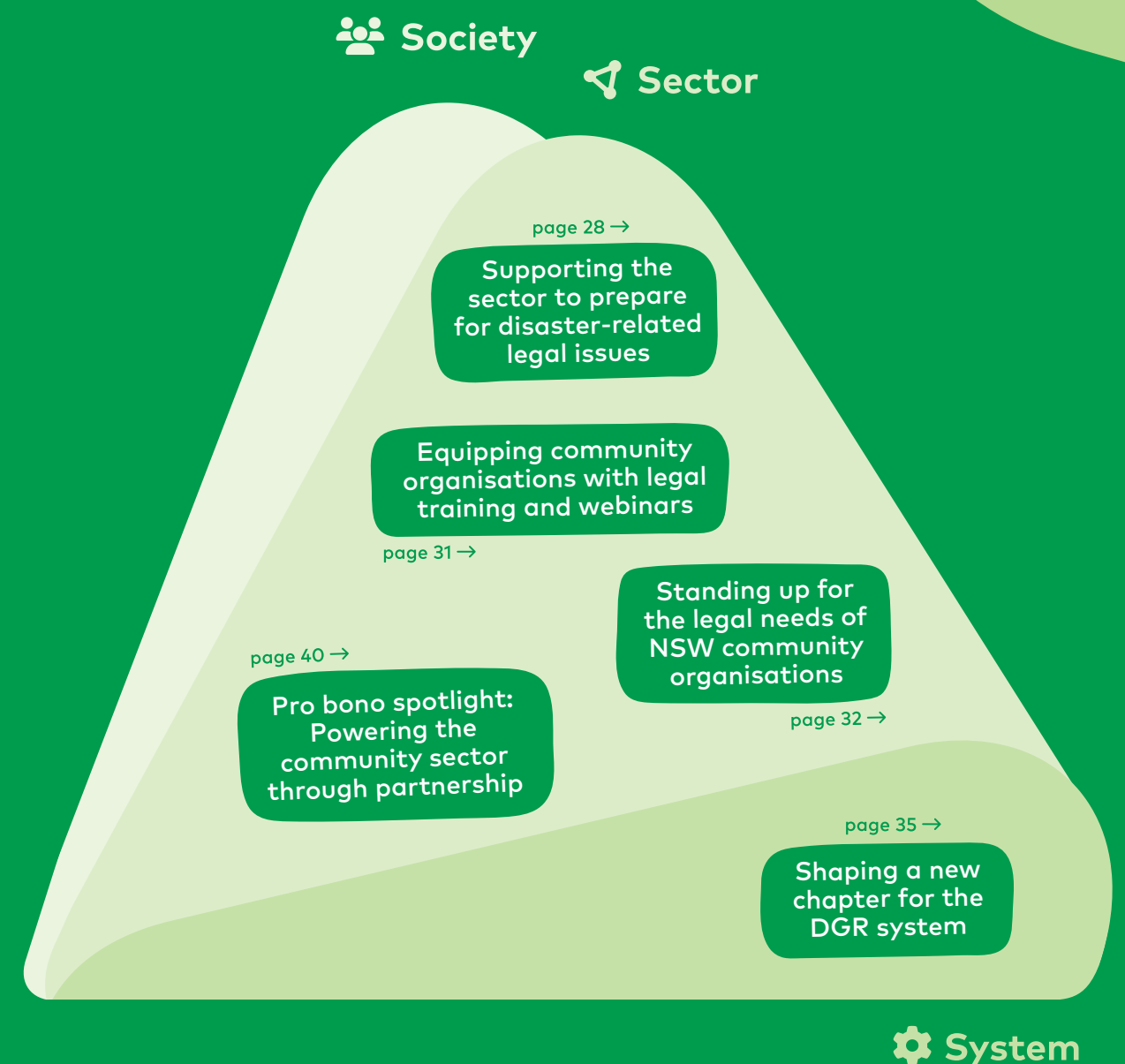
Not-for-profit organisations are the cornerstone of community resilience, providing essential services that uplift those most in need and strengthen society in times of adversity.

However, these vital organisations exist in a complex legal landscape, especially if they operate in multiple states. With their limited time and resources, this can make keeping up with compliance extremely difficult, let alone affording costly legal fees when they experience a legal issue.

By providing expert advice, training, and resources, we work to relieve community organisations of this burden. As a charity ourselves, we share the same experience and priorities as the organisations we help. Our specialist legal support aims to give not-for-profit organisations the skills, confidence, and information they need to run their organisation well, while focussing on what matters most: their communities.

Work we are proud of

This chapter contains our stories of impact over the past year, and clients whose stories we changed for the better.



For society: We address legal problems in the community with legal and social work.

For the sector: We support and build capacity in the pro bono and community sectors.

For the system: We work with institutions and decision makers for a fairer legal system.



Supporting the sector to prepare for disaster-related legal issues

When disasters strike, not-for-profit organisations are often the first to respond and the last to leave. They play a crucial role in supporting communities through recovery, **but they also face significant legal challenges of their own.**

From governance to insurance, and from volunteer safety to funding, the legal challenges can be complex and high stakes, especially when time and resources are stretched thin before, during, and after disasters.

In FY25, we launched the Disaster Legal Toolkit, designed to give not-for-profit organisations clear, practical legal guidance during all stages of the disaster lifecycle. Developed with the support of the Greater Melbourne Foundation, the toolkit contains 26 resources covering the issues that not-for-profit organisations told us matter most. These include disaster planning and compliance, managing volunteers and workforce safety, navigating insurance limitations, sustaining funding, and collaborating effectively with other organisations.

The toolkit has already reached thousands of users, and **82% of surveyed users** (n=33) **said it answered their legal questions.** Organisations have praised it as "a timely and much-needed set of resources" and "fantastic, really useful for [us] and our Network".

Since launching in December, our Disaster Legal Toolkit received more than 7,200 page views

Early feedback shows these resources are already reducing stress and giving people the clarity they need to act. One user told us:

Every day I go to work and try to consider what my responsibilities and duty of care are, but often it just gets lost in the fold of the day-to-day. Information that clearly tells me what to do [is] a godsend.

But this project is about more than a toolkit. It's a continuation of our commitment to create accessible legal supports that help organisations prepare for, withstand, and recover from increasing disasters, whether that means navigating climate governance, managing spontaneous volunteers, or dealing with operational interruptions.

Too often, small volunteer-run organisations cannot afford legal advice and are left to manage these legal risks alone. **By providing specialised, plain-language resources, we are giving boards, staff, and volunteers the confidence and skills to make sound decisions when the stakes are highest.**



Explore the Disaster Legal Toolkit
nfplaw.org.au/disasters

IMPACT HIGHLIGHT



We expanded the reach of our Disaster Legal Toolkit through targeted digital campaigns on Meta and Google, reaching community organisations nationwide and generating **352,167 impressions** that resulted in **3,831 link clicks.**



Equipping community organisations with legal training and webinars

Charities are at the heart of strong communities. At the same time, many leaders find themselves juggling governance, compliance, and operational responsibilities without legal expertise.

We help bridge that gap by running a dedicated social enterprise that delivers tailored training and accessible, affordable webinars. **These sessions cut through legal complexity and give organisations the clarity and confidence they need to focus on their mission.**

While we ran slightly fewer sessions in FY25 (167 compared to 182 in FY24, a decrease of 8%), attendance surged, showing that more organisations than ever are seeking out this support.



5,280 people attended our training and webinars in FY25, a 24% increase (4,274 in FY24).

144 of our sessions were customised training workshops designed specifically for individual organisations, while 23 were open-access webinars for small to medium not-for-profit organisations across the country.

The feedback is resounding: our training is building confidence and making complex legal issues and topics manageable.



After attending customised training sessions, **97% of participants** (n=375) **said they felt more confident** tackling legal issues in their organisation, and **every participant** (n=375) **rated the training positively.**



One attendee described the training by saying:

I didn't think that law related information could have held my attention for over 3 hours! Excellent info and so well delivered!

Our webinars reached a record number of people this year, with participation up by a third. 91% of attendees (n=471) reported increased confidence, and 97% (n=471) rated them positively.

As one participant told us:

Coming from a non-legal background I thought I might be underarmed to get anything out of the session — how wrong I was! The presenters made the topics understandable and relevant (and, not least, made it interesting!).

By equipping thousands of community organisations with the knowledge and skills to manage their legal obligations, we are reducing stress, strengthening governance, and helping leaders focus on what matters most: creating real impact in their communities.

IMPACT HIGHLIGHT



In FY25, our ads promoting our capability-building webinars for community organisations reached **209,319 Australians**, resulting in **over 2,500 ticket sales.**



Standing up for the legal needs of NSW community organisations

When the NSW Government cut off our funding in October 2022, we had no choice but to close our legal advice service for community organisations in NSW, and remove tailored NSW resources from our website. Community organisations were left without critical legal support, at the same time as demand for their services grew and cost-of-living pressures pushed already stretched operating budgets to breaking point.

The negative impact was immediate. **Tens of thousands of small and medium organisations, many of them volunteer-run, suddenly lost access to specialist legal advice** and clear guidance on issues such as employment obligations, privacy requirements, and workplace safety. Without this support, organisations risked being bogged down in compliance and governance issues that undermine their sustainability.

We did not accept this loss quietly. In FY24, we rallied our community of supporters across the sector to call for the reinstatement of our vital funding, with more than 527 people and organisations writing to the NSW Minister for Families and Communities in support of our services. **The message was clear: these services are critical to the strength of the NSW community sector.**

In FY25, we were able to secure a major step forward. Thanks to short-term philanthropic funding, we could re-establish our NSW-specific self-help resources online and launch an outreach campaign to reconnect organisations with these essential tools. We reviewed and reuploaded 23 resources tailored for NSW organisations and reviewed a further 104 national resources to ensure they remained accurate and relevant for NSW audiences too.

35% of visitors to our Not-for-profit Law website came from NSW this year, with more than 78,512 views to our self-help resources for community organisations in NSW.

The positive impact was immediate. Organisations told us these resources are once again saving them time and reducing their legal risk:

The summaries on these highly technical areas are really useful in saving time to help home in on what specific areas of the legislation require further consideration.

We are a small charity operating in multiple jurisdictions. The resources were really helpful in bringing together the national picture for areas such as WH&S. Saves me hours in going to individual pieces of legislation in what is quite a technical area.

Alongside this, we secured further short-term funding from a new source to reopen our free legal advice service in NSW in July 2025. The announcement was met with overwhelming support from the community sector, with messages reading:

Thats great news congratulations on this much needed notion.

This is the most AMAZING news – congratulations!!!!

A great achievement for any community.

Fantastic news!

Wonderful! So thrilled to hear this update.

So happy to hear this.

Such beautiful news.

Congratulations and let's hope the NSW Gov come to the party with sustainable funding.

These wins mark a vital step in restoring access to justice for NSW community organisations. But they are not yet secure. Current funding only extends until June 2026, and without a commitment from the NSW Government, our services are at risk of being cut again.

We will continue to advocate for sustainable, long-term funding to ensure that community organisations in NSW can rely on specialist legal support. The future of these services matters. With the right investment, our Not-for-profit Law program can keep removing legal barriers and freeing organisations to deliver more support to the communities that rely on them.





Shaping a new chapter for the DGR system

Charities drive social and economic progress every day. They strengthen communities, create opportunities, and respond to challenges that governments alone cannot solve. But while their impact is immense, parts of the tax system that should enable their work are holding them back.

The Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) system is one of the clearest examples of how outdated rules are locking far too many organisations out of opportunity. Access to DGR status unlocks crucial funding because it allows charities to receive tax-deductible donations and opens the door to philanthropy, grant makers, and community donors. Yet today, around half of registered charities are deemed ineligible for DGR status.

The reason is complexity. Over the past 100 years, more and more DGR categories have been bolted on in an ad hoc way, leaving 52 separate categories, each with their own eligibility criteria. **It's an opaque system that even experts struggle to navigate. For small, volunteer-led organisations, the process is daunting.** For those that do make it through, the compliance burden continues, with organisations forced to ensure they do not lose their endorsement by accidentally straying from their given category.

The result is a system that is outdated, overly complex, ineffective, and unfair. **It leaves thousands of charities without access to sustainable funding streams, making it harder for them to serve the communities who need them most.**

We recently secured funding to lead the establishment of a national coalition campaign for reform. **Our goal is simple: to work with government on building a fairer, simpler DGR system that reflects the diversity, productivity, and resilience of Australia's charity sector.** The Productivity Commission's Future foundations for giving report has already provided a clear, common sense pathway forward, and reform would directly support the Australian Government's goal of doubling philanthropic giving by 2030.

Reform is about unlocking opportunity. Unlocking freedom from confusing red tape. Unlocking access to more giving. Unlocking greater community impact, with sustainable funding that allows charities to grow their services and reach more people in their communities.

With our unique expertise as the only nationally available source of free legal support for community organisations, and with the trust we have built across the sector over the last two decades, Justice Connect is well placed to lead this campaign in FY26 and beyond.

Together, we'll be shaping a new chapter for the DGR system: one that unlocks potential and strengthens the future of Australia's vibrant charity sector.



CLIENT STORY:

Andrew's story: Transforming knowledge into action with online tools

Starting a charity can feel like standing at the base of a mountain without a clear path to the top. For Andrew, one of the founders of the Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA) Collective, the climb seemed daunting, until he found tools that turned his determination into action.

At PDA Collective, their goal is to create dedicated resources for families and caregivers navigating PDA. They have plans to build a central hub for information, support, and community, aiming to ease the challenges faced by caregivers.

However, to achieve that vision, Andrew first needed to navigate a complex legal landscape. Setting up a new organisation meant understanding different legal structures, registration requirements, and the steps to establish a charity with the right governance and compliance in place.

"I felt a nervous...", Andrew admits. *"I thought, 'This is going to be really challenging and require that I have deep knowledge of legal requirements.'"*

Andrew applied for legal support through Justice Connect's website, and we directed him to our suite of online self-help tools for community organisations, including our Getting Started Tool.

For Andrew, this was a turning point. A self-described "practical, utilitarian" person, as he worked through the tools, Andrew realised he didn't need deep legal expertise to make progress.

What he needed was clear, structured information that made sense.

"The information was really clear on issues and problems. I could follow the logic, and the tips were reassuring. It was a homely, warm experience in terms of the colours and fonts. And there wasn't too much jargon either."

Andrew realised he didn't need deep legal expertise to make progress. What he needed was clear, structured information that made sense.

Armed with this knowledge, Andrew registered PDA Collective with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission and is now also registered as a charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission. He now feels confident in moving ahead with the next steps of building the organisation.

Reflecting on the journey, Andrew says:

"In terms of unpacking complex information and giving me confidence to tackle something that feels out of my comfort zone, it was very reassuring. People forming charities do it because they feel a strong sense of purpose. I've been able to divert some agency into the charity and feel like I'm actually doing something to help my community and broader society in the long run. So it's given a certain sense of fulfilment, as slow as we're going, doing something productive."

Andrew's story shows the power of the right information, delivered in the right way, at the right time. By transforming charity compliance from confusion into clarity, our self-help tools free up community leaders to spend their energy where it belongs: delivering impact, not battling paperwork.

For Andrew, that means his new organisation is not only legally sound but also better positioned to achieve its mission supporting caregivers of people with PDA.



The information was really clear on issues and problems. I could follow the logic, and the tips were reassuring. It was a homely, warm experience in terms of the colours and fonts. And there wasn't too much jargon either.

– Andrew



IMPACT HIGHLIGHT



In FY25, we delivered **81 free legal services** to **39 Local Aboriginal Land Councils** in NSW.



CLIENT STORY:

Kaylene's story: Lifting the load for community leaders

In a small farming town in western Victoria, Charlton Neighbourhood House has become a lifeline: a place where people gather, learn, and connect. But behind the scenes, its board carried the heavy weight of governance without support, until Justice Connect helped lift the load.

Since opening its doors on the foothills of the central highlands in 2019, Charlton Neighbourhood House has grown into a vital hub for its community. It offers courses, activities, and social opportunities that strengthen connections. Yet from the beginning, the board faced the familiar challenges of small, community-based charities: navigating governance, legal obligations, and operational responsibilities with little support.

Kaylene, president and chair of the board, recalls: "As a small not-for-profit in a rural community, we don't have any peers we can turn to for advice. We felt unsupported and just bluffed our way through in those first years". The pressures of balancing governance with the day-to-day delivery of programs weighed heavily on the board.

Everything changed when the Charlton Neighbourhood House's board connected with Justice Connect. Attending our Governing a Not-for-profit Organisation training provided Kaylene and her team with clarity and reassurance.

"All the little things you touched on in your training made us feel supported when we hadn't been supported. Your governance training is a critical refresher for our board and we really hope you can continue to provide this."

Since then, Charlton Neighbourhood House has made significant improvements. Policies and procedures are now reviewed every six months, processes for inducting new board members are well-defined, record-keeping has been strengthened, and board roles are clearly defined.

At Charlton Neighbourhood House, governance is no longer a hidden burden carried by a single person. It is a shared responsibility. *"It's made a huge difference knowing that others on the board understand our collective responsibility for governance. By sharing the workload and being able to empower others, there is less on my shoulders alone as chair."*

Beyond training, the board now makes regular use of our free online resources, and has received direct legal advice to ensure compliance and best practice. With stronger knowledge and the confidence needed to thrive safely, they can now focus their energy on delivering valuable services for their community.

Kaylene's story illustrates how timely, ongoing legal support can transform the experience of community leaders. With guidance from Justice Connect, Charlton Neighbourhood House is empowered to do what it does best: bringing people together, fostering connection, and enriching the lives of people in its rural town.



PRO BONO SPOTLIGHT:

Powering the community sector through partnership

Behind every thriving community organisation is a network of people who believe in its mission. Justice Connect helps build that network by linking community organisations with pro bono lawyers who stand beside them, offering the legal expertise they need to keep making a difference.

Through our Not-for-profit Law program, pro bono lawyers play a crucial role in two ways: providing one-to-one legal help for community organisations through referrals, and contributing to the development and upkeep of our self-help resources that reach thousands more. Together, they are amplifying our impact across the entire community sector.

In FY25, 238 matters from community organisations were referred to pro bono firms, allowing specialist lawyers to contribute the equivalent of \$2.6 million of legal support. Every referral helps an organisation resolve a complex issue, strengthen its governance, or reduce risk so it can focus on its purpose. As one client told us:

They were wonderful, fantastic and spectacular. They were all so lovely and treated me with the same respect as a paying customer. I couldn't have asked for a better experience.

In FY25, pro bono lawyers contributed more than 6,500 hours of legal support to community organisations, powering the community sector through partnership.

Measures of success



100% of the organisations we surveyed (n=12) rated their experience positively.



82% (n=11) said the lawyers helped them take action and achieve a successful outcome.



67% (n=12) said the legal help improved their organisation's ability to achieve its purpose.



64% (n=11) said that it improved their personal mental wellbeing too.

Beyond individual matters, pro bono lawyers helped us keep our legal resources current and comprehensive. **In FY25, together we developed 27 new resources and updated 144 existing resources**, spanning topics from working with volunteers and discrimination laws to a new guide on *Artificial intelligence and your organisation* – a timely resource that responded to growing sector demand, and quickly became one of our most accessed resources. **Each update means thousands of community organisations can access free, reliable, and up-to-date legal information.**

When pro bono lawyers and community organisations work side by side, the ripple effect reaches far beyond the law. We're proud to play a crucial role in supporting pro bono lawyers to transform their legal expertise into tools for community resilience, powering a sector that continues to deliver hope, support, and opportunity across Australia.



In FY25:

238 matters from community organisations were referred to pro bono firms

We developed 27 new resources and updated 144 existing resources

Pro bono lawyers contributed more than 6,500 hours of legal support to community organisations

Keeping people safely and securely housed

Safe, secure housing is a human right that lays the foundation to wellbeing. But as legal, housing, health, social, and financial needs increase in the housing and cost-of-living crises, many more Victorians are facing homelessness, and accessing community supports for the first time.

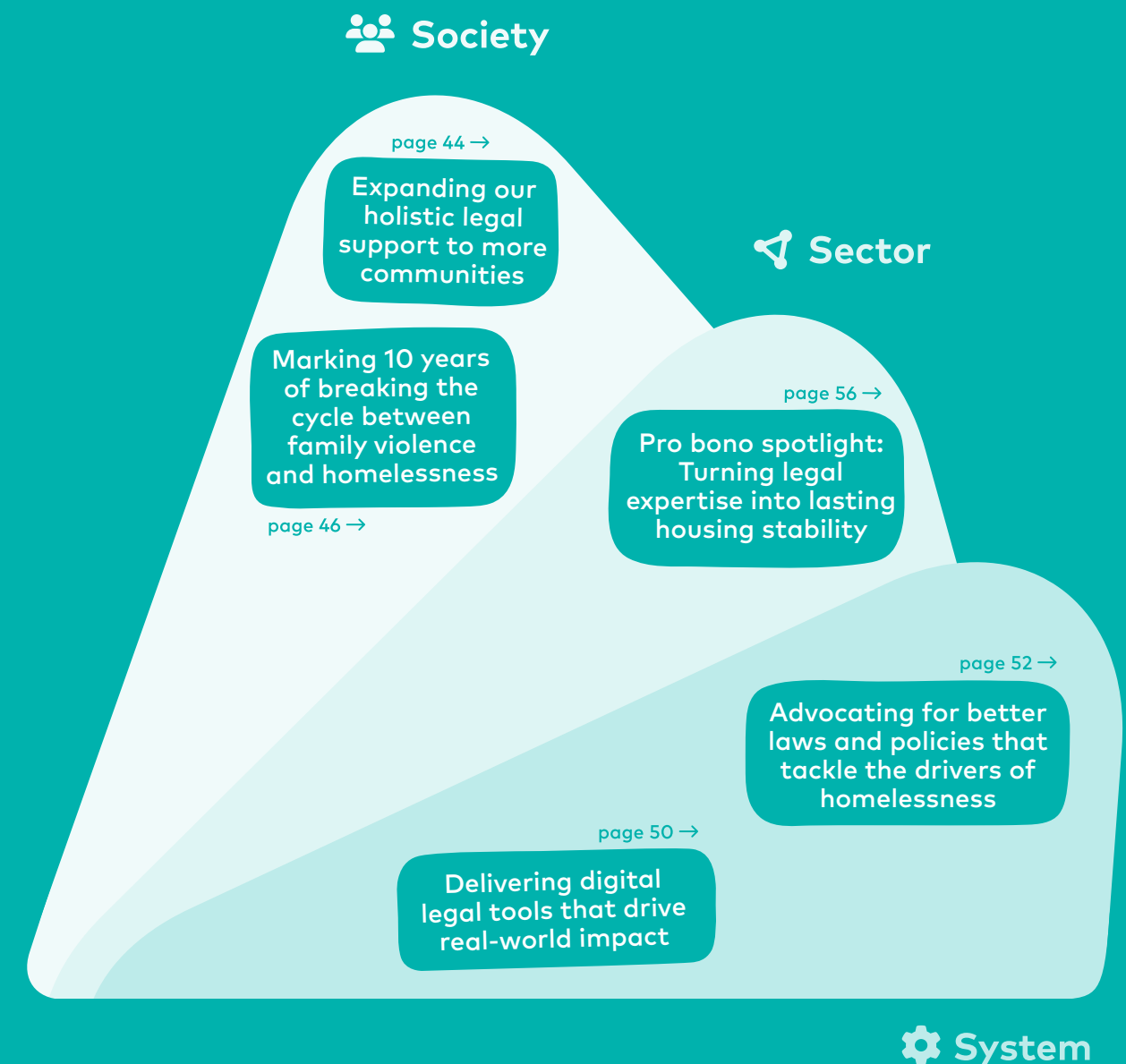
When people have complex or interconnected needs, our multidisciplinary team of lawyers and social workers are there to offer a higher intensity of support, such as providing ongoing casework or representation.

We also amplify this impact by developing digital tools that increase our help to more people, so renters can understand their legal rights and take early, preventative action to stay safely housed.

To break the cycle of homelessness, we use our frontline insights and service delivery data to advocate for better laws, policies, and practices to stop homelessness before it starts.

Work we are proud of

This chapter contains our stories of impact over the past year, and clients whose stories we changed for the better.



👥 **For society:** We address legal problems in the community with legal and social work.

🔗 **For the sector:** We support and build capacity in the pro bono and community sectors.

⚙️ **For the system:** We work with institutions and decision makers for a fairer legal system.



Expanding our holistic legal support to more communities

For people experiencing homelessness, legal issues never arrive alone. Meeting these challenges takes more than just legal advice. It takes integrated, person-centred support that restores stability across housing, health, financial, and social needs.

Our Under One Roof model brings legal help to the places people already are. By embedding lawyers in frontline community organisations, we remove barriers and identify legal problems early to connect people with the right support before issues spiral further. Working alongside partners including Launch Housing, Sacred Heart Mission, and cohealth, we break down service siloes and make sure help is joined-up, practical, and accessible.

The success of our Under One Roof model, as well as our tailored Homeless List court program with the Magistrates' Court of Victoria, has led to its expansion through a pilot at VincentCare Glenroy. **Following months of collaboration and preparation, the pilot launched in March 2025, extending our holistic approach to reach more people and strengthen connections between community and justice services.**

The Under One Roof model is reaching more people earlier and delivering stronger outcomes for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

How clients rated our services



In FY25, **95% of clients** (n=39) **reported that we helped them** resolve their problem.



89% (n=38) **stated that our support achieved a better result** than they could have achieved on their own.



90% (n=39) **rated our legal support as good or excellent.**



89% (n=9) **gave the same rating to our social work support.**



As one client reflected:

They made me feel at ease. Made me feel like a person, not just a number... I wouldn't still be in my house if it wasn't for them.

By expanding holistic legal support, we're helping people move from crisis to stability and from uncertainty to confidence. This work extends beyond solving legal problems. It empowers people with the knowledge and support to protect their rights and secure their futures.

In FY25, 270 people received legal support through our co-location projects and proactive partnerships with health and homelessness services

It's made an extreme difference, especially being a single mother. All the hassle I was getting... I would have been homeless, number one, and it's saved me, and allowed me and my son to have a roof over our heads. That's the difference it's made.

In the year ahead, we'll continue to track and evaluate the pilot, using the insights to refine our approach and strengthen the impact of our co-located services. Every lesson learned brings us closer to a system that keeps more people safely housed and supported.





Marking 10 years of breaking the cycle between family violence and homelessness

In FY25, we reflected on a decade of impact through our Women's Homelessness Prevention Project (WHPP), releasing an evidence-based report showcasing how our integrated legal and social work model keeps women and children safely housed while breaking the links between homelessness, family violence, and financial insecurity.

Over ten years, WHPP has helped 1,405 women and children remain safely housed, directly preventing the eviction of 1,019 families, 83% of whom had experienced family violence.

We also achieved an 87% success rate in sustaining tenancies, and our social workers made 1,986 targeted referrals to support services.

Together, these interventions have resulted in cost savings to the government and community of over \$11.4 million

We wouldn't be able to do this work alone. This project is delivered in partnership with Herbert Smith Freehills Kramer, who have contributed over 47,717 hours of free legal work over the lifetime of the project, further strengthening our capacity to protect women and children.

The impact of WHPP can be felt in the voices and experiences of the women and children we support. **One client described how the help she received "blew me out of the water. They stopped our eviction, even helped with food**

vouchers, and put us back on our feet. The difference they made over those months was just incredible."

Another reflected on the relief of avoiding homelessness, saying, *"If I didn't have Justice Connect's help, my kids and I would've been homeless. I was so relieved."*

For many, the combination of legal and social work support was transformative, showcasing the power of timely, integrated support to not only resolve immediate crises, but to restore stability and hope. As one client explained, *"The whole experience with Justice Connect has been lifechanging... It's taken a massive load off my shoulders. I couldn't be happier as we start our new lives."*

As WHPP looks to the future, we remain **committed to impact, advocacy, and collaboration, leveraging the lessons of the past decade to further strengthen our approach.** This milestone underscores how coordinated, holistic support can transform lives, and reaffirms WHPP's place as a leading model in preventing homelessness linked to family violence and financial insecurity.



Read the 10 year impact report

justiceconnect.org.au/whpp



IMPACT HIGHLIGHT



Home of Your Own, our online tool helping people stay safely housed, was recognised with a **Good Design Award in the Social Impact category**, highlighting the transformative potential of codesigned digital legal support.



CLIENT STORY:

Melinda's story: Creating a safe start for her family

When Melinda* received an eviction notice just weeks after becoming a mother, her world collapsed overnight. Facing the threat of homelessness with a newborn in her arms, she turned to Justice Connect for help. With expert legal and social work support, we helped her regain safety, stability, and the confidence that she wasn't facing this alone.

At 39, Melinda had already lived through family violence and personal trauma. As she began her life as a new mother, the arrival of a Notice to Vacate from her social housing provider put everything at risk when the threat of homelessness loomed.



Her attempts to communicate with the provider went nowhere. "It was frustrating to hear that Melinda was not feeling heard or assisted," recalls Liz, Justice Connect's Homeless Persons' Liaison Officer. "I was glad she had reached out to us as a resource to promote her rights and best outcomes with her."

Her attempts to communicate with the provider went nowhere.

Melinda was referred to our Women's Homelessness Prevention Project, which combines the expertise of lawyers and social workers. Together, the team worked to protect her housing and her future.

Her lawyers fought hard to negotiate a transfer to a safe and suitable property. Meanwhile, her social worker stepped in to provide practical support, including financial assistance to cover moving expenses. This made an overwhelming process achievable, giving Melinda the chance to move houses quickly and without added financial stress.

It was great to see that after the assistance provided, Melinda not only had secure housing and other practical support, but felt respected and included by Justice Connect in the process.

– Liz, Justice Connect's Homeless Persons' Liaison Officer

"The teamwork with Melinda, her lawyers, and her social worker was really positive," Liz reflects. "She felt supported, assisted in a really thorough way... and she often said how much she valued having 'someone in her corner'."

For Melinda, the outcome meant more than secure housing. It meant being treated with respect, included in the process, and supported at every step. With a stable home and strong community connections around her, she can now focus on the future she wants for herself and her child.

As Liz puts it: "It was great to see that after the assistance provided, Melinda not only had secure housing and other practical support, but felt respected and included by Justice Connect in the process and was able to re-stabilise."

Melinda's journey shows that timely, integrated support does more than secure housing. It restores dignity, safety, and the foundation she needs to rebuild her life confidently for herself and her newborn.



Delivering digital legal tools that drive real-world impact

In the face of a worsening housing crisis, we're helping people navigate housing challenges with confidence through innovative digital legal tools.

Supported by multi-year philanthropic funding from the Victorian Legal Services Board + Commissioner and the Greater Melbourne Foundation, we have continued to refine and expand these tools to reach more people and deliver meaningful results.

Dear Landlord has become an essential resource for renters seeking to resolve tenancy issues early and avoid eviction.

In FY25, **Dear Landlord views increased 41% to 68,231**, from 48,509 in FY24, reflecting both a surge in housing stress and the success of our targeted online outreach campaigns that share clear, accessible legal information with renters.

In FY25, **90% of surveyed users** (n=93) **increased their confidence** in communicating with their rental provider.

87% (n=93) reported that it helped them address their tenancy issues, 82% (n=93) stated it reduced stress, and 73% (n=93) noted that it contributed to achieving a positive outcome.

To track the long-term outcomes, we also connect with users six months after using the tool.

90% (n=10) **reported their housing situation had been improved** by Dear Landlord, and 70% (n=10) stated that it had a positive impact on their mental health.

One user shared:

After weeks of my landlord ignoring all my emails and not returning calls, the day I sent Dear Landlord, I heard from him the very next day with approval of my repayment arrears request!

Another user emphasised its practical guidance, saying:

It allowed me to find the necessary avenues to help me when going to VCAT. I was informed of my rights as a renter and was able to solve my dispute with VCAT easily.

In FY25, we focused on understanding our impact from a different perspective, utilising a cost-benefit analysis of Dear Landlord to assess the economic impact of the tool. In collaboration with a consulting economist, we began to understand the tool's financial outcomes and built internal capacity to track the costs and benefits into the future. **Our findings revealed that for every \$1 spent, \$3.30 of benefits were generated.** We look forward to sharing further results soon.

Surpassing its first birthday, our tool **Home of Your Own** has helped renters experiencing family violence stay safely housed, with completed milestones increasing from 193 in FY24 to 1,352 in FY25, a **600% increase**.

Each milestone represents a tailored action plan or letter generated in response to a user's specific situation.

In FY25, 42% of users used Home of Your Own to explore options for finding somewhere new to live, 13% reviewed their rights to make their home safer, and 12% looked at options for managing rent arrears or property damage.

Through Dear Landlord and Home of Your Own, we're empowering renters to better understand their rights, take early action, and regain control over their housing situation.

In FY26, we will continue this impactful trajectory by releasing a new version of Dear Landlord, ensuring it **keeps pace with the changing legal needs of renters**, and reaches a **broadier audience to create lasting, positive change in communities across Victoria.**



Explore
Dear Landlord

apps.justiceconnect.org.au/dear-landlord



Explore
Home of Your Own

homeofyourown.apps.justiceconnect.org.au





Advocating for better laws and policies that tackle the drivers of homelessness

Safe and secure housing is fundamental to wellbeing, but across Victoria, too many people are still living on the edge of losing it. **When laws and systems don't work for the people they're meant to protect, the risk of homelessness grows, and so does the need for change.**

In FY25, we contributed to key housing reforms that have the potential to reshape how Victorians experience renting. **We provided input into the design of Rental Dispute Resolution Victoria**, a Victorian Government initiative launched in June to help renters and rental providers resolve disputes quickly, fairly, and with less stress. The program was created in response to the Government's Housing Statement, released in 2024, **which identified the urgent need for a more efficient and accessible way to manage rental issues.** We worked to make sure the design considered the realities faced by renters experiencing financial stress or housing insecurity, and we'll continue to advocate for a process that is fair, inclusive, and informed by lived experience.

Our advocacy also focused on protecting individuals from laws that disproportionately affect people experiencing disadvantage. In collaboration with Southside Justice and a network of legal and community organisations, **we advocated against proposed changes to the City of Port Phillip's by-laws that would have penalised rough sleepers.** Our collective work included strategic engagement with local government, collaboration across sectors, and the development of human rights-based arguments that highlighted the harm these laws would cause. Together, this collective effort helped shift the conversation away from punishment and towards compassion and long-term systemic solutions.

We also continued to lead advocacy for a fairer fines system through our coordination of the Infringements Working Group. For many people in crisis, fines can quickly accumulate into unmanageable debt, deepening financial stress, and increasing the risk of homelessness. Our ongoing leadership of this cross-sector group has kept the issue on the agenda with government and enforcement agencies, with a particular focus on abolishing imprisonment warrants for unpaid fines.

The pause on the proactive execution of these warrants, achieved through our earlier advocacy, remains in place; however, we continue to meet with the Sheriff of Victoria and the Attorney-General to advocate for the change to be made permanent through legislative reform. We also coordinated pro bono research comparing fines systems

across Australian jurisdictions, providing evidence to strengthen reform efforts, which we look forward to sharing in FY26.

These outcomes reflect our broader vision: a fairer, more compassionate housing and justice system that recognises the structural causes of homelessness. By combining individual advocacy with systemic reform, we help people not just resolve crises but avoid them altogether. Each legal reform, policy shift, and collaborative success brings us closer to a community where no one is forced into homelessness by unfair laws, and where every Victorian has the opportunity to live with safety, respect, and stability





CLIENT STORY:

Mark's story: Finding safety, stability and a second chance

For most of his adult life, Mark* had experienced trauma, family violence, and years spent in prison. At fifty years old, he was ready to rebuild his life, but when he was released from prison, he faced the devastating reality of homelessness.

Mark slept rough for almost eight months. When he finally received an offer of safety in community housing, it was a step toward rebuilding his life. But that fragile stability was quickly threatened. A confrontation with a neighbour spiralled into a serious incident that left Mark facing both criminal charges and possible eviction.

Understandably, the prospect of further charges sent Mark's mental health into decline. That's when he was referred to Justice Connect.

Our multidisciplinary approach meant Mark had a team working together around him. His tenancy lawyer stepped in to negotiate with the housing provider, protecting his tenancy and ensuring he wasn't unfairly evicted. At the same time, he was referred to an external lawyer for representation in his criminal law matter. Behind the scenes, our Homeless Persons' Liaison Officer, Rachel, worked quickly to connect Mark with the support he needed.

"I was concerned for Mark's wellbeing as he was facing further incarceration and trauma," Rachel recalls. "I was aware of Mark's complex situation, trauma history and potential trust issues, having been let down by both family and support services in the past."

For many people facing homelessness, safety means more than a roof over their head. It means rebuilding trust, finding a sense of community, and feeling seen.

Understandably, the prospect of further charges sent Mark's mental health into decline. That's when he was referred to Justice Connect.

Through coordinated advocacy in both the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal and the Magistrates' Court, Justice Connect's legal team, along with Rachel, helped Mark avoid homelessness and imprisonment.

"I was so impressed by the advocacy and trauma-informed skills that Mark's specialist lawyers demonstrated to make him feel heard and safe," Rachel said. "It was a true reflection of the benefits of an integrated practice where lawyers and social workers work together with the client at the centre."

Rachel continued to check in, providing tailored and practical help as Mark's confidence grew. When his mental health declined again, she arranged vital brokerage funding for essentials like food, clothing, and respite accommodation, giving him the space to recover and regroup. She also helped him connect with a new support coordinator, who established links to ongoing health and community support services.

Mark described the impact of this support in his own words: *"[Justice Connect] shows integrity, respect and honesty. Day in and day out, you keep punching and it's relentless, which does me wonders."*

Rachel reflected, *"I was so happy that Mark received a new offer of community housing as a direct result of the advocacy [we] provided. Despite the many barriers Mark faced, his lawyers were never phased. Working in a trauma-informed way allowed Mark to trust his new supports and begin to build safety and stability in his life for the first time."*

Through Justice Connect's integrated legal and social work model, Mark has found housing stability, but he has also found safety, trust, and a sense of belonging. With secure housing and the proper support, he's now focused on recovery and building a future defined not by fear, but by confidence and connection.

I was so impressed by the advocacy and trauma-informed skills that Mark's specialist Homeless Law lawyers demonstrated to make him feel heard and safe.

– Rachel, Homeless Persons' Liaison Officer

[Justice Connect] shows integrity, respect, and honesty.

– Mark





PRO BONO SPOTLIGHT:

Turning legal expertise into lasting housing stability

Every week, across Victoria, dozens of pro bono lawyers stand beside people who are facing homelessness, offering not just legal advice, but real pathways to safe housing and lasting support. Through our Homeless Law clinics, these passionate and dedicated lawyers transform their expertise into life-changing outcomes for our community.

Run both in-person and remotely, our seven weekly clinics connect clients with integrated legal and social work support. Appointments are carefully arranged by our intake team so that people can receive holistic, ongoing help, not just a one-off consultation. **Behind every appointment is a network of skilled, compassionate lawyers and social workers working together to stop evictions, resolve fines, and address the underlying issues that push people toward homelessness.**

We continue to strengthen and modernise the way these clinics operate. In FY25, we rolled out a hybrid model for the Women's Homelessness Prevention Project, offering women the choice to connect with our integrated legal and social work team either remotely or in person. **This updated model prioritises accessibility and connection, allowing our social workers to link women with nearby family and community services co-located at the City of Melbourne's narm ngarrgu library.**

Our in-house experts also ensure every pro bono lawyer is equipped to deliver safe, trauma-informed support. **In FY25, hundreds of pro bono lawyers participated in 10 dedicated training sessions**, with one participant reflecting, *"After attending the training, I will bring a more empathetic and holistic perspective to the provision of legal services."* Another told us, *"Empathy and listening is at the core of helping Homeless Law clients."*

We also make our expertise available through written resources for pro bono lawyers on a website called Homeless Law in Practice. **In FY25, there were 80,156 unique page views, extending our expertise further into the pro bono and wider legal assistance sector.**

Through these partnerships, we are building a community of lawyers who see justice not just as theory, but as action: preventing homelessness one client at a time. As one firm put it:

We love the clinic – it's such great work to be involved in. It's a huge part of who we are as a firm and I personally think it makes our lawyers better at their jobs.

Together, we're channelling compassion and legal expertise into lasting housing stability, demonstrating the power of pro bono to change lives and strengthen communities.

In FY25:

The joint efforts of our pro bono network contributed to a record 317 evictions prevented, the highest number in Homeless Law's 25+ year history



Pro bono lawyers contributed 41,967 hours (up 19%), valued at more than \$18 million



Hundreds of pro bono lawyers participated in 10 of our dedicated training sessions



Our collective impact

Pro bono lawyers delivered 41,967 hours of free legal work through our clinics, an increase of 19% on the previous year. This equates to more than \$18 million of in-kind legal support.

41,967 hours in FY25;
35,321 hours in FY24.

317 evictions prevented in FY25;
256 evictions prevented in FY24.



Safeguarding older people from financial abuse

Financial elder abuse can quietly strip away a person's security, independence, and peace of mind. Abuse often comes from those who are most trusted, and the warning signs can be difficult to detect until serious harm has occurred.

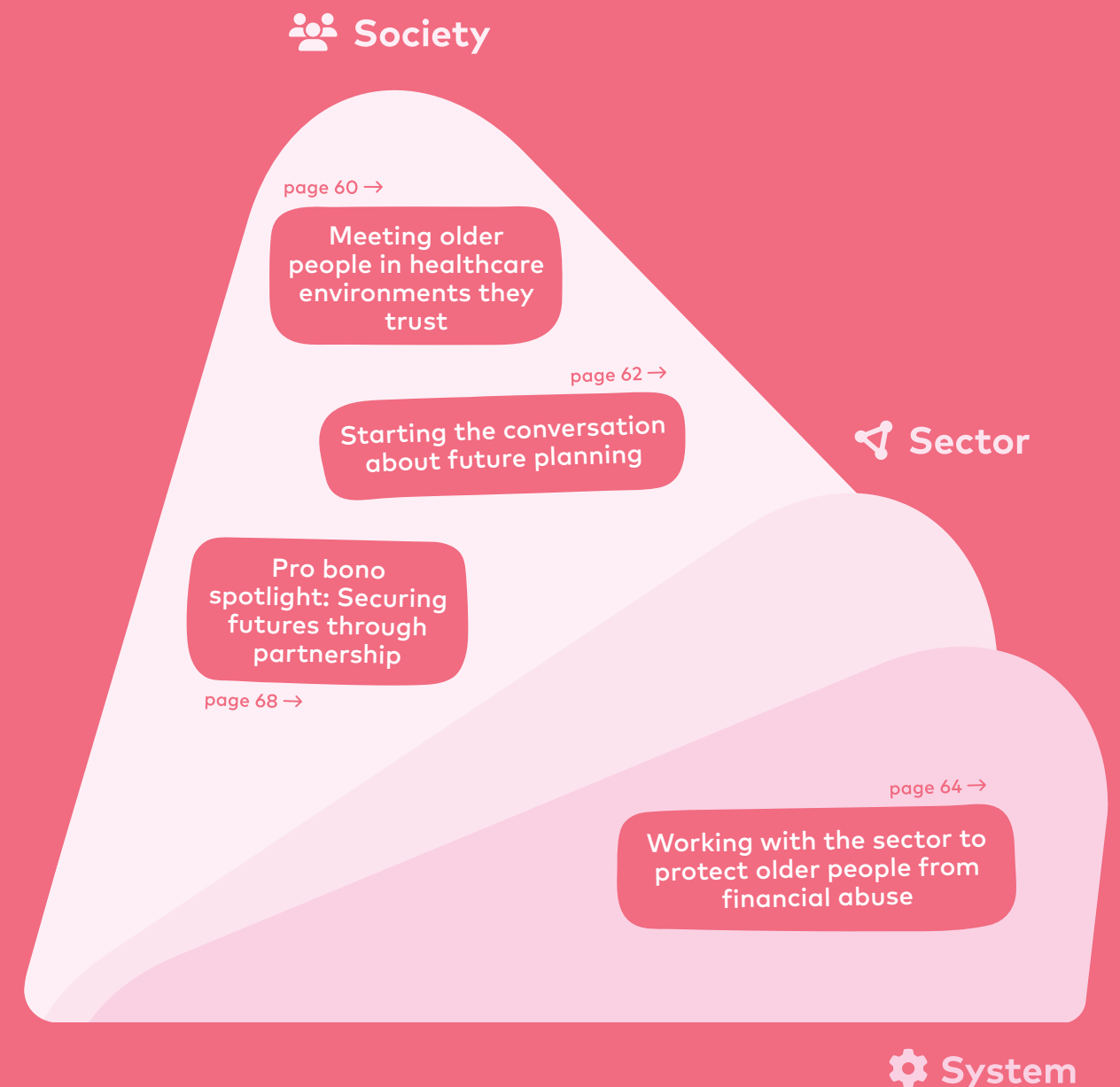
We help older Australians protect their rights and make decisions that reflect their values. Through our Health Justice Partnerships, we meet people early, in safe and familiar spaces like hospitals, to provide clear legal guidance before a minor issue becomes a crisis.

We know that planning ahead can be one of the most powerful tools for prevention. Supporting older people to discuss their wishes, plan for the future, and take practical steps to safeguard their wellbeing reduces vulnerability and builds confidence.

By combining legal expertise with compassion, we help people maintain control over their affairs and strengthen the systems around them, creating safer pathways for older Australians to live with respect, security, and independence.

Work we are proud of

This chapter contains our stories of impact over the past year, and clients whose stories we changed for the better.



For society: We address legal problems in the community with legal and social work.

For the sector: We support and build capacity in the pro bono and community sectors.

For the system: We work with institutions and decision makers for a fairer legal system.



Meeting older people in healthcare environments they trust

Many older Australians place deep trust in the people and communities around them. But when that trust is betrayed and elder abuse occurs, often at the hands of family or carers, mobility challenges, social isolation, and uncertainty about where to turn can make it difficult to seek timely legal support. Financial abuse in particular can quietly strip away independence, security, and peace of mind.


At Justice Connect, we believe no one should face these challenges alone. **Through our Health Justice Partnerships, we embed lawyers directly within trusted healthcare settings, meeting older people in environments where they already feel safe and supported.** These partnerships operate across hospitals and community health centres in both Victoria and New South Wales.

In Victoria, we partner with cohealth, Caulfield Hospital, and St Vincent's Hospital. In NSW, we partner with St Vincent's Health Network Sydney, and Uniting War Memorial Hospital.

These partnerships allow us to support doctors, nurses, and allied health workers to identify early signs of legal risk and connect patients with free, specialist legal help. Early legal intervention prevents harm, protects rights, and supports both the health and wellbeing of older people.

In FY25, we delivered 1,372 services for older people through our Health Justice Partnerships

This included 334 advice services, 100 casework services, 18 pro bono referrals, 544 information and simple referrals services, and 345 secondary consultations, where a Justice Connect lawyer provides advice through consultations with healthcare professionals.

 **All clients surveyed** (n=10) **reported feeling supported, more capable** of handling their issues, and satisfied with the outcomes.

One client said:

[Justice Connect] made getting [legal documents] easy for me with my mobility concerns and having had falls before. [The lawyer] came to my home, which made a big difference, or met me before or after times I was at the hospital.

Another reflected:

[I would] like to thank the lawyer and the team at the hospital, they were very empathic and understanding, it was an outstanding service all round. Always thought of putting [legal] documents in place but had never done it.

By integrating legal help into the healthcare system, we make it easier for older people to address problems before they escalate, while also empowering clinicians to act early and reduce stress for patients. This innovative and impactful model shows what's possible when legal help is accessible, timely, and trusted.

Together we can meet older people where they already feel safe, helping them protect their rights, plan for their future, and maintain dignity and independence as they age.

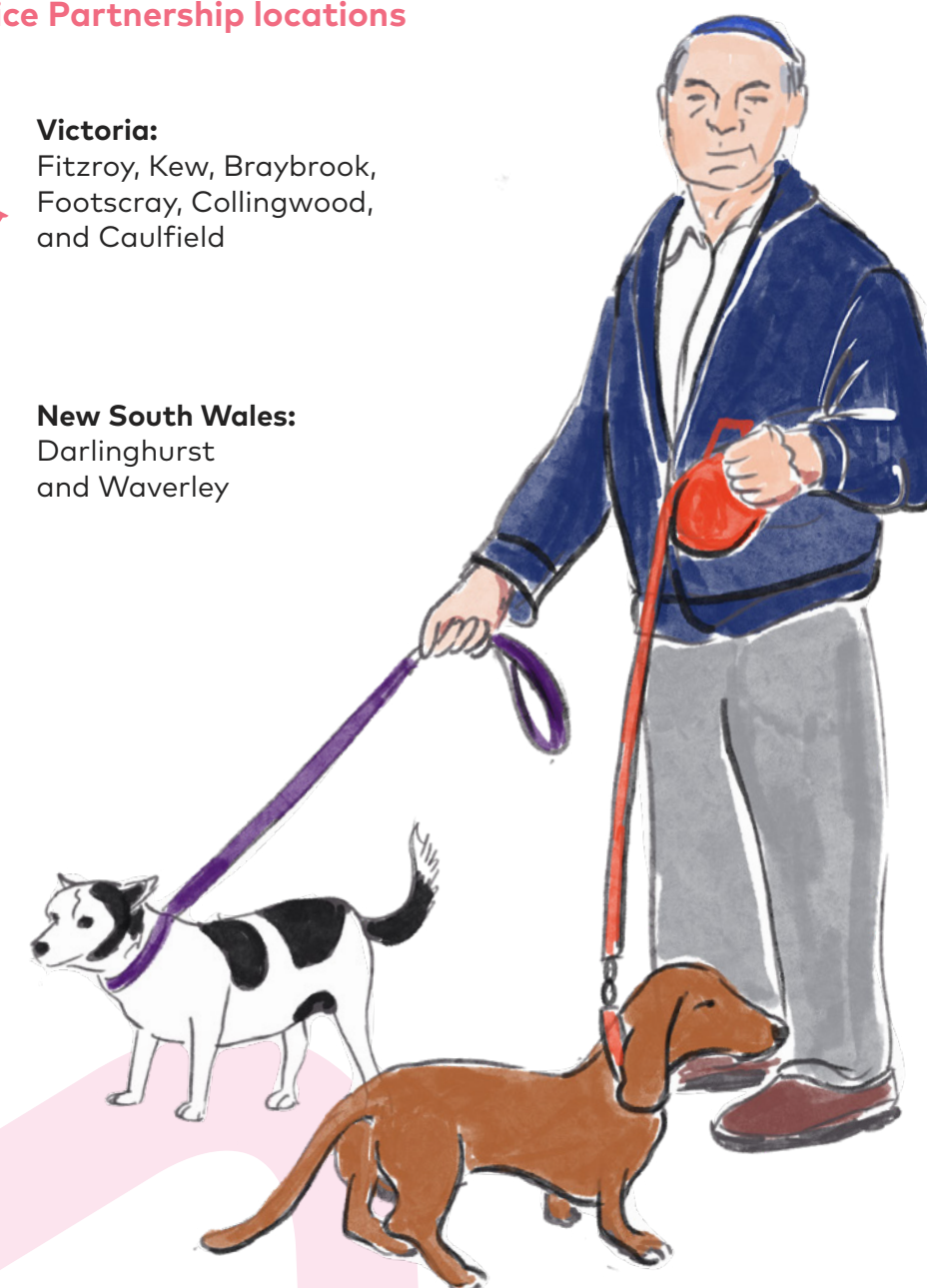
Our Health Justice Partnership locations



Victoria:
Fitzroy, Kew, Braybrook, Footscray, Collingwood, and Caulfield



New South Wales:
Darlinghurst and Waverley





Starting the conversation about future planning

Supporting informed decision-making today prevents harm tomorrow. We know that proactive planning is one of the strongest ways to safeguard older Australians from elder abuse.

Our Conversation Guides, workshops, and training programs provide practical, accessible tools to help older people consider their future, make informed choices, and feel confident their wishes will be honoured.

In FY25, we conducted 24 Conversation Guide workshops for older people, reaching 425 attendees

50% of these workshops were delivered to individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, with tailored training provided to groups speaking Turkish, Italian, Greek, Chinese, and German.



Our train-the-trainer program reached 76 healthcare partners across four sessions, with **all attendees surveyed** (n=8) **reporting a better understanding of future planning and increased confidence** to discuss it with their clients.



One participant shared:

[The presenter] made me feel confident to deliver this workshop with the support of useful resources for participants for information we may not be able to support them with.

Another said:

Clear information, no jargon, culturally appropriate, well presented.

We also ran 30 community worker training sessions, reaching 330 professionals to equip them to recognise and respond more effectively to elder abuse.



Every participant rated the training positively, with **94%** (n=32) **stating they now feel more confident** reaching out to Justice Connect about a patient's legal issue, and **94%** (n=30) **also reported having a deeper understanding** of elder abuse and how to help prevent it.

These programs ensure that both older people and the professionals who support them are empowered to act early. Feedback from healthcare workers who attended the community worker training included:

Thank you for all that you do for our clients

Feeling more comfortable to speak up or ask the client if they are ok

The flowchart was extremely helpful to know how to escalate situations.

[The training] was excellent and really crucial to the work that we do here.

By providing structured, accessible resources, we're helping older people make plans for wills, powers of attorney, and advance care arrangements. **These conversations help reduce the risk of abuse, strengthen autonomy, and protect rights**, creating a community where older Australians can approach their future with clarity, respect, and peace of mind.



Explore our Conversation Guides
justiceconnect.org.au/conversation



Working with the sector to protect older people from financial abuse

Financial abuse is one of the most pervasive yet hidden forms of elder abuse. Stopping it requires more than legal support. It demands coordinated, cross-sector action from financial institutions, community services, and government.

We're working with the banking and financial services sector to turn insights from our casework into practical, systemic reforms to improve protections for older Australians.

In FY25, we responded to the Parliamentary Report *Financial abuse: an insidious form of domestic violence* released in December 2024. We communicated our insights publicly and welcomed the Report's recommendations, many of which directly reflected our submission to the Federal Government's *Inquiry into the Financial Services Regulatory Framework in relation to Financial Abuse* in June 2024.

We also participated in the Federal Government's consultations on the *National Plan to End the Abuse and Mistreatment of Older People 2024–2034*, and in a survey exploring the unique challenges faced by older people in rural and regional communities.

Through this work, we're helping the legal and financial sectors work more closely together so banks, government, and community organisations can recognise the warning signs of financial abuse and respond early with compassion and consistency before it causes lasting harm.

Financial abuse thrives in silence. By working collaboratively across sectors, we're helping to build a system that listens sooner, acts faster, and makes lasting reform that will protect older Australians from preventable harm.

Throughout the year, we continued to be a trusted voice in shaping the national response to elder abuse on four significant occasions

We were invited to contribute to multiple high-level consultations, including the Australian Human Rights Commission's *Human Rights as We Age* roundtable, and the Commission's dedicated *Financial Elder Abuse Forum*.



IMPACT HIGHLIGHT



"I felt empowered and can breathe easy knowing my family is clear with everything. The lawyer and the service was amazing."

– Client who received a referral to pro bono legal support



CLIENT STORY:

Roger's story: Rebuilding safety and confidence

For years, Roger felt unsafe in his own home, living in constant fear. With Justice Connect's support, he was able to reclaim his safety, his rights, and his independence. Today, Roger can finally breathe freely, enjoying the peace and security he deserves.

Roger*, 75, lives with an intellectual disability and cherished the independence and peace of his own home. That safety was shattered when his nephew began arriving uninvited, staying without permission, and damaging his property. Unsure of his rights and increasingly fearful, Roger reached out for help.

Through our Health Justice Partnership, Roger was connected with legal support from Justice Connect. From the outset, it was clear he was experiencing elder abuse and needed urgent support to protect his home and his physical and mental wellbeing.

Sadie, one of Justice Connect's lawyers, remembers their first conversation: *"I was concerned for Roger as he was a vulnerable older man with an intellectual disability. I worried about his safety at home."*

Justice Connect supported Roger in two crucial ways. First, Sadie helped him prepare future planning documents, like an Enduring Power of Attorney, so a trusted person, such as his neighbour, could step in if needed. Then, she arranged pro bono legal advice that confirmed what Roger had long hoped: his nephew had no legal right to stay in his home.

When Roger received his advice, Sadie saw a remarkable change: *"You could see the relief. He finally felt safe and reassured that his home was his own again."*

A new clarity empowered Roger to take control and action in his situation with his nephew. With stronger protections in place and a clearer understanding of his rights, Roger could return to enjoying the independence he valued.

Roger's story shows how timely, clear legal information can stop problems from escalating. By helping people understand their rights, take protective steps, and access support, uncertainty is turned into security.

Today, Roger's home is safe again. He feels reassured, supported, and confident that he can live independently without facing these challenges alone.



IMPACT HIGHLIGHT



Views to our Conversation Guides increased 420% (from 1,137 in FY24 to 5,918 in FY25), driven by a digital campaign targeting older audiences.



PRO BONO SPOTLIGHT:

Powering the community sector through partnership

By harnessing the strength of our pro bono partners, we're helping more older Australians take control of their futures.

With multi-year philanthropic funding generously provided by the Wicking Trust and Perpetual, we have been able to expand our Conversation Guides and pro bono referral clinic model to more older people, including culturally and linguistically diverse and regional communities.

In partnership with our pro bono firms, we invite participants from the Conversation Guide workshops to attend a clinic where they can complete Powers of Attorney or Appointment of Medical Treatment Decision-maker documents with the support of a pro bono lawyer. **It's a moment of transformation: moving from uncertainty to empowerment, from intention to action.**



Future planning clinics

In FY25, we delivered 28 services for older people through our future planning clinic.



96% of participants were from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.



Every client surveyed (n=20) reported feeling safe, respected, and heard.



95% of participants (n=20) completed their documents during the session, while others left with a clear plan to do so soon.



We delivered 28 services in FY25, up from 2 in FY24



Lawyers, too, spoke of the deep personal and professional satisfaction the clinics bring. One pro bono lawyer from Maddocks shared:

The clinic not only empowers [clients] to make informed decisions about their future, but also fosters a strong sense of trust and support in the legal community. It has been a privilege to contribute to such a great cause.

Another lawyer participating in the clinic added:

I thought the clinic ran very smoothly and successfully! The [Conversation Guide] training seems to be very effective, as the clients knew what they were doing.

Each clinic represents a bridge between expertise and empathy, between law and lived experience. It's proof that when the legal sector comes together, we can achieve practical, lasting outcomes.

Through the collective power of pro bono partnerships, Justice Connect continues to build a future where every older Australian, regardless of their income, background, or circumstance, can access the help they need to protect what matters most.

In FY25:



We expanded our Conversation Guides and pro bono referral clinic model to more older people



We delivered 28 services for older people through our future planning clinic



96% of participants were from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

Responding to emerging legal need

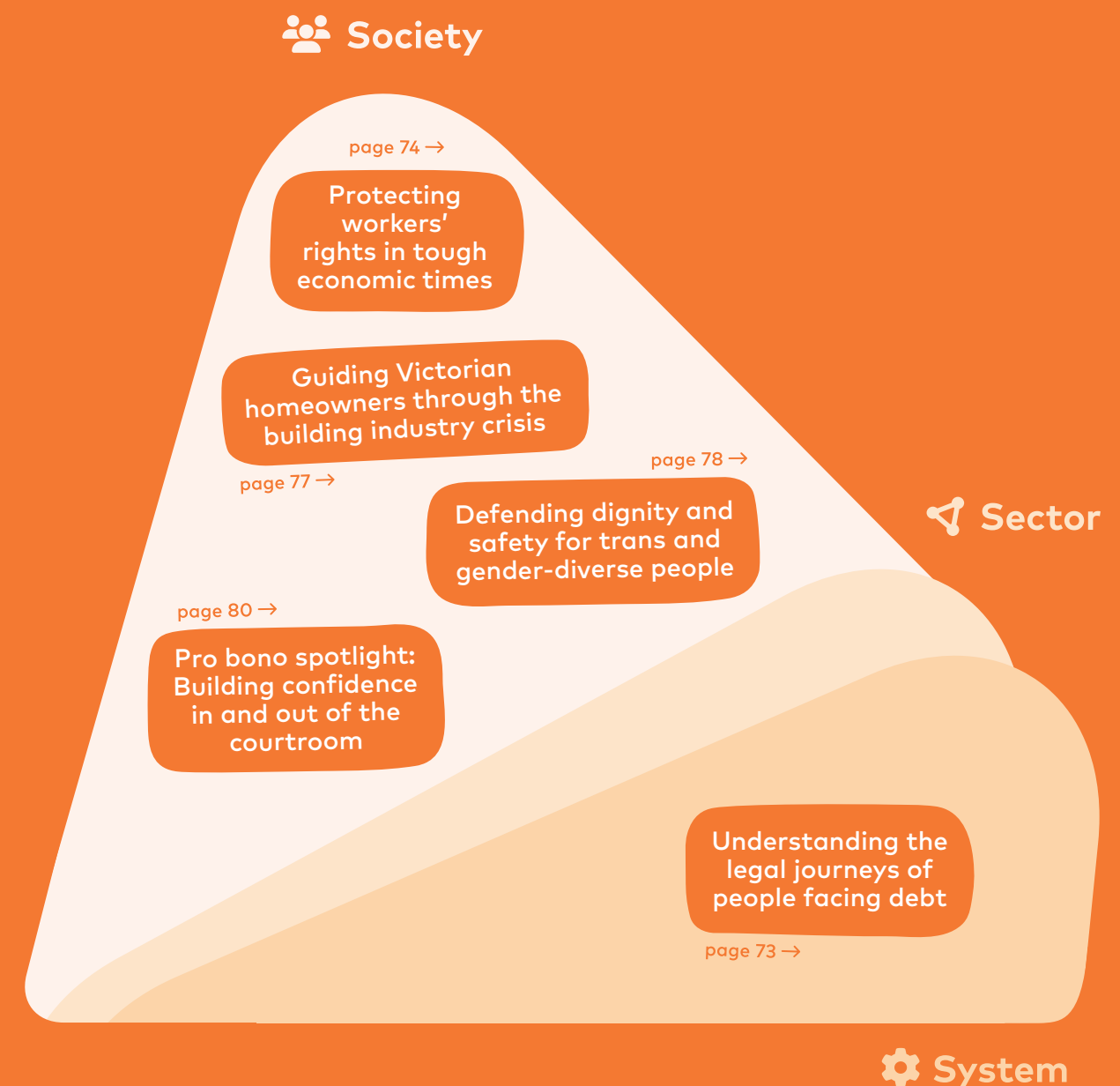
Legal need doesn't stand still. It evolves as the world changes, shaped by economic pressures, housing instability, digital disruption, and shifting social attitudes. At Justice Connect, we adapt alongside it, using evidence from our frontline services to understand where help is needed most and how to deliver it effectively.

Our work spans the realities of financial distress, insecure work, and consumer vulnerability – issues that can escalate quickly when people can't find help early enough. By listening to people's experiences, we identify where systems fall short and design timely, practical responses that make a difference.

Whether it's sharing research that deepens understanding, providing clear information about rights and obligations, or partnering with pro bono lawyers to help people navigate complex challenges, our goal is the same: to ensure that when new legal problems emerge, no one is left to face them alone.

Work we are proud of

This chapter contains our stories of impact over the past year, and clients whose stories we changed for the better.



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- For the system:** We work with institutions and decision makers for a fairer legal system.



Understanding the legal journeys of people facing debt

When debt spirals out of control, legal problems often follow. In FY25, we published new research that sheds light on how Victorians in financial distress try to find legal help, and why so many struggle to get it in time.

Our Navigating Financial Legal Problems in Victoria research, completed after 18 months of interviews and surveys, revealed a clear message: **most people do not wait until crisis point to seek help, but too often, the system fails to meet them when they do.**

Drawing on the lived experiences of 32 Victorians who faced creditor enforcement, along with insights from 20 service provider staff and 9 community organisations, the research paints a detailed picture of what it is like to navigate debt while juggling illness, job loss, or family breakdown. As one participant shared:

You get into a fog. You know your life's turned upside down, and you're desperately looking for help.

– Interview participant

Many participants assumed free services would be available, yet struggled to find the right support before their debts escalated into legal action or bankruptcy.



The research found that **96% of people sought help early**, but barriers such as poor service visibility and limited coordination often meant they fell through the cracks.

Our report makes six key recommendations to improve early intervention and reduce the harm caused by debt-related legal issues. **These include better service design, stronger referral networks, and investment in digital tools that make it easier for people to find help quickly.**

The research has already started shaping practice across the sector. The Victoria Law Foundation adopted our ethics documentation as a best-practice template, and legal organisations have praised the report for its clarity and impact. As Hannah Gray, a Senior Researcher from Tenants Victoria noted:

It was very informative to see how you interpreted the challenges in creating better accessibility to services and the consequences on help-seekers when we fail to meet them where they are at.

– Hannah, Tenants Victoria

By understanding how debtors navigate the law, we can build systems that meet people sooner, reduce stress, and prevent small financial problems from turning into life-changing legal crises.



Read our Navigating Financial Legal Problems in Victoria research
justiceconnect.org.au/financial-research

IMPACT HIGHLIGHT



We delivered **1,760 services** for disaster-related legal issues in FY25, a **4% increase** on 1,687 in FY24.



Protecting workers' rights in tough economic times

Across Australia, people are feeling the strain of a volatile economy and rising living costs. For many, this pressure is spilling into the workplace, where job insecurity, pay disputes, and unfair treatment can quickly spiral into complex legal problems.



In FY25, we saw a sharp rise in people seeking help with employment issues. **We delivered 478 employment law services, a 78% increase on last year.**



Enquiries more than doubled (477 in FY25, up 106% from 231 in FY24), reflecting both the growing need for support and the impact of our proactive outreach campaigns.

Through stronger partnerships with community organisations, courts, and legal aid commissions, we reached people who may never have found us otherwise.

The year also brought significant legislative change, with major employment law reforms coming into effect in January 2025, including the criminalisation of intentional wage underpayment. We worked to help people understand what these changes mean for them, particularly people facing insecure work.

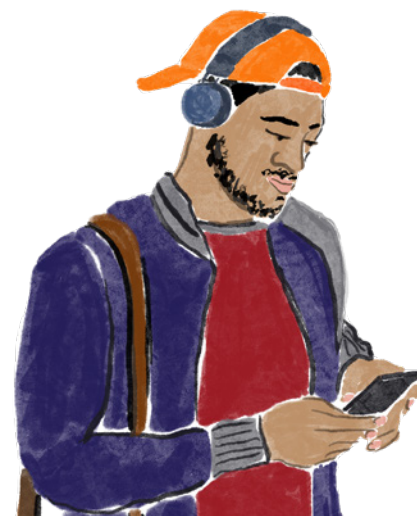
Our targeted employment campaigns received 47,500+ impressions

Our digital outreach played a major role in meeting this need. **Our targeted online employment campaigns received 47,501 impressions, and 3,821 clicks, helping more people recognise when their workplace rights were at risk, and understand what steps they can take to resolve issues before they compound.**



More people also turned to our online legal clinic Justice Connect Answers to get clarity on their rights at work, with **employment-related questions increasing by 88%** compared to last year (49 in FY25 compared to 26 in FY24).

The surge in demand shows that workers are actively seeking clear, reliable guidance to navigate shifting employment conditions. **Our support helps people protect their jobs and income, enabling them to manage the rising costs of living, stay safely housed, and maintain their wellbeing.**





IMPACT HIGHLIGHT



Our Disaster Legal Support Resource Hub received **11,774 page views** in FY25 (up 102% from 5,818 in FY24), providing plain language legal information on common disaster-related legal problems like damaged roads and bailment disputes.



Guiding Victorian homeowners through the building industry crisis

With record numbers of builder insolvencies leaving homeowners stranded mid-project, our Domestic Building Legal Service has been a crucial lifeline for Victorians navigating unfinished builds, insurance disputes, and financial uncertainty.



In FY25, we delivered 423 legal services to homeowners, and **enquiries about building and construction issues rose by 69%.**

Insurance-related enquiries alone increased more than eight times, reflecting the growing distress of people trying to recover losses and protect their homes.

Behind these numbers are stories of families left with half-built houses, retirees struggling to claim insurance, and individuals unsure of where to turn when builders disappear. **Our lawyers provide practical, compassionate guidance to help them understand their rights, access dispute resolution, and pursue fair outcomes.**

As the Victorian Government undertakes the most significant reforms to domestic building in decades, we are ensuring that the experiences of those most affected are heard. **By proactively providing frontline data and insights from our service-delivery, we're pushing for a system that delivers stronger protections, fairer outcomes, and greater accountability.**

For homeowners facing the fallout of a broken system, our service provides vital legal help that restores a sense of control, clarity, and hope for the future.

In FY25, we delivered 423 legal services to homeowners





Defending dignity and safety for trans and gender-diverse people

Across Australia, LGBTQIA+ communities continue to face growing hostility and discrimination. Against this backdrop, our work supporting trans and gender-diverse people to access essential, gender-affirming healthcare remains a powerful expression of what justice looks like in practice.

For more than a decade, Justice Connect and our pro bono partners have helped young people and their families navigate the complex legal process of accessing hormone replacement therapy. Just eight years ago, even fully consenting families had to go to court to confirm a young person's right to treatment; a traumatising and unnecessary hurdle that we helped remove through a series of landmark cases in 2017.

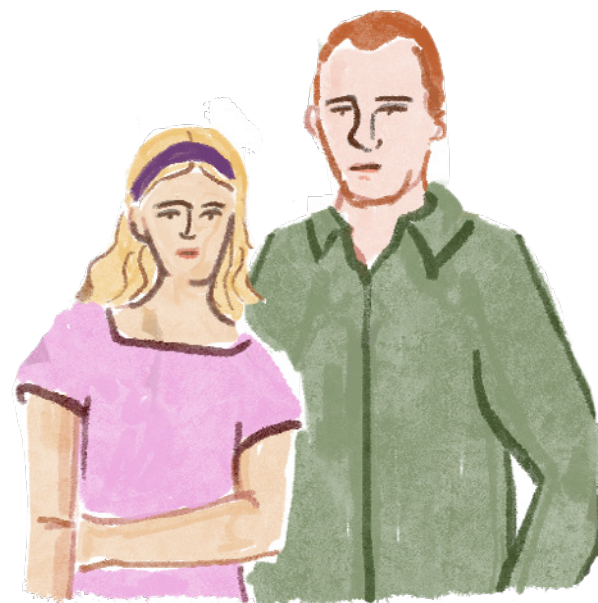
However, when one parent withholds consent for a child's treatment, the matter must still go before the Family Court. These cases are often fraught and emotionally taxing, particularly as anti-trans sentiment gains traction in the community and some corners of the legal system. Increasingly, young people and their supportive parents are facing well-resourced opposition from groups seeking to relitigate settled medical evidence and delay care.

Alongside our dedicated pro bono partners, we continue to stand firm, helping parents prepare their cases, navigate complex court processes, and secure the medical support their children need. These cases are intricate and time-intensive, but their impact is life-changing.



In FY25, **every referral we made for access to hormone replacement therapy – six in total – was successfully placed with a pro bono firm**, continuing a decade-long record of unwavering support from firms that consistently step up with the courage and compassion that defines the best of Australia's legal profession.

Our mission remains clear: **every young person deserves the right to live authentically, safely, and with dignity.** By defending that right, Justice Connect and our pro bono partners are not only changing individual lives, but also helping shape a fairer, more inclusive future.



IMPACT HIGHLIGHT



"I have never had such a scary experience be more comfortable."

– Client who received a referral to pro bono legal support



PRO BONO SPOTLIGHT:

Building confidence in and out of the courtroom

Every day, people arrive at court without a lawyer by their side, facing a complex legal system that can be intimidating and overwhelming. Our self-representation services exist to make sure they don't have to face it alone.

In FY25, our network of pro bono lawyers continued to power this vital service, providing clear, practical advice that helps people understand their options and take their next steps with confidence.

The clinics have become a well-oiled partnership, where lawyers value the chance to make a tangible difference through short, impactful appointments while gaining hands-on experience, particularly junior lawyers who benefit from direct client interaction.

[The] matters have been varied and interesting, and [our] lawyers feel they are making a tangible impact.

– Pro bono lawyer

Firms tell us the model strikes the right balance between purpose and practicality, fitting seamlessly into busy schedules while delivering genuine outcomes for clients facing high-stress situations.



In FY25, **89% of clients** (n=18) **rated the assistance positively**, saying the advice was easy to understand and helped them move forward in their legal matters.

One client told us:

Thank you thank you! Especially to [my lawyer] who understood and validated my concerns coupled with practical verbal and written advice. It makes all the difference!

Another reflected:

Please continue to support self-represented litigants, with extra empathy and understanding that the distress we are going through is overwhelming, seeking justice in a system that usually favours the rich and powerful, that can afford legal representation.

Through this collaboration, we're not just helping people navigate the legal system. We're restoring confidence, dignity, and a sense of fairness for those who might otherwise face it alone.

Our pro bono partners delivered 1,190 hours through our self-representation services, valued at \$476,000



Our thanks & acknowledgements



Our people

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

Staff

Our work is conducted by 75 staff across Australia. We are made stronger, more impactful, and more resilient as an organisation through the dedicated work of our staff.

Our multidisciplinary team includes lawyers, social workers, project managers, researchers, marketers, and developers. United in our commitment to increasing access to justice, each team member brings their unique expertise to inform how we design and deliver client-centred services, and change the legal system for the better.

We wholeheartedly thank our staff for their steadfast contributions, culminating in the wins and stories we've been able to showcase in this report.

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
- Robert Fitzgerald AM
- Ruth McColl AO

Volunteers

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

Our volunteers for FY25 were:

- Anna Lyons
- Elaine Fell
- Evelyn Agius
- Natasha Markavitage
- Rebecca Johnstone
- Ruby Evans
- Thiên Hương Le



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 FY25 were:

- Brooke Massender, Chair
- Tristan Cutcliffe, Deputy Chair
- Vicki Jamieson
- Laavanya Pari
- Michael Horin
- Jonathan Goh
- The Hon. Marcia Neave AO (retired November 2024)
- Jidah Clark (retired November 2024)





Our members

Our valued network of over 10,000 pro bono lawyers offer 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.

- Addisons
- Allens
- ARC Justice
- Ashurst
- Baker McKenzie
- Barry Nilsson
- Bartier Perry Lawyers
- Beaumont & Beaumont
- Carrol & O'Dea Lawyers
- CIE Legal
- Clayton Utz
- Clifford Chance
- Clyde & Co
- Colin Biggers & Paisley Lawyers
- Corrs Chambers Westgarth
- Deloitte Legal Pty Ltd
- DLA Piper Australia
- Federation of Community Legal Centres
- Fragomen (Australia) Pty Ltd
- Hall & Wilcox
- Harwood Andrews
- Herbert Smith Freehills Kramer
- Hive Legal
- Hogan Lovells
- Holding Redlich
- HopgoodGanim Lawyers
- Inner Melbourne Community Legal
- JobWatch Inc
- Johnson Winter Slattery
- Justice and Equity Centre
- Justin Moses, Solicitor
- K & L Gates
- King & Wood Mallesons
- Kingston Reid
- Lander & Rogers
- Law Institute of Victoria
- Lawyerbank
- Maddocks
- Makinson d'Apice
- Maurice Blackburn Lawyers
- McCabes
- McCullough Robertson
- MinterEllison
- Norton Rose Fulbright
- Ross Mackay, Sole Practitioner
- Russell Kennedy Lawyers
- Sparke Helmore
- The Victorian Bar
- Thomson Geer Group
- Transport Accident Commission
- Webb Henderson
- Weir Legal and Consulting
- White & Case
- Wisewould Mahony
- Women's Legal Service Victoria
- Woolf Associates Solicitors
- Wotton + Kearney

Our secondees

Our member firms offer invaluable support by providing secondees to contribute to our work.

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.

- Anna Lyons, Minter Ellison
- Daniel Komesaroff, Minter Ellison
- Dylan Perumal, Sparke Helmore
- Emma Ladbury, Thomson Geer
- Jenny Pang, Herbert Smith Freehills Kramer
- Jina Alikozay, Sparke Helmore
- Lara Douglas, Sparke Helmore
- Lexi Blackburn, Barry Nilsson
- Mark Rabjohns, Ashurst
- Porscha Harper, Ashurst
- Rachael Harris, Herbert Smith Freehills Kramer
- Thien-Tam Nguyen, Ashurst
- Xavier Vale, Minter Ellison



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
- Actuaries Institute
- Addisons
- Allens
- Ashurst
- Asta
- Australian Centre for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies
- Australian Men's Shed Association
- Baker McKenzie
- Caulfield Hospital, Alfred Health
- CIE Legal
- Clayton Utz
- cohealth
- Comisión Pro Bono Argentina
- Committo
- Community Legal Centres NSW
- Consumer Action Law Centre
- Corrs Chambers Westgarth
- Council on the Ageing Victoria
- Council to Homeless Persons
- Culture Amp
- Disaster Legal Help Victoria
- Disaster Response Legal Service (Legal Aid NSW)
- Diversity Council of Australia
- DLA Piper
- Domestic Building Dispute Resolution Victoria
- Equal Justice HK
- Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria
- Federation of Community Legal Centres
- Financial Counselling Victoria
- Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand
- Hall & Wilcox
- H & L Hecht Trust
- Health Justice Australia
- Herbert Smith Freehills Kramer
- Hive Legal
- HLB Mann Judd
- Holding Redlich
- Human Rights Law Centre
- Ian Rollo Currie Foundation
- IBP Philippines
- intelliHR
- JobWatch
- Justice Adda India
- K&L Gates
- KWM
- knowMore
- Lander & Rogers
- Lanrex
- Launch Housing
- Law Institute of Victoria
- LawWorks UK
- LiveHire
- Maddocks
- Melbourne City Library
- Merri Health
- MortgageStress Victoria
- Neighbourhood Houses Victoria
- New South Wales Council of Social Service
- Norton Rose Fulbright
- Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations
- Performance Culture Consulting
- PILA Ireland
- PILnet HK
- Piper Alderman
- Justice and Equity Centre
- Sacred Heart Mission
- Safetrac
- Schiff Consulting
- Seniors Rights Victoria
- Social Traders
- St Vincent's Health Network, Sydney
- St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne
- Te Ara Ture
- Texas Opportunity & Justice Incubator
- Uniting War Memorial Hospital, Sydney
- University of Melbourne
- UPJ Germany
- Vacro
- Vance Centre
- Vertex Cyber Security
- Vic Bar Pro Bono Committee
- Victorian Bar
- Victorian Council of Social Service
- Victorian Men's Shed Association
- Volunteering Australia
- Volunteering Queensland



Our supporters

We recognise our valued supporters whose contributions help to achieve our purpose. Our high-impact legal supports for individuals and community organisations are made possible by the generosity of our government, philanthropic, corporate, and community supporters, and committed individual donors.

We give special thanks to those acknowledged below for their significant support in FY25.



Government & statutory entities

- Australian Government Attorney-General's Department
- City of Melbourne
- Court Services Victoria
- New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council
- Victorian Government Department of Justice and Community Safety
- Victorian Government Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
- Victorian Legal Services Board + Commissioner

Philanthropic & community organisations

- Launch Housing Limited
- Greater Melbourne Foundation
- Perpetual Limited
 - » H & L Hecht Trust
 - » Centenary Foundation - Trustees Endowment
 - » Ian Rollo Currie Foundation
- Pratt Foundation
- The Helen and David Hains Foundation
- Victoria Law Foundation
- Rachel Emma Ferguson Foundation
- Taylor Sidhu Giving Fund

Individuals

- Anonymous donors
- Andrew and Kerry Stephenson
- Chris Paton
- Fiona McLeay
- Julian Burnside
- Mitzi & George Gilligan
- Stephen & Elizabeth Howard
- William Pitt

Corporate organisations

- Telstra
- HP
- Herbert Smith Freehills Kramer




Become a supporter

For more information about supporting Justice Connect please contact:

Clea Lumley
Fundraising Lead
giving@justiceconnect.org.au



 **Make a donation**
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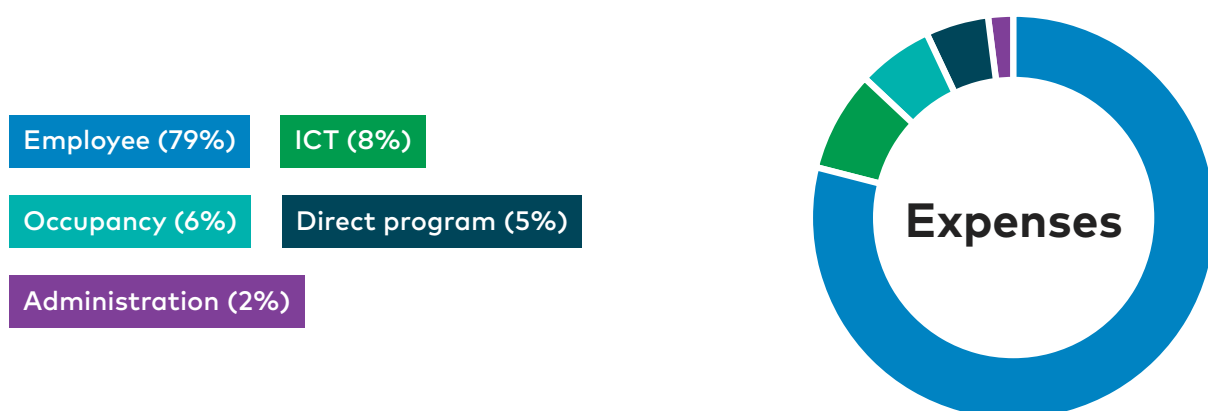
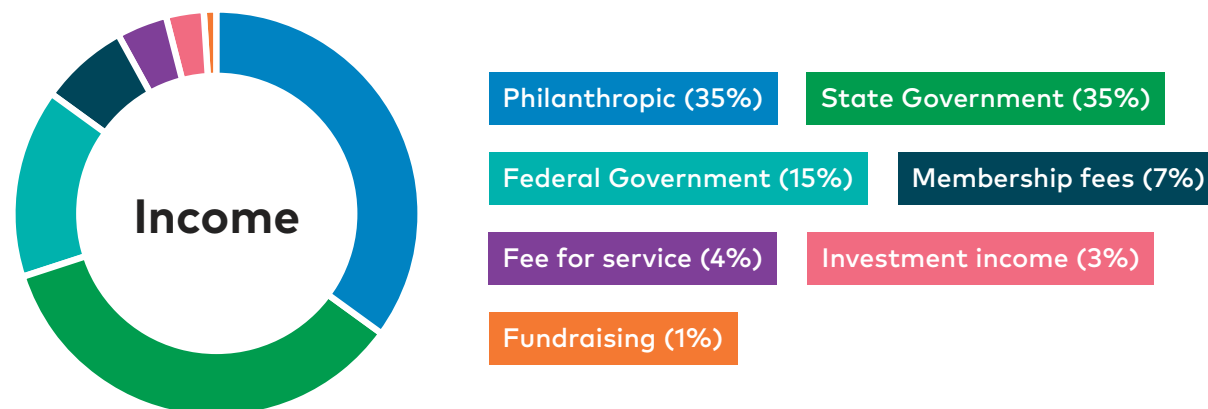
Our finances

The audited financial result for the 2024-25 financial year is a surplus of \$270,767. At 30 June 2025 we maintain healthy net assets and retained earnings of \$2,764,230.

In 2024-25, our annual income totalled \$11,215,368, receiving funding from the diversified sources shown in the charts below.

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

Enhancing our financial sustainability is one of our four strategic goals under our 2028 strategy, where we will focus on diversifying revenue, reducing reliance on single funding sources, and securing new revenue streams.



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