



Marrickville Legal Centre

# Marrickville Legal Centre

## Annual Report

2014 – 2015



Marrickville Legal Centre is an independent non-profit community legal centre providing free legal advice and assistance to people living in the inner west, south & parts of south-west Sydney and to young people throughout NSW.

Marrickville Legal Centre acknowledges the Gadigal, Wangal, Guringai, Wallumedegal and Cammeraygal peoples of the Eora Nation, who are the traditional custodians of the land on which we work. We would also like to pay respect to the Elders both past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

*Image: Haldon St Festival, Lakemba*



# Contents

About Us.....	Page 4
Our Services.....	Page 5
Our Service Catchments.....	Page 6
Message from the Chair.....	Page 7
Message from the Executive Officer.....	Page 8
Message from the Principal Solicitor.....	Page 9
Special Thanks.....	Page 10
General Legal Service.....	Page 12
Family Relationships Centre Partnership.....	Page 15
Employment Law.....	Page 17
Domestic Violence Support.....	Page 20
Tenancy and Housing.....	Page 23
Youth Law.....	Page 26
Community Legal Education.....	Page 29
Law Reform.....	Page 30
Our Volunteers.....	Page 32
Our Board.....	Page 34
Our Staff.....	Page 35
Financial Report 2014 – 2015.....	Page 37

# About Us

Marrickville Legal Centre is a nonprofit community legal centre that has been operating for over 35 years.

We provide free legal advice and related services to disadvantaged people living in the inner west, south and parts of south-west Sydney and to young people throughout NSW.

We offer community legal education, and advocate for equal access to justice and a better legal system through law reform.

## Our Vision:

**Social justice through accessible legal assistance to those who need it most.**

Our objectives:

1. To promote social justice and provide free and accessible legal services to people who experience social and economic disadvantage.
2. To involve vulnerable people in the recognition, understanding and solution of legal problems
3. To provide and promote community legal education
4. To develop and work collaboratively with networks, communities and key stakeholders
5. To participate in action for law reform and changes to policies that negatively affect our clients
6. To create and maintain an effective infrastructure to ensure effective service delivery

MLC prioritises service delivery to:

- Indigenous people
- young people
- boarding house residents and people facing homelessness
- people with a disability
- people with a mental illness
- people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- older people
- lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex & queer people.



# Our Services

## The General Legal Service

gives free legal advice through both telephone and face-to-face appointments with solicitors. The service offers drop-in clinics, and conducts outreach and community legal education. The Family Relationships Centre Partnership and the employment clinics are part of the General Legal Service.

## The Youth Legal Service

provides free telephone legal advice to children and young people (up to 24 years of age) living anywhere in NSW. In some cases the service offers advocacy and ongoing assistance, and can also give advice to parents and carers of young people, and youth and community workers.

## The Inner West Tenants' Advice & Advocacy Service and the Northern Sydney Area Tenants' Service

provide free telephone advice, advocacy and assistance to tenants living in Sydney's inner west and northern suburbs. The tenancy services help tenants with issues such as:

- repairs and maintenance
- rent increases
- boarding house disputes
- disputes with Housing NSW & community housing
- lockouts and evictions
- going to the tenancy tribunal.

## The Inner West Domestic Violence Proactive Support Service

entered its sixth and final year in 2014–15, working with Police on the Yellow Card referral scheme. The service focused on improving the safety of domestic violence victims and their children through telephone support, information and referrals. In 2015–16 the service will continue to provide this support while also assisting with training for the transition to the new referral pathway.

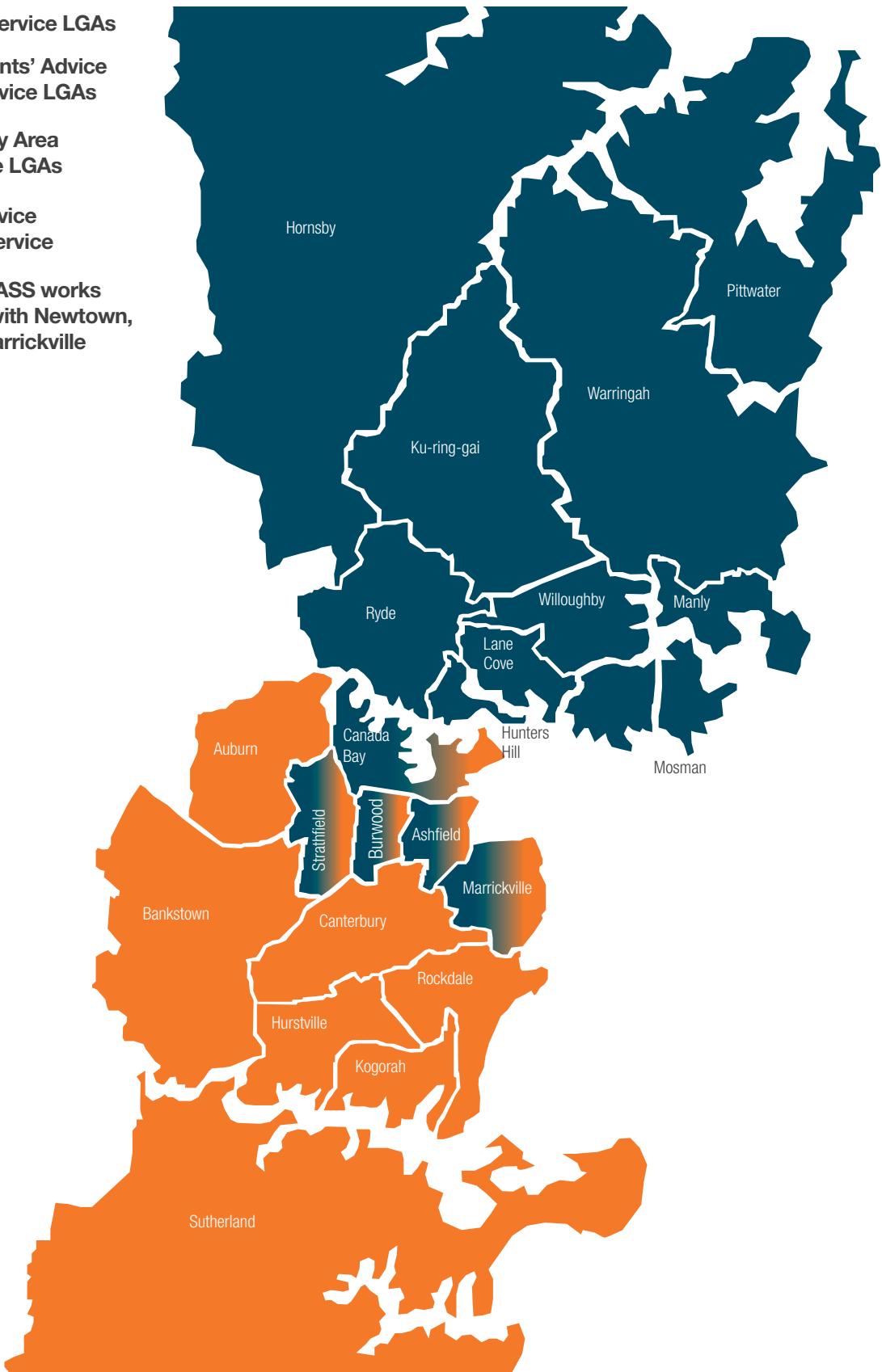
## Referrals

Marrickville Legal Centre has an excellent referral network to ensure clients find the best possible help for their problem. We work closely with other community legal centres, legal aid, and many local and community organisations and are able to refer clients to the appropriate service if we are unable to assist them ourselves.



# Our Service Catchments

- General Legal Service LGAs
- Inner West Tenants' Advice & Advocacy Service LGAs
- Northern Sydney Area Tenants' Service LGAs
- Youth Legal Service is a statewide service
- Inner West DV PASS works in conjunction with Newtown, Leichhardt & Marrickville police



# Message from the Chair



## Welcome!

Marrickville Legal Centre (MLC) provides community-focused legal assistance across a range of programs. These include general legal services, children's legal services, tenancy advocacy and domestic violence services, all offering effective and meaningful assistance to our community.

This report is packed with examples of MLC putting into practice its aim of providing high quality legal services to those who need them most. The team reports highlight case studies of MLC in action: providing assistance to community members who have experienced domestic violence, faced termination of employment, been discriminated against, faced eviction from their homes and who need support after family separation. It is truly one of the strengths of MLC that staff can provide holistic assistance to clients across so many areas.

It has been another busy and unpredictable year for all community legal centres. Like all the sector, halfway through the year MLC's staff and Board members were faced with the difficult task of preparing for a significant funding decrease, commencing on 1 July 2015. This decision was eventually reversed in April 2015, by which time we had already spent an awful lot of time and resources trying to work out how best to keep the Centre running without affecting key service delivery. And while the reality of further significant funding cuts is still on the horizon, we are all grateful for the temporary

reprieve and the time ahead to work together as a sector to face these challenges.

The staff members at MLC are all dedicated and talented workers who serve our community tirelessly from both the Marrickville and Chatwood offices. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to thank them all for their hard work, commitment and willingness to take on all challenges. Once again the Board would like to thank Catherine Dornan for her dedicated work and leadership as Executive Officer. We would also like to thank Michael Walton, our Principal Solicitor until November 2014, for capably leading the legal team over several years. We are lucky in that we have been able to welcome the very experienced community lawyer Annette Van Gent as our new Principal Solicitor this year.

MLC would not be able to provide the services it does without its legal and administrative volunteers, PLT students and seconded solicitors. The Centre's success could not have been achieved without the thousands of hours of unpaid work contributed by our volunteers. A heart-felt thank you goes out to all of the volunteers over the past year.

Lastly, I would like to thank my fellow Board members for their commitment to the Centre.

**Dianne Anagnos**

Chair, MLC Board

# Message from the Executive Officer



By any measure 2014–15 has been a challenging year for Marrickville Legal Centre, and for all community legal centres.

Having welcomed the Productivity Commission's recommendation in 2014 for an additional \$200 million per annum for legal services, we in fact saw a year of uncertainty across the sector in terms of structure, funding levels and allocation models.

The majority of funding cuts announced in mid 2013 were to be implemented from July 2015. By the start of 2015 as the devastating impact on community legal centres loomed large, the sector lobbied to be given details on how the cuts were to be distributed. Many centres began planning as well as they could for a best-guess outcome of the cuts. For MLC this meant we were unable to continue our contract positions, translating to a loss of 1.4 FTE solicitors and the free legal services they provided.

With some centres facing closure, and public support for the sector mounting, Attorney-General Senator George Brandis made a surprise announcement in March 2015, reversing some of these cuts.

Uncertainty about the exact details continued, as the Commonwealth and States continued negotiations over the five-year National Partnership Agreement on Legal Services (NPA). At 1 July 2015, MLC still did not have confirmation of our exact funding, the details of the NPA, or a finalised Service Agreement.

The final outcome of this 'reversal' of funding cuts is a two-year reprieve. While we applaud the acknowledgment of the need for our services and welcome the reprieve, importantly it does not address the basic problem of chronic underfunding to the sector.

In fact, budgeted funding cuts will go ahead, now occurring in the third year of the National Partnership Agreement. This means that in 2017–18 community legal centres nationally face a funding 'cliff' of a 30 % cut to our Commonwealth funding.

If implemented, these funding cuts will have a devastating impact on MLC's ability to provide vital frontline legal services, for disadvantaged community members. This is an important point; that any cut in the Centre's funding is a direct cut to our front-line services.

During this time of uncertainty, MLC reached out to our community, our political representatives and our many supporters, and I would like to sincerely thank all of you for your ongoing support in helping us continue the work of providing free legal services and equity in access to justice for vulnerable people across our catchments.

MLC has accomplished many things this year, continuing to provide excellence in service delivery, assisting 4084 clients and providing information and referrals to an additional 3451 people over the

12 month period. Our clients came from over 550 different suburbs across 12 local government areas, including some of the most socially and economically disadvantaged parts of our city.

Approximately 25 % of our clients spoke a language other than English at home. In particular, our work with women and young people, experiencing domestic and family violence or at risk of homelessness makes a real difference to the lives of the most vulnerable in the community. This and other work is detailed in the following reports.

I acknowledge that this significant number of services would not have been possible without the assistance of our pro bono partners, and our incredible front desk volunteers and volunteer solicitors. Thank you all for another year working alongside us.

This year has seen an expansion of MLC's Board, and I welcome new directors Julia Steward, Kira Levin and Aditi Kogekar. Thanks to all our Directors, and particularly to our Chair, Dianne Anagnos, for her commitment and support.

I acknowledge and extend my thanks to MLC's wonderful staff who despite the challenges continue to bring unwavering dedication and professionalism to their work.

Finally I thank former Principal Solicitor Michael Walton sincerely for all his hard work, and welcome our new Principal Solicitor, Annette Van Gent. Annette's considerable experience in community legal centres has already proved invaluable and it is a pleasure to be working with her and all the staff, who continue to innovate in delivering legal services to our clients and community.

I am very proud to be a part of the amazing community that is Marrickville Legal Centre.

**Catherine Dornan**  
Executive Officer

# Message from the Principal Solicitor



In December 2014, I had the great privilege of joining the team at Marrickville Legal Centre. Throughout 2014–15, this team of dynamic and caring workers have continued MLC's tradition of more than 35 years' of service to the people of inner and south west Sydney – promoting social justice through the provision of legal services to the most socially and economically vulnerable members of our communities.

Young people, people experiencing family violence, new and recently arrived migrants, and people at risk of homelessness are but some of the communities with whom our team has worked this year, giving legal advice, delivering legal education and, where needed, offering intensive casework assistance and representation.

MLC's generalist, youth, domestic violence and tenancy services have achieved much this year, including:

- Ongoing provision of legal services in relation to a broad range of general legal issues affecting the community, including legal problems arising from motor vehicle accidents, problems with credit and debt
- Assistance for people engaged in dispute resolution relating to family law parenting issues
- Expanded casework and advocacy services for people with employment law problems, including termination of employment, underpayment of wages, bullying and discrimination at work
- Intensive support to women experiencing domestic violence and seeking help through the local courts at Newtown, Leichardt and Balmain, provided by the Inner West Domestic Violence Proactive Support Service
- Outreach services to at-risk young people at locations including the Belmore Youth Resource Centre, the Bankstown Multicultural Youth Service, the Parramatta Children's Court and the Reiby Juvenile Detention Centre
- Tenancy advice and advocacy to tenants in social housing or at risk of homelessness, through the Inner West Tenants' Advice and Advocacy Service and the Northern Sydney Area Tenants' Service.

The achievements of each of MLC's services are detailed further in this annual report as de-identified case studies. As each case study demonstrates, the goal of the MLC team in working with our clients and communities involves more than the resolution of specific legal dilemmas.

Our goal extends to preventing further legal and social problems – and empowering individuals and communities – through a greater knowledge of the law and access to the legal system.

While each team member's contribution is invaluable in making MLC the vehicle for social justice that it is, I would like to especially acknowledge the exceptional work of Stephanie Tredinnick, who since 2012 has worked as the co-ordinator of MLC's Inner West Domestic Violence Proactive Support Service. Since its inception, this service has assisted 2698 women leaving family violence. It is a great cause of sadness and concern to all at MLC that this service will come to an end in June 2016, and we will be without a dedicated family violence worker from that time. In the coming months, we will work together to identify alternative sources of funding in order to be able to carry forward this invaluable support for those members of our communities seeking a way out of family violence.

I also must acknowledge the amazing ongoing support of our volunteers and pro bono partners, who generously donate their time, knowledge and skills to further MLC's efforts in achieving access to the law for all. Our volunteers and pro bono partners are truly an invaluable and much loved part of our team, to whom I am very happy to extend our heartfelt thanks.

Finally, I wish to thank the MLC team for their tremendous work, and for welcoming me this year. I greatly look forward to continuing to work together for social justice in the year to come.

**Annette Van Gent**

Principal Solicitor

# Special Thanks

## Funding

Marrickville Legal Centre relies on funding from a variety of government departments. We acknowledge and thank each of these departments and their individual program managers for their ongoing support.

- The General Legal Service, the Family Relationships Centre partnership and the Youth Legal Service, are provided through the Community Legal Services Program, funded by both Commonwealth & NSW Attorney General's Departments and administered by Legal Aid.
- The Inner West Tenants' Advice & Advocacy Service and the Northern Sydney Area Tenants' Service are both funded by NSW Fair Trading
- The Inner West Domestic Violence Proactive Support Service is funded by Women NSW, a part of NSW Department of Family & Community Services.

## Partners & Secondee Programs

Marrickville Legal Centre acknowledges and thanks these organisations for their generosity. Their assistance greatly increases our capacity to meet demand on our services.

### St George Migrant Resource Centre drop-in

We thank the amazing staff at the St George Migrant Resource Centre at Rockdale for their support and assistance for our weekly drop-in clinic every Friday morning.

### Bankstown Multicultural Youth Service

We thank the staff of BMYS for their assistance with and referrals to our outreach program.

### Belmore Youth Resource Centre

We thank Youth Community Development Officer Joanne Morrison and other Canterbury Council staff for their warm welcome and assistance with our Belmore office and the developing outreaches.

### Corrs Chambers Westgarth Secondee Program

MLC thanks Corrs Chambers Westgarth for their continued support through the Corrs Secondee Program. Our particular thanks also to 2014–15 Corrs secondees Giselle Kenny, Clementine Randle, Pavrita Vigneswaran, Amelia Ho and Joanna Lawrence.

Corrs also gave MLC and the Youth Justice Coalition use of their meeting rooms throughout 2014 and 2015.

### Gilbert + Tobin

G + T generously provide two solicitors every Tuesday night for evening advice sessions, and have given MLC and the Youth Justice Coalition use of their meeting rooms throughout 2014 and 2015.

We sincerely thank them for their continued support and ongoing assistance since May 2002.

### HWL Ebsworth Lawyers Secondee Program

This program grants assistance to the high number of marginalised clients with employment related debt. In particular we thank Pro Bono Coordinator, Meghan Curruthers, and secondees Newton Lee, Deliang Chin and Shomaice Zowghi.

### Fair Work Ombudsman

MLC thanks the Fair Work Ombudsman for the secondment of Helen Yuen one day a week, who greatly enhanced our ability to assist vulnerable clients with employment related issues.

### Clayton Utz

Our thanks to Clayton Utz and their lawyers for the Employment Law Advocacy Scheme, which has allowed us to offer clients representation in unfair dismissal and general protections claims at the Fair Work Commission.

### Employment Law Clinic Secondee Program

We thank the following law firms and participants for their generous support of this program.

#### HWL Ebsworth Lawyers

Partner: Michael Connelly

Pro bono: Natalie Bountros & Meghan Curruthers

Secondees: Irina Kolodizner, Adina Teggins, Sebastian McIntosh, Laura Gavan, Nicholas Mangan, Justin Le Blond & Tara Nicholas (for organising the roster)

#### Sparke Helmore Lawyers

Partner: David Davies

National Corporate Social Responsibility Manager: Hannah Rose

Secondees: Sarah Wood, Felicity Edwards, Julie Kneebone, Ian Bennett & Conor McNair

#### Minter Ellison

Partners: George Williams & Gareth Jolly

Secondees: Ajay Khandhar, Jessica Middleby-Clements, Jacob Summers-Smith, Chloe Conway, Anna Hobson, Kelsey Hunter & Bernadette McCabe

#### New Law

Secondee: Joseph Kennedy

#### Labour Pains Legal

Secondee: Alison Dutton

# Special Thanks

## Pro Bono Assistance

We would like to acknowledge and pay special tribute to the many solicitors and barristers who have donated many hours of pro bono assistance to Marrickville Legal Centre and its clients over the year.

In particular we would like to thank:

<b>Will Staples</b>	Bridge Lawyers	<b>Natasha Hammond</b>	Martin Place Chambers
<b>David Hillard</b> <b>Sarah Brooks</b> <b>Lewis d'Avigdor</b> <b>Wagih Doueihi</b> <b>Aaron Johnson</b> <b>Hannah Kimber</b> <b>Mary Konstatopoulos</b> <b>Natalie Martins</b> <b>Alexandra McCaughan</b> <b>Kate Paull</b> <b>Rachel Richardson</b> <b>Katie Wightman</b> <b>Hai-Van Nguyen</b> <b>Jess Morath</b> <b>Lynn Baggs</b>	Clayton Utz	<b>Nick Eastman</b>	
<b>Louise Goodchild</b> <b>David D'Souza</b>	State Chambers	<b>Louise McDermott</b>	Redfern Legal Centre
<b>Michael Do Rozario</b> <b>Ruth Nocka</b> <b>Giselle Kenny</b> <b>Clementine Randle</b> <b>Pavrita Vigneswaran</b>	Corrs Chamber Westgarth	<b>Carmine Santone</b> <b>Tina Santone</b>	Santone Lawyers
<b>Michelle Hannon</b> <b>Tamara Sims</b> <b>Shamilla Bargon</b> <b>Matthew McGirr</b> <b>Amy Rogers</b> <b>Grace Keesing</b> <b>Brooke Cooling</b> <b>Peter Pereira</b> <b>Patty Veliz</b>	Gilbert + Tobin	<b>Hannah Rose</b> <b>Ian Bennett</b>	Sparke Helmore
<b>Meghan Carruthers</b> <b>Natalie Bountros</b>	HWL Ebsworth	<b>Erin Steiner</b>	Steiner Legal
<b>Joanna Mansfield</b> <b>Michael Ziemer</b> <b>Teresa Cianciosi</b>	Justice Connect	<b>Patricia Lane</b>	13th Floor St James Hall
<b>Simon Howard</b> <b>Katrina Wong</b>	Legal Aid NSW	<b>Zach Marrett</b>	Tosh Legal
		<b>Gabrielle Starr</b>	United Voice



# General Legal Service

2014–15 was another busy year for Marrickville Legal Centre's General Legal Service, which gave 2160 legal advices for 1903 clients, 50 % of whom were from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

## Clients

The General Legal Service covers 12 local government areas across the inner west, south and parts of south-west Sydney, with a population of approximately 1.2 million people. We provide free legal advice, casework and community legal education, and participate in law reform and policy development. Our Employment Law Service and Family Relationships Centre Partnership are part of the General Legal Service.

The geographical areas of Sydney serviced by Marrickville Legal Centre include a wide diversity of people, and this is reflected in the clients of the General Legal Service, more than 50% of whom are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. People with disability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are also significantly represented among the clients of the General Legal Service.

All our clients are people who experience difficulty in accessing mainstream legal services, for financial or other reasons relating to socio-economic disadvantage. We work to help our clients overcome the barriers to accessing justice, through the range of advice, casework and educational services that we provide.

## Advice and Casework

During 2014–15, the General Legal Service staff solicitors provided 2160 legal advices for 1903 clients. This would not have been possible without the invaluable support and assistance of volunteer solicitors attending MLC for both day and evening sessions. Staff solicitors also provided ongoing assistance for clients at particular

disadvantage, opening 282 casework files dealing with complex legal issues.

Clients sought advice in relation to a broad range of legal problems, including:

- Driving-related issues – motor vehicle accidents, minor traffic offences, traffic fines and issues around drivers' licence suspension and disqualification;
- Credit and debt issues – recovering money owed, responding to demands for money owed, dealing with non-traffic related fines, and bankruptcy; and
- Consumer complaints – about a wide spectrum of goods and services.

The majority of casework provided by the General Legal Service involved assisting clients to resolve issues relating to motor vehicle accidents and serious credit and debt problems. In our casework, we strive to help highly disadvantaged clients achieve a timely, just and equitable resolution to their legal issues, using alternative dispute resolution processes wherever possible.

The General Legal Service has continued to offer advice and casework services in a range of flexible formats, to respond to the particular needs of our clients. This includes both drop-in and booked face-to-face appointments during the day at both MLC and the St George Migrant Resource Centre at Rockdale. We also provide advice to clients two evenings per week, both face-to-face and over the telephone. Throughout the day, we also offer information and support to community workers engaging with people living across our catchment area.



## Family violence and debt

'Susie' (not her real name) ended a relationship of just over one year when her partner 'Max' became increasingly psychologically and physically violent towards her. She reported the violence to the Police, sought their assistance in applying for an apprehended violence order (AVO), found a new home and started to move on with her life.

A short time later, Max filed a statement of claim in the Local Court seeking to recover several thousand dollars which he claimed he had loaned to Susie during their relationship. Susie knew this was not true and was devastated, feeling that Max's actions were a form of financial abuse, an attempt to continue to control her.

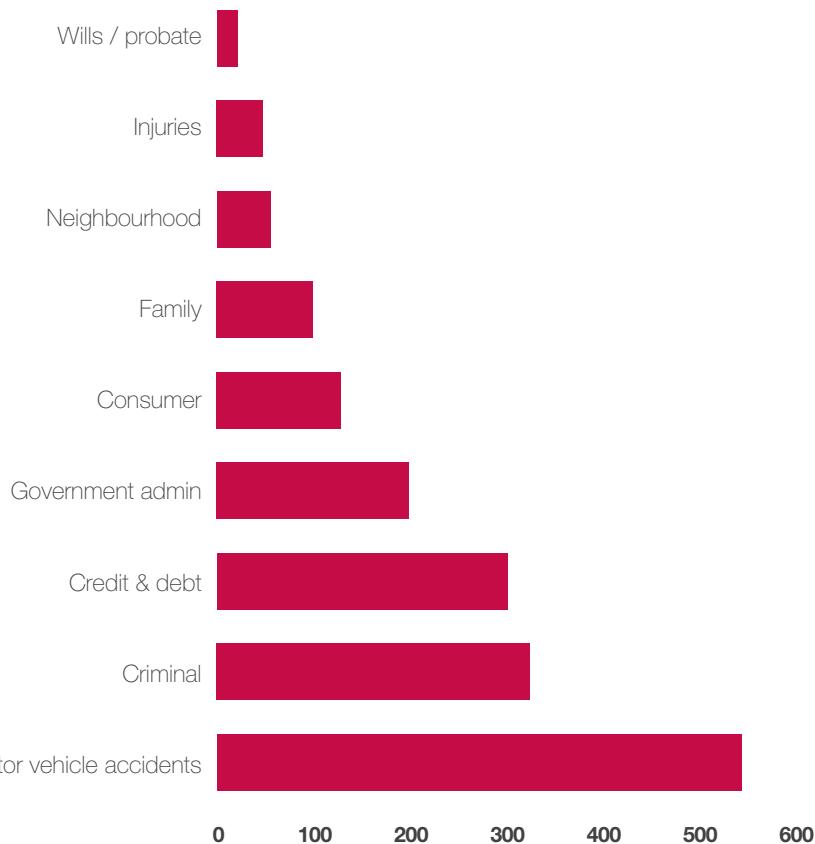
Susie missed her first court date as she was in hospital, seeking treatment for depression, which she had developed in response to the violence she had suffered in her relationship. A default judgement was made against Susie, and Max commenced action to enforce the judgement.

Susie came to MLC deeply distressed and full of anxiety that she would lose her possessions and money to Max. MLC assisted Susie by applying to have the default judgement set aside, and filing a defence to Max's claim (in which Susie was able to prove that the alleged debt did not exist). MLC was ultimately able to negotiate with Max to withdraw his statement of claim before it proceeded to hearing, and to take no further action against Susie.

## HWL Ebsworth Secondee Program

The HWL Ebsworth Secondee Program continued during 2014–15, with the law firm generously providing a secondee solicitor once a week on a pro bono basis. The clinic provides advice and casework assistance for vulnerable and disadvantaged clients experiencing problems with credit and debit, fines, consumer complaints and motor vehicle property damage cases.

### Examples of GLS advice by problem type



## Write-off reactivation of fines debts

'Dave', 'Sam' and 'Steve' (not their real names) came to MLC after receiving letters from the State Debt Recovery (SDR) stating that their outstanding debt for fines had been reinstated. The NSW *Fines Act 1996* allows the SDR to reinstate a debt within five years from the date it was written-off if the person receives a new enforcement order. MLC's General Legal Service had previously obtained a write-off for Dave, Sam, Steve for a combined debt of around \$45,000.

Clients like Dave, Sam and Steve, who experience mental health issues and periods of homelessness, are unlikely to be 'fines free' for five years, as they are regularly issued with new enforcement orders, such as fines for public transport offences. We assisted Dave, Sam and Steve by making further submissions to the SDR for the withdrawal of the re-instatement of the debts on the basis that the clients' circumstances had not improved. After some negotiation, the SDR agreed to allow MLC to rely on the medical prognosis contained in previous medical reports, so that we did not incur the additional cost of new medical reports. In the course of the reassessment process, the SDR also approved the write-off of the bulk of court fines, which had been rejected under earlier write-off applications.

## **Victims compensation**

In 2013, the NSW Government replaced the old Victims Compensation Scheme with the Victims Support Scheme, which does not provide for the cost of legal representation. This can make it difficult for vulnerable and disadvantaged clients who continue to require assistance with the application process, particularly when it may involve multiple claims, complex issues and traumatic events. MLC's General Legal Service had acted on behalf of the following three vulnerable clients to help them through this process.

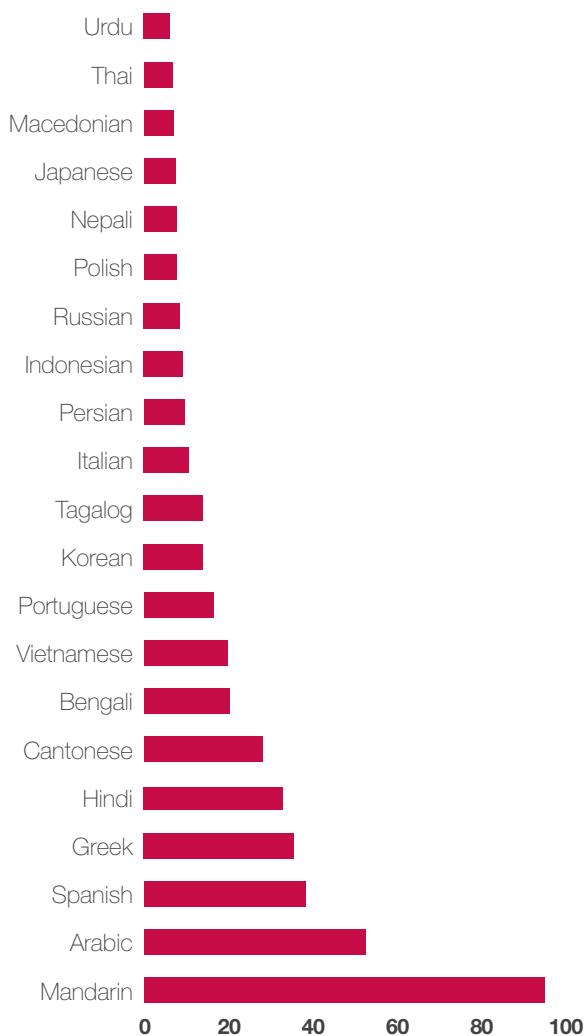
'Kim' (not her real name) came to MLC after experiencing a prolonged period of domestic violence that spanned over a decade of her life. In addition to documenting the multiple acts of violence and injuries sustained by Kim, the claim also required additional submissions to address criminal charges against Kim, who had acted in self-defence on one occasion. This had occurred when the offender had hit her on the head with a bat and was threatening to kill her. Kim received \$5000, which is the maximum amount payable under the Category C recognition payment and was later acquitted at court on the criminal charges

'Asmin' (not her real name) moved to Australia with her husband after an arranged marriage in her home country. Things did not go well in the marriage, which Asmin described as violent and degrading, being treated like a servant and locked in the marital home for prolonged periods. One night she managed to call 000, and with the help of an interpreter the Police were able to locate and rescue her. Asmin spent a long time in a refuge where she could learn the life skills to live independently and attend English classes. MLC assisted Asmin in making submissions and obtaining medical reports to establish that she had sustained a permanent injury that amounted to grievous bodily harm. Asmin was granted \$5000, the maximum amount under the Category C recognition payment and a \$5000 special grant from the Victims Support Fund.

'Reza' (not her real name) came to MLC for assistance with multiple claims, which had been lodged while she was in a refuge following her escape from the marital home. Reza had experienced violence from her husband and his family. One claim against a violent family member had been dismissed, however we assisted Reza with an internal review application and the claim was successfully reassessed on the basis of our additional submissions.



## **Examples of GLS clients' languages spoken at home**



# Family Relationships Centre Partnership

Marrickville Legal Centre and Sutherland Family Relationship Centre continue a successful partnership to provide legal assistance to clients requiring family dispute resolution, who are disadvantaged by a lack of financial resources or may have complex needs. The Commonwealth Attorney General's Department funds the program, which began in 2009 and operates nationally.

MLC provides legal advice to clients and assistance with the preparation of court documents. We also represent clients at legally assisted mediations in cases where there is particular need. This may be where the parties are entrenched in their positions or if there is a history of family violence, mental illness or substance abuse.

## Legally Assisted Mediation

Over the last five years, the partnership has helped many clients reach agreement about the shared care of their children through legally assisted mediation, which has resulted in the drafting of parenting plans or consent orders.

MLC works collaboratively with our partners, who include family dispute resolution practitioners and lawyers from other community legal centres involved with the program.

Clients who undergo legally assisted mediation often require a series of ongoing interventions such as referral to counselling, other support services or parenting courses. For instance, where a client has experienced family violence either during

the relationship or upon separation, MLC is able to call upon the expertise of our domestic violence support coordinator who can connect the client to the various support services available, such as counselling and the Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Scheme.

MLC also provides assistance with the periodic review of client parenting arrangements. This often means repeat legally assisted mediations at three to six month intervals.

In 2014–15, MLC gave advice to 68 clients requiring family dispute resolution and represented clients in legally assisted mediations on 18 occasions resulting in 12 successful signed parenting plans.



*Family Relationships Centre  
Partnership solicitor, Margie Martin*



## Supervised contact mediation

Sutherland Family Relationship Centre referred 'Mary' (not her real name) for assistance at a legally assisted mediation. Mary had some mental health problems and presented as having anger management issues when she felt frustrated. Mary's husband had been granted sole parental responsibility for the children who lived with him. Mary was granted supervised contact with their two children of primary school age, until she underwent therapy as prescribed by a court appointed psychiatrist. The psychiatrist was to report on her progress and allow for the time Mary spent with her children to increase and progress to unsupervised care. Mary struggled with these orders for a period of four years, but she had made great progress when the Relationship Centre asked us to assist her. Mary had very low expectations for the outcome of the mediation, which proceeded as a shuttle mediation with each client and their lawyer in a separate room. She was delighted when her proposal to move from supervised contact at a contact centre to her local church on the weekends was finally accepted by the children's father. This allowed Mary to spend time with her children in a friendly social environment where the children could play with other children and enjoy their mother's company in a fun and happy place free of the tensions and restrictions of the contact centre.

## Increasing contact mediation

We have been assisting our client 'David' (not his real name) referred to us by the Family Relationship Centre for a legally assisted mediation, with a view to gradually increasing the time he spends with his six year old daughter. David has been receiving treatment from his psychiatrist and therapy with his psychologist after a period of mental illness, when he attempted suicide, and the final breakdown of his marriage to 'Rachel' (not her real name). Both parents are very respectful of the other parent's relationship with their daughter and of each other, but Rachel needed to be sure that their daughter 'Daisy' would be safe when she was with David. David has been spending supervised contact with Daisy for several months and the Relationship Centre has worked with David to keep him focused on Daisy's best interests when supervised contact becomes frustrating for him. Short periods away from direct supervision have been gradually introduced and this will hopefully continue with the support of legal assistance at mediation.

# Employment Law Service

As in previous years, Marrickville Legal Centre experienced a high demand for employment law advice, casework assistance and representation during 2014–15. Employment law continues to constitute the main area of practice for our General Legal Service.

A significant proportion of people seeking employment law assistance during the year were from a recent migrant background, were people with disability, or were older workers. In addition to initial advice, MLC provided ongoing casework and advocacy assistance for many of these clients, in recognition of the particular disadvantages they experienced in the workplace and in accessing assistance once problems arise.

We assisted these and other clients with a broad range of legal issues, including underpayment of wages and entitlements, termination of employment, bullying, harassment, and discrimination.

## Advice and Assistance

During 2014–15 we provided a total of 692 employment advices, with a total of 298 clients receiving ongoing assistance through casework and advocacy. Our capacity to provide advice in relation to employment matters is significantly increased through the generous support and assistance of volunteer solicitors at evening advice sessions. We also depend on the invaluable support of solicitors in our pro bono programs in order to provide ongoing casework and advocacy in employment matters to particularly disadvantaged clients.

## Employment Law Advocacy Scheme

In January 2015, MLC in partnership with the law firm Clayton Utz established an Employment Law Advocacy Scheme, which has allowed us to offer clients representation in unfair dismissal and general protections claims at the Fair Work Commission. Our thanks to Clayton Utz and their solicitors for their great volunteer work in support of this scheme.

## Secondment from the Fair Work Ombudsman

In April 2015, MLC was privileged to welcome Helen Yuen on secondment from the Fair Work Ombudsman. Throughout her secondment, Helen has significantly increased our capacity to respond to and assist socially and economically disadvantaged clients with issues involving the underpayment of wages and entitlements. Helen has also delivered training about the role of the Fair Work Ombudsman and assisting clients with underpayment issues, which has been of great value for community legal centre staff, volunteers and pro bono lawyers assisting community legal centre clients.

## Employment Law Clinic

The Employment Law Clinic Secondee Program began in March 2014, with the commitment of participating law firms HVL Ebsworth Lawyers, New Law, Minter Ellison Lawyers, Sparke Helmore Lawyers and Alison Dutton from Labour Pains Legal. The clinic operates on Thursday mornings with participating firms providing a secondee solicitor on a monthly roster. The program provides an opportunity for vulnerable and disadvantaged clients, who frequently present with complex and multiple issues, to receive intensive casework assistance.

## Sex discrimination at work

'Sally' (not her real name) worked in a clerical role for a finance company. She loved her job and felt that she had a good relationship with her colleagues and supervisor. This changed when Sally announced that she was pregnant, and needed to take maternity leave. Sally felt that her supervisor suddenly became highly critical of her work, which had not occurred previously. He also made various comments to her about how difficult it would be for the company to accommodate her taking maternity leave, and suggested that she should leave her job. After several months of this treatment, Sally felt too anxious and depressed to go on. She reluctantly resigned from her employment.

MLC assisted Sally with a sex discrimination complaint in the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board. Sally's complaint settled at a conciliation conference, at which Sally received a number of outcomes that were important to her in moving forward. These included an apology about how she had been treated, and evidence that her former employer would institute appropriate policies and training about discrimination and harassment at work.



Fair Work Ombudsman  
secondee Helen Yuen with  
Annette Van Gent,  
MLC Principal Solicitor

## Disability discrimination at work

'Dara' (not her real name) had worked for about 28 years as a seamstress for a company producing work outfits, when her employment was terminated because she was unable to perform the work at the same rate as the other seamstresses. Dara knew that she was slower than the other employees, because she had a number of age-related health problems which made it difficult for her to work at the same rate as they did. She was extremely upset about the loss of her employment, partly because it meant the end of her working life, but mostly because she felt that she would have been able to continue working if her employer had agreed to some adjustments which she had requested, such as working reduced hours.

MLC assisted Dara to bring a general protections claim in the Fair Work Commission, alleging discrimination on the grounds of Dara's disabilities. In a conciliation conference at the Fair Work Commission, MLC assisted Dara in negotiating with her former employer about the possibility of her being reinstated to her former job. As this was unfortunately no longer available, we assisted Dara in negotiating to receive compensation for the financial loss which she had suffered as a result of losing her employment earlier than she had expected. Negotiations also successfully helped her achieve other outcomes that were important to Dara, such as being able to resign from her employment rather than having her impeccable work record saying that she had been terminated.

## Underpayment of wages

'Ari' (not her real name) found work as a kitchenhand at a busy inner city restaurant, while living in Sydney on a working holiday visa. Before her visa expired, Ari's employer offered to sponsor her on a temporary work visa. Ari's employer put in an application for this visa, and she continued working at the restaurant on a bridging visa.

After he had applied for the temporary work visa, Ari's employer made increasing demands of her at work. Before long, Ari was working in the kitchen undertaking all of the kitchenhand duties for approximately 60 hours per week over six days per week. For this work, she was paid \$500 cash-in-hand most weeks and on some weeks was not paid at all. She was told that she was not allowed to take time off work sick, or for a break if she was tired.

Ari lost her employment when her employer's application to sponsor her on a temporary work visa was declined. When Ari came to MLC for assistance, she was exhausted and stressed. Her visa was about to expire and she had very limited time in which to make arrangements to leave Australia. She also had very little money as the wage she had earned in the kitchen had left her with not much left over after paying her rent and living expenses.

MLC advised Ari about the ways in which her employer had breached Australian workplace laws. We helped Ari make a workplace complaint to the Fair Work Ombudsman, and assisted her at mediation facilitated through the Ombudsman. Through this process, Ari was able to recover most of the wages owed to her, and to make arrangements to return home. The Ombudsman was also able to provide information to the employer about obligations to employees, and the consequences of breaching the law.



## Racial discrimination at work

MLC assisted 'Mohamad', 'Emmanuel', 'Daniel' and 'Amad' (not their real names) with multiple employment related claims arising from their employment at a local business, 'Soapy Suds'.

Mohamad and Emmanuel first came to MLC after Mohamad had been dismissed, and Emmanuel had been threatened with dismissal, after asking to be paid their correct wages and entitlements on the basis of information from the Fair Work Ombudsman. Soon after Emmanuel was also terminated.

We assisted Mohamad and Emmanuel with drafting and lodging General Protections Termination Applications with the Fair Work Commission. Mohamad and Emmanuel received legal representation under a pro bono partnership with a major law firm, which focuses on representation for MLC's youth clients on employment law matters.

Later, two other employees, Daniel and Amad, contacted MLC for assistance with their underpayment claims and discrimination complaints on the grounds of disability, race and racial vilification. Earlier in the year, Daniel had been sacked after he became ill at work and went to hospital by ambulance. Amad had left because of the way he was treated at work. At work, Daniel and Amad (and other employees from the same racial background) had been expected to work under different conditions than other employees. They were constantly called racially derogatory names. Daniel and Amad were represented on a pro bono basis by the same law firm.

All four clients had major underpayment of wages and entitlements claims. MLC undertook complex underpayment calculations and lodged complaints with the Fair Work Ombudsman. As the Fair Work Ombudsman was unable to resolve the underpayment complaints, the underpayment claims were 'joined' with the discrimination and general protections claims.

With the assistance of the pro bono partnership, Mohamad, Emmanuel, Daniel and Amad were able to obtain a fair settlement for all their claims including the payment of outstanding wages and entitlements.

# Domestic Violence Support

In 2014–15, the Inner West Domestic Violence Proactive Support Service (IWDVPASS) entered its sixth and final year of the Yellow Card program with NSW Police. The Yellow Card program finished on 30 June 2015, to be replaced by the NSW Government Safer Pathway Reform, which includes the new Police Domestic Violence Risk Assessment Tool and a new process of referral from Police to the Central Referral Point (Victim Services) and the Local Coordination Point (WDVCAS).

From 1 July 2015, IWDVPASS has been funded for a single additional year. Coordinator, Stephanie Tredinnick, will continue to meet and fulfill the newly defined objectives of the program, by supporting this new pathway transition and by building upon the partnerships with Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service, NSW Police and many other community organisations.

## Inner West DVPASS Program at MLC 2010 – 2015

The Domestic Violence Proactive Support Service (DVPASS) model was developed and implemented by the NSW Police Force in 2003 to provide Local Area Commands (LACs) with a mechanism to refer domestic violence victims to specialist domestic violence services.

In 2009 the Office of Women's Policy funded MLC to auspice a one-year pilot, modelled on the successful DVPASS programs then operating in Campsie and Sutherland. In 2010 MLC's Inner West DVPASS was granted a further five years recurrent funding to continue the excellent work.

The project aimed to provide an integrated criminal justice and social welfare response to victims of domestic violence, providing support, information and referral to people impacted by domestic violence who come into contact with the police.

The 'Yellow card' program as it was known involved a two-step process.

1. Police asked the victim, usually at the time of an incident, for consent for the DVPASS to contact the victim.
2. DVPASS then made telephone contact within 72 hours to provide information or referrals to enable the person to access local services and support.

With the focus on the safety and wellbeing of the victim, and on the accountability of the perpetrator, this early intervention ensured that the person was supported as close as possible to the point of crisis, in order to maximise their efforts to break the cycle of violence. Being based in the legal centre has also enabled women to gain access to legal advice about family law, tenancy issues and victim's compensation claims.

The innovative project has proved to be very successful, receiving very positive feedback regarding the high standard of support and service coordination given to clients. This feedback has come from many sources including our police partners, local community partners and clients themselves.

Over the five years of the program, over 4300 referrals were made to the service and contact attempted in all cases. With just one dedicated DVPASS worker, the program provided information, referrals and support to 2698 people.

MLC acknowledges and pays tribute to the incredible DVPASS workers employed over the six years for their dedication to assisting the flood of people in crisis – our thanks to Amelia Pace, Sarah Stellino and Stephanie Tredinnick .



Ingrid Rielly, Marrickville Police Domestic Violence Liaison Officer, Charmaine Weldon, Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service Coordinator, and IWDVPASS Coordinator, Stephanie Tredinnick

## **Improving the Safety of Victims and their Children**

In 2014-2015 IWDVPASS has once again focused on making contact quickly with domestic violence victims to improve their safety and that of their children, through telephone advice, casework and outreach support. From 1 July 2015 onwards, IWDVPASS will still receive referrals and provide these assessments, safety and casework services for referrals under the new Safer Pathway received from MLC and other community service providers.

## **Integrated, Collaborative Service Provision & Partnerships**

Over the year, the service continued to be co-located one day each per week in the three police stations of Leichhardt, Marrickville and Newtown Local Area Commands, and this has allowed for strong partnerships with police Domestic Violence Liaison Officers. The IWDVPASS Coordinator participated in the Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service Seconded Worker Roster on a bi-monthly basis at Balmain and Newtown Local Courts, improving communication between the services, and providing assistance and support to victims attending court.

The IWDVPASS Coordinator also attended various interagency and networking opportunities with other domestic violence and community service providers in the local and metropolitan areas of Sydney, keeping abreast of recent and updated programs, research, statistics and trends within community service networks, and further improving referral pathways for clients.

## **June's story**

'June' had been married to 'George' (not their real names) for three years and they had a two-year-old daughter together. The family had settled in Australia from Indonesia and had been living in a motel while awaiting more permanent accommodation from NSW Housing.

Earlier this year June had been diagnosed with a serious chronic illness and had to spend time in hospital on and off for several weeks. This triggered concern from Family and Community Services (FACS) that the two-year-old girl was not being adequately cared for while June was in hospital.

There had been a history of domestic violence previously reported to Police while the family were living in the motel but no AVO had been put in place. After contact from FACS, George threatened to kill June, their daughter and then himself during an argument. Terrified about what might happen, June reported to Police. George was arrested and charged and June and her daughter were taken to emergency refuge accommodation. IWDVPASS contacted June, providing legal advice around the AVO, information about domestic violence and services available, safety planning, a warm referral to the Women's Court Advocacy Service and counselling. IWDVPASS coordinated with Police, June's Social Worker, the FACS Child Protection worker and the refuge to provide ongoing referrals and support to June during her stay and after she left emergency accommodation. As a result of this support, June and her daughter have been able to go on to live their lives in peace and security, free from the threat of both violence and homelessness.

## **Number of referrals received from agencies, by source:**

**Marrickville LAC 348**

**Leichhardt LAC 278**

**Newtown LAC 209**

**Other sources 31  
(MLC/self-referral)**

## Main partner agencies

- Marrickville Legal Centre
- NSW Police Force Local Area Commands (Leichhardt, Marrickville, Newtown)
- Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service
- Elsie Women's Refuge
- Wesley Family Homelessness Services (WAGEC)
- Warringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre

## Participation in education and training 2014 – 2015

- DVNSW Safer Pathway Training – Redfern Legal Centre
- Advanced Domestic and Family Violence Training – ECAV
- Love Bites Youth Domestic and Sexual Assault Facilitators training
- WDVCAS Forum training
- White Ribbon Forum Training Day

## Materials produced and distributed

When appropriate and safe to do so, an information pack is sent out to clients by post or by email containing:

- a power and control wheel
- an equality wheel
- 'Safe from Violence' booklet (or similar)
- cycle of violence info
- a list of local support services/helplines/websites
- flyers for SWDVCAS, Victims Services, MLC, Leichhardt Women's Community Health Centre and other services
- family law and relationship /family support information
- a flyer on financial support

## Lily's story

'Lily' and 'Mark' (not their real names) were married for six years, have a four year old son and also own a home together. Lily is a teacher and Mark is unemployed. Lily disclosed that there had been a long history of verbal and psychological abuse, and erratic aggressive behaviour from Mark since the birth of their son. They had many arguments over parenting issues, which revealed aggressive outbursts and erratic psychological abuse toward Lily in front of their son. Lily reported to Police about the abuse including information that Mark had started stalking her at work and threatening her. Mark later took the child away from their home and contacted Lily advising he would leave with the child and not return. Lily contacted Police, and they spoke to Mark and an AVO was put in place. IWDVPASS contacted Lily, provided information about domestic violence, safety planning and Family Law, and made a warm referral to Sydney Women's Court Advocacy Service, victims' services and a local family support service as well as providing ongoing contact support. Lily did decide to stay in the relationship and has received information, support and counselling to assist her.



## Thanks

A special thanks to NSW Police Domestic Violence Liaison Officers at Marrickville, Leichhardt and Newtown Police and staff at Sydney Women's Court Advocacy Service for their ongoing partnership and support during the Yellow Card Project and to Elsie's Women's Refuge staff for supporting IWDVPASS and assisting filling staff leave locums. The information, referrals, and advocacy that have been provided has assisted hundreds of women to be supported and be safer, and their fantastic work is greatly appreciated by Marrickville Legal Centre.

# Tenancy and Housing

In 2014–15 Marrickville Legal Centre continued to provide essential legal advice, advocacy and representation to over 2000 tenants across the inner west and northern suburbs of Sydney.

Since opening in December 2013, the Northern Sydney Tenants' Advice Service (NSATS) has developed its presence as the first point of contact for vulnerable tenants facing eviction and homelessness in the northern suburbs. The long established Inner West Tenants' Advice & Advocacy Service (IWTASS) continues to engage with local community organisations and is particularly active in assisting social housing and boarding house tenants. It has been a year of consolidation and growth despite the pressure that the tenancy services are under, due to increased demand and a lack of funding.

## Duty Advocacy

Our tenancy services continue to provide a duty advocacy service at the Sydney registry of the NSW Civil & Administrative Tribunal. Tenants' advocates provide on-the-spot advice and representation for tenants appearing at the Tribunal, negotiating agreements and appearing on the tenant's behalf at the hearing. This service plays an important role in preventing homelessness and helping vulnerable tenants who may not have received any assistance or advice before attending the Tribunal. In 2014–15 the tenancy services assisted 246 tenants, the majority of whom were at risk of homelessness.

## Law Reform and Policy Issues

Our tenancy services are involved with a number of law reform and policy campaigns relating to tenants' rights and the prevention of homelessness. For details about one of these issues, see page 31.



## **Building Relationships**

The tenancy services continue to build relationships with community organisations in their local areas. MTAAS attends the weekly Newtown Neighbourhood Centre 'one-stop-shop' for boarding house residents and people experiencing homelessness. We also provide outreach advice for the Korean Welfare Association and attend a monthly barbecue for boarding house residents at the All Saints Church Petersham. NSATS has been developing partnerships with a number of organisations in the northern suburbs including Ryde Family Services, Northern Sydney District Homelessness Early Intervention and Prevention Program, Northern Sydney Partners in Recovery, and Taldumande Youth Services.

These relationships target assistance for vulnerable tenants who are at risk of homelessness and allow easy referrals between the organisations to make sure that the complex needs of marginalised tenants are being effectively addressed.

## **Community Legal Education**

In 2014–15 the tenancy services provided a number of community legal educations for community workers and tenants. In particular, the priority housing workshop, which provides advice and tips on negotiating the priority housing application process, has continued to be popular with workers from a range of community organisations.

## **Casework**

The core work of the tenancy services continues to be the daily advice, advocacy and representation provided to tenants. These services are under pressure, as tenants' advice services in NSW have not received a core funding increase since 2001, despite a 40% increase in demand. Given that lack of funding, the tenancy services continue to target their assistance to ensure that the most vulnerable tenants get help when they need it. However, many other tenants require advice on a range of issues and the tenancy services are developing tools that will provide tenants with one-off legal help.

## **Protected tenancies**

In late 2014, MTAAS was approached by a group of tenants who lived in workers' cottages that were part of the old Homebush Abattoirs. All 12 of the cottage tenants had been issued with termination notices.

The public authority that owned the cottages had recently sold the properties to a private developer. The private developer had then started the process of selling the houses individually. All of the properties were sold at auction for a large profit.

We assisted four tenants to dispute their notices of termination. These tenants were former abattoir workers or their families and were elderly with complex medical issues. It was established that the tenants were protected under the 1948 *Landlord and Tenant Amendment Act*.

The property developer had sold the properties without first obtaining Council development approval for sub-division. This was lodged after the sales. With the assistance of MLC's General Legal Team and barristers Nick Eastman and Natasha Hammond, the tenants disputed the DA application.

The property developer made a claim to the Land & Environment Court where the tenants joined to the proceedings, on the grounds that they were entitled to raise issues regarding the social and economic impact of the proposed sub-division.

The matter settled on favourable terms without further litigation. This was a successful outcome for the tenants and an example of MLC's General Legal and tenancy teams working collaboratively for a successful outcome.



(From left to right) MLC Financial Administrator Julie Robson with members of the tenancy team Olivia Nielsen-Gurung, Janice Leung, Sam Salvidge, Un-Ai Jo, Sousan Ghecham and Martin Barker

## Improvements

IWTAAS and Newtown Neighbourhood Centre have collaborated on assisting tenants in the Housing NSW units in Station St, Newtown, for a number of years.

A few months ago, we were contacted by tenants in the block expressing serious concerns over Housing NSW's unilateral decision to install large light-blocking louvers to the exterior of the building. A large majority of tenants complained that the louvers prevented sunlight and heat from entering their units.

In conjunction with Newtown Neighbourhood Centre and Member for Newtown Jenny Leong's office, we negotiated with Housing NSW to remove the parts of the louvers that cover the tenants' windows. Housing then met with the Station Street tenants at a community meeting set up to develop strategies for the Department to better consult with the community about changes to the block. Housing apologised to the tenants for not consulting with them about the impact louvers over their windows would have on their enjoyment of their properties.

## Ms B's story

Ms B is a client with a diagnosis of schizophrenia and post-traumatic stress disorder. Ms B was offered a Housing NSW property ten years ago after a long history of homelessness. She maintained a stable tenancy for most of that time, but in the last year struggled with serious drug and alcohol addiction issues after a significant relationship breakdown. The Police were called to the property many times and Housing NSW received numerous complaints from neighbours.

The social housing landlord applied to the Tribunal to evict Ms B, but while the Tribunal found that Ms B had breached her tenancy agreement, it found that in the circumstances of the case it was not appropriate for the tenancy to be terminated. This was due to the fact that Ms B was a highly vulnerable person with a lived experience of homelessness, who would likely become homeless again if her tenancy was terminated. They also found that Ms B was on a community treatment program and that there were reasonable prospects for Ms B to stop creating the noise and nuisance and to sustain her tenancy.



# Youth Law

The Youth Legal Service is an integral part of Marrickville Legal Centre, providing a statewide service to children and young people in NSW since 1979. Offering a service across NSW means that the phones are always ringing with young people calling for legal help with all sorts of problems, from change of name applications to driver licence suspensions, mobile phone debts and drug charges.

This year, as a result of reduced funding, MLC could not renew the contract of our valuable second Youth Solicitor, Liam McAuliffe, who left us in April 2015. This has meant a significant reduction in our capacity to advise and represent children and young people.

Despite this, Youth Solicitor Kate Duffy pushed forward, working with a team of excellent secondees to provide telephone and face-to-face advice, as well as representation for young people in court and in alternative dispute resolution practices.

The Youth Legal Service also undertakes a number of outreach programs to engage with children and young people 'on their turf'. These are listed below.

## **Bankstown Outreach**

The fortnightly outreach at Bankstown continued for its seventh year in 2014 – 2015. The outreach, which is a partnership with the Bankstown Multicultural Youth Service, sees the Youth Solicitor attend the drop-in service run by the Youth Service

on a Friday afternoon once a fortnight. The Youth Solicitor works closely with staff who identify those young people with legal problems and require legal advice.

## **Parramatta – Linked In II**

The civil law outreach program at Parramatta Children's Court continued for its third and final year with help from funding provided by the Federal Government. The Youth Solicitor worked closely with staff from the Children's Court Assistance Scheme to identify young people who had civil law legal problems and required legal advice. The outreach ran on a Tuesday morning once a fortnight until April 2015.



Tenancy Advocate Un-Ai Jo with Corrs secondee Clementine Randle and MLC Youth Solicitor Kate Duffy

## **Successful representations at the Local Court**

17-year-old 'Daisy' (not her real name) was referred to MLC from the local youth centre. Daisy, who came from a single parent family with limited finances, had been charged with negligent driving and driving without a licence. We represented Daisy in the Local Court and were successful in getting her a good outcome.

18-year-old 'Ben' (not his real name) came to the MLC to get advice on an AVO and assault charge. We advised on the charge and the strength of the prosecution's case. Ben instructed he was acting in self-defence. We represented Ben in the Local Court. At the hearing, the police withdrew the charge and AVO.

19-year-old 'Isabella' (not her real name) contacted the Youth Legal Service because she had been charged with possession of drugs. Isabella disclosed she had mental health issues, had attempted to take her life in the recent past, and was homeless. We acted for Isabella in the Local Court and were successful in obtaining a section 32 order that explained her behaviour was due to her poor mental health at the time of this offence.

## **Airds, Waratah Unit at the Reiby Juvenile Justice Centre**

Youth Solicitor Kate Duffy continued to attend an outreach program at the Waratah Unit, a facility of the Reiby Juvenile Justice centre. Kate undertook community legal education sessions for young men living in the pre-release Waratah Unit, focusing on civil law problems that young people often experience.

## **Belmore Outreach**

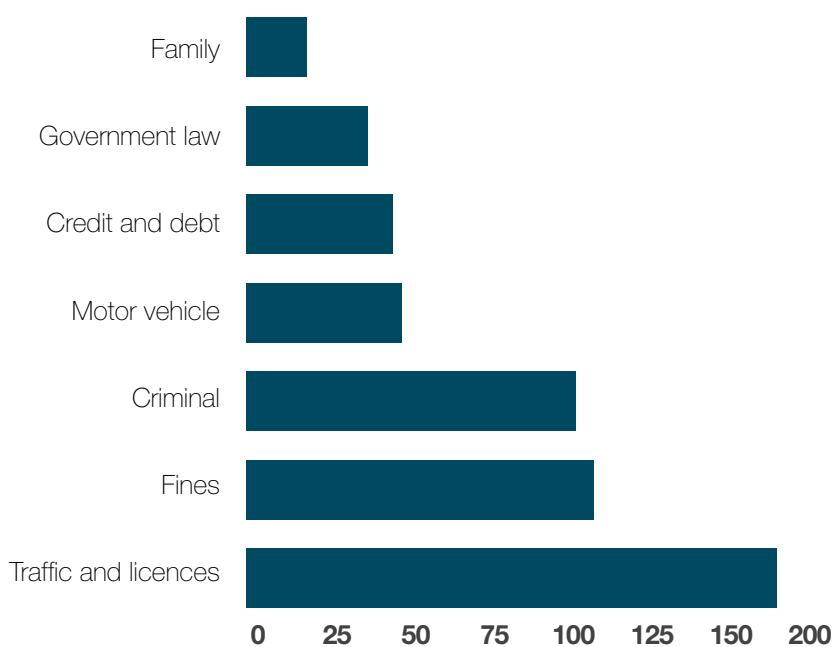
Before leaving us in April 2015, Youth Solicitor Liam McAuliffe provided a fortnightly outreach at Belmore Youth Resource Centre, giving legal advice and general legal information to young people attending the Centre. Thanks to Canterbury Council, Mission Australia and Barnardos Australia for their assistance in making this a successful program.

## **Lakemba Library Outreach**

The Youth Legal Service continued to participate in a weekly outreach program at Lakemba Library, now in its second year. Lakemba Library has recently been identified as an emerging hotspot for youth activity including encounters with the NSW Police Force. The Youth Solicitor has been working closely with the Canterbury Workers with Youth Network and the Inner West Youth Interagency to staff a drop-in service at the Library. This service has been extremely successful and has allowed the youth solicitors and other youth workers to engage with young people from the area.



## Youth Legal Service advice by problem type



## Victims Services recognition payment

'Megan' (not her real name) was a vulnerable 23-year-old single mother from a migrant background who was the victim of repeated sexual and physical assaults perpetrated by her father for a number of years from the age of 13. We acted for Megan in making an application to Victims Services for recognition payment and were able to get the maximum payment of \$10,000 for her. The payment would certainly not change the trauma experienced by Megan but it provided a small contribution to her recovery process.



## Age discrimination

'Jess' (not her real name) was a 16 year old who applied for her first casual job with the 'Company'. Jess was informed by the Company that she was successful for the job, however when it came to confirming her start date the Company became very evasive. Jess visited the workplace to enquire about the start date and was informed that the Company could not employ anyone 16 years or older. We assisted Jess in writing a complaint to the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board and represented her at the conciliation conference. We were successful in settling the matter at the conciliation conference, where Jess received an apology and compensation for hurt feelings and loss of confidence.

# Community Legal Education

Throughout 2014–15, Marrickville Legal Centre continued to develop and deliver community legal education for members of the community, community workers, and solicitors volunteering both at MLC and other community legal centres.

Marrickville Legal Centre delivered training for community legal centre volunteers on legal issues relating to motor vehicle accidents and helping clients with minor criminal matters. With the assistance of Helen Yuen, our secondee from the Fair Work Ombudsman, we also delivered training to community legal centre volunteer solicitors and pro bono solicitors about employment issues, including providing advice and advocacy for people wishing to recover underpaid wages and entitlements.

We also delivered community legal education to community workers about a broad range of legal issues, including:

- Family law parenting issues
- Domestic violence issues for the LGBTI community
- Wills, guardianship and powers of attorney

Our Youth Legal Service solicitors delivered a number of community legal education sessions for young people, about legal issues relevant to their lives, including:

- Credit and debt
- Problems arising from mobile phone plans
- Police powers
- Fines
- Sexting
- Issues related to moving out of home

This community legal education for young people was delivered in a wide range of locations, including the Belmore Youth Resource Centre, the Reiby Juvenile Justice Centre, local high schools and young men's groups at Lakemba. Our community legal education seminars for young people have proved to be particularly engaging, with many young people at the sessions later seeking assistance from our Youth Solicitors to resolve their legal problems at an early stage.

Our tenancy services have also continued to offer community legal education for community workers and tenants. In particular, the priority housing workshop, which provides advice and tips on negotiating the priority housing application process, has continued to be popular with workers from a range of community organisations.

Tenancy advocate Un-Ai Jo conducts a priority housing workshop at the Australian Korean Welfare Association.



# Law Reform

Marrickville Legal Centre continues to engage in law reform matters relating to our clients, by writing submissions on issues affecting vulnerable members of the community. We also comment on issues via social media to share our concerns about areas in need of reform.



It is vital to engage in the debate in this way to ensure that the Government and the public understand the impact of legal issues on people from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Community legal centres are in a unique position to contribute to law reform through their contact with the day-to-day legal problems faced by the community. Our large volume of clients enables us to identify and address areas of systemic injustice, to benefit both our clients and the community as a whole. It is for this reason that advocacy through law reform remains a significant part of the identity of the work of community legal centres.

Three of MLC's major policy and law reform projects for 2014–15 are featured. In addition to these major projects, MLC has engaged in a number of other law reform activities, including making submissions to the NSW Department of Justice's Police Oversight Review in relation to issues involving young people and policing, and submissions to the NSW State Debt Recovery Office about its Youth Engagement Policy, in relation to the impact of fines on vulnerable youth.

## Youth Justice Coalition

Marrickville Legal Centre convenes the Youth Justice Coalition (YJC), which is a network of policy workers, youth workers, academics and solicitors advocating for the rights of children and young people in NSW. In the past 12 months, the YJC has been working on law reform in the areas of Out of Home Care and NSW Policing; Suspect Target Management Plan. MLC has been active in both working groups.

## Out of Home Care

The YJC has a working group, which focuses on the legal issues of young people in out-of-home-care. The working group has been looking at the issue of Victim's Support and the ability of young people in out-of-home-care to make claims for recognition payments, and their eligibility to receive financial assistance once they leave out-of-home-care.

The group met with the office of the Minister for Community Services, and on a separate occasion with representatives from Family & Community Services to raise and discuss concerns about Victim's Support and Financial Assistance for young people leaving out-of-home-care.

## Suspect Target Management Plan (STMP)

The STMP is a policy initiative implemented by NSW Police in the early 2000s. The central aim of the STMP is to reduce and prevent offending of young people in NSW, with programs and individual strategies employed to address risk factors associated with offending.

While the aim of the STMP is to reduce reoffending, the YJC has been concerned that the individuals targeted may be subject to unwarranted harassment, surveillance and victimisation. The STMP does not provide NSW Police with any additional powers to those contained in the *Crimes Act 1900* (NSW) and the *Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002* (NSW). However, there have been incidents where some police seem to believe that the STMP provides them with additional powers to impede the freedom and rights of those on the plan.

MLC has been actively involved in an ongoing law reform process with other organisations from the Youth Justice Coalition to safeguard young people's rights and exercise of police powers in accordance with legislation.



## Social Housing Discussion Paper

In December 2014, the Department of Family & Community Services released a discussion paper on public and social housing. The paper asked for comment on the challenges facing the social housing system and ideas for how those problems could be addressed. The tenancy services were concerned that the paper was framed in a way that limited possible solutions and focused on punitive and restrictive changes to the social housing system.

In partnership with Redfern Legal Centre, our tenancy services produced a video submission on the paper with the assistance of a young filmmaker. In the video, public and social housing tenants told their stories and answered questions about how a fair and accessible social housing system should work. We were disappointed that the Department announced changes to the social housing system only two days after the deadline for submissions on the discussion paper closed.

The video can be viewed online at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=YkhcEP-gI3I](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YkhcEP-gI3I)

# Our Volunteers

Marrickville Legal Centre could not provide accessible legal services as extensively as it does, without the assistance of its wonderful team of volunteers.

MLC draws on the contributions of a broad range of volunteers, including solicitors, students, and others.

- Front desk volunteers play the vital role of being the first point of contact to the public, answering telephones and providing basic information and referrals.
- Law students and graduates also assist with the smooth running of MLC's evening advice sessions – taking details from clients, making notes during appointments, and undertaking research.
- Volunteer solicitors are rostered to directly assist clients at MLC's legal advice nights on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, supervised by an MLC solicitor.
- MLC has a Practical Legal Training (PLT) program, in which law graduates develop important work experience skills while performing the important daily tasks of client intake and advice session administration, and supporting GLS solicitors in their work.
- MLC's Board is comprised of dedicated volunteer directors drawn from the sector, and wider community.

## PLT Students

Deirdre Bole  
Andre Castaldi  
Matthew Dickinson  
Max Dixon  
George Fren  
Julie Gordon  
Grace Gunn  
Vesna Krstic  
David Maloney  
Jackie Nicholas  
Amelia Stojevski  
Noriko Tamaru

## Front Desk Volunteers

Jodic Chan  
Julie Cheung  
Myles Cuneo  
Madeleine Cunliffe  
Julie Dang  
Gabrielle Doyle  
Vivin George  
Lewis Hamilton  
Kate Heber  
Mikaela Heise  
Claudia Hill  
Tara Holland  
Ling Hsu  
Natasha Karagounis  
Claudia Kernan  
Peter Kwag  
Joshua Lee  
Max Moffat  
Tess Mulock  
Sherrifah Napidow  
Emma Pendlebury  
Kerrie Pieri  
Rhonda Pietrini  
Calum Robertson  
Rebecca Rogan  
Yvette Seti  
Hannah Sewell  
Prajesh Shrestha  
Oliver Smith  
Penina Su  
Lauren Tawk  
Martin Tram  
Dominic Tran  
Elle Triantafillou  
Melanie Wilson  
Marie Yaw  
Minna Zhang

In 2014–15 Rod Stockwell continued to volunteer weekly as a solicitor during the daytime. Rod's assistance is invaluable in delivering our Tuesday appointment clinics.

I began my PLT placement at Marrickville Legal Centre after being a front desk volunteer for six months. Even so, it was not until I began working with the solicitors and my fellow students as a PLT did I really appreciate the breadth of legal services that MLC provides or the vital role it plays in the community.

The PLT program allowed me to work on a wide range of legal problems – from police complaints to workplace

discrimination. I learned so much from the solicitors, not just about the law but also how to calmly and effectively communicate with clients from many different backgrounds.

The commitment of all the MLC staff to their clients and to social justice is truly inspiring. My PLT was an incredible experience and I feel privileged to have been included as part of their team.

### Jackie Nicholas



## Evening Advice Volunteers

Generalist Solicitors
Uzma Abbas
Paul Ahearn
David Baddeley
Michael Baster
Ljubica Belovic
Sandra Berghofer
Michelle Bragg
Tom Bruce
Louise Buchanan
Simone Bush
Rebecca Chant
Michelle Chau Hua
Simon Cole
Harish Ekambareswar
Donna Flood
Rhonda Fumer
Calum Robertson
Maria Guarnieri
Daniela Hartman
Laura Henschke
Tina Higgins
Seong Hong
Naomi Jung
Catherine Kelso
Nathan Kennedy
Toya Kha
Andrew Kinton

## Employment solicitors

Ian Bennett
Megan Cant
Melanie Carmeci
Bill Clarke
Ellen Davis
Elizabeth Devine
Margery Diep
Maggie Driscoll
Mark Dunstan
Alison Dutton
Angela Friedrich
Jannine Graham
Michael Green
Andrej Jankulovski
Joe Kennedy
Amrita Kumar
Allison Lenard
Fiona Lenhardt
Katrina Mark
Zach Marrett
Jessica Middleby-Clements
Sean Morgan
Ruth Nocka
Victoria Sales
Gabrielle Starr
George Stathopoulos

I am not a lawyer (or law-student) and if I had to navigate my way around a legal issue, I wouldn't know where to start! I admire and appreciate the staff and volunteers at community legal centres like MLC. They help everyday people like me to negotiate the law when issues come up. This social justice aspect of community law also appealed to me (and still does).

When I looked into volunteering in late 2012, it quickly became apparent that it is difficult to volunteer in a law related area unless you're a law student. Luckily for me MLC takes 'civilians' as volunteers, and I was accepted as an Evening Front Desk volunteer in early 2013. I enjoyed learning about the services offered, and some of the processes behind those services. I especially appreciate MLC sending me to tenancy advocacy training, and I currently now volunteer for three hours a fortnight on the Tenants Union Advice Line.

In my time with MLC a few things have stood out, in particular the stamina of the staff solicitors I have met, who are the lynchpin of any advice night. They are the multitasking, multi-focused, run-off-their-feet (but still calm) heroes of any evening advice session. I am also really impressed by the commitment of the volunteer

solicitors, many of whom arrive for their evening shift tired from a day in the corporate mines. Chatting with fellow Front Deskers has also been a highlight, and I wish them all the best in the future, especially those studying law a second time (!) after migrating to Australia. And last but not least – the clients. So many faces and stories, and I have enjoyed the chance to make them feel welcome at MLC.

### Anne Clifford



# Our Board



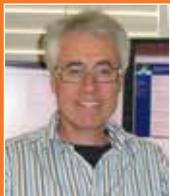
## Dianne Anagnos | Chair

Dianne Anagnos is a solicitor at Kingsford Legal Centre. She is particularly interested in anti-discrimination law, social security law and clinical legal education. Dianne has a long history of association with MLC, previously volunteering as an evening advice solicitor for three years and as director of the Board since 2008.



## Janet Loughman | Secretary

Janet Loughman is Principal Solicitor at Women's Legal Services NSW. She has been working with community legal centres for almost 30 years. She has lectured in legal issues relevant to community management, and has community management experience in a range of NGOs. She has served on the board of Legal Aid NSW and on the CLCNSW board on several occasions including as Chair. In 2005 she was awarded the NSW Justice Medal.



## John McMahon | Treasurer

John McMahon is a semi-retired financial analyst with experience both in stock broking and funds management, as well as prior CFO positions. His background includes roles as Equity Analyst, Head of Research, Head of Equity Sales and Managing Director. He holds a B. Comm (Hons), MBA and is a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA). He currently runs a family investment fund and is Chairman of NZX-listed Solution Dynamics. He knows lots about accounting, financial analysis and management, has limited legal knowledge, and has a strong sense of social justice.



## Danielle Cutrupi

Danielle Cutrupi is Legal Counsel at National Australia Bank. Danielle was introduced to MLC in 2011, when she undertook a secondment assisting MLC's Youth Legal Service. A Board director since 2014, Danielle is strongly committed to supporting accessibility to legal services for the broader community.



## Kira Levin

Before moving to Sydney, Kira Levin worked in community legal centres in Victoria and is currently working as a solicitor at the NSW Environmental Defenders Office. Kira is motivated by the vital role community legal centres play in empowering the community to overcome the barriers obstructing access to the justice. She joined the MLC Board in March 2015.



## Aditi Kogekar

Aditi Kogekar is a Senior Associate at Corrs Chambers Westgarth, a firm with a longstanding partnership with MLC. Aditi is passionate about the role of governments and lawyers in providing access to justice for disadvantaged and vulnerable members of our community. Aditi joined the MLC Board in May 2015.



## Julia Steward

Julia Steward has a background in corporate law and has been working as Senior Solicitor at the Refugee & Advice Casework Service since August 2014. She assists particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged clients and is committed to the work of community legal centres in providing access to legal services. She joined the MLC Board in 2014.

# Our Staff

## **Legal Team**

Michael Walton

Kate Duffy

Annette Van Gent

Margaret Martin

Lisa Woodgate

Trevor Collier

Principal Solicitor (until October 2014)

Acting Principal Solicitor (October to December 2014)

Principal Solicitor (from December 2014)

Generalist Solicitor (p/t)

Generalist Solicitor

Generalist Solicitor (p/t)

## **Youth Legal Service**

Kate Duffy

Liam McAuliffe

Youth Solicitor

Youth Solicitor (until April 2015)

## **Tenancy Team**

Martin Barker

Julia Murray

Diana McMahon

Un-Ai Jo

Eloise Parrab

Olivia Nielsen-Gurung

David Baddeley

Sousan Ghecham

Sam Salvidge

IWTAAS Tenants' Advocate

& Acting NSATS Coordinator (from June 2015)

IWTAAS Tenants' Advocate (p/t)

& Acting NSATS Coordinator (July 2014 – June 2015)

IWTAAS Tenants' Advocate (p/t) (until January 2015)

IWTAAS Tenants' Advocate

IWTAAS Tenants' Advocate (p/t) (LWOP from November 2014)

IWTAAS Tenants' Advocate (p/t) (from July 2014)

NSATS Tenants' Advocate

NSATS Tenants' Advocate

NSATS Tenants' Advocate (p/t)

## **Inner West DV PASS**

Stephanie Tredinnick

Coordinator

# Our Staff

## **Administration Team**

Catherine Doman

Julie Robson

Maria Elena Ang

Cassandra Dawes

Meggan Fitzgerald

Donna Flood

Tracy Goulding

Executive Officer (p/t)

Financial Administrator (p/t)

Office Coordinator

Executive Assistant & Volunteer Coordinator (p/t)

(until September 2014)

Executive Assistant & Volunteer Coordinator

(September – December 2014)

Administrative Assistant (p/t) (from December 2014)

Funding & Communications Officer (p/t) (from April 2015)

## **Casuals**

Rafael Mazzoldi

Sarah Drury

Elizabeth de Freitas

Catherine Thompson

locum IWTAAS Tenants' Advocate and IT support

locum IWTAAS Tenants' Advocate

locum IWTAAS Tenants' Advocate

locum Financial Officer



# Financial Report

MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE  
ABN 53 699 012 017

## DIRECTORS' REPORT

The directors present their report together with the financial report of Marrickville Legal Centre for the year ended 30 June 2015 and auditor's report thereon. This financial report has been prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards.

### Information on directors

The names of the directors in office at any time during or since the end of the year:

**Dianne Anagnos**

Special responsibilities      Chair

**Janet Loughman**

Special responsibilities      Secretary

**John McMahon**

Special responsibilities      Treasurer

**Danielle Cutrupi**

**Dorothy Bamblett**      Resigned 17 November 2014

**Sarah Stellino**      Resigned 17 November 2014

**Julia Steward**      Appointed 23 February 2015

**Kira Levin**      Appointed 23 March 2015

**Aditi Kogekar**      Appointed 25 May 2015

The directors have been in office since the start of the year to the date of this report unless otherwise stated.

**MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE**  
ABN 53 699 012 017

**DIRECTORS' REPORT**

**Strategic Statement 2014 - 2017**

**Our Vision**

Marrickville Legal Centre (MLC) seeks to promote social justice and provide free and accessible legal services to people who experience social and economic disadvantage.

**Our Values**

MLC believes that people have a right to legal information, advice, advocacy and representation which is accessible and relevant to their lives. It aims to utilise both legal and community processes to promote an agenda of social justice and to work towards fairer legal and social outcomes for those most disadvantaged in our community. It is committed to providing the community with a wide range of legal services that are delivered in diverse ways and in co-operation with community networks and resources.

**Our Mission**

To provide free and accessible legal and related services, which are responsive to the needs of those most disadvantaged and which promote just and lasting solutions to legal and social issues in our community.

**Service Delivery**

MLC provides generalist and employment legal services to 12 Local Government Areas: Ashfield, Auburn, Bankstown, Burwood; Canada Bay; Canterbury, Hurstville, Kogarah, Marrickville, Rockdale, Strathfield and Sutherland. MLC also provides a statewide Youth Legal Service.

MLC provides the specialist tenancy services of the Inner West Tenants' Advice & Advocacy Service (IWTAAS) and the Northern Sydney Area Tenants' Service (NSATS). IWTAAS services the Local Government Areas of Ashfield, Burwood, Canada Bay, Marrickville and Strathfield. NSATS is based in Chatswood and services the Local Government Areas of Hornsby, Hunters Hill, Ku-ring-gai, Lane Cove, Manly, Mosman, North Sydney, Pittwater, Ryde, Warringah and Willoughby.

MLC also provides community legal education and participates in local, statewide and national committees, interagencies and networks to undertake community development and law reform activities.

Recognising barriers to access to justice, MLC prioritises service delivery to: indigenous people, young people, boarding house residents and people facing homelessness, people with a disability, people with a mental illness, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, older people; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer people, and people who have experienced family violence.

**MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE**  
**ABN 53 699 012 017**

**DIRECTORS' REPORT**

**Objectives & Strategies**

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Strategies</b>
1. To promote social justice and provide free and accessible legal services to people who experience social and economic disadvantage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a Generalist Legal Service</li> <li>• Provide a statewide Youth Legal Service</li> <li>• Provide specialist tenancy services in the Inner West and Northern Sydney Areas</li> <li>• Provide an integrated response to socially and economically disadvantaged clients</li> </ul>
2. To involve people experiencing social and economic disadvantage in the recognition, understanding and solution of legal problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in community development projects in partnership with local organisations</li> </ul>
3. To provide community legal education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify major legal issues for disadvantaged groups and provide community-based legal education through various modes and formats</li> </ul>
4. To participate in law reform, social change and changes to other policies and practices which adversely affect MLC's clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in law reform and social change arising from the Centre's casework and the principles of equity and access to justice</li> </ul>
5. To develop and work collaboratively with networks, communities and key stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote MLC's services in a range of accessible modes and formats</li> <li>• Develop and maintain relationships with local, statewide and national committees, interagencies and networks to undertake community development and law reform activities.</li> </ul>
6. To create and maintain an effective infrastructure to resource and support staff and to ensure effective service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure staff have the resources required to perform their duties</li> <li>• Ensure appropriate composition of and support for the Board</li> <li>• Strengthen the financial viability of MLC</li> <li>• Encourage volunteer engagement within MLC to enhance service capacity</li> <li>• Ensure that systems within MLC support service delivery</li> <li>• Evaluate service outcomes and quality and use results to make service improvements</li> </ul>

MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE  
ABN 53 699 012 017

DIRECTORS' REPORT

**Meetings of directors**

Directors	Directors' meetings	
	Number eligible to attend	Number attended
Dianne Anagnos	10	8
Janet Loughman	10	9
John McMahon	10	8
Danielle Cutrupi	10	9
Dorothy Bamblett	4	0
Sarah Stellino	4	2
Julia Steward	4	3
Kira Levin	3	2
Aditi Kogekar	1	1

**Members guarantee**

The company is incorporated under the *Corporations Act 2001* and is a company limited by guarantee. If the company is wound up, the Constitution states that each member is required to contribute to a maximum of \$10 each towards meeting any outstandings and obligations of the company. At 30 June 2015 the number of members was 27. The combined total amount that members of the company are liable to contribute if the company is wound up is \$270.

**Auditor's independence declaration**

A copy of the auditor's independence declaration under section 60-40 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* in relation to the audit for the financial year is provided with this report.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the board of directors.

Director: D. Anagnos  
Dianne Anagnos

Director: J. McMahon  
John McMahon

Dated this 26th day of October 2015



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](http://www.pitcher.com.au)  
[partners@pitcher-nsw.com.au](mailto:partners@pitcher-nsw.com.au)

Pitcher Partners, including Johnston Rouse,  
is an association of independent firms.  
Melbourne | Sydney | Perth | Adelaide | Brisbane

**MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE**  
**ABN 53 699 012 017**

**AUDITOR'S INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION**  
**TO THE DIRECTORS OF MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE**

In relation to the independent audit for the year ended 30 June 2015, to the best of my knowledge and belief there have been:

- (i) No contraventions of the auditor independence requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission Act 2012*; and
- (ii) No contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Godlewski'.

Mark Godlewski  
Partner

PITCHER PARTNERS  
SYDNEY

**MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE**  
**ABN 53 699 012 017**

**STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015**

	Note	2015	2014
		\$	\$
<b>Revenue and other income</b>			
Grant and funding income	2	1,537,599	1,313,594
Other revenue	2	<u>64,473</u>	<u>57,363</u>
	2	<u>1,602,072</u>	<u>1,370,957</u>
<b>Less: expenses</b>			
Computer expenses		(19,119)	(12,415)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	3	(27,299)	(20,194)
Employee benefits expense		(1,362,580)	(1,185,252)
Insurance		(8,451)	(7,899)
Library resources and subscriptions		(14,992)	(14,750)
Occupancy expense		(46,783)	(28,672)
Printing and stationery		(13,169)	(14,293)
Telephone and fax		(44,827)	(34,702)
Volunteer costs		(3,872)	(3,304)
Other expenses		<u>(51,371)</u>	<u>(51,694)</u>
		<u>(1,592,463)</u>	<u>(1,373,175)</u>
<b>Surplus / (deficit)</b>		9,609	(2,218)
<b>Other comprehensive income for the year</b>		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>Total comprehensive income</b>		<u>9,609</u>	<u>(2,218)</u>

**MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE**  
**ABN 53 699 012 017**

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION**  
**AS AT 30 JUNE 2015**

	Note	2015 \$	2014 \$
<b>Current assets</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	5	706,846	1,100,421
Receivables	6	8,857	7,068
Other assets	8	<u>13,676</u>	<u>25,685</u>
<b>Total current assets</b>		<u>729,379</u>	<u>1,133,174</u>
<b>Non-current assets</b>			
Property, plant and equipment	7	46,763	55,941
Other assets	8	<u>5,232</u>	<u>6,992</u>
<b>Total non-current assets</b>		<u>51,995</u>	<u>62,933</u>
<b>Total assets</b>		<u>781,374</u>	<u>1,196,107</u>
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Payables	9	97,242	150,375
Provisions	10	291,647	211,813
Other liabilities	11	<u>144,903</u>	<u>566,243</u>
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<u>533,792</u>	<u>928,431</u>
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>			
Provisions	10	98,950	126,893
Other liabilities	11	<u>5,232</u>	<u>6,992</u>
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>		<u>104,182</u>	<u>133,885</u>
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<u>637,974</u>	<u>1,062,316</u>
<b>Net assets</b>		<u>143,400</u>	<u>133,791</u>
<b>Equity</b>			
Retained surplus	12	<u>143,400</u>	<u>133,791</u>
<b>Total equity</b>		<u>143,400</u>	<u>133,791</u>

MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE  
ABN 53 699 012 017

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015

	Retained surplus	Total equity
	\$	\$
<b>Balance as at 1 July 2013</b>	136,009	136,009
Deficit for the year	(2,218)	(2,218)
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>	(2,218)	(2,218)
<b>Balance as at 30 June 2014</b>	<u>133,791</u>	<u>133,791</u>
<b>Balance as at 1 July 2014</b>	133,791	133,791
Surplus for the year	9,609	9,609
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>	<u>9,609</u>	<u>9,609</u>
<b>Balance as at 30 June 2015</b>	<u>143,400</u>	<u>143,400</u>

MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE  
ABN 53 699 012 017

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015

	Note	2015	2014
		\$	\$
<b>Cash flow from operating activities</b>			
Receipts from clients and community		60,154	22,262
Operating grant receipts		1,226,371	1,876,569
Payments to suppliers and employees		(1,683,289)	(1,358,552)
Interest received		<u>21,310</u>	<u>22,709</u>
<b>Net cash provided by / (used in) operating activities</b>		<u>(375,454)</u>	<u>562,988</u>
<b>Cash flow from investing activities</b>			
Payment for property, plant and equipment		<u>(18,121)</u>	<u>(49,404)</u>
<b>Net cash provided by / (used in) investing activities</b>		<u>(18,121)</u>	<u>(49,404)</u>
<b>Reconciliation of cash</b>			
Cash at beginning of the financial year		1,100,421	586,837
Net increase / (decrease) in cash held		<u>(393,575)</u>	<u>513,584</u>
<b>Cash at end of financial year</b>		<u>706,846</u>	<u>1,100,421</u>

**MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE**  
**ABN 53 699 012 017**

**NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015**

**NOTE 1: STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

The financial report is a general purpose financial report that has been prepared in accordance with 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*.

The financial report was approved by the directors as at the date of the directors' report.

The financial report is for the entity Marrickville Legal Centre as an individual entity. Marrickville Legal Centre is a company limited by guarantee, incorporated and domiciled in Australia. Marrickville Legal Centre is a not-for-profit entity for the purpose of preparing the financial statements.

The following is a summary of the material accounting policies adopted by the company in the preparation and presentation of the financial report. The accounting policies have been consistently applied, unless otherwise stated.

**(a) Basis of preparation of the financial report**

*Historical Cost Convention*

The financial report has been prepared under the historical cost convention, as modified by revaluations to fair value for certain classes of assets as described in the accounting policies.

**(b) Revenue**

Revenue from the rendering of services is recognised upon the delivery of the service to the customers.

Interest revenue is recognised when it becomes receivable on a proportional basis taking in to account the interest rates applicable to the financial assets.

All revenue is stated net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST).

**(c) Government Grants**

A non-reciprocal contribution or grant is recognised when the company obtains control of the contribution or grant and it is probable that the economic benefits will flow to the company, and the amount of the contribution or grant can be measured reliably.

If conditions attached to the contribution or grant that must be satisfied before the company is eligible to receive the contribution, recognition of contribution or income is deferred until those conditions are met.

When the company receives grants but is obliged to give directly approximately equal value to the contributor, recognition of grant income will be deferred until the delivery of service.

MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE  
ABN 53 699 012 017

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015

**NOTE 1: STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (CONTINUED)**

**(d) Income tax**

No provision for income tax has been raised as the company is exempt from income tax under Division 50 of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*.

**(e) Property, plant and equipment**

Each class of plant and equipment is carried at cost or fair value less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation and any accumulated impairment losses.

*Plant and equipment*

Plant and equipment is measured on the cost basis.

The carrying amount of plant and equipment is reviewed annually by committee to ensure it is not in excess of the recoverable amount from those assets. The recoverable amount is assessed on the basis of the expected net cash flows which will be received from the assets employment and subsequent disposal. The expected net cash flows have been discounted to present values in determining recoverable amounts.

*Depreciation*

The depreciable amount of all property, plant and equipment is depreciated over their estimated useful lives commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use. Land and the land component of any class of property, plant and equipment is not depreciated.

Leasehold improvements are depreciated over the shorter of either the unexpired period of the lease or the estimated useful lives of the improvements.

**(f) Impairment of non-financial assets**

Goodwill, intangible assets not yet ready for use and intangible assets that have an indefinite useful life are not subject to amortisation and are therefore tested annually for impairment, or more frequently if events or changes in circumstances indicate that they might be impaired.

An impairment loss is recognised where the carrying amount of the asset exceeds its recoverable amount. The recoverable amount of an asset is defined as the higher of its fair value less costs to sell and value in use.

The recoverable amount is assessed on the basis of the expected net cash flows which will be received from the assets employment and subsequent disposal. The expected net cash flows have been discounted to present values in determining recoverable amounts.

MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE  
ABN 53 699 012 017

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015

**NOTE 1: STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (CONTINUED)**

**(g) Provisions**

Provisions are recognised when the company has a legal or constructive obligation, as a result of past events, for which it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will result and that outflow can be reliably measured.

**(h) Employee benefits**

*(i) Short-term employee benefit obligations*

Liabilities arising in respect of wages and salaries, annual leave and any other employee benefits expected to be settled within twelve months of the reporting date are measured at their nominal amounts based on remuneration rates which are expected to be paid when the liability is settled. The expected cost of short-term employee benefits in the form of compensated absences such as annual leave is recognised in the provision for employee benefits. All other short-term employee benefit obligations are presented as payables.

*(ii) Long-term employee benefit obligations*

Liabilities arising in respect of long service leave and annual leave which is not expected to be settled within twelve months of the reporting date are measured at the present value of the estimated future cash outflow to be made in respect of services provided by employees up to the reporting date.

Employee benefit obligations are presented as current liabilities in the statement of financial position if the entity does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least twelve months after the reporting date, regardless of when the actual settlement is expected to occur.

**(i) Goods and services tax (GST)**

Revenues, expenses and purchased assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Tax Office. In these circumstances the GST is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of the asset or as part of an item of the expense. Receivables and payables in the statement of financial position are shown inclusive of GST.

Cash flows are presented in the statement of cash flows on a gross basis, except for the GST component of investing and financing activities, which are disclosed as operating cash flows.

**(j) Comparatives**

Where necessary, comparative information has been reclassified and repositioned for consistency with current year disclosures.

**MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE**  
**ABN 53 699 012 017**

**NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015**

	Note	2015 \$	2014 \$
<b>NOTE 2: REVENUE AND OTHER INCOME</b>			
Grants and funding income			
Legal Aid Commission - Commonwealth		205,070	168,278
Attorney General - Homeless Youth		74,882	73,558
Legal aid Commission - Linked In Project		22,666	45,333
Legal Aid Commission - State		314,102	303,704
Legal Aid Commission - Commonwealth (FRC)		61,704	58,132
Legal Aid Commission - Partnership Program		-	7,658
Legal Aid Commission - Care Partner		9,500	-
NSW Fair Trading - IWTAAS		313,880	305,742
NSW Fair Trading - NSATS		418,507	242,544
NSW Fair Trading - NSATS Start-up grant		17,288	8,645
Family & Community Services - DV PASS		<u>100,000</u>	<u>100,000</u>
		<u>1,537,599</u>	<u>1,313,594</u>
Interest income		21,310	22,659
Other revenue		<u>43,163</u>	<u>34,704</u>
Total revenue		<u>1,602,072</u>	<u>1,370,957</u>

**NOTE 3: OPERATING SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)**

Surplus / (deficit) before income tax has been determined after:

Depreciation		27,299	20,194
- plant and equipment			

**MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE**  
ABN 53 699 012 017

**NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015**

	Note	2015	2014
		\$	\$
<b>NOTE 4: KEY MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL COMPENSATION</b>			
Compensation received by key management personnel of the company			
- short-term employee benefits		147,953	147,803
- post-employment benefits		<u>12,992</u>	<u>13,672</u>
		<u><u>160,945</u></u>	<u><u>161,475</u></u>

During the year there were 12 key management personnel, including directors.

**Directors Emoluments**

All positions on the Board of Directors are honorary. No director has received or become entitled to receive, during or since the financial year, a benefit because of a contract made by the company with the director, a firm of which a director is a member or an entity in which a director has a substantial financial interest.

**NOTE 5: CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS**

Cash on hand		450	450
Cash at bank		206,396	89,971
Cash on deposit		<u>500,000</u>	<u>1,010,000</u>
		<u><u>706,846</u></u>	<u><u>1,100,421</u></u>

**NOTE 6: RECEIVABLES**

CURRENT			
Other receivables		<u>8,857</u>	<u>7,068</u>
		<u><u>8,857</u></u>	<u><u>7,068</u></u>

**NOTE 7: PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT**

**Leasehold improvements**

At cost		42,690	42,690
Accumulated depreciation		<u>(42,690)</u>	<u>(42,690)</u>
		<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>

**Plant and equipment**

Plant and equipment at cost		192,584	174,463
Accumulated depreciation		<u>(145,821)</u>	<u>(118,522)</u>
		<u><u>46,763</u></u>	<u><u>55,941</u></u>
Total property, plant and equipment		<u><u>46,763</u></u>	<u><u>55,941</u></u>

**MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE**  
**ABN 53 699 012 017**

**NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015**

	Note	2015	2014
		\$	\$
<b>NOTE 8: OTHER ASSETS</b>			
CURRENT			
Prepayments		7,568	19,827
Other current assets		<u>6,108</u>	<u>5,858</u>
		<u><u>13,676</u></u>	<u><u>25,685</u></u>
NON CURRENT			
Prepayments		<u>5,232</u>	<u>6,992</u>
		<u><u>5,232</u></u>	<u><u>6,992</u></u>

**NOTE 9: PAYABLES**

CURRENT			
<i>Unsecured liabilities</i>			
Sundry creditors and accruals		<u>97,242</u>	<u>150,375</u>

**NOTE 10: PROVISIONS**

CURRENT			
Employee benefits		<u>291,647</u>	<u>211,813</u>
		<u><u>291,647</u></u>	<u><u>211,813</u></u>
NON CURRENT			
Employee benefits		<u>98,950</u>	<u>126,893</u>
		<u><u>98,950</u></u>	<u><u>126,893</u></u>
(a) Aggregate employee benefits liability			
		<u>390,597</u>	<u>338,706</u>

**NOTE 11: OTHER LIABILITIES**

CURRENT			
Grants received in advance		<u>144,903</u>	<u>566,243</u>
		<u><u>144,903</u></u>	<u><u>566,243</u></u>
NON CURRENT			
Other non-current liabilities		<u>5,232</u>	<u>6,992</u>
		<u><u>5,232</u></u>	<u><u>6,992</u></u>

MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE  
ABN 53 699 012 017

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015

	Note	2015	2014
		\$	\$
<b>NOTE 12: RETAINED SURPLUS</b>			
Retained surplus at beginning of year		133,791	136,009
Net surplus / (deficit)		9,609	(2,218)
		<u>143,400</u>	<u>133,791</u>

**NOTE 13: CAPITAL AND LEASING COMMITMENTS**

(a) Operating lease commitments

Non-cancellable operating leases contracted for but not capitalised in the financial statements:

Payable

- not later than one year	28,064	22,550
- later than one year and not later than five years	7,140	21,300
	<u>35,204</u>	<u>43,850</u>

The property lease is a non-cancellable lease with a 2 year 5 month term commencing on 3 February 2014. Within the lease agreements terms, dictate that the minimum base payments shall be increased by CPI annually. Balances exclude GST.

**NOTE 14: EVENTS SUBSEQUENT TO REPORTING DATE**

There has been no matter or circumstance, which has arisen since 30 June 2015 that has significantly affected or may significantly affect:

- (a) the operations, in financial years subsequent to 30 June 2015, of the company, or
- (b) the results of those operations, or
- (c) the state of affairs, in financial years subsequent to 30 June 2015, of the company.

**NOTE 15: ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE**

The company is reliant on various government agencies for funding.

MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE  
ABN 53 699 012 017

DIRECTORS' DECLARATION

The directors of the company declare that:

1. The financial statements and notes, as set out on pages 6 - 16 presents a true and fair view of the company's financial position as at 30 June 2015 and performance for the year ended on that date of the company in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards - Reduced Disclosure Requirements and other mandatory professional reporting requirements;
2. In the directors' opinion there are reasonable grounds to believe that the company will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

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

Director: Dianne Anagnos  
Dianne Anagnos

Director: John McMahon  
John McMahon

Dated this 26<sup>th</sup> day of October. 2015



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](http://www.pitcher.com.au)  
[partners@pitcher-nsw.com.au](mailto:partners@pitcher-nsw.com.au)

Pitcher Partners, including Johnston Rorie,  
is an association of independent firms.  
Melbourne | Sydney | Perth | Adelaide | Brisbane

**MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE**  
**ABN 53 699 012 017**

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT**  
**TO THE MEMBERS OF MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE**

We have audited the accompanying financial report of Marrickville Legal Centre, which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2015, 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, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the directors' declaration.

*Directors' Responsibility for the Financial Report*

The directors are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards - Reduced Disclosure Requirements and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, and for such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

*Auditor's Responsibility*

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Those standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the directors, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE  
ABN 53 699 012 017

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT  
TO THE MEMBERS OF MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE

*Independence*

In conducting our audit, we have complied with the independence requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*.

*Opinion*

In our opinion, the financial report of Marrickville Legal Centre is in accordance with *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*:

- (a) giving a true and fair view of the company's financial position as at 30 June 2014 and of its performance for the year ended on that date; and
- (b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*



Mark Godlewski

Partner



PITCHER PARTNERS

SYDNEY

Date 28 October 2015



Marrickville Legal Centre

Marrickville Legal Centre  
338 Illawarra Road  
Marrickville NSW 2204

t: 02 9559 2899  
f: 02 9558 5213  
e: [enquiries@mlc.org.au](mailto:enquiries@mlc.org.au)

[www.mlc.org.au](http://www.mlc.org.au)

ABN: 53 699 012 017

Editor  
Tracy Goulding

Front cover design  
Kate Bellairs Design

Design & external photography  
freshlab  
[www.freshlab.com.au](http://www.freshlab.com.au)