

IMPACT  
REPORT  
2020



women's legal  
service victoria

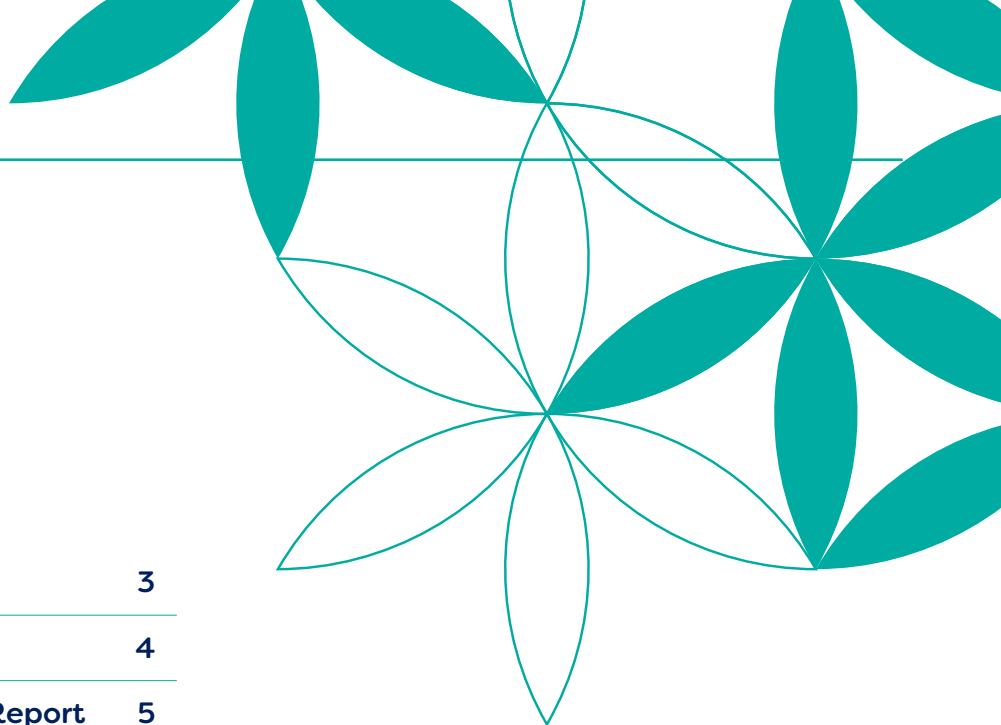


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# About Us

## We exist to help build a gender equitable country

Our unique contribution to this vision is to work alongside women to promote their rights to live free from violence and make informed choices about their relationships

## We do this by:

- > Providing legal advice and representation to women experiencing disadvantage.
- > Advocating for laws and policies that respect and promote the rights of women.
- > Delivering professional development, community development and prevention of violence against women programs.

# The Facts



On average, **one woman a week** in Australia **is killed** by her intimate partner



**Family violence** is the single biggest cause of **homelessness** in Victoria

Women who have experienced **family violence** are

**10x**

**more likely** to have legal problems



# Our Year



More than **2550 women** benefited from our **free legal help**



More than **40 women** received financial counselling support as well as legal help



More than **100 women** received social work support as well as legal help



**90%** of child protection clients were **experiencing financial hardship**



**75%** of people rated our legal education sessions **highly**

**1/3** of our clients were from **CALD communities**



**12%** of our clients were **homeless or at risk of homelessness**



# Chair & Chief Executive Officer's Report

This year has been a challenging one for so many people, but especially for women experiencing violence. With Victoria in lockdown due to COVID-19 for much of 2020, Women's Legal moved swiftly to ensure all our vital legal and support services were available to women in a remote or virtual format. We also quickly moved our award-winning legal education programs to online platforms.

Our advocacy has remained strong during this period, and we were happy to see two new funding streams become available and a third stream secured for the future. These will help us to continue to grow our service to respond to the legal needs of women experiencing disadvantage. However, with many more women expected to need family violence legal help in the months and years ahead, we believe more investment in the sector is essential.

## Highlights of 2019/2020 included:

- › **The launch of three new family law pilots that we advocated for (see p.8)**
- › **Securing commitments from key stakeholders to prioritise legal assistance as an integral part of the family violence response - through policy change and new funding (see p.8)**
- › **Our rapid and effective response to COVID-19 - both as a service provider (see p.12) and as an advocacy organisation (see p.9)**

## INCREASING ACCESS TO FAMILY VIOLENCE LEGAL ASSISTANCE

Last year, we wrote about the urgent need for investment in family violence legal assistance. This included:

- › Investment in education for community support workers, especially family violence workers, so they could identify women's legal needs and make appropriate referrals.
- › Investment in 'wrap-around' legal help so women experiencing disadvantage could be supported to address their broader welfare and financial issues, as well as their legal issues.
- › Investment that could begin to reflect the critical role of legal assistance in the overall family violence response.

This year, we have seen progress in all of these areas, with our advocacy playing a significant part in achieving these milestones.

### Support for our legal needs training

We have been funded by Family Safety Victoria to deliver 12 months of training for family violence practitioners to help them identify when their clients need legal assistance. Our training provides practitioners with crucial legal information and a toolkit for connecting women to lawyers for expert advice.

### Funding certainty for wrap-around legal assistance

We now have recurrent Federal funding for our Domestic Violence Unit, known as Link Community. Since April 2018, Link Community has partnered with local health and family violence services to provide accessible 'wrap-around' legal services to women facing significant barriers to justice. This program has had a real impact - helping victim-survivors of family violence who would struggle to access specialist family law assistance in the Grampians region, Gippsland (including East Gippsland)

“

*Forever my family are humbly appreciative of everyone's efforts at Women's Legal Service. BRAVO and once again THANKYOU*

Women's Legal client

”

and two outer metropolitan areas. Initially funded for 18 months and later extended by a further 12 months, we are pleased to now have the funding certainty to be able to fully embed and then expand the service.

### Recognition that legal assistance is critical

New legal assistance funding was provided to the sector in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, with a focus on responding to family violence related legal issues in the family law context. This is core business for Women's Legal, and the funding we secured will increase our legal assistance capacity by more than 10% for the next two years.

This year also saw the Victorian Government commit to a three-year program of work to improve access to legal assistance for people experiencing or using family violence. This will be reflected in the second rolling action plan (2020-2023) under Victoria's 10-year family violence response. However, it is not yet clear whether further funding will be available through the action plan.

### Further investment needed

While the new funding this year is welcome, much more is needed to meet the legal needs of victim-survivors of family violence. Currently, even women with additional barriers to accessing justice (including disability, homelessness and limited English) miss out on the family violence legal assistance they need.

## 45%

of clients found it **more difficult** to access standard legal and justice supports during **COVID-19**



This legal assistance can avert women being injured or killed, can avert longer-term social, financial and health issues and can avert the flow-on costs to a range of publicly funded services.

Due to insufficient resources, women's legal services around the country currently have to turn away 40% of the women who come to us for help. With expert assistance from a leading economist, we recently estimated that women's legal services need an extra \$25 million a year nationally just to meet this immediate demand.

Not a high price to pay, we think.



**Tina Lavranos**  
Chair



**Joanna Fletcher**  
Chief Executive Officer

## Lisa's Story

*A woman at risk of losing quality time with her children gets her life back on track*



### Issues

We first met Lisa through our duty lawyer service at the family courts. Her former partner, Steven, had applied for parenting orders, including an order for Lisa to have no time at all with her three children. The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) had previously placed the children with Steven and later supported his family law application because Lisa had a drug dependency. This was despite the fact that Steven had been violent and manipulative during the relationship. We took on Lisa's matter and were able to present an alternative view. Steven was persuaded that "no time" was unreasonable and he proposed that Lisa have limited supervised time with her children at a contact centre. Getting a place at a contact centre can involve a six-month wait.

### Resolution

Women's Legal activated its wrap-around legal and social work support to give Lisa the help she needed to get her life back on track. She was referred for drug and alcohol counselling, as well as regular psychologist appointments, and she agreed to live with her parents to facilitate seeing her children more regularly. With the children's grandparents now able to supervise visits, our lawyer successfully argued that Lisa spend time with her children at home. Lisa has now been drug-free for two years, and the children spend time with her unsupervised at her parents' place five nights every fortnight. Her next goal is finding her own place to live and moving towards the children living with her 50 percent of the time.

*\* Name and image changed to protect our client's identity*



# Change

## Decision makers change laws and policies to promote women's rights

### Improving safety and economic wellbeing in the family law system

Financially disadvantaged women experiencing relationship breakdown and family violence will benefit from three new pilot programs which began in the family law system this year. The pilots were introduced as a result of our successful advocacy with government and the courts as part of our Small Claims, Large Battles campaign.

The first two pilots - a small claims pilot and a small claims mediation pilot - will make the family law system easier to navigate so that financially disadvantaged women can achieve fairer outcomes for small property claims after separating from their partner.

The third pilot will improve safety for women and children navigating the family law courts. In December 2019, in response to our call for a safer family law system, the Federal Government announced that \$13.5 million was being allocated to pilot a three-year risk-screening process and a specialist family violence list. We are hopeful these pilots will be a success and can be rolled out across the country.

### Simplifying the superannuation splitting system in Australia

When couples separate, superannuation is one of the assets they can split as part of a property settlement. However, the process for splitting superannuation is too complex and costly, particularly for women on low incomes.

To tackle this problem, Women's Legal has brought together a powerful coalition of industry, government, legal and pro bono partners to work on reforms to superannuation splitting. We have built consensus around the changes that need to be made which will allow women to financially recover from relationship breakdown and improve their retirement outcomes.

Women who have experienced family violence are **16x more likely** to have family law issues



### Prioritising legal assistance in the family violence response

The Victorian Government has committed to prioritising work, over the next three years, to improve access to legal assistance for people experiencing or using family violence. This will be reflected in the second rolling action plan (2020-2023) under Victoria's 10-year plan for change.

Our voice was a significant one in achieving this outcome.

We advocated throughout 2019/2020 for government to recognise and fund legal services as a critical element of the family violence response. Meeting with senior public servants, members of parliament, ministers and their advisors, we emphasised the role of legal assistance in supporting women's survival and recovery from violence.

Family violence victims are 10 times more likely to have legal problems - and 16 times more likely to have family law problems - than other community members. If not addressed, these problems can lead to immediate safety risks and longer-term adverse impacts for victim-survivors. This in turn contributes to significant downstream costs to other publicly funded services (such as health, housing and financial support).

### Boosting COVID-19 legal assistance funding

The COVID-19 pandemic, and the restrictions imposed, increased women's risk of family violence, at the same time making it harder for them to reach out for assistance. As we describe in the Free from Violence section of this report (see p.12), we rapidly adapted our services to reach more women. We also advocated successfully with both state and federal governments for new legal assistance funding, made available during the pandemic, to be targeted towards responding to family violence related legal issues in the family law context. This area had been largely overlooked in previous funding arrangements, despite over 70% of family law cases involving family violence.

# Women's Rights

## *Institutions, service providers and the courts respond appropriately to women experiencing violence and respect their rights*

### Identifying critical legal issues for women experiencing violence

Women experiencing violence can have a range of legal issues that they may not be aware of. Our award-winning Critical Legal Issues Map (CLIM) training takes complex legal concepts and processes and breaks them down into step-by-step guidelines that family violence practitioners can follow when working with women fleeing violence. This year, we received funding from the Centre for Workforce Excellence at Family Safety Victoria to deliver CLIM training to family violence practitioners across the state. This training helps practitioners identify when their clients might have legal issues, so that they can provide them with critical legal information and connect them to lawyers for expert advice. We believe this will result in safer outcomes for women and their children.

### Adapting our education programs for COVID-19

With the COVID-19 pandemic impacting our ability to provide training face-to-face, we moved swiftly to adapt our suite of training programs to an accessible online format. In May, we delivered a webinar to 300 community support workers on the best ways to connect clients to lawyers during the lockdown restrictions, as we had identified that many women were not getting the legal support they needed. Many more of our training programs are being moved online to ensure practitioners working on the frontline of the family violence response can continue their learning no matter the situation.

### Training financial counsellors and tenancy workers to improve family violence response

This year, we trained almost 50 financial counsellors in best-practice family violence response, in partnership with WIRE Women's Information, and with funding and support from Consumer Affairs Victoria. The program

provides family violence training for all financial counsellors in Victoria, as well as an annual 'Masterclass' on complex cases and a 'Leaders Class' to support senior and specialist financial counsellors who are leading their sector's family violence response.

We also developed and delivered training for almost 90 financial counsellors and tenancy workers on two new State Government frameworks directed at improving women's safety. The aim of these frameworks is to ensure that family violence risk is assessed and managed and vital information is made available to all relevant practitioners. This training is also funded and supported by Consumer Affairs Victoria.

### Ensuring women have access to legal help during COVID-19

Women's Legal was in a unique position to give voice to the needs of women impacted by family violence during the COVID-19 pandemic. Working with women, recording their experiences and our lawyers' observations, we quickly assembled data which informed our advocacy with courts, police, government and other agencies.

Women's Legal took a leading role in ensuring women facing family violence and the effects of the pandemic had access to legal representation. We shared our expertise and client stories with the Chief Justice of the family law courts, the Magistrates' Court of Victoria, Victoria Legal Aid and the wider legal assistance sector. This advocacy continues to ensure the courts recognise and address the barriers to women's access to justice during the pandemic.

We trained almost **50 financial counsellors** in best-practice family violence response



A photograph of a woman with dark hair and a bindi, smiling warmly. A young child with dark hair, wearing a yellow shirt, is sitting on her shoulders. The woman is wearing a blue top. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with greenery. In the top right corner, there is a decorative graphic of overlapping white circles and lines.

## Anna's story

*With our help, a woman ensures her child is protected from her abusive ex-husband*

### Issues

We first met Anna after she had arrived back in Australia following a traumatic ordeal rescuing her Australian-born child from a foreign country. Although she was now safely home, Anna was keen to get sole parental responsibility for her child after enduring several years of threats, manipulation and violence at the hands of her ex-husband and his family. This included being effectively held captive in her ex-husband's birth country and having her ex-husband and his family try to forcibly take the child from her.

*\* Name and image changed to protect our client's identity*

### Resolution

To help Anna and her child live safely and securely in Australia, we issued family law proceedings that aimed to ensure her ex-husband could never track them down again. We successfully argued that Anna have sole parental responsibility, that the child live with her exclusively, and that Anna's ex-husband have no contact with the child. As an extra precaution, we took the exceptional step of applying to have the father's name removed from the child's birth certificate. We engaged with Births, Deaths and Marriages, drafted new orders for this exceptional situation and notified the father of Anna's intentions. At the uncontested final hearing, the judge decided in Anna's favour on all counts, including the birth certificate change – an important step that will allow her to confidently move on with her life.



## Rochelle's story

*A vulnerable woman embraces her future with wrap-around support from us*

### Issues

Rochelle met her Australian husband, Bruce, when he was holidaying in her home country. They married and had a child, but separated when the child was young. Although Bruce was controlling and intimidating, Rochelle felt indebted to and dependent on him, and was reluctant to disagree with him. With limited English, no job and no support network in Australia, she was in a vulnerable position. We met Rochelle at a family law mediation session, where Bruce's lawyer was offering her a \$50,000 settlement, less than 5 percent of the value of their house. Rochelle was inclined to accept any offer they made.

### Resolution

Our lawyer worked with Rochelle to explain her rights under Australian family law and our social worker organised whitegoods and furniture for the flat she had rented after separating from Bruce. Our social worker also arranged a cash grant so Rochelle could pay fees to study in her chosen profession. The legal negotiations took place over more than a year, with the parties finally agreeing on a settlement of \$100,000 for Rochelle. Rochelle is now employed in her chosen field, living independently and sharing the care of her child with her ex-husband. The wrap-around, multidisciplinary support Women's Legal was able to provide Rochelle has given her the chance to build a new life for herself.

*\* Name and image changed to protect our client's identity*

# Free from Violence

***Disadvantaged women exercise their rights to live free from violence and make informed choices about their relationships***

## **Keeping new mothers and their babies safe and together**

Pregnant women who are experiencing family violence can be at risk of having their babies removed from their care at birth. To tackle this issue, Women's Legal joined forces with Monash Health, launching our new Health Justice Partnership (HJP) in June 2020. The HJP, known as Together from the Start, provides ongoing, holistic support to women who attend Monash Health for antenatal care, with legal, health, social work and financial counselling services all available to at-risk women. Supported by the Legal Services Board, this early intervention, integrated service model ensures that women experiencing family violence during pregnancy have access to legal advice and support services so that their baby remains in their care once they are discharged from hospital.

## **Adapting our services to assist more women during COVID-19**

With the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbating the family violence crisis, we had to move quickly to ensure women's legal needs could still be met in the vastly changed circumstances. We were already experienced in using audio-visual technology to link our lawyers with clients and family violence workers around Victoria through our LINK Virtual Outreach Program and LINK Community Program (Domestic Violence Unit). During the pandemic, this was expanded to women housed in crisis accommodation, through a new partnership with Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre.

We also set up new referral arrangements with regional community legal centres (CLCs) and with Victoria Legal Aid. Regional CLCs can now refer women with complex family law issues to us for ongoing representation and we are supporting Victoria Legal Aid's Legal Helpline by providing advice to women with complex family law

“

*You advocated to support my right to live as I choose, to change my circumstances within a complex relationship breakdown. With safety measures in place. Thank you once again*

**Women's Legal client**

”

issues. With our own Legal Advice Line already swamped with calls during the pandemic, we enlisted the help of lawyers from our pro bono partners to ensure every caller received a call back.

## **Tackling sexism and gender inequality in legal & justice workplaces**

Our Starts With Us program continues to drive positive change across the legal and justice workforce by addressing sexism and gender inequality in our sector. Women's Legal developed an action plan with consortium partners that adapts best-practice workplace strategies to address the drivers of violence against women by also accounting for intersecting forms of disadvantage. Consortium members include the Victorian Bar Association, Victoria Legal Aid, the Law Institute of Victoria, Federation of Community Legal Centres, Slater and Gordon, and gender equity specialists Women's Health Victoria. The action plan sets us up to collaborate with professionals across a range of roles and settings to co-design and implement strategies to achieve meaningful organisational and whole-of-sector improvements. Starts With Us is supported by the Victorian Government's Free From Violence fund.

# Our Supporters

*Women's Legal is funded by the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department and Victoria Legal Aid.*

We also received project funding this year from Consumer Affairs Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Justice and Community Services, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Family Safety Victoria, Victorian Legal Services Board and the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust.

We rely on volunteers, pro bono lawyers, donations and in-kind support to extend and enhance our services.

Thank you to the following people and organisations who have supported us and our clients this year:

## Major pro bono project partners

Baker McKenzie  
Colin Biggers & Paisley  
Gadens  
Hall & Wilcox  
Herbert Smith Freehills  
Holding Redlich  
Lander & Rogers  
Mills Oakley

## Pro bono and reduced fee legal assistance

Adaena Sinclair-Blakemore  
Bonnie Renou  
Catherine Devine  
Celia Conlan  
Chiara Bryan  
Claire Harris QC  
Danny Cole  
Daphne Foong

David Carolan  
Ek Taghdir  
Emily J Clark  
Gregory Buchhorn  
James Moore  
Kate Hutchings  
Kerry Paull  
Lachlan Wraith  
Leanne Olden  
Mark Bland  
Natalie McCabe  
Nina Merlino  
Dr Renata Alexander  
Steven Edward  
Stragen Foo  
Susannah Portelli  
Therese Megens  
Timothy Jeffrie

## Legal Advice Line volunteers

Alexandra Walker  
Anna Nguyen

Carla Bursich  
Charlotte Connolly  
Danielle Sturgeon  
Dina Shehata  
Eleni Martakis  
Elizabeth Hall  
Eloise Paxton-Hall  
Emma Heggie  
Emma Swiatlo  
Emmalaura Messer  
Greta Haywood  
Hayley Chester  
Jona Villanueva  
Laura Harding  
Loren Gulliver  
Miranda Brookes  
Michelle Petrovski  
Natasha Mastroianni  
Nathalie Ng  
Rosetta Traficante  
Sarah Jefford  
Siobhan McGee  
Sue Hamilton-Green  
Vanessa Shambrook  
Winning Wang

## Student volunteers and student placements

Alaa Marei  
An Pham  
Anni Zhu  
Brittany Moldrich  
Carlyna Yap  
Daisy-Anne Eales  
Dyana Bidawid  
Emma Genovese  
Eunice Ghita  
Harmonie Cribbes  
Indea Davey  
Kimberley Koelmeyer  
Laura Hillard  
Lilliana Tataborrelli  
Lisa Michelle Silvers  
Maria Nocera  
Natalie Georgakopoulos  
Natasha Vassallo  
Nivedita Jaggi  
Quynh Trang McGrath

“

*I honestly can't thank you enough for all your hard work and for always putting all my concerns at ease through these past few years*

**Women's Legal client**

“

*My time at Women's has been nothing less than formative. I learned so many skills and mindsets that go into being a lawyer that I never would've learned at law school, and got to do it under the guidance of some amazing lawyers*

**Women's Legal student volunteer**

”

”

Rachel Meltser  
Sara Ito  
Sarah Khattab  
Sharanpreet Kaur  
Siti Suhaimi  
Stephanie Caruana  
Suganyaa Vishnuraj  
Tabea Hansen  
Tapiwa Bururu  
Yasmine Hamidi

### Administrative support

Special thanks to Kathy Fawcett, who has provided administrative support to Women's Legal for more than 20 years.

### In-kind support and donations

Actionstep  
Akuch Anyieth

Alice Godfree, *Associate to Justice Maxwell*  
Amy Rogers, *Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission*  
Andreia Monteiro, *Victorian Bar Association*  
Craig Stabler, *Victoria Police*  
Dagmar Jenkins, *SECASA*  
Gemma Hazmi, *Law Institute of Victoria*  
Harry Prout, *Olympic Village Exodus Community*  
Jenny Firkin, *Victorian Bar Association*  
Jill Prior, *Law & Advocacy Centre for Women*  
Jim Stanford, *Centre for Future Work, Australia Institute*  
Justice Connect  
Kate Rietdyk, *Associate to Justice Maxwell*  
Katherine Lorenz, *Victorian Bar Association*  
Kehndra Hooker, *Djirra*  
Latrobe Settlement Network, *Latrobe City Council*

Lauren Galvin, *Victoria Legal Aid*  
Liz Kollias, *Vidversity*  
Lowanna Wickham  
Luba Tanevski, *InTouch Multicultural Centre against Family Violence*  
Magistrate Kate Hawkins  
Magistrate Noreen Toohey  
Maryclare Machen, *Drummond Street Services (Queerspace)*  
Man with a Van  
Maxine Gross, *You Matter*  
Natalie Campbell, *Victorian Bar Association*  
Natalie Wieland, *Vidversity*  
Naty Guerrero-Diaz, *Slater and Gordon*  
Nicole Rich, *Victoria Legal Aid*  
Rebecca Tipper, *Women's Health Victoria*  
Rochelle Anderson, *You Matter*  
Russell Kennedy Lawyers  
Ruth Parker, *Galbally Parker Criminal Defence Lawyers*

Sanja Nenadic, *Refugee Legal*  
Sulaika Dhanapala, *InTouch Multicultural Centre against Family Violence*  
Suzanne Crellin, *Olympic Adult Education*  
Terri Pollard, *Djirra*  
Tom Wolff  
Toni Law, *Seniors Rights Victoria*  
Vanessa Shambrook, *Victorian Women Lawyers*  
Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner

### Public donations

We also acknowledge the generosity of the many individuals who made donations to Women's Legal in the 2020 financial year.

# Our People

## Board Members

Tina Lavranos  
*Chair*

Kim Mays  
*Treasurer*

Trish Low  
*Deputy Chair & Secretary*

Jane Welsh  
*Member*

Leonie Mayson  
*Member*

May Lim  
*Member*

Monique Adofaci  
*Member*

Beth Jones  
*Senior Lawyer*

Brenna Powney  
*Senior Lawyer*

Chelsea Trang  
*Senior Lawyer*

Lara Guarino  
*Senior Lawyer*

Marta Vezzosi  
*Senior Lawyer*

Rebecca Ballard  
*Senior Lawyer*

Rebecca Helberg  
*Senior Lawyer*

Alessandra Cavicchia  
*Lawyer*

Anna Farrant  
*Lawyer*

Bonnie Renou  
*Lawyer*

Carol Mellords  
*Lawyer*

Catherine Moroney  
*Lawyer/Project Manager*

Julia Parkin  
*Lawyer*

Kythe Di Scala  
*Lawyer*

Melanie Alderton  
*Lawyer*

Molly Willoughby  
*Lawyer*

Rosie Cuppaidge  
*Lawyer*

Vanessa Shambrook  
*Lawyer*

Donna Letchford  
*Financial Counsellor*

Zoe Leishman  
*Financial Counsellor*

Koula Neophytou  
*Integrated Programs Manager*

Julia Bennett  
*Social Worker*

Amanda Prince  
*Administrator*

Sandra O'Connor  
*Administrator*

Monica Campo  
*Education & Engagement Coordinator*

Sophie Gale  
*Education & Engagement Coordinator*

Tasha Lloyd  
*Administrator/Education & Engagement Coordinator*

Vanessa Giorgetti  
*Administrator*

## Operations

Nuzhat Lotia  
*Director Operations*

Belinda Harrison  
*People & Culture Manager*

Emma Miller  
*Communications Manager*

Lauren Wellington  
*People & Culture Manager*

Menaka Bandara  
*Finance Manager*

Abril Garcia Negron  
*Data Analysis & Evaluation Coordinator*

Genie Abramoff  
*Finance Coordinator*

Sarah Thomas  
*Administrator*

Vicki Gazzola  
*Receptionist*

## Staff

Staff listed were employed for all or part of 2019/2020

Joanna Fletcher  
*Chief Executive Officer*

## Legal & Policy

Elisa Whittaker  
*Director Legal & Policy*

Helen Matthews  
*Director Legal & Policy*

Henrietta Barclay  
*Director Legal & Policy*

Erin McCoy  
*Manager, Policy & Campaigns*

Lynda Memery  
*Manager, Policy & Campaigns*

Tania Clarke  
*Manager, Policy & Campaigns*

Ria Jago  
*Senior Policy Adviser*

## Education & Engagement

Eila Pourasgheri  
*Director Education & Engagement*

Lynda Memery  
*Senior Education & Engagement Practitioner*

Ilana Faivel  
*Education & Engagement Coordinator & Lawyer*

Nina Ulasowski  
*Education & Engagement Coordinator & Lawyer*

*I find it difficult to express just how wonderful [your lawyer] was to me in those moments of great fear and anxiety... I felt that I could be transparent without fear. And I was*

**Women's Legal client**





## Tammi's story

***A woman escapes a horrific relationship and secures a safe future for her children***

### **Issues**

Tammi and her three children lived in fear of her husband, Asad, who habitually abused and assaulted her and her children. The violence was even worse when he had been drinking. During a particularly violent incident one of the children called the police, who removed Asad from the house. The police then successfully applied for an intervention order against Asad. Despite this, over the next few months, Asad and his family overseas repeatedly threatened Tammi's life, insisted she return the children to their country of birth and made threats against Tammi's extended family. Tammi was terrified Asad or his family would take the children from her and move them overseas, out of her reach.

*\* Name and image changed to protect our client's identity*

### **Resolution**

One of our LINK partners referred Tammi to Women's Legal for family law advice. We launched legal proceedings against Asad, who had recently left the country, asking the court to give Tammi sole parental responsibility, for Asad to have no contact with the children and for Asad to be placed on the Airport Watch List in case he tried to re-enter Australia. Throughout this process we liaised with Victoria Police, Centrelink, Refugee Legal, social services and the children's schools to provide appropriate support. Although we went through a lengthy process to serve the orders on Asad overseas, the final hearing was undefended. Tammi is now living safely with her children and hopes to apply for permanent residence in Australia.

# 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 2020

	2020	2019
	\$	\$
<b>Income</b>		
Grant Income - Operating Funding Commonwealth	1,531,035	1,408,234
Grant Income - Operating Funding State	483,060	455,714
Grant Income - Community Legal Services Program funding	371,936	314,414
Grant Income - Project Funding Other	1,281,085	1,230,230
Legal education	68,067	85,759
Legal services	6,936	14,033
Philanthropic donations	48,923	64,817
Other income	111,716	25,646
Recoupment from Family Law Legal Service (FLLS)	332,808	355,920
Finance income	57,223	75,507
	<b>4,292,789</b>	4,030,274
<b>Expenses</b>		
Employee benefits expense	(3,150,321)	(2,833,746)
Depreciation and amortisation expense		
PPE - Depreciation	(47,979)	(44,891)
Occupancy expenses	(176,736)	(156,819)
FLLS costs	(270,492)	(294,093)
Other expenses	(459,741)	(360,521)
	<b>(4,105,269)</b>	(3,690,070)
<b>Surplus for the year</b>	<b>187,520</b>	<b>340,204</b>
Other comprehensive income, net of income tax	-	-
<b>Total comprehensive surplus for the year</b>	<b>187,520</b>	<b>340,204</b>

## Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2020

	2020	2019
	\$	\$
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	3,426,184	2,878,735
Trade and other receivables	400,532	104,769
Other assets	12,545	14,768
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>3,839,261</b>	2,998,272
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Property, plant and equipment	123,302	149,961
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>123,302</b>	149,961
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>3,962,563</b>	3,148,233
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Trade and other payables	327,798	232,403
Employee benefits	386,141	302,922
Deferred income	1,371,548	902,030
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>2,085,487</b>	1,437,355
<b>NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Employee benefits	84,330	87,302
Long-term provisions	143,683	162,033
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>228,013</b>	249,335
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>2,313,500</b>	1,686,690
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>1,649,063</b>	1,461,543
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Capital Replacement Reserve	90,000	90,000
Retained Surplus	1,559,063	1,371,543
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>1,649,063</b>	1,461,543



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