

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2010-2011



Queensland Association of  
Independent Legal Services Inc



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*This Annual Report covers the period July 2010 – June 2011 and was presented at the QAILS Annual General Meeting held on 25th November 2011.*

**PUBLISHED: November 2011**

**DESIGN AND LAYOUT: Artshak**

**PRINTING (PRO BONO): LITSUPPORT**

**CONTENT COORDINATION: Carolyn Grant and Lyn Giles**

**CONTENT ASSISTANCE: Kelsie Bricknell**

QAILS acknowledges all the contributions to this report from member community legal centres.

QAILS also acknowledges funding from the Queensland Department of Justice and Attorney General and Legal Aid Queensland.

QAILS would also like to thank Kelsie Bricknell for her volunteered time assisting with writing and coordinating the CLC Profiles within.

The 2010/11 QAILS Annual Report will be available online from mid-December 2011 at [www.qails.org.au](http://www.qails.org.au). For further information please contact [qails@clc.net.au](mailto:qails@clc.net.au)



Queensland Association of Independent Legal Services Inc

PO Box 119  
Stones Corner Qld 4120

T 07 3392 0092

F 07 3891 5815

E [qails@clc.net.au](mailto:qails@clc.net.au)

W [www.qails.org.au](http://www.qails.org.au)



# CONTENTS

4	ABOUT QAILS
6	CONVENOR'S REPORT
8	EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT
14	QAILS MEMBERS
15	QAILS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
16	MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE PROFILES
20	REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORTS
20	STATE REPRESENTATIVE REPORT
22	PII REPRESENTATIVE PROFILE
23	PII REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT
24	COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES IN QUEENSLAND
26	WHAT IS A CLC?
27	THE NATURE OF CLCS
28	COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE PROFILES
52	ACCREDITATION




## ABOUT QAILS

*QAILS is the state based peak organisation representing the 32 funded and unfunded member Community Legal Centres (CLCs) operating throughout Queensland.*

Community Legal Centres (CLCs) are independent, community organisations providing equitable and accessible legal services. CLCs are able to offer appropriate, effective and creative solutions based on their experience within their community. It is this community relationship that distinguishes Community Legal Centres from other legal services. While providing legal services to individuals, CLCs also work beyond the individual. Community Legal Centres initiate community development, community legal education and law reform projects that are preventative in outcome and that strengthen the community.

The Queensland community legal sector is an active and collegiate network which prioritises the strengthening of the sector as a whole over the needs of individual member organisations.

QAILS Inc. is established for the public charitable purposes of assisting the Queensland community, particularly disadvantaged and marginalised people, to obtain access to legal services, including:

- a. assisting people to resolve legal problems by providing information and referral services; and
  - b. providing information and educational resources about legal rights; and
  - c. providing referrals to legal assistance services and facilities; and
  - d. supporting and assisting community legal centres to provide these services; and
  - e. providing a state forum for community legal centres; and
- 

- f. developing and coordinating Queensland community legal centres' policy; and
- g. advancing the interests of community legal centres within Queensland.

QAILS is an incorporated association which operates with a small Secretariat team, side by side an active Management Committee comprised of Queensland CLC workers who offer their time and energy to provide:

- Representation for all members in relation to funding program and law reform issues;
- Coordination of the State administration of the National Professional Indemnity Insurance Scheme which provides group professional indemnity and other insurance services to QAILS member centres;
- Member support services including the coordination of an annual state conference, training on relevant issues and regular bulletins about matters of interest to CLC staff, volunteers and management committees.

There are three elements to the QAILS structure – the membership; Management Committee; and the Secretariat.

The membership of QAILS is made up solely of CLCs, including either staff and/or Management Committees of these services. QAILS is a member-driven organisation and relies heavily on its membership to provide the overall direction of the organisation. Members are obliged to be active in their participation in some form (Management Committee, Working Parties, Conferences, etc.)

The Management Committee of QAILS is drawn from the membership and any CLC worker or Management Committee member of a CLC may nominate for a position on the QAILS Management Committee each year at the Annual General Meeting. The Management Committee is responsible for the governance functions of QAILS including providing direction for, and overseeing the work of, the Secretariat.

The Secretariat has a core staff team made up of an Executive Officer and an Administrator / Information Officer. From time to time QAILS may employ project staff to work as part of this team. The primary role of the Secretariat is to provide support for the Management Committee and the membership as decided at QAILS planning forums.

QAILS is a member of the National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC), the national peak body of CLCs in Australia.

It is important to note that QAILS is the QLD member of the National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC). CLC's in Qld gain representation by NACLC via membership of QAILS.



## OUR PURPOSE

*'A collective voice advocating for social justice'*

*'QAILS is the independent peak body for Community Legal Centres (CLCs) in Queensland. QAILS advocates for social justice in the community and provides a collective voice through:*

- *Supporting and resourcing members;*
- *Policy reform, sector development, networking, lobbying government and other relevant bodies; and*

- *Advocating for access to justice.*

*QAILS values and promotes the diverse contribution of its members and seeks to work cooperatively and collaboratively with all member CLCs and other community legal sector partners.*

*QAILS believes that through this work, the voices of and for marginalised and disadvantaged people and their interests will be heard in the community, and will come to influence social systems and policies.'*



# CONVENOR'S REPORT

*The major issues dominating QAILS attention this year have been establishing an autonomous State Office operation, sector funding, NACLC accreditation, and the impact of the summer of disasters.*

## AUTONOMY

2010/2011 has been a year of significant internal development for QAILS as it progressed through the stages of resuming responsibility from Women's Legal Service for financial and employment matters and establishing an independent State Office.

Following on from the planning workshop in November 2010, in May 2011, the QAILS Management Committee did the hard yards of workshopping the changes required to QAILS' governance arrangements in order to create an independent peak body operation. The outcomes that have flowed from the workshop include the key proposals to appoint a full-time Director and to establish the following sub-committees:

- Finance and Employment Sub-committee;
- PII Sub-committee;

- Sector Funding and Development Sub-committee; and
- Accreditation and Membership Sub-committee.

It is intended that each of the sub-committees will be chaired by a member of the Management Committee, whose Centre will receive a nominal honorarium to reflect the effort involved in taking responsibility for the sub-committee's business. In this way it is hoped that the Director of QAILS will be supported in the autonomous State Office by strong involvement of the QAILS membership.

The workshop was followed up with a successful application to the ATO for Public Benevolent Institution status.

Next year will be an exciting year for QAILS as it moves into its own offices and can give greater focus to sector development and accreditation issues.

## SECTOR FUNDING

As was foreshadowed in last year's report, the impact of the failure of funders to implement the payment of the Queensland Pay Equity rates has been realised, with several CLCs being forced to make redundancies and reduce service delivery. It is particularly difficult to cut services at a time when there is a growing demand for such services resulting from a downturn in the economy and the Queensland natural disasters, and with limited or no other alternative services available.

Some CLCs have delayed the inevitable by accessing surplus funds or self-generated revenue, however these practices are not sustainable and without additional funding, particularly from the Commonwealth Government, there is likely to be a significant problem created by the reduction in CLC services next year.

This year we again saw a regrettable delay in the timing of decisions about LPITAF funded CLC programs. Despite QAILS' best efforts in highlighting the problems created by the delays in previous years, the announcements on LPITAF funding did not occur until June. As a result of the delay, we again saw unnecessary stress placed on CLC management and staff, uncertainty of services for clients and the loss of at least one much valued CLC lawyer.

## FLOOD AND CYCLONE RESPONSE

On a more positive note, there was a valuable demonstration of the effectiveness of a collaborative response from the community, private and public sectors in the aftermath of the Queensland floods and cyclones. Immediately following the South East Queensland floods in January the Queensland Legal Assistance Forum (QLAF) rallied to create Flood Legal Help which was shortly after expanded to become

Flood and Cyclone Legal Help (QFCLH). QLAF is made up of, the Queensland Law Society, Legal Aid Queensland, the Queensland Public Interest Law Clearing House, QAILS and the Bar Association of Queensland.

Beyond the work of QFCLH, many community legal centres have been active in their own communities, meeting the short and longer term legal needs of people directly and indirectly affected by the storms, floods and cyclones.

## ACCREDITATION

Another major task this year for QAILS has been to support the membership throughout the introduction of the NACLC accreditation scheme. QAILS looks forward to playing a greater role in this area next year.

## CONFERENCE

QPILCH hosted this year's QAILS conference at the fittingly tranquil O'Reilly's Resort. There was strong feedback from attendees about the quality of the program and the effort put in by the organisers to stimulate discussion and challenge assumptions about how, what and why CLCs go about their business. The last minute, stand in, conference dinner guest speaker will be remembered by many for years to come as will Zoe Rathus' tribute to Bill Mitchell.

## THANKS

I would like to thank the QAILS Management Committee and staff for their dedication to the task of building the capacity of QAILS as Queensland's peak body for CLCs. Special thanks are owed to Katrina Finn, Rosslyn Monro and the management and staff of Women's Legal Service for hosting QAILS in recent years.

**SCOTT MCDOUGALL**  
**QAILS CONVENOR**



# EXECUTIVE OFFICERS REPORT

*The year commenced with an understanding that two objectives would drive our activities for the coming year. Those two objectives were:*

***Autonomy and Accreditation***

The first of these objectives, QAILS organisational autonomy, would keep the QAILS office staff and management committee busy for the rest of the year, and beyond.

The second of these objectives, the implementation of the National Accreditation Scheme, would see the whole of the CLC sector engage in a significant change management process.

Beyond these two 'A's the day to day work of the QAILS office would continue.


The work of moving QAILS to organisational autonomy started a number of years ago. When QAILS received recurrent funding for the Secretariat in 2005 it was intended that the QAILS office and its lone staff member would stay on with a host member organisation. In 2005 the host was Caxton Legal Centre. By 2006 the host member

organisation was Women's Legal Service. In 2008 QAILS received additional recurrent and project funding increasing the staff team to 3 part time workers. By that time we were on the way to planning for autonomy.

The first key task was the review of the QAILS Constitution – 'the rules of the house'. By May 2010 QAILS' new Constitution was approved by the membership and the cornerstone of autonomy had been laid. Our next brick – an application for Public Benevolent Institution (PBI) Status.

The November 2010 meeting of the QAILS membership, the 'Autonomy Workshop' discussed what an autonomous QAILS would look like. Would the QAILS State Office remain co-located, although no longer auspiced, by a member organisation or would the Office seek independent accommodation? Would a member organisation continue to manage





finances or would QAILS take over all financial management? The membership felt it was ambitious in the extreme to reach organisational autonomy and re-locate in one step and considered a staged process with an independently located and autonomous QAILS the ultimate aim.

The Autonomy Workshop developed an action plan and timeline. The Action Plan included the following; most tasks taking place between February and June 2011:

- PBI Brief would be prepared, a Pro Bono firm engaged and an application forwarded to the Australian Taxation Office by April 2011
- Draft budgets would be prepared
- Financial Management scenarios would be explored including the employment of a Finance Officer and external contractors
- Staff transitional arrangements would be explored and advice sought
- Commercial real estate companies to be contacted and potential office space viewed
- Review of all funding options to support Autonomy and relocation
- Asset audit to be conducted and all Insurances reviewed
- Preparation of Governance Policy and Procedures

A key outcome of the meeting was agreement that the QAILS Management Committee and Staff would engage a consultant to facilitate a Governance Workshop in order to nut out some of the detail, including:

- The preferred governance arrangements for QAILS including the respective roles and responsibilities of Management Committee, sub-committees, office bearers and staff
- Staffing model required for the new governance arrangements
- Immediate and longer term options for resourcing the new governance arrangements, and the legal implications of implementing new governance arrangements
- Timetable for implementation of the governance arrangements

Floods and Cyclones arrived in Queensland and we still got there. Certainly floods are an apt metaphor for the QAILS' past year – total inundation.

Yet, the bricks for organisational autonomy continued to be laid and at June 30, 2011 we were on track with all actions and timelines as agreed at both the Autonomy Workshop and Governance Workshop.

While all the above was occurring, we also had Accreditation to prepare for – the National Accreditation Scheme had been in the pipeline for some years, starting from an exploration of the values and activities of CLCs "What's a CLC", moving through to concerns regarding protecting the 'CLC Brand' and in so doing protecting clients and ensuring quality service delivery. More information about Accreditation follows in this report; however the key activities for QAILS included working with Julia Hall from the National Association of Community

*“The challenge for a political advocacy organisation in pursuing fundamental change to the prevailing power structure is to avoid the two principal strategies of the capitalist state in neutralising external pressures for change: defining in, and defining out.”*

**Simon Rice, 2010 NACLC Conference**

Legal Centres (NACLC) on a funding submission to the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department for funding to support a Queensland Regional Accreditation Coordinator. If successful, this position would support CLCs with the implementation of Accreditation and working through this important continuous quality improvement initiative.

In the meantime there was the existing work of the QAILS Office – before autonomy and accreditation.

By the new year we had a new State Attorney General, the Hon Paul Lucas, MP and we visited to follow up and maintain some traction with ongoing issues such as funding increases required to ward off CLC service cuts and reductions. In early 2010 a funding submission had been tabled with the previous Attorney General requesting funding to support the implementation of the Queensland Pay Equity case and subsequent, long awaited pay increases for community sector workers.

QAILS has maintained a watching brief on the impacts of the funding stress on CLCs as a result of what was initially a celebration – recognition of the work of the broader sector and historical underfunding; ending in an ongoing struggle for funding to meet pay equity rates and ultimately cuts to services for disadvantaged and marginalised Queenslanders. By the end of the financial year the majority of CLCs had implemented or were planning strategies for reducing services. Some centres are now significantly compromised in terms of capacity to deliver services. Innovation and creativity do not thrive in such an environment.


The 2011 QAILS Conference was hosted by Queensland Public Interest Law Clearing House (QPILCH) and held at O'Reilly's in the picturesque Lamington National Park – a great venue for reflection on the theme of the Conference – Smarter>Stronger>Better. Each year more CLC representatives attend the conference with lots of new faces at a forum which provides a great opportunity to network with others doing similar work. The opening key note address was presented by Simon Rice, Director of Law Reform and Social Justice at the ANU, College of Law. Simon had spoken at the previous National CLC Conference, thrown out a challenge to CLCs nationally and we were keen to hear more...

The opening session got people thinking and provided a great start for the next few days.

The conference sought feedback from stakeholders with one session including judicial and tribunal decision-makers letting us know how they see the work of CLCs and what they think CLCs could be doing. Another session sought similar feedback and ideas from a range of NGO stakeholders.

A new session was developed , CLC101 – not just for new workers, which as the title suggests was delivered not only to support the induction of newer workers to the CLC sector, but to refresh and draw from the experience of some of the longer term CLC workers.

The conference urged us to work smarter, not harder; reflect on our strengths and how to keep strong; and identify where we can do better including self-empowerment for clients and worker self-care.



*“The state either absorbs revolutionary proposals for change – and their advocates – into its own system of its decision-making, or it stigmatises the proposals and their advocates as extremist and sectarian. Either way, the revolutionary voice is ‘finished’ as a voice for change.”*

**Simon Rice, 2010 NACLC Conference**

QAILS Staff attended the National CLC Conference in Melbourne. The theme for the 2010 Conference was Breaking New Ground – CLCs Advancing Justice. As well as sessions on innovative services and delivery of community legal education, there was plenty of opportunity to develop new skills in sessions such as the Policy and Law Reform Skill workshop series.

We visited a number of member centres throughout the year, particularly a few of the smaller, inner city CLCs looking at modelling for our own operational costs as an independent organisation, and reviewing office rental costs. Other members we visited to collate information about hot topics and concerns which revolved around themes of inadequate funding, cuts in services and the ongoing challenges with finding affordable office accommodation. In the past two years, almost 25% of the QAILS membership has sought new office space.

QAILS management committee and staff representatives continue to meet quarterly with Legal Aid Queensland regarding issues of mutual interest and the State Community Legal Services Program. Our meetings with the broader Queensland legal assistance sector, via the Queensland Legal Assistance Forum (QLAF) have now extended to meeting twice yearly with Commonwealth stakeholders through the Queensland Inter Jurisdictional Forum (QIJF) – a key initiative supporting the progress of the National Partnership Agreement.

A decision was made to move QAILS Management Committee meetings from a four to six weekly cycle. A new subcommittee structure will be implemented in the next

financial year which will support and streamline the work of the QAILS Management Committee and allow the Management Committee to focus on good governance. The Management Committee trialled the Queensland University of Technology, Developing Your Board survey as a preparation for working on improving governance.

Throughout the year the Autonomy Working Group consisting of QAILS Management Committee representatives and staff guided and progressed the work of organisational autonomy. Additionally, the Secretariat Reference Group met to support the Executive Officer throughout the process.

The QAILS Membership application kit was reviewed requiring significant update as a result of the new Constitution, the National Accreditation Scheme and the revised Professional Indemnity Insurance (PII) Risk Management Guide. Our QAILS PII representative has experienced a busy year too with the review of the RMG resulting in a comprehensive, easy to read tool.

The QAILS Executive Officer attends quarterly meetings of the NACLC Management Committee which is also attended by the QAILS State representative to NACLC. Attendance at these meetings provides an opportunity to meet with and maintain relationships with EO's of the other State Associations and the Director of NACLC, as well as keeping up to date on national agendas and sharing the role of communicating key issues to member centres with the State rep.

Work was also undertaken with NACLC on the NACLC Governance

Working Group, a forum which is working through some of the same processes as a newly autonomous QAILS – policies, procedures, roles and responsibilities, and delegations.

Towards the end of March, QAILS staff attended the opening of the new, purpose built Nundah Neighbourhood Centre which houses the Nundah Community Legal Service. The opening was well attended by local groups and residents and there was obvious strong support and attendance from local, State and Federal members.

Although we didn't get out and about as much as in previous years we did set up stalls and fly the flag for community legal centres at both the Family Law Pathways Expo and the Queensland Law Society (QLS) Careers Expo. The Pathways Expo is attended by Government, non-Government and private providers of services relating to the provision of family law and related support services. QAILS staff worked with staff from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Legal & Advocacy Service to promote the work of CLCs and provide information regarding the variety of relevant services provided by the CLC sector. The QLS Careers Expo is an opportunity for private legal firms, various government departments and the community legal assistance sector to promote opportunities to work and volunteer to final year students and graduates. We staffed the QLS Careers Expo stall this year with staff from the Tenants

Union. Each year there are groups of students drawn to the QAILS stall by the QAILS banner and the phrase "social justice". Those students are looking out for us and keen to hear the best way to get involved in CLCs. Others are interested to hear that something like CLCs exist and want to hear more.

QAILS also worked with its partner CLC State Associations, Community Legal Centres NSW, Federation of Community Legal Centres (Vic) and Community Legal Centres Association (WA), and the National Association of Community Legal Centres on a joint project to review the 2006 'Mercer Report'. Mercer consultants were engaged to 'review and update the work value of six core work roles across CLCs and to provide high level remuneration comparison with reference to relevant markets, updating data provided in 2006 to reflect 2011 status.' This report formed the basis for a submission lodged in the Fair Work Australia Community Sector Equal Pay Case.

It has been an exciting but very busy year. The coming year will see many changes for QAILS – new staff, new space, new furniture (depending upon the success of funding applications) and opportunities to review and reflect once we have an opportunity to stand still.

Thanks to the QAILS Management Committee members for their time, hard work and support. Thanks also to the staff and Management

Committee of Women's Legal Service for the years of support – providing us with office space, resources, financial management support and lots more.

We look forward to reporting next year on the exciting further developments which will see the QAILS State Office located independently, operating independently and continuously improving functioning as an effective, efficient peak organisation. We intend developing new resources to reflect the new work and new profile – they are on the drawing board. A number of funding submissions have been prepared to assist us with the additional resources.

**CAROLYN GRANT**  
**EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

# QUEENSLAND'S

QUEENSLAND'S PEAK ORGANISATION

REPRESENTING COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES

## ADVOCACY

## INFLUENCE

## LEADERSHIP

## SUPPORT

*As indicated in the reports in this annual document, Queensland requires a significant injection of funds to support the work of community legal centres which provide services to some of the most disadvantaged people in our community. The most recent government review of CLCs (2008) noted that 58% of community legal sector clients received some form of income support and 82% of clients earned less than \$26,000 per annum.*

*In the past year, Queensland community legal centres provided services to over 42,000 clients. Over 32,000 were new clients. Queensland CLCs provided nearly 60,000 advices via phone, mail, email, video-conference and face-to-face. More than 600 community legal education activities were conducted across the State and 158 Law Reform Projects, including submissions prepared to government regarding legislative and policy review impacting upon Queensland's most disadvantaged, and activities which supported CLC clients and communities to have their say.*

*Queensland community legal centres are an essential component of the social infrastructure of Queensland and yet Community Legal Service Program (CLSP) funding per capita (State and Commonwealth funding combined) is \$1.38. This is the lowest expenditure across all States and Territories.*



## QAILS MEMBERS 2010/2011

**ABORIGINAL AND TORRES  
STRAIT ISLANDER WOMEN'S  
LEGAL AND ADVOCACY  
SERVICE ABORIGINAL  
CORPORATION**

**ABORIGINAL AND TORRES  
STRAIT ISLANDER WOMEN'S  
LEGAL SERVICE  
– NORTH QUEENSLAND INC.**

**BAYSIDE COMMUNITY  
LEGAL SERVICE INC.**

**CAIRNS COMMUNITY  
LEGAL CENTRE INC.**

**CARE GOONDIWINDI  
ASSOCIATION INC.  
(GOONDIWINDI COMMUNITY  
LEGAL SERVICE)**

**CAXTON LEGAL CENTRE INC.  
  
CENTRAL QUEENSLAND  
COMMUNITY LEGAL  
CENTRE INC.**

**CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU  
& GOLD COAST LEGAL  
SERVICE INC.**

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
SERVICES INC.  
(STANTHORPE COMMUNITY  
LEGAL SERVICE)**

**ENVIRONMENTAL  
DEFENDER'S OFFICE  
OF NORTHERN  
QUEENSLAND INC.**

**ENVIRONMENTAL  
DEFENDER'S OFFICE  
(QLD) INC.**

**HERVEY BAY  
NEIGHBOURHOOD  
CENTRE INC. (TAYLOR  
STREET COMMUNITY  
LEGAL SERVICE)**

**LESBIAN GAY BISEXUAL  
TRANS INTERSEX LEGAL  
SERVICE INC.**

**MACKAY REGIONAL  
COMMUNITY LEGAL  
CENTRE INC.**

**NORTH QUEENSLAND  
WOMEN'S LEGAL  
SERVICE INC.**

**NUNDAH COMMUNITY  
SUPPORT GROUP INC.  
(NUNDAH COMMUNITY  
LEGAL SERVICE)**





**PINE RIVERS  
NEIGHBOURHOOD  
ASSOCIATION INC.  
(PINE RIVERS COMMUNITY  
LEGAL SERVICE)**

**PENINSULA COMMUNITY  
LEGAL SERVICE INC.**

**PRISONERS' LEGAL  
SERVICE INC.**

**QUEENSLAND  
ADVOCACY INC.**

**QUEENSLAND PUBLIC  
INTEREST LAW CLEARING  
HOUSE INC.**

**REFUGEE AND IMMIGRATION  
LEGAL SERVICE INC.**

**ROMA COMMUNITY LEGAL  
SERVICE INC.**

**SOUTH WEST BRISBANE  
COMMUNITY LEGAL  
CENTRE INC.**

**SUNCOAST COMMUNITY  
LEGAL SERVICE INC.**

**TENANTS' UNION OF  
QUEENSLAND INC.**

**THE ADVOCACY AND  
SUPPORT CENTRE INC.  
(TOOWOOMBA COMMUNITY  
LEGAL SERVICE)**

**TOWNSVILLE COMMUNITY  
LEGAL SERVICE INC.**

**WELFARE RIGHTS  
CENTRE INC.**

**WOMEN'S LEGAL  
SERVICE INC.**

**YOUTH ADVOCACY  
CENTRE INC.**

**YOUTH AND FAMILY  
SERVICE (LOGAN CITY)  
INC. (LOGAN YOUTH LEGAL  
SERVICE & LOGAN LEGAL  
ADVICE CENTRE)**

## QAILS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2010/11**

#### **Convenor**

Scott McDougall, Caxton Legal  
Centre Inc.

#### **Secretary**

Andrea de Smidt, Queensland Public  
Interest Law Clearing House Inc.

#### **Treasurer**

Colleen Wall, Aboriginal & Torres  
Strait Islander Women's Legal  
& Advocacy Service Aboriginal  
Corporation

#### **Members**

Tanya Anderson, North Queensland  
Women's Legal Service Inc.

Donald Gunn, South West Brisbane  
Community Legal Centre Inc.

Katrina Finn, Women's Legal Service  
Inc. (to March 2011)

Aaron Finn, Townsville Community  
Legal Service Inc.

Ann Florence, The Advocacy and  
Support Centre Inc.

Rachel Manson, Youth and Family  
Service (Logan City) Inc. (Logan  
Youth Legal Service)

Rosslyn Monroe, Youth Advocacy  
Centre Inc. (to March 2011)

Rosslyn Monroe, Women's Legal  
Service Inc. (from March 2011)

Giselle Negri, Cairns Community  
Legal Centre Inc.

### **REPRESENTATIVE POSITIONS**

#### **State Representative**

Rosslyn Monroe, Youth Advocacy  
Centre Inc. (to March 2011)

Rosslyn Monroe, Women's Legal  
Service Inc. (from March 2011)

#### **PII Representative**

Jo-Anne Bragg, Environmental  
Defenders Office Inc.



# MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE PROFILES

## SCOTT MCDUGALL

Scott McDougall is the Director and Principal Solicitor of Caxton Legal Centre in Brisbane. Prior to assuming this role in 2002, Scott worked in the areas of Native Title, Discrimination and Criminal Law.

Scott has a long held interest in the representation of disadvantaged litigants, particularly indigenous people, and has conducted a wide variety of cases in the Queensland and Commonwealth jurisdictions.

In 2006 Scott was commissioned to prepare a report assisting the Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council in their negotiations with the Queensland Government.

## ANDREA DE SMIDT

Andrea is a solicitor at the Queensland Public Interest Law Clearing House (QPILCH). Andrea was admitted to practice in 2006, and after working for two years in private practice, she commenced work with QPILCH, firstly as coordinator of the public interest referral scheme and then as coordinator of the Homeless Persons' Legal Clinic.

Andrea has since pursued her interest in administrative law by supervising QPILCH's Administrative Law Clinic, and more recently as coordinator of QPILCH's Self Representation Service at the Queensland Civil and Administration Tribunal (QCAT).

## COLLEEN WALL


Colleen Ma'run Wall is the second daughter of Herb and Alfa Geiszler (nee Beezley) and born in Eidsvold.

She is one of the many Granddaughters of Bert and Mary Beezley (nee Minniecon) and is a direct descendant of Katherine Minniecon (Lingwoodock) – and her mother Sarah Lloyd – and her mother Nannie who was born of the Dauwa Kabi Clan (of the Bauple region).

The Kabi Nation extends from Maryborough, west to the Coastal Range below Biggenden then south to Goomeri's Kinbombi Range and east to the coast below Noosa. Colleen's Mother's Granny Katherine left the family knowledge and language belonging to our mob.

Colleen is a storyteller whose artwork depicts her Traditional country, significant sites, creation stories and





stories of prominent spirits of her ancestral country. Her community work is based on healing and cultural empowerment of our women and their children.

After working most of her life in the bush she started work in Arts Queensland in 1992 after leaving Mt Isa. Colleen stayed there and managed the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs for 14 years and did a lot of groundbreaking work during that time creating many positions and programs including the Indigenous Regional Arts Development Fund. Colleen held positions in Arts Queensland such as Principal Policy Officer and Senior Consultant in the Regional Arts Unit and Queensland Heritage Trails Network. Since leaving Government Colleen has been delivering recognized training to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Community Service, Arts Administration, Youth Work and delivering Cultural Training at Griffith University in the School of Nursing & Midwifery, Logan Campus and the School of Physiotherapy and Exercise Science Gold Coast campus.

Colleen is also working with Griffith University's School of Human Services – Sustainable Desert Settlements: Vulnerabilities, Resilience and Livelihood Futures Project May 07 – Dec 08 – researching the demographics and mobility of the community, what expertise is there and what opportunities there are for development of businesses to keep people in the region and entice

more people into the region in the hope of making a stable and viable community and a specific project 'Painting Stories' Art workshops with Wangkangurru Women of Birdsville.

After she resigned she started her own company called Wanyiram Pty Ltd and over the past 3 years have worked to profile artists and artworkers. Colleen has been contracted as an Industry Expert working with companies such as Positive Solutions, Focus Pty Ltd and Queensland Arts Council. Wanyiram has become a preferred provider for the Brisbane City Council Aboriginal Programs. Her son Dany Williams and daughter Joelene Williams are now managing that work. The Company's vision is the 'Spiritual Wellbeing for Our People'. The Company works from a premise of 'Land is Law' and the importance of respecting Land and works with community to profile the correct cultural way to proceed in developing our daily lives.

Colleen is now working as the Executive of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Legal and Advocacy Service (ATSIWLAS) and is very humbled to be working with such a dedicated and hard working team and Management Committee. Colleen is committed to working with our women in such a way that strengthens and empowers our families.

Colleen extends to all a Kabi Blessing.

"Mur'ruba Ninda – May life be good to you!"

## TANYA ANDERSON

Tanya was admitted as a Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Qld in January

2007. Tanya commenced her law career in private practice in Townsville in 2005 as a trainee Solicitor where she practiced primarily in the fields of Commercial Law, Commercial Litigation, Family Law, Estates, and Property Law.

Tanya has a passion for social justice issues and is dedicated to community work and looked for a more rewarding career where she could really assist clients without the pressures of time costing – putting the person before profit.

Tanya commenced employment with the North Queensland Women's Legal Service (NQWLS) in May 2008 as the Elder and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Solicitor. NQWLS has an office in Townsville and Cairns. NQWLS provides free advice, information and referrals to women in various areas of law including family law, child protection, domestic/family violence, discrimination and sexual assault. Tanya was appointed as the Principal Solicitor of NQWLS in July 2009. Tanya is also a registered Migration Agent providing assistance to migrant women who are affected by Domestic and Family Violence. Tanya is passionate about ensuring that women within the community have access to legal assistance and participating in law reform.

Tanya has been a member of the QAILS Management Committee for the past two years.

## KATRINA FINN

Katrina has worked in the CLC sector since January 1998. She is the Legal Coordinator of the Women's Legal

Service in Brisbane and was the Chair of the Ministerial Advisory Council on Domestic and Family Violence from 2005–2007.

In addition to working at Women's Legal Service, Katrina has also worked at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Legal and Advocacy Service (ATSIWLAS).

Over the last 12 years, Katrina has practised as a solicitor and undertaken community education and law reform projects. Katrina has been a member of the Women's Legal Services Australia (WLSA) committee since 2004 and works closely with other Women's Legal Services on issues of National Law Reform.

Through her work, she advocates for legal systems reforms that will address violence against women, particularly in the areas of Family Law and Domestic Violence.

Katrina has been on the QAILS Management Committee since 2004 and was Co-Convenor for 2 terms, 2007/08 – 2008/09.

## AARON FINN

Aaron first came into contact with Community Legal Centres when he was a clinical legal education student at the Townsville Community Legal Service in 1999. He completed his Practical Legal Training at the same Centre.

Aaron served as the Treasurer for the Central Queensland Community Legal Centre from 2004 to 2006. He became the Principal Solicitor at the Mackay Regional Community Legal Centre in April 2006 and spent close to three years at that Centre.

Aaron has returned to Townsville where he is now a Solicitor at the Townsville Community Legal Service Inc.

## ANN FLORENCE

Ann is a solicitor of the Supreme Court of Queensland and the High Court of Australia and in addition to many years in private practice also has eleven years experience in the Community Legal Sector. She was a volunteer with Caxton Legal Service while in private practice. Prior to joining The Advocacy and Support Centre (TASC) in late 2008 she worked with the North Queensland Women's Legal Service Inc in Townsville and was instrumental in the establishment of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Legal Service NQ Inc in Townsville.

Ann presently is the Manager and Principal Lawyer at The Advocacy and Support Centre (TASC) in Toowoomba.

She has a strong commitment to social justice and to the philosophy of TASC.

Her interests are walking, travel, reading, gardening, leadlight, renovating and her family.

## DONALD GUNN

Donald works as a generalist Solicitor at the South West Brisbane CLC and has been at the centre for almost 5 years. He worked in Private law firms before CLC land.

He has had a long involvement as a volunteer at community radio station 4ZZZ.

Donald works in CLC land as he likes helping people. We can't fix everything but we can fix a few things and help a lot of the community.

CLC's are born in different areas and exist because of a need in the community that the system has failed to provide.

He likes working in CLC land – it's a very positive place and the information exchange and camaraderie is exceptional.

Hobbies are playing guitar, bass, piano accordion, hiking, camping, reading and travelling.

Looking forward to working with everyone.

## RACHEL MANSON

Rachel was admitted as a Barrister of the Supreme Court of Queensland and the High Court of Australia in 2000. Rachel worked for Legal Aid Queensland for 8 years in a number of areas before making the move to private practice. Rachel also teaches criminal law and other subjects for QUT and the Queensland College of Law.

In her current position as Manager of Legal Services for Youth and Family Service Logan City Inc., Rachel continues to focus on improving the accessibility of legal services to members of society.

## ROSSLYN MONRO

Rosslyn Monro has been involved with Community Legal Centres since 1997. She started as a law student volunteer at Nundah Community Legal Service, and has worked at Pine Rivers Community Legal Service as a generalist solicitor, Caxton Legal Centre as a solicitor for older people, and she is currently the Director of the Youth Advocacy Centre.

Rosslyn has been a member of the QAILS Management Committee since 2003. She has previously held the role of Treasurer and Co-Convenor and is currently the NACLC State Representative.

## GISELLE NEGRI

Giselle Negri is the Director of the Cairns Community Legal Centre.



# STATE REPRESENTATIVES REPORT

*It has been another busy year for the National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC), with the board capably lead by the new NACLC Convenor, Michael Smith.*


A very successful annual conference was held in Melbourne, with its theme, "Breaking New Ground: CLCs Advancing Justice".

A huge amount of work has been done by the NACLC office in working towards finalising the next edition of the Risk Management Guide. The process has involved consultation and working with the NACLC Professional Indemnity Sub-committee, comprising of State PII reps, broader consultation with the sector and a lot of collation and negotiation by NACLC staff. The process and the time it has taken is an illustration of the diversity of the sector and how seriously risk management is regarded by CLCs.

A large project that has continued to be rolled out is the Accreditation process. This has involved getting CLCs familiar and using the online resources, Standards Performance Pathways (SPP) and Management

Support Online (MSO). Lis Maier was appointed the National Accreditation Coordinator and has been speaking with all states about the accreditation process, including Queensland.

NACLC has developed MOUs with State Associations, and State Associations have then developed MOUs with individual CLCs, so that there are clear lines of accountability in the Federated structure for accreditation. One of the goals is to have a Regional Accreditation Coordinator (RAC) in most States to provide hands-on assistance to CLCs with the Accreditation process as well as facilitate the Accreditation assessment. NACLC successfully secured funds from the Commonwealth for QAILS to employ a RAC in the near future. While Accreditation has involved some cultural change for CLCs, there has been positive feedback that the assessment process and the resources have assisted CLCs to be



supported to work on policy issues with their staff and Management Committee.

This year NACLC reviewed its fee structure. The review was a result of some difficulties with the fee calculation formula which relied on less current CLC funding figures, resulted in inequities and was overly complex to administer. It also required review in light of NACLC's financial obligation to support the Accreditation process, without having to charge a separate fee that is typical in most accreditation processes outside the sector. As a result some CLCs have experienced an increase in fees, however the majority of CLC's fees have remained the same or have slightly decreased. A portion of the NACLC fees will continue to financially support the availability of the SPP and MSO to CLCs at no further cost.

NACLC also developed a position statement on CLCs charging fees

to clients. This involved surveying Centres to understand the range of practices that exist in the sector and then formulating a policy position on this. The QAILS Constitution clearly states that members must provide "free" legal services and the NACLC position statement supports this. This is a key policy issue in defining CLCs from other parts of the legal profession and is inherent to our social justice values.

Julia Hall and her staff do an amazing job in handling the many projects that NACLC undertakes. It is a very small staff team that produces work of a quality and quantity that defies the limited resources. Michael Smith has done a great job in his first year as National Convenor, providing new ideas and focus to the work of the NACLC board. It's very rewarding to be on the board of such an energetic organisation.

**ROSSLYN MONRO**  
**STATE REP**



## PII REPRESENTATIVES PROFILE

Jo-Anne Bragg graduated from Sydney University in 1988 with a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Laws. After working with law firm Minter Ellison in Sydney in company and commercial law, Jo moved to Brisbane in 1992 to take up the position of Solicitor at the EDO QLD, and is now the longest serving EDO solicitor in Australia.

Throughout her approximately 18 years as Principal Solicitor at the EDO QLD, Jo has provided invaluable legal advice to members of the public and community and environment groups, and has made critical contributions to reforming Queensland's environmental laws, particularly in successful advocacy for expanded third party enforcement rights in the Environmental Protection Act 1994,

the Nature Conservation Act 1992 and the Water Act 2000. In recent years Jo has worked on a number of successful test cases concerning the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, including the Nathan Dam case and enforcement cases with Dr Chris McGrath for Dr Carol Booth concerning protection of flying foxes under the Queensland Nature Conservation Act 1992. Recently Jo has provided assistance to groups opposing the Traveston Dam. During 2008-2010 Jo worked as Principal Solicitor for client the Wide Bay Burnett Conservation Council in an enforcement action against dam operator Burnett Water.

**JO-ANNE BRAGG**  
**PII REPRESENTATIVE**

# PII REPRESENTATIVES REPORT

This year, the 32 Queensland community legal centres have again willingly participated in the cross check system, whereby the practices and procedures of a centre are scrutinised by a practitioner from another centre and suggestions for improvement made. This is a valuable way to promote improvements in practice at legal centres, large and small. Further, it encourages useful informal professional networks to form which is essential to help support work at small and sometimes remote community legal centres. All cross check reports are now being scanned for archiving.

We now have a new Risk Management Guide and new Cross Check Guide, again due to work originally by Bill Mitchell and then by other members of the PII Committee. 2011-12 will see a need to become familiar with these altered guides, so I ask all centres to put the time in to better understand the changes, but also to take the initiative to ask questions or to comment on any points needing clarification.

The network's valuable professional indemnity insurance was renewed with insurer CGU, after evaluating alternative insurers and considering costs and other benefits. Thank you to Peter Noble the chair of the NACLC

Professional Indemnity Insurance Committee and Julia Hall and Anna Bruce at the NACLC office for their work in the negotiations.

On a personal note, I have enjoyed being the PII Rep for Queensland as it means I am in more regular contact with members of the Qld network. Instead of keeping my head down and working on environmental law such as vegetation clearing and water pollution and coal dust, I get to hear about family law and succession issues and what's happening in and around our state.

**JO-ANNE BRAGG**  
**PII REPRESENTATIVE**





# QUEENSLAND COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES

---

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES  
STRAIT ISLANDER WOMEN'S  
LEGAL & ADVOCACY  
SERVICE

ABORIGINAL & TORRES  
STRAIT ISLANDER WOMEN'S  
LEGAL SERVICES NO

BAYSIDE COMMUNITY  
LEGAL SERVICE

CAIRNS COMMUNITY  
LEGAL CENTRE

CAXTON LEGAL CENTRE

CENTRAL QUEENSLAND  
COMMUNITY LEGAL  
CENTRE

ENVIRONMENTAL  
DEFENDERS OFFICE

ENVIRONMENTAL  
DEFENDERS OFFICE NO

GOLD COAST LEGAL  
SERVICE

GOONDIWINDI COMMUNITY  
LEGAL SERVICE

LESBIAN GAY BISEXUAL  
TRANS INTERSEX LEGAL  
SERVICE

LOGAN LEGAL ADVICE  
CENTRE

LOGAN YOUTH LEGAL  
SERVICE





**MACKAY REGIONAL  
COMMUNITY LEGAL  
CENTRE**

**NORTH QUEENSLAND  
WOMEN'S LEGAL  
SERVICE**

**NUNDAH COMMUNITY  
LEGAL SERVICE**

**PENINSULA COMMUNITY  
LEGAL SERVICE**

**PINE RIVERS COMMUNITY  
LEGAL SERVICE**

**PRISONERS LEGAL  
SERVICE**

**QUEENSLAND ADVOCACY  
INCORPORATED**

**QUEENSLAND PUBLIC  
INTEREST LAW  
CLEARING HOUSE**

**REFUGEE AND IMMIGRATION  
LEGAL SERVICE**

**ROMA COMMUNITY  
LEGAL SERVICE**

**SOUTH WEST BRISBANE  
COMMUNITY LEGAL  
CENTRE**

**STANTHORPE COMMUNITY  
LEGAL SERVICE**

**SUNCOAST COMMUNITY  
LEGAL SERVICE**

**TAYLOR STREET COMMUNITY  
LEGAL SERVICE**

**TENANTS UNION OF  
QUEENSLAND**

**THE ADVOCACY AND  
SUPPORT CENTRE**

**TOWNSVILLE COMMUNITY  
LEGAL SERVICE**

**WELFARE RIGHTS  
CENTRE**

**WOMEN'S LEGAL  
SERVICE**

**YOUTH ADVOCACY  
CENTRE**



## WHAT IS A CLC?

*Community legal centres (CLCs) are independent, community organisations providing equitable and accessible legal services.*

They are of their communities and responsive to their communities. 'Communities' may be geographic communities, as for generalist CLCs, or communities of interest, as for specialist CLCs that may target a group (eg. children) or a particular area of law.

CLCs are able to offer appropriate, effective and creative solutions based on their experience within their community. It is this community relationship that distinguishes community legal centres from other legal services. It is this community relationship that makes community legal centres essential and vital organisations.

While providing legal services to individuals, CLCs also work beyond the individual.

Community legal centres initiate community development, community legal education and law reform projects that are preventative in outcome and that strengthen the community. The clients of community legal centres are those who are facing injustice, whose legal problem is not profitable, and whose life circumstances are affected by their legal problem.

Community legal centres harness the energy and expertise of thousands of volunteers across the country. Centres are committed to collaboration with government, legal aid, the private legal profession and community partners to ensure the best outcomes for their clients and the system of justice in Australia.

# NATURE OF CLCS

*CLCs are community managed, independent organisations operating within an overarching philosophy of promoting access to justice for members of the community through the provision of direct legal services, community education and law reform activities.*

Traditionally, CLCs have developed as grass roots, dynamic and voluntary organisations of solicitors, social workers, community workers and concerned community members who seek to provide basic legal information and advice services. The historical nature of CLCs has allowed them to develop in places of high legal needs to meet identified gaps in the services provided by Legal Aid and the private profession.

The very nature of the evolution of CLCs as instruments created by and for the community has traditionally ensured that CLC services are appropriately tailored to the community being serviced and that there are high levels of acceptance of those services by the community.

Significantly, CLCs have never claimed to be, nor do they wish to be seen as replacements for a properly resourced legal aid system. Rather, CLCs aim to complement the broad range of Legal Aid services provided through formal Legal Aid structures.

Successive reviews (both in Queensland and in other states) have

concluded that CLCs effectively work in conjunction with formal Legal Aid structures and the private profession to address legal needs that might otherwise remain unfulfilled. In this regard, CLCs are uniquely positioned to identify and respond to emerging needs because:

- they are located within the community. This is more than a mere physical presence by way of an office, but extends to community management of the services and directions of each CLC;
- they have the ability to be highly responsive. Unhampered by rigid structures or the 'red tape' of large institutions such as Legal Aid offices, CLCs are able to quickly identify needs and develop strategies for dealing with issues;
- they are able to adopt 'nontraditional' approaches to legal problems and draw upon highly innovative means for the delivery of services, including the ability to provide services outside of normal business hours;
- they draw upon extensive bodies of voluntary assistance.

CLCs are not outposts of Legal Aid, or 'mini Legal Aid offices'. They have limited or no capacity to deal with large-scale casework and court representation which they see as the responsibility of a properly resourced Legal Aid office that has the personnel and infrastructure to effectively manage such activities.

Rather, CLCs achieve the important goal of promoting access to justice by providing a range of accessible services, often unavailable through other means. Whereas a Legal Aid office is properly concerned with the resolution of a problem for the individual, CLCs have a focus not only on the individual, but also on the wider community.

A community legal centre is often the first port of call when legal matters arise through the provision of individualised advice, information and referral. They are also often the last port of call when the justice system falters or fails and so provide the important (and otherwise silent) community voice in seeking reform of that system.



# ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER WOMEN'S LEGAL AND ADVOCACY SERVICE

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Legal and Advocacy Service (ATSIWLAS) aims to build a resilient community of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women—strong in spirit and with knowledge of their rights. The Service has membership with the Indigenous People's Organisation (IPO) which allows their client's rights to be represented on an international level through the United Nations Indigenous Permanent Forum.

ATSIWLAS was founded in 1995 by leading Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, including Ms Monica O'Callaghan (deceased), Ms E. Watson (deceased), Ms I. Tarrago, Prof. Boni Robertson, Ms S. Finn and Ms C. Buchanan. Non-Indigenous women, Ms P. Godsell, Ms Z. Rathus and Ms J. Clarkin, were also involved in the founding of the service.

In 1996, ATSIWLAS was registered as a specialist Community Legal Centre, and has since continued to provide legal advice in areas of family law, domestic and family violence, victims of crime, advocacy and child welfare issues. They also provide general legal

information and offer assistance by way of information and referrals.

ATSIWLAS has three program areas:

- Administration and Support
- Legal
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Violence Counselling and Court Support

A total of seven staff work within these units and include an Executive Director, administration assistant/office support worker, bookkeeper, one principle solicitor, one part-time solicitor and two support officers. Recently ATSIWLAS introduced a new Management Committee process to provide greater stability to their committee members. This process also ensures that the staffing positions at ATSIWLAS are consistent and composed of workers with the skills needed to meet the future demands of the service.

[www.atsiwl.com.au](http://www.atsiwl.com.au)



# ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER WOMEN'S LEGAL SERVICES NORTH QUEENSLAND

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Legal Services North Queensland Inc (ATSIWLSNQ) began in 1998 as an Indigenous Women's Unit within the North Queensland Women's Legal Service Inc (NQWLS). In February 2006, ATSIWLSNQ became incorporated and has been operating independently ever since.

Core funding supports the team at ATSIWLSNQ, including a solicitor/coordinator; a community development worker who maintains networks throughout North Queensland facilitating indigenous women's access to legal services; and a part-time administrator.

The ATSIWLSNQ clientele come from a region which extends from Mackay to the Torres Strait, east to Palm Island and west to the Northern Territory border. The main practice areas for the Service are family law, child protection, family violence, victim assistance and anti-discrimination law. Legal advice, assistance and representation in these practice areas are offered through the following methods:

- Face to face appointments
- Telephone advice (free phone advice line)

- Mail advice and information
- Legal representation for court and non-court processes

Other projects invested in by the ATSIWLSNQ include CLE for homeless people, community development work, information about family dispute resolution, and information about child support. CLE projects target the assessed needs of individual communities and are a significant part of ATSIWLSNQ's work.

All services offered by the ATSIWLSNQ are provided in a culturally-friendly environment. The Service aims to promote indigenous women's knowledge of their rights, ownership of legal issues and a familiarity with legal processes to assist women to confidently access and partake in the legal court and non-court processes.

Demand for ATSIWLSNQ's assistance has grown significantly over the years and a major challenge for the Service is to continue to identify and implement innovative and culturally appropriate ways to meet this demand.

**[www.atsiwltnq.org.au](http://www.atsiwltnq.org.au)**



# BAYSIDE COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE

---

The Bayside Community Legal Service (BCLS) has been operating since 1992 and provides generalist advice to residents of the bayside region. Services are provided at two locations; Capalaba and Cleveland. With support and assistance from Legal Aid Queensland, BCLS employs one solicitor to work between these locations two days a week.

Project funding has allowed the Bayside CLS to employ an additional solicitor one day per week. This new approach proved to be immediately beneficial as it provided an increased opportunity for clients to access advice during the day. This alternative to evening advice sessions has been particularly appreciated by clients with young children.

A team of ten legal and seven non-legal volunteers form a roster to assist with advices, referrals and legal education seminars. Volunteers also form a separate advice service that is offered at the Capalaba centre each Monday night. With this assistance, the BCLS is able to extend its outreach service which now includes residents living on the Moreton Bay Islands.



# CAIRNS COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE INC.

---

The Cairns Community Legal Centre commenced operations in 1991 and currently offers the following five services:

- Core (General) Service
- Disability Discrimination Legal Service (DDLS)
- Seniors Legal and Support Service (SLASS)
- Family Relationship Centre (FRC) Project Service
- Consumer Law Service (CLS) – Pilot

The majority of the Centre's funding comes from State and Federal grants, allowing it to engage eleven staff members—seven full time and four part time. In 2010/11 the CCLC received \$18 000 from the Legal Practitioners Interest on Trust Account Fund (LPITAF) to assist the sustainability of its DDLS. An additional \$131 618 was received from LPITAF to assist the Consumer Law Service. The new financial year (2011/12) will see the Consumer Law Service into its third year as a pilot program and the CCLC will endeavour to obtain

continued funding to ensure it is instated as an ongoing service.

In March 2011, the Cairns Community Legal Centre received Flood and Cyclone Funding to assist clients following North Queensland's natural disasters. These funds and clientele have formed an additional, separate project to the existing services offered by the CCLC.

In 2011/12 Cairns Community Legal Centre will seek to extend current funds and grants awarded to the Community Legal Services Program (General Service, DDLS and FRC Project Service) to increase sustainability and ensure the CLSP is continued into the future.

The CCLC extends its thanks to all who have contributed to another successful year and looks forward to the year ahead.

[www.cclc.org.au](http://www.cclc.org.au)



# CARE GOONDIWINDI COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE

---

Care Goondiwindi Community Legal Service (CGCLS) offers a broad range of information, advice and referrals to a wide geographical area. The centre operates between 8.30am and 4.30pm Monday to Friday and offers clients face to face appointments, video conferencing, and email and telephone advice. Clients are provided with options for their legal needs and are able to access Legal Aid Queensland, Rural Women's Outreach, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service (ATSILS) and the Maruma-liu Mari Outreach Service.

In the past financial year, Care Goondiwindi CLS assisted one hundred and seventy clients, one hundred and forty-seven of which were new to the service. CGCLS also provided two hundred and sixty-four advices and commenced an outreach service to Stanthorpe, assisting with the region's legal advice once the Stanthorpe Community Legal Service's funding ran out. In addition to this, one of the

local solicitors at Care Goondiwindi CLS commenced mediation training.

CGCLS plans to introduce mediation services to their communities as they are much needed and lacking—the nearest service available is over two hundred kilometres away. By combining new mediation training with existing skills and knowledge existing, the CGCLS plans to expand this service area in the near future.

Care Goondiwindi Community Legal Service is currently endeavouring to expand their service with the possible recruitment of a solicitor on a more permanent basis. This will allow clients to have a more accessible service, which will reduce waiting time and stress. It will also ensure that those clients who have pending court appearances have sufficient time to access legal advice prior to their court date. CGCLS is excited for this prospective financial year.

**[www.caregoondiwindi.org.au](http://www.caregoondiwindi.org.au)**





# CAXTON LEGAL CENTRE

---

Caxton Legal Centre is a generalist community legal service with a number of specialist programs. The Centre works in a range of areas including offering assistance and advice in areas of consumer, debt and employment law. In October 2010 the Centre moved to new premises at 1 Manning Street, South Brisbane. This move enabled the Seniors' Legal and Support Service to come under the same roof as the Centre's generalist service for the first time.

Caxton Legal Centre facilitates a range of specialist programs including:

- an unfunded, employment law advice program (staffed by volunteers)
- a Consumer Law Program run in conjunction with UQ's Consumer Legal Advice Clinic

- a General and Family Law student program with Griffith University

This year, the Centre released an updated version of The Queensland Law Handbook (11th edition). With this publication; legal guides on employment dismissal and citizen rights when dealing with police; and PLT placement programs, the Caxton Legal Centre has continued to offer a broad range of legal services (both in print and online) to a wide community.

The centre acknowledges the help of their volunteers and pro-bono solicitors and firms. Without their support, the Caxton Legal Centre wouldn't exist.

[www.caxton.org.au](http://www.caxton.org.au)



# CENTRAL QUEENSLAND COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE

---

Central Queensland Community Legal Centre (CQCLC) commenced services in 1995 and since then has offered a generalist advice service divided equally between family, and civil law cases. Advice is offered through face-to-face contact for local residents and email advice and correspondence when necessary. Central Queensland CLC also operates a free call, 1800 number. This is the most common form of client contact.

Following the 2011 South East Queensland Floods, CQCLC was awarded one-off Flood Relief funding to assist with efforts to assist the community. Although CQCLC attended the recovery centres immediately following the floods; provided Legal Aid fact sheets to Emerald, Theodor and other outreach posts; and started to assist clients with insurance claims, the Centre found that the significant effect of the disaster seems to be in flow-on problems. These problems started to arise more to the end of the financial year as a lot of clients realised the impact of debt and unemployment. Central Queensland CLC initially assigned the flood cases to their part-time solicitor but unfortunately the Centre has struggled to maintain a permanent cover of this position.

Central Queensland Community Legal Centre appreciates the benefits of belonging to a small community. The Centre often has the opportunity to work in conjunction with other community groups and schools, offering education sessions and services. CQCLC provides regular outreach advice to Yeppoon and attends inter-agency meetings in Emerald, Blackwater, Mt Morgan and Theodor. These meetings help CQCLC assess how to ensure that outreach services are efficient and that they are working with the various communities effectively.

The key challenges facing the Central Queensland CLC in the coming financial year are to maintain funding to support a stable, regular staff. CQCLC has recently applied for LPITAF funding to assist this effort—toward the end of the financial year staffing arrangements were looking more stable, and with extra funding CQCLC will be able to continue their growing outreach efforts in the region.

[www.cqclc.org.au](http://www.cqclc.org.au)





# ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS OFFICE (QLD) INC.

---

The Environmental Defenders Office (QLD) Inc (EDO) provides legal advice and information to individuals and community groups who seek to protect the environment in the public interest. Their main service area is public interest environmental law, which is addressed by a team of two solicitors (one principal solicitor) and a part time office manager. Student volunteers also assist the EDO with legal research one day a week.

At the end of 2010, the EDO received a generous one-off donation that allowed them to employ an additional solicitor plus a part time administrative assistant. These positions will be in place for two years and will work to target Climate Change litigation.

The EDO has conducted free educational workshops throughout the 2010/11 financial year, outreaching to Dalby, the Gold Coast, Rockhampton, Gladstone and Tara. The Office has also conducted a strong case in the Land Court of Queensland on behalf of the Friends of the Earth (Brisbane) Cooperative. This case consisted of an objection to an open cut coal mine (applied for by Xstrata and others) on the grounds that the burning of coal will increase climate change impacts, particularly to the Great Barrier Reef.

The 2011 natural disasters in Queensland saw a number of clients seeking assistance from the EDO. Client inquiries related to planning, pollution and flooding, and the EDO received a one-off grant of \$10 000 to assist this work. EDO is very appreciative to the State Government for this grant.

The EDO is currently seeking funding to provide community legal education on Coal Seam Gas and Mining, particularly in regional areas. This is in response to a huge increase of community concern and enquiries. The Office was recently refused a request for special funding to expand their casework services, law reform and education services to meet land holder needs in regards to the social and environmental impacts of coal mines and Coal Seam Gas.

The main aim of the EDO in the 2011/12 financial year is to secure increased funds for their outreach and casework related to the adverse social and environmental impacts of mining and Coal Seam Gas. In view of increasing costs, especially wages, the EDO faces a challenge in sustaining current levels of the Community Legal Services Program (CLSP) services.

**[www.edo.org.au/edoqld](http://www.edo.org.au/edoqld)**



# ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS OFFICE OF NORTHERN QUEENSLAND

The Environmental Defenders Office of Northern Queensland (EDO-NQ) specialises in public interest environmental law. A volunteer Management Committee works alongside two legal staff and an office coordinator assisting in the delivery of services over a large area (from Sarina, south of Mackay, to the Torres Strait and across the breadth of Queensland). EDO-NQ's service area also includes two World Heritage Areas—the Great Barrier Reef and Wet Tropic WHA.

Modest resources and a large service area do not allow EDO-NQ to directly represent everyone seeking assistance; they do however provide regular support to individuals and groups working to protect North Queensland's unique environment.

The biggest challenge for the EDO-NQ is to identify and channel resources into the areas that provide the best outcomes for the protection of the environment. The Office looks forward to expanding the volunteer program for legal students over the coming year and will continue to visit regional areas to deliver workshops and provide advice.

**[www.edo.org.au/edonq](http://www.edo.org.au/edonq)**



# GOLD COAST LEGAL SERVICE

---

The Gold Coast Legal Service (GCLS) has a service area that extends from Yatala in the north, Beaudesert in the west and Coolangatta/Tweed Heads in the south. Working alongside the Citizens Advice Bureau, GCLS is the only funded community legal centre operating on the Gold Coast and provides a generalist service to their target community.

Approximately 3600 clients annually seek assistance from the GCLS—a broad spectrum of issues are addressed, though family law, consumer law and neighbourhood disputes dominate client concerns. Other matters dealt with at the Service include employment, credit, debt and other civil disputes. A trained and qualified financial counsellor assists clients with personal debt-related matters and offers assistance with bankruptcy where appropriate.

The GCLS staff is made up of two full time and two part time solicitors, a financial counsellor, an office-manager/paralegal and several other employed staff. A dedicated core of volunteer workers provides administrative support to solicitors in addition to assisting client screening and the scheduling of appointments. Volunteers also provide community information as part of the GCLS's Citizens Advice Bureau function.

**[www.advicebureau.org.au](http://www.advicebureau.org.au)**



# LESBIAN GAY BISEXUAL TRANS INTERSEX LEGAL SERVICE

---

The 2010/2011 financial year marked the conclusion of the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans Intersex (LGBTI) Legal Service's first year in practice. Established in July 2010, the LGBTI Legal Service offers a generalist service to a specialist client base—members of the LGBTIQ communities. The Service is staffed entirely by volunteers. The large team, thirty five members in total, is comprised of the following positions:

- 21 x lawyers
- 1 x coordinator
- 12 x administration assistants
- 1 x social worker

In their first year of service, the LGBTI Legal Service successfully met all goals planned for the first year.

Not only did the Service increase client numbers throughout the year, but also took on its first family law case in court, with LGBTI Legal Service on the record. LGBTI Legal Service hopes to continue this action in the second year of service, as well as establishing and engaging in law reform and CLE activities.

The Service is extremely thankful to all its volunteers and acknowledges that, without all their time and effort, the LGBTI Legal Service would not exist. The service would like to extend thanks to Caxton Legal Centre for ongoing support and to Healthy Communities for the donation of office space to accommodate evening advice sessions and resources.



# LOGAN LEGAL ADVICE CENTRE

---

Logan Legal Advice Centre (LLAC) provides support, advice and information to approximately eight hundred clients (respectively) each year. Key presenting issues include:

- Family law—children, divorce and separation
- Civil law—debt, neighbour disputes, motor vehicle accidents and consumer issues
- Criminal law—minor matters

Employed staff also engage in law reform and community education activities throughout the year.

During the 2010/11 financial year, LLAC developed and distributed a new family law brochure for clients.

The brochure explained the aspects of family law that need to be considered and did so in a way that could be easily understood.

LLAC received two years funding to trial a program working with the Family Relationship Centre (FRC) in Logan at the beginning of 2010. This program was established in partnership with the South West Brisbane Community Legal Centre and Women's Legal Service and has continued to be a well received, worthwhile initiative.

[www.yfs.org.au](http://www.yfs.org.au)



# LOGAN YOUTH LEGAL SERVICE

---

Logan Youth Legal Service (LYLS) provides advice, casework and advocacy services to young people, between ten and seventeen years, in Logan and the surrounding regions. The service also engages in community legal education and law reform activities.

LYLS provides services for around three hundred clients and facilitates

approximately forty community legal education activities for community and professional groups each year

The advocacy and legal support engaged in by LYLS continues to occur within a holistic framework. This enables the service to see beyond the young person's behaviour and connect with them as an

individual who is influenced by a range of circumstances that are often complex. Working with young people in this way gives the client a sense that the support of the service will be there regardless of the issue.

[www.yfs.org.au](http://www.yfs.org.au)



# MACKAY REGIONAL COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE

---

The Mackay Regional Community Legal Centre Inc. (MRCLC) has been funded by the Department of Justice and Attorney General since 2005. The Centre provides advice in most areas of law (excluding native title and conveyancing), but the majority of cases tend to relate to family law; property and children's issues in particular. Despite the small, four member staff team, MRCLC is involved in a wide range of outreach projects and works in partnership with other regional community centres to better serve the needs of their community's prospective clients.

In 2009, Mackay Regional CLC implemented a volunteer service—a Registered Migration Agent. This service was designed to provide extended advice on domestic violence and relationship issues to clients on spousal visas. The demand for this service has increased and although advice sessions are only scheduled to operate for one and a half hours,

with clients scheduled in for twenty to thirty minute appointments, the service often extends well beyond this time frame. In 2011, MRCLC commenced work on a funding application to work towards ensuring the Registered Migration Agent program is more sustainable. With funds, the Centre hopes to increase the frequency of the initiative and upgrade it from a volunteer position.

Mackay Regional CLC is involved in extensive community outreach projects. In the 2010/11 financial year, the Centre continued a partnership with the Family Relationship Centre (FRC) in Mackay and ran Family Law information sessions at the FRC and surrounding regional areas (Proserpine, the Whitsundays, Cannonvale, Moranbah, Claremont and Airlie Beach). The success and demand for this project indicates a need for sessions to operate more frequently, ideally on a fortnightly basis. MRCLC

is currently seeking funding to support this demand and hopes to institute a second solicitor in the near future. An increase in funding would assist the FRC program outreach to extend to the Bowen area.

A major challenge for MRCLC lies in the certainty of the Centre's staffing. In early 2012, the surplus funds currently used to employ a second solicitor are due to run out. MRCLC is seeking funding to maintain this full time position and enable continued, more frequent outreach services. MRCLC values the varied opportunities it has to engage with the community—partaking in presentations to Cannonvale High School on Family Law and subpoenas, and to the Mackay Woman's Centre on property issues. Staff hope to continue such services well into the new financial year.

[www.mrclc.com.au](http://www.mrclc.com.au)



# NORTH QUEENSLAND WOMEN'S LEGAL SERVICE

---

North Queensland Women's Legal Service (NQWLS) is a community legal service provided by women, for women. The Service covers a region that extends from Sarina in the south, Cape York in the north and west to the Northern Territory border.

NQWLS comprises two separate offices in two regional centres over four hundred kilometres apart (Townsville and Cairns). The Townsville office has one full time solicitor, one part time solicitor, one part time coordinator and two part time administration assistants. The Cairns office is staffed by two part time solicitors and one part time administration assistant.

Each centre, provides advice to women in most areas of law although the focus is mainly on family law, family violence and child protection. Assistance is offered via a telephone advice line and via face to face appointments. NQWLS also maintains regular outreach clinics to Ayr, Charters Towers, Innisfail, Mareeba and Mossman/Port Douglas.

Past years of operation have seen the North Queensland Women's Legal Service distribute innovative Property Settlement workbooks to assist clients and lawyers in preparations for property negotiations and settlement. By raising key legal issues impacting on their clients through a targeted communication strategy, NQWLS is able to develop and maintain strong relationships with their key stakeholders throughout North Queensland.

The North Queensland Women's Legal Service plays a vital role in community development, delivering legal education sessions that target women and organisations in rural and regional areas. They hope to continue such services in the coming financial year.

[www.nqwls.com.au](http://www.nqwls.com.au)



# NUNDAH COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE

The small but busy generalist Nundah Community Legal Service (NCLS) is operated through the Nundah Community Support Group Inc. Integrated with the Nundah Neighbourhood Centre, NCLS provides a holistic service focused on a clientele around Brisbane's north side.

Nundah Community Legal Service provide a weekly Wednesday drop-in advice service, staffed by dedicated volunteers and an employed daytime solicitor. Clients are able to see the solicitor by appointment which allows for sufficient time to provide more extensive assistance. Despite limited resources, Nundah CLS also maintains an active interest

and involvement in community legal education, law reform, peak organisations, and the Australian Services Union, with a particular focus on Human Rights.

In early 2011, Nundah CLS moved into a purpose built premises funded by the Queensland Department of Communities. There has been a marked increase in the number of clients across all areas of the newly branded Nundah Neighbourhood Centre and Community Legal Service.

The challenge for the legal service, specifically, is to continue to provide the quantity and quality of time for advice together with responding to the unmet need for circumscribed case work, with limited resources.







# PENINSULA COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE INC.

The Peninsula Community Legal Service (PCLS) operates from its base in Redcliffe and has outreach services to Deception Bay and Bribie Island. The Bribie Island outreach operates in partnership with the Legal Aid Queensland Caboolture Office and the Pine Rivers Community Legal Service. PCLS also responds to requests for assistance in the greater Moreton Bay Regional Council Area.

Peninsula Community Legal Service has a small staff composed of one solicitor/manager, a part-time administration assistant and a part-time financial officer. With the help of their volunteer management committee and a team of volunteer solicitors, PCLS is able to service a large and diverse clientele.

Peninsula Community Legal Service has recently engaged with a community development officer to determine the diverse needs of the community and to ensure targeting in areas that require the expertise of the service. The main focus areas of the Service are advice, document assistance and youth. PCLS host a Youth and the Law network meeting for youth providers and those involved in youth justice (including police, courts and lawyers).

Peninsula Community Legal Service is looking forward to expanding its services over the next year, responding to the ever increasing needs of the region.



# PINE RIVERS COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE

The Pine Rivers Community Legal Centre (PRCLC) has been operating under the auspices of the Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre for the last ten years. As part of a number of community services offered through the Neighbourhood Centre, PRCLC provides a general legal advice service (with a focus on family law matters), drafts wills and assist clients to make an enduring power of attorney. The Centre also contributes to community education by providing information sessions on family law and domestic violence.

Three part-time solicitors, a part-time legal support worker and a small but enthusiastic team of administrative volunteers, staff the PRCLC. Legal advice is provided Monday to Friday, by appointment, and on Thursday evenings during a walk-in service. There are thirty-three volunteer solicitors and ten law students

who staff the Thursday evening advice service with the rotating roster forming an invaluable component of the Pine Rivers Community Legal Centre.

Pine Rivers CLC is funded by both State and Commonwealth grants. The Centre is currently in a successful partnership with the Family Relationship Centres (FRCs) at Strathpine and Chermside where they provide family law advice to FRC clients one and a half days per week (including one evening each week).

PRCLC offers an outreach advice service at Bribie Island and hopes to obtain funding to develop a similar outreach service to Caboolture in the near future.

[www.prnc.org.au](http://www.prnc.org.au)





# PRISONERS' LEGAL SERVICE

The Prisoners' Legal Service (PLS) offers free legal advice, information, assistance and referrals to Queensland prisoners and their families on matters relating to their imprisonment. The Service also maintains a watching brief over prisons administration and law reform in Queensland in so far as these affect prisoners and the public interest.

PLS responds to prisoner enquiries by phone twice a week on the prisoner advice lines that run directly out of all prisons across Queensland. They also respond by mail as required. The Service's Gradual Release Program (GRAP) solicitors assist prisoners who have literacy and mental health issues,

with their parole applications. This process involves liaising with prisoners, drafting applications and assisting prisoners to obtain judicial reviews of parole orders.

Over the past year, Prisoners' Legal Service has continued to offer assistance to those prisoners and families experiencing financial difficulties through the Financial Counselling Program (FCP). A financial counsellor and community resource officer work to ensure that prisoners are making informed decisions regarding the best course of action to resolve their financial difficulties and help them to gain an improved ability to manage their financial affairs. The FCP engages in

casework, advocacy, referrals and community education activities.

PLS relies on volunteers to assist in the provision of legal advice. The Service is committed to providing opportunities for students to acquire knowledge and practical experience in social justice issues, human rights law and prison law. PLS is an active participant in the administrative law clinics and student placement programs from Queensland University of Technology (QUT), the University of Queensland (UQ), Bond University, and the Griffith University Law School.

[www.plsqld.com](http://www.plsqld.com)



## QUEENSLAND ADVOCACY INCORPORATED

Queensland Advocacy Incorporated (QAI) is an independent, community-based systems advocacy and legal advocacy organisation for people with disability in Queensland.

QAI's mission is to promote, protect and defend the fundamental needs, rights and lives of the most vulnerable people with disability. This is achieved through campaigns directed at attitudinal, law and policy change, and by supporting the development of a range of advocacy initiatives.

Individual legal advocacy is also provided to persons whose disability is at the centre of their legal issue. The legal services of QAI include:

- Human Rights Legal Service (HRLS)

HRLS provides a specialist legal advice service to people with a disability on a wide range of matters state-wide. Particular specialisations include the provision of legal advice to people with intellectual and cognitive impairments. QAI is the only source of specialist legal advice for this sector of the Queensland community.

- Mental Health Legal Service (MHLS)

MHLS is a specialist legal service dedicated to providing free legal assistance in relation to mental health law in Queensland. The focus of the service is to provide advice and representation to people who have matters before the Mental Health Review Tribunal.

- Justice Support Program (JSP)

The main role of the JSP is to respond to the needs of individual people with mental illness, cognitive impairment, acquired brain injury and intellectual disability in the Justice and related systems. The advocate provides individual advocacy and representation to marshal legal and community services to support the person at risk.

The focus of QAI's advocacy is to provide the best possible opportunities for their clients to remain in the community. QAI strives to prevent clients from becoming involved or any further entrenched into the criminal justice system.

[www.qai.org.au](http://www.qai.org.au)



# QUEENSLAND PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CLEARING HOUSE

Queensland Public Interest Law Clearing House (QPILCH) brings private law firms, barristers, law schools, legal professional associations, corporate legal units and government legal units together to provide free and low cost legal services to people who cannot obtain legal aid or afford private assistance.

QPILCH coordinates the following services, most of which offer both advice and referrals:

- Public Interest Referral Service (PIRS)
- QLS Pro Bono Scheme and Bar Pro Bono Scheme
- Homeless Persons' Legal Clinic (HPLC)
- Refugee Civil Law Clinic
- Administrative Law Clinic
- Self Representation Service (Courts)
- Self Representation Service (Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal)
- Court of Appeal Self Representation Service
- Self Representation Service

(Federal Court)

- Mental Health Law Clinic
- Intellectual Property and Technology Law Clinic

QPILCH's latest initiative is an extension of the self-representation service into the Federal Magistrates Court and Federal Courts for a two day per week, twelve week period. They have also received some funding from the Gambling Fund for a six month environmental governance research project. This project is being considered for the Environmental Law Roundtable, where QPILCH will work alongside the EDO and the Griffith University Law School.

Recently QPILCH received LPITAF funding to support their RRR project which aims to increase pro bono work across the State. This funding will also assist the QLS pro bono project and their self representation service, QCAT. The biggest challenge QPILCH can foresee for the coming financial year is maintaining these funds so that each project remains sustainable.

[www.qpilch.org.au](http://www.qpilch.org.au)



# REFUGEE AND IMMIGRATION LEGAL SERVICE

The Refugee and Immigration Legal Service (RAILS) has continued to provide migration advice and representation to migrant and refugee clients with low income and/or who are disadvantaged due to their language skills, regional location, or inability to deal with the legal system due to a lack of knowledge.

Recently, RAILS implemented a restructuring of their agency in order to maintain financial viability. The new staffing levels include a part time director, a principal solicitor, four caseworkers/legal practitioners, a community legal education coordinator and two administration/finance positions.

Continued key challenges for RAILS relate to the demands for their

services in the areas of refugee family reunion and their capacity to meet the level of demand by providing the services needed. 2010 saw a marked reduction in the types of cases RAILS could take on and casework guidelines had to be tightened to assist unaccompanied minors wanting to sponsor their families, and orphan relative visa applications.

RAILS staff continue to represent clients with onshore protection visa applications, family violence provisions and Ministerial Intervention cases. Community legal education has been an area of expansion as RAILS has continued to receive funding from several sources.

[www.rails.org.au](http://www.rails.org.au)



# ROMA COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE

Roma Community Legal Service Inc. (RCLS) was established in 1987 by a group of interested persons from Toowoomba and Roma. It was originally run by a part time coordinator in a small room in the Roma Neighbourhood Centre but has since moved to its current independent premises.

The RCLS services an area estimated to be three times the size of Victoria (475 000 sq km) and has a small staff team and Management Committee.

Advice, information and referrals are provided in criminal, family and civil

law matters, as well as community legal education and support work. RCLS is kept busy through the demand for support and representation at local courts and they also operate a child contact and supervision centre utilised by many stakeholders from Brisbane, Toowoomba and Hervey Bay.

RCLS also maintains a weekly Justice of the Peace Service.

[www.romalegal.net](http://www.romalegal.net)



# SOUTH WEST BRISBANE COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE

---

The South West Brisbane Community Legal Service (SWBCLS) is a generalist legal advice service, offering face to face contact five days a week, phone consults by appointment and home visits to elderly and disabled clients. There are four full time lawyers, three support staff, one part time lawyer, and a part time volunteer lawyer at the Centre, based in Inala. These staff members also facilitate an outreach service to Goodna and Booval, which operates once a week by appointment. A team of eight volunteer law students provide a weekly Thursday Night Advice program at the base-centre in Inala.

South West Brisbane CLS is funded by State, Commonwealth and LPITAF grants. This funding has allowed them to establish and maintain the two specialist service areas—the Child Protection Duty Lawyer service at the Beenleigh Courts and the Youth and Criminal Advocacy Program. This program is currently funded to run three days a week but produces a full time workload. At the end of the 2010/11 financial year, SWBCLS applied for additional funding to assist their Child Protection Solicitor, seeking to make the program more viable.

Recent initiatives for the South West Brisbane Community Legal Service include the re-publication of their Child Protection Information and Tips for Parents document, and Child Protection Information and Tips for Workers. These documents were issued on the SWBCLS website, however they are also hoping to print the resources—this would allow for wider distribution and reach a broader audience.

The main challenge that South West Brisbane CLS foresees for the coming financial year is the question of the Centre's financial and locational security. In June 2011, the Service's lease ran out and the State Government plans to sell the land. SWBCLS was able to secure an extended lease for the coming year, enabling the Service to continue for the time being. SWBCLS hopes to find a more stable solution soon.

[www.communitylegal.org.au](http://www.communitylegal.org.au)



# STANTHORPE COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE

---

Stanthorpe Community Legal Service is based at the Granite Belt Neighbourhood Centre and is managed by the Community Development Services (CDS) Inc. The Service offers face-to-face advice once a fortnight in the following main practice areas: Civil, Family and Criminal law. The majority of clients seek advice on custodial and consumer law issues.

At the end of 2010 the last of SCLS's LPITAF project monies were expended and Goondiwindi Legal Service (GLS) took over the support of a local solicitor to ensure that the services could be continued in the short term. Advice sessions were forced to drop from once a week to once a fortnight.

Despite their lack of funding, SCLS offers an extensive service to a range of regional clients who can't afford to travel to Toowoomba for legal advice. They provide office space for Toowoomba Advocacy Support Centre (TASC) when necessary; arrange phone consultations and referrals to

Toowoomba Legal Aid; and provide office space for QPILCH when civil matters arise.

The Service auspice, CDS, is extremely reliant and supportive of their ten additional volunteer workers, seven of which comprise the Management Committee and three who operate as Emergency Relief workers. When the 2011 floods hit South East Queensland, thirty homes in the immediate region went under and TASC used the Stanthorpe offices during the recovery effort. During this time, solicitors assisted clients with end of lease and insurance issues. Some of these cases are ongoing.

The coming financial year (2011/12) is an uncertain time for Stanthorpe Community Legal Service. They are not sure how long GLS will be able to provide outreach to Stanthorpe and a further project grant has not been sourced. Stanthorpe Community Legal Service hopes to be able to continue operating in their community.



# SUNCOAST COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE

Suncoast Community Legal Service Inc. has been providing legal advice and referral services on the Sunshine Coast since 1984 when a group of lawyers set up a service at their local neighbourhood centre.

Since 2007, the Service has operated its own office premises in Maroochydore and employs a coordinator, principal solicitor and a small administrative team.

For the past three years, Suncoast CLS has focused on increasing access to justice in other areas of the region through the establishment of regular outreach in local community and neighbourhood centres. Appointments are scheduled for general and family law matters at the central office in Maroochydore, as well as at the outreach venues in Noosaville, Caloundra, Pomona, Nambour, Landsborough and Maleny.

The expansion of services across the Sunshine Coast and Hinterland areas has doubled volunteer numbers and, subsequently, the number of appointments available to clients. Clients can now book an appointment at a location closer to home and lawyers are able to volunteer in their local communities.

In addition to advice appointments, SCLS provide community legal education seminars on a range of topics. These are held regularly in libraries across the region and also by request from schools and community groups. In house 'limited assistance' services are provided by the principal solicitor on referral.

<http://suncoastcommunitylegal.org/>



# TAYLOR STREET COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE

Taylor Street Community Legal Service (TSCLS) operates as a generalist legal service providing advice and assistance to twelve outreach venues across the North Burnett, Bundaberg, Fraser Coast and Gympie regions. TSCLS has funding to sustain one part time solicitor and one coordinator. An administration assistant is also employed part time and is currently paid from tight budgeting and surplus funds.

Taylor Street CLS is dependent on, and grateful to, their many volunteers. Thirty solicitors work from a number of rosters to service Taylor Street's regional, rural and remote venues—thirty administration assistants accompany them. In their outreach, TSCLS offer weekly face to face contact through the Hervey Bay, Urangan, Maryborough, Bundaberg and Gympie community centres. They also offer weekly Skype contact to Gayndah, Mundubbera, Monto and Biggenden and monthly face to face contact to Tiaro, Tin Can Bay and Gin Gin.

For the past three years, TSCLS has run divorce clinics twice a month in Hervey Bay, Gympie and Bundaberg and provide other community education across the regions when invited. They are affiliated with the Family Relationship Centre (FRC) in Bundaberg, Maryborough and Hervey Bay and assist FRC clients who wish to seek legal advice before continuing with the FRC's mediation process.

Taylor Street Community Legal Service continues to offer a varied service to their regional communities and hopes to receive further one off LPITAF funding to assist the sustainability of their service. Obtaining this funding will ensure that TSCLS can continue to provide vital services over a vast distance.

The Seniors Legal and Support Service also operates from the Taylor Street Community Legal Service.

<http://www.hbnc.com.au/joomla/content/view/55/36/>





# TENANTS UNION OF QUEENSLAND

The Tenants Union of Queensland (TUQ) provides services for, and represents the interests of, residential tenants in Queensland. TUQ work to improve the rights of all people who rent their home, including tenants in private rental, public rental, community housing, caravan parks and boarding houses.

The TUQ advises approximately seven thousand tenants annually through their three locations in

Brisbane, Hervey Bay and Cairns. They provide telephone advice as well as limited face to face assistance.

Approximately forty legal cases are opened annually.

The TUQ resources the network of local and regional tenancy advice services (TAAS) and trains these advocates in tenancy and related law. They also provide community education resources

to services for distribution to tenants.

In the past year, the TUQ developed a training scheme in preparation for a new and improved system of dealing with tenancy disputes through the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT). This training scheme has since been developed state-wide.

[www.tuq.org.au](http://www.tuq.org.au)



## THE ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT CENTRE

The Advocacy and Support Centre (TASC) was established in 1982 as the Toowoomba Community Legal Service. Since its inception, the service has grown from a small community legal centre to a large centre that provides legal services to Toowoomba, Ipswich, the Darling Downs and South West Queensland.

TASC provides a generalist legal and support service in both Ipswich and Toowoomba. A Disability Law Project (for people in the criminal justice system with mental health issues) and a Seniors Legal and Support Service operate from both of these centres. The disability advocacy services offered at TASC enable a holistic approach to client's problems and assist community development. TASC also provide outreach services to women in rural and remote regions.

Thirty four staff members work at TASC, with four working from

the Ipswich office. The positions held include:

- 7x solicitors
- 7x advocates
- 1x community development worker
- 2x social workers
- 2x senior managers
- 14x finance and administration staff
- 1x consultant

TASC has an active volunteer student placement program with students from the University of Southern Queensland (USQ) volunteering regularly. Recurrent funding is received to assist this partnership with the Toowoomba and Springfield USQ campuses; the funds also allow TASC to provide services in partnership with Family Relationship Centres in their region.

Volunteer solicitors provide advice at TASC's Legal Advice Clinic and law graduates from the Australian National University (ANU) complete their Practical Legal Training placement with the Centre.

The Advocacy Support Centre's challenges for the future include meeting client demand with the number of people falling into the gaps ever increasing. In the coming year, TSAC will continue work on their Youth Court initiative and the Student Volunteer Project. They also endeavour to extend the Queensland Criminal Justice Centre to look at court support for people with mental health issues and develop a mental health text as a guide for lawyers.

[www.tascinc.org.au](http://www.tascinc.org.au)





# TOWNSVILLE COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE

---

The Townsville Community Legal Service (TCLS) celebrated its twenty-first 'birthday' this year and marked the occasion with a function to recognise all the staff and community groups who have contributed over the years. The Service was first funded in 1992 and has since continued to operate as both a generalist and a specialist community legal centre. TCLS currently offers the following services:

Financial Counselling

Welfare Rights

Seniors Legal and Support

Immigration Law

Family Relationship Advice

Cyclone Legal Help

TCLS employs eight staff—three solicitors, two social workers, one administrative worker, one paralegal and the centre coordinator. An evening advice service is provided each Thursday by a roster of approximately thirty volunteers from local private law firms. Other volunteers support TCLS as administrative assistants and management committee members.

Townsville Community Legal Service also provides a Clinical Legal Studies program for sixteen final year law students in the second semester of each year. Following the 2011 natural disasters in Queensland, TCLS introduced a flood and cyclone legal help service, providing advice to affected businesses and referrals to the Commonwealth Government's Flood Insurance Guide.

Like many CLCs, pressure is again building with the operating costs of the centre exceeding the levels of recurrent funding received. This is the main challenge that TCLS faces at present.

[www.tcls.org.au](http://www.tcls.org.au)



# WELFARE RIGHTS CENTRE

---

Welfare Rights Centre Inc. (WRC) has a longstanding reputation as an independent voice for fairness empowering the most vulnerable people living in Queensland. They offer specialist information, advocacy and legal services for people having problems with Social Security, Employment Services and Disability Discrimination matters. Their services are primarily provided over the phone.

In 2010/11 there were eleven staff positions at the Welfare Rights Centre; four full time and seven part time. All positions were supported by a large, revamped volunteer program consisting of First Contact Officers, Telephone Advice Workers, Communications Officers, Project Officers and people undertaking legal casework.

The first step in service delivery for the WRC is to diagnose whether matters raised require legal or broader advocacy/support services. Some clients require quite intense support as a result of their social or vulnerability issues while others clearly have a legal problem. If that is the case, all clients that contact the centre will be given information and/or advice.

The Welfare Rights Centre undertakes around 1400 matters a year but struggles to gain support and recognition of their work

outside the Department of the Justice and Attorney General. As a result of ongoing funding problems, WRC has continued to narrow which clients are eligible for the more intense casework services. Nearly seventeen percent of people presenting to the WRC have no income and are experiencing difficulties obtaining social security payments; accordingly, casework services have to be targeted to the most vulnerable clients, or those that have matters that will test new legislation in terms of its fairness and social justice principles.

WRC strive to highlight the reality of the government's social security conditions—that an unjust federal social security system can create a bigger burden on the state government. Strategies that remedy the exclusion of people from the community (i.e. advocating to Centrelink or to services that have discriminated against a person with a disability) need to be instated early in the decision making process. This solution would reduce the number of casework matters at WRC while ensuring that their high volume of advice and information services remain stable.

A major challenge for the WRC came when the state government deemed that funding for their innovative employment services

advocacy program no longer met the funding criteria for the Participating in Prosperity (P in P) program. This meant that WRC had to scale down their work in this area and review their strategic priorities toward meeting the pressing needs of the community.

WRC is concerned that a number of people employed to work with the vulnerable do not recognise their clients' rights when it comes to seeking appeals for unfair decisions. WRC is creating community education strategies to overcome this, including a joint project with Bremer TAFE to obtain an accredited course in Welfare Rights that will be available to students in youth work, community housing and childcare studies.

The Centre is applying for grants to employ a Community Engagement Officer to assist with their disability discrimination legal service, giving it a more viable future. Currently, WRC's social security staff are inundated with people struggling to obtain or retain the Disability Support Pension. Although WRC agrees with the rhetoric, that these people should be working, many of these people are overlooked when it comes to obtaining work. WRC hope to work with a broad range of people and services to get this matter addressed.

**[www.wrcqld.org.au](http://www.wrcqld.org.au)**



# WOMEN'S LEGAL SERVICE

---

Women's Legal Service (WLS) commenced services in 1984 and continues to provide advice on family law, domestic violence and child protection matters. WLS also work with the Logan and Mt Gravatt Family Relationship Centres (FRC) and offer a prison outreach program.

WLS is funded by the State and Federal CLSP and the Department of Communities. The Service consists of four full time and ten part time solicitors, caseworkers and support staff, as well as a team of one hundred and twenty volunteers. As a result of the implementation of Pay Equity rates, WLS has had to reduce their full time equivalents and number of staff (and services) by twenty percent. They are currently seeking additional core funding to reinstate the services lost and would also like to expand their services by fifty percent – prior to the cuts WLS was already unable to meet existing client needs.

This year WLS participated in the national training at the five pilot sites of the Coordinated Family Dispute Resolution Model (CFDR). CFDR is a specialised model of the FDR and was developed by WLS in 2009/10 at the request of the Attorney General's department.

Women's Legal Service had to close for two weeks during the 2011 floods in Southeast Queensland as several staff members were directly affected. Despite this, WLS still maintained extensive services to the community, were awarded the 2011 MS Heroes Award and ran their second successful fundraising art show (sponsored by the Brisbane City Council amongst others).

In the 2011/12 financial year, WLS plan to undertake a public funding campaign to restore reduced services to previous levels and to expand the service to better meet legal needs of Queensland women.

WLS would like to extend many thanks to their wonderful volunteers who provide regular advice to clients through the Wednesday night volunteer service. Without volunteers, WLS would not be able to provide the number of client services that they do.

**[www.wlsq.org.au](http://www.wlsq.org.au)**





# YOUTH ADVOCACY CENTRE

---

The Youth Advocacy Centre (YAC) has offered legal and youth work services to young people in Queensland for thirty years. The Centre does not operate on a drop-in basis—clients are assisted face-to-face by appointment and can obtain legal representation, advice and youth work support for matters including education, social security and housing. The legal assistance sought from YAC is primarily in the areas of youth justice and child protection, but education and administrative law are also relatively common.

The staff members at the Youth Advocacy Centre come from different disciplines. The current positions held include:

- 1x full time director
- 2x full time youth workers
- 2x full time solicitors
- 1x 0.6 FTE legal education officer

- 2x 0.8 FTE administration officers
- 1x 0.4 FTE finance officer
- 2x full time bail accommodation officers; part of the Youth Bail Accommodation Support Service (YBASS)

Between January and June 2011, YAC was successful in obtaining philanthropic grants for the 2011/12 financial year (\$50 000 from the Lord Mayor's Community Trust and \$50 000 from the Pratt Foundation). Prior to this news, the Centre had been forced to cut back on services by about ten percent because it could not meet its obligations under the Award, with the office closing at 2.30pm on Fridays. With these funds, YAC can now continue full time services into the new financial year.

The Youth Advocacy Centre has recently applied for funding to assist the updating of their website—

the Centre aims to make it more practical for clients by including interactive components such as video. Aside from this project, one of the policy areas which YAC will be keeping an eye on in the coming year is the criminalisation of young people in care. YAC's casework team has become increasingly alarmed at the high rate of young people who are in the care and protection system and end up before the youth justice system, sometimes for very minor matters.

Since 1992, the Youth Advocacy Centre had been fighting to get seventeen year olds included in the youth justice system, as opposed to the current system where they are treated as adults. They will continue to lobby in this area in the 2011/12 financial year.

**[www.yac.net.au](http://www.yac.net.au)**





## ACCREDITATION

*QAILS is the state based peak organisation representing the 32 funded and unfunded member Community Legal Centres (CLCs) operating throughout Queensland.*

The National Accreditation Scheme and its related tools were launched at the National CLC Conference in Melbourne in October 2010. Since that time QAILS' members have attended information sessions regarding accreditation at a number of QAILS events. NALCLC employed the National Accreditation Coordinator in January 2011 and QAILS has subsequently received notice that a submission for funding from the Commonwealth Attorney General has been successful. These funds will support the employment of a Regional Accreditation Coordinator to support Queensland CLCs with accreditation and the change management process.

The NALCLC Accreditation Scheme has been developed to provide a sector led accreditation and certification process for Community Legal Centres (CLCs) that will recognise and give support to achieving good practice in the

delivery of community legal services throughout Australia.

The Accreditation Criteria, incorporate the existing Community Legal Services Program (CLSP) Service Standards and the mandatory requirements of the NALCLC produced National Risk Management Guide (or a similar set of risk management practices).

An on-line portal (SPP) has been developed to support CLCs through the process of meeting the standards. In continuing to improve beyond minimum compliance, NALCLC also had incorporated into the SPP and a complementary service, the NALCLC Management Support Online ('MSO'), a range of resources and guides that CLCs can download and adapt to meet their requirements.

The Scheme will provide a CLC that has been found to meet the Accreditation Criteria, with an accreditation status, and, if

*“The sector should be applauded for its innovation, strength, pride and commitment to its clients in introducing a sector-led quality assurance program.”*

**Julia Hall,  
NACLC Director**

accredited, certification and approval to use the NACLC Certification Trade Mark. That Mark certifies that the CLC has been assessed as providing services in conformity with the specified requirements of the NACLC Certification Rules and the NACLC Accreditation Criteria.

NACLC has authorised QAILS to be a Certifier and administer the Scheme in relation to Queensland Community Legal Centres.

The Accreditation Scheme is a tiered system. A centre does not have immediately to meet all its policy and procedural objectives or satisfy every standard to achieve accreditation. A CLC which has undertaken its online self-assessment, participated in its site visit, finalised its work plan satisfactorily and meets some standards will be accredited, provided it is actively working towards satisfying unmet standards.

### **So why are we doing this?**

There will always be those within the sector, busy with the work of the CLC's, who wonder what is the 'value add' of an initiative such as the National Accreditation Scheme. There are multiple benefits of this quality improvement mechanism and they are:

- Protecting the brand of CLCs
- Promoting the brand of CLCs
- Ensuring national consistency
- Sector agreed criteria
- Provides tools that allow for reflection
- Enables continuous quality improvement
- Improves services that are delivered
- Gives confidence and builds trust with stakeholders

Accreditation is a requirement of State Association membership. The Accreditation Criteria are based on a common definition and values of a CLC, and that definition of a CLC is incorporated into the QAILS' Constitution.

## **THE DEFINITION OF A CLC**

Community Legal Centre means a centre which was a member of the Association at the date of incorporation of the Association, or:

- a. an organisation, the service provision of which, is independent from government, commercial and professional bodies; and
- b. is located in and operates in Queensland; and
- c. is a non-profit, incorporated community based organisation whose goals and priorities are established in response to the geographic community and/or community of interest it serves; and
- d. is an organisation which aims to:
  - i. provide free legal and support services to the community or a section of the community; and
  - ii. develop effective ways of informing the community of its legal rights and responsibilities; and
  - iii. provide disadvantaged sections of the community with access to legal and related information and/or services; and
  - iv. advocate for the development of laws, administrative practices and a legal justice system which are fair, just and accessible; and
  - v. develop and maintain close links with the community it serves to ensure that areas of unmet needs are detected and appropriate services developed; and
- e. is an organisation which has developed, and continues to develop management and operational structures which enable the involvement of the community or communities it serves.

Recently, one of our member organisation representatives wrote of her organisation's early experience of Accreditation. That account follows:



## ONE CLC'S EXPERIENCE OF THE ACCREDITATION SELF ASSESSMENT PROCESS – SUNCOAST COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE

*Suncoast Community Legal Service Inc (SCLS) is a small, stand alone CLC located in Queensland. It has been in operation for 27 years. Our recurrent funding employs the part-time Coordinator and Principal Solicitor. Over the last 4 years, with additional one-off funding, we have employed 3 additional part-time workers on term contracts. SCLS has over 80 volunteer lawyers and 35 volunteer receptionists who provide Advice appointments to Sunshine Coast residents in 7 locations.*

*SCLS first became aware of the Accreditation Scheme when I attended a presentation at the NALCLC Conference in October 2010 introducing the Standards Performance Pathways (SPP) and Management Support Online (MSO) services,*

*including how the Standards came about, how to use the work plan, evidence pack and review your progress. In my mind it all looked very logical, but a heavy workload.*

*After returning to SCLS I gave a presentation to the Management Committee, with a mixture of enthusiasm and anticipation. The Committee understood it was necessary to become accredited however it also became apparent it was my role to drive the process and this was a little overwhelming.*

*I believe the service saw the accreditation process as an opportunity to update the organisations' Policies and Procedures, to incorporate the growth of SLCS and develop some Policies and Procedures the service has been lacking. The Accreditation scheme has provided a catalyst for reviewing what we do; how we do it and provided us with checklists in reviewing our existing Service Standards documentation. It has also provided a standardised*





*format to review our Policies and Procedures.*

*The Management Committee designated a Committee member to review draft Policies and Procedures, provide feedback and then provide a report to the Committee on Policies and Procedures to ratify and discuss. To date this process has been effective; however it is a lot of work for the designated Committee member but he is keen to assist and interested in the process.*

*The MSO templates have been extremely helpful as we have simply been able to cut and paste current policies into the new format whilst checking all relevant points have been addressed. Some policies have remained the same while others we have changed considerably.*

*Initially we were working through the Standards in a sequential manner however that was not working too well as time was being spent on issues that were not a priority for the service. Now we are*

*working through the Standards on a needs basis, for example we recently employed a new staff member, so we took this opportunity to review our current recruitment Policies and Procedures and continued to work through the Staffing Standard until it was completed. I have found this process to be more useful as the issues are relevant at the time and there is a clear timeframe to complete the work.*

*To date we have completed 48% of the Accreditation Scheme requirements. Initially we were working quickly through the Standards, as time has gone on the process has slowed down after an initial burst of enthusiasm, other demands have pressed in. However, we are slowly moving through the Standards and I think SCLS is addressing issues that previously we would have been resistant to deal with.*

*Louise Jeffs*

*Coordinator – Suncoast  
Community Legal Service Inc.*



Queensland Association of Independent Legal Services Inc