

ANNUAL *Report*

2025-2026

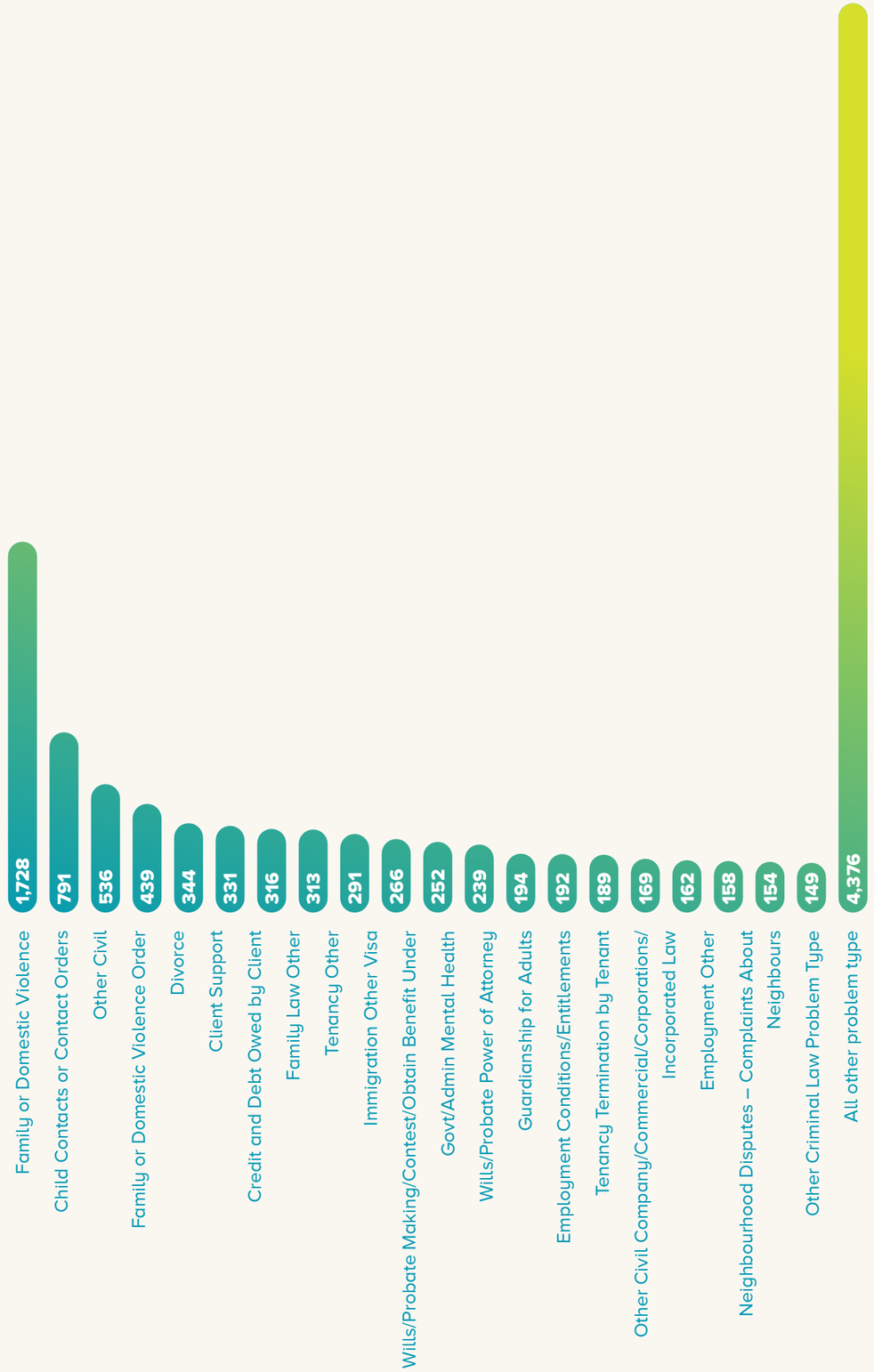
Gold Coast
Community
Legal Centre



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Areas of Law



Acknowledgement 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.



About Us

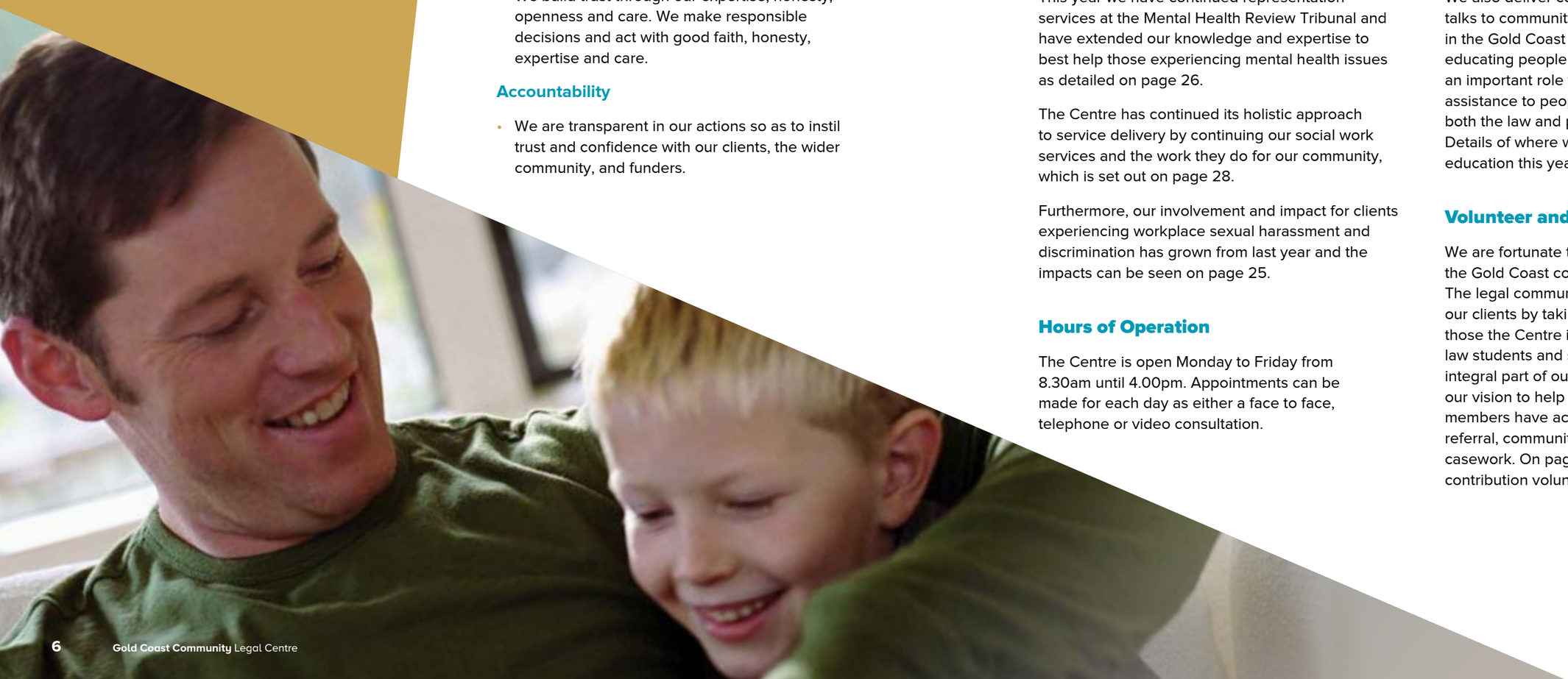
The Gold Coast Community Legal Centre is a non-profit community based legal service advising and assisting the Gold Coast since 1984.

Vision

- An informed and empowered community with justice, hope and fairness at its heart.

Mission

- Providing free holistic and caring legal assistance services to support and empower people most in need.



Our values

Responsiveness

- We believe that by responding and working together we achieve the best outcomes for our clients and community.

Courage

- We are committed, reliable and passionate in providing the help our clients need.

Respect

- We listen; we embrace diversity, equity and inclusion; we recognise the dignity of all people.

Compassion

- Care for others is at the heart of all that we do; our work is grounded in empathy, dignity and kindness

Integrity

- We build trust through our expertise, honesty, openness and care. We make responsible decisions and act with good faith, honesty, expertise and care.

Accountability

- We are transparent in our actions so as to instil trust and confidence with our clients, the wider community, and funders.

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, workplace sexual harassment and discrimination, 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 22 and 24.

We have also continued our relationship with Relationships Australia and continued to provide legal advice to clients under the Elder Abuse Prevention Support Service (EAPSS) and those who are experiencing elder abuse, as detailed on page 27.

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 26.

The Centre has continued its holistic approach to service delivery by continuing our social work services and the work they do for our community, which is set out on page 28.

Furthermore, our involvement and impact for clients experiencing workplace sexual harassment and discrimination has grown from last year and the impacts can be seen on page 25.

Hours of Operation

The Centre is open Monday to Friday from 8.30am until 4.00pm. Appointments can be made for each day as either a face to face, telephone or video consultation.

Outreach Services

The outreach services continued to be in high demand where we provided civil law, family law, social work and duty lawyer services out of these offices. We believe in the importance of having availability across the Coast so clients can access face to face support, even for those with transport difficulties and other vulnerabilities that make travelling to Southport difficult. In addition to outreach services, provided safety criteria are met, our Centre can provide home visits or off-site assistance (such as seeing a client at their local Neighbourhood Centre) to those whose vulnerabilities or circumstances restrict their ability to travel and face to face is the best form of service delivery for that client.

To view the statistics on our outreach operations for this year, please refer to pages 19 to 20.

Community Legal Education

We also deliver community legal education and talks to community groups and other agencies in the Gold Coast area. This plays a vital role in educating people on various legal issues and has an important role to play in early intervention and assistance to people by raising their awareness of both the law and places they can go to access help. Details of where we delivered community legal education this year are on page 31.

Volunteer and Pro Bono Contributions

We are fortunate to have volunteer assistance from the Gold Coast community, through various roles. The legal community plays a vital role in assisting our clients by taking on pro bono matters for those the Centre is unable to assist. Additionally, law students and social work students 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 page 37 we detail the extensive contribution volunteers make to our Centre.

Our Team

Management Committee

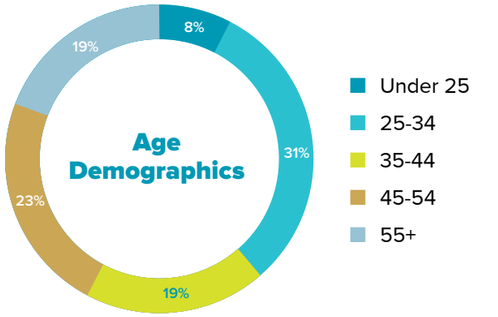
- **President:** Joseph Whitehead
- **Vice-president:** Dennis Nettlefold
- **Secretary:** Antonious Abdelshahied
- **Treasurer:** Joe Ranieri
- **Ordinary member:** Lindsey Stevenson-Graf
- **Ordinary member:** Michael Kyle
- **Ordinary member:** Olivia Woods

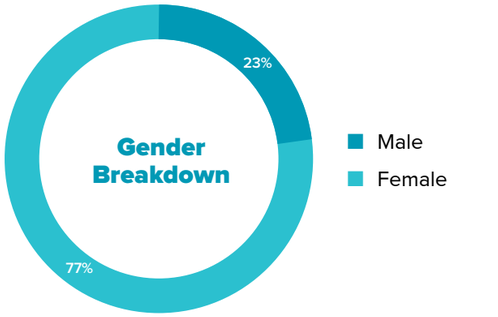
Staff

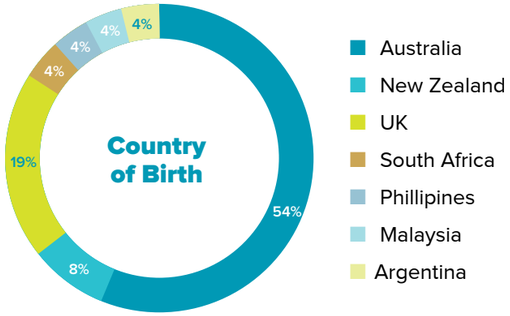
- **Chief Executive Officer:** Tanya Diessel
- **Principal Solicitor:** Skye Worth
- **Supervising Solicitor:** Rikki-Jane Watts
- **Solicitor:** Ali Kandemir
- **Solicitor:** Andrew Rosemond
- **Solicitor:** Anne Pridham
- **Solicitor:** Cassandra Mallett
- **Solicitor**: Chloe de Almeida
- **Solicitor:** Grace Hallewell
- **Solicitor**: Ian Martin
- **Solicitor:** Jemima McGrath
- **Solicitor:** Julie-Ann Ross
- **Solicitor:** Megan Farmer
- **Solicitor:** Natasha Balakrishnan
- **Solicitor:** Oliver Meagher
- **Solicitor:** Tracey Meyer
- **Solicitor:** William Teao
- **Social Worker:** Vanessa Taylor
- **Social Worker:** Carlos Rosales
- **Social Worker:** Alex Sheehy
- **Operations & HR Officer:** Rebecca Johnson
- **Finance & Administration Manager:** Tryll Gemparo
- **Administration and Client Support Officer / Community Engagement:** Leigh Street
- **Administration and Client Support Officer:** Heather Buckley
- **Administration and Client Support Officer:** Kellie Wardman
- **Administration and Client Support Officer:** Madeline Saunders
- **Administration and Client Support Officer:** Olivia Harrison

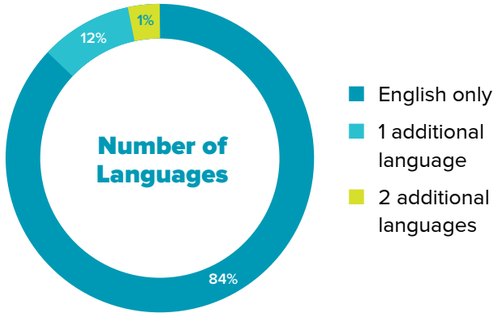
Average Age 43

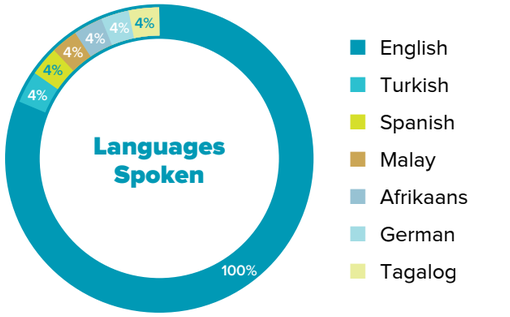
Average Service Years 5

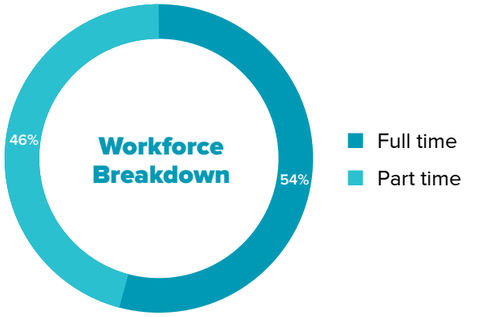


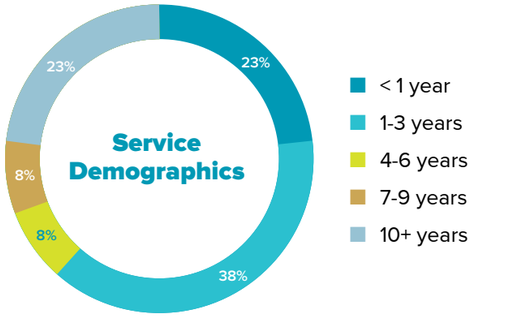


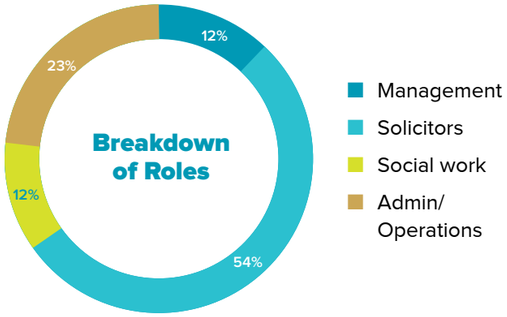












President's Report

This year has been one of progress, stability, and renewed optimism for the Gold Coast Community Legal Centre. As Chair of the Management Committee, I am pleased to report that the Centre continues to strengthen its capacity to serve some of the most vulnerable members of our community while positioning itself for future growth.

A major highlight of the year has been the continued advancement of the $2 million commitment secured through our local state MP Rob Molhoek. This significant investment is moving closer to reality, and we are optimistic that the Centre's current building and site will soon undergo a substantial redevelopment. The planned improvements will create a safer and more functional environment for clients and staff alike, while providing modern facilities that better accommodate our legal practitioners, social workers, volunteers, and administrative team. These upgrades will ensure the Centre is well equipped to meet the growing and increasingly complex needs of the Gold Coast community for many years to come, with works planned to commence in the first half of 2027.

I am also pleased to report that funding for our core services has been secured through to 2030. This provides much-needed certainty for the organisation and allows us to focus on delivering high-quality legal and social support services without interruption. It is a strong endorsement from our funders of the vital role the Centre plays in supporting those who might otherwise struggle to access justice.

Elder abuse has once again emerged as a significant area of concern. Data collected by the Centre continues to demonstrate that this issue remains prevalent across our region. With the Gold Coast's population continuing to age and many retirees choosing to relocate here to enjoy the lifestyle our community offers, it is clear that elder abuse will remain a critical challenge requiring ongoing attention, advocacy, and support services.

This year also brought a change to our Management Committee with the exiting of our long-time Treasurer, Joe Ranieri. Joe has volunteered on our committee for 13 years and the work he has done is greatly appreciated. This saw an opening for a role on the Committee, and we were pleased to welcome our new Treasurer Dr John Sing.

On behalf of the Board, I thank our dedicated staff, volunteers, supporters, and funding partners for their commitment throughout the year. Together, we remain focused on ensuring access to justice and support for those who need it most.

Joe Whitehead
President,
Management Committee
Gold Coast Community
Legal Centre



Leadership and Management Report

CEO Report

The 2025–2026 year has been one of growth, strengthening and change for the Gold Coast Community Legal Centre. While our purpose remains constant, providing free, holistic and caring assistance to people who need it most, this year we continued to build the people, partnerships and infrastructure needed to support our community into the future.

Throughout the year, we assisted 3,251 clients, provided 3,228 legal advices, 439 legal tasks, 536 social work services and 1,538 duty lawyer services, together with more than 8,000 instances of legal information and referral. More than half of clients who disclosed this information had experienced domestic and family violence, while many experienced financial hardship, disability or mental illness, homelessness and other vulnerabilities. These figures reflect the breadth and complexity of the circumstances facing those who seek our assistance.

We strengthened our team and service capacity, welcoming new staff and investing in staff wellbeing, leadership, training and professional development. Our holistic service model remains central to our work, bringing together legal and social work support alongside specialist services in domestic and family violence, child protection, mental health, elder abuse and workplace sexual harassment and discrimination.

Our reach continued to grow. Kirra Hill remained an access point for the southern Gold Coast, our duty lawyer services continued across several courts, and we commenced remote Domestic Violence Duty Lawyer services to Townsville Magistrates Court.

A significant achievement was securing funding for our disaster recovery work, with service delivery commencing during 2025–2026. This expanded our ability to assist people impacted by disaster through legal advice, information and community education.

Partnerships remained an important focus. We launched Coffee and Connections, bringing together Gold Coast family lawyers and practitioners, continued our frontline networking initiatives, and strengthened relationships with community organisations and stakeholders.

The best outcomes are often achieved when services communicate well and make it easier for people to find the right help.

Behind our frontline services, we strengthened the organisation through our transition from CLASS to Actionstep, improved data and reporting systems, strengthened compliance, and continued our work across governance, risk and policy. These improvements are essential to ensuring GCCLC remains sustainable, accountable and capable of supporting growing service demand.

Our future premises also took an important step forward. We continued working with government regarding the $2 million election commitment, with Attorney-General Deb Frecklington endorsing the funding being used towards renovation of our Railway Street premises. This represents an opportunity to create a safe, accessible and welcoming environment for clients while providing our growing team with the space needed to deliver our services.

This year also brought change to our Management Committee. I sincerely thank Joe Ranieri, who stepped down as Treasurer after serving on our Management Committee since 2013. We are incredibly grateful for his longstanding commitment and contribution.

None of the achievements in this Annual Report happen because of one person or role. I am incredibly proud of our solicitors, social workers, administration and support staff, students and volunteers, who bring professionalism, compassion and humanity to their work every day. I also thank our Management Committee, funding bodies and the many organisations and community partners who work alongside us.

As we look ahead, our focus is not simply on becoming bigger. It is on becoming a stronger, more accessible and sustainable Centre, while retaining the community focus and humanity that have defined the Gold Coast Community Legal Centre since 1984.

I am enormously proud of what we have achieved together during 2025–2026 and excited about the opportunities ahead.

Tanya Diessel
CEO

Principal Solicitor Report

The 2025–2026 year has been another busy and rewarding year for the Gold Coast Community Legal Centre. Looking back over the year, I am incredibly proud of what our team has achieved together and, most importantly, the difference those efforts have made for the people who turn to our Centre for help.

Demand for our services remained high throughout the year. Despite that demand, our legal, social work and administration teams continued to provide responsive, compassionate and high-quality assistance across a broad range of services. By the end of the financial year, the Centre had achieved its overall 2025–2026 service delivery targets. Our work included general legal advice and assistance, social work support, domestic and family violence and child protection duty lawyer services, Mental Health Review Tribunal work, elder abuse services, community legal education and our student clinics.

The numbers give some sense of the scale of this work. Across our funded services, the Centre delivered 3,241 legal advices, 435 non-legal support services, 439 legal tasks, 203 duty lawyer services and 58 court, tribunal and other representation services during the year. Behind every one of those figures is a person who came to the Centre needing information, reassurance, advocacy, practical assistance or someone willing to listen. Some of the outcomes achieved during the year demonstrate the importance of being able to provide flexible assistance that responds to the circumstances of the individual client.

The year was also about strengthening our connection with the community. Our team delivered and developed community legal education on issues including wills and enduring powers of attorney, coercive control, elder abuse, domestic and family violence and other issues affecting our community. We collaborated with organisations including Relationships Australia, Women's Legal Service Queensland, the Domestic Violence Prevention Centre and Power Nadeshiko, and continued building relationships across the legal and community sectors. Our family law team also established the Gold Coast Family Law Network's "Coffee and Connections" events, creating an opportunity to strengthen relationships between local family lawyers, barristers, community legal centres and other professionals. Overall, we delivered 17 community legal education activities and recorded 129 stakeholder engagements throughout the year.

Professional development and continuous improvement have remained important priorities. Throughout the year our team participated in professional conferences, advocacy training, WHS and wellbeing training and education on risk management and professional obligations. Our staff meetings also incorporated ongoing education about the Risk Management Guide and GCCLC's policies and procedures.

What stands out to me most when reflecting on the year is the dedication of our people. Community legal practice can be challenging work; our clients often come to us at incredibly difficult points in their lives seeking advice and support. The skill, patience, empathy and commitment our lawyers and social workers bring to this work every day is something of which I am extremely proud. I also want to acknowledge our administration team, whose work is fundamental to everything we do. They are often the first people our clients speak to, and their calm, welcoming and practical support helps make our services accessible while keeping an extremely busy Centre functioning.

I am equally grateful to our management team and Committee for its ongoing guidance, governance and commitment to the Centre. Our achievements during 2025–2026 reflect the contribution of the whole GCCLC team.

It is a privilege to work alongside such a dedicated group of people. I look forward to continuing to build on that work, strengthen our services and find new ways to support and empower our community.

Skye Worth
Principal Solicitor



"Solicitor was awesome! Thanks so much team - such a great community service."

Acknowledgment 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 and the Queensland Department of Justice and Attorney-General provided the majority of the Centre's funding, collected and administered by the Queensland Department of Justice Legal Assistance Strategy and Funding department.

We also received funding through the DRFA Disaster Funding Relief Package in response to Tropical Cyclone Alfred, administered through the Queensland Department of Justice.

We received payment from Legal Aid Queensland for our provision of the Domestic Violence Duty Lawyers Services in Southport and Townsville, 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 each University.

Furthermore, we received one-off grants from the City of Gold Coast and Department of Justice Gambling Community Benefit Fund for one-off project work to support the Centre.

Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department

Queensland Government

CITY OF GOLDCOAST.

Legal Aid QUEENSLAND

Relationships Australia

BOND UNIVERSITY

Griffith UNIVERSITY

Our Impact 2025-2026

We are committed to advocating for dignity, human rights and social justice for vulnerable and disadvantaged people on the Gold Coast.

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.

3,379 – Number of clients seen

1,092 – Clients who identified as male (32.32%)

2,046 – Client who identified as female (60.5%)

241 – Clients who identified as other gender (7.13%)

Client by age breakdown

- Under 25 years – **201** (6%)
- 25-35 years – **685** (20%)
- 36-45 years – **766** (23%)
- 46-55 years – **640** (19%)
- 56-64 years – **299** (9%)
- 65 years and older – **482** (14%)

Income levels

- Nil and Low income – **1,256** (37.20%)
- Medium income – **849** (25.13%)
- High income – **88** (2.6%)

536 – Clients who have a mental illness or disability (15.86%)

142 – Clients who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (4.2%)

336 – Clients whose main language spoken at home is not English (9.94%)

338 – Clients at risk of or experiencing homelessness (10%)

2025 – Clients at risk of or experiencing domestic and family violence (59.93%)

Please note: figures are reflective of clients who disclosed this information at the time of booking.

60%
of clients experienced domestic or family violence

62%
of clients experienced financial hardship

16%
of clients reported a mental illness or disability

14%
of clients were over the age of 65

4%
of clients identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

10%
of clients were culturally or linguistically diverse

10%
of clients were experiencing or at risk of homelessness

Deliverables for 2025-2026

Below are the number of deliverables the Centre provided this year. This sets out the type of work we provided to the Gold Coast community and how we assisted in their matters.

Our solicitors and social workers assist clients in a variety of ways to ensure we can provide a holistic service and make sure there is 'no wrong door' when people reach out for help.

Total number of services – **14,187**

Number of legal advices given – **3,225**

Number of face to face advices – **1,729**

Number of telephone advices – **1,496**

Number of legal tasks completed – **439**

Number of social work services – **536**

Number of duty lawyer services – **1,538**

Number of FASS services – **4**

Times we appeared in the Court / Tribunal (excluding DFV duty lawyer services) - **58**

Legal information and referrals provided – **8,265**

Community Legal Education activities – **17**

Appeared in the Mental Health Review Tribunal – **105**

Reported hours spent on Elder Abuse Matters – **536 hours**

Below are the top 20 areas of law that assistance was sought in during this year. As seen, family and domestic violence, general family law and civil law matters are the most sought areas of assistance. This emphasises the need for the Centre to provide services across all funded areas of law to ensure we are available and accessible to the entire Gold Coast.

Family or Domestic Violence	**1,728**	14.91%
Child Contacts or Contact Orders	**791**	6.83%
Other Civil	**536**	4.63%
Family or Domestic Violence Order	**439**	3.79%
Divorce	**344**	2.97%
Client Support	**331**	2.86%
Credit and Debt Owed by Client	**316**	2.73%
Family Law Other	**313**	2.70%
Tenancy Other	**291**	2.51%
Immigration Other Visa	**266**	2.30%
Wills/Probate Making/Contest/ Obtain Benefit Under	**252**	2.17%
Govt/Admin Mental Health	**239**	2.06%
Wills/Probate Power of Attorney	**194**	1.67%
Guardianship for Adults	**192**	1.66%
Employment Conditions/ Entitlements	**189**	1.63%
Tenancy Termination by Tenant	**169**	1.46%
Other Civil Company/Commercial/ Corporations/Incorporated Law	**162**	1.40%
Employment Other	**158**	1.36%
Neighbourhood Disputes – Complaints About Neighbours	**154**	1.33%
Other Criminal Law Problem Type	**149**	1.29%
All other problem type	**4,376**	37.74%



Service Delivery: Improvements and Highlights

This year, the Centre has continued to adapt and mould itself around the needs of the community.

Some of the key highlights this year include:

- Hosted a fundraising luncheon in collaboration with Rob Molhoek MP with special guest Attorney-General Deb Frecklington, raising awareness and support for the Centre's future building and service needs.
- Attended the official opening of the Beaudesert Courthouse, recognising our ongoing partnership with YFS Legal and HUB Community Legal Centre in delivering Domestic Violence Duty Lawyer services to the region since 2019.
- CEO Tanya Diessel was appointed to the Legal Aid Queensland Board, reflecting her leadership and contribution to the legal assistance sector.
- Participated in the Power Nadeshiko documentary project on elder abuse, highlighting the legal impacts of elder abuse and domestic and family violence and raising awareness of the support available through GCCLC.
- Established the Coffee and Connections networking group, creating new opportunities for collaboration, support and professional engagement.
- Commenced work on a Women's Legal Service collaboration at Coolangatta Courthouse to enhance service accessibility and partnership opportunities.
- Continued to facilitate the Frontline Administration Group, supporting professional development and peer networking across the sector.
- Expanded team capacity within the Mental Health Review Tribunal (MHRT) service area, enabling greater support for clients.
- Successfully secured 4 grant opportunities, strengthening the Centre's capacity to deliver services and community programs.
- Provided legal assistance and community support in response to disaster-related impacts affecting the region.
- Received Attorney General endorsement for planned building renovations, supporting the Centre's future growth and service delivery needs.
- Collaboration with Domestic Violence Prevention Centre in hosting room availability for their Mens Behaviour Change intakes and assessments.
- Continuation of the secondment with the Domestic Violence Prevention Centre to grow and enhance the collaborative work we do between the organisations.
- Continued presence in the Southport Domestic Violence Court providing Domestic Violence Duty Lawyer and Child Support Duty Lawyer services as a Legal Aid Preferred Supplier.
- Commencement of providing DVDL services to Townsville DFV Court via remote services.
- Continuation of the Queensland CLC Front-line worker networking group, hosted by GCCLC.
- Continued reach within the community and accessibility to services for the entire Gold Coast.
- Successful client outcomes as shown through various case studies and positive feedback.
- Maintaining relationships with universities and the local legal profession to ensure continued involvement of law students and growth in volunteer solicitors to assist in providing our services.

- Maintenance of our relationship with Clayton Utz who provided continued support to assist clients of the Centre on a pro bono basis
- Continuation of Staff Development Days and training opportunities for staff to further educate and train staff as well as ensure staff wellbeing, team building and positive culture in the office.
- Successfully launched and operated a new service location, increasing our capacity to support clients through additional consultation rooms.

In addition to highlights throughout the year, the Centre is always open to and welcoming of continuous improvement suggestions. This year, some of the improvements the Centre incorporated were:

- Implemented a staff wellbeing program to support employee health, engagement and workplace wellbeing.
- Developed a comprehensive Areas of Law guide to strengthen staff knowledge and support effective client referrals.
- Upgraded video conferencing technology to improve communication, collaboration and service delivery across multiple locations.
- Continuation of regular surveys to staff to support the team and their wellbeing.
- We continued to invest in improvements across our workplace, with a focus on creating a safe, supportive, efficient and welcoming environment for our staff, clients and community.
- Continuous improvements in data collection with the support of the new and enhanced Actionstep database.



Outreach Services

This year, we continued to operate out of our outreach office at Kirra Hill, as well as provide duty lawyer services at Coolangatta and Beaudesert Courthouse.

The Kirra outreach office continued to be used to provide civil law, family law and social work services out of this office. We believe in the importance of having this office available to the Southern Gold Coast so clients can access face to face appointments, even for those with transport difficulties and other vulnerabilities that make travelling to Southport difficult.

In addition to outreach locations, provided safety criteria are met, our Centre can provide home visits or off-site assistance (such as seeing a client at their local Neighbourhood Centre) to those whose vulnerabilities or circumstances restrict their ability to travel and face to face is the best form of service delivery for that client.

Below are some statistics for our outreach services this year.

Kirra Hill

In Kirra, we occupy a permanent office at the Kirra Hill Community and Cultural Centre, provided by the City of Gold Coast. This commenced in March 2019 and we have worked in the area since. This office allows clients from the Southern Gold Coast regions to easily access our services as well as provides an office for staff who work out of the Coolangatta Courthouse once a week.

A snapshot of clients seen at the Kirra Hill office this year:

- Clients seen: **122**
- Female: **67%**
- Male: **30%**
- Disability: **11%**
- Experience DV: **29%**
- Financial disadvantage: **57%**
- Homeless Indicator: **14%**
- Main language other than English: **11%**
- ATSI: **2%**

Coolangatta Courthouse

We continued to provide domestic violence duty lawyer services each Friday out of the Coolangatta Courthouse this year. This is a service established due to the unmet need we identified in collaboration with the Court that Respondents appearing for their domestic violence matter were unrepresented and were in need of legal support. This service helps ensure that Court processes are followed and parties are aware of their rights and obligations in regards to their matter.

A snapshot of clients seen at the Coolangatta Courthouse this year:

- Clients seen: **74**
- Female: **30%**
- Male: **60%**
- Disability: **30%**
- Experience DV: **24%**
- Financial disadvantage: **43%**
- Main language other than English: **4%**
- Homeless Indicator: **8%**
- ATSI: **5%**

Beaudesert Courthouse

This year, we continued to provide domestic violence duty lawyer services out of the Beaudesert Courthouse on alternate Wednesdays. This was first established in February 2020 and we have continued to see the growth in matters appearing before the Court since then. Our solicitors attending this Court advise and represent Respondents appearing for their domestic violence matter, to assist parties to understand their rights and obligations in their matter and provide access to justice which otherwise wouldn't be available to Respondents.

A snapshot of clients seen at the Beaudesert Courthouse this year:

- Clients seen: **51**
- Female: **22%**
- Male: **76%**
- Disability: **25%**
- Experience DV: **31%**
- Financial disadvantage: **63%**
- Main language other than English: **2%**
- Homeless Indicator: **24%**
- ATSI: **10%**

Townsville Courthouse

This year, we began providing domestic violence duty lawyer services remotely at Townsville Courthouse every Monday and on alternate Wednesdays. This was first established in July 2025 and we have continued to see the growth in matters appearing before the Court since then. Our solicitors attending this Court advise and represent Respondents appearing for their domestic violence matter, to assist parties to understand their rights and obligations in their matter and provide access to justice which otherwise wouldn't be available to Respondents.

A snapshot of clients seen at the Townsville Courthouse this year:

- Clients seen: **375**
- Female: **30%**
- Male: **70%**
- Disability: **28%**
- Experience DV: **33%**
- Financial disadvantage: **64%**
- Main language other than English: **3%**
- Homeless Indicator: **30%**
- ATSI: **11%**



What We Do

The GCCLC continued to provide free legal and social work support, advice, advocacy, information and referral to the entire Gold Coast community.

Services continued to be provided via face to face, telephone and video appointments at our Southport and Kirra office, as well as various Courthouses. The Centre continued to provide the following services throughout the year:

- Information and referrals
- Legal advice
- Legal tasks
- Ongoing legal support services
- Casework services
- Court / Tribunal representation
- Duty Lawyer services
- Discrete and ongoing non-legal support
- Community Legal Education
- Community Development

The Centre continued to assist clients in a variety of areas of law, including but not limited to:

- Family law (including parenting, property and divorce matters)
- Domestic and Family Violence
- Elder abuse
- Mental health matters
- Human Rights issues
- Child Support and Child Protection matters
- Employment law
- Consumer disputes
- Neighbour dispute
- Motor Vehicle Accidents
- Residential Tenancy matters and body corporate issues
- Minor debt
- Centrelink Disputes and Welfare Rights issues
- QCAT matters and certain Magistrates Court matters
- Traffic offences
- Minor criminal matters
- Driving and licence matters (including drink and drug driving, work licences and special hardship orders)

Furthermore, the Centre continued to provide specialist services in the following areas (which are further explained on the following pages):

- Domestic Violence Duty Lawyer services
- Child Protection Duty Lawyer Services
- Mental Health Review Tribunal matters
- Elder Abuse Prevention and Support Services
- Social Work services
- Workplace Sexual Harassment and Discrimination services
- Disaster recovery services

> "Solicitor was very professional. She was very empathetic, patient and understanding with my case as I'm neurodivergence. Her knowledge and expertise was very helpful and guided me in the right path. I highly recommend her to anyone who needs legal advice."

Domestic Violence Duty Lawyer Services and Interagency Collaboration

We deliver services at Southport five (5) days a week 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 (5) days 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 1,538 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 85 people at this Court.

Beaudesert Domestic Violence Duty Lawyer

Since February 2020 we have been providing duty lawyer services at Beaudesert Magistrates Court. Each Wednesday 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 53 people at this Court.

Townsville Domestic Violence Duty Lawyer

Since 1 July 2025 we have been providing duty lawyer services remotely at Townsville Magistrates Court. Each Monday and fortnightly Wednesday 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 375 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.

Additionally, we work closely with the Domestic Violence Prevention Centre to accept referrals from their clients in need of legal advice and support in their matter.

Following the success of the 12-month secondment with DVPC, which commenced in March 2025, it was agreed to extend the arrangement through to the end of 2026. During this extended secondment, a DVPC staff member will continue to support the GCCLC team by:

- Assisting GCCLC clients with service delivery and support.
- Enhancing the team's understanding and application of trauma-informed practices, particularly when working with clients experiencing domestic and family violence (DFV).
- Providing weekly outreach services from the DVPC office.
- Strengthening GCCLC's capacity to support victims of crime and respond to their legal and support needs.

Case study

Example of how we assisted a client at the Domestic Violence Court

The Gold Coast Community Legal Centre assisted a client in their capacity as Domestic Violence Duty Lawyer during which complications arose requiring further assistance and support, so the client was referred to the Centre for ongoing assistance and support.

Following this, our solicitor provided further advice and ongoing support to the client at the office and assisted in urgently drafting affidavit material for the client to be filed in the Magistrates Court to support the Queensland Police Service's Application for Protection Order protecting the client.

Our solicitor then assisted again in their capacity as Domestic Violence Duty Lawyer and ensured that the client was supported throughout the Court date and this support and the filed affidavit material led to the client's matter being successful and further necessary protections were added to the Protection Order by the Court.

The client and the Prosecutor in Court on this date, were grateful for this ongoing support and assistance, as with this further affidavit material filed additional protections could be put in place immediately and the matter could proceed in Court to ensure the ongoing protection of the client.

> "Thanks to my solicitor for your invaluable help."



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 are 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 55 people at the Courthouse needing our help in this jurisdiction.



> "The Solicitor was amazing & helped me initially. The Social worker has been the most helpful I could have ever wished for, Empathy, understanding, compassion and common sense are so professionally empowered & implemented. A massive GRATITUDE"

Workplace Sexual Harassment and Discrimination

From September 2022 until June 2025, we received funding to expand our services to include legal and social work assistance to those experiencing workplace sexual harassment or discrimination issues.

Whilst this funding has ceased this year, our Centre has been able to upskill our legal and social work team in this area of law to continue providing this service.

Due to the sensitive nature of this area of law and a client's reluctance to speak up about it, the holistic services provided by the Centre ensure support and encouragement are provided and clients feel empowered and believed in their matter.

> "I am very happy to get help from the legal service."

Case study

Example of how we assisted a client on Workplace Sexual Harassment and Discrimination

The client was employed in a workplace where the majority of her coworkers were males.

The client became aware of online content about her being shared between her coworkers and supervisors. The content included photographs, comments and emojis of a sexually harassing nature.

The client felt extremely uncomfortable upon discovering what was occurring and reported the behaviour to management, however the report was dismissed with no action taken to protect the client.

Our dedicated employment law solicitor was able to inform the client about sexual harassment in the workplace, including what it is and assuring the client that workplace sexual harassment is unlawful and unacceptable. Our solicitor provided legal advice about the courses of action available to the client, covering the law and legal processes. Written information and factsheets were also provided to ensure the client had the best opportunity to understand the legal concepts and options discussed.

Our solicitor identified the potential benefit of non-legal referrals and supports, considering the significant impact of the unlawful behaviours. Non-legal referrals and information about our social work service was provided.

In this interaction our solicitor listened to, informed and empowered our client, which are important goals of our Centre in our client interactions.

Mental Health Review Tribunal

This year, we continued to work as a Legal Aid Preferred Supplier in the Mental Health Review Tribunal, providing representation to community mental health patients and in- patients at mental health facilities at their Mental Health Review Tribunal hearings.

Additionally the Centre continued to accept direct referrals from the Independent Patient Rights Advisor (IPRA) where we assist clients with their Mental Health matters and appear in the Tribunal on their behalf.

The Queensland Mental Health Act 2016 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 advocate 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. We have continued to see the number of clients assisted each year grow as this area of law expands.

This year we represented 72 clients at their Mental Health Review Tribunal hearings as referred to us by Legal Aid.

*This figure excludes the Tribunal appearance work outside of the Preferred Supplier work provided and funded by Legal Aid Qld (excludes the clients referred to the Centre by the Independent Patient Rights Adviser).

Case study

How we assisted a client in the Mental Health Tribunal:

Through a collaborative approach between our legal and social work teams, the Gold Coast Community Legal Centre provided advocacy and support to a client experiencing significant trauma and mental health challenges.

The client sought assistance after being dismissed from several jobs due to concerns about being criminally targeted. These concerns had led to a Treatment Authority being imposed, allowing treatment for a mental illness without consent. The client disagreed with the diagnosis and the need for treatment.

During counselling sessions with our social worker, the client disclosed a significant history of domestic and family violence, which was impacting how certain experiences and events were interpreted. Our social worker provided ongoing support and helped gather evidence of domestic violence and trauma-related impacts.

With this evidence, our lawyer assisted the client in presenting their case at a Mental Health Review Tribunal hearing. The client was empowered to share their experiences and express their views, wishes, and preferences regarding treatment. After considering the evidence and the impact of trauma on the client's presentation and decision-making capacity, the Tribunal revoked the Treatment Authority.

The client was extremely pleased with the outcome and the holistic support provided by both our social work and legal teams, which helped achieve this result.

Elder Abuse Prevention and Support Service

This year we continued our partnership with Relationships Australia (QLD) to deliver legal help as part of the Elder Abuse Prevention and Support Service (EAPSS). 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 case manager to provide a dedicated legal service that provides individual legal help. We also deliver Community Education and Information regarding Elder Abuse Prevention strategies as required or requested by the community.

This year, we spent 536 hours on EAPSS matters, assisting 200 clients with their legal issues.

We acknowledge that Relationships Australia fund the Centre to provide this service.

Case study

Example of how we assisted a client:

An older client from a culturally and linguistically diverse background sought assistance while facing significant health challenges, social isolation, unsafe housing, and a lack of family support. The client was living in unsuitable accommodation that posed risks to their health and mobility and had become reluctant to access aged care services following previous negative experiences.

Working collaboratively with community partners, GCCLC provided intensive advocacy and practical support. This included securing safe and accessible housing, coordinating the client's relocation, re-establishing aged care services, and assisting with applications and assessments to ensure they received the support they required.

As a result, the client successfully moved into secure senior living accommodation, regained access to essential in-home services, and was approved for the highest level of Home Care

Package support. The client also began participating in community activities that strengthened their social connections and cultural identity, significantly improving their wellbeing, independence, and quality of life.



Social Work Service

Since the social work service started in October 2020, things have grown and developed into a very holistic and collaborative service.

The GCCLC acknowledges that many clients of our service are experiencing multiple factors when presenting to the Centre. The GCCLC social worker's role is to enhance our client's wellbeing. Our social workers work in partnership with solicitors to enhance service delivery and outcomes for clients. Our social workers are primarily based in Southport, but also work out of the Kirra office to ensure these services are available across the Coast.

The team have been working this year very closely with our solicitors in assisting clients beyond the legal needs they approach the Centre for. Solicitors have found the social work team to be invaluable to expanding the support provided to clients.

To elaborate, the ways in which our social workers have provided our clients support includes counselling, referrals and information including practical assistance around a wide area of topics such as:

- homelessness and risk of homelessness;
- housing and tenancy issues;
- CALD and Immigration issues;
- drug and alcohol issues;
- elder abuse including financial and emotional abuse;
- domestic and family violence;
- navigating NDIS;
- bereavement,
- isolation and loneliness;
- property and neighbour dispute;
- conflict in relationships, including divorce and separation,
- Impacts of physical and mental health on vulnerable members of the community,
- Centrelink and various other financial issues.

The social workers also have a role in promoting the service to the community and raising awareness of the challenges clients of GCCLC may be experiencing. Therefore, in addition to client assistance, our social workers regularly attend Community Development opportunities and network meetings to assist in the promotion and awareness of our Centre, as well as networking and gaining a better understanding and remaining up to date with referral pathways.

Our social workers also work with social work students on fieldwork placement from Griffith University who significantly assist our social work team in providing these services. Students are placed at the Centre for their required 500 hours practical placement and have been a great addition to the social work service.

July to October 2025

- Mihita Dewanji
- Nikitha Santhosh
- Samantha Moreno

February to June 2026

- Eleonora Pini
- Millie Crane
- Si Yuan Zhang

> "Referral to Social Worker was an added bonus for me & my partner due to the stress she has endured during this matter."

Case study

Example of how we assisted a client through the social work service

An 80-year-old woman, from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, presented at the centre in distress after receiving a letter from Government Office advising that her pension could be cancelled if she did not respond within 15 days. With no family or social supports, significant communication barriers in English, and a history of severe trauma from domestic violence, she was unable to resolve the matter herself. The letter related to suspicion that she might be receiving a pension from another country where she had once worked prior to migrating to Australia 50 years ago however her only income was the Australian pension. Repeated attempts to contact by phone were unsuccessful, with calls ending abruptly when requesting an interpreter. During her visit to the Gold Coast Community Legal Centre, she disclosed for the first time a history of extreme violence from her former husband, including life-threatening assaults, and described how fleeing to Australia meant abandoning her children in order to survive. Sharing her experiences left her feeling some relief, as she had carried the burden of her trauma silently for decades.

A social worker drafted a letter on her behalf, outlining her circumstances and highlighting the trauma that made dealing with official processes particularly distressing. With this advocacy, the client was able to resolve her case.

Centrelink staff advised her that the letter from the GCCLC had been instrumental in ensuring her matter was taken seriously. Without such support, she would not have been able to overcome the language barrier and systemic reluctance to assist her. The client later returned to the centre to express her gratitude in writing, noting the significant impact of both the advocacy and the opportunity to share her story in a safe and supportive environment.



Disaster Recovery Work

The Centre continues to play an active role in disaster recovery by providing legal advice, information, and community education to individuals and families affected by natural disaster events. Building on the foundations established following Tropical Cyclone Alfred, GCCLC has focused on increasing community awareness of available disaster recovery assistance and ensuring that people understand their legal rights and options following a disaster.

Throughout the year, the Centre delivered community legal education sessions, engaged with local stakeholders and support services, and provided tailored legal advice to community members experiencing issues related to insurance, housing, financial hardship, tenancy matters, and access to recovery support. This ongoing work has strengthened community resilience by helping people access timely assistance, navigate complex systems, and make informed decisions during recovery.

By maintaining strong partnerships and a visible community presence, GCCLC has continued to support vulnerable members of the Gold Coast community to recover, rebuild, and access the services they need following disaster events.

This work is funded by the DRFA Disaster Funding Relief Package and administered by the Queensland Department of Justice.



Community Legal Education

Community Legal Education activities are conducted to increase awareness in the community about the law and legal processes. This service intends to help community members to better understand everyday life issues, make better decisions and anticipate and avoid legal problems.

Our Centre targets either community members who are perceived to be at risk of or who are already facing legal issues and/ or non-legal workers who work with these community members.

GCCLC has a long history of delivering community legal education to the Gold Coast Community across a large number of locations and covering a range of topics.

Below are the CLE activities the Centre was involved in this year.

Disruption Conference

In September 2025, our Principal Solicitor, Skye, presented at the Disruption Conference, highlighting the impact of the Domestic Violence Integrated Response (DVIR) and its contribution to the establishment and ongoing evolution of Queensland's first Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Court in Southport.

Griffith University Career Talk

Our CEO Tanya presented to Griffith University law students on the role of Community Legal Centres and career pathways in the community legal sector, promoting access to justice and encouraging future legal professionals to consider careers in community law.

Kalwun presentation about GCCLC

In October 2025 presentation was delivered to Kalwun on the services and impact of the Gold Coast Community Legal Centre, strengthening relationships with local community partners and increasing awareness of available legal support.

MFO Womens Group Presentation

In August 2025 provided a legal information session to the MFO Women's Group, in partnership with our social work team, supporting participants to better understand their legal rights and available support services.

St John's Crisis Centre Presentation

Nov 2025 presentation delivered to staff and clients of St John's Crisis Centre, raising awareness of legal issues commonly faced by vulnerable community members and the assistance available through GCCLC.

Wills, EPOAs and AHDs Presentation

Delivered a community legal education session to the Probus Club of Runaway Bay on Wills, Enduring Powers of Attorney and Advance Health Directives, helping community members plan for the future and make informed decisions.

Queensland Justice of the Peace Professional Development Day presentation

In October 2025 our Senior Solicitor Ian presented at the Queensland Justices of the Peace Professional Development Day, providing legal education and strengthening collaboration with volunteers who play an important role in supporting the justice system.

Savvy Seniors Presentation

In February 2026, a presentation was delivered in collaboration with Relationships Australia to provide important information on Ending Powers of Attorney, Advance Health Directives, and Wills and Estates. The session focused on the three key documents essential for planning a person's future, covering decisions related to financial management, healthcare preferences, and the distribution of assets.

National Seniors Presentation

In April 2026, solicitor presented on Wills, EPOAs and AHDs held at the Kurrawa Surf Club in Broadbeach.

Community Engagement

Community engagement involves our Centre taking part in community events and opportunities to network and collaborate with other organisations.

During this year, staff and volunteers of the Centre had the opportunity to attend various events over the Gold Coast, sharing the view of our Centre and providing information about our services and how members of the community can access the services provided by the Centre.

Over the years, the GCCLC has created a reliable network and built strong relationships with other organisations. As a result, our Centre has relationships and referral pathways to ensure clients can receive the most appropriate service for their needs. When community engagement is done right, it can help to develop a more socially responsible organisation.

Griffith Career Fair



In August 2025, our staff Carlos and Cassie had the opportunity to join the Griffith Uni Career Fair, an event where local businesses and organisations met students and graduates to show career opportunities once they have finished their studies. The fair provided an invaluable platform for students to explore diverse career paths, connect with potential employers, discover internship opportunities, and gain insights into graduate programs and employer expectations through workshops. For employers, participation in the fair offered the chance to position themselves as options for graduates, access top-tier talent for future workforce needs, promote engagements to students and graduates, and engage with Careers and Employment Recruitment Consultants to address staffing requirements. This collaborative environment facilitated meaningful connections between academia and industry, fostering mutual growth and development.

Connect 2 Home



Our Centre proudly participated in the annual Connect 2 Home event, supporting people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The event provided an important opportunity for our legal and social work teams to connect with the community, identify need and increase awareness of available support.

It's in the bag appeal



The Centre was proud to participate in Share the Dignity's "It's in the bag" appeal this year.

This is a fundraising appeal to fill bags with essential items that can be given to women and children over the Christmas period to help with essential items they may need. These bags are generally distributed through refuges so our contribution to putting together bags we know would help people in need. Our bags were filled by our team with contributions from around the office.

Seniors Expo – Beenleigh



In September 2025, our Principal Solicitor attended the Beenleigh Seniors Expo which is a Gold Coast initiative to bring together key services for seniors within the area. This expo comprised of government representatives and local organisations to showcase services and supports for older people in our community. The Expo brought together experts from Cards and Concessions, The Queensland Police Service, and legal and financial service representatives to ensure seniors can get advice on:

- tips to protect yourself at home, in the community and financially.
- accessing local services and supports.

Seniors Health and Lifestyle Expo



In April 2026, GCCLC staff participated in the Seniors health and Lifestyle Expo at Robina Community Centre. Our social workers and social work students took the opportunity to promote GCCLC services in this area as well as network and gather referral information and collaborative opportunities with other stakeholders. These events are a fantastic opportunity to help expand the services we provide and educate the community on the holistic services available on the Gold Coast.

Savvy Seniors

In September 2025 and March 2026, social workers along with two social work students, attended the inaugural session of the Savvy Seniors workshop series at Relationships Australia. This workshop, which centred on financial education for seniors, is part of a comprehensive series of five informative sessions organized by Relationships Australia under the EAPSS program. Ben O'Rourke is the key organiser of these events.

Southern Cross University engagement

During July and August 2025, our social work team collaborated with Southern Cross University to provide students with practical insights into multidisciplinary practice, demonstrating how social workers and lawyers work together to deliver holistic support and improve client outcomes.

> "Very appreciative of receiving these services at this time with no income or support.
>
> Thank you."



Stakeholder Engagement

In addition to providing the community with legal education or opportunities to learn about our services, we engage frequently in stakeholder engagement activities to ensure we are finding ways to remain connected with stakeholders, explore collaborative opportunities and ensure processes, such as referral pathways, are effectively working.

Below are a list of stakeholder engagement activities the Centre was involved in:

- Meetings with various State Members of Parliament to share CLC updates, community needs and focus areas;
- Regular meetings and workshops with Relationships Australia regarding the Elder Abuse Prevention and Support Service;
- Northern Gold Coast and Southern Gold Coast Interagency meetings which are held regularly and bring together organisations in that area to promote services;
- Operational Working Group meetings which are held at the Southport Specialist DFV Court as a weekly meeting for all stakeholders to discuss matters of the Court and learn any updates on processes and operations;
- Gold Coast Regional Legal Assistance Form (RLAF) meetings which happen quarterly as a way for all GC assistance organisations to meet and discuss service updates and trends for our local community;
- Child Protection stakeholder meeting to focus on updates for the Child Protection Court and related duty lawyer services;
- Domestic Violence Integrated Response (DVIR) meetings which are held monthly to discuss DV matters on the Gold Coast and involve input from various stakeholders such as legal services, police, education, refuges, social workers and more.
- Griffith University Meet the Profession event to network with stakeholders and law students;
- Southport DFV 10-year recognition celebration
- Gold Coast Family Law Pathways Network event attendance
- Meetings with Domestic Violence Prevention Centre to collaborate on ways to work together to meet gaps in the needs of our clients;
- Meetings with Women's Legal Service to discuss referral pathways as GC based Community Legal Centres assisting women in family law and DV services.

Conferences and Training

On top of the Community Legal Education and Community Engagement activities the Centre is involved in, staff also attend and participate in various training and conference opportunities over the year to ensure we remain upskilled to any changes in the law, network with stakeholders and continue to promote GCCLC services for referral options.

Below are a list of some of the conferences and training opportunities GCCLC staff attended this year (on top of regular mandatory training obligations under legal professional responsibilities and workplace health and safety training needs):

- Australian Elder Abuse Conference 2026
- Legal Aid Qld Preferred Supplier DFV Duty Lawyer training and refreshers;
- The Disruption Conference
- Gold Coast Mental Health Symposium
- Community Legal Centres Queensland Leadership Program 2025
- Community Legal Centres Qld Leadership Forum in November 2025;
- Gold Coast Homelessness Conference 2025
- Gold Coast HR Symposium
- Gold Coast Family Law Pathways Network training sessions;
- Mental Health First Aid accreditation
- Annual Great Debate
- Actionstep Masterclass Training
- Elder Mediation training
- First Aid Training
- Community Legal Centres Queensland Conference June 2026
- Regular Community Legal Centre Queensland, Legal Aid and Queensland Law Society webinars;
- Regular Staff Development Days to facilitate staff learning and team building.

Volunteers and Pro Bono Support

The Centre values and appreciates the support provided by individuals and organisations who contribute to assist in the services we provide to the community.

We recognise the time and commitment from student volunteers who come to the Centre to not only expand their skills and exposure but contribute to the way in which we help clients.

You can find out more about the social work students on page 28 and law students on page 38.

Additionally, this year we would like to acknowledge the significant support we were given from the private profession. In particular, Clayton Utz provided extensive assistance by way of HR support and mentoring, legal research and assistance with casework services for our clients.

> "Very helpful and informative and also very kind. Thank you very much."



Law Students

Throughout the year, our Centre facilitates law students who seek to gain further experience in the practical side of the law whilst they are still completing their university degree.

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.

"Thanks for listening & offering helpful advice."

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

Rikki 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 worked with Rikki to enable this clinic to operate each semester. The clinic is run three (3) times a year in each semester of the university academic calendar.

The GCCLC acknowledges that Griffith University provides funding to the Centre to operate this 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 operated one (1) program this year available for Bond University law students to participate in.

Clinical Placement Subject

As with previous years, the Centre continued to accept law students enrolled in a clinic legal placement subject run by the Bond Faculty of Law staff member, Melanie Jackson.

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.

The GCCLC acknowledges that Bond University provides funding to the Centre to operate this clinic.

Front Desk Volunteers

This year, we commenced the process of reinstating and recommencing our front desk volunteer program. This allows volunteers who do not fall under any other program offered, to still be able to assist the Centre. We are delighted to have this up and running again and having the opportunity to welcome more volunteers into our Centre to help triage and intake our clients and work with our local community.

Other Student Volunteers

From time to time, based on resource availability, the Centre accepts law students outside of these clinics to volunteer and provide valuable assistance to staff. This can include students undertaking their Practical Legal Training (PLT) or those simply looking to gain experience and give back to the community.

Law Student Placements 2025-2026

Griffith Community Lawyering Clinic students

July – October 2025

- Keely Morgan
- Kyle Hogan
- Alexander McMurdo
- Ilse Suresh
- Ravisha Perera
- Leiola Aholelei

November 2025 – February 2026

- Brianna Lane
- Thrisanth Raajakesary
- Harvir Hothi
- Andrew Krys
- Harrison Chalke
- Mikayla Pearce

March – June 2026

- Alice Sharples
- Reuben Pratt
- Luke Hattingh
- Zidane Westwood
- Stephanie Wiebe
- Keshav Bhatia

Bond Clinical Placement students

October – November 2025

- Tayla Rintoule
- Michael Ciobotaru
- Georgina Bajcetic
- Katie Mcphee

February – March 2026

- Yi Fei Zhu
- Charlie Maynell
- Marlie Crummer
- Hongliang Shen
- Shehnaaz Johal
- Lin Tang

Front Desk Volunteers

2025-2026

- Dinelka Withange
- James Freitas
- Kaiser Lau
- Kim Kibaek
- Olivia Harrison
- Stephanie Weibe
- Vidhyasakthi Ramakrishnn
- Tate Gace Stimson-thurecht
- Jane Moir
- Joelle Lizbeth Lu
- Maya Ljumanovic
- Paulina Grabowska

Case Studies

Throughout the year, our solicitors and social workers work with clients to assist them in their 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 staff have assisted clients in during this year, having successful outcomes which otherwise may not have been achieved if the Centre wasn't able to provide the services which it does.

Case Study 1

The client was referred to GCCLC by Legal Aid Queensland after his former partner initiated proceedings in the Federal Circuit and Family Court seeking sole decision-making responsibility for their two children and permission to relocate them more than 200km away from their current community and paternal family supports.

At the time, existing Final Orders provided that the children live with the client and that he hold sole decision-making responsibility. The mother's application followed a period in which the client experienced a significant mental health crisis and temporarily placed the children in the care of their paternal aunt while he focused on recovery. The client opposed the proposed relocation and sought assistance responding to the court application, with his response documents already overdue when he first engaged GCCLC.

The client faced several challenges, including PTSD, ADHD, anxiety, depression, a recent mental breakdown, homelessness, and an inability to work. Although he had since secured stable housing, received updated medical treatment, and engaged with support services, he continued to experience significant stress and was not yet ready to resume care of the children. However, he remained concerned about their welfare if returned to their mother's care.

GCCLC provided legal advice and assisted the client with preparing and filing his response material. After reviewing the client's initial draft documents, the solicitor offered ongoing legal support and prepared the court documents on his behalf to ensure his position was clearly and effectively presented.

As a result of GCCLC's assistance, the client's response material was filed before the Child Impact Report process and well ahead of the Interim Defended Hearing. This enabled the Court to consider his detailed position before independent evidence was gathered and interim parenting arrangements were determined. The client expressed gratitude for the support he received during a particularly difficult period of his life.

Case Study 2

The Gold Coast Community Legal Centre provided a client with ongoing advice and assistance throughout their many years of legal proceedings across Domestic Violence, Criminal, Parenting and Property matters. The matter was able to be fully resolved prior to proceeding to a Final Hearing based on the proposal one of our solicitors assisted the client to draft. This proposal was child focused and sought to meet the best interests of the children in difficult circumstances and managed to resolve the ongoing proceedings.

> "The staff are very friendly & respectful. The legal advisor spent a good amount of time explaining everything that would help us in legal matters. The appointments are really hard to get as the waiting period is long."

Case Study 3

A client attended the Gold Coast Community Legal Centre seeking assistance to finalise a long-delayed divorce. The parties had been separated for many years, with the former spouse residing overseas. While both parties wished to formally conclude the marriage, the client had limited contact details for the other party, creating uncertainty about how to progress the matter.

The client was experiencing significant anxiety throughout the process, which was compounded by ongoing health concerns. He felt overwhelmed by the legal requirements and did not believe he would be able to navigate the court process without assistance.

Through the Student Assistance Clinic, law students worked under the supervision of solicitors to prepare and lodge the divorce application with the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia. The Centre also provided guidance on serving the court documents internationally and assisted the client to meet all procedural requirements.

As a result of this support, the divorce proceedings were successfully completed and the matter was finalised. The client expressed immense gratitude for the assistance received, stating that he would not have been able to pursue the application without the Centre's help.

The outcome provided the client with certainty and closure, while enabling both parties to move forward with their lives.

Case Study 4

An older client sought assistance from GCCLC in relation to ongoing domestic and family violence proceedings following the breakdown of a long-term relationship. Despite being protected by an existing domestic violence order, the client faced further court applications that challenged those protections.

The client was experiencing significant anxiety about the legal process and struggled to navigate court requirements without support. GCCLC provided legal advice, assisted with the preparation of affidavit material, and helped the client understand and respond to the proceedings.

With the Centre's assistance, the client was able to clearly present his concerns and participate more confidently in the court process. Ultimately, the application against the client was dismissed, and the existing protection order remained in place.

The client expressed gratitude for the support received and later returned to the Centre for assistance with other legal matters, demonstrating the lasting impact of accessible legal help during a difficult period.





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