

Thousands of people contact us every year

-  1449 People helped
-  1880 Information and legal advices
-  245 Evidence collected and advocacy
-  16 Appeals
-  237 Referrals

“

Without Welfare Rights Centre I would have been in an extremely dire situation... without an income, with no money, still struggling to navigate my way through the maze otherwise known as Centrelink, and unable to pay for housing expenses, basic necessities, food, utilities and bills etc.

”

WRC client



We Help People with Centrelink

At Welfare Rights Centre, we focus on helping the most vulnerable members of our community - victims/survivors of family and domestic violence, people facing homelessness, those in need of the Disability Support Pension. Ensuring access to income support for First Nations people is a key priority.

Our casework team provides free legal advice and representation to people across NSW dealing with Centrelink issues. Many of our clients face challenges like health issues, housing instability, safety concerns and financial stress.

welfarerightscentre.org.au

We support the people most in need:

- 91% were financially disadvantaged
- 67% live with a disability
- 18% identified as Indigenous Australians
- 18% had a main language other than English

Of services we delivered:

- 31% were to those experiencing or at risk of homelessness
- 18% were to those experiencing or at risk of family and domestic violence



DISABILITY SUPPORT PENSION CLINIC

Our Disability Support Pension (DSP) Clinic assists people with serious illnesses, injuries, or disabilities to access DSP and appeal Centrelink's decision to reject claims. We guide clients in gathering essential medical evidence to re-submit claims or appeal decisions. We are grateful to Hall & Wilcox for their invaluable pro bono support through seconded solicitors, crucial to our clinic's success.

New Annual Program

DSP COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

The DSP Community of Practice (CoP), fosters collaboration among community workers to explore DSP claim processes, discuss real-world cases, and develop strategies with guidance from an expert social security solicitor.

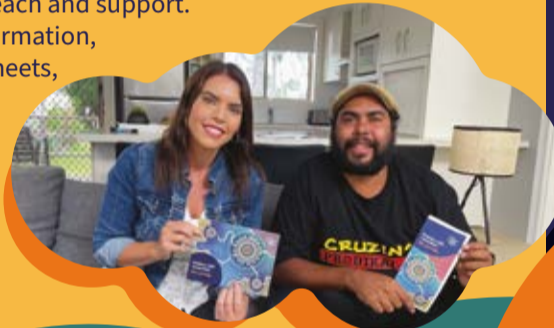
By enhancing the capacity and knowledge of services across NSW, the CoP empowers community workers to better support clients.



FIRST NATIONS ACCESS PROGRAM

Our First Nations Access Program increases access to legal information about Centrelink for First Nations people in a culturally safe way. We develop targeted social security content to help identify Centrelink issues and offer interactive workshops for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community workers. We collaborate with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to provide outreach and support.

For more information, see our factsheets, videos, and website.



FAMILY & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND CENTRELINK

We represent many people facing debt and lack of income support while fleeing or putting their lives back together following abusive relationships. Over 18% of our services are delivered to clients affected by family and domestic violence. We help relieve financial pressures caused by abuse, and tackle Centrelink issues often worsened by false reporting and 'dob-ins.' We continue this vital work with the support of The Walter and Eliza Hall Trust.



Debt Waived Due to Financial Abuse

Sumaira*, a single mother escaping domestic violence, received an \$8,500 Family Tax Benefit debt. Her abusive husband had controlled their finances, preventing Sumaira from accurately reporting his income to Centrelink. Welfare Rights Centre intervened, gathering evidence of the financial abuse and preparing an internal appeal. Thanks to our advocacy, Centrelink waived Sumaira's debt in full, acknowledging the effects of financial abuse. This case underscores the Centre's critical role in supporting vulnerable clients facing complex social security issues.

*Name has been changed

OUR ADVOCACY PRIORITIES

- 1 Making it easier to challenge Centrelink decisions
- 2 Pushing Centrelink to better inform people of their entitlements
- 3 First Nations justice: advocating for better access to Centrelink income support
- 4 Domestic and family violence: getting laws changed to help victim-survivors with Centrelink debts

COMMUNITY WORKER TRAINING

Our free online training program attracts thousands of community workers seeking guidance to support their clients with Centrelink issues and income support entitlements.

Our sessions target community workers across the social services sector including disability, family and domestic violence, carers, seniors, migrants, students and families.

We provide practical, face-to-face workshops that demonstrate how our services help both community workers and their clients navigate the complexities of Centrelink.

See our upcoming training sessions

We train over 2500 workers each year

“

The webinars produced by Welfare Rights Centre are some of the most informative and practical I have attended. I cannot rate this service highly enough

”

WE VALUE COLLABORATION MEET OUR PARTNERS

Welfare Rights Centre depends on government, philanthropic, corporate and trade union support. We are deeply grateful for all funding and pro bono support provided to maintain our centre and vital services.

Government Partners
NSW Government
Commonwealth Government

Non-government Partners
Alinta Energy
Ecstra Foundation
Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal
HESTA
John T Reid Charitable Trusts
James N Kirby Foundation
Mercy Foundation
The Walter and Eliza Hall Trust

Peak Organisations
Economic Justice Australia
Community Legal Centres Australia
Community Legal Centres NSW

Pro-Bono Partners
Gilbert + Tobin
Hall & Wilcox
HWL Ebsworth Lawyers
Thompson Cooper Lawyers

Trade Union Program Partners
Independent Education Union
NSW Nurses & Midwives Association
NSW Teachers Federation
Police Association of NSW
Public Service Association of NSW
National Tertiary and Education Union
Sutherland Tradies

VOLUNTEERS & BOARD

Our dedicated staff work alongside up to 85 volunteers each year, supervising pro bono lawyers in targeted clinics supporting our clients, as well law students answering calls. We rely on the enormous contribution made by all our volunteers, including our board members.

We are passionate about training and inspiring our volunteers. There are two volunteer intake sessions each year.

Join us!



Donate Now

GIFTS & DONATIONS

Every dollar we receive supports people in NSW who need legal help with Centrelink and who are often in crisis. To donate or leave a gift in your will please visit our website.

Welfare Rights Centre is a registered charity.

Problem with Centrelink?

We can help

- Access to Centrelink payments
- Cancelled payments
- Centrelink debts
- Appealing Centrelink decisions
- Family and domestic violence and Centrelink
- Homelessness and Centrelink
- Disability Support Pension
- Other Centrelink matters



Welfare Rights Centre is a not-for-profit Community Legal Centre that specialises in social security law and its administration.

We offer free legal advice and representation to NSW residents impacted by Centrelink decisions. We provide training and education to help community workers better understand social security law.

We are actively engaged in law reform, working alongside Economic Justice Australia to advocate for systemic improvements in social security policy and Centrelink services with a focus on preventing injustices like Robodebt from happening again.

We acknowledge and pay our respects to First Nations people as the traditional owners of the land, water and seas where we live and work.

Always was, Always will be

Need Advice?

Call us
02 9211 5300
1800 226 028 (toll-free outside Sydney)

— Or —

Lodge an online advice request
welfare-rights-centre.org.au

Visit Welfare
Rights Centre



Follow us



**Welfare
Rights
Centre**

Our vision is a fair, just, accessible and adequate social security system that provides all people with the resources they need to lead a life which is meaningful to them.

EST.1983