

# **Welfare Rights Centre**

## **Annual Report**

**July 2010 to June 2011**

**Prepared for 2011 Annual General Meeting**

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# Introduction

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The Welfare Rights Centre is a Community Legal Centre which specialises in Social Security law, administration and policy. Established in 1983, the Centre provides case management, expert advice and representation on Social Security and Family Assistance matters. Now in its twenty seventh year, the Centre currently employs 12 workers and benefits from the service of unpaid volunteer workers and its Board members to provide a wide range of services covering casework, policy analysis and advocacy, publications and community education.

## 1.0 Casework

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### 1.1 Casework service

The Welfare Rights Centre provides a casework service to people with income support problems that come under Social Security and Family Assistance law and to agencies assisting people with such problems. The aim of the Centre's casework service is to achieve outcomes for individual clients and for classes of clients, and to utilise our casework to improve equitable access to income security.

The casework service comprises a telephone advice service, research, assistance with self-advocacy, written advocacy on behalf of clients and written or personal representation before the Social Security Appeals Tribunal (SSAT), the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT), or the Federal Court in some cases. Advice is given on almost all aspects of Social Security and Family Assistance law and appeals. Further assistance may be provided in complex cases, matters of wide application, and matters where the client has no money at all or where they may not adequately represent their own interests.

Telephone advice and assistance is available Monday to Friday, for a four hour period each day. However, ongoing clients may contact the Centre at all times between 9 am and 5 pm. The Centre has a toll free number to facilitate access for clients in country and outer-metropolitan areas and a TTY for people with hearing impairments. Initial advice is generally provided by telephone; however, the Centre has an access and equity policy to ensure that people unable to obtain assistance by telephone are not disadvantaged.

The Centre's casework service could not function without the valuable contribution of unpaid volunteer workers. Their contribution is gratefully acknowledged in section 6.5 of this Annual Report.

### 1.2 Casework statistics

The following statistics are compiled from information provided to us by our clients. Some clients choose not to provide some of their personal information. The percentages are calculated on the total number of people volunteering particular information and may not represent the complete picture. Nevertheless, they provide a good overview of the casework of the Centre.

#### Number of clients

From July 2010 to June 2011 the Centre provided assistance to 2,232 clients. We provided 3,047 "advice activities" and opened 501 new cases in the period. This advocacy included representation of clients in internal Centrelink reviews and with appeals to the SSAT and AAT.

A high percentage of our “advice activities” and our cases involved securing stable and ongoing income or reducing debt for people with children aged between 0 and 18 years old. Approximately 50 % of our clients have children. We also gave direct advice to a small number of children under 18 years of age in relation to Youth Allowance and Special Benefit.

<b>Age</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>
0 - 18	1%	1%
18-34	20%	18%
35-49	27%	26%
50-64	22%	27%
65+	11%	14%
Not supplied	19%	14%

<b>Gender</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>
Female	57%	53%
Male	38%	39%
Not supplied	5%	8%

### **Country of birth**

The countries of birth disclosed by our clients was as follows.

	<b>2009-10</b>		<b>2010-11</b>
Australia	52.5%	Australia	49.5%
New Zealand	3%	New Zealand	2.6%
United Kingdom	3%	United Kingdom	2.6%
Lebanon	1.7%	Lebanon	2.4%
China	1.2%	China	1.9%
Vietnam	1.1%	Egypt	1.6%
Fiji	1%	Iraq	1.5%
Philippines	0.9%	Fiji	1.1%
Iraq	0.8%	Vietnam	1.0%
Iran	0.7%	India	0.9%
Egypt	0.7%	Greece	0.9%
India	0.6%	Turkey	0.8%

Clients of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background:

3.76% of all clients identified themselves as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background, or both.

### **The most common payment types for matters over the period were:**

Disability Support Pension	723
Newstart Allowance	531
Parenting Payment	386
Age Pension	214
Youth Allowance	167
Family Tax Benefit	144
Carer Payment	98

### **1.3 Casework issues during 2010 - 2011**

#### **Debts and prosecutions**

The most resource-intensive issue for our advice and casework service continues to be related to the raising and recovery of Social Security and Family Tax Benefit debts. This is particularly the case where the client is at risk of criminal prosecution in respect of their debt.

Debt matters covered a range of issues including debts raised due to under-declared income, non-disclosed assets, member of a couple determinations and receipt of arrears of compensation or income. Some clients continue to experience problems in reporting their income accurately because of confusion in what and how to report. This is a problem that we frequently observe even when a client has asked for help from Centrelink on how to report.

The Centre has assisted a number of clients to appeal against their debt when they are simultaneously under investigation for possible prosecution action. When successful in their appeal against the debt, the prosecution action is usually dropped. We remain concerned that many clients are facing prosecution action in the first place, as there is usually evidence on the Centrelink file that the client did not intentionally under-declare their income or that prosecution is not in the public interest.

#### **People with illnesses and disabilities**

The Centre advised a large number of clients on activity tested payments, such as Newstart Allowance or Parenting Payment, who have an illness or disability. Some of these clients had Disability Support Pension claims with Centrelink; others were just seeking temporary exemptions from activity test or participation requirements. These clients often contacted the Centre after a Centrelink decision to refuse their Disability Support Pension claim or to refuse to exempt them from participation requirements.

Most of these clients were confused (understandably) about their participation requirements, who they must speak to and when, who is making decisions about their payments and what they can do to appeal. In many cases they were required to navigate a number of complex processes at the same time - appeal the Disability Support Pension rejection, appeal the refusal to accept their medical certificates, attend appointments with Employment Services providers and to continue to look for work (even though they were too unwell to do so).

#### **Compensation preclusion periods**

We continue to see a large number of cases about "compensation preclusion periods". These are cases where our client has been precluded from social security payments, often for many years, because they have received a compensation payout. We are often contacted by clients who are without any income or assets after their compensation payout has been exhausted. This situation all too frequently results in homelessness. Whilst it is possible to argue that a preclusion period should be reduced if special circumstances can be demonstrated, these can be difficult cases to run. This year

our Centre has had some great success in getting lengthy preclusion periods reduced and assisting clients in hardship to get onto appropriate social security payments.

### **Member of a couple**

The question of whether or not a person is a “member of a couple” is often a difficult one to which there are no easy answers. A significant portion of our casework service throughout the year was spent advising and representing clients who were challenging Centrelink decisions that they were a “member of a couple”. Many of these clients had large debts raised as Centrelink determined that the relationship existed for sometimes up to 10 years prior to the decision to cancel payments.

We continued to advise and assist people who were affected by the recognition of same-sex de facto relationships under Social Security and Family Assistance law that came into operation on 1 July 2009. We acted in several matters where the issue was whether or not people were partnered for the purposes of Social Security law. Many clients expressed fear at coming out to Centrelink, and concern at losing their sole means of financial support.

### **Residence issues**

Of the many clients who contacted us in relation to residency issues, many were unable to access social security payments because they were not residentially qualified for social security payments. Issues included application of the newly arrived residents waiting period, whether Special Benefit was available because of ‘a substantial changes of circumstances’ and debts resulting from a decision that clients were not residentially qualified for a past period.

New Zealand citizens who moved to Australia since February 2001 have had extremely limited access to Social Security payments. If they fall into hardship while living in Australia, often the only avenue for financial support is to seek Act of Grace payments from the Federal Government. Where the Centre has sought Act of Grace payments for some of these clients who are in the most desperate of situations they have only rarely been granted. The reason for refusal is usually on the basis that the law was changed in 2001 to prevent New Zealand citizens from obtaining Social Security payments, and to make Act of Grace payments is counter to that change.

# 2.0 Policy Report

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## 2.1 Introduction

Over the last year the Centre has been engaged in a program of law reform and policy advocacy. The Centre has worked in co-operation with a number of other community organisations including the National Welfare Rights Network (NWRN).

The Australian Social Security system is a complex, tightly targeted and intrusive system of residual income support. The Welfare Rights Centre has a clear set of goals to guide its important law reform and policy advocacy activities. Those goals are:

1. to develop and advocate proposals for reform of Social Security legislation, administration and Government policy in order to minimise hardship and poverty in Australian society in general, and for Social Security recipients and their children in particular;
2. to ensure that the Social Security system is:
  - based on rights and entitlements, responsibilities and obligations which are clearly stated in legislation and enforceable;
  - administered under clear, publicly accessible policy guidelines;
  - characterised by a robust review and appeals systems that allows individual decisions to be challenged; and
3. to promote fair and accessible administrative law particularly in the field of income support.

## Key achievements in 2010-11

The Welfare Rights Centre's policy priorities over the past year have focussed on protecting basic rights that underpin our income support system in Australia and convincing Government that reforms are needed to address the adequacy of payments for unemployed people, students and young people, and to increase the level of assistance to help people into work.

The Centre continued to work closely with a wide range of other community sector organisations, through the National Welfare Rights Network, and with ACOSS, to achieve important improvements that are listed in this report.

Key achievements over the last year were:

- stopping the introduction of one harsh and unfair rule which would have been applied to job seekers who did not attend appointments;
- drawing attention to the inadequacies of financial support for unemployed people;
- highlighting harsh and unfair waiting periods;
- drawing attention to problems with Income Management, including the lack of any evidence to support an extension of the policy;
- promoting alternative views on Government and media attempts to stigmatise income support recipients as "welfare cheats", and in particular, to participate in community debates about positive disability pension reforms and the need for a stronger leadership role from both Government and business in addressing employment and skills acquisition for people with disabilities;
- exposing the poor quality of Centrelink decisions when it comes to discretionary matters;
- ensuring that gay and lesbian social security recipients have access to independent information and advice about changes to the July 2009 social security arrangements;
- increasing Family Tax Benefit payments for parents with children aged 16-18 by up to \$150 a week;
- expansion of access to Youth Allowance through the implementation of the Bradley reforms to student incomes, including extra scholarships and the lowering of the age of independence;
- better targeting of Family Tax Benefit announced in the 2010-11 Budget;
- joining with community organisations to restore vital funding for the National Rental Affordability Scheme, which provides financial support aimed at increasing access to affordable housing low income Australians;

- supporting the Government's temporary, targeted and progressive flood levy and the rebuilding efforts in Queensland communities;
- ensuring that Social Security laws and Centrelink practices that relate to people experiencing family and domestic violence is responsive and appropriate, through our engagement with the production of the discussion paper by the Australian Law Reform Commission into family violence;
- achieving a unanimous report from the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee inquiry into Compensation Payments, that recommended an overhaul of unfair debt waiver rules that are especially harmful for women experiencing domestic violence, making the rules fairer and ensuring that Centrelink be more accountable for its own errors;
- exposing ongoing problems with Centrelink's investigation and prosecution processes, which were mirrored in a report by the Australian National Audit Office on Centrelink and Fraud Investigations;
- advocating for changes to Centrelink's treatment of job seekers living in rural and remote areas;
- ensuring that the interests of low income households is considered in the development of compensation for a Carbon price;
- successfully advocating for a Budget increase in the range of services for marginalised and vulnerable job seekers through an increase to the network of Local Connection To Work sites throughout Australia;
- highlighting the \$128 per week gap between the single rate of allowance and the single rate of pension;
- advocating for more adequate supports and employment assistance for people with disabilities; and
- ensuring that Centrelink's service delivery is more responsive to a person with a mental illness, leading to the establishment of a Mental Health Service Delivery Working Party.

## **2.2 Submissions and letters**

The Welfare Rights Centre, separately and in collaboration with the NWRN, completed a number of submissions as we sought to influence key Government decisions in areas of Social Security legislation, tax reform, job seekers engagement, employment assistance and supports for low income and disadvantaged Australians.

We wrote to Ministers, politicians, political parties, Government Departments and Agencies to raise awareness and to seek reform about a range of social security law and policy matters including the rate of Rent Assistance, social security payment reform and Income Management.

In addition to providing written submissions the Centre also gave evidence at a number of parliamentary inquiries that were considering legislative reforms.

The major submissions during 2010-11 are listed below.

- 2010 Federal Election Policy – The Real Welfare Issues;
- Submission to the Independent Review into Job Seeker Compliance;
- Submission to Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Inquiry into Government Compensation Schemes;
- Submission to House of Representatives Community Affairs Committee Inquiry into a Children's Commissioner;
- Feedback to the Non-Government Organisation's Submission to UN Committee on the Rights of the Child;
- Submission to Joint Parliamentary Inquiry into Gambling (including the pre-commitment scheme);
- Submission to Social Security Legislation Amendment Bill Job Seeker Compliance Bill, 2011;
- 2011-12 Federal Budget Priorities Policy Statement;
- 2011-12 Federal Budget NWRN services and secretariat funding submission;
- Submission to the Minister for Employment Participation: The future of employment services, 2012-2015;
- Appearance before the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations - Jobseeker Compliance Bill, Canberra;
- Submission to Family Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2011; and



- Submission to Senate Standing Committee on Economics: Inquiry into Schedule 4 of the Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and Other Legislation Amendment (Further Election Commitments and Other Measure) Bill 2011.

### **2.3 Liaison with Government agencies, departments and the community**

Staff members have attended many meetings with Government Ministers, agencies and departments as well as with the Opposition, minor parties, NSW parliamentary members of both Government and the Opposition and with many community organisations. The Centre played a pivotal role in the organisation of and running of the biannual meetings with Centrelink as part of the NWRN delegation and also met separately with the Commonwealth Ombudsman, the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA), the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and the Department of Human Services (DHS).

The Centre meets regularly with the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) and actively took part in a number of key community campaigns during 2010-11, including support for the flood levy income support and the Federal Budget and the Equal Pay Campaign in the community services sector. The Centre's Policy and Media Officer, Gerard Thomas, is an ACOSS Board member and is also an ACOSS policy adviser on employment and social security issues. The Centre works closely with NCOSS and is also a member of the NSW Homelessness Community Alliance.

The Welfare Rights Centre also had membership in ongoing and ad-hoc working groups including:

- NSW Anti-poverty Week Steering Committee;
- NCOSS Poverty Working Party;
- Say No To Income Management in Bankstown Committee;
- Centrelink Do Not Attend (Missed Appointments) Working Party;
- ACOSS Income Support Working Party;
- Centrelink Sydney Mental Health Advisory Committee;
- Centrelink NSW Indigenous Advisory Committee;
- Centrelink NSW Homelessness Advisory Committee;
- New South Wales Federation of Non-Government Associations (FONGA);
- New South Wales Homelessness Alliance;
- Australian Council of Social Service (Board member);
- Centrelink National Multicultural Advisory Group;
- Welfare Rights Outreach Project (on Income Management in the Northern Territory); and
- Australian Law Reform Commission – Member, Expert Panel on Inquiry into Family Violence and Social Security Legislation.

### **2.4 Media**

The Centre sought to ensure that issues affecting Australians on income support received sufficient scrutiny. We responded to issues as they arose, but also sought to raise broader issues facing people whose primary source of income is a Centrelink pension or allowance. In addition to writing and distributing media releases for the Welfare Rights Centre, we also wrote and distributed media releases on behalf of the National Welfare Rights Network.

Eighteen media statements were released in 2010-11. Examining the level of media coverage on matters related to income support and social policy in Australia the Centre has achieved considerable success in gaining coverage for what are often very complex and at times controversial issues.

# 3.0 Community Education and Liaison

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## 3.1 Long term goals

The community education and training goals are:

- to provide high quality, accessible and targeted community legal education;
- to ensure that the work of the Welfare Rights Centre is widely known and supported throughout NSW in order to maximise its accessibility and strengthen community support for the Centre; and
- to ensure that the Welfare Rights Centre plays an appropriate role within, and for the advancement of, the Community Legal Centre movement in Australia.

## 3.2 Education and community liaison

In 2010-2011 the Centre continued to target disadvantaged groups for education.

From June 2010 to January 2011 the Centre began work on a project to provide bi-monthly training sessions on social security law to groups of community workers who service clients in our target disadvantaged groups. A calendar of bi-monthly training sessions for the 2011 calendar year was produced and marketed throughout the sector. The courses also received accreditation from the Australian Association of Social Workers. The first training sessions quickly booked out and were well attended. The training for the 2011 calendar year commenced in early 2011 and comprised the following courses:

- Appealing against social security debts;
- Social security for people working with newly arrived residents;
- Social security for youth workers;
- Social security for people working with carers and people with disabilities; and
- Social security for people working with students.

New training materials were developed for each of the above training sessions. These materials have been made available to other community legal centre workers via the database developed by Community Legal Centres NSW.

In addition, customised training and seminars continued to be provided to targeted community organisations that support disadvantaged groups, and new resources were developed. Particular focus was given this year to interagency and community groups within the Bankstown local government area on the introduction of income management to the area, and to community and advocacy groups working with people with disabilities.

More than 41 training seminars were presented to community organisations, including youth centres, TAFE, homelessness and accommodation services, domestic violence court support workers, youth and migrant organisations, interagency meetings, financial counsellors, other community legal centres and community organisations advocating on behalf of disadvantaged clients.

Regional training direct to TAFE and community workers was held in the far north coast and hunter regions.

Throughout 2010-2011, the Centre was involved in the National Multicultural Advisory Group, the NSW Centrelink Homelessness Reference Group, the NSW Homelessness Community Alliance, the NSW Bail Reform Alliance and the Centrelink Same Sex Reference Group and Anti-Poverty Week 2011.

More than 280 community liaison activities were undertaken in 2010-2011.

# 4.0 Publications

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## 4.1 Long term goals

The Centre's overall publication goals are to produce and distribute clear, informed, effective and targeted, information and policy advocacy material designed to:

- increase accessibility to the Social Security system;
- educate and empower the community about Social Security issues, payments and rights; and;
- improve the Social Security system in Australia.

In pursuit of these goals, the key publications for 2010-2011 were:

- "rights review quarterly newsletter;
- Independent Social Security Handbook ONLINE;
- Social Security Reporter;
- Factsheets; and
- Website.

## 4.2 "rights review"

"rights review" is the quarterly newsletter of the Welfare Rights Centre. Its purpose is to:

- provide information on recent changes to Social Security law and administration;
- raise awareness of Social Security matters;
- assist community workers to help their clients; and
- promote the services provided by the Centre.

The Centre published four issues of "rights review" in 2010-2011, reporting every three months on changes to Social Security law and administration. In 2010-2011 particular themes or issues in "rights review" focused on the carbon tax and the need for assistance to people on low incomes, the Henry Tax and Transfer Review, Income Management and the fact that with mental illnesses are the hardest hit group in relation to Centrelink activity penalties.

## 4.3 The Independent Social Security Handbook

In 2010-2011 the Centre continued to produce the ONLINE EDITION of the "Independent Social Security Handbook". The primary purpose of the Handbook is to inform community workers about Social Security law and Centrelink administrative practices and to assist them to better advocate for their clients with regard to Social Security payments.

The Centre updated the ONLINE Handbook four times during 2010-2011 to take into account changes to Social Security law and policy. In the 2010-2011 financial year there were substantial changes to the Social Security system including the introduction of weekly payments, changes to the compliance regime and the introduction of Parental Leave. The Handbook fully encompassed all these changes and more to help community workers and other users of the resource to assist their clients with Social Security problems.

The Handbook ONLINE continued to be available free to community workers in Tasmania, and Queensland due to arrangements made between the Centre and the Tasmanian Government and QCOSS respectively.

## 4.4 Social Security Reporter

The Centre has produced the Social Security Reporter (SSR) since November 2005. The purpose of the SSR is to provide a useful ready reference for Social Security practitioners and others with a particular interest in this area of the law. The SSR provides an easy and accessible means of ensuring that practitioners can keep abreast of important case law developments. It also serves as a useful reference tool for research on particular Social Security issues.

The Centre Office Manager is the Project Manager of this publication and Centre staff members contribute to each edition of the Social Security Reporter.

#### **4.5 Factsheets and brochures**

The Centre has 30 Factsheets available to assist and inform people about Social Security matters. Two Factsheets are available in five languages other than English (Spanish, Mandarin, Serbian, Arabic and Vietnamese). A complete list of the publications produced by the Centre and the NWRN can be found on the NWRN website.

In 2010-2011 we again revised our existing Factsheets to take into account changes to social security law and policy. We also produced the new Factsheet "Centrelink payments and domestic violence" which details what payments are available to a person who is a victim of domestic violence.

#### **4.6 National Welfare Rights Network Website [www.welfarerights.org.au](http://www.welfarerights.org.au)**

The NWRN website, which is hosted by the Welfare Rights Centre, Sydney, continued to be updated and maintained by the Centre's Office Manager. The NWRN's website, which is hosted and managed by the Centre, has over 300 pages of information to assist people with Social Security and welfare rights matters.

# 5.0 Funding

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## 5.1 Major funders

Funding for the period 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011 was received from:

- NSW Department of Community Services – \$393,397 plus a "one off" \$15,000 grant;
- Commonwealth Government - Welfare Rights Program – \$227,336; and
- CLC Funding Program - (NSW) – \$118,656.

## 5.2 Welfare Rights Trade Union and HESTA Programs

Throughout the year the Centre continued to provide service to and receive support from the following unions involved in its Trade Union Welfare Rights Program:

- NSW Independent Education Union;
- NSW Nurses' Association;
- NSW Teachers Federation;
- NSW Branch of United Voice;
- Public Service Association (NSW); and
- Police Association of NSW.

In addition, the Centre has continued its service arrangement with HESTA, under which HESTA members who are injured or ill and without income support, are provided with advice and assistance in relation to their Social Security entitlements and Income Protection.

The Centre is greatly appreciative of this support and the opportunity it provides the Centre to assist low income working people. Throughout the 2010-2011 year, the main features were:

- advising and representing trade union and HESTA members with regard to their Social Security matters;
- providing quarterly bulletins to each union with updates of changes to Social Security Law; and
- writing articles for publication in trade union journals to inform readers about their correct Social Security entitlements.

## 5.3 Income generation

In addition to the revenue from HESTA and the trade unions detailed above, the Centre also continues to generate further income through sales of the newsletter ("rights review"), the Social Security Reporter and sales of the ONLINE EDITION of the Independent Social Security Handbook.

## 5.4 Project Grants

The Centre successfully made submissions for a "one off" grant of funding to continue the national advice line for people affected by the same sex law reform as it pertains to the Social Security Act 1991.

## 5.5 Auditor's Report

The audit for this period was conducted by Steven J Miller & Co. The Auditor's Report forms part of this Annual Report and is attached at section 7.

# 6.0 Management

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## 6.1 Board of Directors

Throughout the period the following people played the very important role of planning and overseeing the Centre's work in their capacity as members of the Board of Directors.

## 6.2 The Directors who held office at any time during 2010-2011 were:

- Estelle Adamek
- Liz Biok
- James Campbell
- Diana Covell (Chairperson)
- Tony Eardley
- Carol Howard
- Michelle Jones
- Meghan Carruthers
- Terry Mason
- Kerry O'Neil
- Cristina Pebaque
- Stella Topaz

Details of each of these Board Members are set out in the Auditor's Report.

## 6.3 Staff Members

- Matthew Butt                      Litigation Solicitor
- Lua De Burgh                      Administrative Secretary (casual)
- Jackie Finlay                      Principal Solicitor (resigned February 2011)
- Lee Hanson                      Solicitor and Principal Solicitor
- Jo Kwan                      Solicitor/Volunteer Co-ordinator (on secondment from Legal Aid NSW until December 2010)
- Karen Lua                      Administrative Secretary
- Catalina Loyola                      Office Manager
- Amelia Meers                      Community Education and Liaison Officer/Caseworker
- Carolyn Odgers                      Solicitor/Caseworker
- Maree O'Halloran                      Director
- Gerard Thomas                      Policy and Media Officer
- Danny Shaw                      Senior Caseworker
- Cass Wong                      Funding Officer/Volunteer Coordinator/ Caseworker
- Katie Wrigley                      Handbook Researcher/Caseworker

Centre has 11 ongoing positions, most full-time but some part-time.

Independent contractor

The following person was engaged on a fee for service:

- Sam Trinity – Financial Administrator

## 6.4 Volunteer workers

The Centre's success could not have been achieved without the help of our unpaid volunteer workers throughout the 2010-2011 year. At any given time the Centre has about 10 casework assistant volunteers who provide an invaluable service each week on our advice shifts. Special mention should also go to our administration volunteer workers who help with the administrative functions in the office. These volunteers perform their duties with style, diligence, patience and much skill.

The casework volunteer workers, who have the challenging task of direct contact with people who contact us for advice or referral, assisted in 3,543 advice matters throughout the year. They displayed excellent communication and interpersonal skills in assisting many highly distressed clients. Their dedication and enthusiasm provides an inspiration to all of us at the Centre.

The Centre gratefully acknowledges the role played by all our volunteer workers.

These workers contribute services to the Centre valued at over \$120,000 each year. We hope they have enjoyed being at the Centre as much as we have enjoyed having them and we look forward to their continuing involvement with the Centre. To those who left the Centre in the 2010–2011 year we wish them well in their future endeavours and thank them for their years of service.

### **The volunteer workers who were at the Centre at any time during 2010-2011 were:**

- Ally Hijazi
- Abdulla Rahhal
- Adam Stipcevic
- Brendan Cook
- Chris Dobbs
- Chris Trizna
- Dave Linehan
- David King
- Estelle Adamek
- Gene Michelle
- Jessica Chiu
- Jo Ang
- Johanne Eide
- Josephine Montgomery
- Jowa Chan
- Julia Doyle
- Julia Zboromirsky
- Karibatau Takabwebwe
- Katrina Chianese
- Kimberley Wintour
- Laura Campbell
- Lisa Lucak
- Morgan Steinmetz
- Maria Nawaz
- Mark Knespal
- Mark Tang
- Millicent McCreath
- Nadia El-Marakby
- Nikita Prasad
- Petrina Slaytor
- Rebecca Thoms-Packer
- Samuel Chua
- Sarah Doyle
- Scarlet Wilcock
- Shanni Zoeller
- Sharissa Thirukumar
- Shirley Innes
- Siddharth Mylavarapu
- Stephen Tan
- Suzanne Castellias
- Trevor Tsui
- Victor Yoon
- Yvonne Xu

Student Placements: Morgan Steinmetz, Julia Doyle, Johanne Eide, Josephine Montgomery

Volunteer Solicitor: Malcolm Charlton

Pro Bono Counsel: Justin Carter, Dean Morzone

## 7.0 Auditor's Report

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The Auditor's Report, prepared by Steven J Miller & Co, is part of this Annual Report. It is available on request because it is produced in a different format.