



northern suburbs
community
legal centre

Northern Suburbs Community Legal

Annual Report 2021-2022

OUR VISION

Leading in community social justice

OUR MISSION

To provide innovative and dynamic services to enable justice for clients and the community

OUR VALUES

- Person-centred and holistic activities
- Safe and open communication
- Compassion and appreciation for all
- Respect for each other
- Inclusive support
- Excellence always

MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

JENNIFER HANNAN AM



Over the last year, the Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre has moved forward, following the pandemic and its impact on the community we serve. This last year has been a time of consolidation and continuing best practice.

The Board recognises the increased complexity of many client matters and we applaud and thank all staff, our pro bono partners and volunteers who were committed to making a difference. It was an organisational priority to ensure attention and care was taken across all our programs. Our workforce has been agile and we have tried to ensure staff health and wellbeing has remained at a high level, as well as addressing client circumstances in a safe and supportive way.

I am particularly pleased with the successful outcome of our stage three national accreditation. There was a large body of work completed and implemented to ensure we were compliant, maintaining strong governance and operationalising policies. The staff worked together to develop and support this work, an example of the high standards we maintain.

Our ongoing partnerships with many local and sector services has also produced positive outcomes. The participation of the Centre across health and community services has enriched client referral pathways and increased shared learning. We thank our many colleagues and hope this support continues.

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate my thanks, on behalf of the Board of Management, for the work, energy and commitment of our CEO, staff and volunteers of NSCLC. I would also like to thank the Board for the time and expertise that they provide to our organisation.

Special thank you to our board: Diana MacTiernan, Allison Leonard, Rupert Johnston, Michael Klimek, Richard Klimek, Samantha Harper and Toby Nisbet.

MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

KATHY COKIS



As I complete my third year at Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre, I reflect on the difference that we have made to so many lives. I am proud of and wholeheartedly express my thanks to all our staff as this achievement is always dependent on a strong sense of teamwork.

The increasing living, health and welfare challenges has meant harrowing stories of people and families in crisis. I know for many staff this has been difficult to listen to, not take the stories home and focus on support.

In total, we saw over 3000 clients and provided thousands of occasions of service. As people will see, there were 72 different languages spoken amongst the people we provided a service to and we increased our reach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through our local partners. We strive for high standards and I am proud to say that clients receive the best possible service.

This year, the Centre successfully completed stage three national accreditation, strengthening our governance and consolidated our partnerships and networks. Looking into the future, this foundation means the organisation can be creative in our program delivery.

I extend my absolute gratitude and thanks to each member of the Board of Management and Jennifer Hannan as the Chairperson. The Board has always provided a supportive environment, coupled with expert guidance. This created open discussion where many ideas and plans were able to take shape and progress.

It is, and has been, a privilege to lead the team at Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre.

Highlighted Awards

Department of Consumer Protection



Rona Okely Award

Mary Martin,
NSCLC
Tenancy Advocate

Institute of Public Administration Australia

Bronze achievement award for best practice in collaboration between government and any other organisation Naala Djookan.



OUR SERVICES

General Legal

General legal advice appointments continued to be offered across the various offices, five days per week. Solicitors provided in-person, telephone and videocall appointments for family law, civil law including debt, criminal injuries compensation, as well as advice on traffic and minor criminal matters. Our partnership continued with Edith Cowan University – Joondalup and we hosted the Community Legal Practice unit for the School of Business and Law. The five most common types of presenting legal matters related to family and domestic violence, child contact orders, family law property settlements, child residency matters and restraining orders.

Tenancy Advocacy and Education Service

This year saw our tenancy advocates providing nearly 1000 occasions of service. The Residential Tenancy Act and the 'no fault' rental termination issue increased to 36% of all matters that were dealt with by our Joondalup Magistrates Court duty service. This was a particularly difficult and confronting period for people in crisis and at risk of homelessness. Negotiation was a key component of the work and as always, staff attention to addressing disadvantage was a priority.

Women's Resource and Engagement Network (WREN)

WREN is in its sixth year of operation as a partnership with Legal Aid WA and maintains two health-justice partnerships with Joondalup Health Service and Ishar Multicultural Women's Health Centre. The masterclass session with psychology students from Edith Cowan University was a great success. This last year saw the expansion of our social work team which reinforces the multidisciplinary support to women. Access to and costs of mental health services for women was an area of growing concern. We saw an increase of nearly 10% of services provided to women seeking legal, social and/or financial advice and support compared to the previous year.

The Older People's Rights Service Peer Educators and Financial Education Program

The OPRS team, funded through the Department of Communities, continued to provide legal advice, information and support to older adults who are at risk of, or are experiencing elder abuse. Notwithstanding the impact of COVID-19, the team provided over 500 occasions of legal and advocate support as well as financial education through the Ecstra Foundation, addressing matters such as enduring powers of attorney/guardianship orders, recouping monies from family members and state administrative tribunal issues. We express our thanks to the volunteer peer educators who continued the journey and had a busy year along with the Purple Road, talking with hundreds of people in the community on elder abuse and positive ageing. World Elder Abuse Day was particularly special this year, with a collaboration of events involving many of our partner agencies, Council of the Ageing, Advocare and Bankwest.

Shuttle Conferencing and the respondent duty lawyer service

Both programs at Joondalup Magistrates Court provide a valuable service and are an integral part of the broader court system. Our solicitors provided a range of information to clients, in an attempt to resolve matters. Overall, 44% resulted in an outcome that did not require going to trial, such as agreed consent orders, undertakings or conduct agreement orders.

Community Legal Education Program

We ran 169 sessions across the community on a variety of legal topics. Early intervention and prevention is the focus of the CLE program and we continue to build on this work as it allows us to better understand community needs, the ability to respond in real time and address specific issues.

Additional Partner Programs

- **Naala Djookan** – family and domestic violence hub with 10 partner agencies, led by the City of Stirling.
- **Aboriginal Outreach Program** – Ebenezer Aboriginal Corporation and Wungening Aboriginal Corporation (Mirrabooka).
- **Women on temporary visas and family violence** – Circle Green and Mirrabooka Migrant Resource Centre.
- **Community Legal Practice unit and WREN Masterclass** – Edith Cowan University Joondalup.

Pro Bono and Partners

We extend our thanks to all our pro bono partners who provided a total of 867 occasions of service to our community.

**Klimek & Wijay
Family
Lawyers**

**Saxon
Legal**

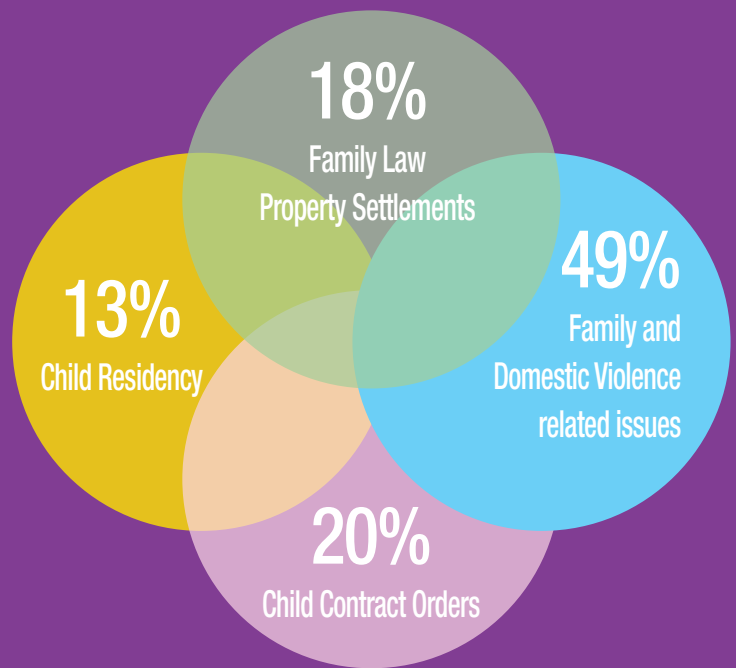
**Hall and
Wilcox**

**Bailey
Family
Law**

**Bloxham
Legal**

At a Glance...

Most Common Issues



16,510 OCCASIONS
of service

3741

TOTAL NUMBER OF
CLIENTS ASSISTED

33.33% MALES 66% FEMALES .07% NON BINARY

72
languages spoken

90.4%
clients experiencing
financial disadvantage

45.2%
clients disclosed a history
of family violence

A very special thank you to our funding bodies who make this possible.

Supported by



Government of Western Australia
Department of Communities



Government of Western Australia
Department of Justice



Government of Western Australia
Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety

ecstra

City of Stirling
City of Choice