

NACLC acknowledges the traditional owners on the lands across Australia and particularly the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, traditional owners of the land on which the NACLC office is situated. We pay deep respect to Elders past and present.



Contents

About NACLC and Community Legal Centres	3
NACLC People	4
Board of Directors	5
Advisory Council	5
National CLCs Census Infographic	6
Chair Report	8
CEO Report	9
Community Law Australia – Fund Equal Justice Campaign	10
Sector Sustainability	11
Training for RRR Centres	12
Quality Assurance: National Accreditation Scheme	13
Community Legal Assistance Services System (CLASS)	14
Insurance and Risk Management	15
National Professional Indemnity Insurance Network	15
Policy and Advocacy	16
Reconciliation Action Plan	17
NACLC's Communication Engagement	18
knowmore	19
National CLCs Conference 2016	20
National Networks	21
National Social Security Rights Network	21
Older Persons Legal Services Network	22
Women's Legal Services Australia	23
Financial Reports	24



National Association of Community Legal Centres

PO Box A2245 Sydney South NSW 1235

Tel: 02 9264 9595

Fax: 02 9264 9594

Email: nacalc@clc.net.au

Web: www.nacalc.org.au

Twitter: www.twitter.com/nacalccomms

Facebook: www.facebook.com/nacalccomms

ABN 67 757 001 303

ACN 163 101 737

Cover: Photos from the Fund Equal Justice campaign, including photos by Mark Riboldi, www.sansicarus.com.
Design: Tenants' Union of NSW. Printed on recycled paper.

About NACLC and Community Legal Centres

The National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC) is the peak national organisation for Community Legal Centres (CLCs) in Australia.

NACLC's members are eight state & territory CLC associations, which together, represent nearly 190 centres in metropolitan, regional, rural and remote locations across Australia. Some Family Violence Prevention Legal Services & Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Legal Services are members of state and territory CLC associations and therefore also come under the NACLC umbrella.

Community Legal Centres are independent, not for profit, community-based organisations that provide free and accessible legal and related services to everyday people across Australia.

In 2016/17, CLCs across Australia assisted over 216,000 clients with discrete and ongoing services; provided over 409,000 referrals; and responded to over 143,000 requests for legal information from the public.

- **CLCs specialise in everyday legal problems:** a lot of the work CLCs do to help people are in the areas of civil and family law issues such as; debt, family violence, tenancy disputes, employment law, relationship breakdown, but there are also other areas CLCs assist in
- **CLCs help people who can't afford a lawyer**
- **CLCs have a strong focus on early advice and problem solving:** as well as helping individuals with legal problems, CLCs work to prevent problems arising, through legal education to client groups, government and community sector agencies, as well as by advocating for fairer laws and policies
- **CLCs work in partnership:** CLCs work collaboratively with their communities and with all levels of government, community and private sector service providers, business, professional bodies and a range of philanthropic organisations.

After NACLC's Strategic Plan 2013-2016 ended, a new plan was developed in the latter part of 2016 for the 2016-2019 period. In the early part of 2017 there was a values-based review of NACLC's strategic direction. The aim of this process was to strategically position NACLC and the community legal sector so that people who cannot afford a lawyer can get access to quality legal services in 2017 and beyond. A revised Strategic Plan will be released in the near future after consultation with NACLC members.

NACLC's Strategic Plan, 2016-2019:

NACLC's **vision** is:

to realise rights, fairness and equality for everyone

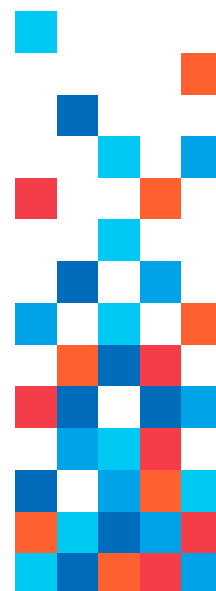
NACLC's **mission** is that:

NACLC leads, connects and sustains CLCs to realise rights, fairness and equality for everyone

NACLC's **strategic priorities** are:

- strive for equitable access to justice and the promotion & protection of human rights
- proactively identify the sustainability needs of CLCs in collaboration with the sector and through other evidence, and drive initiatives to sustain healthy, viable legal assistance organisations and maximise ongoing service availability
- advance the interests of CLCs and their clients, disadvantaged and marginalised people in Australia, by developing, maintaining and strengthening mutually beneficial collaborations with CLCs and with other key partners
- guide the operation and oversee the wind-down of **knowmore**, supporting its clients and staff and preserving and building on its legacy
- build a sustainable future for NACLC, modelling good practices.

Continued on page 5



NACLC People 2016/17



NACLC Staff

NACLC Staff

CEO:

Nassim Arrage (from Feb 2017)
John Macmillan (acting Nov 2016
– Feb 2017)
Julia Hall (until Nov 2016)

Director Policy and Advocacy:

Amanda Alford

Director Sector Sustainability:

John Macmillan
Chantel Cotterell (acting Nov 2016
– Feb 2017)

Policy and Advocacy Team

Te Raehira Wihapi

Sector Sustainability Team

Meg Houston
Alice Jones Rabbit
Jane Housley
Catherine Dornan

Former:

Chantel Cotterell (until June 2017)
Kiri Libbesson (until Mar 2017,
currently on
extended leave)
Sharryn Jackson (until Aug 2016)
Mary Flowers (until Dec 2016)
Brendan Ross (until Dec 2016)

Administration Team

Ana Rey
Liz Dods
Fran Bowron

Former:

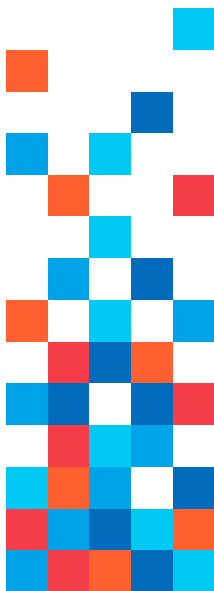
Erith Carr (until Feb 2017)
Bradley Mathers (until Feb 2017)

CLASS Team

Chris Dubrow
Alice Jones Rabbitt
Koumbah Semega-Janneh
Jon Schild

Former:

Patricia Gora
Marcus Carr (until April 2017)
Terenty Ellsworth (until April 2017)
Adam Retallack (until June 2017)



About NACLC and Community Legal Centres

Continued from page 3

NACLC Board of Directors

July 2016 – June 2017

Sara Kane (Chair)
Anna Cody (Deputy Chair)
Nick Hudson (Treasurer)
Lee-Ann Emzin (appointed 30 Mar 2017)
Vanessa Lesnie (appointed 30 Mar 2017)
Rosslyn Monro
Dan Stubbs
James Farrell (resigned 26 Oct 2016)
Nancy Walke (resigned 26 Oct 2016)

NACLC Advisory Council Representatives

2016/17

ACT

Deb Phippen (from Dec 2016)
Genevieve Bolton (until Dec 2016)

NSW

Polly Porteous
Nassim Arrage (until Dec 2016)
Linda Tucker (from Dec 2016)

NT

Caitlin Perry
Matt Fawcner

QLD

James Farrell
Janet Wight

SA

Catherine McMorris
Marja Elizabeth

TAS

Jane Hutchison
Susan Fahey

VIC

Jackie Galloway
Serina McDuff

WA

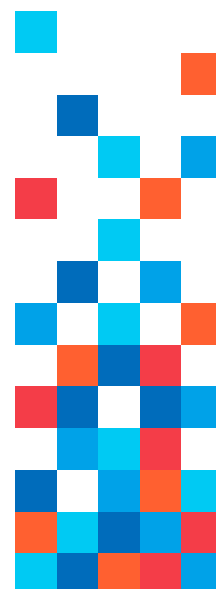
Helen Creed
David Kernohan

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Representatives

Bobbi Murray
Corina Martin (until Dec 2016)

NACLC's **work** is wide ranging and includes:

- negotiating and administering three national insurance schemes including **Professional Indemnity Insurance, Association Liability Insurance, and Public Liability Insurance**
- developing, rolling out and maintaining a new database system to manage and record legal cases and advices, to record community legal education work and law reform activities, and as a reporting tool to government. This is the **Community Legal Assistance Services System (CLASS)** database system
- providing a number of other direct services to CLCs aimed at building the sustainability of the community legal sector
- supporting and promoting quality assurance and continuous improvement in CLCs, including through a **National Accreditation Scheme for CLCs**
- leading a national campaign – **Fund Equal Justice**, which was successful in the reversal of significant funding to the CLC sector.
- organising events including an annual **National CLCs Conference**
- undertaking **strategic advocacy** with the aim of promoting and protecting human rights
- representing CLCs in national forums, debates and negotiations
- supporting specialist **National Networks** of CLCs
- **working collaboratively** with CLCs, other legal assistance providers and community organisations on law reform and other projects
- supporting **knowmore** a national, culturally safe, legal advisory service for people engaging or considering engaging with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.



NATIONAL CENSUS OF COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES (CLCs) 2016

Clients, services and work

NALCLC is the peak national organisation representing Community Legal Centres (CLCs) in Australia. Its members are the state and territory CLC associations that represent 180 centres in various metropolitan, regional, rural and remote locations across Australia.

The 2016 Census is the fourth annual survey of the CLC sector conducted by NALCLC, in consultation with the state and territory CLC associations. The Census is an important tool to collect information about the clients, services, work and priorities of CLCs.

Note: All statistics in this infographic relate to the 2015/16 financial year.¹

PROFILE

129 CLCs responded to the Census



TOP 3

Top 3 specialist areas or clients groups were:



domestic/family violence



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people



family law

TURNAWAYS²

169,513

people were turned away from 109 CLCs



74.7%

reported turning away people due to **insufficient resources**

32%

of CLCs could not provide a person they turned away with an appropriate, accessible and affordable referral

CLIENTS



15.4%

of clients, on average, identified as an **Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person**



25.8%

of clients, on average, identified as a person from a **culturally and linguistically diverse background**



24.0%

of clients, on average, identified as a person with a **disability**

TIME SPENT ON FUNDING-RELATED ACTIVITIES

118

CLCs spent over

2,477

hours per week



on funding-related activities

including reporting, grant applications and fundraising



¹ Every percentage (%) referred to in this infographic is a percentage of the number of respondents that answered that particular question in the Census. To locate how many CLCs responded to each particular question, please refer to the National Report on the NALCLC website: http://www.nalclc.org.au/cb_pages/reports_and_resources.php

² A 'turnaway' by a CLC was defined as: any person your CLC had to send away because you were unable to assist them within the needed timeframe or because of a lack of resources, lack of centre expertise or your centre's eligibility policy.

NATIONAL CENSUS OF COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES (CLCs) 2016

Clients, services and work

VOLUNTEERS AND PRO BONO PARTNERSHIPS

volunteers
contributed



889,096

to 112 CLCs across Australia

6,773  volunteers

contributed
a total of

17,098

hours of work per week

An average of approximately **1** staff hour  was spent to garner



6.4 quality assured
volunteer hours³

CLCs spent approximately

138,602 hours

supporting the work of volunteers

57,848  hours

were contributed by pro
bono partners to 70 CLCs

POLICY ADVOCACY AND LAW REFORM

76.2%

undertook policy advocacy
and law reform activities



TOP 3

Top 3 policy
advocacy and
law reform
activities:



preparing submissions
to inquiries and reviews



meeting with Members
of Parliament and/or
their staff



letter writing to
Members of Parliament

PARTNERSHIPS



47%

partnered with legal pro bono partners
when delivering legal services



47%

also partnered with legal aid commissions
when delivering legal services



73%

partnered with non-legal community organisations
in the provision of community legal education

OUTREACH



79.1%

provide legal outreach at a location
other than their main or branch offices



83%

provide services to clients and communities
in Rural, Regional and Remote communities⁴

³ The word 'approximately' is used because the number of CLCs that responded to each question about hours spent on the various types of support (supervision, induction, orientation and training volunteers) varied.

⁴ Figures reflect the number of CLCs servicing Rural, Regional and Remote (RRR) areas, as opposed to being located in RRR areas. For example, state-wide specialist services exist that are based in urban areas, and provide outreach services to RRR areas

Chair Report 2016/17

What a journey of innovation, collaboration, resilience and resourcefulness we have travelled this year!

Restoration of funding

Last year our sector faced a 30% funding cliff. How did we respond? With a ground swell of CLC staff, volunteers and



supporters working out ways to keep CLC doors open during this time of uncertainty. We collectively made an impact on the Commonwealth Government to reinstate the funding. This much needed funding provides an essential lifeline for CLCs delivering critical, frontline legal services to vulnerable people every day. It is the first chapter of NACLCLC's work to

secure long term, sustainable funding and resources for our sector.

Governance and strategy

Even in light of the funding announcement, the NACLCLC Board continued to focus on our strategic purpose, identity, leadership and value as a national peak body to our members and their member CLCs to ensure we keep in step with sector needs, particularly in a time of changing funding arrangements, sustainability challenges, CLC structures and complex client needs.

We determined five key values: leadership, member focus, fairness, quality and collaboration to underpin our work and build our strategic focus.

The Board undertook a thorough review and sought the skills we need to govern NACLCLC into this next chapter; ensuring a thriving community legal sector. Thanks to James Farrell and Aunty Nancy Walke, who finished their terms on the Board for their extraordinary work and commitment to our sector, and welcome to new Board Members Lee-Ann Emzin and Vanessa Lesnie who bring a wealth of community, planning and social enterprise experience to the Board. Thanks also to fellow Board Directors Anna Cody (Deputy Chairperson), Nick Hudson (Treasurer), Daniel Stubbs (National Spokesperson) and Rosslyn

Monro, for their energy, leadership and work this year.

It is also opportune to thank Julia Hall, outgoing NACLCLC CEO and John Macmillan Acting CEO for their dedication and commitment to our sector, and we warmly welcome new NACLCLC CEO, Nassim Arrage to lead our peak into the future.

Further, NACLCLC launched the new Reconciliation Action Plan and a range of initiatives and resources to support the sector in employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and in culturally safe service delivery. As the peak body for Community Legal Centres in Australia, NACLCLC acknowledges and accepts the role we should and must play in working towards Reconciliation Australia's and our vision for reconciliation in Australia.

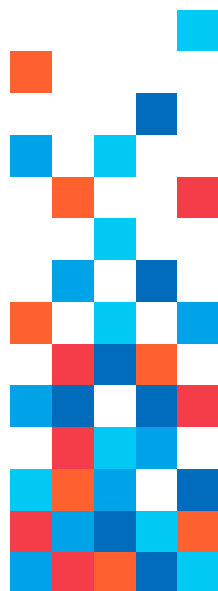
Services

In addition, we have delivered a range of sector services to ensure CLC resilience and sustainability. We will continue to explore other services and products that ease the operational pressures on CLCs so CLCs can focus on delivering quality services to people seeking legal assistance.

NACLCLC could not succeed in these achievements without the work of our exceptional team of staff. The Board would like to express thanks and appreciation to each member of the team for the role they play in delivering success for the community legal sector.

NACLCLC looks forward to continuing to being a fair, quality, member focussed peak that leads and collaborates in all the work we do on behalf of our members and Community Legal Centres.

Sara Kane
Chair



CEO Report 2016/17

I am really pleased to be in the position of CEO at NACLC. I have worked in the community legal sector for more than a decade and I know the incredible work that CLCs, Family Violence Prevention Legal Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services do as part of the backbone of the Australian legal system. We know that there are unfair laws and policies that have a detrimental impact on individuals, their families and the communities they are part of. I am committed to the important national role that NACLC plays to support the work of the community legal sector in providing legal services in ways that are accessible to people who would otherwise not be able to exercise their rights under law.

NACLC has delivered significant services to enhance CLC success and sustainability over the 2016/17 financial year, including:

Community Legal Assistance Services System (CLASS) – we rolled out CLASS across the country in March to 160 CLCs and eight state and territory governments, within a very tight timeframe, with limited resources and a relatively small budget. CLASS will improve the integrity and usefulness of our client data, build a national picture of our sector and legal need, and most importantly, our sector will own it.

National Accreditation Scheme (NAS) – Phase 2 was implemented focusing on continuous improvement and a framework for organisational sustainability across the sector.

Insurance – we reviewed our insurance scheme, changing brokers to deliver high level coverage below market premiums.

National CLCs Conference – our National Conference, ‘Innovation and Collaboration: for better justice outcomes’ was another success, attended by over 430 delegates from across Australia in Fremantle, Western Australia. An external review of the Conference commenced this year with a view to making recommendations for future improvements.

Advocacy – NACLC continues to be a leading voice in policy, advocacy and engaging civil society and government in discussions about reconciliation, access to justice, and human rights in Australia; using our client experiences and key partnerships to strengthen this advocacy.

knowmore – has delivered exceptional client-centred, trauma informed legal services for people telling their story or providing information to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

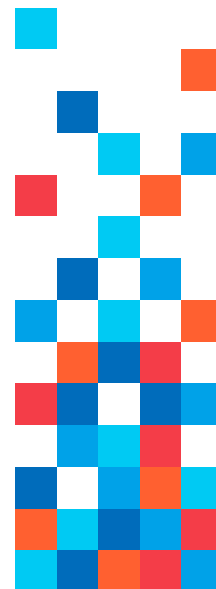
Other sector sustainability initiatives – included an update of the Legal Needs Assessment Toolkit, completion of the NACLC Census, coordination of Good 360 and LexisNexis.

A dedicated team of staff who work hard to support the community legal sector deliver these projects. I'd like to thank the NACLC team for their ongoing work and for welcoming and supporting me since I took up the role as CEO.

In particular, I'd like to thank Amanda Alford and John Macmillan. I would also like to thank the NACLC Board for their guidance and support and for providing many hours of volunteer time to enable the work that NACLC does.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone in the community legal sector and our partners for welcoming me. I am looking forward to continuing the vital work that we all do to ensure that every person in Australia – no matter their circumstance – can have access to justice and the protection of their human rights

Nassim Arrage
CEO



Community Law Australia – Fund Equal Justice Campaign

This year saw the incredible success of the Fund Equal Justice campaign, with the Federal Government reversing the 30% cut to Commonwealth funding for CLCs due to take effect on 1 July 2017.

The success of the campaign is a testament to the work of the sector, its partners and supporters, in highlighting the vital work of CLCs helping everyday people across Australia.

impact of the cuts & promoting the **voices of everyday people** helped by centres

- use of **Parliamentary processes**, including Senate motions to express support for the sector, and
- development of **information and materials** including campaign information kit, fact sheets, briefing materials and submissions to support the campaign.



Community lawyers advocate for equal justice. Photo: Mark Riboldi



Sector representatives with Attorney-General Brandis and Minister Cash after the announcement of the reversal of the funding cuts.

The Federal Government provided CLCs with an additional \$39 million over 3 years under the National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services, targeted at family law and family violence-related services as well as some additional family violence-related funding. A number of State and Territory Governments also provided CLCs with welcome additional funding.

The funding provides a critical lifeline for all those people who rely on the help of CLCs every day and for centres and communities across Australia.

Unfortunately however, despite the reversal in May 2017 the South Australian Government announced that it would not provide ongoing funding to three Commonwealth funded CLCs. NACLC was extremely disappointed with this decision and worked closely with the South Australian Council of CLCs with assistance from Community Legal Centres Queensland, and affected CLCs to support them and their communities.

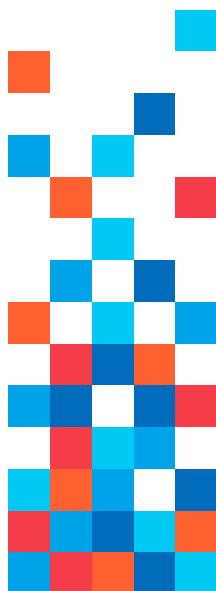
More broadly, there is ongoing work to do to ensure increased, predictable and long-term funding for the legal assistance sector. As a result, over the coming year NACLC is looking forward to working with the sector to continue to highlight the essential nature of legal help and the central role the sector plays in ensuring everyday people can access the legal help they need in Australia.

NACLC acknowledges and thanks the individual CLCs and state and territory CLC associations for their tireless work in opposing the cuts, as well as the other legal assistance services, the private profession and pro bono partners, community organisations and others who supported the sector and the people it helps throughout the campaign.

NACLC coordinated the Fund Equal Justice campaign, guided and supported by the state and territory CLC associations, NACLC Board and Advisory Council and CLCs across Australia.

The campaign involved:

- significant **media and social media** engagement at a local, state and territory and national level
- **engagement with MPs and Senators** across Australia, highlighting the work of CLCs in their community and in key policy areas
- **collaboration and joint advocacy** with the legal profession and its peak bodies, community and advocacy organisations, churches, academics and key individuals
- development of a strong **evidence base** demonstrating the value of the sector and



Sector Sustainability

This last year has been important in developing and delivering a range of products aimed at supporting, and building the vision for, the long-term sustainability of the community legal sector, especially as it was in the shadow of potential substantial cuts to the community legal sector nationally.

NACLC's sector sustainability initiatives continue to be delivered as part of the implementation of the six core activity areas of the national Sector Sustainability Framework established in 2015/16.

Sector efficiency and financial sustainability

- implementation of a new partnership with **LexisNexis**, providing ongoing access to free online legal resources for CLCs and supporting efficiency and financial sustainability for the sector. We thank those CLCs that contributed their time and feedback, needed to support and maintain this important partnership. On the back of the success of implementation in 2016 the partnership has been renewed for another year
- maintenance of other bulk purchasing arrangements to support the financial sustainability of the sector including **Insurances** and the **Standards and Performance Pathway** tool to support and enable centres to conduct their self-assessments under the National Accreditation Scheme. New arrangements were put into place to maintain free access to **video conferencing** for the sector. A very favourable deal for those centres wanting to maintain access to the **Management Support Online** resources was also negotiated
- A new partnership between **NACLC**, the **Australian Legal Sector Alliance**, **Good360** and a range of CLCs and contributing private law firms that provides free access to a wide range of excess merchandise is also being piloted.

Sector coordination and collaboration

- NACLC is working with state and territory CLC associations to explore opportunities to drive a common agenda and share resources through the **National Sector Sustainability Committee**

- NACLC continues to work closely with our colleagues across the legal assistance sector including **National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services** and **National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services** to identify opportunities for collaboration.

Quality and continuous improvement

- implementation of Phase 2 of the **National Accreditation Scheme for CLCs**, including the new Cultural Safety



Sector Sustainability Director, John Macmillan meeting with the team at Youthlaw in Melbourne.



NACLC CEO, Nassim Arrage with the National Accreditation Coordinator and the Regional Coordinators. Left to right: Penny Sullivan (QLD), Meg Houston (NACLC), Nassim Arrage (NACLC), Jen Messing (Vic), Trish Ryans-Taylor (WA), Laurel Draffen (NSW).

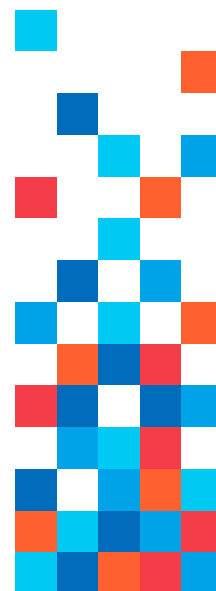
Standard, is progressing positively (see page 13 for further details)

- the **Risk Management Guide** was updated to incorporate the new National Legal Assistance Data Standards and other feedback received. A copy of the revised guide has been provided to all centres.

Access to justice

- to support CLCs to plan their services and contribute to jurisdiction planning under the National Partnership Agreement the **Legal Needs Assessment Toolkit** was updated and a series of training webinars delivered on how to most effectively use the tool.

Continued on page 12



Sector Sustainability *continued...*

Continued from page 11

Workforce capability and sustainability

- delivery of another successful **National CLCs Conference** and National Networks Day in Fremantle on 9 – 12 August 2016 (see page 20 for further detail)
- development and delivery of **training initiatives** specifically targeted to centres operating in regional, rural and remote locations focussed on establishing effective pro bono relationships and managing volunteers
- updated the **CLC Volunteers website** in partnership with the Australian Pro Bono Centre.

Evidence base and information management

- successful development of the **Community Legal Assistance Services System (CLASS)** and migration of all centres to the new system (see page 14 for further detail)
- collection and publishing of data through the annual **National Census of Community Legal Centres**. The 2015 Census report was launched at the 2016 National CLCs Conference, attracting positive media attention and providing critical evidence to support the Fund Equal Justice Campaign. The survey tool was revised in 2016 to reduce the amount of time required for centres to complete it. Data packs were provided to all state and territory CLC associations for the first time to support their work and advocacy efforts
- Utilisation of the **CLEAR database**, as the only national repository of Community Legal Education resources continues to be promoted and supported.

Training for RRR Centres

NACLC worked with the Australian Pro Bono Centre to develop a video and deliver webinars on establishing and maintaining effective pro bono partnerships for RRR CLCs. The video, which was launched at the 2016 National Conference, features helpful tips and best practice examples from CLCs and law firms already engaged in partnerships outside of major population centres. The webinars took the form of a live question and answer panel where pro bono partners fielded questions from the audience. A considerable amount of positive feedback was received with one participant writing, *“helpful to hear the panel’s advice and insights, and to build the sector’s understanding/capacity to partner with private law firms.”*

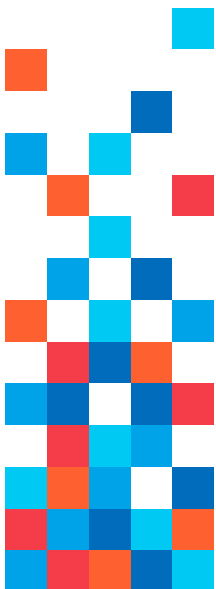


NACLC also engaged the Centre for Volunteering to develop and deliver three webinars for RRR centres on recruiting, retaining and inducting volunteers. The content of the webinars was developed through consultations with, and case scenarios provided by, the National RRR Network. The webinars included a specific focus on meeting the National Accreditation Scheme Standards as they relate to recruiting and managing volunteers.

Including the webinars on governance and work, health and safety delivered earlier in 2016, a total of **297** representatives from RRR centres across Australia participated in these informative training initiatives.

A recording of each of the webinars delivered, along with the video on effective pro bono partnerships is available on the RRR CLCs members page on the NACLC website.

This work was made possible as a result of grant funding received from the Australian Government Attorney-General’s Department.



Quality Assurance: National Accreditation Scheme

The National Accreditation Scheme for Community Legal Centres (the NAS) continues to be a very successful sector led initiative which drives quality service provision for clients, guides organisational development and supports Boards and staff.

Launched in 2010, the NAS is an industry based accreditation and certification process for CLCs that supports and recognises good practice in the delivery of community legal services. The aim of the NAS is to provide a quality assurance process that gives CLCs, funding bodies and clients confidence that CLCs are operating according to good practice and industry standards. A key feature of the NAS is to promote a culture of continuous quality improvement.

The NAS is a joint project of NACLC and the eight state and territory CLC associations. It is governed by a NAS Steering Committee which comprises a member of each state and territory CLC association and NACLC. The NAS is overseen by NACLC through the CEO, Director Sector Sustainability and the National Accreditation Coordinator (NAC). The latter works closely with four Regional Accreditation Coordinators (RACs) (in NSW, Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia) and works on the NAS with CLCs in ACT, Northern Territory, South Australia and Tasmania.

Full member CLCs are required to participate in the NAS. CLCs are currently involved in the second cycle of the NAS, Phase 2, which was launched in February 2016 following consultation with the sector and external stakeholders.

The aim of the NAS for Phase 2 is to build on the significant work CLCs undertook in Phase 1,

to further strengthen processes and systems for organisational management and service delivery and to help embed a culture of continuous improvement.

A new Standard on Cultural Safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and staff was introduced for Phase 2 and has been a focus across the sector. NACLC worked with Aboriginal colleagues in the sector to develop and deliver a session on the new Standard at the National CLCs Conference and has produced a number of resources to guide CLCs in this important work.

Phase 2 involves a rigorous process of self-assessment against the NAS Standards followed by an on site assessment by a RAC or the NAC. CLCs that are successful have their certification renewed for a further three years, during which they are required to report 6 monthly on progress in completing their agreed Improvement Plans.

NACLC oversees the development and implementation of the NAS for the sector and provides support for the sector and for individual CLCs, including through access to a Standards and Performance Pathway tool (the SPP provided by an external supplier called Breaking New Ground) which provides self-assessment quizzes and a range of resources for organisational management. NACLC ensures that the NAS is being implemented consistently across Australia in line with the NAS Guidelines and timelines for completion of Phase 2. NACLC provides ongoing support and leadership to the Certifiers and RACs, bringing the RACs together

in Sydney in November 2016 and May 2017 for professional development.

NACLC views the NAS as an integral part of sector sustainability and is a crucial framework for building the capacity of the sector, alongside NACLC's Risk Management Guide and insurance package.



Supporting the CLC sector in its ongoing journey to raise standards. Left to right: Meg Houston (NACLC), Penny Sullivan (QLD), Laurel Draffen (NSW), Jen Messing (Vic), Trish Ryans-Taylor (WA)

There has been positive feedback from the sector on the ways in which the NAS brings benefits to the CLC and its clients:

"The main advantage is that the accreditation process forces you to critically examine every aspect of the service... at the end of the process your service has well developed frameworks to guide service provision with the flow on effect that makes the service more accessible and efficient for our clients." – Karen Sigley, Southn. Aboriginal Corp. WA

NACLC is grateful to CLCs for their high engagement with the certification renewal process, appreciates the work of the RACs, Certifiers and their peak bodies and is pleased that a number of CLCs have achieved accreditation for the first time this year.

Community Legal Assistance Services System (CLASS)

The Community Legal Assistance Services System (CLASS) database provides a contemporary cloud based platform that more effectively supports legal practice management in CLCs and FVPLS as well as fulfils reporting requirements under the National Partnership Agreement (NPA). After 18 months of planning, scoping and developing, the first phase of the CLASS database was delivered in 2016/17 and is now in use.

Data from 166 CLCs was migrated from the antiquated Community Legal Services Information System (CLSIS) to CLASS during February and March 2017; CLSIS was decommissioned later in the financial year.

As with all IT projects of any size and complexity, there were some delays to the original planned timetable for this project however most of the initial post migration issues have now been resolved. NACLC thanks the sector and funding bodies for their flexibility during the system implementation and appreciates their ongoing collaboration. NACLC continue to work closely with the developer, ITMagnet, to resolve concerns and maintain a focus on continuous improvement.

A dedicated team of staff responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of CLASS was established. The team established support processes, set up tools including JIRA and Confluence to provide real time support and up to date information to centre staff. As well as supporting centres during the migration and post migration, the team is now providing ongoing helpdesk support and

training for new staff and as new functions become available.

As outlined in the table below, a total of 275.5 hours of training was provided by the CLASS team to sector staff throughout the year.

Approx. training hours 2016/17

	Total
Online	167.5
F2F NSW	34
F2F WA	20
F2F SA	4
F2F QLD	24
F2F VIC	10
F2F TAS	4
F2F ACT	0
F2F NT	0
F2F SPMs	6
F2F FVPLS	6
TOTAL	275.5

As well as specific training sessions, a number of more general presentations and information sessions were delivered across the sector:

Number of F2F sessions by jurisdiction

	Presentations (e.g. Quarterlies, Conference)	Training sessions	Total by state
NSW	2	0	2
NT	0	0	0
ACT	0	0	0
QLD	2	0	2
SA	0	1	1
WA	2	0	2
VIC	1	0	1
TAS	0	1	1
National	1	0	1
TOTAL	8	2	10

The current focus of development is on delivering the reporting module for CLASS. Work is well underway and is due for delivery to a pilot group of centres in July 2017.

CLASS is based on the new data standards, as described in the *National Legal Assistance Data Standards Manual* that was published in August 2016, and uses its terms and definitions for recording client and service data. This will support and facilitate CLCs and FVPLS in their reporting to government, and state or territory program managers in accessing reports for provision to the Commonwealth in accordance with their obligations under the NPA.

NACLC continues to maintain regular contact with all CLCs and FVPLS through identified contacts in every centre as well as the publishing of regular updates and other information on the NACLC website and the Message Board and regular CLASS News.

NACLC is positively committed to continuing to work closely with CLCs and FVPLS to deliver a contemporary, secure and high quality legal practice management tool through CLASS that will support the information management needs of the sector now and into the future.

Insurance and Risk Management

NACLC negotiates and administers three national insurance schemes for the benefit of legal assistance services around Australia. This is one of NACLC's key services and means CLCs that are full members of a state or territory CLC association can obtain highly discounted, tailored insurances, without the need to negotiate their own policies. These include Professional Indemnity Insurance (PII), Association Liability Insurance (ALI), and Public Liability Insurance (PLI).

In 2016/17, the NACLC insurance team included Kiri Libbesson as Insurances Coordinator, and during her leave, Alice Jones Rabbitt as Insurances Officer and Peter Marer as Insurances Consultant.

In May 2017, NACLC changed insurance brokers from Aon Risk Services to McDougall Kelly Martinis (MKM). NACLC looks forward to working closely with MKM to deliver insurances for the community legal assistance services sector. NACLC thanks Aon for its partnership of more

than 10 years, in particular David Harry, Jamie Quinn and Gavin Deadman of Aon's specialist Not for Profit team.

NACLC's work also includes managing the renewal process on behalf of all participating centres, providing ongoing support to centres throughout the year and working closely with the National PII Network. In addition, in 2016/17, NACLC published the second edition of the *Risk Management Guide* (RMG). In particular, NACLC thanks the PII Network for their considerable effort in updating the RMG.

This year NACLC commenced reviewing the insurances scheme and made a number of changes and improvements. NACLC remains committed to ensuring that centres are able to access insurances at discounted rates and in supporting and managing the risk management and related frameworks and processes. NACLC looks forward to continuing to provide and explore national insurance schemes, and other related services to the sector.

Professional Indemnity Insurance

In 2016/17, 158 centres participated in NACLC's National PII Scheme. NACLC negotiates and coordinates the policy, and has delegated the regional administration of the associated risk management scheme to the National PII Network, which consists of a number of CLC lawyers, with at least one representative from each state and territory. NACLC acknowledges the significant contributions made by all members of the PII Network throughout the year.

Association Liability Insurance

149 CLCs participated in NACLC's ALI scheme for the 2016/17 financial year. NACLC also administers a separate combined ALI and PII policy for itself and participating state CLC associations.

Public Liability Insurance

NACLC once again arranged Public Liability Insurance (PLI) for 160 organisations this year. PLI is provided to centres and state CLC associations free of charge as one of the many benefits of NACLC membership.

National Professional Indemnity Insurance Network

The Professional Indemnity Insurance (PII) Network consists of the PII representatives from each state and territory. We meet monthly by phone and then face-to-face at least once each year at the Network Day prior to the National CLCs Conference.

Throughout 2016/17, the PII Network finalised revisions to the Risk Management Guide, and in February published the Second Edition of the RMG. The RMG provides practical recommended guidelines and procedures to centres related to legal practice and risk management. The revised

RMG incorporates:

- feedback from the sector-wide consultation survey in 2014
- updates to reflect the change in systems from CLSIS to CLASS and the new Data Standards Manual
- changes suggested by the National PII Network on the basis of their experience assisting centres in relation to CLC practice issues
- updates to reflect changes in legislation and practice rules.

During 2016/2017 we also:

- liaised regularly with the Accreditation Coordinators,

including regarding changes to the National Accreditation Scheme (NAS) in relation to legal practice and reducing areas of overlap with the cross-check process;

- presented a session at the National CLCs Conference in August 2016

The PII Network thanks Kiri Libbesson for her role as Network Secretariat and in revising the RMG before going on 12 months leave in March.

Alice Jones Rabbitt
PII Network Secretariat
National PII Network

Policy and Advocacy

Over the past year NACLC has continued to lead and engage in strategic policy and advocacy work making a difference across a range of areas for the sector, everyday people helped by CLCs and the broader community.



Renee Cummings (NFVPLS), Amanda Alford, Karly Warner (NATSILS), Ben Schokman (NFVPLS), Change the Record Coalition meeting, Melbourne.

Supporting the Sector

The key focus of NACLC's advocacy over the last 12 months was the successful Fund Equal Justice Campaign (read more about this on page 10).

In addition to the campaign, NACLC has worked on behalf of the sector to emphasise the need for increased, long-term, sustainable and predictable funding and engaged with the Federal Government to inform decision-making about other Commonwealth funding for the sector. NACLC has also advocated on behalf of the sector in the context of CLC and access to justice-related reviews across Australia and the implications of these reviews on the funding and administration of centres.

Access to Justice & Human Rights

NACLC is committed to continuing to work with the sector to protect and promote the rights of all people in Australia. NACLC has worked across a wide range of

issues over the past 12 months, including:

Protecting Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

NACLC, along with Kingsford Legal Centre, coordinated civil society participation in Australia's review under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) in May 2017. This involved preparing a submission endorsed by over 40 civil society organisations highlighting significant concerns about Australia's compliance with its obligations under the ICESCR.

The UN Committee condemned the Australian Government in its Concluding Observations, a statement outlining its assessment of Australia's performance, echoing many of the concerns outlined by the Australian NGO Coalition. NACLC will continue to work with the sector and other civil society organisations, Government and the Australian Human Rights Commission on monitoring and implementation of reform.

Tackling Over-Representation of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander People in the Justice System

The ongoing over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander people in the justice system is one of the key human rights issues in Australia. This year NACLC continued to work as part of the Change the Record Coalition to build the evidence base and undertake strategic advocacy aimed at reducing this overrepresentation. NACLC also made a range of submissions, including in particular engaging with the Australian Law Reform Commission to inform its Incarceration Inquiry.

Protecting the Rights of Older People

Together with the National Older Persons Legal Services Network, NACLC has worked to highlight elder abuse across Australia, including as part of the Australian Law Reform Commission's Elder Abuse Inquiry and contribute to international moves to draft a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons.

Other Work

NACLC also works with the sector and other community organisations to push for inform or respond to policy shaping and reform across areas including:

- Law Council of Australia National Justice Project
- Family violence, including through supporting the sector to advocate for reforms such as the cross-examination of vulnerable witnesses; providing evidence to relevant inquiries and reviews; and briefing the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Its Causes and Consequences
- supporting the National Networks to share information, good practice examples and make or inform submissions and engagement with a number of inquiries and reviews.

Democratic Rights and Freedoms

Attacks on Advocacy

CLCs have a long and successful history of bringing about systemic change through policy, advocacy and law reform. NACLC has continued working to protect the right of CLCs and civil



Amanda Alford and Dan Stubbs (NACLC Board), Parliamentary Marriage Equality event, Canberra.

society to undertake this vital work, including through ongoing advocacy around the restriction on use of Commonwealth funding for policy and advocacy work; briefing the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders who expressed serious concern about such steps; and opposing reforms to tax and related laws that may seek to limit this work through administrative or other mechanisms.

Data Retention and Civil Justice

NACLC strongly opposed moves to permit the use of data retained solely for the purposes of the data retention scheme in the civil justice system and welcomed the report of the review which concluded that there was insufficient evidence to support such reform.

Research and Collaboration

National Research Agenda

This year NACLC also started work on developing a National Research Agenda and mechanisms and resources to further encourage collaboration and partnerships between academics and CLCs in a research & project sense, moving beyond historical partnerships involving student placements and clinics. Over the next year NACLC will work with the sector and academics to develop an Agenda that outlines priority areas of research/collaboration nationally at a high level, and develop resources for CLCs and academics to facilitate and guide their collaboration and work.

What Next?

Over the coming 12 months, NACLC will continue to work with the sector, other legal assistance bodies and peaks, Government, civil society, pro bono partners and others to protect and promote human rights and access to justice in Australia. NACLC is also looking forward to further developing the policy and advocacy tools and resources available to the sector and exploring opportunities to build sector capacity and build on our shared expertise as a sector.

NACLC Reconciliation Plan and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy

As the peak body for Community Legal Centres in Australia, NACLC acknowledges and accepts the role we should and must play in working towards reconciliation and in protecting and promoting the human rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and ensuring they are treated fairly and equitably before the law.

This year NACLC launched our *Reconciliation Action Plan 2017-2019* (RAP) and *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2017-2019*. NACLC is committed to ensuring both these are meaningful and living documents that guide and inform our organisational governance, processes and work. They provide NACLC with a strategic, clear and measurable framework for translating our commitment into action.

In addition, NACLC is committed to supporting centres across Australia to provide culturally safe and appropriate services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients. As part of this, we are also committed to improving the attraction, recruitment, support and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees at NACLC and across the sector.

As a result, as well as to assist centres to meet the cultural safety standard in the National Accreditation Scheme (NAS), this year NACLC developed a number of resources, including:

- *Connecting and Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities, Organisations & Clients: A Guide for Community Legal Centres*
- *Recruiting and Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employees: A Guide for Community Legal Centres*

NACLC acknowledges that centre expertise and practice varies significantly, but hope that all centres have and will continue to draw on these high level national resources in some way to reflect on and further develop their cultural competency.

In developing our RAP, Employment Strategy and these resources, NACLC consulted a wide range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and networks within the sector and acknowledges in particular the contribution made by Bobbi Murray, Convenor of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Network and the Network.

NACLC looks forward to working with the sector to ensure that our centres and services are culturally safe and appropriate, we work in partnership with community-controlled organisations, and we continue to provide vital services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and communities across Australia.



NACLC's Communications Engagement

"The announcement that these cuts would take place was made about two to three years ago and since then we have been working really hard to convince the government against implementing these cuts"

– Nassim Arrage,
NACLC CEO,
AM ABC Radio

"The cuts would have reduced the 215,000 clients that we help by a third and the sector already had to turn away 165,000 people a year because of a lack of resources"

– Nassim Arrage,
NACLC CEO,
Guardian Australia

As NACLC is the peak national body for the community legal sector it is imperative that NACLC communicates effectively both within the community legal sector, within the broader legal assistance services sector and the broader NGO sector, as well as externally to media, politicians (at all levels) and other influencers and the general public.

NACLC uses a range of communications tools to share NACLC's and the sectors' key messages and to interact with target audiences. Here are some of the communications highlights from the 2016/17 financial year.

Media

The use of a wide range of media by CLCs, state and territory CLC associations and NACLC was particularly important to help tell the stories about the critical work that CLCs do, as the date for the cuts to the sector (1 July 2017) loomed large for 2016/17 financial year.

While the number of media releases NACLC produced this financial year decreased slightly from 30 in 2016 to 27 in 2017, the media mentions for individual CLCs, state and territory CLC associations and NACLC increased from 127 in 2016 to 194 in 2017.

Media mentions

Media mentions increased by 55%



To view all the mentions visit:
naccl.org.au/cb_pages/media_wrap.php

Social Media

Social Media has become an important tool in a fast moving information environment and NACLC actively uses Twitter and Facebook to engage with followers and supporters.

Twitter followers

@NACLCComms Twitter followers increased by 34%



@CommunityLawAus Twitter followers increased by 17%



NACLC Facebook page likes

Facebook page likes increased by 190%



Websites

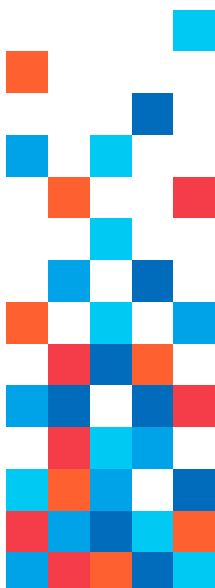
The NACLC website – naccl.org.au – continues to be one of NACLC's main communications tools to provide CLCs and state and territory CLC associations with information about NACLC services. The NACLC website is also a good resource to promote and share the work of NACLC and CLCs. NACLC also used the Community Law Australia (CLA) website – communitylawaustralia.org.au – to promote the Fund Equal Justice Campaign.

E-bulletins

NACLC uses e-bulletins to directly inform the community legal sector as well as the broader legal assistance services sector of topical news, announcements and activities. 2016 saw the introduction of a new community legal sector (only) e-bulletin – Sector Only News and the continued growth of subscribers to NACLC News the regular e-bulletin for the broader legal assistance services sector.

NACLC News

NACLC News subscribers increased by 28%



knowmore is an independent, national legal service established in 2013 to provide free legal advice and assistance, information and referral services to people engaging or considering engaging with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. **knowmore** was established by, and operates as, a separate program of NACLC with funding from the Australian Government, represented by the Attorney-General's Department.

knowmore delivers practical assistance to clients in a confidential and supportive environment. The **knowmore** team of lawyers, social workers, counsellors, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement advisors and operational support staff are committed to delivering trauma-informed services to clients.

As at 30 June 2017 **knowmore**:

- had assisted **7,368** clients including 967 clients who received face to face legal services, providing over **72,000** instances of legal advice, information and referral assistance
- staff have accompanied clients, as their support staff to **81** Royal Commission private sessions
- had conducted or participated in **1,705** community outreach and liaison events, including meetings with legal and support service providers, speaking engagements at conferences, community information sessions for potential clients and support services, and advice conferences with clients in regional and remote locations.

or interviews with the Royal Commission, and for clients who wish to seek legal representation to pursue compensation for the abuse they suffered. We have established legal representation panels in a number of jurisdictions and a national compensation referral panel.

As well as providing individual services to clients, **knowmore** has provided a number of submissions responding to Issues Papers released by the Royal Commission and discussion papers released by governments on issues such as redress. Our submissions are based on our clients' collective experiences and needs.

Although the Royal Commission will deliver its final report in December 2017, in the May Budget **knowmore** received additional funding to transition the service to continue in the future, providing survivors with legal assistance about their options for redress. This will include helping people with possible claims under the Commonwealth Redress Scheme, which is being established by the Federal Government in response to the Royal Commission's recommendations. The Scheme will commence in March 2018 providing information and referrals, and will open to accept claims in July 2018.

knowmore also provided counselling and support to many clients who had never been able to access counselling services to help them deal with the consequences of the abuse they suffered. Over one

half of the clients who have called **knowmore** have received social work or counselling from our support staff. This service is provided on a short term basis to clients to enable them to provide instructions and to understand the advice provided and also with a view to making supported referrals to other services that provide ongoing counselling and assistance.

knowmore also provided referral assistance for those who need representation at public hearings

NACLC welcomes the Federal Government's decision to provide further funding for **knowmore**, as it means that the legal needs of survivors of child sexual abuse, including around options for redress, will continue to be met through a trusted and specialist community legal service.

knowmore contact details
free advice line **1800 605 762**
info@knowmore.org.au
www.knowmore.org.au

Specialist staff for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients

knowmore has a strong commitment to providing culturally appropriate services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients



23% of our clients identify as being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent



We employ 3 experienced male and female Aboriginal engagement advisors.



We also work closely with interpreters and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations to ensure that we are engaging respectfully and appropriately with people

2016/17 saw continuing high demand on **knowmore's** services. Registrations for private sessions closed on 30 September 2016, requiring increased community engagement by **knowmore** with target client groups leading up to that date, to ensure people had the opportunity to tell their story to the Royal Commission if they wished. The Royal Commission will continue to hear private sessions until December 2017 for those already registered. The Commission's public hearings were completed in March 2017.

National CLCs Conference 2016 – Innovation and Collaboration for Better Justice Outcomes

On 10 -12 August 2016, NACLC hosted 430 delegates from across Australia at the 37th National CLCs Conference in Fremantle.



CLCA (WA) Executive Director Helen Creed, Senator Pat Dodson and NACLC Chair, Sara Kane



Some of the NACLC staff who assisted at the National Conference



CONFERENCE PARTNERS



MAJOR SPONSORS



NATIONAL CLCs CONFERENCE 2016
FREMANTLE, WESTERN AUSTRALIA 10-12 AUGUST



Under the theme **Innovation and collaboration for better justice outcomes**, the Conference showcased the innovative and collaborative work of the CLC sector in meeting the access to justice needs of communities. The Conference provided opportunities for the sector to share and learn from each other, partner organisations and communities, as well as other experts in the legal assistance services field, with the aim being to demonstrate and celebrate the fundamental role CLCs play in driving better justice outcomes within their communities and society as a whole.

On Tuesday 9 August, 16 National Networks took advantage of the rare opportunity to meet face to face, to share information and plan for the future.

The Conference included a broad range of highly informative and inspiring presentations. In total there were five plenaries and 42 breakout sessions held including:

- an opening plenary session featuring presentations from Senator Patrick Dodson, Sue Ash AO, CEO at UnitingCare West and the Hon Wayne Martin AC, Chief Justice of WA
- a number of sessions exploring the Health Justice Partnership model including a plenary session featuring the newly appointed CEO of the National Centre for Health Justice

Partnerships, Tessa Boyd-Caine along with representatives from the CLC and health sectors

- sessions that demonstrated the wide range of partnerships that CLCs are engaged in across the country and explored different aspects of service provision, including a very well received session on trauma informed practice presented by **knowmore**
- the ever popular **Brief talks, Big ideas** competition with this year's winner, as voted by the audience, being The Humanitarian Group who gave an innovative and entertaining presentation on temporary protection visas.

As always, a large proportion of delegates enjoyed the Conference Dinner where Michael Smith was thanked by the sector for the great work he had led as the Chair of the NACLC Board/Management Committee over the preceding five years.

Feedback received confirms that the Conference was successful in providing a positive and engaging experience for participants, with over **77%** of those that completed the post Conference questionnaire reporting their overall impression of the program and content as **good or very good**.

NACLC thanks all the sponsors of the 2016 National CLCs Conference for their assistance and support.

National Networks

At different times, there can be around 20 National Networks that are organised around particular areas of law or legal practice, client groups or CLC areas of work.

The National Networks are a way to bring together CLC workers to share their expertise, support one another and work collaboratively. The Networks also contribute to NACLC's own policy development and advocacy work. Here is a spotlight on some of those Networks.

National Social Security Rights Network

Genevieve Bolton, Chair

The National Social Security Rights Network (NSSRN) is the peak community organisation concerned with Social Security and Family Assistance law, policy and administration. Our membership includes legal services across Australia which provide specialised legal assistance in this area.

NSSRN receives secretariat funding through the Department of Social Services. NSSRN's secretariat consists of a part time executive officer and part time legal project officer. It provides support to its members and coordinates their input into its policy and law reform activities.

Although it was not in this financial year, it was significant for the Network that in 2017, Matthew Butt the Executive Officer of the Network resigned. On behalf of the Network, I would like to record our sincere thanks to Matt for his outstanding contribution to NSSRN over many years.

In December 2016, the Network's members voted to change its name from National Welfare Rights Network to National Social Security Rights Network, partly in response to longstanding concerns about the meaning of the word welfare for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The name change took effect from January 2017. Important governance and organisational changes were also made during the reporting period to reflect the changing scope and nature of NSSRN's structure and function. Significantly, NSSRN is now governed by a Board and the

official spokesperson role rests in the Executive Officer position leaving the Board to focus on governance and strategic matters.

Following the name change, the Network launched a new, simpler website and a new set of up to date factsheets focusing on core areas where income support recipients seek legal assistance, as well as hosting only one space for papers, and similar support for members. Its support to its members included training sessions, holding a NSSRN Conference, regular case & legislative updates & a regular bulletin about income support law and policy.

In 2016/17, the NSSRN provided detailed submissions to Government and parliamentary inquiries (approximately 15) concerning income support programs and policies drawing on consultation with our member centres. The most significant policy issue faced by NSSRN and its members was the Department of Human Services' implementation of the online compliance system (colloquially known as 'robo debt'). The Network undertook a significant amount of policy and advocacy work on this issue including appearing before and providing a very detailed submission to the Senate Inquiry and engagement with the Commonwealth Ombudsman and the Department of Human Services which contributed to significant improvements to the system. The Network also produced a detailed robo debt fact sheet, which was widely distributed.

In addition to submissions, NSSRN also regularly engaged with the relevant government departments and other key stakeholders on a wide range of issues including



Genevieve Bolton, Chair of NSSRN Network with Executive Officer Matthew Butt after giving evidence at the Senate Inquiry into Robo debt.

around urgent payments policy and administration, and the disability support pension assessment process.

NSSRN provided input into the NGO sector's 'shadow report' to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights periodic view of Australia's compliance with this instrument.

In addition, NSSRN participated in biannual meetings with the Departments of Social Services and Human Services and was an active member of the Department of Human Services National Multicultural Advisory Group (NMAG).

NSSRN also participated in a forum hosted by the Aboriginal Peak Organisations of the NT (APONT) on the Community Development Program (CDP) concerning the job seeker compliance framework.

Towards the end of the reporting period, NSSRN commenced a research project in collaboration with its member service, Basic Rights Queensland. The project looked at the experience of people claiming disability support pension. A review of case files has now been completed and the NSSRN is now collating and analysing the results.

Older Persons Legal Services Network

**Jenny Blakey and Scott McDougall,
Co-Convenors**

2016 was a watershed year in the recognition of elder abuse in Australia and consequently was a significant year for the Older Persons Legal Services (OPLS) Network.

In June, following on from the Attorney-General's announcement of an Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) inquiry into elder abuse, the Coalition Government announced a \$15 million commitment to develop a *National Plan to Protect the Rights of Older Australians*.

The legal and policy response required to meaningfully address elder abuse is complicated by the fact that elder abuse issues cut across multiple portfolios and jurisdictions. This underscores the need for strong leadership from within government but importantly from within the community sector. Accordingly, earlier in the year a Working Meeting of the National Elder Abuse Conference resolved to commission an options paper on the development of a national entity to be a leading voice in elder abuse policy development.

In August, OPLS met face to face at the Esplanade Hotel in Fremantle to discuss priority issues, finalise the Network's submission on the ALRC Elder Abuse Inquiry Issues Paper 47, and develop a work plan for the year. In September, amongst the 458 submissions received by the ALRC were numerous individual submissions lodged by member CLCs.

In November, members of OPLS met with Age Discrimination Commissioner, the Hon Kay Patterson, to discuss her role in progressing any recommendations from the ALRC Inquiry and to seek her support for the establishment of a national elder abuse advocacy entity. OPLS were impressed by Commissioner Patterson's longstanding commitment to the rights of older Australians and her determination to use her term as Age Discrimination Commissioner to prioritise the achievement of key outcomes in elder abuse public policy.

After further consultation amongst the potential membership, consensus was reached about the name of a national entity – Elder Abuse Action Australia.

The name was chosen for ease of use (EAAA), to evoke a positive 'action oriented' entity and to avoid the use of 'network' which has apparently become a pejorative term!

In March 2017, OPLS delivered its submission to ALRC Discussion Paper 83. Amongst its various recommendations OPLS urged the establishment of a Coalition of Australian Governments plan similar to the National Plan to *Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children 2010-2022*, which has achieved some measurable progress toward addressing domestic violence.

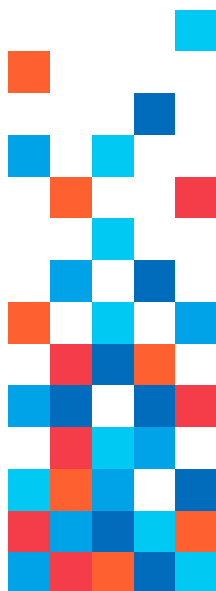


*Townsville Community Legal Service
Principal Solicitor, Bill Mitchell
representing NACLC and the Network.*

On 23 and 24 March 2017, members of OPLS attended the Aged and Disability Advocacy Australia National Conference on the Gold Coast where Townsville Community Legal Service Principal Solicitor, Bill Mitchell, presented a paper entitled *Towards a Convention on the Rights of Older Australians*. This excellent presentation highlighted the achievements of NACLC at the United Nations, as a Non Government Organisation, in advocating for a convention on the rights of older people to address the gaps in protection of older people resulting from the limitations of other human rights instruments. We wish to acknowledge and applaud Bill Mitchell for this important work over a sustained period.

In April members of OPLS met with key staff from the Attorney-Generals Department and we look forward to working closely with them in the coming year on the development of the National Plan.

We would like to thank the outgoing convenor Pam Morton for her valuable contribution to OPLS during her employment at Seniors Rights Victoria and all of the OPLS members for their support and generosity of time and effort.



Women's Legal Services Australia

Convenor, Pauline van Adrichem (July 2016 - October 2016), Agata Wierzbowski (November 2016 - April 2017), Liz Snell (May 2017 - June 2017)

National Policy Coordinator, Emma Smallwood (July 2016 - August 2016), Agata Wierzbowski (September 2016 - April 2017), Angela Lauman (May 2017 - June 2017)

Women's Legal Services Australia (WLSA), is a group of CLCs that specialise in women's legal issues, promotes a legal system that is safe, supportive, non-discriminatory, and responsive to the needs of women in accessing justice. WLSA members jointly fund a part-time National Policy Coordinator.



Political leaders from major parties joined Rosie Batty and Women's Legal Services Australia to discuss safety in family law and receive a petition by Rosie Batty calling for reform to the family law system.

In 2016/17, WLSA, with the support of Rosie Batty, continued to advocate for the five step plan to put Safety First in Family Law.

The 5 Step Plan:

- **Step 1:** develop a specialist pathway for domestic violence cases in family courts
- **Step 2:** reduce trauma and support those who are most at risk of future violence and death
- **Step 3:** intervene early and provide effective legal help for the most disadvantaged
- **Step 4:** support women and children to financially recover from domestic violence
- **Step 5:** strengthen the understanding of all family law professionals on domestic violence and trauma

See the *Safety First in Family Law* website: safetyinfamilylaw.org.au

Following years of advocacy by family violence survivors and their supporters we welcomed the Government's announcement in the May Budget of a public consultation on legislation to ban direct cross examination in family law proceedings.

WLSA made submissions in response to:

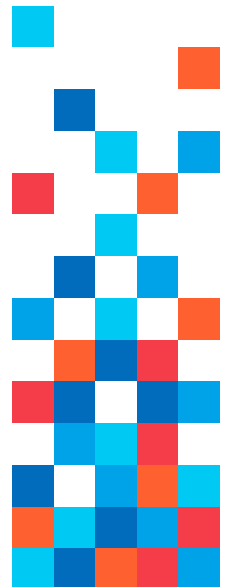
- the exposure draft of the *Family Law Amendment (Family Violence and Other Measures) Bill 2017 (Cth)*
- Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women: country visit to Australia
- the parliamentary inquiry into the complaints mechanism administered under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law
- the Australian Law Reform Commission Discussion Paper about Elder Abuse
- the parliamentary inquiry into a better family law system to support and protect those affected by family violence
- the consultation on the *Family Law Amendment (Family Violence and Cross-examination of Parties) Bill 2017*

WLSA also appeared before the Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs to give evidence regarding the inquiry into a better family law system to support and protect those affected by family violence.

WLSA continues to contribute to the work of the Australian Women Against Violence Alliance and the Equality Rights Alliance and is a member of Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) Practitioner Engagement Group.

During 2016/17 we said farewell to a number of WLSA representatives. WLSA acknowledges the invaluable contributions of:

- Pauline van Adrichem as convenor of WLSA over a number of years
- Emma Smallwood and Agata Wierzbowski in leading WLSA's policy work during 2016/17
- Heidi Guldbaek, a long time active WLSA Coordinating Committee member and a previous WLSA Policy Coordinator.





STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017

	Note	2017 \$	2016 \$
Revenue	2	7,837,997	9,688,516
Less: expenses			
Depreciation and amortisation expense		(202,419)	(314,745)
Employee benefits expense		(5,227,135)	(5,062,030)
Occupancy expense		(428,380)	(439,739)
Conference expense		(248,269)	(242,264)
Operating expense		(544,226)	(699,721)
Project expense		(98,882)	(207,521)
Consultants expense		(579,520)	(501,550)
Recruitment expense		(48,001)	(51,777)
Travel expense		(456,794)	(551,929)
		<u>(7,833,626)</u>	<u>(8,071,276)</u>
Surplus / (deficit) before income tax expense		4,371	1,617,240
Other comprehensive income for the year		-	-
Total comprehensive income		<u>4,371</u>	<u>1,617,240</u>



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2017

	2017 \$	2016 \$
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	2,565,294	1,616,259
Receivables	421,518	121,468
Other financial assets	563,400	1,843,400
Other assets	185,641	233,567
Total current assets	<u>3,735,853</u>	<u>3,814,694</u>
Non-current assets		
Other financial assets	173,735	225,075
Intangible assets	665,323	339,748
Property, plant and equipment	76,549	256,359
Other assets	4,295	12,086
Total non-current assets	<u>919,902</u>	<u>833,268</u>
Total assets	<u>4,655,755</u>	<u>4,647,962</u>
Current liabilities		
Payables	321,431	478,691
Provisions	348,278	298,099
Other liabilities	1,515,229	1,403,923
Total current liabilities	<u>2,184,938</u>	<u>2,180,713</u>
Non-current liabilities		
Provisions	89,965	90,768
Total non-current liabilities	<u>89,965</u>	<u>90,768</u>
Total liabilities	<u>2,274,903</u>	<u>2,271,481</u>
Net assets	<u>2,380,852</u>	<u>2,376,481</u>
Equity		
Reserves	137,500	137,500
Accumulated surplus	2,243,352	2,238,981
Total equity	<u>2,380,852</u>	<u>2,376,481</u>



STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017

	Reserves \$	Accumulated surplus \$	Total equity \$
Balance as at 1 July 2015	87,500	671,741	759,241
Surplus for the year	-	1,617,240	1,617,240
Total comprehensive income for the year	-	1,617,240	1,617,240
Transfers	50,000	(50,000)	-
Balance as at 1 July 2016	137,500	2,238,981	2,376,481
Surplus for the year	-	4,371	4,371
Total comprehensive income for the year	-	4,371	4,371
Balance as at 30 June 2017	137,500	2,243,352	2,380,852

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017

	Note	2017 \$	2016 \$
Cash flow from operating activities			
Receipts from customers		8,376,760	7,010,048
Payments to suppliers and employees		(8,456,725)	(8,281,060)
Interest received		45,844	79,350
Net cash provided by / (used in) operating activities		(34,121)	(1,191,662)
Cash flow from investing activities			
Proceeds from term deposits		1,331,340	632,600
Payment for property, plant and equipment		(22,609)	(141,364)
Payment for intangible asset		(325,575)	(339,748)
Net cash provided by investing activities		983,156	151,488
Reconciliation of cash			
Cash at beginning of the financial year		1,616,259	2,656,433
Net increase / (decrease) in cash held		949,035	(1,040,174)
Cash at end of financial year		2,565,294	1,616,259

Financial Reports

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES

ABN 67 757 001 303



PITCHER PARTNERS
ACCOUNTANTS • AUDITORS • ADVISORS

Level 22 MLC Centre
19 Martin Place
Sydney NSW 2000
Australia

Postal Address:
GPO Box 1615
Sydney NSW 2001
Australia

Tel: +61 2 9221 2099
Fax: +61 2 9223 1762

www.pitcher.com.au
partners@pitcher-nsw.com.au

Pitcher Partners is an association of independent firms
Melbourne | Sydney | Perth | Adelaide | Brisbane | Newcastle

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES

Auditor's Opinion

The accompanying summary financial report which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2017, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended and related notes and director's declaration, are derived from the audited financial report of the National Association of Community Legal Centres Limited for the year ended 30 June 2017.

In our opinion, the summary financial report is consistent, in all material respects, with (or a fair summary of) that audited financial report, in accordance with the basis of preparation as described in note 1 to the summary financial statements.

Summary Financial Statements

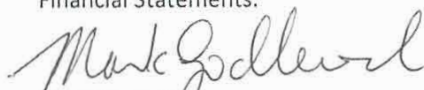
The summary financial report does not contain all the disclosures required by the Australian Accounting Standards Reduced Disclosure Requirements, Interpretations and other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*. Reading the summary financial report, therefore is not a substitute for reading the audited financial report of the National Association of Community Legal Centres Limited. We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on that financial report in our report dated 11 October 2017.

Directors' Responsibility for the Summary Financial Report

The directors are responsible for the preparation and presentation of the summary financial report in accordance with the basis of preparation as described in note 1 to the summary financial statements. This responsibility includes establishing and maintaining internal controls relevant to the preparation of the concise financial report, selecting and applying the appropriate accounting policies, and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the summary financial report based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with Auditing Standard ASA 810 Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements.


Mark Godlewski

Partner

11 October 2017


PITCHER PARTNERS

SYDNEY

