

ANNUAL REPORT



LAW ACCESS

LAWACCESS.ORG.AU

2024

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ABOUT LAW ACCESS

Law Access is a not-for-profit organisation that facilitates the giving of pro bono (free or low fee) legal assistance by the Western Australian legal profession to those who cannot afford a lawyer.

We are a service of last resort for those who cannot get legal assistance from Legal Aid WA, a community legal centre or other legal services. Law Access considers applications from not-for-profits and individuals in genuine need of legal assistance.

Genuine need is assessed by considering an applicant's financial circumstances, the merit in their case and whether resolving their issue may have a broader positive effect on vulnerable groups in the community.

Our Patron

The Hon Malcolm
McCusker
AC CVO KC

Our Current Board Members

Greg McIntyre SC,
Chair
Barrister, Michael Kirby
Chambers

Valerie French OAM,
Director

Clare Thompson SC,
Director (to July 2024)
Barrister, Francis Burt
Chambers

Adam Levine
Director
Partner, K & L Gates

Louise Giolitto
Director
CEO, WACOSS

Michelle Sims
Director
Coordinator - First Nations
Services, Legal Aid WA

Ante Golem
Director
Partner, Herbert Smith
Freehills

Lee Rossetto
Director
Partner, Minter Ellison

Prof. Sharon Mascher
Director (2024)
Dean and Head of
School, UWA

Thanks to retiring member in 2023:
Prof. Natalie Skead, former Dean, UWA Law School

CHAIR'S FOREWORD

The statistics and the report of the Chief Executive Officer set out in this Annual Report attest to the fact that Law Access has been a hive of activity in progressing and enhancing the performance of its role as a co-ordinator of the provision of pro bono legal services in Western Australia.

It has maintained its focus on attempting to bridge the gap between those who are eligible for legal aid and those who remain unable to afford the legal services they require. That includes a majority of cases related to civil disputes but covers a broad spread of disadvantaged groups, nearly half of whom are experiencing health or disability issues and over 30% are victims of family domestic violence.

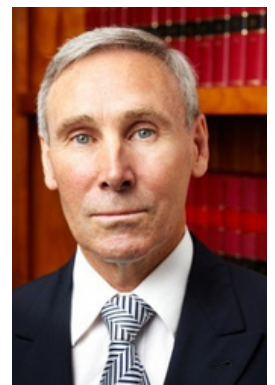
As the CEO reports, inventive approaches have been taken to enhancing the referral service of Law Access by developing a model for providing limited scope pro bono services in partnership with Community Legal Centres.

Law Access has also broadened its communication within our multicultural society by creating information videos in First Nations and other languages and sought to enhance the capacity of lawyers to provide pro bono services with resources on trauma informed practice and cultural competency.

Law Access has valued the important relationships it has had with those who throughout the year have continued to support the role it plays: the Department of Justice, the Law Society of WA, the University of Western Australia, those who have volunteered their time to provide legal services and those who have donated funds to maintain the service it provides.

The backbone of the work of Law Access is the enthusiasm and dedication of its staff and volunteers, led by the Chief Executive Officer, Alana Dowley, who sustain its important work.

Gregory McIntyre SC
Chair



LAW ACCESS STATISTICS



756

Applications for pro bono assistance



151

Matters referred to lawyers



11

Matters unable to be referred



7223*

Estimated total pro bono hours



\$2.47m*

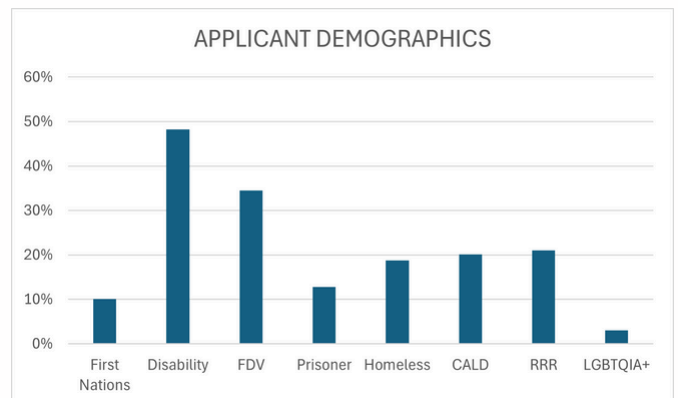
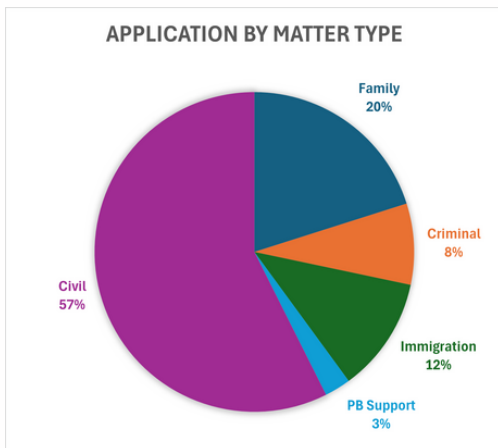
Estimated value of pro bono (\$)

* Estimates are based on the pro bono lawyer survey results extrapolated to the number of matters referred.

Applications Received in FY2024

Law Access received the following applications by matter type:

- 57% Civil
- 20% Family
- 8% Criminal
- 12% Immigration
- 3% Pro Bono Support



Law Access assisted individuals in genuine need of legal assistance with experience of the following categories of disadvantage:

- 10% First Nations
- 48% Disability/Mental Health/Serious Health issue
- 35% Experiencing/experienced FDV
- 13% Prison/Detention
- 19% Homeless/ At risk of homelessness
- 20% CALD (Culturally and linguistically diverse)
- 21% RRR (Regional, rural and remote)
- 3% LGBTQIA+

I felt so out of my depth with my situation, but the lawyers were able to do an honest assessment of my case and help me act to find a solution to the problem. Thank you so much.

I was in a situation I'd never experienced before & this in turn brought feelings of confusion, anxiety etc however my lawyer had been a shining light at the end of a very dark tunnel. His knowledge and skills have been exceptional to help me better understand and feel at ease.

REPORT FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Enhancing Our Services

Law Access continues to look for ways to increase the efficacy of the pro bono contribution in addressing legal assistance needs in Western Australia. We do this through working closely with pro bono lawyers and the legal assistance sector.

Family Law Project

Property Steps (the Family Law Project) progressed in partnership with CLC partners, funded by a grant administered by Perpetual Impact Philanthropy. Resources were created for CLCs, applicants and pro bono lawyers to facilitate the roll-out of the service model.

The model defined bundled (limited scope) services that can be referred to pro bono lawyers with the applicant receiving on-going support from CLCs. Assessment of the outcomes of the pilot and expansion of the service model to our Family Law referrals will occur later in 2024.



Information videos

This year Law Access produced our informational videos for applicants in other languages - now available in Kriol (Kimberley region), three Indigenous languages from Pilbara / Goldfields, as well as Vietnamese and Persian / Farsi. Thanks to all our translators.



We also enhanced our website with audio instructions to guide those who have difficulty reading through our online webforms.

Working in Partnership

Law Access continues to participate in the Department of Justice working groups towards the implementation of a new Legal Assistance Strategy for WA.

The Law Society continues to support Law Access and pro bono lawyers in many ways and to advocate on important issues through its Access to Justice Committee .

The University of Western Australia continues to provide much valued in-kind support to Law Access and work closely with us on student opportunities.

Law Access thanks the members of our Stakeholder Advisory Committee, led by Chair Jennie Gray from Women's Legal Service.

Building Organisational Capacity

Pro Bono Lawyers' Portal Resources



Enhancing resources on trauma-informed practice, we released a video on Referrals to Support Services.

We then published resources for pro bono lawyers in cultural competence including First Nations and CALD peoples. Links to free and low-cost resources are provided and free access to See-You-See-Me training has been secured.

Disbursement Fund

Law Access approved seven applications to the Disbursement Fund, with just over \$2,190 being distributed to cover the costs of interpreters, translation, medical reports and a title search. This support allows applicants and pro bono lawyers to fund necessary expenses of legal matters.

Ensuring Our Sustainability

Reward and recognition

We sincerely thank all our staff for their commitment to Law Access. Thanks also to the many secondees and students who make a significant contribution to our work every year.

Law Access is grateful to the Western Australian Government and the Public Purpose Trust for their commitment to funding certainty to FY2025 and to The Law Society for their ongoing support.

Each year we thank our pro bono lawyers and other supporters with Certificates of Appreciation. Our annual Thank you Drinks event, was again generously hosted by MinterEllison in 2023.

Special thanks to Tom Lettenmaier, our Pro Bono Lawyer of the Year for 2023 (presented at The Law Society Gala).



2024 Walk for Justice

We held the most successful Walk for Justice yet, with 948 registered participants. We enjoyed a beautiful Perth day and much comradery.

Many thanks to:

- the McCusker Charitable Foundation,
- our Gold Sponsor (The College of Law),
- our corporate sponsors (MinterEllison and Piper Alderman),
- all the university sponsors, and
- prize sponsors, participants and donors.

We raised over \$186,000 for Law Access, funds which are vital for our sustainability.



Cultural Competence



Cultural Competence was a large focus for Law Access in FY2024. We commenced with a CC Action Plan setting out the process of internal review and then worked towards the launch of our initial First Nations Action Plan and CALD Strategy.

Actions undertaken included:

- establishing relationships with First Nations and CALD stakeholders;
- accessibility work on our applicant processes and procedures;
- translation of informational videos into other languages;
- training for Law Access staff;
- acquiring and promoting training and resources for pro bono lawyers; and
- promoting cultural awareness and participation in our community of practice.

Alana Dowley
Chief Executive Officer

FINANCIAL REPORT

Statement of Profit and Loss

For the year ended 30 June 2024

	Notes	2024 \$	2023 \$
Revenue	3	921,777	829,358
Employee expenses		(651,224)	(622,863)
Depreciation expenses		(5,242)	(6,620)
Fundraising expenses		(11,780)	(12,049)
Other expenses		(88,113)	(76,969)
Surplus for the year		165,418	110,856

3 Revenue

	2024 \$	2023 \$
Revenue		
<u>Government grants</u>		
Department of Justice - WA Probono Model grant	153,015	151,500
Department of Justice - Law Access grant	102,010	101,000
ATO Jobkeeper grant	-	-
ATO COVID-19 cashflow boost	-	-
<u>Other revenue</u>		
Public Purposes Trust Fund grant	270,000	270,000
Other Grant	27,648	77,363
Sponsorship	18,000	18,000
Donations	236,627	207,606
General Income	107,330	1,618
Interest on investments	7,147	2,271
Total Revenue	921,777	829,358

Statement of Changes in Equity

For the year ended 30 June 2024

	Accumulated Surplus \$	Total equity \$
Balance as at 30 June 2022	276,654	276,654
Surplus for the year	110,856	110,856
Balance as at 30 June 2023	387,510	387,510
Surplus for the year	165,418	165,418
Balance as at 30 June 2024	552,928	552,928

Law Access accounts were audited by Ledger Accounting

THANK YOU

Pro Bono Lawyers

We thank all the pro bono lawyers and legal assistance service providers who took referrals from Law Access. We are grateful to members of our Pro Bono Coordinators' Committee who helped to guide and support our work.

Law Firm Secondees

Many thanks to the law firm secondees who worked with our staff this year.

- Corrs Chambers Westgarth
- Johnson Winter Slattery
- Jackson McDonald
- HWL Ebsworth
- Sparke Helmore Lawyers
- Squire Patton Boggs
- Clayton Utz
- MinterEllison

Volunteers and Interns

Thanks to our interns, legal and admin volunteers, students from Edith Cowan University Business and Law School, School of Law Notre Dame University, University of Western Australia Law School, and The McCusker Centre for Citizenship.

Stakeholder Advisory Committee Members

Thank you to the members of our Law Access Stakeholder Advisory Committee for guiding and supporting our work.

In Kind Supporters

Compu-Stor
FilePro

Funders



Public Purposes  Trust

Principal Supporters



Major Donors

**McCusker
Charitable
Foundation**



Thank You Drinks Sponsor MinterEllison

Donors

We thank all those who donated to the Law Access Walk for Justice, individuals who donated via the Law Access website, and CPD presenters who elected that The Law Society of Western Australia make a donation to Law Access on their behalf.

THANK YOU

Walk for Justice Sponsors

Principal Supporter

**McCusker
Charitable
Foundation**

Gold Sponsor



MinterEllison



PiperAlderman

Corporate Sponsors

University Sponsors



School of
Business & Law



Our Vision

Equal Access to Justice

Our Purpose

To relieve disadvantage through pro bono legal assistance

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