



Annual Report

2019-2020



Gold Coast
Community
Legal Centre

- 4 About Us
- 6 Management Committee & Staff
- 7 President's Report
- 8 Director & Principal Solicitor's Report
- 10 Coordinating Solicitors Report
- 12 Acknowledgement of Funding Sources
- 13 Deliverables for 2019-2020
- 16 Covid-19 Impact Statement
- 18 Outreach Services
- 20 Tuesday Evening Advice Clinic
- 21 Domestic Violence Duty Lawyer Services and Interagency Collaboration
- 22 Child Protection Duty Lawyer Service
- 23 Mobile Services in Safe Locations
- 24 Mental Health Review Tribunal
- 25 Elder Abuse Prevention & Support Service
- 26 Case Studies
- 30 Community Legal Education
- 31 Community Engagement
- 36 Awards and Acknowledg
- 37 Pro Bono Support
- 38 Social Work Students
- 39 Volunteer Solicitors
- 40 Law Students

Contents



Acknowledgment of Country

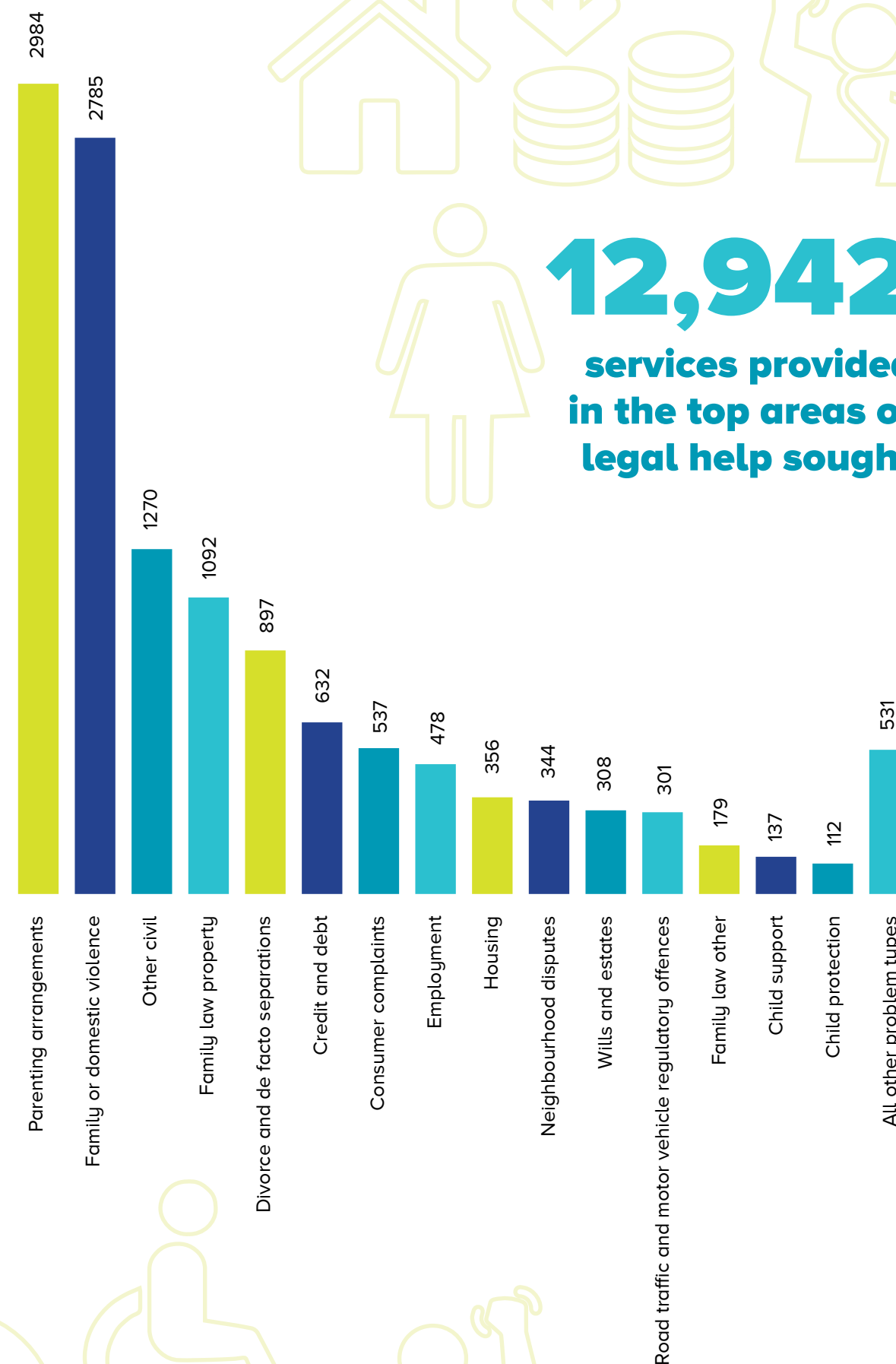
The Gold Coast Community Legal Centre proudly acknowledges Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and their rich culture and pays respect to their Elders past and present. We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's first peoples and as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and water on which we rely.

We recognise and value the ongoing contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities to Australian life and how this enriches us. We embrace the spirit of reconciliation, working towards the equality of outcomes and ensuring an equal voice.

We also acknowledge the traditional custodians of the Gold Coast region, the Kombumerri people, and pay our respects to the Elders past, present and future – for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of indigenous Australia.

We must always remember that under the concrete and asphalt – the land, sea and waterways were, and always will be, traditional indigenous land.

Areas of Law



About Us

The Gold Coast Community Legal Centre is a non-profit community based legal service advising and assisting the Gold Coast since 1984.

Our Vision

- Dignity, human rights and social justice for people on the Gold Coast.
- Build a just and inclusive society that values difference and diversity, and the rights of all people and their communities to the social and economic resources they need to exercise their human rights.
- Influence the development of law to recognise the needs of people who are socially or economically disadvantaged.
- Assist people who would otherwise be denied access to justice, due to social or economic disadvantage, to exercise their rights.

Our Goals

- Promote access to justice.
- Provide free legal advice and information.
- Assist people to address their legal problems.
- Increase community awareness of the law
- Produce clear, easy-to-read publications

Description of Services

The Gold Coast Community Legal Centre is a generalist legal Centre, providing assistance, advice and advocacy across a wide variety of areas, including but not limited to family law, child protection, domestic and family violence, consumer issues, tenancy law, employment law, fencing, trees and other neighbourhood disputes, motor vehicle collisions, drink driving and other driving offences and civil contract issues.

We also provide extensive duty lawyer work in child protection and domestic and family violence detailed further on pages 21 and 22.

Due to an increased need for assistance in areas of family law, family violence and child protection our work in this area has continued to expand considerably as detailed on pages 3 and 15.

This year we have continued representation services at the Mental Health Review Tribunal and have extended our knowledge and expertise to best help those experiencing mental health issues as detailed on page 24.

Hours of Operation

The Centre is open Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 8.30am until 4.00pm and on Tuesdays from 8.30am until 8.00pm. Appointments can be made between 8.30am and 4.00pm each day.

Outreach Clinics

The outreach clinics continued to be in high demand prior to the move to remote working and telephone appointments with the COVID-19 pandemic. Before the transfer away from face-to-face appointments, the numbers of appointments made at outreach clinics remained consistently high with appointments being filled very quickly as soon as they became available. Currently, the Centre offers services at various different outreach clinics described in detail at pages 18 and 19.

Community Legal Education

We also delivered community legal education and talks to community groups and other agencies in the Gold Coast area. Regular family law mediation information sessions are held weekly at the local Family Relationship Centre. In addition, legal staff deliver CLE talks on request to local organisations on issues including wills, powers of attorney, traffic matters, dealing with police, and consumer law. More information on our community legal education is on page 20.

Volunteer and Pro Bono Contributions

We have community and legal volunteers who are an integral part of our service and critical in extending our vision to help the Coast's most vulnerable members have access to legal information, referral, community education, advice and casework. On pages 37 and 39 we detail the extensive contribution they make to our Centre.

“I just wanted to say a big thank you...I really appreciate all the help I have received during my appointments. [Your solicitors] made it possible for me to feel comfortable while discussing my problems.”

- Client

Management Committee & Staff

The Management Committee ensures that everything the organisation does supports its vision, purpose and aims. They establish the fundamental values, the ethical principles and strategic direction in which the organisation operates. We are indebted to the skill, dedication and expertise they volunteer to our Centre.

- **President** - Bobbi Reilly
- **Vice President** - Dennis Nettlefold
- **Secretary** - Joe Whitehead
- **Treasurer** - Joe Ranieri
- **Ordinary member** - Bronwyn Charles
- **Ordinary member** - Lindsay Stevenson-Graf
- **Ordinary member** - Sunil Dutt

Our staff are continuously working hard to meet the community needs in regards to free, front line, grass roots legal advice and assistance. All staff share a common value of wanting to help the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in the community and they work together to achieve this shared goal.

- **Director & Principal Solicitor:** Victoria Shiel
- **Co-ordinating Solicitor:** Tanya Diessel
- **Solicitor** - Amelda Schrenk
- **Solicitor** - Anne Pridham
- **Solicitor** - Cassandra Mallett
- **Solicitor** - Ian Martin
- **Solicitor** - Renee Hochstrasser
- **Solicitor** - Rikki-Jane Buckland
- **Solicitor** - Skye Worth
- **Administration and Client Support Officer** - Heather Buckley
- **Administration and Client Support Officer** - Tryll Gemparo
- **Finance Officer** - Carolyn Ashcroft

President's Report

Looking back at my first year as President of the Management Committee I never imagined the year that lay ahead of us. The challenges and impacts of Covid-19 have bought the Centre together in ways that have that exceeded all expectations.

At the beginning of 2020 the Centre set itself on a trajectory of changing our infrastructure and adapting service delivery to meet the needs of the communities we assist but never anticipated the speed with which we would need to adapt policies, assess risk and develop procedures to support a rapid transition from office based services to remote. The actions and collaboration of the staff and our strong networks and relationships within the community allowed the rapid response and transition to work from home while not sacrificing the quality of service delivery to those in need.

Our staff under the exceptional leadership of Victoria Shiel have worked extremely hard this year to continue to provide quality assistance and services to Gold Coasters that are most in need. COVID-19 saw the Centre move from face to face service delivery to completely remote service delivery, with solicitors and other staff and volunteers only being able to speak to clients via telephone from their own homes..

Our solicitors have never lost focus on the wide ranging economic and social impact on the community and since returning to face to face service delivery and the re-opening of the Courts, are continuing to provide valuable advice sessions, duty lawyer assistance on the fronts of domestic violence and child protection at Southport, Beaudesert and Coolangatta Magistrates Court each week. Our staff are also assisting with Mental Health Tribunal work and Elder Abuse Prevention Support Services.

As a management committee we have worked professionally and collaboratively to support Victoria and the staff through a year of uncertainty and change. 2020 has been a year of action, collaboration, forced new thinking and adaptability. I feel grateful to be part of a team that has had an opportunity to bring together individual strengths and perspectives in such a positive way.

Thank you to the staff for their outstanding work and dedication, and to the volunteers for all of the wonderful assistance they provide and personality they bring to our Centre.

I would like to thank our stakeholders for their belief and commitment to the Centre and all that we offer. As a Centre one of our continued strengths is to continually assess and build from a community needs approach and will continue to do so.

2020 has been a reminder that never has the work of a community legal centre been more relevant and our Centre is thriving due to the commitment and adaptability of the staff and committee.

Bobbi Reilly
President



Director and Principal Solicitor's Report

This year of global pandemic has been a time of unprecedented events and the upheaval drove us to rethink and adapt our services to continue to improve outcomes for our clients who represent often the most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of the Gold Coast Community. We responded quickly but sensibly to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic with the successful implementation of policies, technology and other measures to support working from home and remote service delivery.

We saw challenges which were not anticipated and we could not have prepared for until faced with them and the haste we managed to shape and evolve into a paperlite, remote operating centre was remarkable. I am proud of the work the staff did as a team to help move the Centre into a new way of operating that being working from home for a significant part of the year and conducting client appointments, court appearances and meetings from home. Staff managed to adapt to the change in operations and environment and continued to service the community despite the changing and uncertain world around us. I am indebted to the management committee who showed resilience and agility and had strong input into the governance and direction and rapid changes that were made.

Despite the challenges during 2019-2020 we have continued to assist more people with even more services than ever before. The impacts of covid also meant we saw emerging trends with more people wanting help with employment issues and facing financial stress, an increase in domestic and family violence and the increase in people experiencing mental health issues. It is indeed a testament to the dedication of the staff and volunteers that we are able to respond to emerging community need with additional services and the commitment to improve and expand our services and our networks and relationships with our communities.

This year we again have the privilege of conferring life memberships on members of our association who have made and continue to make outstanding contribution to the Centre.

I want to acknowledge the dedication and strong leadership of our new President, Bobbi Reilly, in her first year as President of the Centre. Whilst Bobbi first joined the Committee in December 2013, her first year in this role has been a great success and led the Centre to continue to achieve many things. Bobbi's dedication to the Centre is evident and her input is invaluable to helping the Centre continue to excel, especially during the year that we have all experienced.

Our Treasurer Joe Ranieri is also awarded a life membership. Joe's knowledge of finance and his guiding hand and his willingness to help and mentor us has been an instrumental part of our ability to pursue new funding sources and expand our services and our reach in the community.

Service Delivery Improvements and Highlights

Some of our service delivery improvements and highlights this year have been

- Establishing a much stronger presence in the Northern Gold Coast area with a new office base at the Ormeau Community Centre. We wish to thank the State Government for assisting with funding for the set up costs and to the City of Gold Coast for allowing us to rent our own office in an area of the Coast that has a high demand for our services.
- Establishing a telephone advice service to enhance and expand our service delivery options. Clients now have the option to receive advice via telephone or face to face which has assisted those unable to travel to an office but still be able to receive free legal advice.
- We received funding to employ and establish a social work service through the Centre which is a much needed injection of resources into the Gold Coast Community.

- We have continued to work in closely with other services in our area and to develop warm referral pathways into and from our service to allow us to be more responsive to community need and more accessible.
- We commenced a duty lawyer service at the Beaudesert Courthouse once a week, providing legal advice and representation to Respondents appearing for their matter.

Overview of cooperative/ collaborative activities

Despite the challenges which 2020 may have presented, the Centre continued to work closely and collaboratively with other organisations to continue to provide a holistic service to the community.

- Our service remains committed and involved in a number of cooperative and collaborative activities across the Gold Coast.
- We are members of the Domestic and Family Violence Integrated Response Network, the Homeless Connect Network and the Multicultural Communities Council
- We work closely with Relationship Australia as part of the Elder Abuse Prevention Support Service to provide legal assistance to those experiencing or at risk of elder abuse
- Our relationships with local universities continues to remain strong as we host various law student clinics where students gain practical experience whilst also benefiting the Centre and assisting staff where required
- We continue to work closely with the Southport, Coolangatta and now Beaudesert Courthouse in regards to providing duty lawyer services for domestic violence matters.

Victoria Shiel
Director & Principal Solicitor

Coordinating Solicitor's Report

Welcome to the year that was 2020. It has certainly tested us, challenged us and taught us how to quickly adapt to the environment around us.

There is no need to elaborate on what this year has brought to the Gold Coast community in regards to restrictions, social distancing, isolation and working from home. What does deserve elaboration is the way in which the Centre worked together, both staff and volunteers, in ensuring there was minimal impact on service delivery and our ability to continue to assist the Gold Coast community. However, more on that later.

Prior to 2020, the Centre saw some incredible changes which have assisted us in the ability to grow and adapt the way in which we provide our services.

Phone Advice

In July 2019, the Centre launched a telephone advice service which significantly enhanced the Centres ability to service the entire Gold Coast community. By allowing and facilitating legal advice over the phone, the ability for people to access services was enhanced, especially for those unable to physically turn up at the Centre. Staff were welcoming to the idea of enhancing the mode of service delivery to include telephone advice and adapted to this change very well.

Outreaches

In 2019, we moved from operating via our various outreach services at local neighbourhood and Community Centres to using our established offices as the sole place of face to face service delivery. As the work we provide continues to grow in demand and complexity, this change meant that solicitors would work from established GCCLC offices (Kirra, Southport and Ormeau) to be able to have adequate resources and IT to provide services and ensure we had a presence across the entire Coast each day of the week.

The set up and opening of an office at The Ormeau Centre in October 2019 was another milestone for the GCCLC as services were able to be offered to the northern end of the Coast. Acknowledgement needs to be provided to the Department of Justice and Attorney Generals office for funding the set up and providing a financial contribution to allow us to open this office and ensure staff have the necessary resources to provide a full service out of this space.

Law students

We have had another successful and challenging year of law students coming through the Centre, gaining not only experience for their own benefit, but also opening their eyes to the issues in the community, raising their awareness on the importance of volunteering and 'giving back' as well as the benefit they bring to the Centre by allowing us to give clients a greater service. Students are shown this part of the legal profession that they generally are unaware of before walking in our doors.

This year we saw one Clinic operate remotely whilst the Centre was working from home which proved an exciting challenge to find a way to continue to give students a CLC experience. I thank this team of Griffith Clinic (Trimester 1, 2020) for their teamwork and flexibility in helping make this clinic happen despite the challenges around us.

I sincerely thank all the staff and volunteers who engage with the students, talk to them, share experience with them and make them feel welcome.

Social work students

We commenced 2020 with the re-introduction of social work students placed at the Centre through Griffith University as part of their required 500 hour practical placement. This was an exciting service brought to the Centre. The social work students participated in networking events, community engagement opportunities, resource creation and assisting clients.

Once the Centre closed in 2020 and all staff and volunteers were working from home, the social work students continued to work and assist the Centre in triaging clients, helping solicitors with client details and generally assisting the community who were all struggling with the changes, isolation and distancing we were all dealing with. I cannot thank this team of students enough for their continued assistance and adaptability during the challenging times and helping demonstrate the need for social work services within the Centre.

Walk In Night Clinic and Volunteer Solicitors

Night Clinic started this year as another successful operation and service to the community. A massive thank you to our committed team of volunteer solicitors and the law students who turned up each week to help run the clinic.

However, as the restrictions on gatherings increased and the Centre could not offer face to face services in 2020, Night Clinic initially moved to booked phone advice only before being placed on hold whilst the Centre was working from home.

COVID adaptability and the year that was 2020

In 2020, the Centre faced a challenge that was not expected or anticipated. However, it was clear how well the staff worked together to ensure the Centre continued to operate despite the changing environment.

We were faced with the enormous challenge of quickly making the paper-based service electronic and remote access for all staff as we worked towards a work-from-home structure during the peak government restrictions. From 31st March 2020 until 13th July 2020, all staff worked from home and it was incredible to see the ability everyone had in 'making it work.'

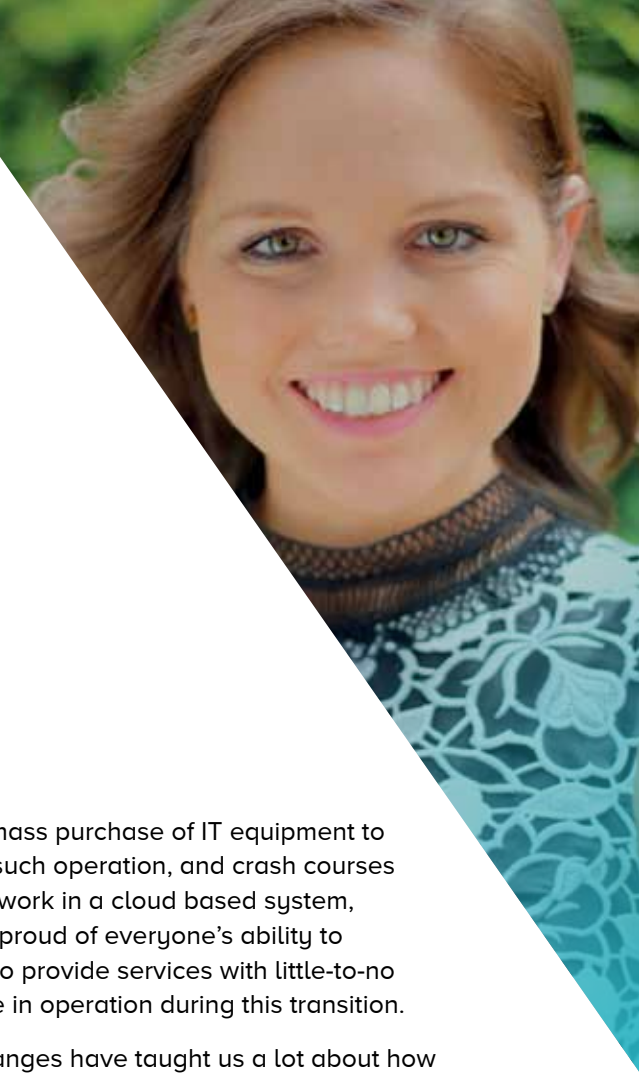
With the mass purchase of IT equipment to facilitate such operation, and crash courses in how to work in a cloud based system, I am very proud of everyone's ability to continue to provide services with little-to-no down time in operation during this transition.

These changes have taught us a lot about how we can work in a more electronic environment and I am excited to see how we continue to evolve in enhancing service delivery with confidence in knowing we have the ability to adapt to whatever challenges are presented to the Centre.

Additionally, the Centre launched the new website in August 2019 which was a fresh, welcome change to the image presented to the community and ease of access to information about our services. This proved a useful tool during the COVID restrictions as we were able to display relevant information about the Centres operations and also provide the ability for people to get in contact with the Centre through the website if needed.

Thank you everyone for a great year and I look forward to what the next 12 month's brings to the Centre – whatever challenges, hurdles, successes and triumphs we will see through.

Tanya Diessel
Coordinating Solicitor



Acknowledgement of Funding Sources

The Gold Coast Community Legal Centre greatly appreciates the funding provided to the Centre to enable us to provide free legal advice and assistance to the Gold Coast Community. Without the funding provided, the Centre would not be able to operate and Gold Coast residents would be limited in their access to free legal services.

The Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department, the Queensland Department of Justice and Attorney-General and Legal Aid Queensland provided funding through the Community Legal Service Program (CLSP) for our legal service. The CLSP program is managed by Legal Aid Queensland.

The Centre receives an annual grant from the City of Gold Coast as a contribution towards our rent as well as other forms of financial assistance through grants.

We received payment from Legal Aid Queensland for our provision of the Domestic Violence Duty Lawyers Services and Child Protection Duty Lawyer at Southport Courthouse and our work in the Mental Health Review Tribunal.

We received funding from Relationships Australia (QLD) to deliver legal help through the Department of Communities funded Elder Abuse Prevention Support Services Program.

We receive funding from Bond University and Griffith University to place students at the Centre as part of a clinical education course run by the University.

Gold Coast Community Legal Centre acknowledges its funding sources:

- Commonwealth Government
- Queensland Government
- City of Gold Coast
- Legal Aid
- Relationships Australia
- Bond University
- Griffith University



Deliverables for 2019-2020

The Centre advises and assists a variety of Gold Coast residents. Clients who attend the Centre come from varying backgrounds, lifestyles, financial positions and cultures. Below are some statistics on the clients which the Centre has assisted in the last year.

Client Data

- Number of clients seen: 3,529
- 1,193 were male (33.8%)
- 2,222 were female (62.9%)
- 8 were other gender
- 106 unknown
- 97 were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (2.7%)
- 2,694 experiencing financial disadvantage (76.3%)
- 289 on nil income (8.2%)
- 1,624 on low income (46%)
- 663 with disability or mental illness (18.8%)
- 104 experiencing or at risk of homelessness (2.9%)
- 424 were culturally or linguistically diverse (12%)
- 1,907 were experiencing domestic or family violence (54%)
- 263 were children or young people under the age of 24 (7.4%)
- 667 were aged 25-34 (18.9%)
- 1,209 were aged 35-49 (34.3%)
- 677 were aged 50-64 (19.2%)
- 418 were aged 65+ (11.8%)



2,222

clients were female
1,193 were male,
8 were other gender

1,907

clients were experiencing
domestic or family violence



2,694

clients were experiencing
financial disadvantage

424

clients were culturally or
linguistically diverse



97

clients were Aboriginal
or Torres Strait Islander

663

clients with disability
or mental illness



104

clients were experiencing
or at risk of homelessness

"I just wanted to write and let you know how much I appreciate your services. Earlier this year I found my life in turmoil.

I made an appointment with [your office] and from the get go I felt that [the solicitor] had my back and that she would get me through this. She helped me subpoena evidence, gather affidavits, and write submissions to prosecution. She reassured me every step of the way.

Without the assistance of [GCCLC], I would have ended up with a protection order against me which would have seriously hindered my career and have sent me into an emotionally downward spiral which would have had a detrimental effect on my family.

Thank you so much for your services."

- Client

Deliverables for 2019-2020

The total number of legal advices given during the period 1st July 2019 to 30th of June 2020 amounted to 5,042 and we also completed 1,751 legal tasks which include tasks such as court documents and letters.

Our duty lawyer services were directly impacted by COVID-19 this year, however we still managed to help in this way with 966 cases where we appeared in court as a duty lawyer.

We also gave information and referral in over 12,900 instances.

- Number of legal advices given: 5,042
- Number of telephone advices: 1,924 (38.2%)
- Number of legal tasks completed (including court documents and letters): 1,751
- Number of new cases opened (including duty lawyer services): 1,107
- Legal information and referrals: 12,930
- CLE: 37 activities
- Appeared in court as a duty lawyer: 966
- Mental health review tribunal: 53

The area of law most people sought assistance in was family law, claiming more than half of all services and mostly the help sought was in children's matters and family violence, followed by civil law particularly in areas of debt, employment, tenancy and consumer complaints.

Breakdown of services provided for each area of law:

- Parenting arrangements 2984 / 23.06%
- Family or domestic violence 2785 / 21.52%
- Other civil 1270 / 9.81%
- Family law property 1092 / 8.44%
- Divorce and de facto separations 897 / 6.93%
- Credit and debt 632 / 4.88%
- Consumer complaints 537 / 4.15%
- Employment 478 / 3.68 %
- Housing 356 / 2.75%
- Neighbourhood disputes 344 / 2.66%
- Wills and estates 308 / 2.38%
- Road traffic and motor vehicle regulatory offences 301 / 2.33%
- Family law other 179 / 1.38%
- Child support 137 / 1.06%
- Child protection 112 / 0.87%
- All other problem types 531 / 4.10%

Grand total 12,942 / 100.00%

Covid-19 Impact Statement

The enormous global impact of the coronavirus pandemic has certainly made its mark on the lives of many Gold Coast citizens, as well as community legal centres across the country. With lockdown and other restrictions commencing in March of 2020 across Queensland and Australia, an array of unprecedented changes began which has had a tremendous impact on our service.

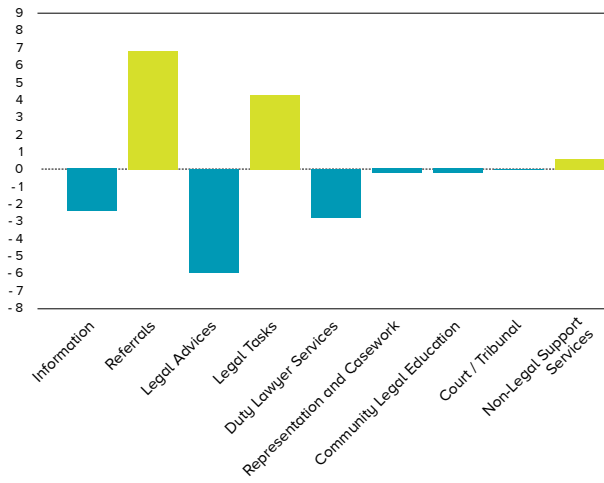
Although the Gold Coast Community Legal Centre had to limit the delivery of services in a number of locations and specific projects, our solicitors and staff have endeavoured to find new and effective ways of ensuring that legal assistance is still provided to those in need. Moving out of the office and working from home for a number of months meant that the entire team had to learn to work with new technology and deliver services to clients in unforeseen ways. Although new barriers to service delivery certainly arose, the COVID-19 pandemic gave our Centre a valuable opportunity to develop updated processes and innovative ways to assist our clients. Majority of the advice given across this period was provided via telephone and email. This has meant that clients from more remote areas, or clients who may have otherwise had difficulty making it into one of our offices to receive advice, whether that be due to disability, limited transportation options, work commitments, safety issues or anything else, are now more easily able to receive assistance from a place most convenient to them.

COVID-19 also enhanced the Centres electronic based file management system, ultimately making the Centre capable of operating remotely. With technological innovation being forced on most of the community during the period of Government restrictions, the Gold Coast Community Legal Centre transitioned to become a more flexible online workplace that did not require the confines of an office, or specific location of staff, to continue to deliver valuable services to the community during this time.

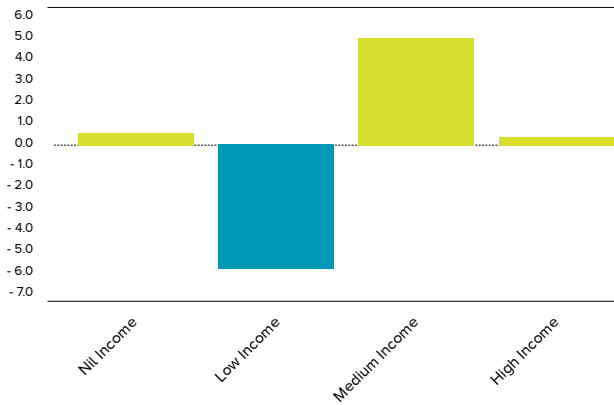
On top of these internal changes experienced by the Centre, COVID-19 has also seen changes in the types of clients and legal issues that we have been able to assist with. In comparing data from March 2019 to June 2019 with data from March 2020 to June 2020, some clear differences have emerged, which may be attributable to the changing environment.

Victoria Shiel, Director and Principal Solicitor, Gold Coast Community Legal Centre said, “Since the pandemic, Gold Coast Community Legal Centre has seen an increased number of calls from community members seeking psychosocial support as well as legal advice. We are finding many people are scared, have heightened emotions and are feeling highly anxious. The issues are complex and often include aspects of mental health, social issues and financial hardship as well as a legal problem.”

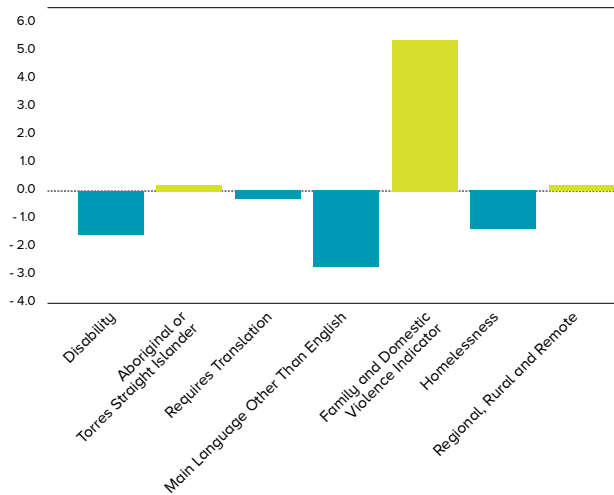
Service Proportion Changes



Income Level Proportion Changes



Demographic and Priority Group Proportion Changes



“The help I received here was invaluable! The expertise and understanding helped me take on a huge conglomerate with their advice.”

- Client

Outreach Services

For the first few months of this year, we continued to operate out of our outreach Centres at Nerang, Palm Beach, Varsity Lakes, Ashmore, and Oxenford in community centres who generously provided us with a space to assist clients in that area. However, with the changing needs of our Centre and the drive to have a permanent office in areas over the Coast, the Centre ceased these outreach services from October 2019.

Instead, the Centre moved towards having permanent office spaces in areas of the Coast to enable staff to have resources and technology available as well as a full-time presence and office in these areas.

The Centre continues to recognise and acknowledge the contribution local neighbourhood and community Centres made to us over the years by providing an office space for our use during the week. The networks and referral pathways made with each of these Centres will continue to develop as we all work towards the common goal of assisting the community.

The Ormeau Centre

Our Ormeau outreach commenced in October of 2019 and has been steadily growing. This permanent office is located in The Ormeau Centre and is a full time operating office solely used by the Centre and rented from the City of Gold Coast. This office allows clients from the Northern Gold Coast regions to more easily access our services. This is extremely beneficial to clients in the region who otherwise may not have been able to travel to our other locations due to, for example, lack of access to transport, financial hardship, and disability circumstances.

Snapshot of this outreach:

- 116 clients seen
- 79 were female
- 17 disability
- 38 experiencing DV
- 88 financial disadvantage
- 7 main language not English
- 2 ATSI

Kirra Hill Community Centre

This outreach commenced last financial year and has been growing strongly. This permanent office is located in The Kirra Hill Community Centre and is a full time operating office solely used by the Centre and rented from the City of Gold Coast. It has greatly enhanced our ability to provide services to the Southern Gold Coast to help, for those more vulnerable and disadvantage people unable to travel to our current locations due to, for example, lack of access to transport, financial hardship, and disability circumstances.

Snapshot of this outreach:

- 259 clients seen
- 166 were female
- 54 disability
- 55 experiencing DV
- 195 financial disadvantage
- 30 main language not English
- 6 ATSI

Coolangatta Court House

Each Friday we provide duty lawyer services at the Coolangatta Magistrates Court for people appearing in court for domestic violence applications. This services fills a previously unmet need for assistance and has been a very successful outreach.

Snapshot of this outreach:

- 59 clients seen
- 21 were female
- 12 disability
- 46 experiencing DV
- 41 financial disadvantage
- 0 main language not English
- 4 ATSI

Beaudesert Court House

Since February 2020, each Monday we provide duty lawyer services at the Beaudesert Magistrates Court for people appearing in court for domestic violence applications. This new service fills a previously unmet need for assistance and has been a successful outreach.

Snapshot of this outreach:

- 24 clients seen
- 8 were female
- 7 disability
- 24 experiencing DV
- 17 financial disadvantage
- 2 main language not English
- 1 ATSI

“[GCCLC] should be highly commended for the extra effort and time...spent on my case. The service and advice I received was carried out with professionalism and efficiency and with a great friendly attitude. This was an outstanding effort...and beyond what I could have expected.”

- Client

Tuesday Evening Advice Clinic

Walk-In Advice Clinics give the Gold Coast Community access to immediate free legal advice. The Gold Coast Community Legal Centre provides a walk-in advice clinic so that clients can access legal services on an urgent basis without the need to wait for an appointment, as well as providing the opportunity for free legal advice outside normal business hours.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our Centre's ability to provide the walk-in night clinic service in the latter part of this financial year, we are still offering the Tuesday Evening Advice Clinic by appointment. This gives Gold Coast residents the ability to seek legal advice outside of normal business hours, allowing clients who may not otherwise have been able to seek legal advice during the day, the opportunity to obtain assistance on their legal matters.

This year 321 clients were seen by the Tuesday Evening Advice Clinic.

- 156 identified as female
- 53 clients had a disability
- 49 clients experienced domestic violence
- 235 clients experienced financial disadvantage
- 50 clients had a main language other than English
- 8 clients were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people



156

clients were female

49

clients were experiencing domestic or family violence



235

clients were experiencing financial disadvantage

50

clients were culturally or linguistically diverse



8

clients were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

53

clients with disability



Domestic Violence Duty Lawyer Services and Interagency Collaboration



We deliver services at Southport five (5) days a fortnight as 'preferred suppliers' for Legal Aid Queensland. We work under the Legal Aid Queensland Duty Lawyer Service along with other preferred suppliers and Legal Aid funds the position. Our solicitors work to a duty lawyer roster set by Legal Aid; generally attending the Court two (2) to four (4) times a week. This financial year, we were rostered as duty lawyers for the aggrieved / applicant in the matter.

The role includes providing advice, assisting with preparation of documents, carrying out negotiations with other duty lawyers or private solicitors and providing court representation.

This year we assisted and represented 506 people as part of this service.

Coolangatta Domestic Violence Duty Lawyer

Since July 2016 we have been operating a service at the Coolangatta Magistrates Court. Each Friday we provide duty lawyer services for people attending the court for domestic violence matters. Just as above, this service provides advice, representation and referral services to people appearing for their matter.

This year we appeared for 59 people at this Court.

Beaudesert Domestic Violence Duty Lawyer

In February 2020 we introduced a new service at the Beaudesert Magistrates Court. Each Monday we provide duty lawyer services for people attending the court for domestic violence matters. Again, our solicitors provide assistance to people appearing on the day for their matter by way of advice, representation and referral services.

This year we appeared for 24 people at this Court.

Interagency Collaboration

Our Centre has worked hard this year to work even closer with other agencies working in the area of domestic and family violence.

We continued to participate in the operational working group meetings at the Specialist Court and value the role as an opportunity to work together for systemic change and innovation.

We are members of the integrated response network to ensure we are aware of and make appropriate referrals and work in closely with existing and emerging services on the Gold Coast

Child Protection Duty Lawyer Service

Throughout the year, the Centre has continued to take an active role in the Child Protection Duty Lawyer Service provided at the Southport Magistrates Court.

The duty lawyer service provides parents, young people and other interested individuals (such as grandparents, aunts, uncles and elders) with valuable legal advice, assistance, referral and representation on the day the matter is to be heard in Court. By increasing the individuals who can receive legal advice about the child protection matter, it is hoped that family members can take a more active role in what can be an intrusive process to intervene in a child's life.

The information and advice is aimed at protecting the client's rights from any unjust accusations and ensuring that they are aware of the process involved at the different stages of the matter. The advice may be in relation to an investigation which must be carried out, whether it is necessary for a child at risk of harm to be taken into custody and placed with a kinship carer or into the foster care system, whether ongoing interventions is required or whether there are any appeal options once a decision has been made.

In addition to providing advice and referral to appropriate services, we also assist in completing Legal Aid forms, negotiating on certain parties' behalf and representing the most vulnerable unrepresented parties in the Children's Court.

This year we advised 38 people at the Courthouse needing our help in this jurisdiction.

Mobile Services In Safe Locations

The Centre continued to operate the Mobile Services in Safe Locations project.

The program was developed and continues to operate in consultation with members of the Gold Coast Integrated Response Network, which includes the Gold Coast Community Legal Centre, specialist police, health services, Centrelink, specialist domestic violence services, housing and homelessness services, and other organisations. The identified need for our participation in this it to provide responsive legal services in the community, in places where victims and survivors of domestic and family violence feel safe. One of our solicitors with experience in domestic violence and family lawyer works in this role and continued to work within this area throughout this year.

This position continues to allow us to work closely with other agencies and to enhance our collaborative and trauma enforced practice. A solicitor from our office provides mobile services in locations as needed, such as out of the Domestic Violence Prevention Centre office fortnightly as well as visiting women's refuges as required.

Case Study

Kathy* has approached the Gold Coast Community Legal Centre regarding a parenting and property matter against her ex-partner. The parties both share a three-year-old son. A DVO order has been made against the ex-partner in relation to physical violence, verbal abuse, threats, and potential harm to Kathy's son. The father is also a known addict who partakes in drug abuse and has been classified as an alcoholic.

Kathy approached us seeking assistance with both parenting and property / financial matters resulting from the separation.

The Gold Coast Community Legal Centre was able to assist Kathy in filing of the Responses to initiating application, affidavit, financial statements and notice of risk via the Commonwealth Court Portal and assisted Kathy in drafting responses in relation to interim parenting and property arrangements.

Kathy was successful in her matter and received orders that were in the best interests of the child and a fair and equitable property settlement.

*Names have been changed for confidentiality and privacy purposes.

“During the course of my placement, I have observed, participated and performed tasks in various situations that enrich my learning and development in the field of law.”

- Volunteer law student Roselyn King, Griffith University



Mental Health Review Tribunal

The Queensland Mental Health Act 2016 commenced in March 2017 and as a result, our involvement in this area has continued to grow. Legal Aid appointed the Gold Coast Community Legal Centre to a list of legal service providers to provide representation to community mental health patients and in-patients at mental health facilities at their Mental Health Review Tribunal hearings.

The Act provides legal representation for a youth patient with a review of a Treatment Authority and other patients with a review of a Forensic Order, or an Application for Electro-Convulsive Therapy, or where the Attorney-General appears in their matter to advocated on the patient's behalf before the Tribunal.

The mental health jurisdiction has been both challenging and exciting as it expands the Centre's focus on social justice programs to reach the most vulnerable members of our community.

This year we represented 26 clients at their Mental Health Review Tribunal hearings.

Elder Abuse Prevention and Support Service

Last year we entered a new partnership with Relationships Australia (QLD) to deliver legal help as part of the Elder Abuse Prevention and Support Service. The Elder Abuse Prevention and Support Service is a Case Managed service for people 60+ (or 50+ for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people) who are at risk or are experiencing Elder Abuse.

This service offers individualised support and referral with RAQ providing:

- Face to face support with a dedicated Case Manager
- Development of Safety Plans
- Referral to counselling or mediation as required
- Referral to other relevant services that may assist to achieve the agreed goals of an individualised Case Plan.

We work with the dedicated case manager to provide a dedicated legal service that provides individual legal help and we also deliver Community Education and Information regarding Elder Abuse Prevention strategies.

This year this funding allowed us to help 24 people, 19 of who were over 65 with their legal issues.

Case Studies

Throughout the year, our solicitors work with clients to assist them in their legal matters. This can range from advice, minor casework or more extensive casework for more vulnerable and disadvantaged clients. Below are some case studies of matters which our solicitors have assisted clients in during this year, having successful outcomes which otherwise might not have been achieved if the Centre wasn't able to provide the services which it does.

Case Study #1

Jennifer* sought advice from the Gold Coast Community Legal Centre for assistance with a debt matter she had with a large telecommunication company. Two (2) years earlier, Jennifer's granddaughter had bought a number of expensive items from this company on a payment plan and had signed up for this using Jennifer's name and personal details, including forging her signature. Following this, her granddaughter fled interstate with the items, leaving her grandmother, Jennifer, with a debt of approximately \$4,000. Jennifer is on an aged pension and did not have the means to pay this debt.

After attempting to resolve this matter with the company a few years ago, she eventually got it sorted by getting the police to retrieve the goods and have them returned. However, 12 months ago the company began chasing Jennifer for the money claiming that the goods were never returned. Debt collectors were also involved in pursuing Jennifer for the debt.

A solicitor at GCCLC, assisted Jennifer with this matter. She got into contact with the company and had them cease pursuing Jennifer about the debt. After over 12 months of assisting Jennifer, our Centre was able to get the company to formally waive the debt and to clear Jennifer's name on their records. Jennifer has expressed that she is very grateful for our solicitor's "amazing" assistance, and feels as though "a tonne of bricks have been lifted off [her] back."

*Name has been changed for confidentiality and privacy reasons.

Case Study #2

John* attended our Centre looking for advice regarding a dispute he was having with a motor dealer. John is an elderly man who decided to purchase a used car. In May 2019, John approached a local motor dealer who sold John a vehicle that was five (5) years old with 45,000 kilometres on the odometer. John bought the vehicle for \$7,500.00.

Two days later, while driving down a hill, the brakes failed and John was no longer able to safely drive the vehicle.

John had the vehicle towed back to the motor dealer who, under the Australian Consumer Law (statutory warranty), has a duty to repair the vehicle. Two days later the dealer told John the vehicle was repaired.

John collected the vehicle from the motor dealer the next morning. Later that day the brakes failed again. John then gets the vehicle taken to a third party mechanic who says the brakes are worn out and unsafe and that the vehicle should never have been sold in that condition. John promptly returns the vehicle to the dealer and asks for his money back. The dealer refuses.

John called our Centre to see what his legal rights are.

One of the Centre's solicitors met with John, explained his legal rights and assisted with drafting a letter to the dealer requesting John's money back as the vehicle has been sold unfit for purpose. Unfortunately, the dealer did not reply. Our Centres solicitor then assisted John lodge a complaint with the Queensland Office of Fair Trading (OFT). The solicitor also assisted with the completion of a Consumer Dispute application in the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT). John requested a full refund, \$600.00 in miscellaneous losses (in all the towing and third party mechanic costs) and filing fees, in return for the vehicle being collected by the dealer.

There were some issues with the identity of the motor dealer's business and the name of the dealer; the Centre's solicitor assisted in connecting the Trading Name with an Australian Business Name and the personal name of the dealer who owned the business. QCAT agreed to add all the information to the respondents details so there could be no question as to the dealer's identity.

Meanwhile the OFT wrote to John stating that they had investigated and taken appropriate action against the dealer.

QCAT heard the matter in November 2019 and awarded John his orders sought. The dealer was ordered to pay John and collect the vehicle.

Unfortunately, the dealer refused to comply with QCAT's decision. The Centre assisted John in filing the QCAT Decision with the local Magistrates Court, this enabled John to begin Enforcement Proceedings against the dealer.

The dealer failed to attend the Enforcement Hearing and the Centre assisted John with an Enforcement Warrant – for a Court Bailiff to visit the dealer and accompany him to attend the next Enforcement Hearing.

In around March 2020, after the Enforcement Warrant was issued and the Court Bailiff spoke to the dealer, John received the full amount of the QCAT Order and the dealer collected the vehicle.

*Name has been changed for confidentiality and privacy reasons.

Case Study #3

Jo* attended our Centre via a telephone advice session during the COVID-19 work from home enacted measures. Jo sought employment law advice regarding COVID-19 Stand Down measures.

Jo works on the production line of a prefabrication factory. She is highly skilled and has worked in this capacity for almost 10 years. The company is classified as a Small Business as it has less than 15 employees. Jo says she once had an Employment Contract but seems to recall it was short and poorly written. She does not recall if it referenced an Award but was sure it was not an Enterprise Bargaining Agreement.

Jo said that on or around 1 April 2020 on returning from personal leave she was handed a Stand Down notice – without pay - by her boss to be effective from the next pay cycle – 2 April 2020. She was told that, there was a downturn in work and that should there be an upturn in work she could come back on a casual basis until 'things got better'. Jo says her boss was refusing to pay any entitlements like annual leave. Jo said that the company was still trading with other employees working at the factory.

Jo wanted to know her legal options.

One of our staff assisted Jo in providing her current employment law advice, specifically with all the changes which were occurring in the community around COVID-19 employment matters. Our solicitors working in this area of law kept up to date with regular changes and processes within employment law to be able to accurately advise clients as they worked through these challenging times.

Jo was advised of her rights and options as an employee during these times and appropriate referrals were made to allow Jo to obtain further advice from services which provide specialized employment advice as well. Jo was provided the tools, processes and advice to allow her to take the next steps in resolving her matter without missing important deadlines whilst also provided information about other useful services and referral networks.

*Name has been changed for confidentiality and privacy reasons.

Case Study #4

Elise* came into the Gold Coast Community Legal Centre while she was pregnant with her first child. The father of the child, David*, was harassing Elise to the point where the pregnancy was being put at risk. He didn't want Elise to keep the child and was pushing Elise to abort the pregnancy by constantly text-messaging her, going to her home, and threatening to harm her and the unborn child. The Centre advised Elise to seek help from the Queensland Police Service. A Domestic Violence Order ("DVO") was put in place.

Despite this, David breached the DVO multiple times. His behaviour, fuelled by drug and alcohol abuse, continued to escalate. Elise went into labour prematurely while David was taken into custody for breaching his DVO. After the child was born, Elise was worried about what David would do in the future should the violence continue and escalate even further. David also refused to acknowledge that the child was biologically his and therefore refused to pay child support which left Elise financially disadvantaged.

Mediation was deemed inappropriate in the circumstances and David continued to harass and threaten Elise even while he was out on bail. Even though he refused several times, David eventually agreed to do a DNA test at an accredited laboratory if Elise paid for the testing. The DNA test confirmed that David was the father of the child, however the Child Support Agency required a Court order to confirm this to be able to commence payments.

The Centre assisted Elise to make an application to the Federal Circuit Court of Australia for a declaration of parentage and orders for sole parental responsibility.

David chose not to attend the first Federal Circuit Court date and Orders were made in his absence on a final basis that day. This included a declaration that David was the father of the child and could now be assessed for child support through the Child Support Agency.

*Name has been changed for confidentiality and privacy reasons.

Case Study #5

Kerry* approached the Gold Coast Community Legal Centre seeking assistance with an adoption application for her niece.

Kerry's niece had tragically lost both of her biological parents and was therefore orphaned. Her niece had been moving between extended family homes with various relatives sharing the care for the child. Given the family's strong ties, Kerry sought to adopt her niece and seek sole parental care for the child. It was agreed upon between all members of the family that this would be in the best interests of the child.

The Centre gave Kerry advice pertaining to adoption in Australia. Because of the particular circumstances of this case, the Centre advised Kerry that an application for a Parenting Order to the Federal Circuit Court for sole parental responsibility would be the preferred course of action.

The application was successful and Kerry was granted sole parental responsibility for her niece. Both Kerry and her niece were very grateful and maintain ongoing relationships with all family and extended family members.

*Name has been changed for confidentiality and privacy reasons.

"The program was excellent and highly appreciated. I was so impressed with the Centre itself. It has a warm and inviting feel while providing a highly professional service and is such an asset to the local community."

- Law student volunteer Dawn Walker

Community Legal Education

Community Legal Education provides information, skills and direction for people with a view to early resolution and solution of legal problems and helping people be better aware and informed of their rights and obligations.

Our Centre has a long history of providing community legal education to the Gold Coast community across a large number of locations and covering a range of topics.

Whilst a lot of events and opportunities were impacted by COVID-19 restrictions, the Centre continued to find ways to provide community legal education services during this year, including remotely via online platforms. Highlights of our community legal education this year included:

- Two of our solicitors, Rikki and Skye, gave a presentation on the legal and social ramifications of Elder Abuse at the 2019 Stop DV Conference, educating the community on the detrimental and widespread impacts of Elder Abuse.
- We gave a presentation on Community Legal Centres at the Gold Coast Justice of the Peace Conference, educating local JP's on the services provided by the Gold Coast Community Legal Centres so that they can refer relevant clients to us where required.
- We delivered several community legal education sessions at universities targeted at students in relation to the history, role and ongoing need for community legal centres as well as the importance of volunteering and giving back to the community once students enter the legal profession.

We are also regular participants in various community events which take place on the Coast. Please refer to the Community Engagement page to find out about what events and activities the Centre has been involved in.

Community Engagement

Our Centre is dedicated to being involved in local community events and showing our commitment to supporting services which aim at helping and bringing awareness to issues within our community.

During this year, staff and volunteers of the Centre attended various events over the Gold Coast, promoting the Centre, providing information about our services as well as creating networks and relationships with other organisations.

Law Right Queensland Legal Walk



In May 2020, staff and volunteers of the Centre participated in the Law Right Queensland Legal Walk where an aspect of the walk was held on the Gold Coast, focused on Domestic Violence awareness.

This walk involved an early morning gathering at the Southport Courthouse where the walk began, heading towards the Broadwater and back to the courthouse to raise awareness for barriers to justice within the community. During the walk, the Centre's Director and Principal Solicitor, Victoria, and solicitor Rikki, both appeared via live-stream on Law Right's Facebook page speaking about the event.

International Women's Day



In March 2020, a number of staff and volunteers from the Centre attended the Family Law Pathways Network International Women's Day Breakfast at Kurrawa Surf Club in Broadbeach. This was a breakfast event held to bring together women working with the legal and related industries to network, listen to guest speakers and share their views on topics within the profession.

Gold Coast Multicultural Network



This year we continued our relationship and collaboration with the Gold Coast Multicultural Network who supports the various multicultural communities around the Gold Coast. The network helps to bridge the gap between different communities and encourage greater diversity through various events, network meetings and education opportunities.

In August 2019, we attended the International Café Event held at the Southport Church of Christ. We had a stall set up to raise awareness about the Centre and interacted with other vendors, enjoying the variety of cultural performances and food available.

In November 2019, the Centre also attended a Walk Together event held by the Gold Coast Multicultural Network.

NAIDOC Week



In July 2019, our Centre celebrated NAIDOC week by Anne and Rikki attending the Gold Coast Titans NAIDOC Day at Firth Park in Mudgeeraba. Anne and Rikki had a stall set up promoting the services of the Centre at this event and were actively involved in activities throughout the day. NAIDOC Week celebrates the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Homeless Connect Day

In August 2019, solicitors and volunteers of the Centre attended the Homeless Connect Day held at Metricon Stadium. The Centre had a stall set up to provide information about the Centre to attendees of the event, as well as network with other services for future collaboration and referral pathways.

This day is held every year to bring awareness to homelessness on the Gold Coast. Services, organisations and businesses attended the event to provide information, referrals and on-the-day services (such as haircuts and food) for attendees of the event seeking help with homelessness issues.

Child Protection Week

In September 2019, Rikki attended the Queensland Child Protection Week Family Fun Day. The Centre had a stall set up to provide information about the Centre as well as having activities for children to interact with.

Child Protection Week is held over a week in September each year where various community centres, local council areas and organisations host a family fun day for parents and children to attend. Children are entertained with free activities and events whilst parents can find out information available to help children who may be involved in child protection matters. This week is aimed at raising awareness and providing information for child protection as well as remembering children who may have been affected or exposed to child abuse and protection issues.

Sexual Violence Awareness Annual Breakfast




In September 2019, staff and volunteers of the centre attended the Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence Annual Breakfast. This event aimed to raise awareness and funds for sexual violence issues within the community, and was attended by a number of community members, community service representatives and government and political officials. This event further educated our staff and volunteers on the widespread impacts of sexual violence in the community, practical ways to help, and allowed us to network with other services within the community.

Seniors Expo

In August 2019, we attended the Annual Seniors Expo held at the Varsity Lakes Community Resource Centre. At this event we gave out information about our Centre and the free services we provide to Gold Coast seniors.

The Annual Seniors Expo is aimed at providing information and assistance to the senior citizens within our community to assist in resolving the specific issues they may face. This event was attended by a number of other community services including the Department of Human Services, QSTARS, Volunteering GC, Carers Queensland, Hearing Australia, Assisted Living and many more, who all provided information and services to attendees.



**“It was a rewarding and
though-provoking experience.”**

- Law student volunteer Nicholas McLean,
Griffith University

**“It is an experience
I will not soon forget.”**

- Law student volunteer Jacob Lobban,
Griffith Community Lawyering Clinic

**“[my experience] points to
the vital need of community
legal centres like GCCLC
where the community
can seek information on
their legal rights before
bad-decisions...are made,
resulting in long reaching
consequences for the
individual and their family.”**

- Law student volunteer Dawn Walker,
Griffith University

**“The work that the Community
Legal Centre is doing is
incredibly important because
they exist for the community,
for those who need help with
advice and forms, for those
who cannot afford the high
costs charged by legal firms
and for those who would find
stepping out to seek legal
help more difficult.”**

- Law student volunteer Tanisha Wong,
Griffith University

Awards and Acknowledgments

Tanya Diessel

Community Legal Centre Lawyer of the Year Award in the Lawyer's Weekly 30 under 30 Awards 2020

In May 2020, Tanya was named as Lawyer's Weekly Community Legal Centre Lawyer of the Year in their 30 Under 30 awards.

The Lawyers Weekly 30 Under 30 is a national awards ceremony that identifies the recognises young lawyers across Australia. These awards highlight the work of lawyers under the age of 30 years across 30 different categories throughout Australia and how they have contributed to their work and profession as a whole.

The Community Legal Centre Lawyer of the Year category acknowledges solicitors in the sector for their clear passion in their work and achievements within their field. Finalists within this category were from other community legal centres across Australia and it is acknowledged the work they do within their community and impact they are all making on access to justice and free legal services.

Tanya attended the awards ceremony over Zoom as the ceremony was held virtually during peak Government restrictions in May 2020.

Rikki-Jane Buckland

Finalist in the Not for Profit Category of Lawyer's Weekly Women in Law Awards 2019

In September 2019, Rikki was announced as a finalist in the Not for Profit Category of Lawyer's Weekly Woman in Law Awards.

The Women in Law Awards is an awards ceremony celebrating women who shape and influence the legal industry. This awards ceremony highlights the work of women lawyers across Australia and the impact they have within their area of work and legal profession.

The finalist list features over 269 legal professionals across 31 categories. In November 2019, Rikki along with other staff from our Centre, attended the Women in Law Awards Ceremony in Melbourne to celebrate Rikki's achievement in being announced a finalist in this category.



Pro Bono Support

The Gold Coast Community Legal Centre extends our acknowledgement and recognition for the pro bono support offered to us by a number of other law firms and organisations. Without the contributions of these groups, we would not be able to offer the level of service delivery we are currently able to, and we are grateful for all of the assistance they offer.

Law firms who provided the Centre and our clients with pro bon assistance this year include:

- Minter Ellison
- Clayton Utz
- Herbert Smith Freehills
- French Chambers

MinterEllison

CLAYTON UTZ



Social Work Students

In 2020 the Centre began facilitating social work students from Griffith University as part of their clinical placement requirements at university. These social work students come in to the Centre to assist with non-legal support and community engagement.

The social work students' mission is to provide guidance to the Centre on the scope of Social Work practice and how that can support all staff within the organisation. This has included a list of common issues social workers can deal with at the GCCLC, including but not limited to crisis intervention, brief counselling, advocacy and community engagement. A number of initiatives have been organised by the students, allowing all staff to better meet the socio-economic and psychological needs of clients who seek assistance with the Centre.

The Griffith University Social Work students also aimed to develop strong connections with service providers. This will foster warm referrals for clients, which will better meet their immediate needs and increase the likelihood that clients receive the assistance they need. They also developed stakeholder relationships by attending community events, facilitating presentations and meeting with members at relevant organisations. This has helped to increase the visibility of the GCCLC, driving referrals and walks-ins for the organisation. By developing a comprehensive list of stakeholders, this will allow future Social Workers at GCCLC to transition into the role with an established body of local knowledge.

During the placement period, Social Work students are available for de-escalation of crisis and additional case work either before or concurrent to legal assistance.

This year, the social work students were faced with the challenge of working from home for the second half of their placement. They were able to quickly adapt to the change in operation and continued to assist the Centre and its clients during the challenging environment. The Centre found that the use of social work students during the stressors of COVID-19 and the impacts it had on people were greatly beneficial in assisting clients manage and cope with stress, anxiety and isolation.

Griffith University Social Work Students

- Alana MacKinnon
- Eliza Graves-Browne
- Luciana Tursicova
- Matt Newton

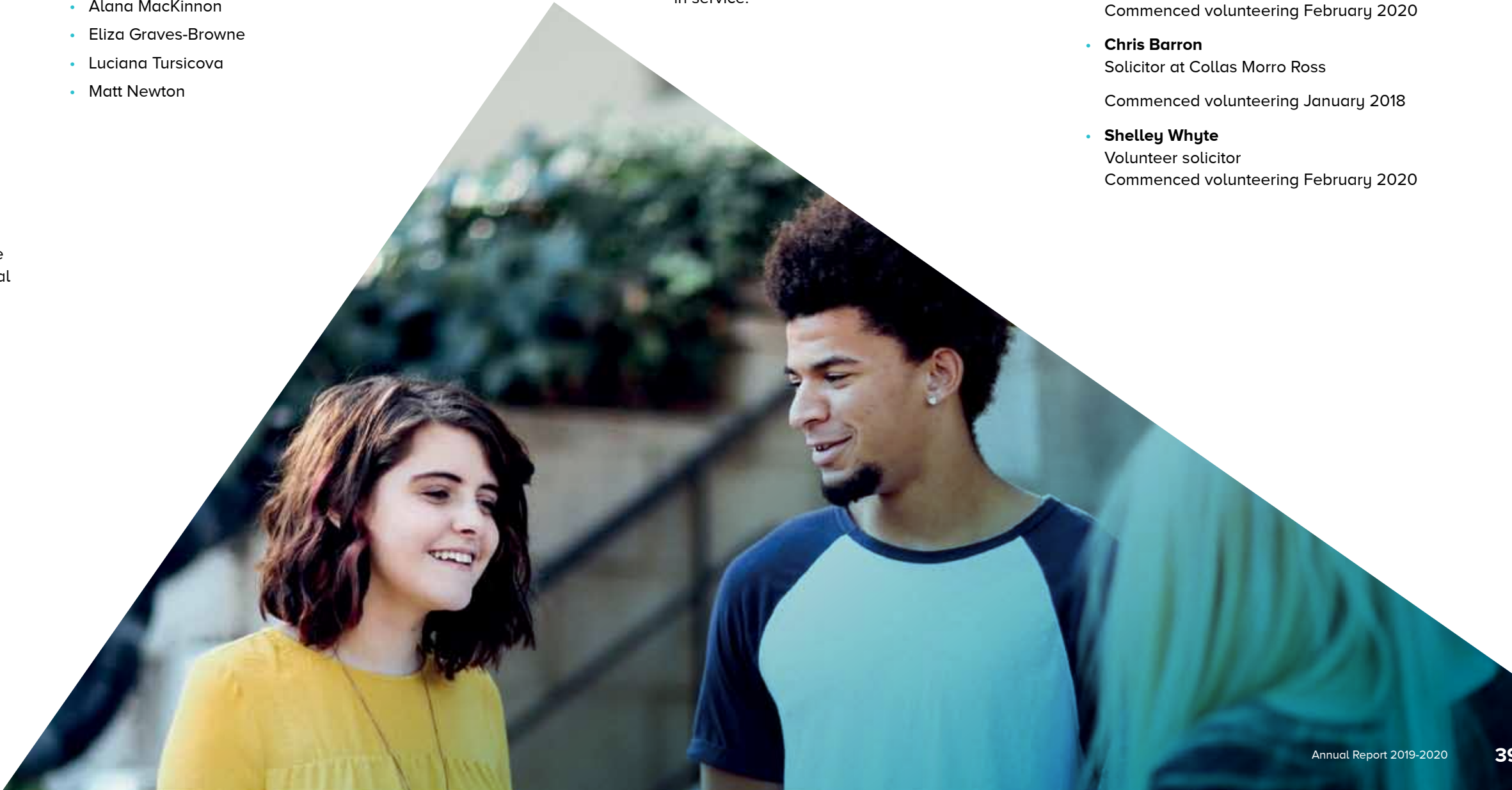
Volunteer Solicitors

To assist in the running of the Tuesday evening walk-in clinic, we have volunteer solicitors come provide advice and assistance to clients attending the Centre. Most of these solicitors work during the day at their own place of employment, and volunteer their time at the Centre as a way of giving back to the community. Our volunteer solicitors bring a variety of knowledge and experience to the Centre which helps expand the services we can provide the community outside of business hours.

Whilst the walk-in night clinic was suspended during the COVID-19 restrictions and work from home structure, many of these volunteers continued to keep in contact with the Centre and offer assistance where they could and remained engaged to be able to recommence once the Centre moved back to the walk in service.

Volunteer Solicitors in 2019-2020:

- **Dennis Nettlefold**
Retired solicitor / volunteer solicitor
Commenced volunteering May 2017
- **Marilyn Davis**
Volunteer solicitor
Commenced volunteering April 2019
- **Joe Whitehead**
Volunteer solicitor
Commenced volunteering June 2017
- **Lucinda Veldman**
Senior Associate at Slater and Gordon
Commenced volunteering in October 2019
- **Thomas Barry**
Principal Lawyer for People and Corporate Services at Gold Coast Health
Commenced volunteering February 2020
- **Chris Barron**
Solicitor at Collas Morro Ross
Commenced volunteering January 2018
- **Shelley Whyte**
Volunteer solicitor
Commenced volunteering February 2020



Law Students

The Centre has various programs and placement opportunities for law students. The Centre works closely with local universities to ensure there are opportunities for students to gain practical experience whilst undertaking their studies. Students who attend the Centre participate in a range of activities such as:

- Sitting in on legal appointments;
- Conducting client intakes;
- Creating fact sheets and self-help kits to be made available to clients;
- Conducting research for solicitors;
- Assisting in reception;
- Drafting letters and documents for clients;
- Assisting in the completion of forms; and
- Any other task a solicitor deems appropriate based on a student's capabilities.

"I will be forever grateful for my time at the GCCLC. The staff and student team were some of the best, most supportive people I have had the pleasure of meeting through my university degree, and I am so appreciative of all they did to help me get through a difficult, if rewarding, summer semester."

- Volunteer law student Lachlan Hoy, Griffith University

Griffith University



The Centre and Griffith University have had a successful relationship for some years now where Griffith University law students can be part of the Centre to gain experience whilst completing their studies.

Community Lawyering Clinic

Tanya has worked with Griffith Law School staff to continue to operate a subject through Griffith University where six (6) students are placed at the Centre one day a week, for the duration of a semester (12 weeks). The first clinic commenced in July 2015 and has successfully been running each semester thereafter. Professor Fiona Fitzpatrick works with Tanya to enable this clinic to operate each semester.

Night Clinic Volunteers

To assist in the running of the Tuesday evening walk-in clinic, law students are placed in reception to be the first point of contact for clients attending the clinic.

Students are placed on a six (6) month basis, where they assist in setting up the office for the night clinic and then triage clients once the clinic commences.

The students greet clients, briefly discuss their matter and if appropriate for the clinic, conduct a conflict check and progress the client through the intake process to be seen by a solicitor.

Southport Domestic Violence Court Volunteers

In August 2018, the Southport Domestic Violence Court asked the Centre to establish a team of law student volunteers who can work on the information desk on Level 1 of the Southport Courthouse, at the information desk for the Domestic Violence Court. A team of volunteers were recruited, trained and welcomed to this new project. Volunteers continued to work on the information desk at the Court under this program until October 2019.

From October 2019, funding was provided to an external organization to manage and supervise volunteers in this role which meant the Centre's acting role in working with information desk volunteers was handed over and this program concluded.

They are responsible for marking parties off as they arrive, providing information and referrals to parties, informing the Court of matters which are ready to be heard as well as any important information about parties plus many more duties, including working with the duty lawyers, court registry staff and other organisations part of the Domestic Violence Court.

Phone advice volunteers

With the introduction of the phone advice services provided by the Centre this year, Tanya established a law student volunteer clinic to work with the solicitors. Students were rostered on each week to work with a specific solicitor in their telephone advice appointments.

Students would undertake tasks such as completing client detail forms, triaging, typing solicitors notes and any other tasks required to assist in the operation of the phone advice clinic.

Bond University



The Centre continues to have a relationship with Bond University where students are placed at the Centre during their academic semesters. The Centre currently has two (2) programs available for Bond University law students to participate in.

Clinical Placement Subject

As with previous years, the Centre continues to accept law students enrolled in a clinic legal placement subject run by the Bond Faculty of Law staff member, Lindsey Stevenson-Graf.

Bond University provides 5-6 students from this subject who attend the Centre for a 5 day placement. Bond students are placed at the Centre twice a year – during February to March and also October to November. These students are assessed on their performance at the Centre and this significantly contributes to their overall grade for the subject.

Bond Community Law Clinic

This clinic commenced in June 2015 and is organised through Maria Nicolae from Bond University in liaison with Tanya Diessel. This clinic allows for 4 students to volunteer one day a week at the Centre and isn't part of their studies but on a voluntary basis. This clinic was established to be able to provide further opportunities for Bond University law students to volunteer and gain practical experiences, as well as to be able to create a greater service available to our clients which can be provided during the clinic.

We have had great success with the Bond University law students, from both the clinical placement and volunteer clinic, where a number of them ask to return to continue volunteering out of their own time to ensure they can gain as much experience as they possible and continue to learn whilst completing their studies.

Law Student Placements 2019-2020

Clinical Placement and Community Lawyering Clinics

- Ana-Catarina De Sousa
- Arashdeep Dhanda
- Bernadine Lai
- Billie Shone
- Chasely Kern
- Chengye Fan
- Cheryl Chiung-Wen Chang
- Dawn Walker
- Egi Band
- Emma Dehring
- Jake Hepplewhite
- Jaslene Bui
- Kelly Modder
- Lachlan Hay
- Laura Elliott
- Maria Clemente
- Max Neilson
- Melanie Lehamn
- Narayan Pattison
- Natalie Vellozzi
- Nicholas McLean
- Nicholas Miranda
- Priya Thind
- Reece Webb
- Roselyn King
- Samantha Elliott
- Sarina Yusuff
- Sartaj Malhi
- Shaylene Ghang
- Sylvie Chadwick
- Tanisha Wong
- Tanveer Sohal
- Tavis Gorman
- Telekah Anderson
- Tobie Mitchell
- Tyler Rech
- Ziggi Busch

Domestic Violence Court Volunteers

- Adrienne Peers
- Charlotte Fitzgerald
- Chasely Kern
- Chloe Aus
- Christine Mitchell
- Darascilla Mason
- Jarrad Eccles
- Jayson Cooke
- Jodie Layzell
- Laura Griffiths
- Linda McBride
- Madison Abela
- Robyn Little
- Sam Cleveland
- Sharmaine Moore

Night Clinic and Phone Intake Volunteers

- Abdullah Khan
- Annabelle Bloor
- Bridget Barford
- Casey Roche
- Charlotte Fitzgerald
- Christine Mitchell
- Claire Drake
- Jamie-Lee Carter
- Jarrad Eccles
- Jayson Cooke
- Laura Griffiths
- Liliia Samysheva
- Madison Abela
- Melanie Lehman
- Nicholas Miranda
- Olivia Woods
- Sharmaine Moore
- Tara Byrne





Gold Coast
Community
Legal Centre

Phone: 07 5532 9611

Email: office@gcclc.org.au

Address:
34 Railway Street,
Southport Qld 4215

www.gcclc.org.au