



ANNUAL REPORT

2019-2020

 **SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY THROUGH COVID-19**

Macarthur Legal Centre is part of a network of community legal centres that provide free legal advice, referrals and assistance to people living in and around the Macarthur region of NSW, extending to Goulburn, Yass Valley and the Upper Lachlan Shire.

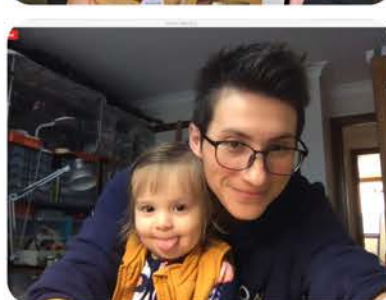
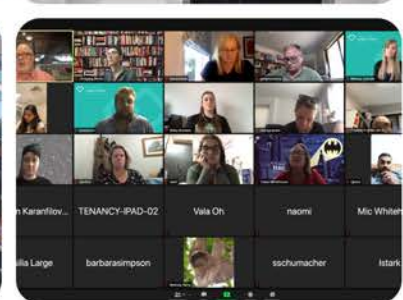
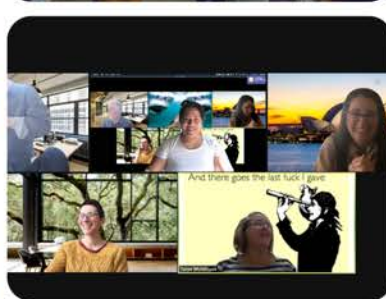
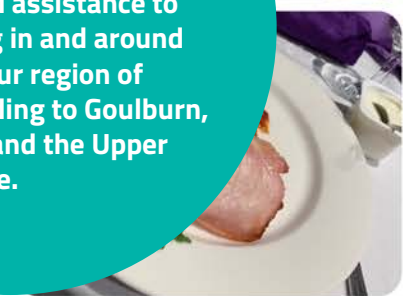
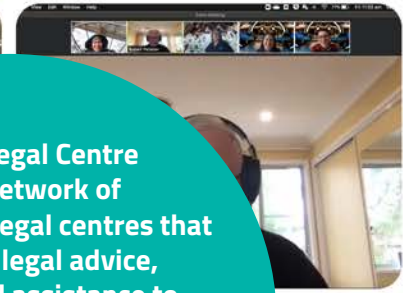


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chairperson’s Report	4
Executive Officer’s Report	6
Legal Report	10
Domestic Violence Report	18
Tenancy Report	22
Financial Report	26

In addition to our legal practice, MLC currently auspices the South West Sydney Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service (SWSTAAS) and the Macarthur Women’s Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (MWDVCAS), as well as the Children’s Court Assistance Scheme (CCAS) and an Aboriginal Legal Assistance Program (ALAP).



THANKS

-TO OUR STATE AND
FEDERAL FUNDING
BODIES, GRANT
PROVIDERS, BUSINESS
SPONSORS AND
PRIVATE DONORS.

WE ALSO THANK OUR
SOLICITOR, STUDENT &
COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS



Our supporters help us
support our community.

COVID-19 has presented huge and unprecedented challenges for everyone at MLC and across the planet.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

PETA ANDERSSON

CHAIR OF MLC'S BOARD

Well, 2020, what can I say? This is a year we will all be glad to get to close the chapter on!

Perhaps I jinxed us when I wrote "May 2020 bring stability, new opportunities and capacity" in the 2018/19 Chairperson's Report. One could argue the past year has brought new opportunities and capacity, insofar as learning how to adapt MLC organisational practices and service delivery in the context of a pandemic, however this was not what I had in mind!

COVID-19 has presented huge and unanticipated challenges for everyone at MLC and across the planet. The significant and far reaching effects have been felt personally and professionally by everyone, and this impact cannot be underestimated.

Against (and indeed in spite of) the odds, MLC has survived the carnage and chaos that was 2020. Displaying strategic thinking, proactivity, adaptability and resilience, MLC has continued providing high quality Legal, Tenancy and Domestic Violence services to vulnerable, disadvantaged and often traumatised clients who have complex needs.

On behalf of the Board, I wish to thank Robert Pelletier (Executive Officer) and his leadership team, Christina Pirina (Principal Solicitor), Carina Southern (Financial Administrator), Tanya Whitehouse (Coordinator, MWDVCAS

and LCP) and Vala Ola'aiga (Coordinator, SWSTAAS) for their heroic efforts throughout these extraordinary times.

It is a credit to Robert Pelletier and the team that they read the changing landscape early and commenced planning for the transition to remote working arrangements from March 2020. Robert displayed his commitment to duty of care and work health and safety (WH&S) for staff, clients and community, by planning and acting early. This proactive effort meant that MLC service delivery was adapted but continued, which was especially important during a time of significant community crisis, where there was an increased demand for all MLC service areas – tenancy, legal and domestic violence services.

Understandably, several of the planned activities for this year had to take a back seat and instead the focus became infrastructure and capacity building. The MLC team invested time in reviewing and implementing improved IT systems and hardware, photocopiers, record keeping and archiving processes. Also, the lease agreement was renewed, maintaining the annexe for tenancy staff. In addition, physical changes were made to the MLC entry to enable social distancing and enhance physical safety of staff and clients, which has been an ongoing concern for some time.

None of this work would have been possible without the foundations laid in previous years by the MLC team, embedding a workplace culture and behaviours consistent with MLC core values and the Code of Conduct, enhancing WH&S and risk management processes and practices and quality leadership.

Another important focus has been promoting self-care and encouraging staff to access supervision and EAP to mitigate risks of vicarious trauma and burn out, as well as supporting the broader mental health and wellbeing of staff in the context of COVID-19.

The Board sincerely thanks all supporters of the Centre, including MLC staff, students and volunteers.

Finally, I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Board members Nevine Youssef (Secretary), Dani Napton (Vice-Chair), Adam Quinn (Treasurer) and Alison Croall for their professionalism, support, commitment and leadership.

I won't make any predictions for next year... let's just keep our fingers crossed that it's better than this one!

Thank you.



MLC HAS SURVIVED THE CARNAGE AND CHAOS THAT WAS 2020

Displaying strategic thinking, proactivity, adaptability and resilience, MLC has continued providing quality services.

At the beginning of the year, I was wrong. I thought life would go on as it always has. And this financial year started that way...

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S

REPORT

I acknowledge that we live and work on the land of the Tharawal people. We pay our respects to their elders, past, present and emerging.

At the beginning of the year, I was wrong. I thought life would go on as it always has.

And this financial year started that way. The drought, one of the worst in our history continued to blaze across Eastern Australia. The Murray Darling system faced the worst crisis in recorded history. The Darling was reduced to a waterless scar on the landscape. The drought, harsh and unrelenting as it was, was just the beginning. The lack of rain and record temperatures prepared the ground for what came next.

If you have lived through an Australian summer, chances are you have experienced bush fires. Nothing could have prepared us for the devastation of the fires that gripped the East coast of Australia from September 2019 to March 2020. Those fires raged through 18.6 million hectares. They destroyed infrastructure and 5,900 buildings and directly killed 34. Lives, livelihoods, flora, fauna and the sacred heritage of our First Nations peoples were lost in the inferno. Roads melted. Highways were closed. The fires erupted in rain forests which were thought to be immune to bushfire because of their humidity. Escape was out of reach for many. Coastal communities and isolated tourists huddled for safety on beaches as fire fronts advanced.

In February 2020, the rains started. True to form, they didn't stop. Suddenly we were dealing with floods.

Dorothy Mackellar celebrated the beauty and the terror of this ancient land which has this heart-breaking rhythm of "flood and fire and famine". This time, the temperatures, the drought and the flood were all unprecedented in their scale.

At about the same time, the COVID-19 Pandemic hit. Australia went into lockdown. Borders were closed. South West Sydney was

a recognised hotspot for a time.

The Pandemic exposed fault lines in our community. The inadequacies of the aged care system led to needless loss of life, isolation and fear. Employers shed staff as they battled to keep afloat. Tenants and borrowers were only saved because of the moratorium on evictions and mortgage repayments imposed by Governments.

State and Federal Treasurers discovered billions of dollars to keep the country going. Increased Government payments provided lifelines to hundreds of thousands of Australians who found their income had dissolved.

Many, however, found that there was no lifeline for them. Artists, musicians, university workers, the young who had not been employed for 12 months, those on bridging visas, overseas students who could not get home have largely been ignored.

But there is always a reckoning. The moratoriums will end and Government relief payments are being scaled back. Many businesses will not be reopening their doors.

At the beginning of the year, I thought that those who wanted to socially distance themselves were non-huggers, desperate to maintain their personal space. I now know that social distancing, personal hygiene and wearing masks, are integral to a society that wants to minimise the risks of contracting the COVID-19 virus. I thought that the smoke from back burning was a nuisance. I now know how traumatic a fire is. I thought that pandemics were something from another age or were something that could be managed like the flu. I now know that we have to live with COVID-19 for the foreseeable future.

Thanks for an amazing year!

OUR STAFF

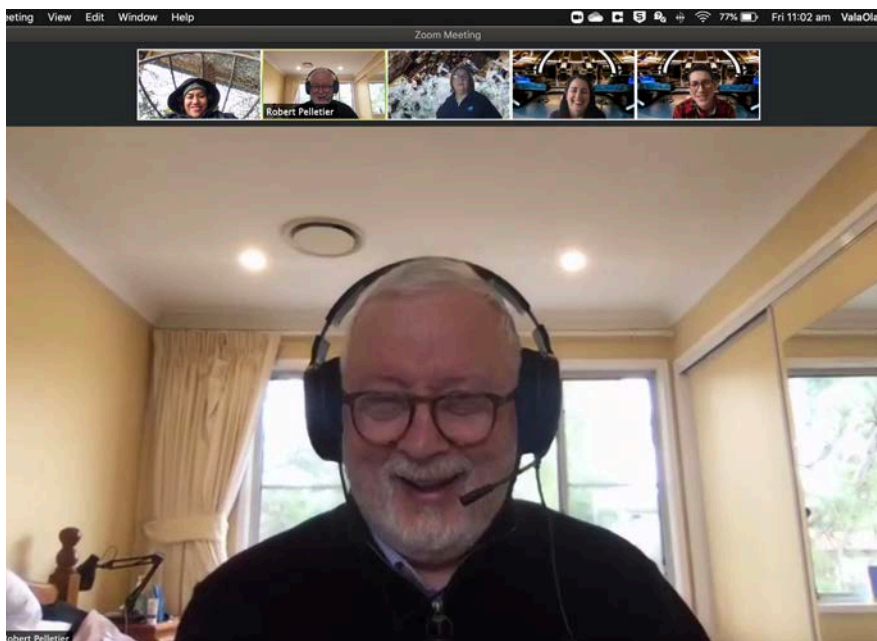
Only one of our employees, Robyn Roelandts, left the Centre in August 2019. Robyn came to us as a volunteer and stayed with us for many years. We thank Robyn for her contribution and wish her all the best for the future.

Ash Chand, one of our mighty volunteer students also finished up after more than two years at the Centre. Ash was admitted to practice on 13 September 2019. We wish her well in her legal career.

We welcomed Greg McCauley as a solicitor with our legal team. Greg has worked with us as a volunteer law student and as a volunteer lawyer before he joined us as a generalist solicitor in our legal team.

Naomi Hare, our wonderful Tenancy Advocate, took maternity leave to give birth in October 2019 to her beautiful daughter Dakota.

We worked hard on our internal culture in this financial year. This work paid dividends when the Pandemic hit. As the lock down became harder and harder, they somehow managed to keep providing services to our clients. From time to time, I get an email from a grateful client or an appreciative partner service about the amazing work one of our staff members has done. These emails give me a precious insight into the positive differences our staff are helping our clients to achieve in their lives – whether it be a roof over their heads, a safer life that is free from fear or working out a parenting agreement with a former partner. The Centre is grateful to all our staff members for the truly amazing work that they do.



OUR MANAGEMENT TEAM

OUR BOARD MEMBERS

OUR VOLUNTEERS

ROBERT PELLETIER - EXECUTIVE OFFICER

A big thank you to our staff, management team, Board and volunteers

Our management team

This has been the hardest year for the Centre. We have had to change and change again so that we provide a safe work environment where we can continue to service our clients. We have rapidly changed our work practices to support our staff working remotely and working with our clients and our outreach partners in different ways.

This would not have been possible without the best management team. My thanks go to Christina, our Principal Solicitor, Tanya, the co-ordinator of MWDVCAS, Vala, the co-ordinator of SWSTAAS and our financial administrator, Carina. They go above and beyond every day. They have supported and guided our staff during this time of transition. Somehow, they and our staff manage to do more and more work in each reporting period.

Our Board members

Our Board is led by Chair, Peta Andersson. I am grateful to Peta for the experience and clarity of purpose she has brought to our Centre. Peta is supported by Dani Napton, our Deputy Chair, Nevine Youssef, our Secretary, Adam Quinn, our Treasurer, and Alison Croall.

All these volunteers share their time and insight. I am deeply grateful for the excellent

work they do – guiding the ship through very challenging times.

I should make special mention of the unstinting support that Nevine's firm, Marsdens, provides to Macarthur Legal Centre and has done for many years. Marsdens hosts many of our Board meetings, has provided pro-bono advice and training and have been firm friends of the Centre over many years. Many of our volunteer solicitors have come from Marsdens. Their continued support of the Centre is very much appreciated.

I should also mention the amazing support we receive from Adam's firm, Kelly Partners. They also host some of our Board meetings. They provide excellent accounting services to the Centre. We could not achieve what we do without their help and the contribution that Marsdens have made over many years.

Our volunteers

To our student volunteers, volunteer solicitors and the legal firms that support us, a big thank you. Your passion for social justice has enabled us to extend our reach and assist so many more people than we could on our own. Since the Pandemic hit, we have not been able to welcome you back to the Centre but please know how much your steadfast contribution means to us.

Our funders

We are funded by the State and Federal Governments. We also receive funding for particular projects – largely from

those Governments but also from Local Governments. Our final source of income is donations we receive – these are a small portion of our funding overall but very welcome all the same.

I acknowledge our colleagues at Legal Aid NSW who manage the funding for our Legal Team and MWDVCAS and also those at NSW Fair Trading – who manage the funding for SWSTAAS. We appreciate the support these colleagues make to enabling our sector to flourish. It has been said by someone very unkind that managing lawyers is like herding cats. If lawyers are like cats, I dread to think what CLCs are like to manage!

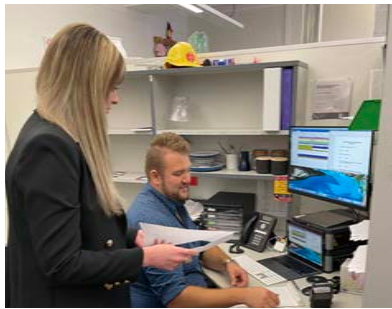
Two staff members honoured

Tanya Whitehouse was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in the General Division for her services to the community through social welfare initiatives on Australia Day 2020. Prue Gregory was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for her services to the law and to the community. Prue was our Principal Solicitor between 2009 and 2013. She left us to work in Knowmore, a CLC established by the Federal Government to support the work of the Royal Commission into Institutional Sex Abuse. She has been the Principal Solicitor of this organisation since 2015. Both Tanya and Prue have previously been awarded the NSW Law & Justice Foundation Justice Medal – in 2015 and 2017 respectively. The Centre congratulates Tanya and Prue on their outstanding commitment to justice and to the people of South Western Sydney.

SERVICE

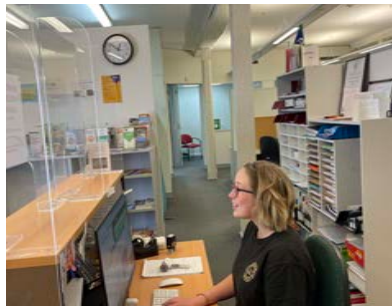
DEVELOPMENTS

WE ARE GRATEFUL TO ANNIE AND THE TEAM AT AUTONOMOUS, WHO HAVE ASSISTED US WITH MIGRATION TO SHAREPOINT AND OUR PHONE PROVIDERS, CONVERGE, WHO HELPED WITH REMOTE PHONE SET-UP.



Our IT and Coms have had to develop very fast to enable us to work remotely. Key changes we made in this year include, (a) continuing the migration of our data to SharePoint, (b) obtaining a new internet connection for the Centre – this has been essential because of the migration from the local server to SharePoint as we are all continuing chewing up bandwidth on our connection. We have also had to acquire laptops for our staff to enable them to work remotely. Thank you to Autonomous and Converge.

IT & COMS



We have an excellent landlord in Charter Hall. This organisation supports us in so many ways. They have found additional space for us at Campbelltown Mall when we were bursting at the seams. We have negotiated two new leases with Charter Hall for three years starting on 1 July 2020.

NEW LEASES



We started to increase the safety of our Centre. We now have a camera at our door and a front lock that is operated by our receptionist so that we can control who comes in and we can ensure that social distancing is maintained at the Centre.

SECURITY IN OUR PREMISES



The biggest challenge in 2020 has been understanding how to work in this new Pandemic environment. We have followed the health advice carefully and consulted with our staff and partners in the sector. As I write this late in 2020, we are still providing little face to face support and many of our outreaches remain closed. We work diligently to ensure compliance with COVID safe practice.

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY



THANKS TO ALL FOR A TRULY AMAZING YEAR

HIGHLIGHTS & UPDATES

In August 2019, we were visited by Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AO QC, the Governor of NSW.



Moves to the paperless office

Two of our teams have moved to paperless files. Our Tenancy team was the first to embrace the migration to being paper free and Legal moved to paperless files when the pandemic made it impossible to carry on business as usual. This transition has been fast and relatively pain free.

acquire laptops for our staff to enable them to work remotely.

I am grateful to Annie and the staff at Autonomous who have assisted us with this migration. I am also grateful to the team at Converge who have wrestled with a Mac system they are not comfortable with to get our phone system working remotely. This is still a work in progress but we are getting there.

Our WDV CAS is compelled by its funding agreement to maintain paper files. Because of the volume of work, this service is challenged by the volume of archiving it generates. However, I am pleased to report that our funder, Legal Aid NSW, is looking to a better solution to the paper file for our WDV CAS workers.

DV Committees

For many years we have auspiced the Campbelltown and Camden Wollondilly DV Committees. These Committees bring together all the services that assist victims of domestic violence in the relevant local government areas so that information can be shared. Apart from the networking and information sharing, the Committees also play a key role in raising the profile of DV and making the community aware of the services that are available.

Visit of the Governor

On 1 August 2019, we were visited by Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AO QC, the Governor of New South Wales, and her husband, Mr Dennis Wilson. The Governor has made youth justice one of her focus areas and asked to visit us because of our work in youth justice.

We continue to auspice the Camden Wollondilly DV Committee. However, in this financial year, we decided to cease auspicing the Campbelltown DV Committee. This decision was taken with regret but, after many years, we decided that we needed to focus our efforts on our core funded responsibilities.

We are keenly aware that the work done by our two youth workers, Laura Sutton at Campbelltown's Children's Court and Nadia Graham in our WDV CAS, is done in partnership with many services. We invited our partners to an excellent function at Campbelltown's beautiful Art Gallery. Aunty Joyce Mate provided the Acknowledgement of Country. Her Excellency gave a short address. She said that a key part of her role was to recognise the work that is being done by so many people in our community and she wanted to acknowledge the wonderful work being done in youth justice at Campbelltown. She then had the opportunity to meet with local youth workers before being whisked away to another reception! We have also had to

In conclusion, Ladies and Gentlemen

Aren't they the most welcome words in a long speech? Thanks to all for a truly amazing year. As always, I am honoured to be on the staff of Macarthur Legal Centre and be a witness to the amazing work our staff, volunteers and Board members do. In the words of someone a great deal wiser than me (smart arse son pipes up and says 'And that would be everybody, Daddy, wouldn't it'), be of good cheer, this too will pass.



LEGAL REPORT



We saw a steady increase in demand for advice services from March 2020, and the trend continues...

Introduction

MLC is part of a network of community legal centres funded by the Community Legal Centres Program administered by Legal Aid NSW to provide free legal advice, referrals and assistance to residents of the Macarthur region of NSW. Our services now cover the local government areas of Campbelltown, Camden, Wollondilly, Wingecarribee, Goulburn-Malwaree, Yass Valley and the Upper Lachlan Shire. We also deliver community legal education, to increase awareness of legal issues, and use our coalface experience to help inform constructive legal and policy reforms.

Our mission

Our mission is to ensure that professional legal services are accessible to all members of our community, regardless of social or economic background. We see our clients as individuals and we constantly strive to deliver our services in innovative, collaborative and holistic ways. We provide free legal information, advice and referrals to all residents in our region, and targeted casework assistance for disadvantaged clients.

COVID-19

In March/April 2020 the legal team closed to the public, and transitioned to remote work arrangements, in response to COVID-19 restrictions. We increased provision of phone advice/ assistance and transitioned to fully a paperless file management system, which allows for effective 'remote' supervision by the principal solicitor. We changed our advice intake model, to facilitate remote service delivery - previously we had two advice intake sessions per week (on a Tue evening and Thurs afternoon). Our reception workers now perform conflict checks and gather client information at first contact and solicitors call back clients for advice within 1-2 working days. Staff and clients have reported being satisfied with this new system and we will be retaining it as our new intake model. In June 2020, our team partially recommenced attendance at the office, as required,

to perform admin tasks or see vulnerable clients for face-to-face meetings (e.g. to sign a will for a terminally ill client, where remote assistance is impractical). We have ceased face-to-face attendance at our outreach locations, for the time being, but we are in constant contact with our outreach partners and take warm referrals for telephone advice. We have temporarily suspended our student and solicitor volunteer program, given our main office closure.

COVID-19 Statistics

We saw a steady increase in demand for generalist legal advice from March 2020:

March	14% above advice targets
April	25% above advice targets
May	30% above advice targets
June	60% above advice targets

We have also been exceeding monthly targets for taskwork:

March	on target
April	122% above target
May	90% above target
June	145% above target

We have been collecting COVID-19 related statistics since 16 March 2020. Records from mid-March - 30 June 2020, indicate that approximately 13% of incoming advice enquiries were directly COVID-19 related. Since March 2020, there has been an ongoing demand for advice in COVID-19 related matters, including employment law, debts, consumer claims, centrelink, family law and end of life planning.

COVID-19 LEGAL MATTER TYPES

1 EMPLOYMENT LAW

69%

Standowns, redundancy, work entitlements and conditions.

2 CONSUMER AND DEBT

11%

Debt management, refund claims etc.

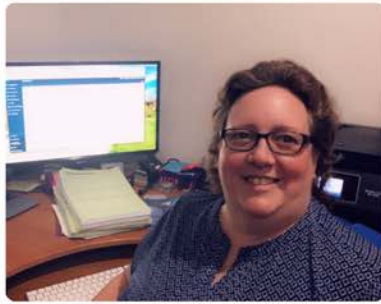
3 CENTRELINK, FAMILY LAW, WILLS ETC.

5% Centrelink

5% Family Law

3% Wills, and end of life issues

7% Misc. (restrictions, offences, DV)



15

MARCH 2020

15 COVID-19 Advices delivered



COVID-19 support

34

APRIL 2020

34 COVID-19 Advices delivered



COVID-19 support

23

MAY 2020

23 COVID-19 Advices delivered



COVID-19 support

20

JUNE 2020

20 COVID-19 Advices delivered



COVID-19 support

OUR LEGAL

SERVICES

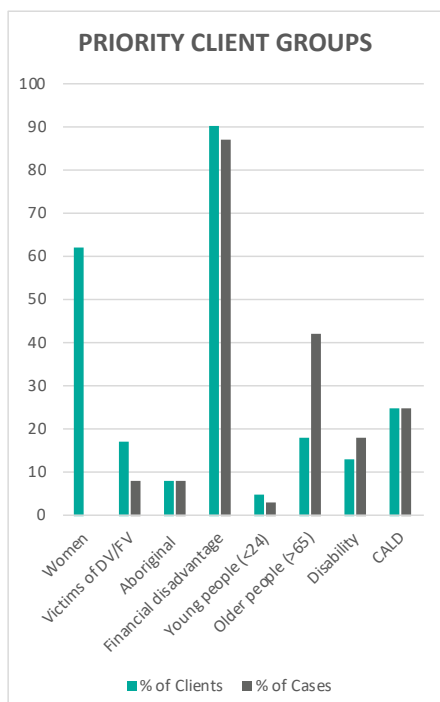
In FY2019, we provided information to 2993 people, made 5543 referrals and our solicitors conducted 1591 legal advice sessions. 548 (34%) advice sessions were delivered 'face-to-face' and 1042 (66%) via telephone (increase due to COVID-19). Our solicitors opened 320 new cases, as well as continuing work on 336 open cases. 376 cases were finalised. We also completed 265 legal tasks (one-off task assistance).



Christina Pirina, Principal Solicitor (+ new co-worker)

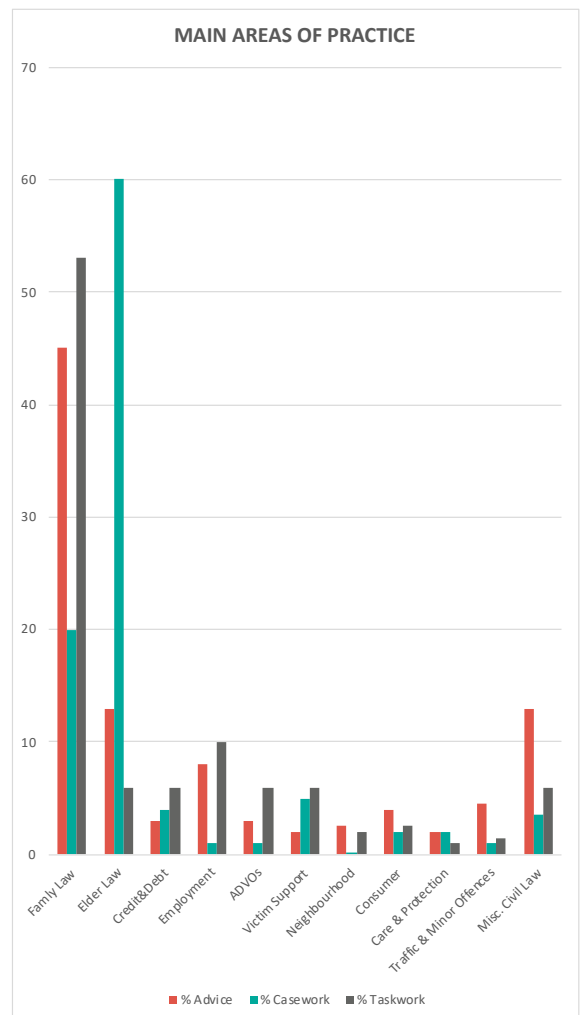
Priority Groups

We continue to target our services at the most vulnerable people in our community.



Main Areas of Practice

Our solicitors deal with a range of generalist legal issues, with family law and elder law being our two main areas of practice.






SERVICES DELIVERED TO CLIENTS WHO MET CRITERIA FOR AT LEAST ONE PRIORITY GROUP CATEGORY.

100%

OUTREACH

WE ARE PART OF THE COMMUNITY WE SERVICE AND DO OUR BEST TO ENSURE OUR SERVICES ARE ACCESSIBLE TO THE MOST VULNERABLE MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY

-  SUPPORTING COMMUNITY
-  LISTENING TO CLIENTS
-  MEETING CLIENT NEED

We work closely with a range of community organisations to deliver outreach advice and assistance services.

We believe legal services should be accessible to all members of our community. Our solicitors regularly attend our 15 outreach clinics on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis, to deliver face-to-face legal advice to some of the most vulnerable clients in our catchment. We temporarily suspended our outreach services in March/April 2020, due to COVID-19 restrictions, but have continued to take warm referrals from outreach partners and provide clients with prompt telephone advice/assistance. We surveyed our outreach partners in May 2020, to help inform COVID-19 related service delivery. We plan to return to regular operations, when COVID-19 issues abate. In 2019-2020 we partnered with the following services, to provide outreach assistance: Tallowood Community Centre (Ambarvale); Break the Cycle (Macquarie Fields); Benevolent Society (Campbelltown); Burnside (Campbelltown); Nagle Centre (Campbelltown); Community Links Wellbeing (Tahmoor); Claymore Community Centre (Claymore); Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation (Airds); Youth Off the Streets (Macquarie Fields); Big Yellow Umbrella (Narellan); Community Links Wellbeing (Bowral); Pathways

(Goulburn); Campbelltown Hospital; and the Family Relationship Centre (Campbelltown); and (our newest outreach) Warragamba Silverdale Neighbourhood Centre (Silverdale).

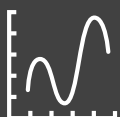
Health Justice Partnership (HJP)

Our Health Justice Partnership (HJP) is an integrated, patient-centred service model that addresses complex, multifaceted legal and non-legal patient concerns through effective referral pathways to meet the immediate socio-legal health needs of patients. MLC solicitors are usually based at Campbelltown Hospital, every Friday, and provide free and confidential legal advice, assistance, support and referrals to inpatients and outpatients. Solicitors also attend Camden and Campbelltown Hospitals (CCH), on an ad-hoc basis during the week, as needed. We have had to suspend our onsite attendance at Campbelltown Hospital, since March, but we have continued to receive warm referrals and enquiries from hospital staff. The hospital has reported that they are happy with this mode of service delivery, until it's safe to resume onsite sessions.

15 OUTREACH CLINICS

426 OUTREACH CLIENTS

90 HJP CLIENTS



OUR HJP IS AN INTEGRATED, PATIENT-CENTRED SERVICE MODEL THAT ADDRESSES COMPLEX LEGAL/NON-LEGAL NEED

We work closely with Campbelltown hospital to deliver our HJP

OUR OUTREACH PARTNER SERVICES ARE LOCATED THROUGHOUT OUR CATCHMENT

Despite COVID-19 restrictions on face-to-face services, we continued to work closely with our outreach partners to deliver phone advice.

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATION

MLC is committed to holistic, client-focused service delivery. To achieve this, we partner with internal and external service providers to ensure our clients achieve the best outcomes

Macarthur Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Service (MWDVCAS)

Prior to March 2020, we ran a weekly domestic violence list, to provide in-house legal advice and assistance to clients of our Macarthur Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (MWDVCAS). MWDVCAS workers pre-booked appointments for their clients each Thursday morning (9:30am-1:00pm). Clients were seen by female solicitors, with specialized knowledge in domestic violence, family law and care and protection. Since March 2020, we have continued to receive warm referrals from MWDVCAS workers, on a daily basis, and provide these clients with priority telephone advice/assistance.

Community engagement, partnerships and collaborative practice

MLC is committed to holistic, client-focused service delivery. To achieve this, we partner with internal and external service providers to ensure our clients achieve the best outcomes possible.

Family Relationship Centre Partnership

We currently partner with the Family Relationship Centres (FRCs) at Macarthur Square, Fairfield, Liverpool and Bankstown to provide legal advice, referrals and assistance/representation to clients accessing FRC services. Generally, South West Sydney Legal Centre (SWSLC), or Marrickville CLC, will provide similar advice to the 'other party' in each matter. This model, whereby both parties are advised/represented by solicitors from community legal centres, is aimed at redressing power imbalances and resolving entrenched conflicts, with the aim to developing safe parenting arrangements and helping parents avoid unnecessary court action. This year our solicitors have started participating in ZOOM/MS Teams mediations, in response to COVID-19 restrictions. In the new FY, we will be extending our (remote) services to other FRCs, who are unable to access CLC services in their own catchments.

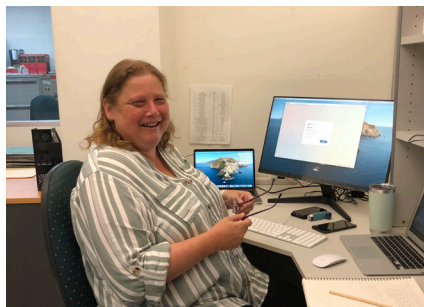
CALA Pilot

Our Culturally Appropriate and Legally Assisted (CALA) pilot came to an end in June 2020. This program was an innovative initiative funded by the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department. As part of this program, our solicitors participated in cultural training, child inclusive practice, child protection, domestic/family violence and men's behaviour change. Despite the end of this pilot, we plan to continue our close partnership with Bankstown FRC, South West Sydney and Marrickville Legal Centres.

Community engagement

Our team is committed to being part of the community we service. We delivered 37 community legal education (CLEs) workshops, developed 15 CLE resources and otherwise participated over 150 non-casework activities/projects, including: regular attendance at local and state-wide interagencies, participation in CLC sector activities, attendance at local events and expos, law reform activities, meetings with key stakeholders, attendance at networking events etc. Our CLEs were delivered to a wide range of community groups in the Macarthur region, with audiences ranging from children and young people, to vulnerable parents and senior's groups. The topics we covered included bullying, healthy relationships, domestic violence, family law, child protection, child support, elder law, employment, credit and debt, discrimination, mental health and carers issues. We have continued our successful 'Let's Talk Legal' seminar series, in collaboration with Campbelltown Library, which delivers a yearly series of targeted, plain language legal education talks to community members at local libraries. Sessions after March 2020, being delivered via ZOOM. We hope to recommence face-to-face delivery, at library locations, in 2021.





WE ACTIVELY ENGAGE WITH THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVICE TO IDENTIFY AREAS OF UNMET LEGAL NEED AND IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY

Aboriginal Legal Access Program (ALAP)

MLC is committed to:

- Welcoming Aboriginal clients who drop-in for support and assistance.
- Attending relevant Aboriginal inter-agencies and consultations in the Macarthur region.
- Liaising with local Aboriginal organisations/workers for better working relationships.
- Establishing reliable networks of specialist workers for warm referral purposes.
- Actively participating in local community events (for example: NAIDOC, Sorry Day, Reconciliation Week).
- Providing information, support and referral for Aboriginal clients as appropriate.
- Ensuring all staff undertake cultural training on a regular basis.

We did not have a dedicated ALAP worker during the reporting period but intend to employ a youth-focused ALAP worker in the new FY.

Client Satisfaction Survey

We conducted our annual client survey in April 2020 and included COVID-19 related questions to help inform service delivery. 48 clients, who received advice/casework assistance in the month of April 2020, were surveyed by telephone:

- 98% found it easy to access MLC services.
- 98% felt MLC listened to their problems.
- 100% felt MLC had helped them understand and deal with their legal problem.
- 92% felt they knew where to go if they had another legal problem in the future.
- 100% felt that MLC had appropriately catered to their identified needs
- 100% of clients said they would recommend MLC to other people

In terms of COVID-19 service delivery:

- 98% of clients said they were satisfied with telephone advice.
- 96% of clients received advice within 4 days of contacting the centre (if it took longer, it was usually because of difficulties contacting the client).
- 33% of client would have preferred face-to-face contact, if available.
- 33% of clients would have been agreeable to ZOOM advice, if available.
- 50% of clients would prefer face-to-face assistance, for ongoing casework matters.
- 80% of clients would be happy for MLC to be an 'appointment only service' (as distinct from drop-in).

We also received a range of constructive and complimentary comments about the services clients had received, for example:

'The solicitor was outstanding, went above and beyond - was true to her word and was very helpful. Couldn't recommend anyone more highly - even emailing outside of work hours. Best lawyer I have ever been in contact with - my partner agreed.'

'Very satisfied with the help - I can't fault anyone I dealt with.'

'Solicitor was excellent - was accommodating, polite, professional and patient.'

A special thank you to student volunteer, Kristie Evans, who conducted this year's survey.

LAW REFORM ACTIVITIES - WORKING FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE

We continue to participate in law reform activities, which relate to systemic legal problems being experienced by people in our community. We have participated in CLCNSW related advocacy on domestic and family violence, family law, and victim support. Our CCAS worker, Laura Sutton, acting as Chairperson of the Youth Justice Coalition (YJC) also worked extensively on two key areas of law reform, namely:

(1) Submissions to the Council of Attorneys General (CAW) Working Group regarding raising the age of criminal responsibility, and

(2) Submissions to the NSW Attorney General regarding amendments to the Young Offenders Act 1997 (NSW).

(3) Submissions responding to the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability Issues Paper on the criminal justice system.

CCAS REPORT



Laura Sutton - CCAS Coordinator

MLC runs the Children's Court Assistance Scheme (CCAS), at Campbelltown Children's Court. The CCAS program provides support to young people facing court for criminal matters and apprehended violence orders. The program creates a supportive point of engagement for children and young people, allowing CCAS workers to identify and respond effectively to welfare and social needs. The scheme also supports the family, carers, friends and other support people who accompany the young person at court.

The support that the CCAS provides to young people and/or their families/carers includes:

- information about court processes and outcomes;
- social support on the day at court; and
- referral to welfare services such as drug and alcohol programs, counselling, and accommodation.

This year we helped 666 young people with matters listed before the Campbelltown Children's Court, This number was lower compared to last year due to a two month cessation of the CCAS program during the height of the lockdown. 74% of the young people we assisted were males, 26% female and at least 23% identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. We also assisted 399 parents/carers. Our CCAS worker also provided discrete (one-off) non-legal casework assistance to 57 young people and ongoing non-legal casework assistance to 18 young people. Our CCAS worker can spend anywhere from a few minutes to many hours with an individual, depending on the young person's needs.

The CCAS program does not operate alone, and relies enormously on the assistance of many other individuals and organisations to do its work effectively. Laura Sutton, the CCAS

Coordinator, is grateful to have benefitted from the skills, experience and support of her colleagues from all of Macarthur Legal Centre's teams, legal, tenancy and domestic violence; workers from Youth off the Streets; the Department of Education; Doorways for Youth; and Bianca Halloran (YAMS Coordinator), to name a few.

During the reporting period Laura worked on the following youth related projects:

- Coordinating court support services at Campbelltown Children's Court each Monday.
- Coordinating with DCJ (Justice) Campbelltown staff regarding the needs of young people under DCJ supervision
- Coordinating volunteer assistants – during the reporting period, two Māori elders attended to provide culturally-informed support to Pacific Islander youth appearing before the court.
- Working closely with the Education Court Liaison Officer (ECLLO) to support justice-involved young people so that they may re-engage in education
- Coordinating with youth workers from the YoTS Aboriginal Services team who attend Campbelltown Children's Court to support Aboriginal youth and take referrals for community-based cultural programs and mentoring, and also to identify and address how we can work collaboratively to better service the needs of Aboriginal young people in the community, with a particular focus on young people who are both clients of YoTS and involved in the youth justice system.
- Liaising with community police officials including Youth Liaison Officers, Crime Prevention Officers, Multicultural Community Liaison Officers, Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers.
- Promoting and raising awareness of MLC services in the community via participation in local youth-focused working groups and inter-agencies, including monthly meetings of the Macarthur Youth Services Network interagency, and bi-monthly meetings of the Youth Homelessness and Community Matters working group (facilitated by Uniting)
- Acting as Chairperson of the Youth Justice Coalition (YJC), and participating in the preparation of law form submissions in that role

- Preparing private submissions responding to the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability Issues Paper on the criminal justice system (these submissions were informed by the experience of a young person with disability who attended Campbelltown Children's Court for criminal charges)

- Participating in Youth Action Meetings (YAMS), a recently formed pilot program in the Campbelltown PAC focusing on the safety of young people as well as crime prevention

- Regular meetings with the YAMS Coordinator between monthly meetings regarding urgent needs of children and young people in the community.

- Preparing and delivering peer mentoring training to over 50 Year 9 students at Campbelltown Performing Arts High School

- Delivering community legal education talks, including, several workshops to Year 7 and 8 students at Airds High School, Ingleburn High School and Leumeah High School covering various legal issues affecting young people (this project was done in collaboration with Uniting's Link to Learning program; a CLE on MLS services to Yarn n Learn, and Aboriginal Women's group run by Macarthur Family and Youth Services; and, with Nadia Graham, a presentation on Domestic and Family Violence at the Macarthur youth inter-agency.

- During the lockdown, delivering a CLE workshop via ZOOM to a youth group from Focus Connect, a community service organisation working to support the needs of refugees and other new arrivals regarding MLC services and COVID-19 movement restrictions.

- Provision of referral and ad hoc casework services to vulnerable youth engaged in Children's Court proceedings. For example, Laura accompanies young people to court hearings and support services such as Doorways for Youth, Centrelink, FACS Housing, and youth employment program providers such as WhiteLion and Yourtown.

- Participation in a range of community events to promote MLC services and access to justice, including NAIDOC 2019 events at Youth off the Streets, Camden Council and Tharawal, and DAMFEST at Warragamba.

CASE STUDY & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

COVID-19 Case Study

Jane and her partner had planned to marry in 2020 and had a wedding booked at a wedding reception venue. Due to COVID-19, the ownership of the venue changed hands and the new owners told our client they could not 'guarantee' that they would be able to provide the booked services. As a result of this uncertainty, our client decided to cancel, however there was a failure on the part of the supplier to provide the necessary refund. Our solicitor provided ongoing advice and assistance to Jane, in regard to recovering monies owed to her. Including reviewing the contract and correspondence and assisting the client in drafting correspondence etc. Jane was successful in recovering most of the money owed to her, without the need for formal legal action.

Our Volunteers

In 2019-2020 we had a variety of assistance from student and solicitor volunteers. This included support during our advice intake sessions, and day-time administrative and paralegal assistance from law students. We temporarily suspended our volunteer program, in early 2020, due to COVID-related office closures and changes to our advice intake procedures. We plan to re-evaluate (and re-imagine) the program in early 2021. A big thank you to all of our wonderful volunteers.

Volunteer Students:

- Aishwarya Chand
- Anthony Byrne
- Brandon Bayeh
- Brianna Ellul
- Kristie Evans
- Mackenzie Roberts
- Melanie Tisma

- Natalia Brkic

- Sean Mabin

Volunteer Solicitors:

- Christine Guirguis, Coutts Solicitors and Conveyancers
- Greg McCauley (& now MLC staff solicitor)
- Joanna Knight, Marsdens Law Group
- Kaisha Gambell, Coutts Solicitors and Conveyancers
- Keiran Khan, JPM Legal
- Patrick Duffy, Duffy Law Group
- Sarah Kermode, Duffy Law Group
- Seyfarth Shaw (employment law advice and assistance)

Acknowledgements

A special thank you to our staff solicitors, for their relentless passion and dedication, notably – Barbara Simpson, Stephen Karanfilovski, Melissa Jozwiak, Andrei Stepanov and Milka Bundalo, Greg McCauley and Nicole Kennedy (Nicole and Greg both joined us in 2019-2020). I'd also like to thank our support team, including Danielle Archer (office administrator), Phillipa Magro (paralegal), and our volunteer, Jean Hibbert, who has been attending once a week to provide invaluable administrative and paralegal support.

The Year Ahead

I have no idea what the New Year will bring, but I know we will relentlessly continue to deliver free and accessible legal services, to the most vulnerable members of our community, and develop innovative ways of addressing the challenges that present themselves.

Go Team!!

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR STAFF, VOLUNTEERS & PARTNERS...

MWDVCAS REPORT

OVERVIEW OF OUR SERVICES

MWDVCAS is part of a network of 29 community-based Court Advocacy Services in NSW. Legal Aid NSW administers funds for all WDVCS'. MWDVCAS covers Campbelltown, Camden and Picton Courts, with workers attending to support clients on ADVO List Days and other days for hearings. Our workers also give appropriate referrals and information relating to Domestic and/or Family Violence matters, advocate for clients, network with local community service providers on issues around Domestic and Family Violence, offer training to community workers and ensure women have access to appropriate support outside of the justice system. Our WDVCS' is unique in that it is only one of two WDVCS' in NSW that have funding for case management/casework.

There are 13 staff employed with MWDVCAS including the Coordinator – Tanya Whitehouse, Assistant Coordinator/Multicultural Specialist Worker – Sesilia Large, Aboriginal Specialist Worker – Julie Hoffmannbeck, SAM Coordinator – Kelly Standaloft, Youth Focussed Caseworker – Nadia Graham, Generalist Caseworker – Lisa Stark, Disability Focussed Caseworker – Rachel Weir, Administration Worker – Melinda Perry, Intake & Referral Officers – Rebecca Furey, Shaylyn Schumacher, Joanne Walker and Amanda Weigand and part-time Data Entry Worker – Michaela Whitehouse.



COMMUNITY AND INTERAGENCY SUPPORT

The fantastic work done by MWDVCAS is never done as an individual service. MWDVCAS wants to sincerely acknowledge our community partners. Without them, we could not do our job as well as we do:

Macarthur Legal Centre, Narellan/Campbelltown Police, Campbelltown/Camden & Picton Courts, Nanette Reuben, Ngoc Le, Brenda Duchon, Ngoc Le, Cheryl Beaumont, Mona El Baba, Leonie Miller, Benevolent Society Centre for Women's Health, Staying Home Leaving Violence, WILMA Women's Health Centre, Community Links Wellbeing, BaptistCare, Macarthur Family & Youth Services, Tharawal Aboriginal Health Service, FACS Housing, FACS Child Protection, Focus Connect, Macarthur Disability Services, Jackie Burns, Uniting, Mother Hubbard's Cupboard, Legal Aid Campbelltown Office, St Vincent de Paul Case Management, Macarthur Gateway, Big Yellow Umbrella, Camden Council, Campbelltown Council, Wollondilly Council and Shining Star Foundation.

Staff at MWDVCAS are involved in many different interagency supports including Domestic Violence Committees at Campbelltown and Camden, multicultural interagency, youth interagency, Aboriginal interagency and our Youth Focussed Caseworker is also a panel member of the Youth Subsidy Assessment Committee. Our Aboriginal Specialist Worker – Julie - is supported by an Intake and Referral Officer – Shaylyn – to continue running the Sista Girl Yarnz Group (currently suspended due to COVID-19).



CASE STUDY



TANYA WHITEHOUSE - MWDVCAS COORDINATOR

MULTICULTURAL CASEWORK

Fatima (de-identified) is 31 years old and was born in Syria. She has three children aged 10, 8 and 5. Fatima was referred to our service by DCJ FACS in May 2019. Concerns had been raised after the children made disclosures at school, about violence towards them and their mother perpetrated by their father. In particular, the children reported that their father had assaulted them by slapping their faces with an open hand. He also grabbed one child's face and forcefully smacked it onto a wall about four times. He used keys to stab their mother and used a knife to threaten to 'stab' their mother. The Children also reported that, on another day, their father assaulted their mother with a belt and used her hijab to choke her. As a result of the choking, their mother was unconscious and the child attempted CPR. The child thought their mother was going to die.

NSW Police attended the home, but Fatima was reluctant to disclose details of the incidents. She told police that it was only a verbal argument and refused to show police any injuries. A referral also came to MWDVCAS through the Central Referral Point. Fatima was already known to our service and had previously engaged. DCJ FACS and Police attended her home again and we were in contact regarding appropriate supports. The offender was arrested and placed in custody.

Fatima was assessed to be at 'Serious Threat' and referred to the Safety Action Meeting. DCJ FACS, Police and MWDVCAS worked collaboratively to support Fatima and her children.

Casework support from our Multicultural Specialist Caseworker involved:

- Ongoing advocacy, support and information regarding FACS, Housing, police and other services.
- Support letter and advocacy with Start Safely and Housing.
- Ongoing court support and follow ups.
- Macarthur Case Management Service referral to assist with security cameras at new property.
- Family law legal appointment referral to Macarthur Legal Centre.
- MDSI information provided again.
- Immigration Advice and Rights Centre (IARC) and Legal Aid immigration information provided.

Fatima told her MWDVCAS caseworker that it is much easier to talk to her, as opposed to DCJ FACS and police. She has now relocated to a new property with her children and is feeling safe and grateful for the ongoing support of MWDVCAS and all other services that assisted.

STATISTICS INDICATE AN INCREASE IN SERVICE DELIVERY DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD. THIS IS TESTAMENT TO MANY THINGS INCLUDING WORKER SUPPORT, LCP REFERRALS, EFFECTIVE REFERRAL PATHWAYS AND A CONTINUED FOCUS ON EFFECTIVELY SUPPORTING WOMEN.

1 2750 CLIENTS ASSISTED

INCREASE OF 2.5% FROM THE PREVIOUS FINANCIAL YEAR

2 291 ABORIGINAL OR TSI CLIENTS

INCREASE OF 1.7% FROM THE PREVIOUS FINANCIAL YEAR

3 747 CULTURALLY & LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE (CALD) CLIENTS

INCREASE OF 4% FROM THE PREVIOUS FINANCIAL YEAR

4 562 CLIENTS WITH DISABILITY

INCREASE OF 4% FROM THE PREVIOUS FINANCIAL YEAR

5 2983 CLIENTS UNDER 16 YEARS

INCREASE OF 2.6% FROM THE PREVIOUS FINANCIAL YEAR

CASE STUDY - GENERALIST

Katrina and Chuck (de-identified) were in a relationship for 15 years. They have two children together, James and Terry, aged 14 and 9 years respectively. Katrina has always been employed, while Chuck had been unemployed for many years. He would look after the children while Katrina worked full time.

James had been exposed to bullying in year 6. Chuck decided that James would not return to school, and he kept James at home to write 'affidavits' daily. The aim was to sue Catholic Education for the bullying. James did not go to school for two years.

Chuck wouldn't let Katrina care for the children - she was not allowed to go into their bedrooms, was not allowed to wash their clothes, was not allowed to go to school events, was not allowed to contact the school or education department, was not allowed to take her children to the Doctor. If Katrina dared to stand up to Chuck, he would physically assault her. Chuck also controlled Katrina's money, taking \$1000 a week for food. The incident that led to the Police involvement occurred when Chuck physically assaulted James. Katrina waited until she left for work on the Monday to make her formal report to Police. Katrina and the children left the same day, while police were arresting Chuck.

This was an out of area referral and the Central Referral Point (CRP) referral indicated 'Serious Threat'. Katrina was staying with her sister in the Macarthur area, when we contacted her, and had left her job to look after the children. Chuck had previously contacted her former employer, so she thought that leaving her job was also the safest thing to do. Katrina was referred to the Safety Action Meeting (SAM) due to being at 'Serious Threat'. She was allocated to the Generalist Caseworker - Lisa - who assisted with a variety of things including: a support letter for Centrelink and advocacy with Centrelink (Katrina had an inheritance, but no paperwork to prove it, as evidence as Chuck had taken it). Having no income meant this was urgent work.

Lisa made an urgent referral to Macarthur Legal Centre regarding Katrina's inheritance. The MLC solicitor assisted Katrina by contacting the Equity Trustee who emailed the MLC solicitor a copy of the will and breakdown of funds and organised for Katrina to draw on the funds while unemployed. The Equity Trustee also immediately released \$5000 into Katrina's bank account.

Lisa prepared a support letter for DJC Housing, to help Katrina and the children access the Start Safely Program. Lisa also completed a support letter and Victim Support applications for Katrina, James and Terry. This allowed them to access counselling, Recognition Payments and the Financial Assistance Package to help with relocation, rent, bond and some household items. Katrina was approved for the \$5000 Immediate Needs Package. Counselling has also been approved for Katrina and the boys.

After successfully finding appropriate accommodation, Lisa referred, advocated and liaised with Mother Hubbard's Cupboard to arrange for the delivery of furniture to the new property. Katrina moved into her new property in December 2019. Lisa also referred Katrina to Macarthur Case Management services for white goods and safety upgrades at the new property.

Lisa recognised that there were significant concerns around trauma with the boys and completed a referral to The Benevolent Society -

Child and Family Team. Katrina started seeing the Child and Family counsellor in January 2020. Katrina enrolled James into Distant Education and plans to stay home with him for at least 3 to 6 months. An Education assessment needs to be completed prior to James starting school full time. Terry is enrolled in the local primary school and started in 2020.

Lisa also recommended Katrina see their local GP for a referral to a Paediatrician regarding development assessment for the boys as Katrina had concerns that both the boys were on the spectrum for autism and/or trauma. Katrina organised for the boys to see a Paediatrician around April 2020.

At Court, the perpetrator completed an Application to Vary the Interim Order as he wanted to have contact with the boys. Lisa referred Katrina to Sutherland WDV CAS for court support for this application in January 2020. The defendant entered a plea of not guilty to the charges in December 2019. Matters were adjourned to June 2020 for Hearing. Due to COVID-19 this matter was not heard, and the Hearing is still pending. Lisa will attend Sutherland Court with Katrina when this matter is finally heard.



Casework

Information



MWDVCAS is one of 29 DVCAS' in NSW



59,163
REFERRALS/YEAR

Increase of 41.9% from the previous financial year

34,381
SERVICE EVENTS

Increase of 18.7% from the previous financial year

The SayNo2DV Virtual Breakfast 2020

661

WEEKLY SERVICE EVENTS

Average per week

1138
WEEKLY REFERRALS

Average per week

13 Staff



MWDVCAS covers Campbelltown, Camden and Picton Courts

Court Support

Referrals

LCP Service

The fantastic work done by MWDVCAS is never done alone

We thank our staff, referrers and community partners for their continuing dedication to supporting women.

TENANCY REPORT



OVERVIEW

Gratitude. When uncertainty is the only certainty in a unique year of an ever-changing pandemic and funding challenges within, we focus on gratitude as a tool of building resilience in us as individuals and as a team. It has been a challenging time, but we are grateful for the ability to serve the community through our work. It has been frightful at times, but we are grateful for the opportunity to give the community some hope through our experience in this very specific and important area of work. It has been very busy, but we are grateful for the opportunity to continue to work and be gainfully employed doing what has become much more meaningful work in the current circumstances.

Partnerships

Gratitude for the services we have worked with. Before working from home became the new normal, working in collaboration with various services allowed us to deliver on our services. It would be much more challenging to support the whole community across South West Sydney without the support services that have enabled our work to run smoothly.

MILLER HUB

COVID-19 interruptions aside, this service and venue remain as constant and in-demand as the very first day. Our work with Miller Hub is a mutually important partnership for our hosts and our mutual clients. We don't only see people from in and around Miller at this place; we also use the facility to see clients who are from Liverpool and Fairfield LGAs and find it difficult to travel to our office in Campbelltown. We are a lot more accessible to more people who need the service. We are sure face-to-face service demand will resume when COVID-19 restrictions abate.

NCAT: We maintained a large NCAT roster in the financial year, relative to the resources we had at our disposal as a whole, and COVID-19 restrictions.

TU NSW & TAAP Network: The value of the network and being a part of it has been even more evident this year.

Tenants' Union NSW and TAAP Network collectively advocated for the Moratorium for tenant evictions to reflect the social, political, health, economic and socio-economic implications of COVID-19 and subsequent public health restrictions implemented across NSW. We received funding to employ an extra employee to help with the workload during this year.

SERVICE DELIVERY

For the reporting period of 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020, we provided 2200 sessions of advice to tenants. These were delivered over the phone, email, face-to-face appointments (before COVID-19) restrictions, and representation in conciliations and formal hearings at the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (Tribunal).

We suspended face-to-face interactions with clients in mid-March 2020, including Tribunal attendances, which is reflected in the drop in the face-to-face statistics. Representation of all kinds in the Tribunal since mid-March has been conducted over the phones.

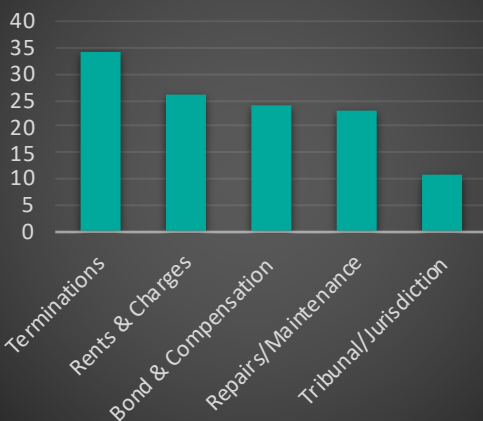
We opened 739 new cases in addition to the 409 cases carried forward from the previous year. A total of 1148 cases were active during this reporting period.

Terminations continued to be our most common matter type, followed by rent issues, bonds and compensation, repairs and NCAT jurisdictional issues. Some matters involved a variety of issues.

We also obtained a range of positive client outcomes. Obtaining these outcomes often takes a significant period of time, especially given that most assistance was provided over the phone and via email.

SOUTH WEST SYDNEY TENANTS ADVICE AND ADVOCACY SERVICE

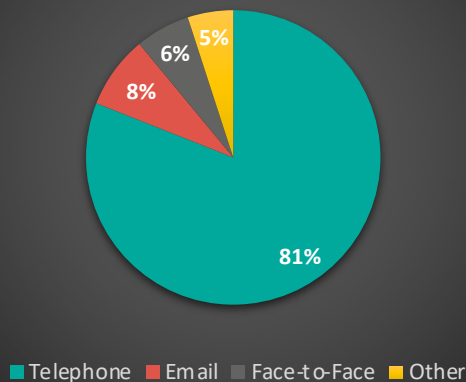
Case Types (%)



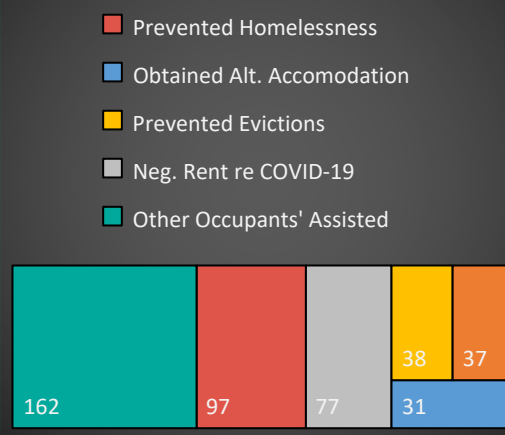
Client Outcomes (%)



Mode of Service Delivery (%)



Other Outcomes (no.)





GOOD NEWS STORY

OUR TEAM WORK MAGIC ON A DAILY BASIS

In or around late April 2020, we received a referral from Lisa of MWDVCAS for some tenancy help for Megs (not her real name). Megs had experienced domestic violence in late 2018 and fled with her children for safety reasons. Due to this, Megs stayed in a short-term holiday let. The cost was \$6200 for a month's stay and a further \$500 for a bond. Megs paid all \$6700 required of her.

Unfortunately, the arrangement only lasted a week. After leaving, the landlord did not return the bond as there was a small mark on the wall and they claimed all the money for "damages". Megs disputed this, but she was unable to get in contact the landlord to recover her money.

Shortly after this time, the tenant made a claim with Victims Services for the amount of \$5000. This amount was awarded, which is brilliant. However, Victims Services paid the money incorrectly to the landlord of the holiday let in late 2019, instead of Megs.

Megs, Victims Services and MWDVCAS tried to contact the landlord to have the money recovered. However, no one could find the landlord. After months of failed attempts with the landlord, Megs was referred to our service for assistance.

We are trying to be grateful for being perceived as being magical or of being miracle workers. This is work in progress.

Anyway, we immediately lodged an NCAT application to seek the return of the overpaid monies and to recover the bond. Shortly after, we received a phone call from the phantom landlord. They denied ever receiving a payment of \$5000 from Victims Services. But of course. No

one expected anything else from this landlord.

Naomi, not taking any prisoners, pressed the issues. After further discussions and evidence to show that the money had been paid to the landlord, the landlord agreed to repay the amount in full. She refused to return the bond due to minor damages to the property. Megs did not wish to pursue the bond, on the proviso that the \$5000 was paid immediately to her account number.

We drafted consent orders for the amount of monies to be paid within seven days. The landlord quickly signed and scanned them back to us. The consent orders were sent to NCAT, where they were finalised. We closed the matter when Megs received her money. She also sent a message to Naomi, part of which read:

Thankyou so much for all of your help. You don't understand what this money means to me and my family. You have not only helped me but this will have a great generational impact on my children. Without services and people like you, people like me wouldn't get the help they desperately need.

Tanya Whitehouse of MWDVCAS also praised Naomi's brilliant work in this matter, in an email to Robert and managers. Another excellent example of cross-service collaboration within MLC. Thank you, Naomi, for your hard work and working with Lisa to help Megs. Magical stuff!!

WE THANK YOU

'Hi Ash - Thanks so much for the info and advice. I know these things are a game, which I am usually pretty good at, but I don't know the rules of this game lol! Thanks for helping me get an understanding. I am super pleased you can review any application put together.'

'Hi Ghazal, I would like to thank you and Ash for your help with my evidence bundle and general advice'

For Ash and Ghazal - 'I cannot thank you two enough for your awesome help and all your time and advice. Thank you.'

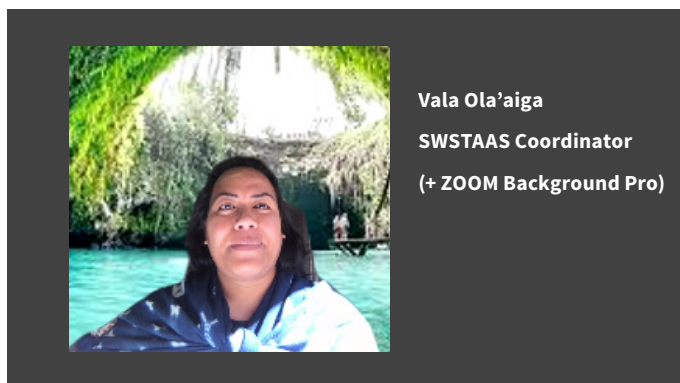
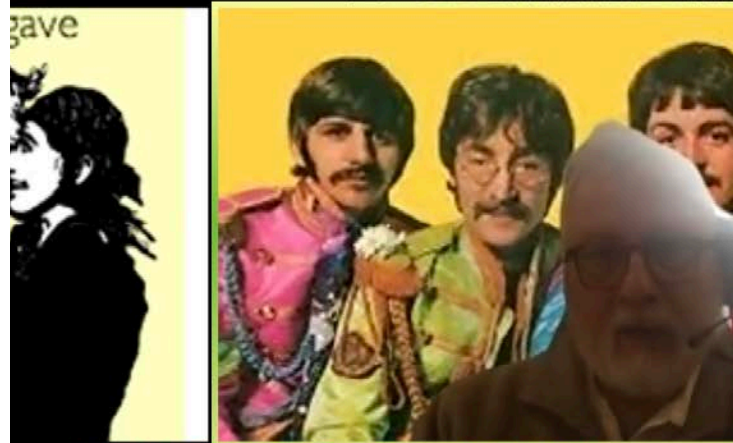
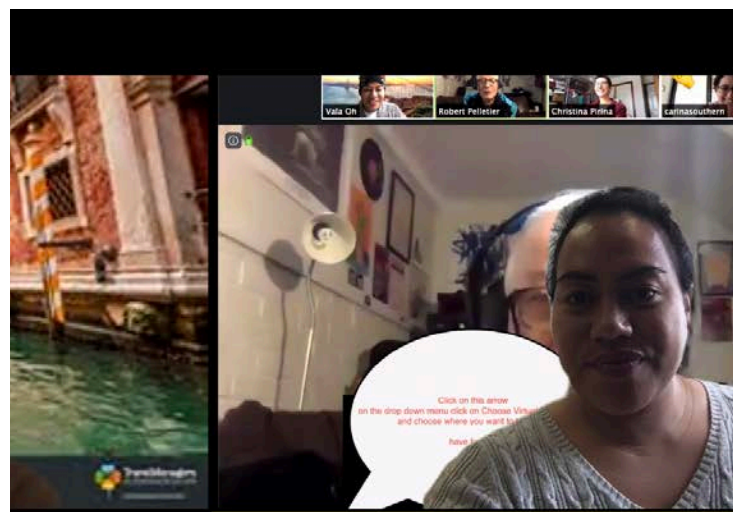
To the team

Douglas Lee, Naomi Hare, Mohammed Qasim Aziz, Ghazal Atayan and Ashmita Rao. Your hard work has not gone unnoticed. Thank you for stepping up and leaning in for each other and most especially for the community when the year got challenging. We have learned much and also know the work is unrelenting. Thank you, team.

We acknowledge our community and express so much gratitude for the opportunity to serve different parts of our stakeholder communities in and through the work we do.

To Macarthur Legal Centre Board Members and staff, thank you for your support, encouragement and patience this year.

Special thank you to the MLC management team - this year could have easily run away with us, and we'd be forgiven (maybe) but here we are. Thank you for your support, your back-up, your colourful/very meaningful ©Zoom backgrounds during the many virtual conferences.



FINANCIAL REPORT

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME (FY 2019-2020)

	2020	2019
	\$	\$
Revenue	3,299,005	2,972,321
Depreciation Expense	(38,161)	(39,088)
Employee Benefits Expense	(2,552,172)	(2,464,586)
Other Expenses From Ordinary Activities	(546,575)	(433,225)
Surplus/(Deficit) before income tax	162,097	35,422
Income Tax Expense	-	-
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	162,097	35,422
Other comprehensive income after income tax	-	-
Total other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax	-	-
Total comprehensive income/(loss) for the year	162,097	35,422
Total comprehensive income/(loss) attributable to members of the entity	162,097	35,422

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS (FY 2019-2020)

	2020	2019
	\$	\$
CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Receipts of grants	3,180,114	3,068,730
Payments to suppliers and employees	(3,199,213)	(2,857,717)
Interest received	21,980	22,893
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	2,881	233,906
CASH FLOW FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Proceeds from sale of property, plant and equipment	-	-
Payment for property, plant and equipment	(63,031)	(12,358)
Net cash provided by/(used) in investing activities	(63,031)	(12,358)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held	(60,150)	221,548
Cash at the beginning of the year	1,681,896	1,460,348
Cash at the End of the Year	1,621,746	1,681,896

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION (FY 2019-2020)

	2020	2019
	\$	\$
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	1,621,746	1,681,896
Trade and other receivables	34,593	4,754
Other current assets	11,999	10,704
Total Current Assets	1,668,338	1,697,354
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Property, plant and equipment	99,128	75,185
Total Non-Current Assets	99,128	75,185
TOTAL ASSETS	1,767,466	1,772,539
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and other payables	455,487	603,076
Provisions	325,201	271,202
Total Current Liabilities	780,688	874,278
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Provisions	91,111	38,016
Total Non-Current Liabilities	91,111	38,016
TOTAL LIABILITIES	871,799	912,294
Net Assets	895,667	860,245
Represented by		
EQUITY		
Retained surplus	944,044	781,947
Total Equity	944,044	781,947

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY (FY 2019-2020)

	Retained Surplus	Total Equity
	\$	\$
Balance as at 1 July 2017	746,525	746,525
Surplus attributable to members	35,422	35,422
Other comprehensive income	-	-
Balance as at 30 June 2018	781,947	781,947
Surplus/(Deficit) attributable to members	162,097	162,097
Other comprehensive income	-	-
Balance as at 30 June 2019	944,044	944,044

Thank you to all our staff, volunteers, partners, funders, donors and supporters

DONATIONS TO MWDVCAS

D Vitocco Constructions
Cameron Brae Group
Gunlake Concrete
Marsdens Law Group
McGrath Real Estate Liverpool
McGrath Real Estate Camden
Commonwealth Bank
Commonwealth Bank
St Benedicts College Donation

Campbelltown Catholic Club

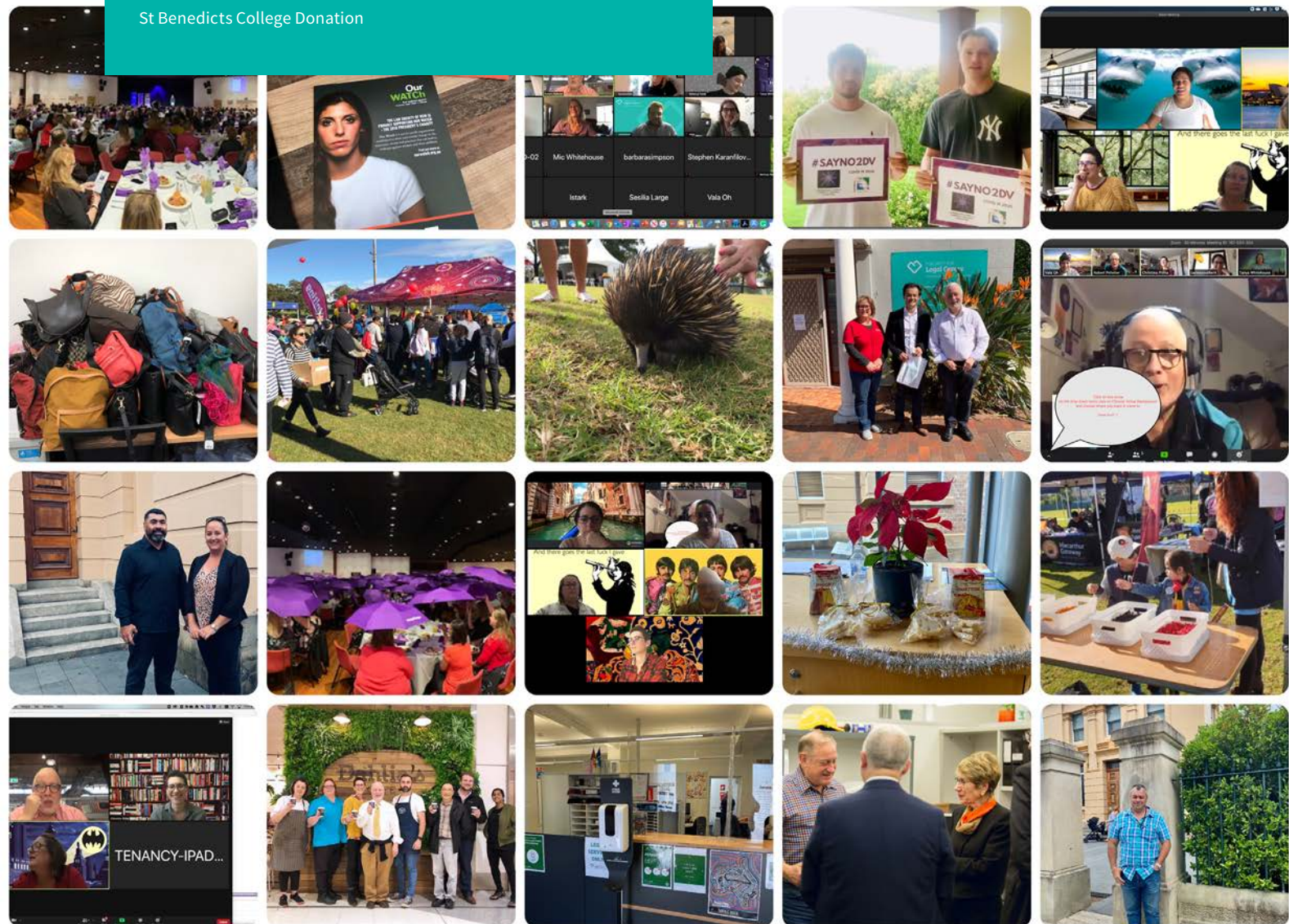
Mr Whitfield Donation

DONATIONS TO LEGAL

Dahlia's Cafe
Misc. client donations

OUR PRIMARY FUNDERS

Legal Aid NSW
NSW Fair Trading



MACARTHUR
Legal Centre
Supporting our community

PO Box 798
317 Queen Street
CAMPBELLTOWN, NSW 2560

Telephone: (02) 4628 2042
Website: www.maclegal.net.au
E-mail: macarthur_admin@maclegal.net.au