

2022

# Directors' Report

and Financial Summary

# Directors' Report

**30 June 2022**

The Directors present their report on Women's Legal Service Victoria Inc. for the financial year ended 30 June 2022.

## Information on Directors

The Directors of the organisation during the current FY to the date of this report are:

Jane Welsh	<b>Chair</b> ( <i>Member since April 2019</i> )
Trish Low	<b>Deputy Chair &amp; Secretary</b> ( <i>Member since April 2019</i> )
Kathryn Brown	<b>Treasurer</b> ( <i>Member since September 2020</i> )
Monique Adofaci	<b>Member</b> ( <i>since October 2018</i> )
Tina Lavranos	<b>Member</b> ( <i>since April 2015</i> )
Leonie Mayson	<b>Member</b> ( <i>since April 2019</i> )
Mia Lloyd	<b>Member</b> ( <i>since July 2020</i> )
Adrienne Walters	<b>Member</b> ( <i>since October 2020</i> )

Directors have been in office since the start of the financial year to the date of this report unless otherwise stated.

## Why we exist

**We exist to help build a gender equitable society.**

Our unique contribution to this vision, as lawyers, advocates and educators, is to work alongside women experiencing disadvantage to promote their rights to live free from violence and make informed choices about their relationships.

## How principal activities assisted in achieving the objectives

### 1: We provide legal advice and representation to women experiencing disadvantage.

Our unique cross-jurisdictional approach – where women are helped across three intersecting legal jurisdictions (Family Law, Family Violence & Child Protection) – has been crucial in giving clients the chance to create a better future this year. In addition, our integrated financial counsellors and social workers help women address other issues that arise due to violence, such as debt, homelessness and poor mental health that can rise from family violence.

As in previous years, the demand for our services has grown beyond our current capacity to meet this need. Our service data this year (21/22 FY) demonstrates that:

- **27% of our statewide services** were provided to women in **regional and outer metro regions of Victoria.**

- **25% of our clients** are provided with ongoing complex casework services. This is a **9% increase** from last year.
- **25% increase in our integrated social work and financial counselling services** in comparison to last year.
- **Over 45%** of our family law and family violence casework applications **have been turned away due to lack of capacity or appropriateness** for our services.

### We serviced 41 regional Local Government Authorities across the state, assisting 425 women in regional Victoria.

Recent surveys of our clients revealed that more than 84% answered 'very much' or 'mostly' when asked if they felt listened to and understood when accessing our service and if we helped them make informed decisions.

Women accessing our services are experiencing disadvantage at a greater rate than the Victorian population, as demonstrated by this service data snapshot:

Service type	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse	Financial disadvantage	Disability	Homelessness (& at risk)
	21-22	21-22	21-22	21-22	21-22
Link, Link Community (DVU) programs and our intake/triage process	3%	35%	73%	21%	17%
Melbourne Magistrates Court Duty lawyer	3%	33%	52%	18%	7%
Moorabbin Children's Court Duty Lawyer	5%	16%	86%	21%	42%
Early Resolution Service	1%	27%	32%	7%	2%
Family Law and Family Violence Law Casework	9%	43%	94%	30%	25%
Child Protection Casework	5%	19%	94%	20%	43%
VOCAT Casework	4%	50%	77%	15%	27%
<b>ALL SERVICES</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>15%</b>
Victorian population*	<b>1%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>0.40%</b>

\*NOTE: 2021 ABS census data, 2018 ABS Disability, ageing and carers data and 2018 VCOSS mapping poverty data;

### 2: We advocate for laws and policies that respect and promote the rights of women.

Our advocacy efforts this year to contribute to positive systemic change included:

- › We saw the ATO superannuation information sharing bill (reflecting WLSV's recommendations and advocacy) being passed through both Houses of Parliament in September 2021, and in April 2022, the family courts implemented the bill.
- › We successfully engaged and advocated to increase public opposition to The Strengthening the Character Test Bill 2021. Due to overwhelming community opposition the bill was not tabled for debate.
- › We jointly advocated and influenced the design of the Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS) investigation on whether the pre-conditions for introduction of police-issued orders had not been adequately met, and agreed that police issued family violence intervention orders (FVIOs) should not be pursued at this time.
- › We contributed to reviews done by the Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor around (a) The accurate identification of the primary aggressor, and (b) Family violence reform governance. We also advocated the benefits of subject matter experts leading reform implementation while remaining accountable to government.
- › Our continued advocacy around the reforms of the Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal (VOCAT), saw State Government introducing laws that will stop perpetrators of family violence and sexual assault from attending, or being notified of, VOCAT hearings.

We also continued to drive change through our innovative prevention project, Starts With Us, which aims to support Victorian legal and justice organisations to take action to prevent violence against women. This ambitious project has secured widespread support from Victoria's legal institutions, who are committed to tackling the outdated, sexist and harmful structures and behaviours that allow the perpetuation of gender inequality and, therefore, violence against women.

### 3: We build the capacity of other professionals and the community to identify and respond appropriately to legal need.

Our Education and Engagement team has trained 1594 professionals and community members this year – from youth workers to financial counsellors – to identify when a woman experiencing violence has legal issues and refer them for help.

Surveys from our Safer Families training revealed that 100% of participants that completed training survey reported improved ability to identify and work to overcome barriers to justice experienced by disadvantaged population groups and improved ability to identify family violence risk factors.

Surveys from our Safer Families working with police training revealed that 84% of participants felt the training improved knowledge and skills to advocate for clients who have been incorrectly identified as the perpetrator of family violence and improved knowledge and skills of strategies for best practice when working with police.

Surveys from our Women and Law, Child protection training revealed that 100% of participants reported improved ability to identify child protection legal issues.

## General information

### Members' guarantee

Women's Legal Service Victoria Inc. is a company limited by guarantee. In the event of, and for the purpose of, winding up of the company, the amount capable of being called up from each member and any person or association who ceased to be a member in the year prior to the winding up, is limited to \$NIL for members that are corporations and \$NIL for all other members, subject to the provisions of the company's constitution.

At 30 June 2022 the collective liability of members was \$ NIL (2021: \$ NIL).

### Operating results

During the current year Women's Legal Service Victoria reported a surplus of \$347,979 (2021: \$ 459,316).

## Other items

### Meetings of Directors

The number of meetings of the company's Board of Directors and each board committee held during the year ended 30th June 2022, and the number of meetings attended by each director were:

Women's Legal Service Victoria - Director	Board Meetings		Audit and Risk Sub-committee		Human Resources Committee		Financial Sustainability Committee	
	Attended	Eligible to Attend	Attended	Eligible to Attend	Attended	Eligible to Attend	Attended	Eligible to Attend
Tina Lavranos	5	6	0	0	2	3	0	0
Trish Low	5	6	0	0	3	3	0	0
Kathryn Brown	6	6	3	3	0	0	0	0
Monique Adofaci	6	6	3	3	0	0	0	0
Jane Welsh	4	6	3	3	0	0	2	2
Leonie Mayson	6	6	0	0	3	3	1	2
Mia Lloyd	4	6	0	0	0	0	2	2
Adrienne Walters	5	6	0	0	0	0	0	0

# Financial Summary

Our full financial statement can be found on our website at [www.womenslegal.org.au](http://www.womenslegal.org.au)

## Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

For the Year Ended 30 June 2022

	2022	2021
	\$	\$
<b>Income</b>		
Grant Income - Operating Funding Commonwealth	1,447,128	1,745,997
Grant Income - Operating Funding State	517,595	490,249
Grant Income - Community Legal Services Program funding	2,505,768	1,316,089
Grant Income - Project Funding Other	1,605,899	1,194,386
Legal education	87,950	23,915
Legal services	2,128	15,780
Philanthropic donations	40,696	35,330
Other income	68,058	108,342
Recoupment from Family Law Legal Service (FLLS)	-	418,199
Finance income	19,930	30,615
	<b>6,295,152</b>	<b>5,378,902</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Employee benefits expense	(5,113,983)	(3,910,411)
Depreciation and amortisation expense		
PPE - Depreciation	(46,137)	(46,990)
Occupancy expenses	(210,139)	(198,745)
FLLS costs	-	(280,488)
Other expenses	(576,914)	(482,952)
	<b>(5,947,173)</b>	<b>(4,919,586)</b>
	<b>347,979</b>	<b>459,316</b>
<b>Surplus for the year</b>		
Other comprehensive income, net of income tax	-	-
<b>Total comprehensive surplus for the year</b>	<b>347,979</b>	<b>459,316</b>

## Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2022

	2022	2021
	\$	\$
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	8,429,327	4,743,209
Trade and other receivables	263,137	251,672
Other assets	28,965	6,698
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>8,721,429</b>	<b>5,001,579</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Property, plant and equipment	111,318	121,850
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>111,318</b>	<b>121,850</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>8,832,747</b>	<b>5,123,429</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Trade and other payables	623,234	498,500
Employee benefits	549,484	472,950
Deferred income	4,979,430	1,827,456
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>6,152,148</b>	<b>2,798,906</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Employee benefits	106,958	88,061
Long-term provisions	117,283	128,083
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>224,241</b>	<b>216,144</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>6,376,389</b>	<b>3,015,050</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>2,456,358</b>	<b>2,108,379</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Capital Replacement Reserve	100,000	90,000
Retained Surplus	2,356,358	2,018,379
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>2,456,358</b>	<b>2,108,379</b>

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