

Welfare Rights Centre

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**ANNUAL  
REPORT**

**2022**



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# MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

During the past year, Welfare Rights Centre has played a crucial role supporting NSW residents to access Centrelink income support and challenge unfair debts throughout a difficult period that included the second COVID-19 lockdown, the early 2022 Omicron wave, devastating floods and continuing economic turmoil.

Despite external pressures, staff continued to provide expert and comprehensive assistance and advice, supporting around 2000 people to access their rights under social security law. Our work has included advocating directly to Centrelink, and undertaking complex legal work involving

appeals to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal to test the law. We have advised and assisted many to collect the evidence needed to win their case, and also put significant effort into providing referrals to other services able to help vulnerable clients, often with complex and diverse problems.

Core to our beliefs, each person has been treated with dignity and respect as we've sought to resolve their legal problem; clarifying issues, securing access to payments and obtaining debt waivers. The skill and dedication of the casework team, combined with their care and attention to the minutiae of social security law, is at the heart of these great outcomes for our clients.

Consistent with our objective to increase the availability of support for people struggling with Centrelink problems, we have delivered training to more than 700 community workers on social security topics ranging from Disability Support Pension to debt. We have also provided many short information sessions for community organisations throughout NSW. Feedback has been consistently positive, with almost all participants stating our training improved capacity to help their clients with Centrelink problems.

We have also been active in the law reform space, working closely with Economic Justice Australia to conduct research, prepare submissions and advocate for change, particularly in relation to the need to improve (Kafkaesque) Disability Support Pension eligibility criteria and access to income support for victims of domestic violence.

The pandemic, climate change and inflation are having a direct impact on our clients. While unemployment is at an historic low, almost 2 million people in NSW rely on income support to get by. Welfare Rights Centre will continue to advocate for the rights of NSW residents to access the social security system and have the resources they need to lead a meaningful life.



Simon Rice, Chair of the Board



Katherine Boyle, Executive Director



## HELPING PEOPLE NAVIGATE THE SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM

**Our casework practice** provides free legal information, advice and representation to help people in New South Wales navigate the social security system. Many of our clients struggle with complex, intersecting issues causing deep distress, including health, housing, safety, and major financial pressures. During 2021/22, we assisted more than 1600 people, providing compassionate support, which included taking the time to make strategic referrals to ensure our clients got additional support wherever useful.

For some, accurate one-off legal advice is all they need to feel empowered to advocate for themselves to resolve their Centrelink issue. Others need ongoing legal assistance. We advised and helped many people gather evidence and prepare the materials they needed to resolve their matter. We also advocated on behalf of our clients directly to Centrelink, and advised and represented clients at both levels of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

In providing our service, we hold Centrelink to account to ensure that Centrelink's decisions are lawful and fair. Access to correct Centrelink payments and the resolution of unfair debts can alleviate financial hardship and address disadvantage that can span generations. While basic access to a Centrelink payment may not sound like much, we see our work transform people's lives.

Thank you to both the Federal Government and the NSW Government for supporting this critical work.

## **Our Domestic Violence Project** supported people experiencing domestic violence to access their Centrelink entitlements and challenge unfair Centrelink debts. Cases were often complex, requiring a sophisticated understanding of domestic violence and a high level of expertise in social security law.

With 12% of clients reporting domestic violence during 2021/22, our legal team benefited from the expertise of our newly recruited Domestic Violence Community Worker who provided structured support including help with safety planning and referrals, while also gathering evidence and working with our legal team to remedy clients' Centrelink problems.

We delivered targeted social security training to domestic violence community workers to increase their capacity to spot and address Centrelink problems, including situations where a client may not realise there is a problem. This training increases the reach of NSW community services able to support people escaping domestic violence to address their social security issue.

We also ensured the experiences of our clients informed policy development by contributing case studies and analysis to our peak, Economic Justice Australia, who continued to lobby for much needed reforms at the intersection of domestic violence and social security law and policy.

### **Case Study | Vulnerable client let down by the system**

Yan contacted us after her partner was arrested and imprisoned for a serious assault against her. Although he was an Australian citizen, as was their three year old child, Yan was on a temporary visa and ineligible for a Centrelink payment. After years of domestic violence, she was left with no income and no savings.

We advised Yan about Special Benefit which, in limited circumstances, can be paid to a young child. After connecting her to a Centrelink social worker, her child was granted Special Benefit. Although a tiny amount of money for two people to live on, when combined with support from other charities, it was enough to survive.

It was a relief when Yan was finally granted permanent residence but the first thing Yan knew, Centrelink cancelled her daughter's Special Benefit - saying her daughter was no longer eligible because Yan had a theoretical eligibility for her own Centrelink payment. Again, Yan was left with nothing to live on. She immediately applied for Parenting Payment Single as she was her daughter's sole carer, but her claim was rejected because Centrelink said she'd have to serve a four year Newly Arrived Residents Waiting Period. Centrelink provided no other guidance or advice.

In despair, Yan contacted us again. We advised her to make a claim for Special Benefit in her own name. To expedite her case, we prepared detailed submissions for the officer determining her claim, stating Yan should be exempt from the Newly Arrived Residents Waiting Period as she had experienced a substantial change in circumstances beyond her control since arriving in Australia. Yan's claim for Special Benefit was approved and she is now back on payment - a small but significant victory.

**Our Disability Support Clinic** provided expert assistance to more than 100 people with a serious illness, injury or disability to help them obtain appropriate Centrelink payments. Cases were varied but often people were completely flummoxed by the complex Disability Support Pension (DSP) claim process, needing advice to decipher why their claim had been rejected, and assistance to gather medical evidence to support a new claim or appeal.

Many clients were unable to work and were distressed because they were stuck on JobSeeker Payment while unable to fulfil Centrelink's mutual obligation requirements. We supported their efforts to bring the facts of their medical condition to Centrelink's attention, regularly establishing they were legally qualified for Disability Support Pension.

The Clinic also provided information to support health practitioners to better understand Centrelink's requirements so they could more efficiently and effectively support their patients, as many medical experts struggle to understand the social security system's specific evidence requirements.

We'd like to thank law firm Hall and Wilcox for their support of the Disability Support Clinic through the provision of pro bono assistance from seconded solicitors.

## **Case Study | Disability Support Pension restored - with arrears**

Marjorie came to us extremely distressed because Centrelink had radically reduced her Disability Support Pension (DSP). She was receiving less than half of what she used to get and was having trouble surviving. Her payment had been slashed after she received some compensation following the workplace death of her husband but the compensation represented payments to her and also three of her children, so she didn't think the huge deduction in her DSP was correct.

After reviewing Marjorie's case, we attempted to advise Marjorie so she could request a review but it became clear she would not be able to manage communication with Centrelink given her distress. We then agreed to contact Centrelink on Marjorie's behalf. After a number of interactions, Centrelink conceded that Marjorie was being underpaid, saying a computer glitch had caused the error. They agreed to refer her case to their IT department. A few weeks later, the glitch was remedied and Marjorie's entitlement was recalculated. That review resulted in Marjorie's DSP returning to almost the full rate, and she received almost \$16,000 in arrears.



## Case Study | Accessing Disability Support Pension

Tim lives in regional NSW, where he has very limited access to public transport. He suffers from a deteriorating physical disability and expects to be completely reliant on his wheelchair for mobility within 18 months. He is also suffering from poor mental health, compounded by his inability to access Disability Support Pension (DSP).

When Tim came to us in early 2022, he had applied for DSP three times. He was particularly frustrated because the first time he'd claimed DSP, Centrelink had discarded his medical evidence and did not return the original copies to him or scan them onto his electronic file. ALL his medical evidence had been lost.

Tim's first DSP claim was rejected. He decided to try again, albeit without as much evidence. When that second claim was rejected, he tried to kill himself.

Working with Disability Advocacy, we began to unravel the history of Tim's attempts to claim DSP. We requested a copy of his Centrelink file, working through through the paper trail to establish the reasons his claims had been rejected and learning that his earlier claims were at various stages of appeal. We began to develop a plan for the best course of action. We worked with Tim to help him replace as much of the lost evidence as possible, requesting new copies directly from his medical practitioners. When some couldn't be replaced, we supported him to obtain new evidence to support his claim.

Tim felt confident that he could represent himself at the Administrative Appeal Tribunal, arguing his appeal against his initial rejection. While preparing for that day, he learned that his most recent DSP claim was successful, and Centrelink had agreed to back pay all the way back to his initial claim in June 2021. Tim has decided to use the lion's share of those funds to pay for a wheelchair, adapted to seat him comfortably given his particular disability.



1671

People  
Helped

CASEWORK

1927

Information and legal  
advice about how to  
resolve a Centrelink issue

308

Collection of evidence and  
advocacy to Centrelink


29

Representation at the  
Administrative  
Appeals Tribunal

964

Referrals for  
additional support






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"A wonderful result and I'm literally crying with relief. I cannot thank you enough for your guidance and time. You have made such a difference to my life and that of my children."


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"I would like to express my sincerest thanks to you all for the great advice I was given as the Centrelink decision has been overturned. I hope that this new government sees fit to give you funding to help everyone that has been treated unjustly."

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"Just a note to thank you very much for your legal expertise and the assistance. As well as alleviating my anxiety, I was sufficiently informed to be able to proceed with the steps you outlined. I just wanted to express my gratitude and thank you very much."

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"With a hug, a thank-you and appreciation I hope you can win for more people like me."

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## Case study | \$10,000 debt waived at AAT

Leah first contacted us after learning she had a \$10,000 Centrelink debt, but it was impossible to get instructions because she was so confused and distressed. Fortunately, she gave us permission to get details from her support worker.

Leah's support worker explained that Leah had a long history of mental illness but she had been able to complete a number of TAFE courses. Unfortunately, during her most recent course, Leah's son had had a serious car accident and she had realised she wouldn't be able to keep up with her studies. After her son was released from hospital, Leah had negotiated with TAFE staff to extend the end date of her online course. She hadn't contacted Centrelink because she had no idea this could affect her eligibility for her Austudy.

The next thing Leah knew, Centrelink stopped her payment and raised a debt for the entire year of her enrolment. Leah had lost an internal Centrelink appeal but we were able to represent her at the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, arguing that Leah was eligible for Austudy for part of the year, and that given her special circumstances, the debt for the remainder of the period should be waived. Fortunately we were successful, and Leah's \$10,000 debt was waived in full.



Welfare Rights Centre

# WELFARE RIGHTS CENTRE

**Problem with Centrelink?  
WE CAN HELP**

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

We provide free legal advice and assistance with problems like:

- Appealing Centrelink decisions
- Debts
- Cancellations
- Claim rejections
- New residents & Centrelink
- Domestic violence & Centrelink
- Homelessness & Centrelink
- Other Centrelink matters

**Phone 02 9211 5300**



## Mid-North Coast Outreach

During 2021/22 we rolled out our Regional Access Program, a highlight of which was a series of in-person community legal education sessions on the Mid-North Coast. During March 2022, we held seven targeted workshops with individual agencies from the disability, domestic violence, employment services, and allied health services. These workshops included training about targeted areas of social security law, top tips on how they can help their clients deal with Centrelink issues, and how and when to refer clients to us. We also joined forces with Legal Aid's CLSD forums to deliver two large scale events in Coffs Harbour and Taree.

Our work on the Mid-North Coast was an opportunity to:

- upskill community workers to support their clients experiencing income security distress
- develop relationships with local community service providers, resulting in stronger links for referral
- provide casework assistance to individual clients living on the Mid-North Coast

Thanks for having us Mid-North Coast! And thank you to the Commonwealth Government Legal Assistance Bushfire Support Fund for supporting our outreach.



## "I feel more confident supporting people to navigate the social security system"

We increased the capacity of our community worker colleagues to assist their clients to spot Centrelink issues and work out what to do next. During 2021/22 we provided community legal education to more than 800 people during 30 information and training sessions for community organisations. We also provided tailored training to the NSW Trustee and Guardian.

Working through the COVID pandemic, most of our training was held over Zoom, with the occasional welcome opportunity to provide training face-to-face. These sessions routinely included opportunities to hear from workers about the kind of social security issues they see, and to answer questions specific to their practice. That helped us understand what was happening around NSW while also ensuring our training was tailored to their needs.

Training sessions were also an opportunity to profile our expertise, with our casework practice seeing a substantial increase in referrals from community workers during 2021/22. Importantly, many of those referrals were made within days of the worker attending a presentation, indicating the training helped the referring worker both identify a client's Centrelink issue and that there was something that could be done about it! Importantly, many of these referrals have resulted in positive outcomes for our shared clients.

We'd like to give a special thanks to the Ecstra Foundation who funded this valuable work.

**97%**

of respondents  
said they will be able to apply the knowledge they acquired during the training session in their workplace

**96%**

of respondents  
said the training materials were useful and will support them in their work

**90%**

of respondents  
said they felt more confident supporting their clients to navigate the social security system

# Communications

We maintained an active communications program to raise awareness of our work and further our core objectives during 2021/22. We shared our social security expertise with individual people struggling to navigate the system, while also shaping the dialogue about pressing social security issues. Central to our work was our genuine commitment to push for greater social justice while reflecting the integrity and diversity of people receiving Centrelink payments.



## Our website

Our website provided valuable information to people about their social security rights during a period of great upheaval. Accessed by more than 45,000 users, our COVID-19 information page was the most frequently visited (36,000 views), with our factsheets page the 2nd most frequently visited (7,000 views).



## Our social media

Our social media performed an important function, providing updates about pending and recent changes to Centrelink payments, Q&As answering common questions, and promotion of our community legal education program. Posting an average of 4 times/week on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter, we reached more than 60,000 people.



## Other communications channels

We got the word out through mainstream TV, radio and print media, providing copy and doing interviews. We engaged with stakeholders through regular updates to members of our Trade Union Program, and presented at large scale events including the Brotherhood of St Lawrence's 'Financial Lives in uncertain times' webinar series.



## SEEKING A FAIR AND ACCOUNTABLE SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM

In the past year, we have contributed to the development of social security law, policy and practice through our casework. As well as the many appeals at Centrelink's internal Authorised Review Officer level, we have run test cases in the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, completing twelve cases at the Social Services & Child Support Division and seven cases at the General Division of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. Each time we support our clients in their individual case, we call Centrelink to account.

We have continued to bring our client's experiences to public attention as we've highlighted injustices in the social security system and advocated for change. This includes our work describing gaps in a system that fails to adequately support victims/survivors of family and domestic violence, and current laws that exacerbate abuse against victims. We have also focussed our efforts on highlighting barriers to Disability Support Pension that leave many people with serious illness, injury or disability without access to an appropriate social security payment. Other priorities have included a push to make Compensation Preclusion Periods more responsive to the economic chaos caused by COVID, and the need for clarification that dependents of people who came to Australia as refugees are eligible for social security support.

We have continued our collaboration with Economic Justice Australia (EJA), the peak organisation for community legal centres providing specialist advice to people on their social security issues and rights.

Our work included conducting research, providing case studies, preparing submissions and advocating for change through the following reports and associated activities that have followed:

- Barriers to Disability Support Pension for people with psychiatric impairments
- Compensation Preclusion Periods and the Impact of COVID-19
- Debts, Duress and Dob-ins: Centrelink compliance processes and domestic violence (*see below*)

We also provided input to the:

- Inquiry into the purpose, intent and adequacy of the Disability Support Pension
- Senate Committee hearing into Centrelink's compliance program
- Inquiry into the application of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Australia

## Debts, Duress and Dob-ins: Centrelink and domestic violence

During 2021, we contributed to Economic Justice Australia's **Debts, Duress and Dob-ins** report outlining how Centrelink's compliance processes can exacerbate domestic violence. The report has taken on a life of its own, including invitations to present the report findings to senior DSS staff responsible for domestic violence-related policy, and to provide feedback on Services Australia's Operational Blueprint and prosecution investigation guidelines relevant to family and domestic violence. Key Members of Parliament have since expressed a willingness to consider legislative and policy reform.

### Our key asks

- Make it clear that family or domestic violence may be considered grounds for a decision that a person in a relationship should not be treated as a member of a couple for social security purposes. That may include where a person's abusive partner provides absolutely no financial support and the person is destitute.
- Ensure a false statement or misrepresentation made as a result of coercion or duress by a perpetrator does not preclude access to the debt waiver special circumstances provisions. That would prevent victims from being prosecuted where there is clear evidence their abusive spouse forced them to make certain statements.
- Ensure that access to debt waiver special circumstances provisions is not precluded by conduct that is not authorised by the debtor: for example, where a perpetrator lies to Centrelink (without their partner's knowledge or consent), affecting the victim's payment
- Remove the requirement that a person has or intends to establish a new home before being able to access Crisis Payment, which would allow victims in temporary accommodation (including a refuge) to access Crisis Payment
- Extend the claim time limit for Crisis Payment from 7 to 14 days, which would allow enough time for victim/survivors in distress to claim



## WORKING TOWARDS RECONCILIATION WITH ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE

Providing a culturally safe service to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people remained core business, as we continued to reflect on our relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to better inform our practice.

A priority this year has been the expansion of our website to include a dedicated section targeting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This has required:

- scoping and identification of priority social security issues
- development of accessible text for information pages and factsheets
- commissioning of effective artwork and design

We were fortunate to work with Gail Thorne, who provided invaluable assistance during the early stages of project development. We'd like to make special mention of Jasmine Sarin, who developed the artwork above as the central design element for the First Nations section of our new site. You can find more of Jasmine's amazing work at [www.jskooridesigns.com.au](http://www.jskooridesigns.com.au).

We've also been very fortunate to work with website designers, NGNY; a First Nations owned business, and can report that our website is well on its way.



We routinely reported on priorities contained in our Reconciliation Action Plan at every Board meeting, while rolling out new ways of doing business. That included advertising all vacant positions in First Nations targeted publications including the Koori Mail, National Indigenous Times, and ATSI Jobs. We redesigned our Welfare Rights Centre promotional brochure targeting First Nations people, with our brochure used on multiple occasions, including the Yabun Festival on 26 January 2022. We've regularly posted targeted content through our social media, exploring ways to improve our communications with First Nations peoples.

With Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people comprising almost 10% of our clients, we remained committed to amplifying the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our advocacy for a fairer social security system.

## Case study | Win at AAT1 for First Nations client

Simon, an Aboriginal man, was desperate to access Disability Support Pension as he was not able to work. He has struggled with mental health and substance abuse issues since the 1980s, with an extensive history of contact with Drug and Alcohol services, having undertaken rehab numerous times since the 1990s, and more than 20 medically supervised inpatient and outpatient detoxifications since 2007. Unfortunately he's had limited ongoing treatment of his mental health conditions, and had had no evidence of treatment for substance abuse or mental health over the last 4 years.

Simon was referred to us by a Financial Counsellor after his claim for Disability Support Pension was rejected. Due to the very short time frame, we were unable to represent him at his Administrative Appeals Tribunal hearing, however the AAT made the commendable decision to adjourn his hearing due to his obvious vulnerabilities and advised him to seek representation. Our DSP clinic staff agreed to take on Simon's case, hoping to win but also wanting to develop a relationship to ensure we could assist him if he needed to put in a new DSP claim.

Finding Simon's file to be lacking, the AAT also requested that Services Australia seek further evidence from various hospitals and other medical facilities and after some prompting, Services Australia produced 34 pages of documents. We approached the same institutions and were provided more than 800 pages of documents, 140 of which were submitted to the Tribunal as further supporting evidence.

We argued that although Simon had not had recent treatment, he had an extensive history of treatment over many decades and was still severely impacted by his history of substance abuse. The Tribunal considered Simon's medical history, finding his history of treatment for substance abuse issues could also be taken as treatment for mental health issues, and that it constituted evidence regarding his current conditions. The Tribunal overturned Centrelink's decision, granting DSP back to the date of his original claim!



## USING OUR ORGANISATIONAL STRENGTH TO DELIVER QUALITY SERVICES

Our staff are the backbone of our service, providing quality services underpinned by their expertise and committed to deliver on our social justice objectives. During 2021/22, we recruited two new members of staff, a Domestic Violence Community Worker and a First Nations Access Officer. We also ensured staff participated in training, workshops and other professional development opportunities, including attending CLCNSW's quarterly training events and Economic Justice Australia's National Conference.

Continued funding constraints have increased pressure on our casework service with the Centre revising our intake procedure to cope with this additional pressure. Despite our best efforts this has resulted in a reduced casework capacity; an issue we are seeking to remedy with some urgency.

We have continued to practice good governance, our Board meeting bi-monthly to provide oversight, with our Centre given full accreditation under the National Association of Community Legal Centre's National Accreditation Scheme.

We continued to rely on and support our generous volunteers. This included additional measures to allow service provision to continue during the disruptive 2nd COVID lockdown, supported by experienced volunteers working off-site. We have also hosted students on social workplaces, and students completing their Practical Legal Training.

# OUR BOARD

We rely on the expertise of our governing Board members who volunteer their time and expertise to set the overall strategic direction of the Centre, while also overseeing the Centre's long-term sustainability, performance and risk management.

We are fortunate to enjoy oversight by a dedicated team who bring insights drawn from their own expert practices, including many who have long-term personal or professional affiliations with the Centre. Thank you for your support during 2021/22.

Chair	Simon Rice
Deputy Chair	Clancy King
Secretary	Laura Lombardo
Treasurer	Andrew Howell
Director	Thomas Calma
Director	Sam Clay
Director	Rita Martin
Director	Ann Sloan
Director	Graeme Smith
Director	Scarlet Wilcock



# OUR STAFF

We have enjoyed the support of truly dedicated staff during 2021/22. Whether full-time, part-time or casual, all have been integral to our Centre's continued success.

Executive Director

Principal Solicitor

Senior Solicitor

Solicitor

Solicitor

Solicitor

Intake Officer

Intake Officer

Intake Assistant

Intake Assistant

CLE & Communications Officer

Domestic Violence Community Worker

First Nations Access Officer

Office Administrator

Katherine Boyle

Natalie Ross

Daniel Turner

Donna Flood

Julius Golab

Juliet Dimond

Jessica Duan

Kylie Fergusson

Utkarsh Chanana

Simran Gowan

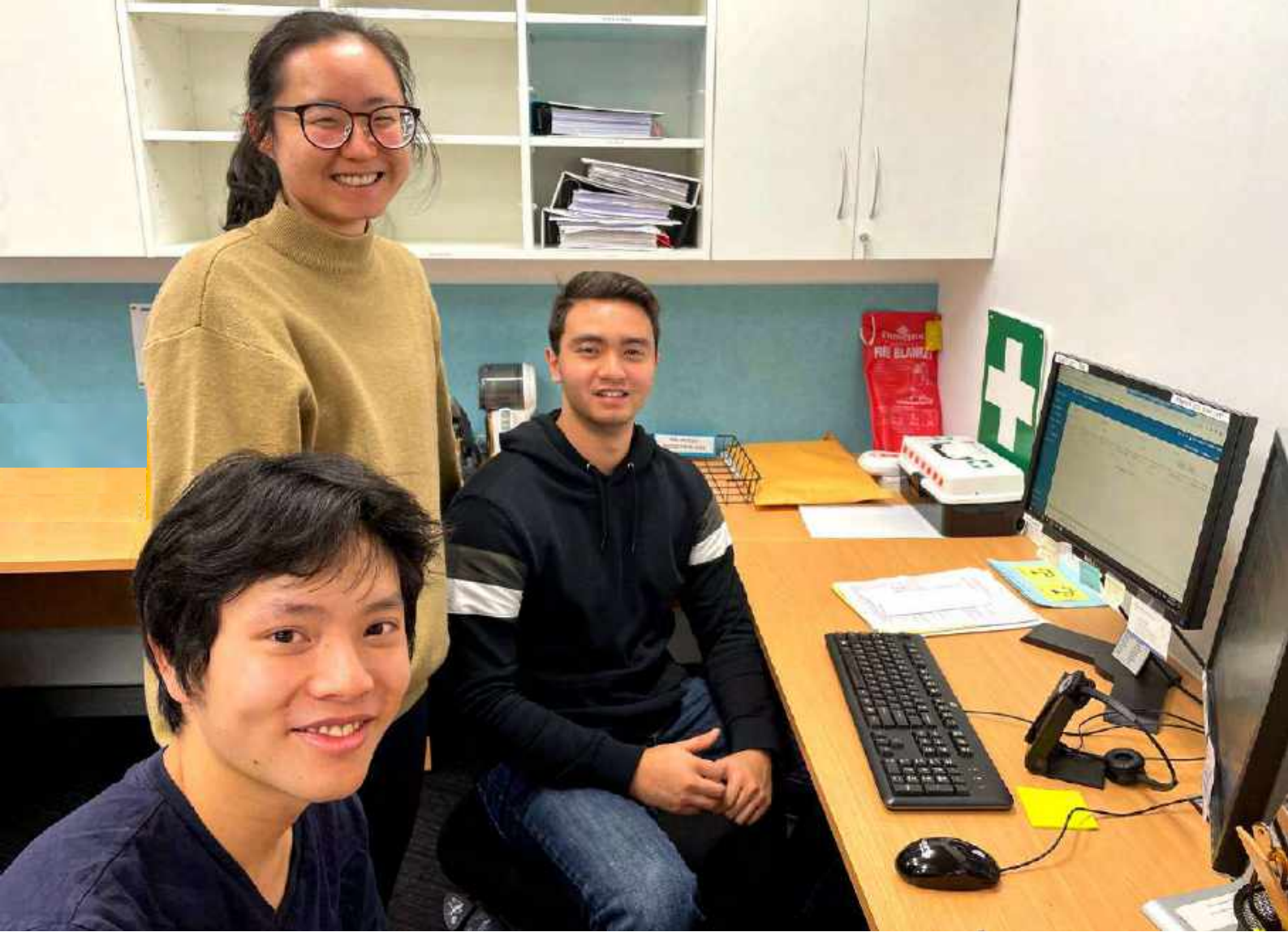
Sally Cameron

Roxanne Gonzalez Lopez

Lucy Doolan

Eric Chu





## OUR VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteers keep the doors open and the Centre running. Thank you all for your help during this very challenging time. We have appreciated your help enormously. Couldn't do it without you!

Ellen Cheung  
Lachlan Cicurel  
Maggie Crowe  
Cyrus Dadgostar  
Archit Dhillon  
Kylie Fergusson  
Edward Ford  
Ariana Haghighi  
Claudia Hayman  
Lavanya Kumar  
Adrian Lee  
Stella Li

Vivien Lu  
Emma McGee  
Maryam Nachabe  
Kyra Lee Shanyi  
Yubin Shaw  
Jacob Swidler  
Emily Theseira  
Jiewen Pang  
Dana Ubiparipovic  
Alex Wu  
Jacinda Yang  
Stella Zikos

# OUR PARTNERS

Welfare Rights Centre is a registered charity which relies on government, philanthropic, private and trade union support. We'd like to thank our partners for their invaluable support that ensures the continuation of our services.

## Government Partners

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NSW Government  
Commonwealth Government

## Non-government Partners

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Ecstra  
John T Reid Charitable Trusts  
John N. Kirby  
Hesta  
Sutherland Tradies

## Pro-Bono Partners

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Hall & Wilcox  
HWL Ebsworth Lawyers  
Thomson Cooper Lawyers

## Trade Union Program Partners

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Independent Education Union  
NSW Nurses & Midwives Association  
NSW Teachers Federation  
Police Association of NSW  
Public Service Association of NSW



# THANK YOU for your pro bono support!

## Hall and Wilcox

### Head of the Pro Bono

Nathan Kennedy

### Pro bono and Admin Support

Ruby Hunt & Nuhulan Ahmed

### Solicitors

Barbara Casado

Eloise Cotchett

Jade Dunn

Leonie Nadarajah

Samantha Santiago

Maryam Alkozai

Carl Newton

Katt Faapito

Gabby Mulry

Anthony Crowe

Charles Friocourt

Andrew Banks

Nelson Tang

Sonia Cheung

Amelia Hagley

Hugh Pearce

## HWL Ebsworth

### Head of Pro Bono

Karen Keogh

### Solicitors

Livija Berzins

Nadim Sara

Kiana Mawad

Alexander Wall

Elizabeth Bennett

Rhiannon Esau

Denise Katidis

Jack Townend

Katherine Huet

Patrick Thynne

## Thompson Cooper Lawyers

Michaela Shim

Brad Faul



# FINANCES

Funding during the 2021-22 financial year was received from a diverse range of sources. We received funding from State and Federal Governments, our trade union and superannuation partners, philanthropic trusts and foundations, as well as donations. We also received very generous in-kind support from our pro bono partners, helping make our work possible through the secondment of staff, volunteer engagement and donation of resources and facilities.

Our investment in fundraising and partnership with Wendy Brooks and Partners has been very successful. We have attracted significant philanthropic funding for our social security training program, a Domestic Violence Community Worker, and a First Nations Access Officer. However, both State and Federal Governments have, to date, continued to underinvest in specialist social security legal services, which has required us to draw down on our equity to fund our legal service, leading to a deficit of \$71,268 for the 2021-22 financial year. However, by the end of the financial year, we have maintained a healthy level of equity of \$297,697.

We will continue with our fundraising strategy, to advocate to State and Federal Governments to increase funding for specialist social security legal services, as well as seek new partnerships with philanthropic trusts and foundations.

You can find a copy of our Audited Financial Report on the [Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission website](#).





Welfare Rights Centre

