

ANNUAL REPORT 2025-26

Community Legal Centres Queensland

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This Annual Report covers the period 1 July 2025 – 30 June 2026 and was presented at the Community Legal Centres Queensland Annual General Meeting on 18 November 2025.

Community Legal Centres Queensland held appropriate insurance throughout the 2025-26 financial year. This included $20 million in public liability insurance cover.

About us

Community Legal Centres Queensland (CLCQ) is the peak body representing 32 independent community legal centres (CLCs) operating across Queensland, including rural and remote areas.

Queensland's CLCs provide free information, legal assistance and referral, representation and casework, community education and advocacy to people experiencing disadvantage who are facing legal and social problems.

Established in 1993, our mission is to work with our centres towards a fair and just Queensland.

We work with Queensland CLCs to:

- continually improve organisational sustainability and service quality
- increase the accessibility, profile and resourcing of the sector
- unite around common objectives to bring about change.

Community Legal Centres Queensland

We acknowledge traditional custodians

Community Legal Centres Queensland pays our deepest respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional custodians of the land in Australia, and recognise their continuing connection to land, water and culture.

We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

We acknowledge the stories, traditions and living cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and commit to fostering a culture of learning from and working with First Nations peoples in the spirit of reconciliation and access to justice.

In particular, we acknowledge the Turrbal and Jagera peoples, the traditional custodians of the land in and around Meanjin (Brisbane) and pay respect to their Elders, past and present.

Director & President's report

The 2025-26 financial year marked an important milestone for Queensland's community legal sector with the commencement of a new five-year funding agreement through the National Access to Justice Partnership (NAJP) for community legal centres.

As a sector, we understand that responding effectively to the evolving needs of our communities requires both long-term planning and a commitment to building a resilient and adaptable network of services.

Throughout the year, Community Legal Centres Queensland (CLCQ) worked closely with members and key stakeholders to develop a shared 10-year vision for the Queensland community legal sector. This long-term plan is centred on three strategic priorities:

- Improving access to services and ensuring high-quality support for clients
- Strengthening the sector's role as a collective voice for justice
- Building a strong and sustainable community legal sector

The development of this plan represents a significant achievement for our sector. It provides a framework for collaboration, guides our collective efforts, and enables us to articulate a clear and compelling vision for the future of access to justice in Queensland.

Looking ahead, the issues facing Queensland communities are increasingly complex, and no single organisation or part of the justice system can address them alone. Strong and constructive relationships with government partners and other stakeholders remain essential to ensuring our voice is heard, needs are understood, and effective solutions are developed.

This year also saw several significant achievements for CLCQ. We delivered our largest annual conference to date, commenced the review and update of the Evidence of Legal Need Guide, and continued to implement our First Nations Framework, strengthening our commitment to culturally responsive and inclusive practice across the sector.

These achievements would not have been possible without the dedication, expertise, and commitment of our staff and Management Committee.

Their leadership and hard work continue to deliver significant outcomes for members and stakeholders. We are constantly reminded that while CLCQ operates with a small team and limited resources, the impact of our work is far-reaching, reflecting the professionalism, capability, and passion of those who contribute to our organisation.

As we enter the coming year, we remain ambitious for the future of our sector. We are committed to providing strong strategic leadership and advocacy, supporting our members, and working collaboratively to advance access to justice for the communities we serve.



Rosslyn Monro
Director



Elizabeth Behrend
President

2025-26: CLCQ's year in stats



32
member community legal centres (CLCs)



9
members re-accredited under NAS



15
meetings with Federal politicians



31
meetings with State politicians



1
trip to Parliament House (Canberra)



9
meetings with Dept of Justice (Qld)



14
webinars held



2500+
webinar registrations



270
2026 Conference attendees



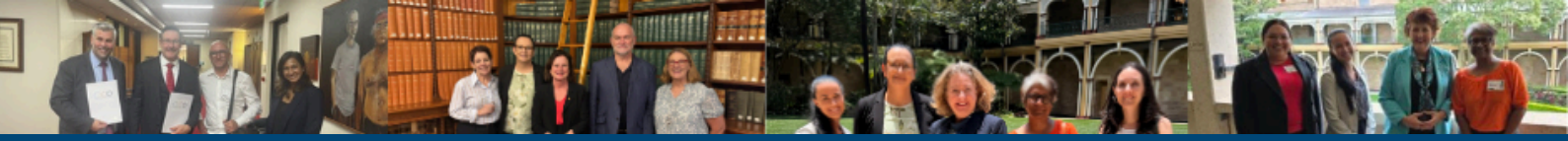
49
First Nations employees attended Wunya



4
Quarterly newsletters sent



25
Member's Digest email newsletters



Advocacy



During 2025-26, CLCQ met with 46 state and federal parliamentarians as part of its ongoing advocacy program to strengthen support for the community legal sector.

In September, in conjunction with the National Community Legal Centres Conference, the CLCQ team attended the launch of Community Legal Centres Australia's Vision for Justice strategy at Parliament House in Canberra.

This event provided an important opportunity to engage with federal decision-makers and highlight the critical role community legal centres play in ensuring access to justice.

While in Canberra, the CLCQ team was joined by several member organisations to meet with Queensland Federal MPs.

These discussions focused on sharing the experiences and impact of the sector, strengthening relationships with key stakeholders, and laying the groundwork for future advocacy and funding initiatives.

At the state level, on 19 November 2025, the CLCQ team, together with representatives from 25 member organisations, participated in a coordinated advocacy day at Queensland Parliament House.

Throughout the day, CLCQ and sector colleagues held 23 meetings with 26 Members of Parliament, providing an opportunity for community legal centres to connect directly with local representatives.

These meetings showcased the findings of CLCQ's 2025 Impact Report and highlighted the breadth and significance of services delivered by community legal centres across Queensland.

They also enabled meaningful conversations about the growing demand for legal assistance and the sector's contribution to supporting vulnerable communities.

CLCQ maintained regular engagement with senior government representatives throughout the year, including ongoing meetings with the Queensland Attorney-General and the Director-General of the Department of Justice.

The strength of CLCQ's relationships with the Queensland Government was demonstrated in late 2025 during discussions regarding the proposed recovery of unspent workforce uplift funding.

Through direct engagement with both the Attorney-General and the Treasurer, CLCQ successfully advocated on behalf of the sector, resulting in the decision to reclaim the unspent funds being reversed.

This outcome provided certainty for community legal centres and reinforced the value of sustained, constructive advocacy.




LUCINDA BAR
STRANGERS RESTAURANT
CAFE &
COFFEE SHOP
EXIT







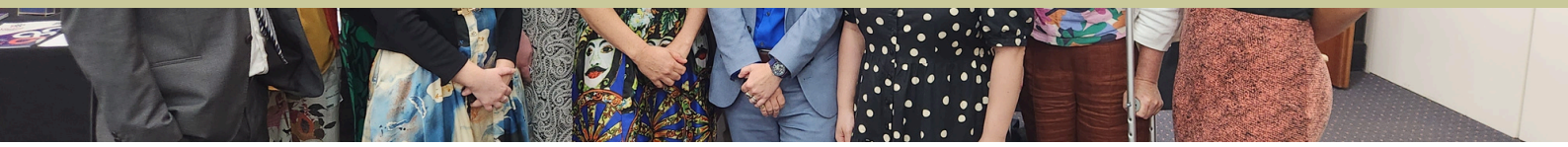








10-Year Sector Plan



In June 2026, Community Legal Centres Queensland released a 10-Year plan for Queensland's community legal sector.

This plan was the result of 12 months of collaboration, including multiple consultations with Queensland CLCs and engagement with key justice, community, and funding partners.

The 10-Year Plan sets out three priority areas:

- Improving service access and quality for clients
- Being a collective voice for justice
- Strengthening the sector

This is a shared plan for Queensland CLCs and CLCQ. It will guide the development of CLCQ's next strategic plan and is intended to be embedded within individual CLC strategic plans to ensure long-term impact.

Download the plan: www.clcq.org.au/project-and-reports/community-legal-sector-10-year-plan/

1



Improve service access and quality for clients

Continue to build our sector's capability to deliver client-centred, culturally safe and inclusive services informed by lived experience

Collaboratively review and improve service delivery approaches to minimise gaps and best support clients

Develop holistic and multi-disciplinary service approaches

Maximise the value and flexible use of long-term funding

2



Be a collective voice for justice

- Collaborate around advocacy efforts
- Advocate for more funding to support and expand the service system
- Pursue joint funding proposals when new funding sources emerge

3



Strengthen the sector

- Improve regional and workforce capacity
- Strengthen governance and sector development
- Build shared values and relationships between centres
- Develop shared systems and programs between centres



Legal Need & Evidence Guide

In late 2025, CLCQ began work to update the Evidence and Analysis of Legal Need in Queensland Guide.

The previous Evidence Guide was published in 2019.

Law firms were approached to assist on a pro bono basis with researching and drafting sections of the updated Evidence Guide and were assigned particular priority client groups and/or regions.

14 firms agreed to be part of the project. Background research undertaken by the firms included a general literature and data/statistics review on each priority group and region, identifying how that information is relevant to legal need, with some firms providing ongoing assistance in the editing/collation phase.

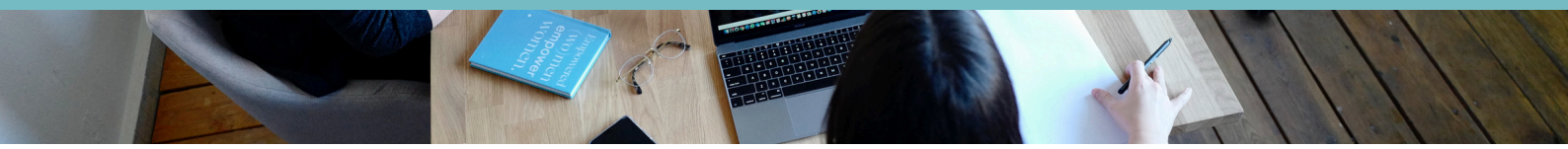
This is an important piece of work which will:

- Allow for broader and deeper research into legal need in demographic and geographic communities in Queensland;
- Support the CLC sector to identify and shape the services needed to address unmet legal need;
- Inform government and other stakeholders about the nature and extent of legal need across Queensland;
- Help direct and prioritise advocacy efforts of CLCQ about strategic use of resources in the CLC sector;
- Provide private law firms with an opportunity to increase their understanding of legal need in Queensland to help inform pro bono strategies; and
- Give a unique opportunity to firms to enhance their pro bono relationships with the Queensland CLC sector.

It is anticipated that the Evidence Guide will be published in the first half of 2027.



Workforce Survey



Following on from the inaugural Workforce Survey in 2023, in late 2025 CLCQ again surveyed member organisations and individual community legal centre workers.

The results of the 2025 CLCQ Workforce Survey highlight the significant positive impact of increased investment by the Queensland Government into the community legal sector.

Targeted Workforce Uplift funding was allocated in the 2024-25 budget and then secured for a further five years by the LNP Government.

The 2025 Workforce Survey indicates early, positive impacts from workforce uplift funding, particularly in improved retention and strengthening of the workforce pipeline.

The results highlight the continued importance of competitive remuneration, supportive employment conditions, and inclusive workplace culture to sustain the sector's capacity to deliver access to justice across Queensland.

Headline findings:

- The workforce profile remained broadly consistent across demographic characteristics, including strong representation of women and continued representation of First Nations peoples, people with a disability and LGBTQIA+ staff

- Where centres received workforce uplift funding, most directed it to improving wages and many also improved non-salary conditions, with early evidence of strengthened career pathways and more experienced solicitors remaining in the sector

- Indicators of improved retention. The proportion of workers thinking about or actively seeking another job reduced significantly to 28.76% in 2025 (from almost half in 2023)

Download the 2025 Working in Community Legal Centres in Queensland Summary Report here: www.clcq.org.au/project-and-reports/workforce-project/

"I feel incredibly fortunate to work alongside such a talented and dedicated group of people in the CLC sector, and within my own CLC.

The professional and personal fulfillment I gain from this work is immense, and I would wholeheartedly encourage new solicitors to consider a career in this field."

Workforce Survey respondent



A 2023 workforce survey confirmed that Queensland's community legal centres were facing a significant workforce crisis, driven largely by uncompetitive salaries that made it difficult to attract and retain qualified staff. Targeted Queensland government Workforce Uplift funding was secured, and the 2025 follow-up survey highlights the significant positive impact of this investment.

90%
of CLCs used funding to improve staff wages

>80%
of CLCs used funding to improve non-salary conditions

74% of CLC workers agreed their working arrangements, conditions and benefits have improved in the past 12 months

21%
decrease in workers looking for a new job

11%
increase in permanent employees

15%
increase in CLCs offering additional superannuation

15%
increase in CLCs offering mental health leave

31%
increase in CLCs offering cultural loading allowance for First Nation staff

11%
increase in CLCs offering shorter working weeks (without loss of pay)

Recruitment and retention challenges are easing over time

26.5%
decrease in CLCs reporting difficulty recruiting qualified staff

30%
increase in CLCs reporting challenges and pressures were getting better

"It has become easier (to recruit and retain staff) since the uplift funding, particularly in senior roles." – CLC CEO

Almost 50%
increase proportion of solicitors reporting holding a legal practising certificate for 10 – 15 years

15%
increase median annual salary for all legal roles

"The uplift funding, and the way my centre applies it, has been a big factor in feeling that I am paid 'fairly'. Before it was applied, I was considering leaving the sector, now I think this may be my 'forever' job."

2025 individual survey response



2025-26 Events



In 2025-26, CLCQ hosted three major events: Wunya, Leadership Forum and the 2026 Community Legal Centres Queensland Conference.

Wunya 2025: Wunya is a Yuggera word that means welcome/greetings.

On15–16 October 2025, CLCQ brought together First Nations employees from across the state to focus on cultural self-care, community connection, and shared experiences in the legal sector.

The event created a powerful space for learning, healing, and growth.

Highlights included inspiring performances and workshops from Derek (Yerongpan Aboriginal Corporation), Chris Jordan (3 Little Birds), Wagga Torres Strait Islander Dance Co, and Waveney Yasso.

From powerful yarns to meaningful professional development, Wunya 2025 was a space to recharge, reconnect, and celebrate the strength and spirit of First Nations people in our sector

"I love that this event exists — it's so important. Wunya creates space for genuine connection, reflection, and growth, which is something we don't often get time for in community work. I think it's also important to acknowledge that it's largely women doing this work, holding communities together and building relationships every day." – Wunya 2025 participant feedback survey response









Leadership Forum: CLCQ hosted its annual Leadership Forum in November 2025.

The Forum saw over 60 leaders from the sector gather for two days of workshops, discussions and networking.

The Forum featured a session on advocacy and decision maker engagement presented by Caterina Giorgi from For Purpose, feedback to the group about Wunya - CLCQ's First Nations Employee Network event, a discussion of Funding Advocacy and the final consultation workshop on our 10-year sector plan.

The Professional Indemnity Insurance (PII) representatives for Qld also led a Q & A session on the new Risk Management Guide.





2026 Conference: The 2026 Community Legal Centres Queensland Conference saw more than 400 delegates across two days gather for thought provoking presentations and robust conversations.

The opening keynote presentation was delivered by Former Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Commissioner, Natalie Lewis.

This was followed by a workshop style presentation on "Strengthening CLCs through effect staff supervision".

Day Two of the conference featured the Hon Kevin Bell AO KC discussing "Legal Recognition of Housing as a Human Right: the time has come" followed by Northern Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency CEO's presentation on "Legal communication with speakers for First Nations languages and Aboriginal English".

12 breakout sessions were held over the two-day program around the themes of Running a CLC, Frontline Workers and Supporting communities and people.

Two masterclasses were also held in conjuction with the conference:

- Taking the next step: skills for CLC paralegals and early career lawyers; and
- Working with First Nations People.













"Great to network with other CLCs and learn from each other as well as the speakers who were very engaging and informative. It was well organised."

"I love spending time around colleagues and learning the variety of work our sector achieves"





Strengthening the sector

In addition to key projects and events, CLCQ's "core business" is to be a voice for the sector and to support Queensland CLCs to deliver quality and accessible services to people experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage.

Supporting our members: A significant part of our work happens behind the scenes through responsive, relationship-based support to our member community legal centres.

Throughout 2025-26, we worked alongside our members to navigate emerging issues and advocate on matters impacting individual centres and the sector, including tailored support, successful funding advocacy, and political engagement.

We value understanding what is happening across our membership, responding to emerging issues, amplifying the collective voice of the sector and using our relationships and influence to achieve positive outcomes for community legal centres

National Accreditation Scheme
This year saw us continue to progress our next phase of the National Accreditation Scheme (NAS), with 9 CLCs achieving re-accreditation during the year.

The NAS, owned by Community Legal Centres Australia and administered in Queensland by CLCQ, ensures that all accredited CLCs meet the rigorous 17 key standards and requirements.

Throughout the year, CLCQ's team travelled to six centres throughout the state for accreditation site visits, with the fourth cycle of accreditation drawing to a close

Client Survey
CLCQ supported CLCs to undertake their annual survey of clients and other stakeholders.

The 2026 client survey data showed:

- 96% of clients said staff listened to their legal problem in a friendly and respectful manner
- 92% of clients said staff helped them understand how to deal with their legal problem and provided them with options
- 91% of clients said they know where to get help if they have another legal problem in the future
- 92% of clients said they would recommend the legal service to other people.

"Your staff were courteous, & sympathetic to my needs & provided me a safe platform to engage & get the legal advice and support needed for my case "

"I had multiple issues and they were broken down and explained to me in a way I understood. At the end of the session I knew where to go and what I needed to do. I came to the session today feeling overwhelmed, and I have left feeling confident and reassured."

Professional development and information sharing: our webinar program
The CLCQ webinar program continues to provide training and resources to our members to support their work.

14 webinars were held in 2025-26 covering a wide range of topics including:

- Legal Practice Ethics
- Artificial Intelligence
- Employment Rights
- Domestic Violence and Migration Law
- Cultural Safety

Webinars run throughout the year are available to watch “on-demand” via the CLCQ website.







CLASS Transition Project
CLCQ continued to support CLCs as they faced the challenge of moving away from the national data base, CLASS, to platforms that are compatible with a soon to be developed national data repository.

We have been in the process of supporting our members with the transition away from CLASS by:

- Holding regular CLASS Transition Community of Practice meetings via Teams
- Providing individual support to CLCs
- Hosting a masterclass after our conference on outcome measures. This masterclass was tailored for CLCs who have moved to the Actionstep platform.

Sector Communication
CLCQ continued to keep members and key stakeholders informed about the work of Queensland community legal centres including:

- 25 editions of the Digest newsletter,
- two First Nations Employee Network newsletters Marlawgay Buuguny,
- four quarterly updates profiling the work of Queensland CLCs
- and a Closing the Gap sector impact newsletter highlighting the contributions of Queensland CLCs towards Closing the Gap outcomes.

Community Legal Centres Queensland

A new look for CLCQ: CLCQ’s new logo draws from the iconography and motifs of an original artwork developed for us by Uncle Charlie Waters.

The CLCQ staff group participated in a workshop with Uncle Charlie and the artwork developed reflects the diversity of the community legal sector in Queensland and the role that CLCQ plays in bringing together the knowledge and capability of all the centres across the state.

The colours for the new branding were chosen as they represent the Queensland landscape.

First Nations Employee Network
CLCQ continued to support the First Nations Employee Network, comprising more than 60 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff working across community legal centres in Queensland.

CLCQ provides members of the Network with culturally informed support, access to training and professional development, and opportunities to connect in a positive, confidential environment.

The Network provides a trusted space to share information relevant to First Nations employees and strengthen connections across the sector.

First Nations Reference Group
CLCQ extends our heartfelt thanks to the CLCQ First Nations Reference Group for their generosity, leadership and continued guidance throughout the year.

Their knowledge, experience, wisdom and perspectives help shape our work with the sector, including implementation of the First Nations Framework 2025–2030, cultural safety and anti-racism initiatives, sector resources, Wunya and the CLCQ Conference.

We deeply value the time, cultural knowledge and expertise the Reference Group generously share with us and their role in keeping our work grounded, accountable and responsive to First Nations voices across the sector.

In the 2025-26 year membership included Patrina Benton, Candice Hughes, Patricia (Trish) Johnson, Keryn Ruska, Andrea Kyle Sailor, Lorraine Tutton, Kathleen Wincen and Sammy Cooper.

First Nations Framework implementation
CLCQ continued implementation of the First Nations Framework 2025-30, supporting community legal centres to strengthen cultural safety, support the First Nations workforce and enhance culturally responsive practice to improve service delivery and organisational practice.

This included:

- A cultural safety webinar series
- A suite of template policies supporting organisational cultural safety, culturally safe governance and First Nations employees
- Development of a culturally safe First Nations recruitment checklist for CLCs
- Development of a new First Nations Coordinator position within the Capacity Building Team to lead and strengthen First Nations work across the sector
- Strengthening First Nations participation and leadership through the First Nations Employee Network and First Nations Reference Group
- Development of resources to support the rollout and implementation of the cultural safety and anti-racism requirements within the NAS adopted by the sector nationally.





A fair and just Queensland

24,845*

individuals received help from Queensland's CLCs

513*

community legal education resources and activities delivered to communities

The work of CLCQ's members* 2025-2026 included:

- Giving more than **32,954** legal advices
- Assisting with over **6,789** legal tasks
- Providing over **7,596** duty lawyer services
- Appearing in courts or tribunals in almost **2,300** matters
- Assisting with **204** mediations and dispute resolution services
- Helping with over **2,175** non-legal support services, such as social work and financial counselling
- Providing referrals on close to **52,483** occasions.

Service delivery

Our members delivered:

- **35 per cent** of services by phone
- **43 per cent** of services in person
- **22 per cent** of services by letter or electronically (email and videoconference)

***The 2025-26 data represents the work of 20 out of Queensland's 32 CLCs and is the best available data at this time.**

Due to CLCs transitioning from CLASS to other management platforms, a full data picture was not possible to obtain this year.







Client groups

78% of clients are experiencing financial disadvantage

59% of clients are women

14% of clients are First Nations peoples

25% of clients are living with disability or mental illness

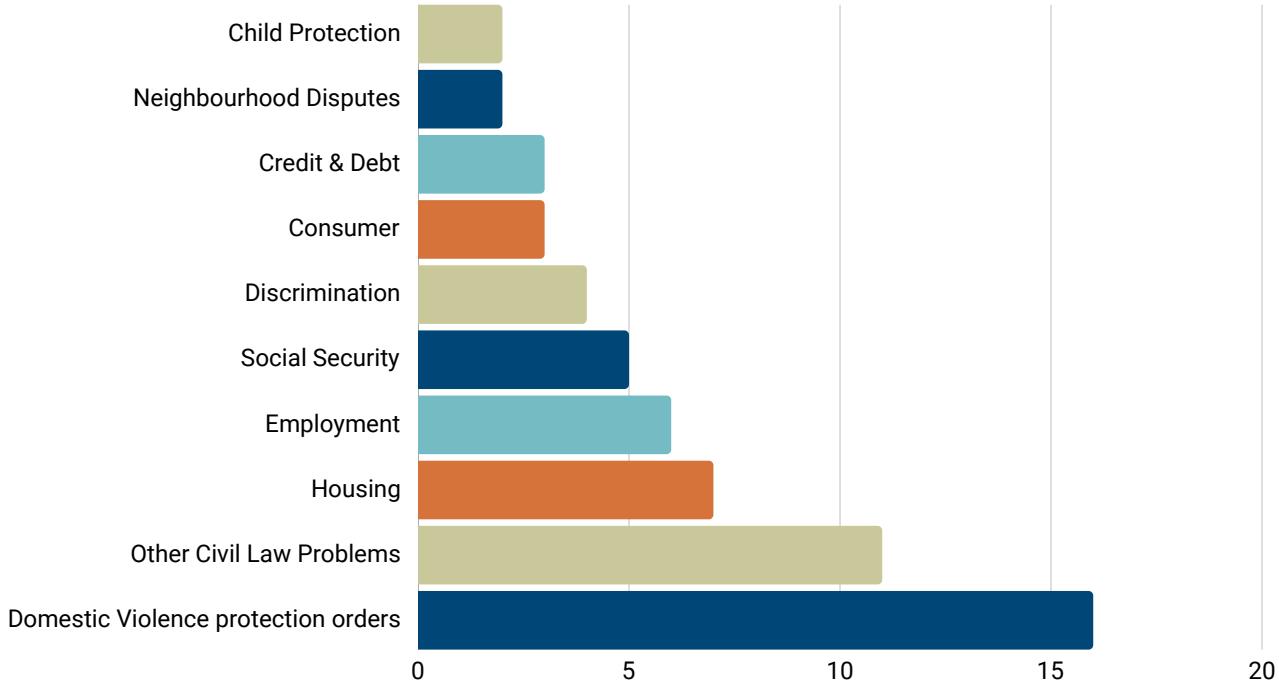
1 in 3 clients who are women are experiencing family and domestic violence

14% of clients are at risk of homelessness

35% of clients in rural, regional and remote areas are experiencing family and domestic violence

5% of clients speak a language at home that is not English

Top 10 Civil Law Issues in 2025-26



Our members

- Aboriginal Family Legal Services Queensland (Maruma-li-mari)
- Aged and Disability Advocacy Australia
- Basic Rights Queensland
- Bayside Community Legal Service
- Brisbane North Community Legal Service
- Cairns Community Legal Centre
- Caxton Community Legal Centre
- Central Queensland Community Legal Centre
- Environmental Defenders Office Queensland
- First Nations Women's Legal Services Queensland
- Gold Coast Community Legal Centre
- HUB Community Legal
- Institute for Urban Indigenous Health
- knowmore
- LawRight
- LGBTI Legal Service
- Mackay Regional Community Legal Centre
- My Community Legal
- North Queensland Women's Legal Service
- Pine Rivers Community Legal Service
- Prisoners' Legal Service
- Queensland Advocacy for Inclusion
- Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service
- Refugee and Immigration Legal Service
- Suncoast Community Legal Service
- TASC
- Tenants Queensland
- Townsville Community Law
- Wide Bay Burnett Community Legal Service
- Women's Legal Service Queensland
- YFS Legal
- Youth Advocacy Centre





Our people

Staff members

Rosslyn Monro, Director
Penny Sullivan, Capacity Building Lead
Sammy Cooper, Capacity Building Lead
Kate Scanlon, Capacity Building Coordinator
Meg Houston, Capacity Building Coordinator
Nate de Valois, Capacity Building Coordinator (until August 2025)
Karen Cutler, Project Officer (until August 2025)
Rob Reed, Project Officer (from October 2025)
Angela Hale, Operations Coordinator
Leah Lane, Communications and Events Coordinator



Management Committee members

Amanda Whelan (President), knowmore (until January 2026)
Elizabeth Behrend (President), Cairns Community Legal Centre (from January 2026)
James Farrell (Treasurer), Basic Rights Queensland
Alex Whitney, Townsville Community Law
Ben Tuckett, LawRight
Helen Wallace, Caxton Community Legal Centre
Megan Inglis, TASC
Serrina Kenny, North Queensland Women's Legal Service

CLCQ First Nations Reference Group

In the 2025-26 year membership included Patrina Benton, Candice Hughes, Patricia (Trish) Johnson, Keryn Ruska, Andrea Kyle Sailor, Lorraine Tutton, Kathleen Wincen and Sammy Cooper

Our thanks

Thanks to our supporters

CLCQ acknowledges funding from the **Queensland Government's Department of Justice and Attorney-General** as well as sponsorship from the following sources in 2025-26:

Allens
Ashurst
Colin, Biggers & Paisley Foundation
DLA Piper
Herbert Smith Freehills Kramer
Holding Redlich
Hopgood Ganim Lawyers
MinterEllison
MurphySchmidt Solicitors
Queensland Law Society
QLeave
The Services Union
Wotton+Kearney



PO Box 12102
George Street, Meanjin Brisbane
QLD 4003
07 3392 0092
admin@clcq.org.au

ABN: 71 907 449 543

www.clcq.org.au