



Community Legal Centres
Australia

Annual Report 2019-20



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Community Legal Centres acknowledges the traditional owners of the lands across Australia and particularly the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, traditional owners of the land on which the CLCs Australia office is situated.

We pay deep respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

Chair report

As the national peak for community legal centres we have been constantly evolving over the forty years of our national movement to better meet our fundamental purpose – *ensuring a thriving community legal sector*. We thank and acknowledge everyone who has been part of the journey over the last forty years to bring us to this point.

Over the last two years, we have taken time out to reinvigorate our purpose, values and strategic direction and refresh our image. In August 2019 we changed our name to Community Legal Centres Australia (CLCs Australia) and adopted a new logo.

Community Legal Centres Australia says who we are – in a simpler way. The logo is representative of the eight State and Territory community legal centre peaks coming together as a whole and the collective work we do on behalf of the community we serve.



Community Legal Centres Australia

Some of our many other achievements for the sector over the last twelve months include successful funding advocacy bringing much needed additional funding into the sector; delivery of a powerful national conference in Brisbane in, August 2019; and supporting the sector through the torrent of global challenges – the increasing climate emergency which we most recently experienced as widespread bushfires, the



Sara Kane, Chair

international spread of COVID-19, and the heightened urgency of Black Lives Matter – all of which have significant impacts on our clients and services.

CLCs Australia continues to build a strong base with effective services and advocacy to ensure a robust community legal sector ready to meet legal need in years to come.

The Board maintains steady stewardship during these times of significant change and uncertainty by maintaining oversight of the implementation, monitoring and review of the Strategic Plan and governance systems. While we continue to deliver on our current strategic objectives, we have begun to lay the foundation for the development of a new Strategic Plan for 2021-2024 that will be launched next year.

One of the key challenges facing any organisation is maintaining our financial viability. We have made significant progress this year by securing our financial position for this year and for the next five years. This is the culmination of hard work to implement a comprehensive financial strategy, and continuous advocacy. This security provides a good foundation on which we can continue to build the resources we have available to support the sector.

We have also continued the work of transitioning knowmore into a standalone national community

legal centre. knowmore supports survivors to make applications to the National Redress Scheme for people who have experienced child sexual abuse, provides financial counselling, and works with specialist counselling and support services.

The Board would like to thank the community legal sector and our members for providing valuable insights, support and guidance to shape our work through the Advisory Council.

This will be my last report as CLCs Australia Chairperson. I have relished every opportunity and challenge as a CLCs Australia Director and Chair. It has been a privilege to work alongside, be guided by and learn from fellow Board Members Lee-Ann Emzin, Anna Cody, Laurel Draffen, Cathy McMorrine, Michael Smith, Vanessa Lesnie and Ellen English. The Board has worked diligently to ensure the national peak continues to represent its members and the community legal sector.

I would like to welcome Ellen (Ellie) English to the Board, I thank Lee-Ann Emzin who finished on the Board in July 2020, and acknowledge Anna Cody who is considering the Chairperson role.

Ellie has already provided valuable insights and work for CLCs Australia. Lee-Ann contributed great wisdom, reflection, and strategy during her term, and we will miss her greatly. As Chair, Anna will take CLCs Australia from strength to strength guided by her expertise, experience and fearless leadership.

Finally, I sincerely thank CEO Nassim Arrage and all CLCs Australia staff who, despite the considerable challenges of 2019-20, continue to courageously serve and advocate on behalf of our sector. Thank you for your energy, innovation, resilience and compassion to *ensure a thriving community legal sector*.

CEO report

CLCs Australia is an extraordinary organisation ready to face extraordinary times. From bushfires and floods to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and global Black Lives Matter movement, the past year has certainly presented the community legal sector with extraordinary challenges.

Community legal centres are independent, not-for-profit, community-based organisations that provide critical and cost-free services to everyday people in Australia. There are 174 Centres across the country, providing legal services to address parenting arrangements, housing, domestic violence, debt, immigration and more. From 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020, our sector provided nearly 703,000 services, free of charge; women represent more than half of the recipients, with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and other minorities, including people with a disability and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples among the other demographics regularly supported.

Together with local communities, our sector is working tirelessly to tackle some of the significant challenges of our time. Our ultimate goal is facilitating access to justice for all in Australia. COVID-19 continues to expose the detrimental and long-term effects of structural discrimination and social exclusion on individuals and wider communities. There is hope for change, however, as the pandemic allows our sector to reflect on the transformative potential of the legal system. This is particularly critical as COVID-19 continues to disproportionately affect lower-income individuals and other people who experience discrimination and disadvantage, including older persons and those with pre-existing health conditions.

Adapting to the challenges of COVID-19 has helped us consider new ways to collaborate, connect and show solidarity across the sector through online events and webinars at a time of physical distancing. CLCs Australia continues to look for ways to harness new technologies for the benefit of all Australians in need of legal services.



Nassim Arrage, CEO

This ongoing exploration led to the launch of *Emergence: Our Stories in the Next Decade*, a series of online events building on our *Vision for Justice*. *Emergence* encourages our sector to envision the role of community legal centres in shaping social justice in the next decade. It also inspires us to imagine how Centres will continue to advocate for legal reform and new laws, public policies and innovative approaches to promote social justice and mitigate future crises, particularly those exacerbated by inequality, as COVID-19 and Black Lives Matter remind us.

There is still a lot of work to be done. The confluence of the brutal, unjustified police killing of George Floyd in the USA during Australia's Reconciliation Week amid calls to stop deaths in custody in our country reinforced our sector's commitment to Reconciliation. Justice is powerful and transformative. We recognise our sector's role in working towards Reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We have a key responsibility to help protect and promote human rights in Australia and to ensure everyone is treated fairly and equitably before the law. After two successful Reconciliation Action Plans (RAP), we are in the process of developing our third, focused on addressing systemic discrimination and eradicating the injustices that

have recently called millions to the streets in Australia and around the world.

Our new RAP will emphasise the need for CLCs Australia to lead the sector to encourage and support community legal centres and State and Territory associations on their reconciliation journeys. We will continue to build and nurture stronger working relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal service providers, embed cultural safety and appropriateness in our work and culture and advocate against policies and laws that inherently discriminate against these communities. We stand with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities; we urge governments to heed the Uluru Statement, as well as to support the calls of #BlackLivesMatter and #StopDeathsInCustody. We urge governments to commit to the implementation of all the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. We strongly support the campaign to #RaisetheAge. 'In this together' was the theme of National Reconciliation Week, and it is a reminder that we must all join together to demand justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Over the past year, CLCs Australia has successfully led funding advocacy at the national level: the finalisation of the National Legal Assistance Partnership (NLAP) will draw \$284 million across five years for community legal centres; in addition to NLAP, \$8.75 million has been allocated for bushfire legal assistance and \$5.3 million to boost ICT within the sector in response to COVID-19 as part of \$63.3 million to support legal assistance related to the pandemic. CLCs Australia has also ensured improved funding policies and frameworks.

While this funding is welcome, the number of people facing disadvantage and discrimination continues to grow rapidly, particularly at a time of extraordinary challenges related to climate change, health and racial inequality. Our communities need legal support to manage these challenges. Current funding is simply not enough to meet the high level of existing legal need in our communities, let alone what we foresee for the coming months and years.

To be able to meet the needs of people who experience discrimination and disadvantage across Australia, we need to see a doubling or tripling of the current funding contribution. CLCs Australia is committed to continued advocacy to meet this deficit and sustain the work already undertaken to ensure access to justice for all.

I want to thank the CLCs Australia team of staff, Board, Advisory Council and volunteers who go above and beyond their job descriptions to deliver high-quality services to community legal centres and other stakeholders. Our team is passionate and committed.

My gratitude also goes to all staff and volunteers at Centres around the country who work tirelessly to make a difference in the lives of individuals and communities. Though we expect the next year to bring about further challenges, we are optimistic and determined to work hard in collaboration with community partners to fight for fairness.

To come full circle, the COVID-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement make us ever more aware of the interplay between the national and global contexts. As one of the few non-governmental organisations in Australia with consultative status to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), CLCs Australia has access to various United Nations human rights mechanisms that shape international standards. As such, we enable Centres to play an active role in the international processes that can also shape our national discussion around access to justice and human rights.

I am so proud to be a part of our incredible and inspiring sector. The past year has tested us all, but we are emerging resilient – smarter and stronger, and more able to support our communities' legal needs. As we enter a new year at CLCs Australia, I am confident our proven ability to be responsive, collaborative and creative in the face of extraordinary challenges will continue to make us an asset to the communities we serve. I look forward to working with you all over the next year.

About us and community legal centres

CLCs Australia is the peak national organisation for community legal centres in Australia. Our members are the eight State and Territory community legal centre associations, which together represent over 170 organisations (Centres) in metropolitan, regional, rural and remote locations across Australia. We represent community legal centres (CLCs) as well as some Family Violence Prevention Legal Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services.

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 2019-2020 Centres provided over 700 000 services. Centres provide holistic, client-centred, wrap-around, safe and appropriate services. Delivering efficient, effective and innovative services often involves multidisciplinary teams and service delivery models to provide high-quality services. They are supported by a strong national quality service framework focused on continuous improvement, using frontline service delivery to inform broader systemic work, including law reform, policy and strategic advocacy.

As the national peak body for the community legal sector, we play a key role in:

- providing a voice to, and for, the sector;
- coordinating and supporting beneficial relations with governments and the sector, including by sharing information, facilitating consultation, sharing and encouraging good practice, drawing upon sector expertise to inform government decision-making;
- supporting and facilitating the provision of high-quality community legal services through the National Accreditation Scheme, which ensures continuous quality improvement, and by undertaking strategic national advocacy and representation on behalf of the sector and the people and communities our Centres work with;
- contributing to the evidence base that informs improved government policy development and decision-making;
- advocating for and contributing to law and legal frameworks, policy settings and a society that enables access to justice and the protection of human rights for people in Australia;
- educating governments, other organisations and the community about the sector and access to legal help;
- collecting and communicating sector data through Community Legal Assistance Services System (CLASS), the National CLCs Census and sector surveys;
- providing sector support, training and capacity building to support the provision of high-quality services and the ongoing sustainability of the sector;
- facilitating and leading strategic sector thinking through the development of national position papers;
- working to support our members, including particular assistance to the unfunded State and Territory associations and the Centres in their jurisdictions, and working collaboratively and in partnership with other peak bodies, supporters and partners.

Reconciliation Action Plan

CLCs Australia continues to recognise the unique role that we, as a national peak, alongside the community legal sector has, in working towards Reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We have a key responsibility in protecting and promoting the human rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and ensuring they are treated fairly and equitably before the law.

We are currently in the process of developing our third Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), which will build on the strong foundation laid by our first two RAPs. Our new RAP will emphasise the need for CLCs Australia to take greater leadership across the sector to encourage and support Centres and State and Territory associations on their reconciliation journey. We are determined to build on the strength of our relationships through more focused collaboration and engagement with individuals and organisations aligned with our RAP actions. We remain committed to ensuring that our RAP is a meaningful and living document that embeds cultural safety and appropriateness into CLCs Australia's work, culture, attitudes, policies and activities.

We achieved many of the goals set in our second RAP (2017-2019). Some of the key actions and progress highlights are detailed below.

Relationships

- We have continued to develop strong working relationships with National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (NATSILS) and National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Forum (National FVPLS Forum), including through advocacy campaigns.
- We have developed and strengthened relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal service providers and other community-controlled organisations, including through our engagement with the Change the Record Coalition, of whose Advisory Group we are a member.



Kaylee Anderson from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Network and the CLCs Australia Advisory Council

- We have convened the new RAP working group and drafted our next RAP (Community Legal Centres Australia Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2020-2022).

Respect

- We have continued to embed cultural safety and appropriateness in our work and culture, including ensuring our engagement, communications, events and workplace policies are culturally safe and appropriate. We conduct regular reviews of our RAP in staff meetings and have developed a Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country policy and offer all staff cultural awareness training.
- We continue to support and collaborate with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Network. At our 2019 National Conference, we welcomed two sessions on cultural safety with Aboriginal speakers on each panel.
- We have hosted and participated in a range of events, including for NAIDOC Week,

Reconciliation Week and Invasion/Survival Day.

- We have supported the advocacy of the National FVPLS Forum through the #SaveFVPLS campaign in response to the Federal Government decision to defund the Forum.
- We have continued to focus on advocacy campaigns to highlight the ways many policies and laws have a discriminatory, disproportionate and on-going negative impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Australia. For example, **CLCs Australia's submission** to the Select Committee on COVID-19 endorsed the recommendations made by the sector and our allies – including those from Change the Record and NATSILS.
- We continued to support Centres to actively work to create a culturally safe organisation for staff and clients, including through development of resources and the introduction of the mandatory cultural safety standard as part of the National Accreditation Scheme. We recognise the opportunity to further support Centres in this work.

Opportunities

- We have ensured there is at least one Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person on our governing bodies (the Board and

Advisory Council). Lee-Ann Emzin (Board), Bobbi Murray (Advisory Council) and Kaylee Anderson (Advisory Council) have provided us with invaluable contributions and insights.

- We have continued to support the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to self-determination and promoted implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) through our strategic law reform, policy and advocacy work.
- Our advocacy campaigns regularly highlight the ways many policies and laws have a discriminatory, disproportionate and ongoing negative impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Australia.
- We have welcomed an Aboriginal staff member to the CLCs Australia team.
- We have continued to support and work with the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Network.
- We have committed to support knowmore in its work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as it transitions to an independent organisation.
- We support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses, venues, professionals and services by considering them in procurement processes.



CLCs Australia staff with sector colleagues at the Yabun Festival in Sydney to stand with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities celebrating their culture

- We recognise the opportunity to further support Centres to improve recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in Centres and the opportunities to share information of interest to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities as we improve our own communications and assist Centres to do the same.

Tracking progress and reporting

- We have publicly shared and promoted our RAP to members, individual Centres and partner organisations including through a launch, inclusion on our website, and inclusion in various newsletters.
- We recognise the opportunity to improve our systems and processes to ensure regular monitoring of, and reporting on, implementation of RAP actions.

- We look forward to launching our new RAP once it has been approved by Reconciliation Australia. We are currently operating in line with our new RAP prior to its formal approval.
- Staff have RAP responsibilities in their workplans, and we routinely review progress in staff meetings and ongoing monthly business reporting.
- More broadly, we remain committed to supporting and being guided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, people, communities and organisations during the coming year and beyond.

We thank the CLCs Australia RAP working group who dedicated their time and expertise to its development: Bobbi Murray and Kaylee Anderson (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Network and CLCs Australia Advisory Council), Lee-Ann Emzin (CLCs Australia Board member 2019-2020); Zac Armitage (Community Legal Centres NSW representative) and Samuel Martin (CLCs Australia).

People

Board of Directors



Sara Kane
Chair



Anna Cody
Deputy Chair



Laurel Draffen



Lee-Ann Emzin



Ellen English
From November 2019



Vanessa Lesnie



Catherine McMorine



Michael Smith

Advisory Council

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Network



Bobbi Murray
To Jan. 2020



Kaylee Anderson
From Aug. 2019

Christine Robinson
To Aug. 2019

ACT



Elena Rosenman

New South Wales



Katrina Ironside
To Nov. 2019



Tim Leach



Arlia Fleming
From Nov. 2019

Northern Territory



Vanessa Lethlean
To Nov. 2019



Linda Weatherhead
To May 2020



Alice de Brenni
From May 2020

Queensland



Hayley Grainger



Rosslyn Monro

South Australia



Zita Ngor



Ippei Okazaki

Tasmania



Chris Young
To Jan. 2020



Jane Hutchison



Nicky Snare
From Feb. 2020

Victoria



Zana Bytheway



Serina McDuff
To April 2020

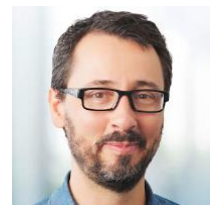
Western Australia



Carrie Hannington
To Nov. 2019



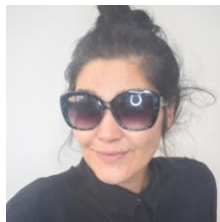
Sharryn Jackson



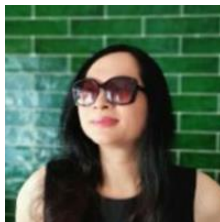
Chuck Berger
From Nov. 2019

Staff

Operations



Mirinda Boon-Kuo
Resilience Manager
From Nov. 2019



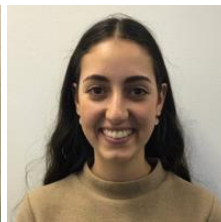
Charlotte Maung
Finance Officer



David Herrero
Operations Officer



Paulina Monforte
Operations Officer
From Aug. 2019

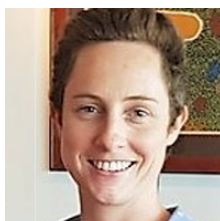


Olivia Conte
Administration
From Jan. 2020

Sector Sustainability



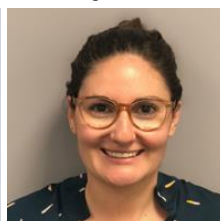
Maria Graterol
Engagement Manager
From Feb. 2020



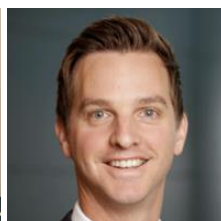
Amanda Alford
Director Policy and
Advocacy
To Sep. 2019



Meg Houston
Sector Capacity
Building Coordinator



Alice Jones Rabbitt
Sector Capacity
Building Officer



Garth Tinsley
Pro Bono, Corporate
Partnerships
To June 2020

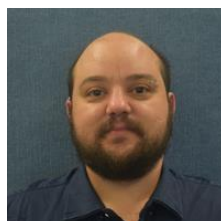
ICT and CLASS



Claire Hammond
ICT Business Manager
From March 2020



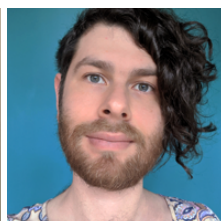
Susan Scott
ICT Projects
Coordinator
From March 2020



Alex Ariti
ICT Coordinator



James Okeby
ICT User Support
Officer, 0.8 FTE



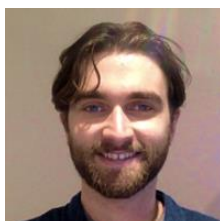
Reuben Johnson
ICT User Support
Officer
From Aug. 2019



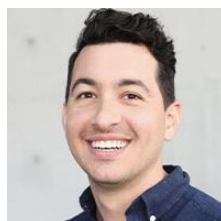
Rhys Ambler
ICT User Support
Officer, 0.4 FTE
From Sep. 2019



Samuel Martin
ICT User Support
Officer, 0.8 FTE
From Sep. 2019



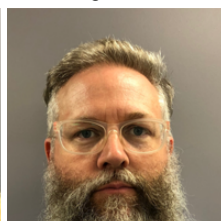
Dan Zayit
ICT User Support
Officer, 0.4 FTE
From March 2020



Gabriel Gutnik
ICT User Support
Officer, 0.4 FTE
From April 2020



Fran Bowron
IT Business Manager
To July 2019



Chris Dubrow
IT Project Manager
To Dec. 2019

Other staff



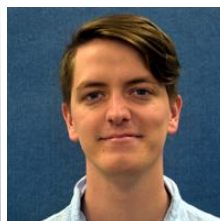
Polly Porteous
Special Projects
To Aug. 2019



Phill Byrne
IT Projects
To Nov. 2019



Cate Lloyd
Communications
Coordinator
Jan. to March 2020



Harold Lander
ICT User Support
Officer
To Sep. 2019



Katelyn Wood
Administration
To Aug. 2019

Volunteers, secondees and social work placements

In 2019, CLCs Australia accepted social work placement students from University of NSW. During 2020, we launched a secondee program, welcoming graduate lawyers from law firm HWL Ebsworth for three-week engagements, and relaunched our successful volunteer program in work-from-home mode as we transitioned to working remotely.

Secondees



One of the reasons I chose to study law was to achieve social justice. Being on secondment at CLCs Australia helped me rekindle this passion. A massive highlight for me was contributing in the daily stand-up meetings, particularly when we discussed the topical social issues that occurred at the time of my placement. I found that I had more discussions with family and friends around topical social issues and educated myself along the way.

Samanthi De Costa, Graduate Lawyer



My biggest takeaway from my secondment to CLCs Australia is the great culture that the organisation has commendably been able to develop. The team are enthusiastic in relation to their work and their vision. The team is readily approachable and extremely friendly, making it smooth for a newcomer joining the team.

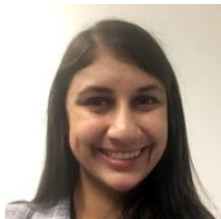
Qasim Khan, Graduate Lawyer



Sarah Bowe



Emily Ling



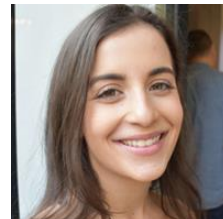
Rosalinda Raiti



Luke Roper

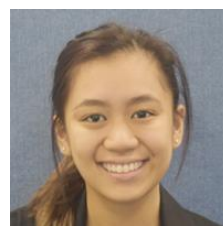


Hugh Snowden



Romy Sirtes

Social work placements

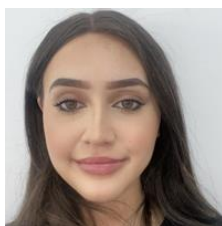


Stephanie Fermin

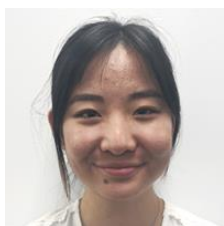


Pascal Santos

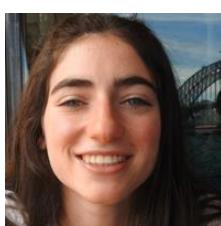
Volunteers



Zahra Ali



Vivienne Davis



The staff taught me a lot about working in the not-for-profit sector, preparing me further in my career, and were so friendly when doing so. I'm incredibly grateful I was able to put my design skills to use in a sector that does so much great work for everyday Australians.

Rachel Holt, Freelance Designer



Georgia Owers



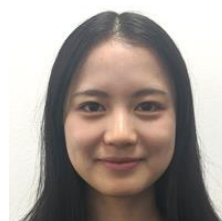
Shivani Prasad



Nirmanee Rathnayaka



Shania Thomas



Grace Wu



Siliu Yuan

Power, Purpose, Possibilities



In August 2019 we co-hosted the fortieth National Community Legal Centres Conference in Brisbane with Community Legal Centres Queensland. Our theme, *Power, Purpose, Possibilities*, reflected a strong focus on climate emergency, human rights, the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, gender and grassroots activism.

The four-day event consisted of four masterclasses, fourteen national network meetings, five plenaries, stalls, poster presentations, lunchtime talks and forty breakout sessions including practical workshops, training sessions, 'unconference' discussion groups and substantive learning opportunities. Social events included a welcome reception at the Queensland Museum and a conference dinner.

Over 500 delegates attended across the program of events. We welcomed delegates from the community legal sector, and the wider legal assistance sector, private practice, academia, politics, research and a delegation from New Zealand. We were delighted to receive sponsorship support from partners including the Attorney-General's Department, Maurice Blackburn, Hall & Wilcox, AFCA and the Queensland Government.

Keynote speakers and plenary participants included:

- Connecting with Community: Grassroots Activism, Movement Building for Change – Candice Hughes, YFS Logan; Denis Ginnivan, Voices for Indi; Dr Amanda Cahill, Centre for Social Change and The Next Economy; Nicola Paris, CounterAct
- Smash the Patriarchy! Gender and Rights in 2019 – Kate Jenkins, Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Australian Human Rights Commission; Nerita Waight, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services; Renee Carr, Fair Agenda; Louise Allen, global gender, peace and security expert
- Why Human Rights Matter – Professor Rosalind Croucher, President, Australian Human Rights Commission; Damian Griffis, First Peoples Disability Network/Change the Record; Lee Carnie, Human Rights Law Centre/Equality Australia; Emma Phillips, Queensland Advocacy Inc./Australian Lawyers for Human Rights



Sam Elkin, St Kilda Legal Service presents at the Conference

Highlight: How do we respond to the climate emergency?

The Conference opened with a plenary on the climate emergency, one of the most pressing challenges facing Australia and our planet. Keynote speakers challenged us to ask what governments and communities across Australia can do to address the growing climate emergency and to think about the role of community-based legal services.

The panel passionately discussed climate emergency as a social justice and intergenerational equity issue, the impacts of which will be disproportionately felt by the people and communities our sector works with, and the rising risks and burdens facing future generations. We learned that the impacts of climate change will be felt first by people experiencing discrimination and disadvantage who are the people with the fewest resources and protections, are least able to have their voices heard in the development of mitigation and adaptation policies and may be less equipped to deal with the challenges and

opportunities of social, economic and technological changes.

The panel included the voices of inspiring younger people:

- Sean Ryan, Environmental Defenders Office Queensland
- Bayah Coolwell, Seed Indigenous Youth Climate Network
- Alice Wicks, climate justice campaigner and activist
- Anna Reynolds, co-creator of Action Ready/Environmental Defenders Office Queensland
- Brianna Collins, co-creator of Action Ready/Environmental Defenders Office Queensland

We built on the momentum generated at the Conference in the months following with a sector climate emergency paper, activism and democracy materials and through our bushfire responses in 2020.



Board member Lee-Ann Emzin, Board Chair Sara Kane and CEO Nassim Arrage at Power, Purpose, Possibilities

Sector Sustainability

This year we continued to deliver a range of services and activities aimed at supporting and building the vision for the long-term sustainability of the community legal sector. The Sector Sustainability team is led by Meg Houston and Alice Jones Rabbitt and brings together capacity building work including the National Accreditation Scheme and the National Community Legal Sector Insurance Scheme.

Sector Sustainability initiatives continue to be delivered in line with the six core activity areas of the National Sector Sustainability Framework.

Sector efficiency and financial sustainability

We provide a number of bulk purchasing options for the sector to support front-line service delivery, including:

- the National Community Legal Sector Insurance Scheme, which offers highly-discounted insurance policies to Centres;
- free access for Centres to LexisNexis online legal resources, training and opportunities to contribute to LexisNexis publications and resources.

We continued to build sponsorship partnerships to support the delivery of the National Community Legal Centres Conference and to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and regional, rural and remote delegates to attend the Conference.

Sector coordination and collaboration

We provide national leadership and coordination of the sector as well as undertaking a key information-sharing role through regular newsletters, presentations, visits to Centres and participation in State and Territory events. In particular we:

- work with our members to drive and inform a common agenda, and collaborate and share resources including through the Advisory Council and the Sector Advocacy, Sustainability and Strategy (SASS) Group;
- work closely with National Networks of sector staff with expertise in particular areas of law,

communities or service delivery to support collaboration, engagement and communities of practice in the sector;

- continue to work closely with our colleagues across the legal assistance sector including National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Forum and National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services, National Legal Aid, Australian Legal Assistance Forum, Attorney-General's Department, Health Justice Australia and Law and Justice Foundation NSW;
- maintain the National CLCs Directory and make it available to members as a downloadable resource.

Quality and continuous improvement

We provide quality assurance and risk management initiatives which ensure that clients receive high-quality advice and that Centres are well equipped to deliver services. These include:

- continued implementation of Phase 2 of the National Accreditation Scheme for Community Legal Centres;
- the launch of Phase 3 of the National Accreditation Scheme following sector consultation;
- roll-out of a remote assessment process in response to COVID-19 travel restrictions;
- continued review of and support for national implementation of the Risk Management Guide for legal practice in Centres.

Access to justice

- We scoped and updated the *Legal Needs Assessment Toolkit* to fully integrate with Community Legal Assistance Services System (CLASS); the Toolkit supports Centres to plan their services and contribute to jurisdiction planning under the National Partnership Agreement;
- We have drafted national position papers on the role and function of the community legal sector, service delivery models and key issues, consulting across the sector.

Workforce capability and sustainability

- We delivered another successful National Community Legal Centres Conference in Brisbane, our fortieth annual Conference;
- We launched a webinar series in May 2020 under the banner of *Emergence: Our Stories in the Next Decade*, to provide professional development opportunities and explore key service delivery issues raised in response to the global pandemic.

Evidence base and information management

- We collected and published data to support our work and advocacy efforts and that of all State and Territory associations;
- We developed a Data Strategy and National Research Agenda;
- We published the *Data Consistency Guide* and associated resources for the sector to support quality data collection in line with the *National Legal Assistance Data Standards Manual*.

Insurance and risk management

We continue to negotiate and administer the National Insurance Scheme for the benefit of legal

assistance services around Australia. This is one of our key services and means Centres can access highly-discounted, tailored insurances without the need to negotiate their own individual policies.

The core policies included are Professional Indemnity Insurance (PII), Association Liability Insurance (ALI) and Public Liability Insurance (PLI). We also support Centres to take out other insurances needed for risk management and governance including cyber, business and volunteer personal accident insurance. Our role includes managing the policy renewal process on behalf of Centres around Australia.

In 2019-20, 163 organisations across the sector obtained policies through our Scheme.

In November 2019, following a tender process, we appointed a new insurance broker for the insurance Scheme, Arthur J Gallagher. We managed a complex transition from our outgoing broker McDougall Kelly & Martinis. We worked throughout the year with our broker to identify and implement improvements and efficiencies to the Scheme and Centres' risk management practices. We provided ongoing support to Centres throughout the year and worked closely with the National PII Network.

Sector Sustainability

National Accreditation Scheme

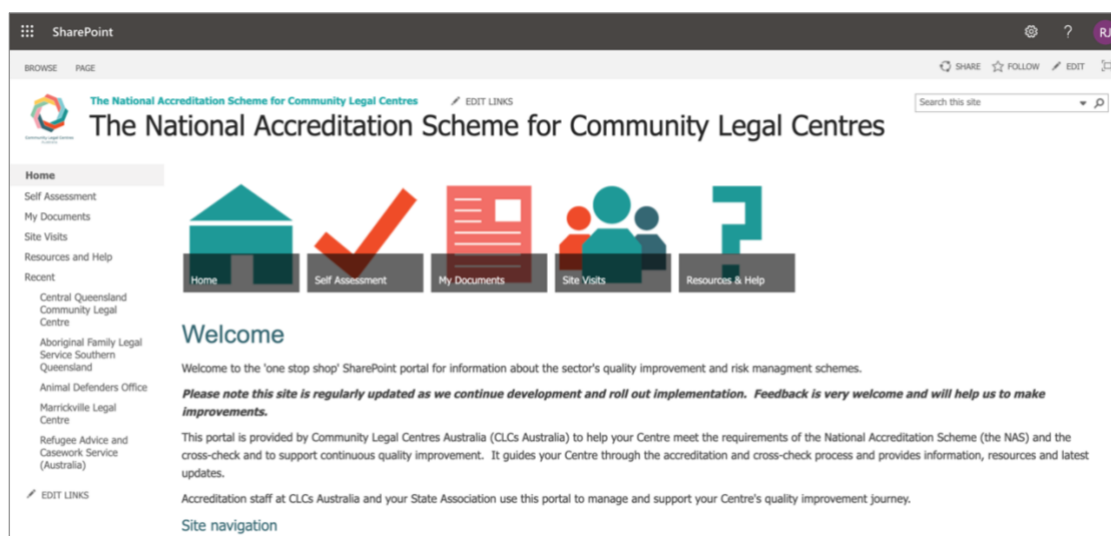
The National Accreditation Scheme for Community Legal Centres (the NAS) continues to be a successful sector-led initiative which drives quality service provision for clients, guides organisational development and supports governing bodies, managers, staff and volunteers. It provides an industry-based accreditation and certification process that supports and recognises good practice in the delivery of community legal services and promotes a culture of continuous quality improvement. The NAS gives Centres, funding bodies and clients confidence that Centres are operating according to good practice and industry standards.

All Centres are required to participate in the NAS. Key features include a Centre self-assessment against the NAS Standards and Requirements, an onsite assessment by a reviewer, the production of an accreditation assessment report and development of an improvement plan. Centres that successfully meet requirements are certified for a three-year period during which they provide regular reports on progress in implementing their improvement plan.

We oversee the development and implementation of the NAS across the sector. We convened regular meetings of the NAS Phase 3 Review Working Group in 2019 prior to launching Phase 3 in September. There are twelve main changes for Phase 3, including revisions to the *Guidelines*, *Standards and Requirements*, evidence and reporting requirements. We have developed and are rolling out an online portal to support Centres to meet the requirements of the NAS.

CLCs Australia also administers the NAS in four jurisdictions: Australian Capital Territory, Northern Territory, South Australia and Tasmania. We support Regional Accreditation Coordinators in New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia.

We remain grateful to Centres for their high level of engagement with the NAS and appreciate the work of Centres, Regional Accreditation Coordinators, certifiers and the NAS Working Group. Congratulations to those Centres that have achieved accreditation for the first time this year or have been successful in certification renewal under Phase 3.



Home screen of the NAS portal

Policy and advocacy

Amplifying the voice of the community legal sector

This year required on-going adaptation and stewardship, as the community legal sector grappled with the institutional challenges created by funding uncertainty, the impact of the bushfires on communities and the COVID-19 pandemic. We

were inspired and energised as new forms of collaboration and innovative ways to exchange information with the community legal sector emerged. In 2020-2021 we will build on lessons learned and focus on the ways the used and built on a strong evidence base to achieve collective impact through sector wide collaboration and strategic engagement.

2019-2020 Advocacy and Policy Highlights

Advocating for more funding and resources for our sector

- Emphasis on increases for the sector in the 2020 Federal Budget submission;
- Leading discussions and consultations with the sector and participating in processes on behalf of the sector that led to the 2020-2025 National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services;
- Advocating for additional funding to enable the community legal sector to adapt and respond to the bushfires and COVID-19 while providing high-quality legal services to disadvantaged communities and addressing their growing legal needs.

Amplifying and sharing the work and campaigns of the community legal sector

- Supporting and endorsing submissions, open letters, initiatives and campaigns by Centres;
- Continuing to work collaboratively on policy and advocacy with Centres, National Networks, peak legal assistance bodies and supporters and stakeholders.

Advocating on issues the sector wants to shape and influence

- Leading and contributing to strategic advocacy on a range of legislative and policy issues to protect and promote the rights of people experiencing discrimination and disadvantage across Australia;
- Building a strong evidence base on unmet legal need and barriers to access that emerged during the bushfire and COVID-19 emergencies;
- Providing a sector voice to government, including sharing information and good practice, facilitating consultation and drawing on sector expertise to inform government decision-making.

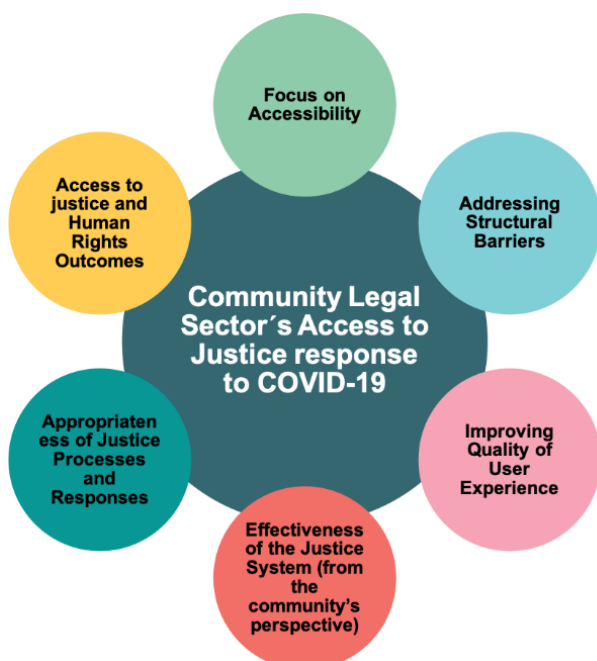
Strengthening and collaborating with broader social justice and human rights movements

- Being active members of national social and human rights movements such as the Australian Council of Social Service and Health Justice Australia;
- Actively supporting and contributing to national campaigns such as Change the Record, Raise the Age and Raise the Rate;
- Ensuring the experiences of the communities we serve are included in NGO reports to various United Nations bodies and international organisations.

Building on forty years of engagement in the policy and advocacy space in Australia, we continued to work with the sector to build a strong evidence base to improve access to justice for socially and economically disadvantaged people in Australia. The focus of our policy and advocacy work this year has been on ensuring that the legislative, regulatory and policy frameworks that are in place facilitate the vital work of the sector. This year we worked toward positive change in a number of areas.

Funding and resourcing the community legal sector

The 2019-2020 period required careful consideration and analysis of the various drafts of the 2020-2025 National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services that CLCs Australia consulted on. Our funding advocacy effort at the national level was successful and the new National Legal Assistance Partnership (NLAP) brings \$284 million across five years to the community legal sector.



This period has also involved on-going advocacy and engagement on funding and resourcing:

- specific sector funding opportunities and calling for more support for health justice partnerships, elder abuse trials and other specialised services
- improvements around funding arrangements to ensure adequate policy implementation frameworks
- bushfire legal assistance
- \$5.3 million for information technology improvements in the sector as part of \$63.3m of funding for COVID-19 legal assistance
- calling for a specific proportion of the COVID-19 legal assistance funds to be dedicated to matters involving domestic and family violence
- State and Territory sector reviews

Access to justice and COVID-19

Monitoring the policy and legal responses to COVID-19 and their ongoing impact has been a key part of our ongoing advocacy work. We are committed to continuing our work with the sector and partner organisations to gather information about the on-going impact of current laws and policies on disadvantaged communities. Ultimately, our analysis will contribute to an ongoing discussion about access to justice and unmet legal needs in Australia, and the role the community sector can play in achieving social justice during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Our community of practice has also enabled us to have ongoing consultation with our network to identify unmet legal needs and trends in services in real time.

Climate crisis

In 2019, after a consultation process, CLCs Australia developed and adopted a national position for the sector on the climate crisis. For us, the climate crisis is a social justice and inter-generational equity issue. The climate crisis impacts are felt first and disproportionately by people experiencing discrimination and disadvantage. The cost of inaction is significant. Our *Climate Crisis Package* for the sector, published in December 2019, clarifies and supports a national position for community legal centres on the climate crisis. It recognises the differing needs of Centres and also enables us to amplify the voice of our members at a global level.

A Vision for Justice

In September 2019, *A Vision for Justice* was published. This blueprint document builds on the existing work and advocacy of the sector and our partners and stakeholders. It is intended to be a living document that is updated regularly to reflect the work and priorities of the sector. It will guide our national policy and advocacy work and our media responses.

Encouraging strong responses to the Banking Royal Commission

We continued to work closely with the sector, Financial Counselling Australia and others to encourage a strong response to the Banking Royal Commission, including funding for financial counsellors and consumer financial legal advice and assistance services.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities

We have worked with key partners on a range of substantive issues related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, family law, family violence, social security and consumer rights. Our partners include Change the Record, NATSILS, NFVPLS Forum, WLSA, Economic Justice Australia, Consumer Action, the Raise the Age Campaign and Financial Rights Legal Centre.

Through consultation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Network, we have developed a clearer position on critical issues that are essential to a vision for justice for Australia. These include raising the age of criminal



Community Legal Centres Australia calls on the Australian Government to continue to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in meaningful conversations and processes to implement the recommendations that emerged from the Uluru Statement and Referendum Council. In line with our mission, values and internal policies, we support the call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution and support the right to self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as a fundamental international human rights principle.

CLCs Australia also joins other voices calling for the immediate implementation of all the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and for ending systemic human rights violations against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Urgent actions include: the elimination of abuse, torture, solitary confinement and mass imprisonment; accountability for racist policing and raising the age of legal responsibility.


responsibility to at least fourteen years of age and ensuring the community legal sector coordinates legal observers of protests.

Promoting economic equality and a strong social security system

We continue to stand alongside Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) and others as part of the #RaisetheRate campaign, calling for increases to Newstart (COVID-19). We also supported the advocacy of the National Social Security Rights Network, including through political engagement, around reforms to the social security system to better support people experiencing family violence.

Supporting the rights of women

Women's Legal Services Australia, CLCs Australia, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services, the Law Council of Australia and many others joined the campaign to stop the Government's proposed family court merger. The proposed family court merger would see the Family Court of Australia merged with the Federal Circuit Court of Australia and result in the loss of a specialist stand-alone superior family court. Inquiry after inquiry has highlighted the prevalence of family violence in family law matters and the need to strengthen family violence and



family law specialisation. Ensuring the safety of children and women requires specialisation, which is why it is so important to retain a specialist, stand-alone superior family court. Over 100 organisations signed an open letter to the Attorney-General which has also been used to inform advocacy and submissions.

Protecting the rights of older people

Together with the National Older Persons' Legal Services Network, we have worked to protect and promote the rights of older people, including through engagement around strengthening services assisting people experiencing elder abuse as a result of COVID-19, as well as contributing to international efforts to draft a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons.

Holding the Australian Government to account internationally

We worked with Centres and other civil society organisations to use United Nations processes to promote human rights and raise concerns about domestic human rights issues. In 2020, sector representatives contributed remotely to processes related to the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing.

In 2021 Australia will have its human rights record assessed at the United Nations Human Rights Council through the Universal Periodic Review

(UPR) process. The UPR provides an opportunity for other nations to identify human rights problems in Australia and make recommendations for possible solutions. To inform this process, leading Australian human rights organisations and community groups have compiled Australia's Human Rights Scorecard: *Australia's 2020 United Nations UPR NGO Coalition Report*. The report, endorsed by over 200 organisations, provides a comprehensive insight into the state of human rights in Australia in 2020. CLCs Australia is part of the Advisory Committee and many of our member organisations have contributed to the substantive sections of the NGO report. For the remainder of 2020, CLCs Australia will continue to engage in consultations and processes related to the UPR.

Reconsidering the inter-relationship between communications and advocacy

In June 2020, CLCs Australia engaged public relations agency Fifty Acres to undertake a review of our communications strategy and explore links between communications and advocacy through new media. The extended period of working remotely has provided fertile ground for testing assumptions and new ideas about the possibilities of communications to inform and transform the ways we collaborate in, contribute to and co-create content within our networks.

Strategic Plan 2018-2021

Ensuring a thriving community legal sector

We are a strong voice to, and for, the community legal sector

We advance a shared vision for the community legal sector

We lead and support national advocacy that facilitates access to justice and the protection of human rights for all people in Australia

We collect and communicate compelling data to ensure a strong understanding of the importance and impact of community legal services

We increase the resources available to the community legal sector

We advance the financial sustainability of the community legal sector

We adapt the range of services we provide to support the changing needs of the community legal sector

We share employment policies and practices designed to nurture the wellbeing and personal growth of staff, including our own

We strengthen our communities through enhanced collaboration

We are guided by and support the perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations

We enhance coordination and collaboration within the community legal sector

We enhance strategic and collaborative partnerships with stakeholders external to the community legal sector

We facilitate the provision of high-quality community legal services

We provide a framework for the community legal sector to provide greater and improved services that best meet the needs of their communities

We provide a robust National Accreditation Scheme to ensure continuous quality improvement

Our Values

Member Focus We assist and enhance the capacity of our members and individual community legal centres, and support their independence and autonomy.

Leadership We work with our members to lead a strong, independent and innovative community legal sector.

Fairness We believe in equity, social justice and human rights and work towards alleviating systemic disadvantage.


Collaboration We build quality relationships to leverage combined resources, expertise and knowledge for the benefit of the organisations and communities that we collectively serve.

Quality We strive to develop and support high standards and quality in our own work and across the sector.

Community legal sector overview 2019-20

NT	
Population	245 000
No. of CLCs	5
No. of FVPLSs	2
Total Centre funding	\$9.2 million
WA	
Population	2 656 000
No. of CLCs	25
No. of FVPLSs	3
Total Centre funding	\$35.4 million
SA	
Population	1 767 000
No. of CLCs	9
No. of FVPLSs	1
Total Centre funding	\$8.3 million
TAS	
Population	540 000
No. of CLCs	8
Total Centre funding	\$4.2 million

Figures are for 2019-20



Community Legal Centres Australia served as the national peak body for 179 Centres during 2019-20, including 168 community legal centres, 10 Family Violence Prevention Legal Services and 1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service.

QLD

Population	5 160 000
No. of CLCs	32
No. of FVPLSs	2
Total Centre funding	\$50.1 million

NSW

Population	8 158 000
No. of CLCs	35
No. of FVPLSs	1
Total Centre funding	\$64.2 million

ACT

Population	430 000
No. of CLCs	8
Total Centre funding	\$4.1million

VIC

Population	6 689 000
No. of CLCs	46
No. of FVPLSs	1
No. of ATSILSs	1
Total Centre funding	\$87.2 million

Data snapshot 2019-2020

This national data snapshot provides an overview of the work of Centres from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020. There were 174 Centres across Australia by the end of 2019-2020. This snapshot is based on data from 142 of these Centres, extracted from Community Legal Assistance Services System (CLASS). It does not tell a complete story of the impact of COVID-19 on the community legal sector and is provided as comparative data.

PROFILE

This data reflects
the work of

142



community legal centres

PEOPLE WE HELPED



Community legal
centres helped

194 230

people in 2019-20

PEOPLE

The breakdown of people helped by
centres was:



60.2%

women



34.3%

experiencing domestic or
family violence



22.5%

people with disability



18.4%

people from culturally and
linguistically diverse
communities



11.9%

people in rural, regional
and remote areas



10.7%

children and young people
under 25 years old



9.9%

older people (65 years of
age and over)



9.6%

people who reported no
income at all



7.8%

Aboriginal and/or Torres
Strait Islander people



6.4%

people experiencing
homelessness

SERVICES

Centres provided over

702 234

services nationally



261 099

referrals



125 892

information services



204 093

legal advices



36 442

legal tasks



26 647

duty lawyer services



13 628

court and tribunal representations



37 204

dispute resolution and other representation



6 615

community legal education activities



TOP 5 SERVICES NATIONALLY

1

Parenting arrangements

2

Housing

3

Domestic violence protection orders

4

Credit and debt

5

Other civil law problem type

FAMILY LAW

41.3%

Parenting arrangements

20.0%

Family law property

16.5%

Domestic and family violence

13.2%

Divorce de-facto separations and/or annulment

5.3%

Other family law problem type

CIVIL LAW

18.1%

Housing

17.1%

Domestic violence protection orders

14.8%

Credit and debt

14.7%

Other civil law problem type

5.4%

Immigration law

Criminal Law

Traffic and Regulatory Offences

39.9%

Engagement

During the year, CLCs Australia continued to work closely with colleagues from organisations across the legal assistance sector, including National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Forum, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services, National Legal Aid, Australian Legal Assistance Forum, Attorney-General's Department, Health Justice Australia, Grata Fund and the Law and Justice Foundation NSW.

At the international level we engaged with the American Bar Association and Community Law Centres Aotearoa (New Zealand). A global directory of CLCs has been collated and we will seek to create connections with our global network in 2020.

Our main corporate partner is LexisNexis. CLCs Australia and LexisNexis' ongoing partnership to promote the rule of law through the provision of high-quality online legal resources to Centres

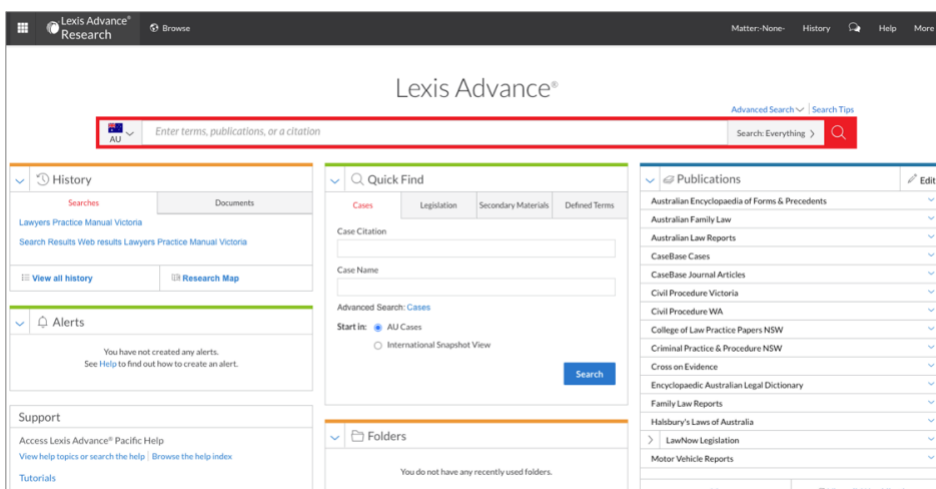
continues to expand. The resources available ensure that clients and communities that experience discrimination and disadvantage can receive informed and timely legal assistance from the Centres that serve them.

In 2019-2020 a focus on pro bono partnerships enabled us to explore the potential of exchanges and collaborations with some of the leading firms supporting the community legal sector. In early 2020, we launched a secondee program that brought graduate lawyers from HWL Ebsworth to CLCs Australia for three-week engagements to work on a variety of projects. We received valuable support from Herbert Smith Freehills in developing the design and layout of our Annual Report.

Through our conferences and beyond, new opportunities and possibilities are being explored.



HERBERT
SMITH
FREEHILLS



Lexis Advance home page

Community Legal Assistance Services System (CLASS)

The Community Legal Assistance Services System (CLASS) is used by 168 community legal centres and Family Violence Prevention Legal Services across Australia for legal practice management and data collection. It uses the data definitions from the *National Legal Assistance Data Standards Manual* and provides a comprehensive reporting platform that meets the needs of individual Centres and of the State and Commonwealth governments.

In the last quarter, CLASS Agreements were renegotiated for CLCs, Program Managers and Peak Bodies to cover the next five years commencing 1 July 2020.

COVID-19 response

From the beginning of the pandemic, between March and June 2020, we supported Centre staff to work remotely by:

- issuing Virtual Private Networks (VPNs), supporting users to address connection and performance issues;
- sharing Remote Workforce Security Guidelines, commissioned as part of a security review of CLASS and our internal ICT systems;
- training individuals and Centres as requested, setting up our webinar platform for ongoing weekly remote training;
- reconfiguring our Helpdesk system for more efficient service – the Helpdesk responded to 1628 tickets in the first half of 2020, including 894 between March and May;
- sharing tips and guidance in our monthly CLASS News newsletter.



James Okeby from CLCs Australia delivers CLASS training to staff of Many Rivers Family Violence Prevention Legal Service, Kempsey NSW



Strategic initiatives

We advanced two major strategic initiatives – integration and reporting – between January and June 2020 which are now in development. We are working closely with the sector to ensure end user needs are met.

Integration

CLASS collects data and provides reports to inform service planning at Centre level, and program management administration at a funding body level. The system also provides a level of legal case management functionality for the majority of community legal centres.

Some Centres have to use a number of systems to meet the requirements of different funders. Larger Centres naturally have more complex case management requirements. A number already use commercial legal case management systems or are planning to adopt them to take advantage of their wider range of features.

To avoid Centre staff entering information into two or more systems, and to improve the quality of reporting data in CLASS, we are working with integration specialists to develop a secure, automated tool to extract data needed for

reporting and import it into CLASS. The process is vendor-neutral and can be adapted to import data from any database.

Reporting

We have assessed measures to improve efficiency of Centres accessing reports, and to reduce the steps required to produce bespoke reports. During the first half of 2020 we worked with developers to map out staged development to flatten data tables and export data to a Structured Query Language (SQL) database which will enable more flexible analyses and deeper insights. Development work started in July 2020.

Enhancements

CLCs Australia updated Australian Bureau of Statistics and other geolocation boundaries, and retagged service addresses to ensure accurate reporting on all statistical boundaries.

Our ICT team began to work with Program Managers and State and Territory peaks to streamline funding categories in CLASS and to align them with the new 2020-2025 National Legal Assistance Partnership.

knowmore

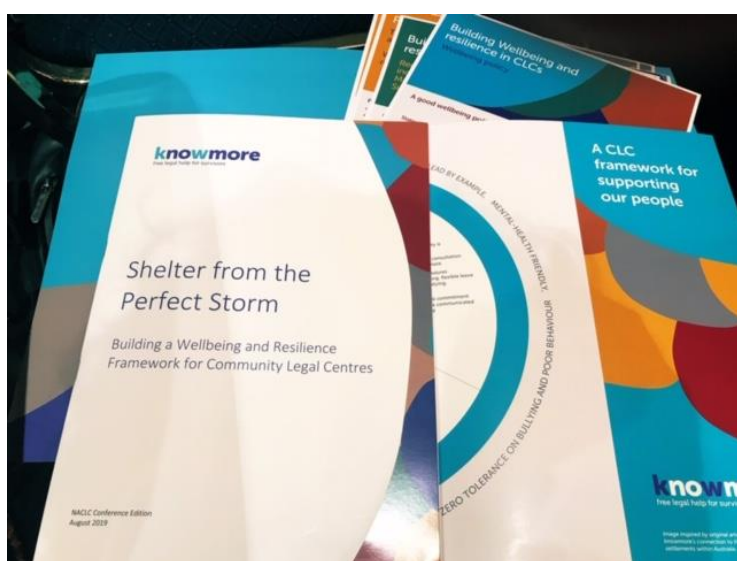
This year knowmore consolidated our multidisciplinary service delivery model and expanded our team to meet the growing demands of our clients and service partners.

From 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 knowmore took nearly 14 000 calls through our 1800 line and completed intake for 2137 new clients. This brings our total client number to 6531 since re-launching on 1 July 2018 to provide support for survivors considering their redress options under the National Redress Scheme (NRS). To ensure we continue to deliver a high-quality and trauma-informed service we have increased our team to around 115 staff across four offices in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Perth. It was pleasing to be able to re-establish our Perth office early in the year, with the team quickly settling in and building on our relationships with local services and the sector to support local survivors.

Like all services, our activities in 2020 have been affected significantly by the COVID-19 pandemic. In late March we transitioned the majority of our team to working from home arrangements. While this presented some initial challenges in the application of our multidisciplinary approach to supporting clients, we were able to adapt well and continued to deliver services via phone and video link to survivors. Obviously official travel restrictions and border closures and other

directives in place across the States and Territories significantly curtailed our outreach and community engagement activities, which had been progressing well in the first half of the year. These activities included undertaking regular outreach visits to Tasmania, South Australia and the Northern Territory and developing plans to increase service delivery into States and Territories without a permanent knowmore office.

knowmore's Financial Counselling team, established in 2019 and funded by a two-year grant from the Financial Counselling Foundation, is now fully embedded into our multidisciplinary practice. The work of our financial counselling team – supporting clients who have received an offer of a redress payment from the NRS, in working to build the capacity of the broader financial counselling sector to support these survivors and in advocating with financial institutions for the protection of redress payments – has underlined the importance of survivors being able to access specialized and expert financial counselling assistance about their redress payments. Our advice helps survivors to understand the protections available to them in relation to their redress payments and to maximize the benefit those payments provide. The team's workload continues to grow with the increasing number of redress offers received by NRS applicants.



knowmore also continued to work closely with its Redress Support Service partners throughout the year. This work was enhanced by additional funding from the Department of Social Services which allowed knowmore to work closely with these services to help build their capacity to assist clients with applications to the NRS. We do this through a combination of training, advice, case consultation and application review services. The project has been very successful, with funding now extended to 2020-21.

knowmore continued to advocate strongly for improvements to the NRS, appearing before the Joint Select Committee on the Implementation of the NRS and making two public submissions. Our submissions

and evidence were referenced extensively by the Committee in its April 2020 interim report. Many concerns knowmore raised, including a lack of information and consistency around decision-making on applications and the lack of participation of institutions attracting claims from survivors, have been identified as high priorities for reform by the Committee.

We also advocated for a range of law and policy changes to support survivors and protect children from sexual abuse, contributing to nineteen reviews and inquiries across Australia, including appearing before several Parliamentary Committees to make submissions about proposed legislation, and collaborated with the NSW CLC sector to campaign against changes to the state's Victims Support Scheme.

To support our advocacy and give clients an opportunity to tell their stories publicly, knowmore has been increasingly active in the media. Our communications team works with journalists to provide commentary for broadcast, background information and relevant client case studies, including supporting survivors to tell their own stories when they wish to participate. We have also recently produced three first-person videos to promote our work and provide reassurance to survivors that knowmore delivers trauma-informed and culturally sensitive services. Over the year we also undertook projects to improve our website and the accessibility of our factsheet and other resources.

At the National CLCs Conference in 2019, knowmore launched *Shelter from the Perfect Storm: A Wellbeing and Resilience Framework for CLCs*, a resource kit designed to assist CLCs looking to develop or enhance their own wellbeing and resilience practice for workers.

The kit draws on knowmore's work since 2013 as a sector leader in the integration of trauma-informed practice and cultural safety in the setting of a legal service, and aligning staff wellbeing with our work. Our aim in developing the kit was to document our own approaches and what we have learnt during the evolution of our own wellbeing

framework, and to share that in a form that is specific to the needs of the CLC sector in order to support the wellbeing of all who work in our sector. The kit can be accessed on the [knowmore website](#)

Finally, it was wonderful to see knowmore's Senior Legal Consultant and long-term CLC worker Prue Gregory recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. Prue was awarded an Order of Australia medal in recognition of "service to the law, and to the community".



Prue Gregory

Early in the coming year knowmore will complete its journey to independence, moving from a program of CLCs Australia to stand-alone status as a national community legal centre. We look forward to strengthening our relationships with the State and Territory peaks and working with the sector to continue to support survivors of child abuse and to advocate for improved laws and services.

National Networks

CLCs Australia supports a number of National Networks that bring together sector staff focused on particular areas of law. Included below are reports from two of these Networks.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Network
Animal Law Network
Community Legal Education and Community Development Network
Disability Rights Network
Employment Rights Network
National Human Rights Network
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer Network

Older Persons Legal Services Network
National Association of Tenant Organisations
National Youth Advocacy Network
National Police Accountability Network
National Professional Indemnity Insurance Network
Rural, Regional, Remote Network
Women's Legal Services Australia
Women's Safety Package Network

Human Rights Network

Co-Convenors – Farzana Choudhury (ACT), Melanie Morgan (NSW)

We are a national network of community legal centre staff with an interest in human rights law and practice. Through our quarterly meetings and email group, we share information about the impact of laws, policies and practices on the rights of our clients. We also seek to promote and support law reform initiatives that advance the human rights of our clients and the broader community.

In the 2019-2020 financial year we welcomed new members from various community legal centres, as well as a new Network Co-Coordinator, Melanie Morgan. We thank our departing Co-Convenors Maria Nawaz and Di Anagnos for their significant contributions to the Network.

During this period we have shared information about human rights developments throughout Australia, including government and police responses to COVID-19 and the impact of the pandemic on our clients and service delivery models. We have supported various human rights campaigns, including by endorsing Australia's NGO Coalition report for the Universal Periodic Review. Our Co-Convenors have also represented Community Legal Centres Australia

at the Attorney-General's Department Human Rights NGO Forum in December 2019, and as members of the Advisory Committee for the Australian Charter of Human Rights campaign.

If you are interested in joining the Human Rights Network or would like to collaborate with us, please contact our Co-convenors at clc.humanrights@gmail.com



Farzana Choudhury



Melanie Morgan

National Professional Indemnity Insurance Network

Convenor – Catherine Eagle

The National PII Network consists of representatives from each State and Territory experienced in legal practice management. The Network's role is to support Centres in legal practice risk management through providing guidance on specific queries, resources and training at both a national and state level and implementing the annual crosscheck process.

We meet every month and in 2019 we met for a full day during the National CLCs Conference in Brisbane.

At the National Conference we presented a session to staff from community legal centres around Australia on topical practice management risks and strategies. The Network also played an active role in supporting Centres to adapt to



Catherine Eagle

working remotely during COVID-19, including presenting a webinar on remote legal practice management, and developing a guide for remote crosschecks.

We also liaised regularly with the Accreditation Coordinators on matters such as changes to the National Accreditation Scheme in relation to legal practice and reducing areas of overlap with the cross-check process.

The members of the Network in 2019-20 were:

ACT	Genevieve Bolton
NSW	Hilary Kincaid Ali Mojtahedi
NT	Janet Taylor Nicky Snare (December-January) Melissa Coveney (from March 2020)
QLD	Rachel Neil (to August 2019) Natasha Tanirau-Stanley (from August 2019)
SA	Alan Merritt
TAS	Chris Rice
VIC	Amanda Storey Kate Ross Jennifer Black Martin Ha Marquita Nolan Ian Scott Joanne Carlton Brendan Lacota
WA	Catherine Eagle (Convenor)

Financial Report

National Association of Community Legal Centres

ABN: 67 757 001 303

Financial report

For the year ended 30 June 2020

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES
ABN: 67 757 001 303

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF THE SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020

Information on National Association of Community Legal Centres Limited summary financial report

The summary financial report is an extract from the full financial report for the year ended 30 June 2020. The financial statements and disclosures in the summary financial report have been derived from the 2020 financial report of National Association of Community Legal Centres Limited. The summary financial report cannot be expected to provide as detailed an understanding of the financial performance, financial position and financing and investing activities of National Association of Community Legal Centres Limited as the full financial report. A copy of the full financial report and auditor's report will be provided to any member, free of charge, upon request.

The discussion and analysis is provided to assist members in understanding the summary financial report. The discussions and analysis is based on National Association of Community Legal Centres Limited's financial statements and the information contained in the summary financial report has been derived from the full 2020 Financial Report of National Association of Community Legal Centres Limited.

Statement of comprehensive income

The company's total revenue increased by \$3,196,215 or approximately 25% to be \$15,764,925 for the year. The increase in revenue is mainly due to the grants received in relation to the Commonwealth Redress Scheme and Financial Counselling.

The company's total expenditure for the year increased by \$4,435,321 or approximately 39%. The increase in expenditure is attributable to wages and salaries and consultants due to the office opening in Perth.

Statement of financial position

As a result of the operating loss, the net asset position of the company decreased by \$84,925. The company continues to hold significant levels of cash reserves and maintains appropriate levels of working capital at year end. Financial assets increased by \$4,478,165 and grant and other income in advance increased by \$2,797,211 compared to last year. Intangible assets decreased by \$317,184 due to amortisation expense of the CLASS project. Payables increased by \$924,160 due to increase in GST payable and timing of payment of creditor invoices and accrued wages. Provisions increased by \$485,125, mainly representing increase in staff leave entitlements due to staff not taking leave due to COVID-19. In 2020 the company applied AASB16 Leases, which resulted in the recognition of lease assets and liabilities. The lease asset and liability will be amortised over the remaining period of the leases. There are no other notable movements or issues relating to the company's financial position.

Statement of cash flows

The company had a cash inflow from operating activities being \$5,608,288 compared to a cash inflow of \$3,425,987 from the prior year. The increase was due to the lease liability payments of \$730,922 now being classified as financing activities rather than operating activities. The company has a cash outflow from investing activities with funds invested in term deposits.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES
ABN: 67 757 001 303

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020

	Note	2020 \$	2019 \$
Revenue		15,764,925	12,568,710
Less: expenses			
Depreciation and amortisation expense	5	(680,958)	(537,237)
Employee benefits expense		(11,164,416)	(7,357,979)
Occupancy expense		(1,000,542)	(898,385)
Conference expense		(255,016)	(265,117)
Operating expense		(1,241,830)	(954,852)
Project expense		(44,198)	(171,758)
Consultants expense		(934,678)	(680,411)
Recruitment expense		(85,061)	(65,204)
Travel expense		<u>(443,151)</u>	<u>(483,586)</u>
		<u>(15,849,850)</u>	<u>(11,414,529)</u>
Surplus (deficit) from operations		(84,925)	1,154,181
Other comprehensive income for the year		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total comprehensive income		<u><u>(84,925)</u></u>	<u><u>1,154,181</u></u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES
ABN: 67 757 001 303

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT 30 JUNE 2020

	Note	2020 \$	2019 \$
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	6	3,696,634	3,439,595
Receivables	7	65,301	77,447
Financial assets	8	7,333,016	2,958,834
Other assets	12	<u>124,833</u>	<u>221,230</u>
Total current assets		<u>11,219,784</u>	<u>6,697,106</u>
Non-current assets			
Financial assets	8	510,761	406,778
Intangible assets	11	370,048	687,232
Lease assets	10	3,245,539	-
Property, plant and equipment	9	491,285	712,867
Other assets	12	<u>141,538</u>	<u>162,344</u>
Total non-current assets		<u>4,759,171</u>	<u>1,969,221</u>
Total assets		<u>15,978,955</u>	<u>8,666,327</u>
Current liabilities			
Payables	13	1,752,954	828,794
Lease liability	14	862,996	-
Provisions	16	849,118	480,440
Other liabilities	15	<u>5,798,273</u>	<u>3,002,562</u>
Total current liabilities		<u>9,263,341</u>	<u>4,311,796</u>
Non-current liabilities			
Lease liability	14	2,309,561	-
Provisions	16	<u>515,596</u>	<u>379,149</u>
Total non-current liabilities		<u>2,825,157</u>	<u>379,149</u>
Total liabilities		<u>12,088,498</u>	<u>4,690,945</u>
Net assets		<u>3,890,457</u>	<u>3,975,382</u>
Equity			
Reserves	18	137,500	137,500
Accumulated surplus	17	<u>3,752,957</u>	<u>3,837,882</u>
Total equity		<u>3,890,457</u>	<u>3,975,382</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES
ABN: 67 757 001 303

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020

	Reserves \$	Accumulated surplus \$	Total equity \$
Balance as at 1 July 2018	137,500	2,683,701	2,821,201
Surplus for the year	<u>-</u>	<u>1,154,181</u>	<u>1,154,181</u>
Total comprehensive income for the year	<u>-</u>	<u>1,154,181</u>	<u>1,154,181</u>
Balance as at 30 June 2019	<u>137,500</u>	<u>3,837,882</u>	<u>3,975,382</u>
Balance as at 1 July 2019	137,500	3,837,882	3,975,382
Surplus (deficit) for the year	<u>-</u>	<u>(84,925)</u>	<u>(84,925)</u>
Total comprehensive income for the year	<u>-</u>	<u>(84,925)</u>	<u>(84,925)</u>
Balance as at 30 June 2020	<u>137,500</u>	<u>3,752,957</u>	<u>3,890,457</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES
ABN: 67 757 001 303

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020

	Note	2020 \$	2019 \$
Cash flow from operating activities			
Receipts from customers		19,545,363	14,683,710
Payments to suppliers and employees		(13,831,122)	(11,308,009)
Interest received		68,427	50,286
Finance costs		<u>(174,380)</u>	<u>-</u>
Net cash provided by operating activities		<u>5,608,288</u>	<u>3,425,987</u>
Cash flow from investing activities			
Payment for property, plant and equipment		(142,162)	(1,183,559)
Payments for investments		<u>(4,478,165)</u>	<u>(2,586,842)</u>
Net cash used in investing activities		<u>(4,620,327)</u>	<u>(3,770,401)</u>
Cash flow from financing activities			
Principal portion of lease payments		<u>(730,922)</u>	<u>-</u>
Net cash provided by / (used in) financing activities		<u>(730,922)</u>	<u>-</u>
Reconciliation of cash			
Cash at beginning of the financial year		3,439,595	3,784,009
Net increase / (decrease) in cash held		<u>257,039</u>	<u>(344,414)</u>
Cash at end of financial year		<u><u>3,696,634</u></u>	<u><u>3,439,595</u></u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES
ABN: 67 757 001 303

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020

NOTE 1: BASIS OF PREPARATION OF THE SUMMARY FINANCIAL REPORT

The summary financial report is an extract of the full financial report for the year ended 30 June 2020. The financial statements, specific disclosures and other information included in the summary financial report are derived from, and are consistent with, the full financial report of the National Association of Community Legal Centres Limited. The summary financial report cannot be expected to provide as detailed an understanding of the financial performance, financial position and financing and investing activities of the National Association of Community Legal Centres Limited as the full financial report. A copy of the full financial report and auditor's report will be sent to any member, free of charge, upon request.

NOTE 1: EVENTS SUBSEQUENT TO REPORTING DATE

No matter or circumstance has arisen since 30 June 2020 that has significantly affected or may significantly affect:

- (a) the operations, in financial years subsequent to 30 June 2020, of the company, or
- (b) the results of those operations, or
- (c) the state of affairs, in financial years subsequent to 30 June 2020, of the company.

NOTE 2: COMPANY DETAILS

The registered office of the company is:

Suite 3, Level 10

307 Pitt Street

SYDNEY NSW 2000

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES
ABN: 67 757 001 303

DIRECTORS' DECLARATION

The directors of the company declare that the summary financial statements and notes for the financial year ended 30 June 2020, as set out on pages 1 – 5:

- (a) is an extract from the full financial report for the year ended 30 June 2020 and has been derived from and is consistent with the full financial report of National Association of Community Legal Centres Limited.

This declaration is made in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors.

Director: Anna Cody (ANNA CODY)

Dated this 21st day of October 2020



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201 Sussex Street
Sydney NSW 2000

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Sydney NSW 2001

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**AUDITOR'S INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION
TO THE DIRECTORS OF NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES**

I declare that to the best of my knowledge and belief, during the year ended 30 June 2020 there have been no contraventions of:

- i. the auditor's independence requirements as set out in the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* in relation to the audit; and
- ii. any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

MARK GODLEWSKI

Partner

PITCHER PARTNERS
Sydney

23 October 2020

Adelaide Brisbane Melbourne Newcastle Perth Sydney

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES
ABN: 67 757 001 303
INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT
TO THE DIRECTORS 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 2020, 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 2020.

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 8 November 2020.

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

23 October 2020

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