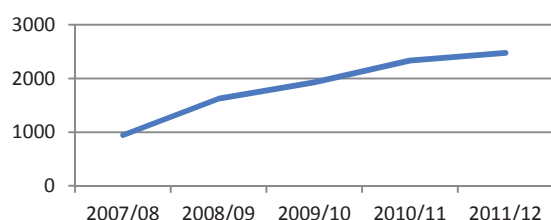


Employment law

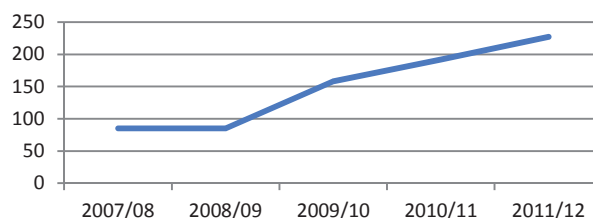
Conversation starter: Scott McDougall (Caxton Legal Centre)

CLSIS figures show a 161% increase in the number of employment law advices and casework provided by Queensland CLCs from 2007/8 – 2011/12:

Number of 'advices'



Number of 'cases'



In our recent survey of CLCs, almost all generalist CLCs identified employment law as a significant unmet need, that might warrant the establishment of a specialist employment law service, which QAILS has been supporting through 2013.

In 2010 Caxton established an unfunded, volunteer staffed employment law service, in order to meet increasing demand. Caxton also publishes the self-help kit *Have you lost your job?*, a plain-English guide to employment law, which is downloaded on average 151 times per month from Caxton's website.¹⁰ Until 2009, South West Brisbane Community Legal Centre (**SWBCLC**) received funding from the Office of the Employment Advocate's Community Partnerships Program. The program was discontinued in 2006, and SWBCLC ceased providing specialist employment law advice. The Welfare Rights Centre (**WRC**) focuses the work of its Disability Discrimination Advocacy Service to clients subject to disability discrimination in the workplace. With minimal funding, WRC is only able to provide ongoing casework and representation to a few, very vulnerable clients.

In 2011-12, 9% of all applications for pro bono representation received by QPILCH related to employment law disputes. Of these, 27% were assessed as eligible for referral and matched to QPILCH member firms and/or barristers for pro bono assistance. In 2011-12, approximately 10% of Homeless Persons' Legal Clinic and Refugee Civil Law Clinic new clients received employment law assistance. From July 2011 to October 2012, QPILCH piloted a self-representation service at the Brisbane district of the Federal Court and Federal Magistrates Court two days per week. The service received 115 applications for assistance, of which, 38 related to employment law. Employment law was not initially included in the scope of the pilot; however, it quickly became apparent that there was a high demand for advice in employment matters commenced under the *Fair Work Act 2009*.

Proportion of total information		Proportion of total advices		Proportion of total casework	
Mackay CLC	22	Mackay CLC	14	Mackay CLC	14
Caxton	20	Caxton	10	ATSIWLS NQ	7
Cairns CLC	12	Cairns CLC	9	Cairns CLC	7
Women's Legal Service	15	Suncoast	8	QPILCH	6
TASC	12	ATSIWLS NQ	8	Goondiwindi	5
Queensland avg.	10	Goondiwindi	6	Townsville	4
Gold Coast	9	Gold Coast	6	Queensland avg.	2
Moreton Bay	9	Townsville	6	Caxton Legal Centre	1
Logan Legal	9	Moreton Bay	5	YAC	1
Suncoast	7	Taylor Street CLS	4	Moreton Bay	0
Townsville	7	YAC	4	Logan Youth	0
QAI	6	Queensland avg.	4	South West Bris	0
Taylor St CLS	6	QAI	1	QAI	0
Logan Youth	6	Women's LS	0	Women's LS	0
Goondiwindi	5	Logan Legal	0	Logan Legal	0
South West Bris	4	Logan Youth	0	Suncoast	0
YAC	3	QPILCH	0	Gold Coast	0
WRC	3	South West Bris	0	Taylor St CLS	0
NQ WLS	2	WRC	0	WRC	0
QPILCH	0	NQ WLS	0	NQWLS	0
ATSIWLS NQ	0	TASC	0	TASC	0

¹⁰ *Have you lost your job?* is available at http://www.caxton.org.au/pdfs/Have%20You%20Lost%20Your%20Job%202011_WEB.pdf.