

# Annual Report

2014/15



# CANBERRA COMMUNITY LAW

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## Introduction

Canberra Community Law (CCL) is an independent not for profit community legal centre (CLC) operating in the Canberra region. Canberra Community Law was founded in 1986 under its former name, the Welfare Rights and Legal Centre.

CCL was the first CLC to open in Canberra and is managed by a voluntary and community based board consisting of people from academia, the community sector, peak bodies and the private legal profession.

CCL provides the following five legal services:



### Housing Law

Provides legal advice to people experiencing problems with housing/tenancy issues in the ACT. Matters include: applying for public housing, evictions, rent arrears, repairs, maintenance and debts.



### Social Security Law

Provides assistance with Centrelink and Social Security matters such as appealing Centrelink decisions, payments, entitlements, debt recovery and refused claims.



### Street Law

Provides legal services to people who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. Matters can include traffic fines, minor criminal law charges, employment law, debts, consumer issues and a wide range of civil law matters.



### Disability Discrimination Law

Provides advice and assistance to people who have been discriminated against because of a disability in relation to: employment, education, access to premises, provision of goods, services, facilities, accommodation, Commonwealth laws and programs and requests for information.



### Night Time Legal Advice Service

Provides information, referral services or one-off legal advice in most areas of law including fines and other traffic infringements, minor criminal law offences, family law, employment law, debts, complaints and consumer issues.

CCL also provides a Social Work service. CCL's social worker works in tandem with CCL lawyers to identify and address the social and environmental factors which may be impacting on the successful resolution of the legal issue.



CCL provides these services in order to address disadvantage in the community and in pursuance of creating a just and compassionate community.

CCL also seeks to address disadvantage and assist vulnerable people in the Canberra community by providing legal awareness training to community workers/organisations within the ACT. This enables early identification and intervention to address the legal issues of people who access these services. CCL also actively raises issues of concern with Government whereby it seeks to improve systemic issues that confront its vulnerable client base.

## Acknowledgements

During the reporting period, CCL received funding from the Commonwealth Government through the Commonwealth Community Legal Services Program and also from the ACT Government through the Community Services Directorate and the Justice and Community Safety Directorate.

CCL also acknowledges funds received through the Statutory Interest Account Grants program administered by the ACT Law Society and philanthropic funding received from the Snow Foundation.

CCL also received funding from the Australian National University to operate our clinical legal education program.

## CCL's Vision, Mission and Values

<b>Vision</b>	Working towards a just and compassionate community.
<b>Mission</b>	Providing free legal advice, assistance and advocacy to

address disadvantage in the community.

## **Our Values**

*CCL is committed to:*

Empowering people

Fiercely guarding our independence

Respecting and valuing diversity

Evidence-based advocacy

Providing high quality and client focused services

Accountability

Social Justice and Human Rights principles

Community engagement and participation

Striving towards a holistic approach to meeting client needs

Robust advocacy and tenacity

Treating people with respect and dignity

Collaboration

Building support for the Centre's work among students, legal profession and other key stakeholders

Innovation and creativity

Professional and ethical practice

## **Hours of Operation and Location**

CCL is located in the ACT CLC Hub on Level 1, 21 Barry Drive (corner of Watson Street) Turner.

The office is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm.

The Social Security and Tenancy telephone advice service operates from 9.30am to 1pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

The Night Time Legal Advice Service (NTLAS) which provides general legal advice operates a phone and drop in advice service every Tuesday evening from 6pm to 8pm (February to November each year).

## **CCL's Board of Directors 2014/15**

The Board of Directors during the year ended 30 June 2015 were:

Daniel Stewart, Chairperson

Deborah Pippen, Treasurer

Genevieve Bolton, Director and Secretary since November 2014

Amanda Graham, Secretary until November 2014. Director

Helen Fisher, Director

Carmel Franklin, Director  
Anusha Goonetilleke, Director (Staff Representative)

## **CCL Staff**

CCL employed the following staff in 2013/14

Anya Aidman, Solicitor (resigned March 2015)  
John Alati, NTLAS Supervising Solicitor  
Louisa Bartlett, Solicitor  
Genevieve Bolton, Co-ordinator/Principal Solicitor  
Rosemary Budavari, DDLS Senior Solicitor  
Cesira Costello, Librarian  
Vanessa Faulder, Senior Solicitor (resigned January 2015)  
Charlotte Fletcher, Street Law Solicitor  
Anusha Goonetilleke, Street Law Supervising Solicitor  
Naomi Gould, Solicitor  
Parastou Hatami, DDLS Senior Solicitor (on unpaid leave from December 2013)  
Heather McAulay, Street Law Program Manager/Solicitor  
Amelia McCormick, Solicitor (from January 2015)  
Catherine Murnane, Social Worker  
Hilary Russell, Solicitor (resigned January 2015)  
John Thornton, Street Law Senior Solicitor (part time)  
Kate Kenny, Office Manager and Legal Advisor  
Chelsi Wingrove, Bookkeeper (part time)  
Anne Yuille, Advice Line Co-ordinator (part time)

## Chairperson's Report

What's in a name? At the special meeting on 4 February 2015 it was resolved to change the name of the ACT Welfare Rights and Legal Centre and adopt a new constitution. That new name is now also reflected in a new website and branding, to go along with the new premises. Now Canberra Community Law, the Centre (it remains, for me at least, the Centre - I can't bring myself to use the abbreviation CCL) has a new way of presenting itself and what it does. It has been renewed, not replaced.

As I suggested in last year's annual report, innovation and change in the Centre is by no means new. The last year has again seen the Centre explore a number of new initiatives. Funding was secured from the Snow Foundation and Clayton Utz to explore new ways to utilise the social worker position within the Centre. The Social worker position was itself a new initiative, reviewed at the end of last year to demonstrate its effectiveness and explore future possibilities for the position. A general appeal for contributions from the legal community has already borne some fruit, and other alternative projects are currently being explored.

These initiatives have been driven by a need to attract new sources of funding. The uncertainty surrounding the level of government funding which I discussed in last year's annual report has not substantially alleviated. While the Street Law program is significantly closer to being considered part of our general recurrent funding from the ACT government, it received less funding than is needed. Funding from the ACT Law Society is likely to continue to fall. Perhaps most alarming is the current promise of dramatic reductions in Commonwealth funding from 1 July 2017.

After a significant financial deficit last year, that reduction in funding has resulted in further cuts to resources. Much of that loss has been met through staff movements. It is a credit to the remaining staff of the Centre that any reduction in services is hard to identify, but there is certainly no scope now for remaining staff to absorb any additional strain. Those staff will once again not see any real increase in their salaries, and will have to bear continued reductions in expenditure to support them and their work. The quality of all the people who work at the Centre - secondees, students and volunteers included - remains extraordinary. Staff movements continue, but the return of some staff from leave and some new, albeit perhaps temporary, staff members has helped to at least maintain the quality of service provided by the Centre.

Many of the difficult decisions faced by the Board remain. We will continue to try to add new members to the Board to assist in maintaining the quality of the service and level of innovation in the years ahead. Many thanks to all Board members who have given so much of their expertise and energy, particularly with the new Constitution and now in identifying and in helping secure additional funding possibilities.

The Centre's debt to its Coordinator/Principal Solicitor, Genevieve Bolton, also continues. Innovation does not just happen, and takes considerable effort and application of expertise in addition to what is already a hugely demanding position.

So the Centre has a new name, a new way of presenting itself to better ensure recognition of its work. But that work, in meeting the demand for the services of the Centre providing legal assistance to the most disadvantaged in the Canberra community, will hopefully continue for a long time to come.

Daniel Stewart



## Co-ordinator/Principal Solicitor's report

### Significant milestones achieved

This year marked a significant milestone in the ongoing development of the Centre with the rebranding of the organisation and its change of name to Canberra Community Law (CCL) to better reflect the diversity of services we provide. The new name was launched by the ACT Attorney-General Simon Corbell on 20 April 2015. It was also a great honour and privilege to have Justice Richard Refshauge, a long standing Board member of the Centre prior to his appointment to the Supreme Court, give an address at the launch.

In his speech Justice Refshauge acknowledged *'the senior solicitors of the Centre who had contributed much over the years including lawyers such as Tom Brennan and John Carroll who had gone on to take senior positions within eminent private firms but had maintained an understanding of the kind of work they have experienced whilst working at the Centre.'*

Justice Refshauge also recognised that *'one of the strengths of the Centre and there are many which have been*

*sources of strength, has been the connection with the Australian National University. The connection was forged strongly by Nick Seddon, now a distinguished senior lawyer with an international legal firm, continued by Stephen Bottomley, who chaired the Board for a number of years and is now of course, Dean of the ANU College of Law and for a remarkable term that must now exceed fifteen years, Daniel Stewart has led the Board with skill, patience and distinction.'*

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*'I commend Canberra Community Law on this new phase in its distinguished existence. The change of name is welcome as it sharpens the focus of the organisation. Its fundamental direction remains the same and is to be celebrated and congratulated as an important contributor to the health and strength of a liberal, civilized democracy which we enjoy in the ACT.'*

*- Justice Refshauge*

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We also celebrated our Street Law program reaching its 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. We were delighted to have Minister Shane Rattenbury, a long term supporter of Street Law and Katie Fraser, Street Law's former Program Manager speak at the event. The event highlighted the important and unique role Street Law plays in Canberra as a specialist service for people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness in Canberra and its particular focus on building relationships with non lawyers in the ACT to ensure that Street Law's client group gets the legal help they need.

Katie Fraser also noted the important law reform work Street Law had undertaken, particularly around the problems with the fines system which had resulted in an overhaul of the system saying that *'I feel confident in saying that without Street Law, those changes to the law would not have been made.'* In highlighting the value of the reforms which now enable fines to be paid off by installments or through community work, Katie recalled that one of the first clients she saw at Street Law was a man with a compelling illustration of a then broken system. He had been a truck driver, and in the course of that work had gotten two speeding fines, which added up to more than a thousand dollars. He had sought an extension of time to pay but had not been able to pay them off. As a result his driving licence had been suspended. He lost his job as a truck driver. He couldn't pay his rent and so was evicted from his house. When he became homeless,

he lost contact with his child. He went from being a tax-paying model citizen, to being on the street, all because of a couple of speeding fines.



### Funding environment

As reported in last year's Annual Report, CCL continues to face a difficult funding environment. Whilst we appreciate the funding we receive through the Law Society's statutory interest account, low interest rates has meant that the Law Society had substantially fewer funds to distribute during this reporting period.

This reduction in funding combined with the general uncertainty regarding the new Commonwealth funding arrangements which came into effect from 1 July 2015 resulted in CCL making the difficult decision not to replace the Social Security and Tenancy's Senior Solicitor position following a staff resignation in January 2015. With significantly less casework resources, we continue to prioritise eviction matters leaving limited capacity to take on other tenancy matters despite the vulnerability of clients.

Whilst the Centre has now secured two years of funding through the new Commonwealth National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance services, a significant reduction in the funding pool from 1 July 2017 will mean that the Centre is likely to face further funding cuts of approximately 30%. In addition, the Commonwealth Government's withdrawal of interpreting services and the Community Legal Services Information Service (CLSIS) database from 1 July 2016 will place further financial pressures on CCL's budget in the years ahead.

In the coming year, CCL will continue its work on trying to secure new sources of funding for the Centre. The Centre has also continued to reduce expenditure in a number of areas and has taken up the generous offer from the ACT Legal Aid Commission to go onto its new payroll/HR system which in the longer term should reduce some of our administrative costs once the new system is fully bedded down. Towards the end of the

financial year, we also launched a 'One Hour' appeal which has raised \$3115 to date. Thank you to all who donated to this appeal.

### **New Projects**

The Centre has continued to innovate and roll out new initiatives to meet the needs of its client group. During the course of the year, an external evaluation of our Social Worker Pilot project was undertaken which demonstrated the significant benefit of combined legal and social work services in addressing socio-legal needs. This has led to the development of a specialist Socio-Legal Practice (SLP) Clinic which incorporates the learnings from the evaluation of the project and will be launched later this year part funded through one off grants from the Snow Foundation and the Clayton Utz Foundation. Thank you to both funders for your ongoing support of CCL's work.

Towards the end of the financial year, CCL also received a one off grant through the 2014/15 Participation (Digital Communities) Grant program to fund a video for our website. The work on this project is well underway. The video is being designed to appeal to members of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community as part of an initiative to increase our accessibility to this client group. The video will provide an overview of the types of legal problems we can assist with through the use of the animated characters in the CCL logo.

We are also working on the development of a range of Community Legal Education resources specifically focused around public housing issues. This has been funded through a one off grant from the Justice and Community Safety Directorate. This funding will enable us to update our series of public housing factsheets, produce a second video specifically targeted to the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community around common public housing issues and also develop a series of stand alone public housing training modules.

### **Clinical Legal Education (CLED) Program**

As in previous years, the Centre delivered its CLED program in partnership with the Australian National University providing the opportunity for six law students each semester to gain valuable practical experience in a community legal centre practice. The students work under supervision on the Social Security and Tenancy advice line, undertake front office duties including initial intake and also work on case files in one of CCL's day time services.

Each student is allocated an advice line supervisor and a casework supervisor whose role is to mentor the student throughout the course and provide guidance and support as the students learn how to apply their legal skills to assist the Centre's clients.

Feedback from students continues to be very positive. Students have consistently stated that the practical aspect of the course distinguishes it from other law courses and its placement in a community legal centre environment challenges them to think deeply and reflect upon how the law and government policies impact on individuals and communities who are at the margins of society.



The assistance of the ANU Course Convenor continues to be critical to the overall success of the CLED program. This year we were fortunate to work with Tony Foley and in the first semester of 2015, the amazing Heidi Yates.

### **Administration Internship Program**

Launched in April 2014, the Canberra Community Law Internship Program has continued to be an invaluable source of administrative support for our busy organisation whether it be photocopying, filing, greeting clients or answering phones as well as para-legal support. In exchange the Centre provides training opportunities to the interns based on their areas of interest. They are also given the opportunity to attend hearings with our solicitors and join client interviews.

### **Sector Engagement**

CCL continues to collaborate with other CLCs, government, the private legal profession and other services to ensure that resources are targeted to best meet legal needs.

During the reporting period, CCL participated in the following forums and activities:

- ACT Legal Assistance Forum and its various subcommittees
- ACT Pro Bono Clearing House Management Committee
- ACT Pro Bono Clearing House Assessment Panel
- ACT Pro Bono and Human Rights Stakeholders Meeting
- National Association of Community Legal Centre's (NACLC) Advisory Council
- NACLC Professional Indemnity Insurance (PII) Committee (as ACT PII rep)
- National Welfare Rights Network (NWRN) member meetings
- ACT CLC Group (as ACT CLC Chair)
- ACT Joint Pathways Forum
- ACT Shelter Forum

### **Special Thanks**

Throughout the year, the Board of Management has strongly supported the work of the Centre. Most particular thanks are due to Daniel Stewart who has for some many years now chaired the Board of Management and continues to provide tremendous leadership and guidance to CCL to ensure the goals and objectives of the Centre are met.

I also wish to thank all the funders, volunteers and supporters for their ongoing assistance and contributions to the work of the Centre over the past year.

Over the last 12 months, there have been several staffing changes at CCL. Vanessa Faulder, Anya Aidman and Hilary Russell all moved on to take up other career opportunities during the year. I thank them for their contributions to the work of the Centre.

I am delighted that Anya Aidman has remained closely connected with the Centre and has recently taken on the position of Chair of our Pro Bono working group.

Louisa Bartlett returned to the Centre from a year's unpaid leave with amazing stories after she had successfully completed the famous Pacific Crest Trial from Mexico to Canada. During the year, Amelia McCormick also joined our Social Security and Tenancy service and with Louisa has successfully carried the bulk of the CCL's litigation work in the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) in the second half of this financial year.

I thank all the staff of the Centre who during this past year have continued to make significant contributions to CCL and I am grateful to them for their constant support and excellent work.

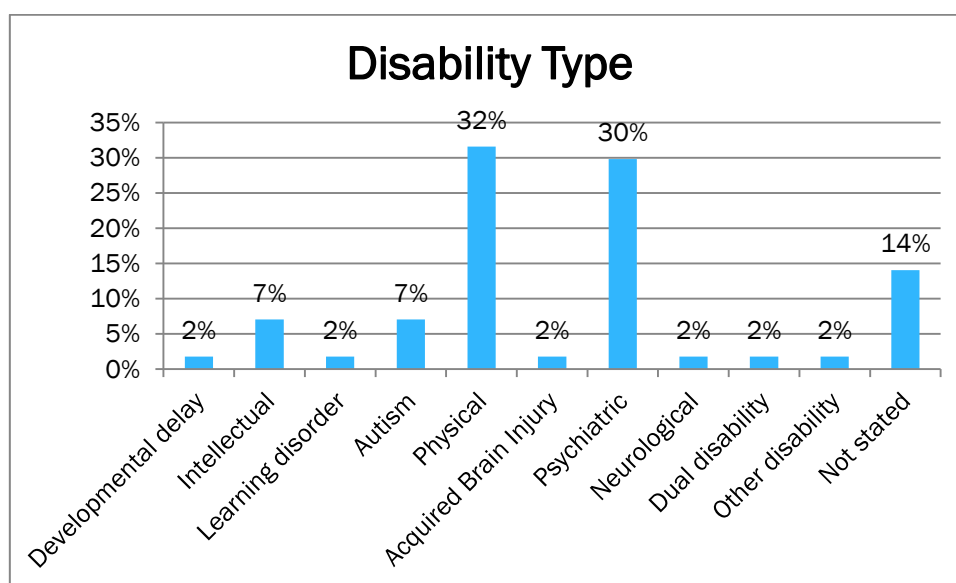
Genevieve Bolton

Co-ordinator/Principal Solicitor

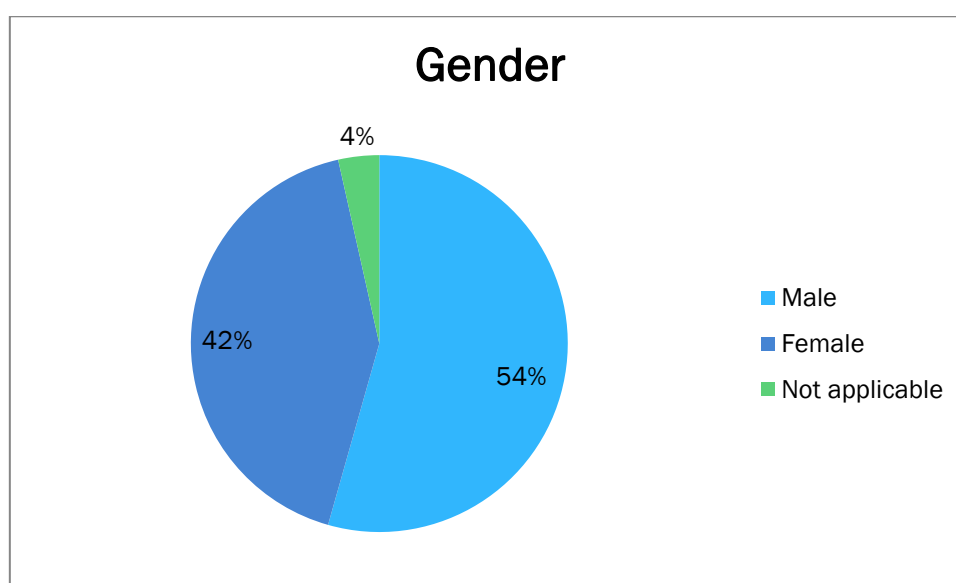
## Disability Discrimination Law

Disability Discrimination Law (DDL) provided 207 advices in relation to disability discrimination during the 2014/15 period. The three major areas for advice work have been service provision, employment and accommodation. These advices have primarily been provided to individuals who have experienced discrimination. DDL has also provided advice to some community organisations about their obligations to avoid disability discrimination.

The major types of disabilities involved have been physical (32% of advice line callers and clients) and psychiatric disabilities (30% of advice line callers and clients) as shown in the table below.



Fifty four percent of those seeking advice have been male, 42% have been female and 4% have been organisations as shown by the graph below.



DDL has provided representation and casework for 19 clients. The casework has included six discrimination complaints to the ACT Human Rights Commission and one complaint to the Australian Human Rights Commission. Several of these complaints settled with the payment of monetary compensation, changes to policies and procedures and the provision of disability discrimination training.

Some casework has involved direct negotiation with employers and service providers which has resulted in monetary compensation and changes in policies and procedures. Some casework has also involved assistance to clients who have made complaints to the ACT Health Services Commissioner and the ACT Disability Services Commissioner. These cases have also resulted in changes to policies and procedures to better accommodate the needs of people with disability.

DDL participated in the CLED Program and provided supervision and training to ANU law students. DDL also delivered tutorials on Discrimination and Human Rights Law as part of the CLED program.

DDL coordinated the CCL submission to the Justice and Community Safety Directorate on *Designing a model for the effective protection of human rights* in June 2015.

DDL also coordinated the preparation of a Disability Action Plan for CCL, which was approved by the Board on 22 April 2015.



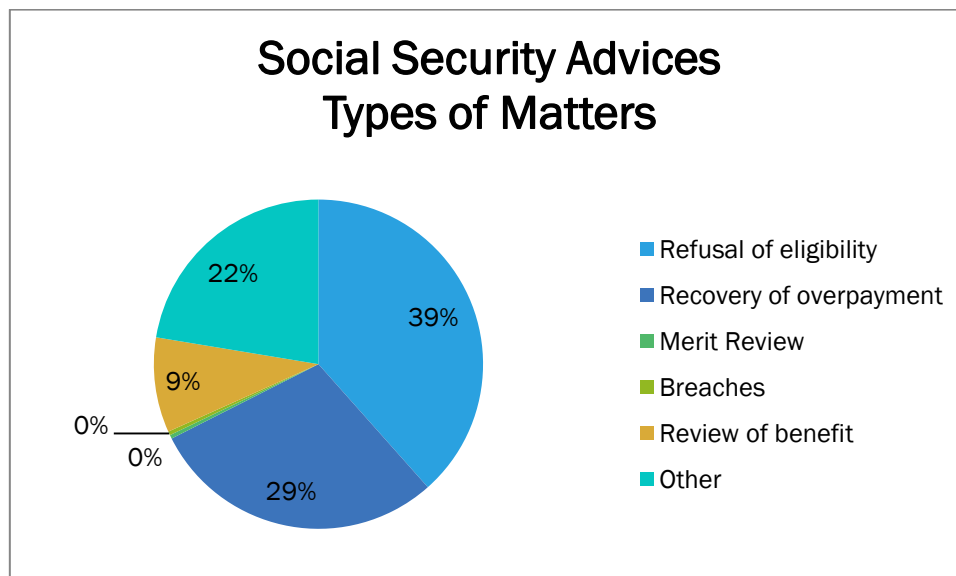
## Social Security and Tenancy Service

Our Social Security and Tenancy service encompasses our Housing Law and Social Security Law services.

### Advice Service

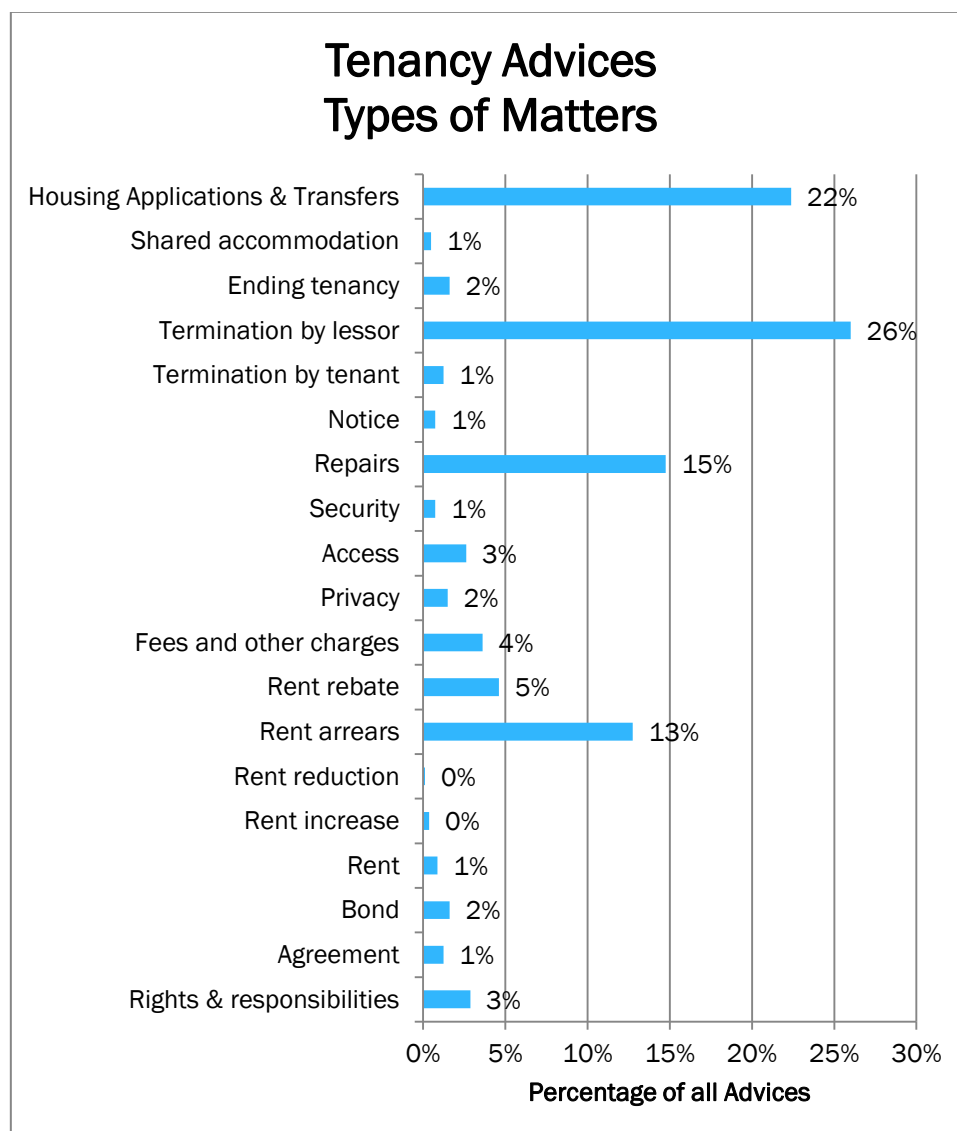
The advice service has managed to maintain and indeed slightly increase the overall number of advices this year, despite significant resource constraints. It is notable that the increase in Social Security law advices has continued, rising to 22% of advices last year to more than 40% this year. This can be attributed to the higher profile and greater accessibility achieved by the rebranding of the organisation this year. Advice is also being sought on a broader range of Centrelink issues and by more clients from outside the ACT but within our region of south-west NSW.

In addition to the most frequent problem of Centrelink overpayment debts, we have advised regularly on refusal of Disability Support Pension claims, compensation preclusion periods causing significant financial hardship, suspension of payments for alleged breaches of activity requirements, and problems arising from increasing restrictions on payment to people while they are overseas. We have also seen a number of cases in which debts have been raised against very vulnerable young people who have been unable to sustain study and therefore qualification for Youth Allowance, but who have insufficient knowledge and support to access an alternative payment.



Many clients have complained bitterly this year about the difficulties of communicating with Centrelink, particularly its very unresponsive telephone system. Long waiting times on hold, unanswered calls, and dealing with unproductive automated systems are frequently reported problems. These difficulties lead to such anger and frustration that some of our most vulnerable clients are banned from attending any Centrelink office, ringing or even writing to Centrelink, obviously compounding the frustration, disempowerment and inability to comply with their reporting obligations.

Our advice work in the area of tenancy and public housing law continues to be dominated by evictions and applications for priority assistance. Despite an increasing government awareness of homelessness and the shortage of affordable housing, we have seen no lessening of demand for advice and assistance and indeed the pressure on all community agencies in assisting in this area appears greater than ever. While advice at an early stage can avoid some of the pitfalls in seeking housing assistance or resolve some of the problems leading to eviction, the fact is that many clients seek advice only when the problem is at such an advanced stage that the matter requires major casework and litigation. With the aim of early intervention, we are improving our cross-referral protocols with a number of agencies this year, including Legal Aid, the Supporting Tenancy Services, services for migrants and refugees and disability advocacy services.



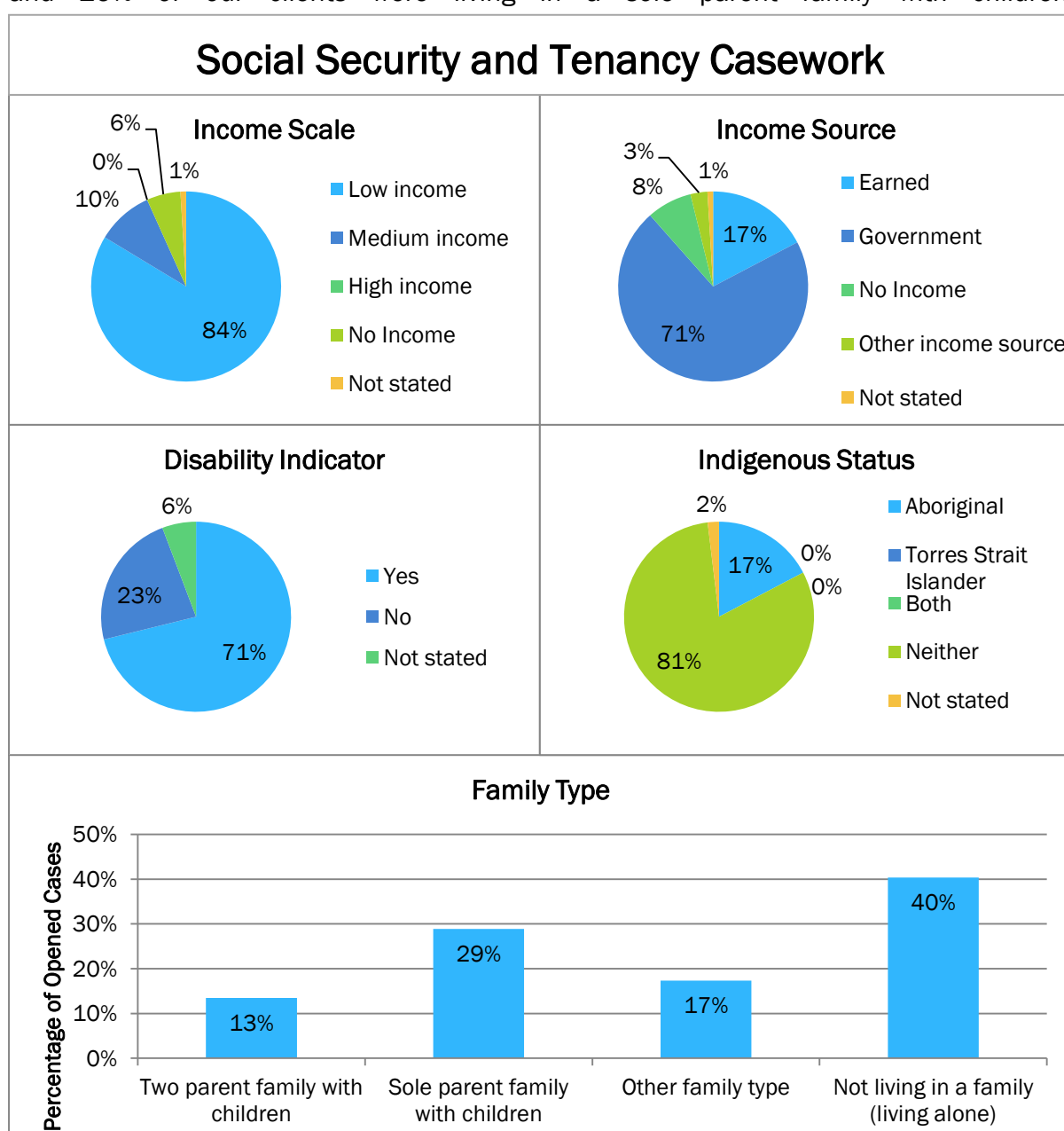
This year we have taken further steps in the transition to an electronic system of logging and recording advice and moving away from a paper-based system. Our intern program, which provides an accessible first point of contact for clients, is working well to facilitate the most efficient use of an adviser's time and expertise.

## Casework

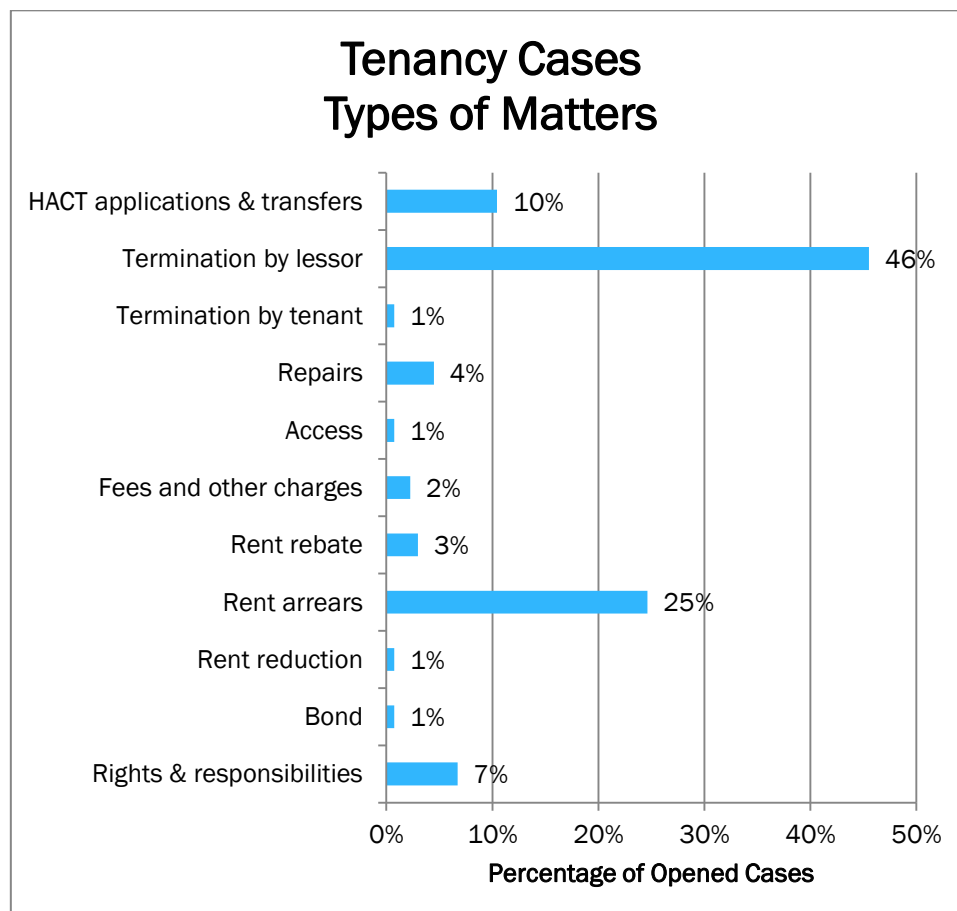
During the year, a total of 104 new cases were opened compared to 187 in the previous financial year.

Not surprisingly the loss of the Social Security and Tenancy Service's Senior Solicitor position in January 2015 has resulted in a reduction in the service's casework capacity. This situation has left the lawyers and advisers in the service in the increasingly difficult position of determining who is most in need of representation.

As the graphs below illustrate our casework assistance is targeted to those people who have limited or no income and usually face some other form of disadvantage. 90% of our clients were on a low income or had no income with 71% in receipt of a Government income. 17% of our clients identified as Aboriginal, 71% of our clients had a disability and 29% of our clients were living in a sole parent family with children.



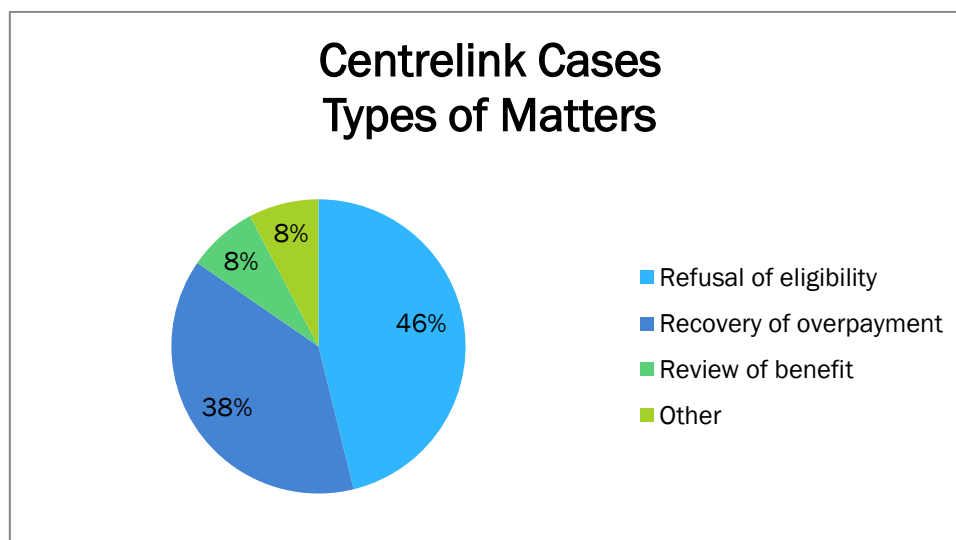
In the housing/tenancy area, the service continues to prioritise matters where the client is homeless or is facing homelessness. Thus the bulk of our casework continues to be centered on eviction matters and applications for Public Housing. Unfortunately, this necessary prioritising has also meant that we have significantly less capacity to provide representation on other types of matters despite the vulnerability of clients. This includes matters where the client is seeking assistance with repairs, access orders, bond disputes and Housing debts.



The general uncertainty about the operation of key aspects of the tenancy legislation coupled with inconsistent decision making within ACAT, meant that Tribunal proceedings at first instance were often very prolonged with extensive written submissions being provided by both parties. The issue of whether a tenancy terminates as a result of a tenant breaching a conditional termination and possession order (CTPO) was referred as a question of law to the Supreme Court with the service briefing Counsel with a grant of legal aid. Whilst, our reasoning was ultimately accepted by the Supreme Court, it has left open many other fundamental questions about the operation of the provisions relating to the termination of residential tenancies for non payment of rent in the ACT and litigation in this area post the Supreme Court decision has continued to be very resource intensive for the service as detailed submissions on complex questions of law have often by required. As noted by his Honour Master Mossop in handing down his Supreme Court

judgment, this area of law is in urgent need of review. We remain hopeful that this matter will be addressed in the ACT Government's current review of the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997*.

In the Centrelink area, the service continues to prioritise cases where the client is without income support or in debt cases where the client is at serious risk of prosecution or is especially disadvantaged.



Examples of the service's casework follows:

### Social Security and Tenancy Case Studies

#### Case Study 1: Ahmed's Story<sup>1</sup>

*Private Tenancy matter, Appeal before the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT)*

- *Preventing the deterioration of personal circumstances or preventing legal problems escalating;*
- *Complex personal circumstances.*

*Ahmed was from a culturally and linguistically diverse background with limited English skills and in the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC). ACAT at first instance had awarded the entire bond to an incoming tenant in circumstances where it appeared that the bond transfer form had been fraudulently signed.*

*Ahmed appealed the decision and the service represented him on appeal. The appeal was ultimately successful with the entire bond being returned to him.*

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<sup>1</sup> The names in all of the case studies contained in this report have been changed to protect client confidentiality.

### **Case Study 2: Amanda's Story**

*Internal appeal against Centrelink's decision to raise a Youth Allowance debt of approximately \$6000.*

- *Representation has enabled client to improve or prevent deterioration of personal circumstances; and*
- *Complex personal circumstances.*

*In this case, Centrelink raised a Youth Allowance debt of about \$6000 against Amanda because she was not enrolled.*

*Amanda was a young Aboriginal woman who had commenced receipt of Youth Allowance payments when she was 15. At that stage, she had no permanent home, had spent time in various refuges and had experienced disjointed periods of education.*

*She thought that she would have stability if she went to live with her mother. However, Amanda's intention to enroll at high school was undermined by her need to look after her siblings and her mother and by a lack of support to manage the process of enrolment. Despite Amanda informing Centrelink that she was not enrolled, she continued to be paid the wrong payment.*

*Centrelink accepted our submissions that the debt should be waived and the entire debt was waived on the basis of sole administrative error.*

## Case Study 2: Grace's Story

*Public housing matter, serious risk of eviction*

- *Representation has enabled client to improve or prevent deterioration of personal circumstances.*

*Grace was brought to CCL by a Housing ACT advocate after the first ACAT hearing. Grace was most likely going to be evicted and the advocate identified she needed legal assistance.*

*Grace owed over \$8000 in rent. Grace had come to Australia as a refugee. Her father was killed in war and her mother died a short time after. Before coming to Australia, she spent many years in a refugee camp. Grace came to Australia with her husband at the time but was forced to flee the relationship after experiencing domestic violence. Before living in her public housing property, Grace lived in women's refuges with her young child.*

*Grace had worked hard to build a life here, gaining a Certificate in Aged Care and learning English. Despite having an income Grace had difficulty paying her rent. She did not understand that her rent was longer being paid through Centrepay as she had started working. She also was sending money back to family in Africa. Grace also struggled to understand her Housing ACT letters and found it difficult to engage with her housing managers. She did not understand that she was in significant rental arrears or that she could lose her house.*

*It took some time for Grace to explain her situation. CCL worked closely with Grace gently discovering more about her traumatic background. Once Grace started to work with CCL she began to understand that she was at significant risk of eviction. Our social worker secured funds from other community organisations to assist Grace with reducing her arrears. Grace started paying rent and by the time of the final hearing she had reduced her arrears to \$1000.*

*CCL represented Grace at the ACAT hearing and was able to explain her complete history something that was particularly difficult for Grace because of her post-traumatic stress disorder. Additionally CCL was able to show that Grace was obtaining financial counselling and the other support she needed. The Tribunal made an order which enabled Grace to keep her house as long as she continued to pay rent and reduce her arrears.*

*Without representation, Grace would likely have become homeless. Through finding out what was going on beneath the surface, CCL was able to identify that Grace's inability to pay rent was a symptom of a traumatic past and set up supports to ensue that going forward, Grace would continue to pay rent and her arrears and remain in her home.*

### Volunteer/secondment support

During the year, Jack Simpson and Jasmine Still from the Australian Government Solicitor's office were each seconded to the service for one day for a period of 13 weeks. Jack provided invaluable assistance to the service in analyzing and transferring crucial service data into a case data base. Jasmine provided invaluable research and assisted in the preparation of some of the service's tenancy cases, including a very complex matter which was before the Tribunal.

We were also very fortunate to have Henry Chang and Frances Bradshaw (both long term volunteers at the Centre) who undertake their Graduate Diploma of Legal Practice (GDLP) placements with us and whose excellent work greatly assisted the service during the past year.

### Community Legal Education

During the past year, the Social Security and Tenancy service partnered with a number of organisations to provide community legal education activities.

Presentations were provided to the ACAT, the private profession through the ACT Law Society's Continuing Professional Development Seminar series, University of Canberra law students, and Youth Law Centre students. A presentation was also provided to the Practice Talking Conference showing the successes of an integrated practice model and how it reduces the risk of homelessness.

### Policy work

The major activity undertaken during this period was the preparation of an extensive submission to the ACT Government's review into the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* (the RTA). The submission commended the Government on undertaking the review within a human rights framework and highlighted the need for the review to recognise the central importance of security of tenure and the intrinsic value of a home to an individual's health and well being.

Our submission argued that the RTA should continue to apply to all tenants equally with the legislation recognising the significant interests of social housing tenants in setting criteria to be considered in relation to the ACAT's powers and responsibilities. The submission identified a number of areas where reform was required including in respect of the length of CTPOs and the effect of a breach of a CTPO. Our submission also highlighted the current inadequacies in relation to the current statutory framework for occupancy agreements and noted its support for the proposal to restructure the RTA to extend coverage of most provisions in the legislation to occupants.

We also participated in and hosted one of two community consultations held on the RTA review and have continued to engage in discussions around this reform.

We understand that the ACT Government will shortly release a further discussion paper proposing reforms to the RTA and we look forward to the opportunity to provide further input into the review.



## Night Time Legal Advice Service

The Night Time Legal Advice Service (NTLAS) provides advice and referral to members of the Canberra community in most areas of law and operates one night a week for 2 hours. Advice is provided face to face, by phone or by email to facilitate service delivery to those with limited mobility, disability or other barriers.

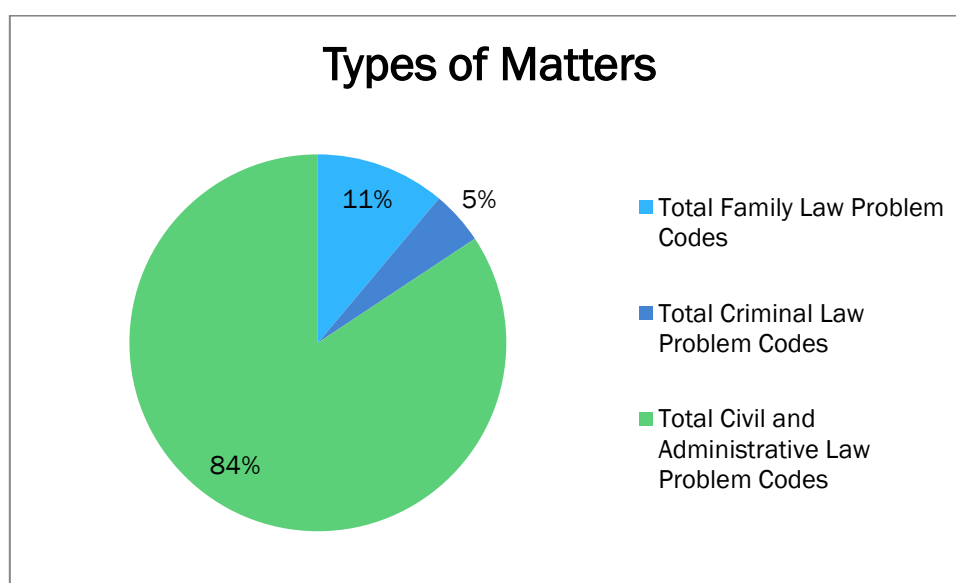
Service delivery is by volunteer legal practitioners from private and government practice aided by law students and supervised by the Supervising Solicitor. Solicitors and students generally work in pairs taking instructions from clients and providing advice after conferring with the Supervising Solicitor. Administrative support is provided by a worker from Canberra Community Law and law students.

Apart from a service to the community, NTLAS provides an important means for law students and recent graduates to gain practical experience and for experienced solicitors to expand on their knowledge and skills base. We all learn from each other and are pleased to provide professional enrichment to students or solicitors at various stages of their careers.

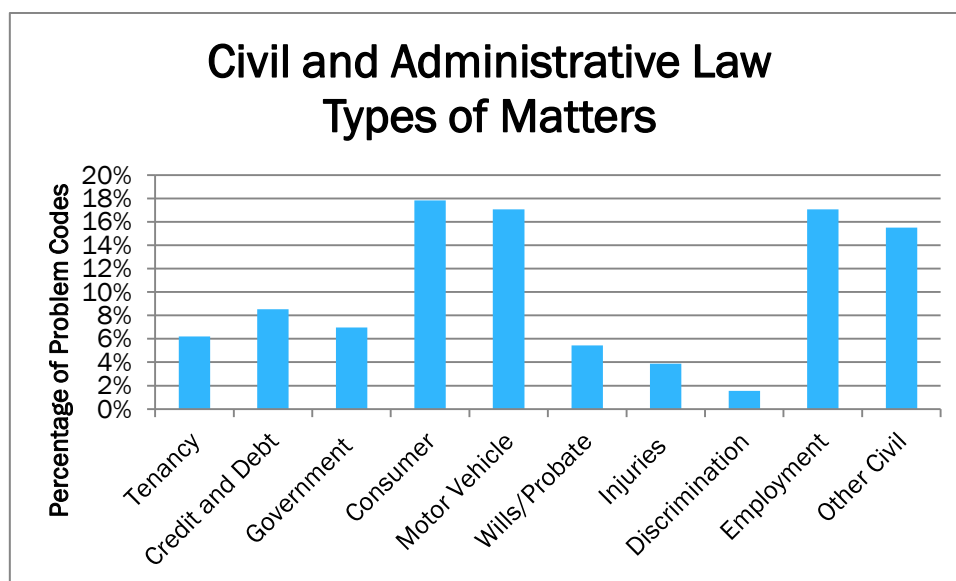
As one private law partner once remarked, *'NTLAS is seen as a rite of passage for Canberra's law students aspiring to enter the profession.'*

During the reporting period, NTLAS advised more than 130 clients in a range of key legal areas. Although actual service numbers were down from last year, this has not translated into a lesser workload, as the complexity and urgency of matters usually means a very intense 2 hours for our volunteers.

Advice, assistance and referrals were provided in the broad areas of family law, criminal law, civil law and administrative law as illustrated by the graph below. Civil and administrative law made up the vast majority (around 84%) of our work in the reporting period.



The main areas in which people seek advice from NTLAS include: consumer complaints, credit and debt, employment, family, motor vehicle accidents, administrative law, property law, wills and probate and general civil law.



Employment law remains a strong area, with NTLAS assisting those who are not assisted by a union, often in quite complex workplace matters. Where we can, we will see clients more than once in a matter, but our capacity to do this is limited and our once-weekly operation can make compliance with external deadlines challenging. As the service is not resourced to provide casework, representation or ongoing assistance, we often face the added challenge of guiding clients in the process of self-help, which often includes an appearance in a court or tribunal. Several of our clients are employed people facing issues in the workplace such as investigation or termination.

Anecdotally it seems that motor vehicles are causing some issues, particularly for the young with accidents, insurance and repair matters causing some problems. We have advised on a vast range of matters and continue to see clients representing themselves through the legal process.

The majority of our clients identify as being on a low income, however our service is not means tested. One of the key strengths of NTLAS is that it fills a service gap for clients who would not qualify for Legal Aid but can not reasonably access private legal representation. Around a third of our clients identify as having a disability.

NTLAS is a vital service to the community and operates at capacity most evenings. We are as ever extremely grateful to our volunteer solicitors and students who give of their time to keep NTLAS operating. Many have been doing so for a number of years, some have just joined us this year and are proving to be an invaluable asset to the service.

## Street Law

### Program Overview

Street Law provides free legal outreach services to individuals who are experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness. It works on an outreach model: Street Law lawyers go to places where people experiencing homelessness are already accessing support services such as refuges or places providing free food. Street Law also provides community legal education and undertakes law and policy reform activities.

### Year in Review

Street Law has had yet another busy year. Our highlight for the year was celebrating the service's 5<sup>th</sup> Birthday. Street Law hosted an event at which Minister for Justice and long time Street Law supporter, Shane Rattenbury, spoke as well as former staff member Katie Fraser. Street Law was lucky enough to have several former staff members Katie Fraser, Beth Cox, and Amy Kilpatrick attend the event. We were very pleased to have friends from the Government, the community sector and the legal sector attend to help us celebrate this exciting milestone.

### Celebrating Street Law's 5<sup>th</sup> Birthday!



*Guest Speaker: Minister for Justice, Shane Rattenbury*



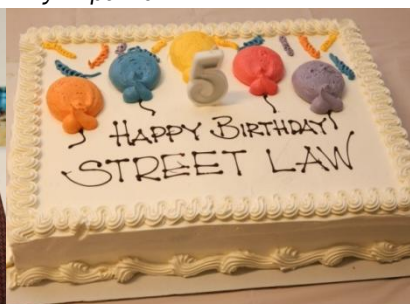
*SL Staff Past and Present: Katie Fraser, Heather McAulay and Amy Kilpatrick*



*Guest Speaker: Katie Fraser, former Program Manager of SL*



*ACAT Member Mary-Therese Daniel and Domestic Violence Co-ordinator General Viki Parker*



*No birthday celebration would be complete without cake!*



*Friends from Legal Aid: Jen Crawley and Angela Lauman*



*Shadow Minister for Housing Nicole Lawder, Homelessness Australia Policy Officer William Mudford and Executive Office of Shelter ACT Travis Gilbert*



*Previous SL Secondees: Cecilia Tulloch (AGS), Thomas Wood (AGS), Anusha Goonetilleke (SL), Viktoria Sulenta (Minter Ellison), and Phoebe Richards (Clayton Utz)*



*Rhonda Payget (Family Court), Elaine Li (Legal Aid), Marilyn Wright (Women's Legal Centre)*



*Outreach Partners: Robyn and Lina from Beryl and Deb and Kim from Inanna*



*Peter Sutherland (ANU) and Sean Costello (Human Rights Commission)*

Street Law's 5 years of operation have seen it develop from a fledgling community legal service to a well established and efficiently run program. We are fortunate to have strong connections across the community and legal sectors who support us to provide access to justice for some of the most vulnerable and marginalised Canberrans.

Another highlight for the 2014/15 year was the commencement of a new outreach partnership arrangement with St John's Uniting Care in Reid. Street Law now attends St John's community lunches which are held on the first Friday of every month.

## Staff

Street Law was lucky to have no staffing changes in the 2014-2015 year. The team for the year was: Anusha Goonetilleke as Supervising Solicitor, John Thornton in the role of Senior Solicitor, Heather McAulay in the role of Program Manager & Solicitor, and Charlotte Fletcher in a graduate lawyer role.

## Advisory Group

Street Law has continued to receive support from its Advisory Group. The Advisory Group in 2014/15 consisted of:

- Shannon Pickles, St Vincent de Paul
- Carrie Fowlie, Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drugs Association
- Peter McNulty, Ashurst
- Jennifer Clarke, Homelessness Australia (until December 2014)

- William Mudford, Homelessness Australia (from February 2015)
- Elaine Li, Legal Aid (from May 2015)

Street Law would like to thank Advisory Group members for their valuable guidance throughout the year.

### **Continued funding**

Street Law was also very pleased to receive further funding for two more years from the ACT Government.

### **Pro bono support - Secondees and Volunteers**

Street Law continues to be well supported by the ACT legal profession. In 2014/15, we were able to attract over 900 hours of pro bono support in the form of secondments from the private legal profession. Street Law was privileged to be able to work with Viktoria Sulenta from Minter Ellison, Phoebe Richards from Clayton Utz, Lucinda Bordignon from Sparke Helmore and Cecilia Tulloch from Australian Government Solicitor. Street Law would like to thank all of our secondees for their invaluable contributions throughout the year.

Street Law has also had several students volunteer with us during the 2014/15 year. We would like to thank Amelia McCormick, Kashpee Wahid, Emily Bowler and Rose McGowan for their dedication and enthusiasm when working in the Street Law team.

Street Law has been fortunate to attract significant in kind support. We were provided with free training from Australian Government Solicitor, Ashurst, Clayton Utz and Minter Ellison, and significantly subsidised training from the ACT Law Society. We were also given access to meeting room facilities for a program planning day by Clayton Utz. Street Law would like to thank the ACT legal community for its ongoing support.



### **Khhash Kamali's Experience, a recent Street Law secondee from Clayton Utz**

*"Working with Street Law has been an eye-opening and sometimes confronting experience. Coming from the large corporate law firm environment of Clayton Utz, it is quite a transition to the world of homelessness where the challenges faced by this client group strike at the most basic needs of every human being: safe and reliable shelter.*

*Prior to Street Law, I naively imagined that homelessness was the result of poor choices or a lack of opportunity. However I quickly realised that often the real cause has little to do with the fault of the individual. While domestic violence and mental illness are common threads throughout the client group, the less obvious but far more profound trigger is the lack of support networks such as family and friends. It is humbling to realise how quickly day to day challenges that we may all face, such as periods of grief, unemployment or debts, can without the support of those close to us quickly spiral out of control to the point that they become overwhelming for anyone to deal with.*

*My time at Street Law has been far from predictable and from the outset I was thrust into the realities of the work by attending outreach homeless services such as the Red Cross Roadhouse Drop-in Centre, Uniting Care Early Morning Centre and Inanna which provided an intimate portrait of the struggles of the homeless community. I soon came to realise that it is through these outreach activities that Street Law has developed a strong partnership with other service providers who recognise Street Law as a dependable and committed service that is motivated by client outcomes.*

*Street Law is very proactive in meeting the needs of its clients and is particularly diligent in recognising the often unique challenges they face. For instance, partnering with community organizations and refuges to maintain contact with clients with no fixed address, meeting with clients at shelters and community centres where they feel most comfortable and little things such as sending text messages instead of leaving phone messages at the cost of the client, speak to Street Law's understanding of the client group.*

*In the face of the emotional burden of dealing with some of the most vulnerable members of our community, the Street Law team exudes a warmth and friendliness that is only matched by their sense of patience and empathy for the needs of clients. Street Law is a collegiate team that is quick to rally around one another. This echoes the success of the Canberra Community Law legal centre more broadly which is built on a family of devoted employees who freely share their experience, wisdom and support.*

*Since the true mark of any society is reflected in how it meets the needs of its most vulnerable citizens, there is great comfort in seeing the many successes of Street Law in achieving outcomes for its clients. As I leave Street Law with fond memories, I wish Canberra Community Law every success and hope that I can continue to make some contribution to the organisation in the future."*

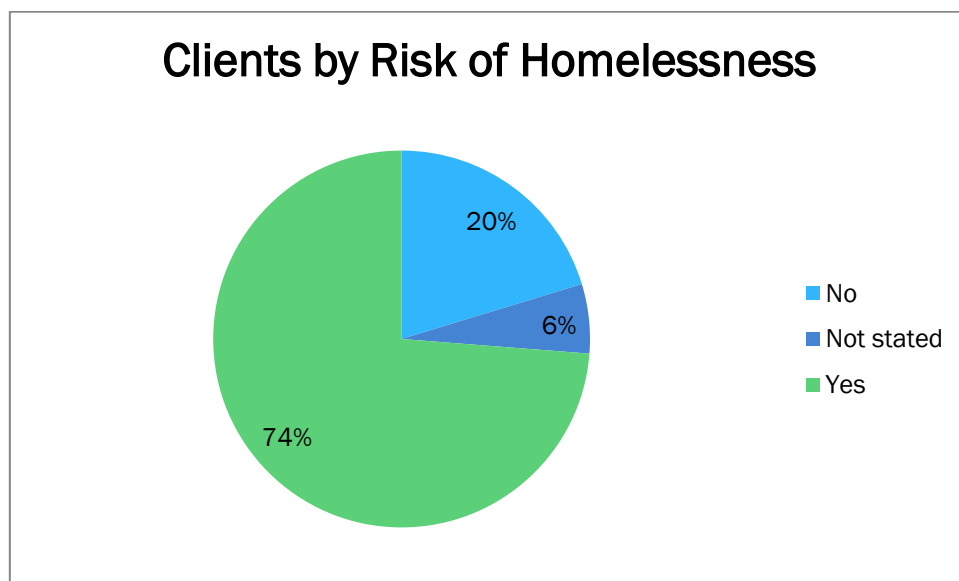
## Client Work

In the 2014/15 Street Law assisted 126 clients. We provided 374 advices, made 373 referrals and opened 98 cases.

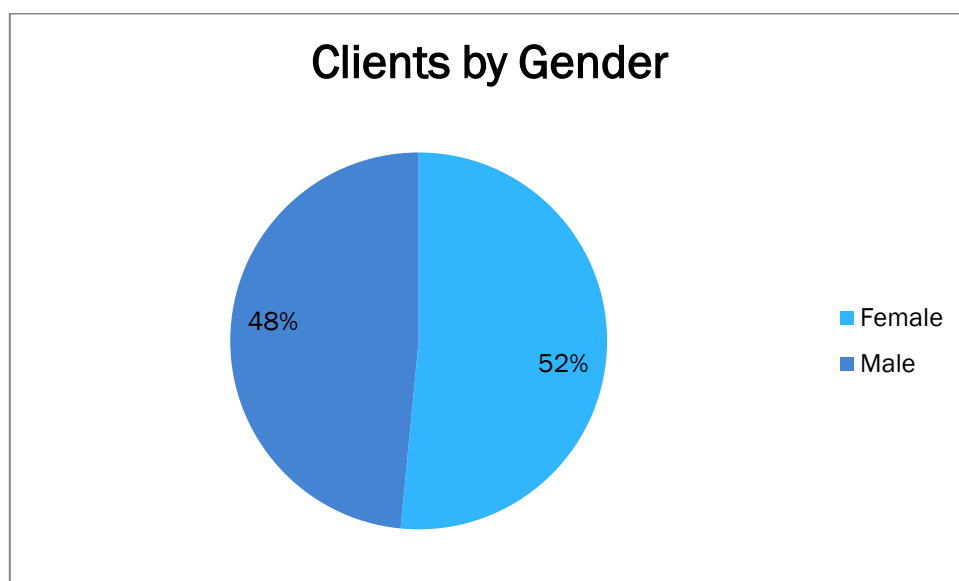
Street Law's clients raised issues in relation to many different areas of law including tenancy, dealing with government, family law, criminal law and a wide range of civil law issues.

## Who are our clients?

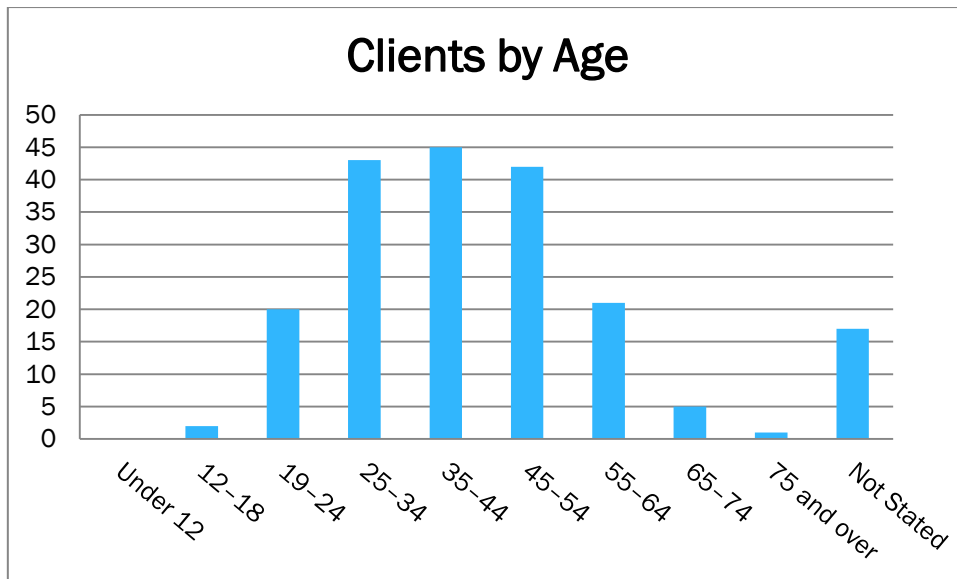
In 2014/15, 74% of Street Law's clients were homeless or at risk of homelessness. Street Law will provide one off advice to individuals who are not homeless or at risk.



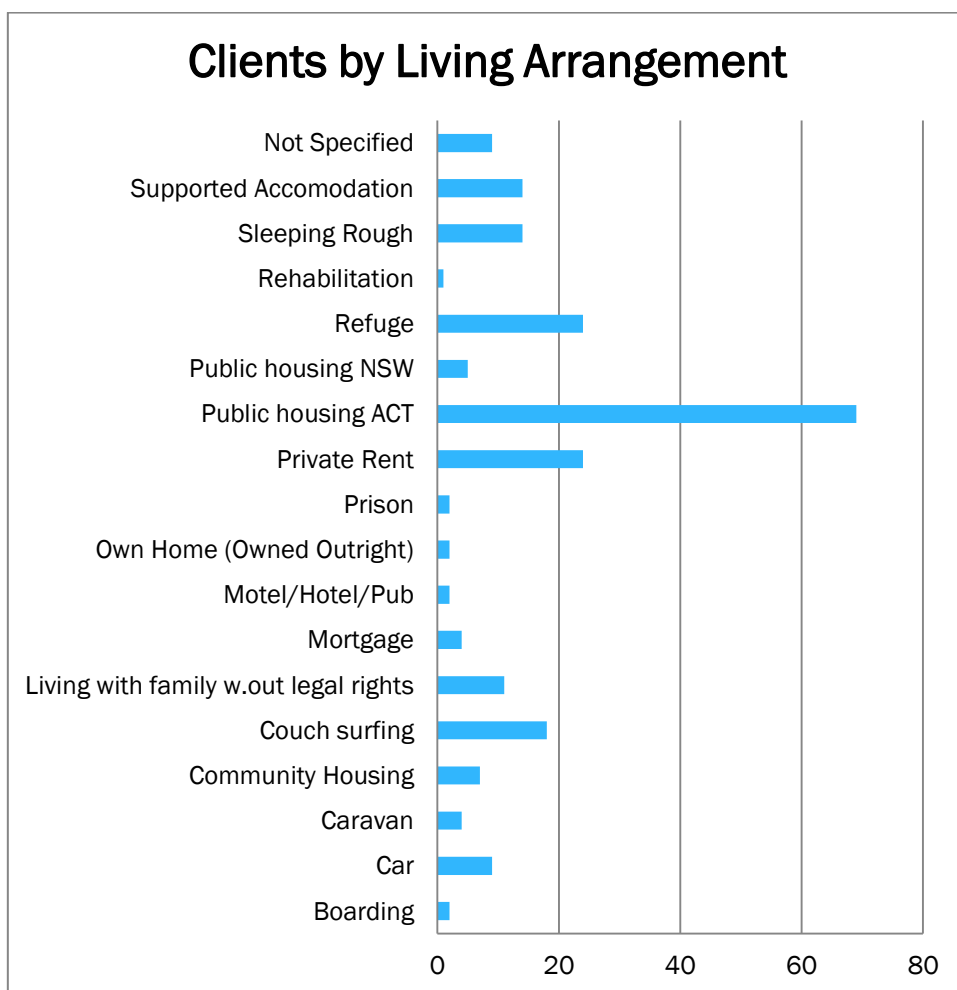
Street Law works with both men and women.



Street Law works with clients across many different age groups. The bulk of our clients were aged between 25-54 years old.



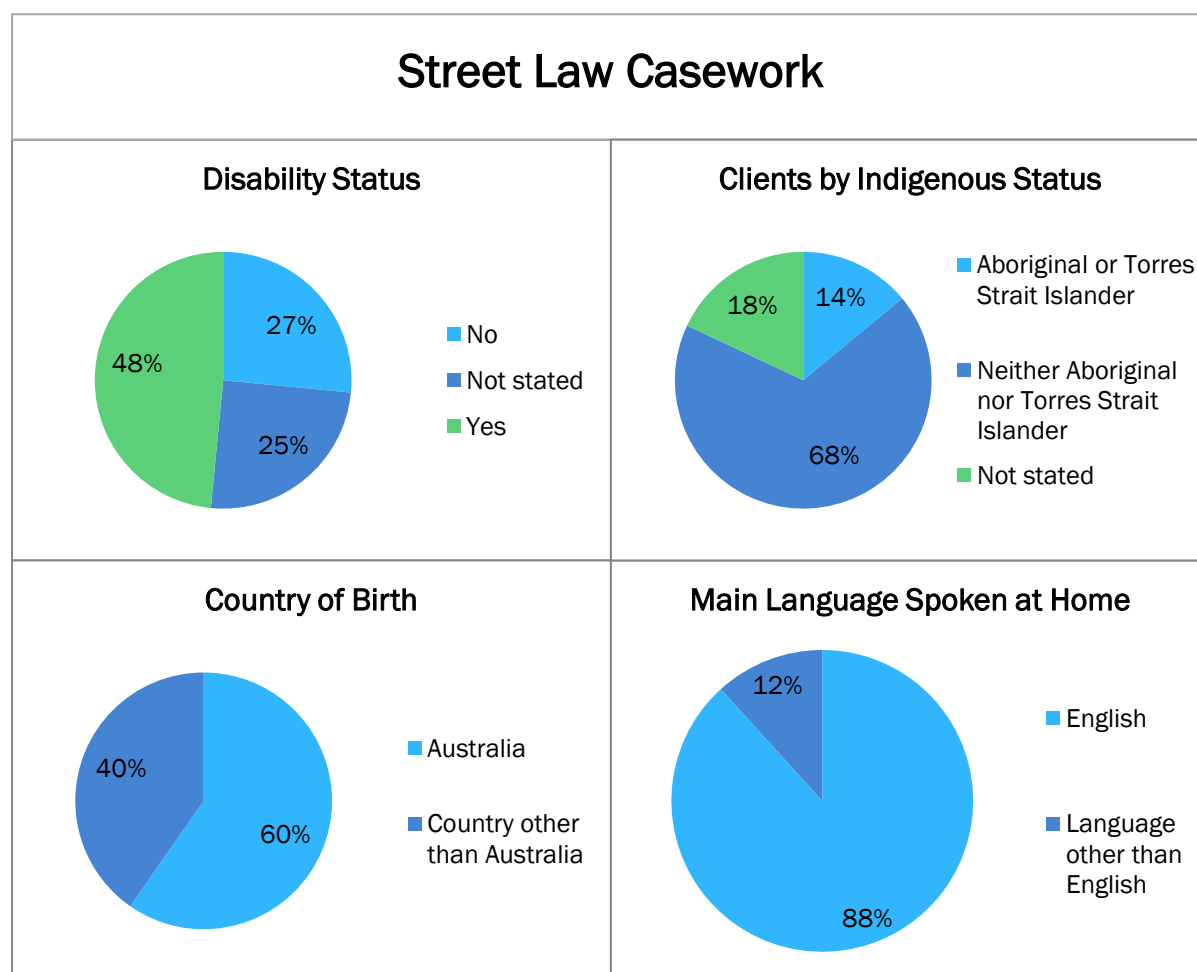
Street Law works with clients who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Our clients have a variety of different living arrangements.



Street Law works with clients with a wide range of life experiences. 14% of our clients in this financial year identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin, 48% of



our clients had a disability, 40 % of our clients were born outside Australia and 12% identified as speaking a language other than English at home.



## Community Legal Education

Street Law has been involved in a number of community legal education activities throughout the 2014/15 year. Street Law continued to offer its 'How to Spot a Legal Issue' training which is aimed at empowering support workers to identify when their clients are facing legal problems that may benefit from advice or assistance and how to refer clients to legal services. Street Law has also developed and run specialized sessions on dealing with traffic fines for support workers and clients.

Street Law has collaborated with other services in the delivery of community legal education. We have partnered with ACT Legal Aid to present their 'Law for Non – Lawyers', worked with our ACTLAF colleagues to deliver the 'Free Law' training as part of Law Week and worked with the Women's Legal Centre's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Law and Justice Support Program to deliver training as part of their 'Know your Rights' training series.

Street Law again ran its 'working with vulnerable clients' sessions for the Australian Government Solicitor Graduates and lawyers from Minter Ellison.



In FY 2014/15 Street Law also attended a series of 5 'Pop Up' Information outreach stalls arranged by Partners In Recovery. These stalls were aimed at providing health and well being information to vulnerable individuals in Canberra. Street Law used this opportunity to provide our Legal Health Check to attendees.

Charlotte Fletcher at a 'Pop Up' information stall.

### Community Engagement Meetings and Events

In 2014/15 Street Law participated in the following community meetings and events:

- ACT Legal Assistance Form (ACTLAF) including the ACTLAF Community Legal Education Working Group
- Pro Bono Stakeholders Forums
- Joint Pathways Forums
- ACT Shelter Forums
- Who's New on the Streets Meetings
- National Association of Community Legal Centres Annual Conference
- Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drugs Association Annual Conference

### Case Study: Fatima's Story

- *Preventing the deterioration of personal circumstances or preventing personal problems escalating; and*
- *Multiple legal Issues*

Fatima is a refugee with a significant trauma background. She currently suffers from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). After arriving in Australia, Fatima's husband was violent and abusive towards her. Fatima stayed in the relationship for some time, as she found it difficult to access support services. Eventually, however, Fatima decided to leave. Fatima was given a place in a women's refuge in Canberra and the refuge referred her to Street Law for advice.

Fatima sought assistance in relation to a number of legal issues including a Centrelink debt, family law and immigration.

#### Centrelink Debt

When Fatima left her husband she notified Centrelink that she was no longer in a relationship and that she now had only 2 of her 4 children in her care (the older children remained with their father). Centrelink updated Fatima's payment and she started receiving New Start Allowance at the single rate. However, Centrelink did not update Fatima's Family Tax Benefit payments and she continued to receive Family Tax Benefit for all four children. Fatima wasn't sure why she continued to receive Family Tax Benefit for 4 children when she had already notified Centrelink that she only had 2 children in her care. Recognising that her husband would need some of this money to care for the 2 children that remained in his care, Fatima transferred half the Family Tax Benefit she received each fortnight to him.

After some months Centrelink corrected the error on their system. Centrelink back paid her husband for the amount he should have received for the time that he had the two eldest children in his care. They also raised a debt against Fatima for the extra amount she had received (about \$3000), but she did not want to ask him to assist her with this debt due to the domestic violence she experienced. Centrelink started recovering this amount from Fatima at a rate of \$120 per fortnight. Centrelink also withheld a Family Supplement underpayment that Fatima had been due to receive of about \$2000 in order to repay the debt. Fatima had a number of expenses associated with establishing a new life after leaving her husband and so found this reduction in her payment very difficult to manage.

Prior to contacting Street Law, Fatima had lodged an appeal of the Centrelink decision but the appeal was refused at the internal review level.

Street Law requested a copy of Fatima's file and realised that Fatima had not included any details of her personal situation in her appeal request. Street Law then assisted Fatima to gather evidence about her personal circumstances. Street Law lodged an appeal on Fatima's behalf with the SSAT seeking waiver of the debt based on special circumstances. After Street Law's representation of Fatima, the SSAT

agreed to waive Fatima's debt and refund the amount she had already repaid.

#### **Family Law**

After a year of separation from her husband, Fatima also wanted advice about how to get a divorce. Street Law assisted by providing a warm referral to the Women's Legal Centre's Specialist Divorce Clinic for women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

#### **Immigration**

Fatima wanted to bring her extended family to Australia. Several family members including her parents and siblings were also refugees and were living in a UN refugee camp. Fatima sought advice on how to help bring them to Australia. Street Law assisted by providing a warm referral to Companion House's immigration law clinic.

Fatima told Street Law that receiving assistance with her various different legal issues allowed her to focus on other aspects of her life including stabilising her living situation.

## Social Worker Pilot Project

The period 2014/15 has been one of steady consolidation for the Social Worker Pilot project. Working in cooperation with CCL's lawyers, the social work program provides case work assistance and one-off social work advice.

## External Evaluation

The external evaluation of the Social Worker Project undertaken in November 2014 and tabled to CCL Board in February 2015 concluded that the project had made great gains since its creation.

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*'Although still in its infancy, it is apparent that the Pilot Project's goals are being met to a very high standard. CCL lawyers and social worker are collaborating well together and are achieving more holistic outcomes for clients. The addition of a social worker at CCL has brought additional knowledge, information and insights which have enhanced the lawyers' ability to gain a more comprehensive and holistic picture of their client's current situation and has impacted markedly on the achievements of better and more sustainable client outcomes. Other benefits of collaboration have included increased client satisfaction as the Social Worker is able to provide support and assistance beyond the narrow realms of the legal matter and increased efficiency as it has freed up lawyer's time to concentrate on the legal issues.'*

*- Butler, A., (Nov 2014)*

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## The Project's work

During the period there were 34 social work cases opened, the majority of which were tenancy matters. Over 95% of clients accessing Social Worker services were at risk of homelessness. The Social Worker also undertook 36 home visits in this period and provided 77 one-off social work advices. The home visits have become an invaluable component of the legal/social work multi-disciplinary model. It enables CCL to provide a more flexible and responsive service for very vulnerable clients who find it difficult or impossible to visit our office or in cases where a home visit is necessary to assess the condition of the property.

The Social Worker Project works with some of CCL's most vulnerable and disadvantaged clients to help them to identify their most pressing needs (apart from the presenting legal issues) and to provide the support and assistance needed to help them improve their situation.

A great deal of the project's focus in the reporting period involved working with clients with multiple and complex needs to assist them to address the issues which were placing their tenancies at risk or were presenting barriers to them accessing housing. During the reporting period, the project worked with several clients who were dealing with squalor

and hoarder issues or were generally finding it very difficult to maintain the condition of their property.

The range and scope of social work services provided continues to evolve in response to the needs of CCL's clients. Through the provision of casework, the Social Worker is able to work intensively with clients to address the underlying social and emotional issues impacting on the resolution of their legal matter. Examples include assisting clients to set up payment of rent by Centrelink deductions, referrals for brokerage funds to reduce quantum of arrears for clients threatened by eviction, liaison with financial counsellors, mental health and drug and alcohol support, family support, family and relationship support.

Social Work case work assistance has also including working with vulnerable clients seeking priority housing. Casework services provided have included assessing the circumstances which may exist to make them eligible, obtaining relevant evidence and supporting letters and linking them with appropriate support services where needed. The Social Worker has also assisted clients who are experiencing homelessness through providing support with non-legal needs, providing information about emergency relief and free food options and supporting clients to engage with other services. The Social Worker has also undertaken psycho-social assessments to obtain a more detailed understanding of a client's background, family history, health, work and circumstances which can then be used to support a legal case.

During the reporting period, a total of 91 warm referrals were made to other organisations; 61 of these referrals were made in the context of advice and the remaining 30 were made in the context of case work. Advice line callers and clients were referred to a wide range of organisations including CARE Financial Counselling Service, Relationships Australia, Child and Family Centres, Supportive Tenancy services, Emergency Relief Centres, Health and Dental Health Clinics, Mental Health Services such as Partners in Recovery, Gambling Counselling services, Home Help services, such as DUO and community services agencies across Canberra.

### **Case Study**

The following case study illustrates the value of a combined legal and social work casework approach.

### **Leah's Story: Single Mum with one child avoids eviction and trauma of homelessness**

*When Leah presented at Canberra Community Law she was \$3,500 in arrears with her public housing tenancy and with an upcoming matter in the ACAT, which meant she was at serious risk of eviction. If Leah was evicted, due to the shortage of crisis accommodation, this vulnerable mother and daughter would very likely have found themselves homeless and living in their car. Leah has a background of trauma and domestic violence and was very fearful of this happening.*

*Instead our lawyer negotiated a repayment plan with the public housing provider whilst the social worker liaised with the financial counsellor to make sure her budget was sustainable and realistic. Leah received budget and debt counselling from the financial counsellor to reduce the likelihood of future arrears. Our social worker also linked the family with ongoing community and family support. The social worker also successfully advocated on behalf of Leah with a charity for brokerage funds which provided \$800 to pay off arrears before the matter went to ACAT.*

#### **Outcome**

*Leah has a successful outcome in the ACAT avoiding the trauma of eviction. Leah and her 8 year old daughter remain in their home and community near her daughter's school, family and community support networks.*

*Legal and social case work in tandem meant a more sustainable outcome for this vulnerable young mum. Leah now has a realistic plan to pay her rent and arrears going forward and is linked with ongoing supports.*

## Professional Development

CCL is committed to providing professional development opportunities for its staff.

The Centre supported all staff lawyers holding practising certificates to meet their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements. The Centre has provided external professional supervision for CCL's Social Worker.

Professional Development opportunities provided to staff during this financial year included:

- Administrative Law Seminar provided by Clayton Utz
- Professional Development workshop on Building Resilience
- Women and Justice Forum
- ACT Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Seminar
- ACT Human Rights Conference
- Pathways through Personal Injury Training presented by Maurice Blackburn
- Suicide Prevention Workshop
- National Welfare Rights Network conference
- National Association of Community Legal Centre's conference
- National Disability Insurance scheme seminar
- Fundamentals of Working Cross-culturally training
- Training day on "Working with people who hoard: a Framework for practice"
- Employment Law Seminar
- CLSIS training
- Working with Government training
- Effective engagement with ATSI people workshop
- Women with Disabilities and Violence awareness training
- Negotiation workshop
- Lawyers Alliance Conference
- Client Confidentiality
- Australian Institute of Advocacy Course
- Practice Management Workshop
- Grant writing training
- Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Association Annual Conference
- Internal Lexis Nexis AU legal research training
- Civil Claims Seminar CPD
- Ethics Seminar CPD
- Dealing with people in difficult situations seminar
- Volunteering ACT's Suicide Prevention training
- Ethics for Government Lawyers
- Statutory Interpretation Training
- Property Seminar CPD
- Internal training on hoarding



- ACT Gambling Counselling and Support Service Training
- Human Rights seminar/panel
- CPD Training on Drink Driving Pleas in the ACT
- 2 Day Training on Mental Health
- The Employment Battleground – A Beginner’s Guide CPD
- Domestic Awareness Training
- Better Business Series – Risk Management Seminar CPD
- CLE on Statutory Interpretation: finding and using extrinsic materials presented by Minter Ellison
- CLE on “Employment Law Issues: What 2014 means for 2015?” At Minter Ellison
- CLE on “Hidden Powers in the ACT Interpretation Act”
- Ethics – Fulfilling your overarching obligations as a lawyer
- Ethics Seminar – delivered by Bradley Allen Love, Courtesy in Communicating – When discourtesy becomes unsatisfactory professional conduct’
- National Disability Insurance Scheme conference
- Contesting the Validity of a Will
- Employment Law Training presented by Ashurst

During the reporting period, CCL also supported a staff member to undertake a Bachelor of Laws (Honours) – Graduate Entry and another staff member to undertake her LLM (Masters of Law) specialising in dispute resolution.

CCL records its thanks the Australian Government Solicitor, Ashurst, Clayton Utz, Minter Ellison, Maurice Blackburn Lawyers, and Bradley Allen Love who delivered free training sessions to CCL staff during the financial year. CCL also acknowledges the ongoing support of the ACT Law Society in providing significant subsidized CPD training to CCL staff.

## **Appendix: Auditor's Report**