



Annual Report 2024-25



**Redfern
Legal
Centre**

We acknowledge that Redfern Legal Centre is located on the land of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation and that sovereignty was never ceded. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and to all the First Nations people, organisations, and communities that we work in solidarity with. Always was, always will be.

Artwork by Rubyrose Bancroft a Bundjalung woman from the North coast of NSW. She completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the National Art School in 2020. Rubyrose is a multidisciplinary artist who operates across many mediums including painting, ceramics and claymation. She was recently featured in the 2025 August edition of Vogue and her claymation works are being exhibited in the touring exhibition “Fantastic Forms”, coordinated by the Bundanon Art Museum.



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Thank you to all those who walked alongside us in our work, including our funders, supporters, and donors, and the many organisations that contribute to our work with the community and for justice.

Message from the CEO

Redfern Legal Centre has continued to strengthen our connection to our local community while achieving incredible impact on a statewide and national level by improving laws, practices, and policies that cause disadvantage.

Since assisting in codesigning the world's first Migrant Justice Visa Scheme, we continue to be the only non-union organisation in NSW that can certify visa applications under the scheme. We are leading this work in NSW to ensure that migrant workers can address exploitation, driving systemic change in employer practices statewide to ensure workplaces in NSW are safe and equitable for all workers.

Our employment practice had a landmark win in a sexual harassment case in the Federal Court. The judgment and damages awarded in this matter are a testament to the incredible work of our employment team and the client, who were determined to seek justice.

The Police Accountability Dashboard is a groundbreaking tool and the first of its kind in Australia – designed to provide accountability and transparency around the use of police powers in New South Wales.

We continued to push for change in police strip search practices in New South Wales, and for alternative first responders to mental health crises.

We supported Selwyn St Boarding House residents, Waterloo tenants facing relocation, and social housing tenants with repair issues, while also advocating for systemic improvements in social housing repairs through policy and advocacy.

A huge thank you to the Redfern Legal Centre Directors who departed this year. Alexandra Finley, Craig Young, Linda Tucker, Ben Lipschitz, and Greg Masters all made incredible contributions over the past several years to Redfern Legal Centre. Welcome to Emma Maple-Brown, Laura Lombardo, and Rose Khalilzadeh.

Thank you also to all the incredible volunteers who amplify our reach and capacity every day – both students and lawyers.

It is an absolute privilege to work with the dedicated and passionate staff at Redfern Legal Centre who achieve such amazing impact each and every day – for individual clients and on a systemic level.

Thank you to all those who walked alongside us in our work, including our funders, supporters, and donors, and the many organisations that contribute to our work with the community and for justice.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Camilla Pandolfini'.

**Camilla Pandolfini, CEO
Redfern Legal Centre**



Our impact

Our 2020–2025 Guiding Principles

In all our work, we will:

- ✓ Respect our clients, communities we work with, and each other
- ✓ Positively impact people experiencing vulnerability through strategic service delivery
- ✓ Ensure innovation and sustainability in our service delivery



RLC staff and volunteers at Yabun

Our Theory of Change

➤ At Redfern Legal Centre, we believe that:



There are gaps and flaws in the design of services, policies, and laws in the legal system that are failing people and communities



People experience inequality and injustices, and



Marginalised communities lack a voice.

➤ We work with:

- ✓ People experiencing vulnerability
- ✓ People with disability
- ✓ People experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness
- ✓ People experiencing financial disadvantage
- ✓ First Nations people
- ✓ People experiencing family and domestic violence
- ✓ People who are culturally and linguistically diverse
- ✓ International students
- ✓ Communities, volunteers, other stakeholders/participants

➤ We respond by:

- ✓ Providing free legal services including legal advice, information and referrals, case work, and representation to provide holistic solutions working closely with non-legal providers when required.
- ✓ Engaging in policy and law reform work via media, campaigns, advocacy and consulting with government, and strategic litigation to change the system
- ✓ Building capacity in the community via volunteer and professional training programs, community legal education, partnerships and community outreach, and legal publications and information
- ✓ Empowering and building capacity in the community and within the legal profession through legal education and providing an effective volunteer program

➤ Which results in:

- ✓ Increased access to justice for people experiencing disadvantage
- ✓ Increased capacity in our community to understand and address legal issues
- ✓ Integrated and effective responses to the needs of people experiencing disadvantage
- ✓ Empowered and resilient individuals and communities
- ✓ Systemic injustices being addressed

➤ Impact:



Equal access to justice



A just and fair legal system



Improved wellbeing for individuals and communities

Achieving Outcomes
Our 2020-2025 Strategic Plan is grounded on the belief that by achieving our goals, we will positively impact the people and communities we work with. We measure and track our performance against outcomes to hold ourselves accountable for the impact we have on people and communities.

Our impact



“Redfern Legal Centre has continued to strengthen our connection to our local community while achieving incredible impact on a statewide and national level by improving laws, practices, and policies that cause disadvantage”

Camilla Pandolfini, CEO
Redfern Legal Centre

Outcome 1:
People experiencing disadvantage
have increased access to justice

This year, we provided a total of **9025** legal services to our local community and statewide. We provided services to **2762** clients, **3659** legal advices, **1382** legal tasks and legal information was provided **578** times. We finalised **375** representation and casework matters. We provided **3031** referrals through our intake, representation, and casework services, including **1602** referrals at our front desk.



Client Satisfaction:

88% of our clients report they would recommend Redfern Legal Centre to other people.

86% of stakeholders surveyed agreed we were effective or very effective at providing access to justice for people experiencing disadvantage.

87% of clients from non-English speaking backgrounds or living with disability agreed or strongly agreed that Redfern Legal Centre provided a culturally appropriate or responsive service.

Representation
and casework:

Our representation and casework matters increase access to justice. Of those clients who we assisted with representation and casework:

32% were experiencing family violence

100% were experiencing financial hardship

27% identified as First Nations

39% spoke English as a second language

40% were people with a disability or a mental health condition.

Outcome 2: People have increased capacity to address and understand their legal issues

We supported clients through

1382 legal tasks, such as writing a letter or filing an application with a court or tribunal.

92 ongoing holistic support services and

39 discrete holistic services.

We assisted **36** clients by providing ongoing advice and legal task assistance as they self-represented in their legal matter.

We built legal capacity in the community by publishing seven community legal education resources and conducting

27 community legal education sessions, both in the community and online.

62% of our stakeholders agreed we were effective or very effective at services working together to meet clients' needs holistically.



Outcome 3: Services work together so that people have their needs met holistically

Redfern Legal Centre values our relationships with local and statewide organisations to ensure holistic support and build capacity in the community sector to assist our clients.

We conduct outreach services and work collaboratively with services as part of our Health Justice Partnership including to;

- Royal Prince Alfred Hospital
- the Professor Marie Bashir Centre
- Sydney Dental Hospital
- Redlink
- Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation
- Newtown Neighbourhood Centre
- Lou's Place
- Redfern Community Centre
- Waterloo Neighbourhood Centre.

During the delivery of advice and casework, we provided

477 referrals to additional services, ensuring holistic wraparound support to address clients' complex and overlapping legal and non-legal needs.

We conducted **259** stakeholder engagement activities, working collaboratively with community services, government, and industry to raise awareness, expand our impact and increase our reach.

Outcome 4: Systemic injustices are addressed

Redfern Legal Centre forges collaborations and partnerships that assist us to make positive changes in laws and the legal system. We work to address systemic issues by engaging with government, industry, and community organisations.

In 2024 – 2025 we conducted **263** law reform activities which included reports, submissions to state and federal government, participation in consultations, and working collaboratively with our stakeholders.

Outcome 5: Empowered and resilient communities

Our work aims to improve the wellbeing of our clients and the communities we work with.

In a survey conducted of our clients:

87% agreed or strongly agreed that it was easy to contact Redfern Legal Centre when they first needed help

95% agreed or strongly agreed that Redfern Legal Centre listened to their legal problem

89% agreed or strongly agreed that Redfern Legal Centre helped them to understand how to deal with their legal problem

85% agreed or strongly agreed that they know where to get help with a legal problem in the future



“The person who talked to me was very clear and friendly. I felt heard and he was sympathetic, and I noticed the preparation in his presentation of the information. So I think he is very professional, and I appreciated that.”

“The staff member was very helpful, friendly, knowledgeable, engaging, and provided excellent support and advice. Thank you – I greatly appreciate it!”

“I honestly don’t know what I would have done if I hadn’t spoken to you, because as a foreigner, I’m not familiar with Australian laws. But thanks to the support I received from Redfern Legal Centre – especially from Joe – I was able to understand what actions I could take in my situation, and that made a big difference.”



Throughout the year, we proudly supported Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation events during Reconciliation Week, Sorry Day, and NAIDOC Week.

Redfern Legal Centre's Reconciliation Action Plan

This year, we increased the percentage of First Nations clients assisted from 11% to 21% of all clients assisted by Redfern Legal Centre.

This year, we strengthened our ongoing commitment to justice for First Nations Peoples through the implementation of our *Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan* (RAP).

In January, we hosted a stall at Yabun Festival on Invasion Day. Throughout the year, we proudly supported Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO) events during Reconciliation Week, Sorry Day, and NAIDOC Week. These events featured vibrant RLC stalls and the distribution of branded merchandise to raise awareness of our services within the First Nations community.

As part of Reconciliation Week, we hosted a screening of *In My Blood It Runs* for staff and volunteers. This powerful documentary explores systemic racism in the education and child protection systems, while highlighting the strength and resilience of First Nations families.

On Sorry Day, RLC staff and volunteers once again supported the Coota Girls Sorry Day event with an affordable sausage sizzle which provided an opportunity to work in solidarity and continue building relationships with the First Nations community.



NAIDOC Week Celebrations at Redfern Town Hall

During NAIDOC Week, we participated in two major community events. At the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence (NCIE), we engaged with hundreds of community members and organisations in a vibrant, well-attended celebration. We also attended the NAIDOC event at Redfern Community Centre, hosted by the Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS). Both events provided valuable opportunities for our staff to connect with the local community and promote our legal services.

We continue to collaborate with First Nations artists to produce culturally appropriate resources, including factsheets and flyers, to raise awareness of key legal issues and the services we offer.

Our engagement with First Nations media has grown stronger, with regular contributions to outlets such as NITV, Koori Radio, and the National Indigenous Radio Service. Our First Nations lawyer, Tobias Elliott-Orr, regularly participates in both scheduled and ad hoc media opportunities, advocating for First Nations justice and reflecting on the systemic racism that continues to impact First Nations communities.

The First Nations Justice practice prioritises meeting clients where they are, undertaking community outreach to ensure we provide a culturally safe and trauma informed service.



First Nations Justice

Our work with First Nations people and communities is central to our work and purpose at Redfern Legal Centre. We provide a priority service to First Nations people across all our legal practice areas. The First Nations Justice practice prioritises meeting clients where they are, undertaking community outreach to ensure we provide a culturally safe and trauma informed service.

Each week we provide weekly on-the-spot legal advice in a culturally safe space at Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation, continuing to strengthen our connection with the community. We undertake outreach to Morning Tea at Poets Corner, fortnightly outreach at Redfern Community Centre, and community outreach in the AMS monthly justice hub alongside other services.

We have strengthened our relationships and warm referrals from Redfern Community Centre, First Nations Response, Redlink Housing Org, Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation, Mudgin-Gal Aboriginal Women's Service, the Aboriginal Medical Service, WEAVE Youth and Community Service and the Aboriginal Legal Service ACT/NSW.



NAIDOC Week celebrations

Case study

Sam*, a 19-year-old man from the Northern Territory, relocated to Sydney to be closer to his mother. Sam experienced significant mental health and cognitive impairments, which led to his involuntary admission to a mental health facility.

As a result, Sam then became homeless and faced criminal charges.

Following successful engagement with WEAVE, Wesley Mission, and Redfern Community Mental Health, we were able to secure long-term, stable housing for Sam within the Redfern community. He also began engaging consistently with mental health treatment, counselling, and social support services.

We represented Sam in his criminal proceedings and successfully obtained a mental health diversion under section 14 of the *Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Act 2020*. This outcome resulted in Sam being found not guilty of the charges and diverted into ongoing mental health care within the community.

This diversion allowed Sam to maintain continuity of care and support through existing community services, contributing to his ongoing stability and recovery.

*Name changed

Case study

Tanya's* adult daughter was recently incarcerated following a severe mental health incident. Tanya is her daughter's primary carer. Although they do not live together, Tanya has been her daughter's official guardian and financial manager since her childhood.

The management of her daughter's finances is a crucial responsibility for Tanya, as the daughter's unsupervised access to her money has historically led to significant risks, including illicit drug use, excessive alcohol consumption, and exploitation.

While Tanya's daughter was incarcerated, a culturally inappropriate NDIS service provider lodged an application with the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) to revoke Tanya's status as her daughter's guardian and financial manager. They also sought to relocate Tanya's daughter into an out-of-home assisted living program, removing her from the family and community.

The service provider submitted evidence containing serious false allegations regarding Tanya's care of her daughter.

We represented Tanya at the Tribunal hearing concerning the revocation of her guardianship and financial management status. After thoroughly analysing the evidence presented by the opposing party and consolidating our client's evidence, we successfully disproved the allegations. The Tribunal dismissed the service provider's evidence, meaning it had no impact on the case.

As a result, Tanya retained her status as her daughter's legal guardian and financial manager. Her daughter was able to return to her long-term home, which is located just 10 minutes away from Tanya's residence.

Tanya has continued to support her in managing daily living needs and making healthy financial decisions. This has included facilitating Tanya's daughter's engagement with community mental health treatment, drug and alcohol counselling, and initiating support with a First Nations NDIS provider.

*Name changed



RLC staff at NCIE's NAIDOC week celebration

RLC in the media

First Nations children – some as young as 11 – strip-searched by NSW police at higher rate, new data reveals

➤ **Sam Lee speaks to National Indigenous Times**

First Nations Legal Service lawyer Tobias Elliott-Orr has a regular spot on Koori Radio's Blackchat program.

Tobias regularly canvasses issues impacting the local First Nations community, as well as First Nations people across the state, informed by what he sees through his legal practice.

Sam Lee, supervising solicitor from the Police Accountability Team, spoke to the National Indigenous Times about the disproportionate use of force against First Nations people in New South Wales.

Redfern Legal Centre's new police accountability dashboard revealed that First Nations people are subjected to 45 per cent of all "uses of force" by NSW Police, despite making up only 3.44 per cent of the population.

The data also shows that First Nations people were strip-searched more frequently across regional NSW, whereas non-Indigenous people were primarily searched in Sydney and coastal areas.



Tobias Elliott-Orr and Sam Lee with Lola Forester from Koori Radio



NAIDOC Week celebrations



Since 2011, ISLS has assisted thousands of international students with problems including housing, scams, debt, family violence, and disputes with education providers.

International Student Legal Service NSW (ISLS)

Redfern Legal Centre's International Student Legal Service NSW (ISLS) is the only independent and specialist legal service dedicated to supporting the more than 277,000 international students living and studying in NSW.

ISLS provides free, confidential legal advice, advocacy, resources, and community legal education to help international students resolve legal issues early, before they escalate and impact health, wellbeing, or education.

Since 2011, ISLS has assisted thousands of international students with problems including housing, employment, scams, debt, family violence, and disputes with education providers. As a frontline statewide service, ISLS plays a leading role in identifying trends, exposing exploitation, and driving systemic reform.

We empower international students to understand their rights and access justice without fear. Our work includes multilingual legal education, digital self-help tools, and student legal clinics delivered in partnership with universities.

Through collaboration with government, education providers, and the community sector, ISLS works to eliminate the systemic drivers of harm and improve legal outcomes for international students across NSW.

In the 2024-25 financial year, ISLS provided legal support to international students experiencing a range of complex and intersecting socio-legal issues. Key trends included financial exploitation through unregulated lending, underpayment and unsafe working conditions, housing insecurity, and sudden education provider closures.

Case study

Mei*, a postgraduate student, received devastating news that her private education provider had been suddenly deregistered.

Having already prepaid thousands of dollars in tuition fees upfront, she was now in jeopardy of having her student visa cancelled because she no longer possessed a valid Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE).

Mei had no financial means to pay a new education provider for a fresh course of study, and she had no idea how to recover the substantial monies already paid to the now-defunct provider.

To make matters worse, the education provider had failed to give her academic records, leaving her unable to prove her completed learning to any proposed new institution.

This meant she couldn't get Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), which would force her to start her studies from scratch; both her academic future and her right to stay in the country were suddenly on the line.

ISLS provided the specialised legal support Mei desperately needed.

We immediately helped her understand her rights under the Tuition Protection Service (TPS).

Mei was able to successfully recover all of her unspent tuition fees.

ISLS guided Mei through the necessary procedures to successfully retrieve her academic records from the deregistered institution.

This enabled her to present her academic transcripts to her new education provider, allowing her to receive RPL and ensure her completed units were credited.

Mei successfully enrolled with another education provider, avoiding any disruption to her studies

*Name changed

RLC in the media

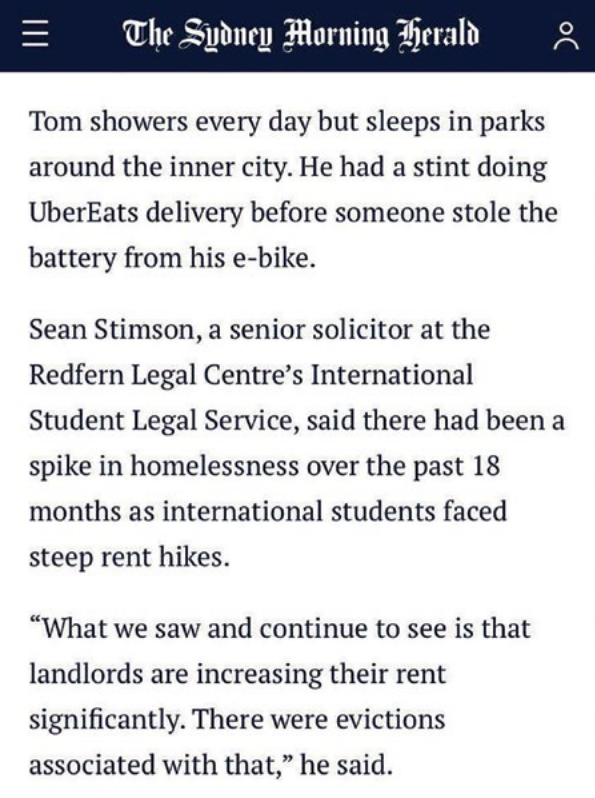
Tom's plan was to get a degree in Sydney. It went horribly wrong

► Sean Stimson featured in The Guardian

Sean Stimson, senior solicitor at Redfern Legal Centre's International Student Legal Service, was quoted in the *Sydney Morning Herald* about a spike in homelessness over the past 18 months as international students faced steep rent hikes.

"What we saw and continue to see is that landlords are increasing their rent significantly. There were evictions associated with that."

Sean Stimson wrote an opinion piece for The Guardian addressing claims that international students are the "modern version of the boat arrivals," calling them inflammatory and unhelpful.



Our trauma-informed service model continues to support students facing coercive debt, gambling harm, and family violence, often involving overlapping legal, visa, and wellbeing concerns. ISLS helped students successfully challenge unfair fines, remain enrolled in education, recover unpaid wages, avoid unlawful evictions, recover rental bonds, and access mental health support through their Overseas Student Health Cover.

We prioritise culturally responsive, accessible service delivery and legal empowerment. Many students told us this was the first time they felt heard, respected, and safe asking for legal help in Australia.

In response to the widespread closure of education providers, ISLS developed a comprehensive legal information package to support affected students. This package included factsheets, self-help templates, and a live webinar. The webinar was widely shared and received positive feedback from stakeholders across the sector.

In March 2025, ISLS delivered an interactive legal rights quiz at the Lord Mayor's International Student Welcome. Over 35% of the 1,000 attendees took part, helping us to measure students' legal awareness in areas like tenancy, employment, and consumer scams. These insights are now shaping our next wave of community education and information resources.

ISLS played a key role in the 2025 NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Modern Slavery Risks for Migrant Workers. We made a written submission and gave evidence, emphasising the heightened risks of trafficking and labour exploitation faced by international students, particularly when their education and employment arrangements are closely linked.

We also supported a trafficked international student to safely share their experience with the Inquiry, ensuring lived experience shaped the final report and recommendations.

ISLS continues to collaborate with the NSW Anti-Slavery Commissioner, education regulators, and frontline services to improve referral pathways and advocate for law reform to better protect international students from exploitation.

Our priorities include stronger oversight, clearer protections for student whistleblowers, and better access to justice for students facing exploitation. This ongoing work has included making submissions to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, Professor Tomoya Obokata.

We won the Study NSW Partnership Excellence Award for providing free legal assistance to international students statewide.



ISLS wins the Study NSW Partnership Excellence Award



ISLS wins the Study NSW Partnership Excellence Award



Original designs for relaunch of ISLS website

For over a decade, Study NSW has funded Redfern Legal Centre's statewide International Students Legal Service, enabling us to offer free legal services and community legal education. This service empowers hundreds of international students each year to assert their legal rights and protect themselves from exploitation. We are honored to receive this award and to work with international students every day.

Recognising the need to better connect with a vibrant and diverse audience of international students, we undertook a full redesign and redevelopment of our International Students website and factsheet templates. Our goal was to create a platform that is more accessible, engaging, and culturally resonant for students navigating complex legal issues related to their studies in Australia.

We commissioned original illustrations from Chinese-Australian artist and activist Judy Kuo. Her distinctive and expressive artwork brings warmth and relatability to the website, helping to reflect the lived experiences and energy of the international student community.

We also collaborated with technical designer Kushla Ross from Studio Cahoots.



The International Student Legal Service meets with the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery

Case study

Rayan*, an international student, reached out to ISLS in a state of distress after becoming trapped in a predatory, high-interest loan.

He had borrowed money from an unregulated lender connected to his employer, blurring the lines between his financial situation and his workplace. Already under significant financial strain, Rayan was unable to meet the lender's exorbitant repayment demands. The situation quickly spiralled into a crisis when the lender began issuing threats, turning Rayan's job into a source of fear and psychological pressure. The constant worry about debt, job security, and personal safety took a serious toll on his mental health.

ISLS acted swiftly to address the financial exploitation, successfully negotiating a debt waiver and removing the crushing burden of the high-interest loan. We then connected Rayan with dedicated financial counsellors and guided him in reporting the illegal lending practices to the relevant regulatory authorities.

During our review of Rayan's employment conditions, we identified potential underpayment issues and referred him to RLC's ISLS Employment Service for specialised support in recovering unpaid wages. Recognising the significant anxiety and trauma he had experienced, we also ensured he was linked to appropriate mental health services available through his Overseas Student Health Cover.

*Name changed



“On each occasion, the person we spoke to was very knowledgeable, reassuring, empathetic, and patient. They showed a willingness to listen and provide great information and advice on how to approach our situation”

Client quote

Health Justice Partnership

Redfern Legal Centre’s Health Justice Partnership (HJP) with Sydney Local Health District has a direct, profound and positive impact on clients’ health and well-being. We work alongside health workers to provide holistic support for clients. We are co-located at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney Dental Hospital and Redlink Community Housing.

- 3 clients awarded victims compensation of \$4500
- 2 clients awarded victims compensation economic loss totalling \$3910.70
- 2 child removals prevented
- 1 charge dismissed for one client pursuant to section 14
- Successfully assisted one client with lodging joint divorce application to FOFCA (via court portal)
- 3 fines waived or written off to the value of \$3477
- 2 debt arrears waived or reduced by \$1012

Case study

Redfern Legal Centre assisted a 17-year-old pregnant mother, Jane*, who was living in out of home care, and advocated on her behalf with the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) during her pregnancy, especially at pregnancy family conferences. Jane faced significant barriers, such as DCJ’s failure to provide her birth certificate and an Opal card, which led to multiple public transport fines in her name. The HJP lawyer worked to ensure the client had safe and stable housing and helped to get her fines withdrawn. Through consistent legal advocacy, particularly during the pregnancy family conferencing, Jane was empowered with knowledge of her rights, and as a result, her child was not taken away from Jane.

*Name changed

“I am very grateful for the service and the fantastic support I received.”

Client quote

Case study

We have been providing ongoing support to a victim of domestic violence, an international student, and a new mother, Lina*, for the past six months. Lina was first referred to the HJP team after fleeing a dangerous DV situation at seven months pregnant. Due to her student visa status, she was ineligible for essential services such as emergency accommodation and domestic violence support. Fortunately, she received support from the Substance Use in Pregnancy and Parenting Service (SUPPS) team.

During the final trimester of her pregnancy, our HJP lawyer attended three Pregnancy Family Conferences to assess the situation, provide necessary support, and determine the best course of action to ensure the safety of both the client and her baby. In parallel, the lawyer facilitated a referral for immigration advice to help the client understand her options regarding her visa status and whether she could remain in Australia with her daughter.

Following the birth of her child, the perpetrator’s behaviour escalated significantly, raising serious concerns about Lina’s safety. In response, the HJP lawyer has advocated for support from the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) to explore options for Lina to return to her home country with her child, given the high level of risk. Additionally, we have provided family law advice regarding the filing of a Hague Convention application should she decide to return home, as well as the potential long-term family law implications of such a decision.

*Name changed

HJP has a significant over-representation of clients who are victim-survivors of domestic violence. We have provided legal advice and support on a myriad of legal issues including (but not limited to) ADVOs, Family law – parenting and property, child protection, victim’s compensation, and housing. The complexity of the matters requires our HJP lawyers to work reactively and often creatively to best assist our clients.

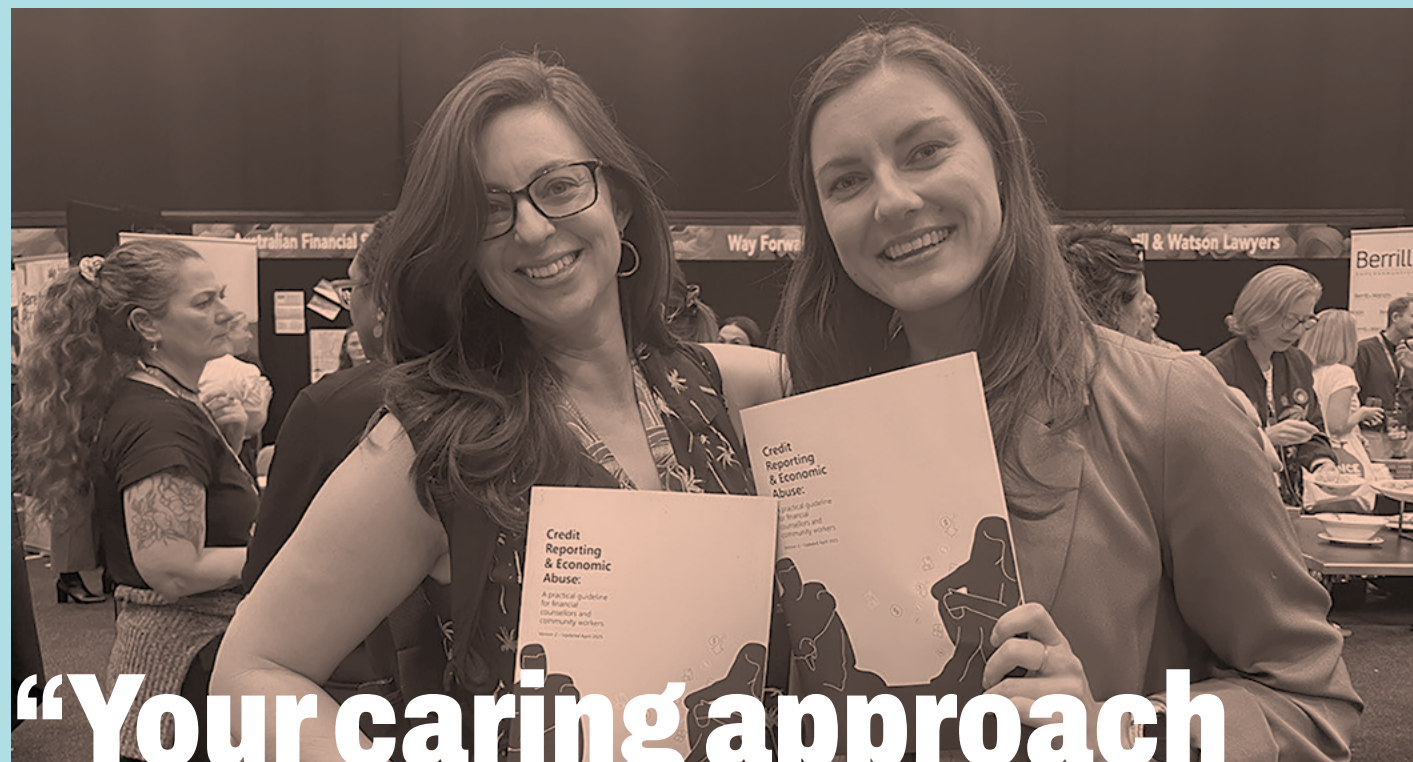
Over the past year, we have had several opportunities to present CLE to our health partners. Currently we present monthly CLEs to social work and drug health teams at RPA on a range of topical legal issues identified by our health partners. The HJP team have received very positive feedback from these sessions. In November 2025, HJP presented to almost 70 health staff at the SLHD “*Insights to Practice*” session providing training to health workers.



Grace Cameron-Lee and Rashini Fernando at a conference

The team presented on the matrix of domestic violence, family law and child protection and key legal issues that impact on social determinants of health for our clients. We have also engaged with stakeholders and provided legal education at team and ward meetings, orientation sessions and to social work students at both RPA and Dental Hospitals.

The burgeoning child protection practice within HJP has continued to go from strength to strength. We have advocated and assisted pregnant and new mothers where DCJ have become involved due to child protection concerns. We work closely with midwives, social workers, nurses, and various health workers to best support these clients. The presence of legal services and lawyers in an early intervention child protection space have held DCJ accountable and supported families to avoid removal of children. We have provided child protection advice to clients who would normally be left unaware of their rights in these situations, and have been a part of the pregnancy family conferencing program at the hospital which provides a voluntary, open forum for all parties to discuss concerns, wishes and hopes for the children and family where DCJ have become involved.



“Your caring approach and fast action have made me feel there are still some people who are good and see through the very sophisticated techniques that financial abuse perpetrators use. Thank you so much for your continued support”

Client quote

Financial Abuse Service NSW

The Financial Abuse Service NSW (FAS) offers free legal, financial counselling, and social work assistance to individuals who have experienced financial abuse in intimate partner relationships. Our state-wide service is the only one of its kind in Australia. Our unique approach provides holistic support to victim survivors facing complex legal problems in family law, credit and debt, corporate insolvency, tax, and immigration. We advocate for policy and law reform to address and prevent financial abuse by coordinating the national Economic Abuse Reference Group.



Jasmine Opdam with members of the Economic Abuse Reference Group and Fair Call Coalition

This year, we launched our new company and tax law service, which provides advice and representation to victim survivors of financial abuse who were coerced or fraudulently made directors of a company that their partner controlled. These clients face potential penalties for breaches of directors' duties, significant personal tax debts, and hurdles untangling themselves from a system that does not understand domestic and family violence. This is the first service of its kind in Australia and fills a vital gap in the legal assistance sector.

In January, we commenced a partnership with the Immigration Advice and Rights Centre (IARC) to provide holistic support to visa holders experiencing financial abuse. It is common for perpetrators to use threats of deportation to coerce a victim survivor to remain in or return to an abusive relationship. This collaboration provides a seamless referral experience for clients and the opportunity for co-advice on intersecting legal, social, and financial issues.

Case study

Anthony* coerced Jess* into taking out multiple debts as part of a pattern of domestic violence and financial abuse. After the relationship ended, Jess relocated far away due to serious safety concerns. She also notified her lender about these concerns. Jess approached FAS for assistance with several debts due to her experience of financial abuse. We supported her through our integrated credit and debt, family law, and social work practices.

FAS helped Jess lodge a responsible lending complaint with AFCA regarding a credit card. As a result, she received a waiver of interest, charges, and fees, along with compensation for non-financial loss due to the bank's handling of her situation. This credit card debt was excluded from the balance sheet in her family law property settlement with Anthony.

Jess chose to be self represented during family law mediation with Anthony. Our family lawyer supported her by reviewing settlement offers, providing legal advice, and discussing alternatives to finalising an agreement. Jess chose to settle on a superannuation split, and for Anthony to take over a car loan he had coerced her into taking out. This allowed her to avoid months of uncertainty awaiting a final court hearing.

As part of the settlement, Anthony agreed to refinance the car loan. Jess later received a letter from the finance company requesting her signature to approve the refinance. The letter contained several of her personal details, including her new address. Concerned, Jess asked the finance company whether the same document had been sent to Anthony. They initially said no, but Jess remained uneasy and sought advice from FAS.

Our credit and debt lawyer, drawing on experience with privacy breaches by finance companies, supported Jess in addressing the issue. Our family lawyer also continued to assist her with executing and enforcing the settlement.

After being contacted by FAS, the finance company admitted the letter *had* been sent to Anthony. Our social worker was brought into the call to do immediate safety planning with Jess and to help her process the new risks she faced. Our social worker and lawyers helped Jess put in place long-term strategies in case of any ongoing concerns about her safety.

*Name changed



Carolyn Bond (former EARG coordinator) and Jasmine Opdam at the Financial Counselling Australia conference

RLC in the media

Australians who don't pay child support should be chased by tax office, parliamentary committee says

🔗 Jasmine Opdam quoted in The Guardian

Jasmine Opdam, Senior Policy and Advocacy Officer, was quoted in The Guardian and Australian Financial Review in articles covering the parliamentary inquiry's recommendations on how corporations and financial services can help address financial abuse.

The report was "encouraging" and included "practical solutions, informed by lived experience, that put the safety of victim survivors first.

"Now we need government agencies and the financial services sector to come together and commit to tangible actions to implement these recommendations."

After years of advocacy, the *Family Law Act 1975* has been amended to make it mandatory to consider economic and financial abuse in family law property settlements. For the first time, economic and financial abuse will be recognised as part of family violence, making the system fairer and safer for victim survivors. To prepare the sector for the major changes coming into effect in June, we presented a webinar panel with expert family lawyers from FAS and our pro bono partner firms, Lander & Rogers and Barry Nilsson. The webinar provided valuable insights into how these changes will affect financial matters in family law, both in court and negotiations.

Through our coordination of the national Economic Abuse Reference Group, FAS has led cross-sector advocacy to improve the tax and corporate systems for victim survivors of financial abuse. Using cases from our new company and tax law service, we published a position paper on the weaponisation of business and tax systems as a tool of financial abuse, in collaboration with academics from Monash University and UNSW. We made a submission and contributed evidence to the Tax Ombudsman's review of the ATO's identification and management of financial abuse. As tax professionals can facilitate financial abuse, we collaborated with Chartered Accountants ANZ, the Institute of Public Accountants, and the Tax Institute on podcasts, articles, and panel events reaching over 2500 accountants.

Ahead of the federal election, FAS advocated to Ministers and MPs, seeking a commitment to implement the recommendations from the 2024 Parliamentary Inquiry into the Financial Services Regulatory Framework regarding Financial Abuse. In response, the federal government committed to reform the tax and corporate systems to ensure they cannot be weaponised by perpetrators, and to address financial abuse in the social security and superannuation systems, drawing on our recommendations and evidence. This is the first time financial abuse has been addressed in a federal election campaign, and we are working closely with Treasury and the Office for Women on reforms.

Case study

Celina* came to FAS with several complex legal issues, years after the breakdown of her relationship with Ted. Despite the time that had passed, Ted continued to engage in domestic violence, including stalking. Celina had been unable to afford legal assistance to obtain a divorce.

Celina and Ted's three children had attended the same Catholic school for their entire education. When she contacted FAS, their youngest child was in the final term of Year 6. Ted had stopped paying school fees, and the school was threatening to expel the child.

After advising Celina, our family lawyer and credit and debt lawyer sent an urgent letter to the school, requesting that they pause any action toward expulsion. Our social worker attended a meeting between Celina and the school, providing support and explaining the context of FAS's involvement. Following this meeting, the school agreed not to expel the child and offered a financial hardship payment plan. Our financial counsellor then supported Celina in gathering and submitting the necessary evidence of her financial situation.

FAS continued to support Celina across multiple areas. She needed a divorce both for emotional closure and to avoid the possibility of Ted seeking a property settlement, which would expose her to significant legal costs. Our family lawyer assisted her in applying for divorce and, when Ted refused to sign documentation, supported her application for substituted service.

Our social worker helped Celina report Ted's ongoing stalking to the local police, which led to his arrest for domestic violence offences. Our credit and debt lawyer helped her have accounts opened in her name, by Ted waived.

Accessing coordinated support through a single organisation was invaluable for Celina. Without FAS, she would have had to navigate multiple intake processes across different services, with no guarantee of successful referrals. Instead, she was able to move forward, resolving unfair and fraudulent debts, securing a divorce, and addressing the ongoing risks posed by Ted's stalking and abuse.

*Name changed



“I am so incredibly grateful for everyone on the team who helped me get out of a terrible situation, and to thank them for the strength and knowledge they have shown me”

Client quote

Police Accountability Practice

The police accountability practice provides free legal advice to individuals across New South Wales. Our statewide advice practice provides an evidence base to identify systemic issues that inform our policy, advocacy, and strategic litigation.

This year, we have continued to focus on the urgent need for reform in the practice of strip searches in New South Wales. We also continue to advocate for an alternative first responder model to ensure that people in mental health crisis do not experience harm when they call for emergency assistance.

“The staff are outstanding and couldn’t be more helpful.”

Client quote

Case study

Anna* was in a long-term relationship with a police officer for over a decade, during which she experienced domestic violence. Eventually, she found the courage to report the abuse to police. An investigation was conducted by a different command not directly connected to her former partner.

However, she soon discovered that some officers in the investigating command knew her ex-partner. As a result, she felt pressured by police not to proceed with the allegations. While her former partner was arrested, no charges were ultimately laid.

Later, when she reported that he was repeatedly calling and hanging up, behaviour she believed breached the apprehended domestic violence order in place, an officer allegedly dismissed her concerns, referring to her as a “vexatious ex-spouse” trying to cause trouble.

We are assisting Anna in seeking accountability through the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission. We are gathering evidence via access to information processes and conducting a thorough review of relevant documents and police policies to support a comprehensive complaint and request for reinvestigation.

*Name changed

Case study

The practice assisted a father, Adam* in his 50s and his teenage son following a distressing encounter with police in southern Sydney. While driving, the pair was signaled to pull over by a police car that activated lights and sirens (ostensibly for a random breath test). Due to a previous traumatic experience involving police, Adam chose to stop at a nearby service station equipped with CCTV, rather than pulling over immediately.

Upon stopping, police officers ran to the vehicle, forcibly removed Adam from the driver's seat, threw him to the ground, and handcuffed him. His son, distressed by the force used against his father, exited the vehicle and pleaded with police to stop. In response, officers used significant force to restrain and handcuff the child. While still handcuffed and distressed, the child resisted and was struck by police in the head and neck area. He was arrested and charged with resisting and assault police, but the charges were later withdrawn in court.

A video of the incident, filmed by another passenger in the vehicle, was instrumental in supporting the family's account. Our practice engaged a private lawyer to initiate civil proceedings against the State of NSW on behalf of the child.

*Name changed

Redfern Legal Centre launched the Police Accountability Dashboard, an innovative tool that is the first of its kind in Australia. This dashboard allows the public to access detailed and comprehensive data on the use of police powers in New South Wales. It contains six years of data, spanning from 2017 to 2023, and analyses the application of police powers, making it a valuable resource for the community. The dashboard was developed by Monica Lam, a volunteer senior analyst with Data4Good.

The dashboard provides interactive statistics on strip searches, use of force, and move-on directions. These statistics are categorised by police area command, location, age, and gender. This dashboard represents a significant step towards increasing transparency in the use of police powers. It features extensive data obtained from NSW Police through freedom of information laws.

In May, the strip search class action against the State of New South Wales began. Justice Dina Yehia presided over the multi-day hearing. The class action, filed in July 2022, challenges the legality of thousands of strip searches conducted by NSW Police at music festivals from July 2016 to 2022.

RLC in the media

Fines erode justice in the government system

Sam Lee, supervising solicitor of the Police Accountability Practice, received national coverage and was quoted in numerous outlets, including ABC, The Guardian, SBS, NIT, and The Australian, about the NSW government's withdrawal and repayment of more than 23,000 fines issued during the COVID-19 pandemic, following a successful campaign by Redfern Legal Centre and Maurice Blackburn.

Samantha Lee said the fines eroded justice in the government system.

"Some people lost their licence, some people couldn't register their vehicles, particularly those living in regional areas. It was a real detrimental impact on them," Ms Lee said.

"Having this lifted is a real justice in their circumstances, but it's something that should have been done many, many months ago, and the fact that the government has waited so long is the appalling aspect of this whole story."

Ms Lee said some households were fined \$10,000, with the majority of those fines issued to people in low socio-economic and First Nations communities.

"It's a lot of money and a lot of fines, and they didn't want to give that up, but we took them to the table and made them do so," she said.

"We believe it's for the justice of people in New South Wales."



Sam Lee attends NSW Drug Summit



Grace Cameron-Lee at an outreach with SWOP.



Sam Lee speaks at a press conference on policing reform

RLC in the media

An important step in holding NSW Police accountable for degrading strip searches

► Feature in Rolling Stone

The strip search class action was featured in nationwide news, including youth and music industry-focused outlets such as Rolling Stone and Pedestrian, as well as prominent outlets such as Channel Ten News, ABC, and The Guardian.

Sam Lee, supervising solicitor at Redfern Legal Centre, described the trial as "an important step in holding NSW Police accountable for the degrading strip searches that thousands of festivalgoers were subjected to".

"For decades, people have been humiliated, intimidated and often left traumatised by these experiences of police officers abusing their powers. This class action is about securing justice for those individuals and ensuring we put an end to these invasive and unlawful practices," Lee said.

"This isn't just about music festivals. It's about the rights of everyone and the need for police to follow the law. Strip searches should never have been allowed to become routine practice."

Redfern Legal Centre participated in the NSW Drug Summit, the state's second such event, held 25 years after the landmark 1999 Drug Summit. The goal was to gather ideas, policies, and strategies aimed at reducing drug-related harms. Over 550 individuals and 250 organisations took part in meetings held over four days in regional NSW and Sydney.

In April, the NSW Government released the NSW Drug Summit Report. This report recommended ending the use of sniffer dogs and strip searches for suspected drug possession at music festivals.

Redfern Legal Centre welcomed this recommendation to halt the use of drug detection dogs and strip searches during the ongoing trial of drug-checking services at festivals.

In April 2022, the government withdrew around 33,000 fines after a test case brought by Redfern Legal Centre found they were invalid. However, there were about 23,000 COVID fines remaining.

Redfern Legal Centre and Maurice Blackburn Lawyers prepared to launch a class action against the NSW Government to challenge the validity of these remaining COVID fines.

In November 2024, Maurice Blackburn notified the NSW Government of its intention to file a class action if Revenue NSW did not withdraw and refund the remaining COVID fines. In response, the NSW Government withdrew and repaid all remaining COVID fines.

Redfern Legal Centre welcomed the decision by the NSW Government. This win is the culmination of years of advocacy by Redfern Legal Centre's Police Accountability Practice against the heavy-handed criminal justice response to the pandemic and its discriminatory impact on marginalised people and communities.



“In cases like mine, because it’s a consumer issue, you want to represent yourself. However, there are many challenges with the legal system that an ordinary citizen, not legally trained, has to contend with, and this is where your service is of real value”

Client quote

Credit, Debt and Consumer Law

Our credit, debt, and consumer law practice provides essential advice, advocacy, and community legal education to people experiencing disadvantage. We assist those dealing with harassment from debt collectors, bankruptcy, lawsuits, and significant debts, including those involving Revenue NSW. Our clients often experience financial hardship and are frequently targeted by schemes designed to capitalise on the poverty premium. In collaboration with consumer advocates across Australia, we address the issues we encounter in our casework through law reform, advocacy, and community legal education. We help people navigate the complex legal system, resolve internal and external debt issues, and achieve fair and reasonable outcomes.

Case study

In 2023, John* purchased a vehicle from a dealership. Within two days, he noticed an issue with the vehicle and returned it to the dealership for repairs. After being advised that the repairs had been completed, John collected the vehicle. However, he was unable to register it after it failed inspection due to an oil leak that had been ongoing for years.

As a result, John was \$3,920.05 out of pocket, having paid for a roadworthy inspection, a repair quote, and subsequent repairs.

We filed a claim in the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT), seeking compensation on the grounds that the dealership had breached Australian Consumer Law. While the matter was listed for a formal hearing, the dealership agreed to compensate John in full, resolving the matter before the hearing took place.

John is now in a healthier financial position after receiving compensation for his losses.

*Name changed

We delivered a public webinar on Problem Debts – Navigating Internal Dispute Resolution, providing practical guidance to help people manage and resolve financial disputes.

Case study

Mark*, an aged pensioner living in social housing, contacted Redfern Legal Centre's Credit and Debt team after receiving a \$1,051 overdue speeding fine from Revenue NSW. Mark relies solely on the Centrelink Age Pension and has no disposable income after covering his daily living expenses. He also suffers from a severe shoulder injury, which makes completing physical tasks difficult.

Redfern Legal Centre applied to Revenue NSW for a fine write-off, in line with their guidelines that allow for debt waivers and payment plans in cases of financial hardship. Taking Mark's circumstances into account, Revenue NSW agreed to write off the fine, waiving the need for payment or a Work and Development Order.

Mark is now free from the financial and emotional stress the fine has caused.

*Name changed

RLC in the media

The Australian tenants who are charged to pay their rent

► Amelia Klein quoted in the Guardian

Amelia Klein, a credit and debt solicitor at Redfern Legal Centre, said they see clients struggling to repay bond loans among a range of financial challenges in "a horribly tight rental market". Many are unaware of interest-free bond loan options offered by state governments.

"If people can't afford to pay a bond, they can't afford to pay the interest and the fees that come with these bond loans," they said. "That can be the start of a debt spiral."

At the company's 2023 AGM, Rent.com.au's Bader said its bond loan product RentBond was the "largest provider of bond finance in the country". Offered by payday lender Fair Go Finance, it is interest-free for 21 days but rates can then climb to 29.9%. Rent.com.au earns a fee for each approved loan.

Bader said "in a perfect world" RentBond would not need to exist. "We ... have a thorough assessment process that takes into account a person's financial position and affordability," he said. "We only approve around 10% of all applicants."



"Excellent service, always attentive to listening and understanding the problem in the best terms to provide a better outcome"

Client quote

Employment Law

Our employment law practice provides employment advice and representation to low-income earners across NSW. We prioritise assisting workers who are targeted for exploitation, including migrant workers, First Nations people, people with disabilities, and young people.

As part of the Employment Rights Legal Service, which is a collaboration between the Inner City Legal Centre, Kingsford Legal Centre, and Redfern Legal Centre, we have provided specialist employment and discrimination services and community education to workers across the State, with a particular focus on assisting people living in regional, remote, and rural communities.

This year, we have prioritised strategic litigation, particularly in relation to sex discrimination, to amplify the impact of our very important work. Our ambitious approach has resulted in not only increased damages for our clients, but huge shifts in societal and legal expectations about the ‘requirements’ for victim-survivors of sexual harassment to stay silent.

This year, we have continued to provide a high volume of assistance, delivering over 1,200 services to New South Wales’ most vulnerable workers. The increasing demand for employment law advice highlights the pervasive nature of workplace exploitation in our community.

- 5 matters of unpaid wages or entitlements were obtained to a value of \$281,365
- 32 workplace justice visa certifications were provided
- 5 strengthening reporting protections certifications were provided

Case study

We assisted an elderly man, David*, in a disability discrimination case against his former employer. David had worked as a cleaner for the company for over 25 years when he was diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease. Due to his condition, he requested a change from his regular night shift to a morning shift so he could attend daily medical appointments related to his disability.

The employer refused to make this reasonable adjustment and subsequently deemed him unfit to perform his role altogether.

We made a disability discrimination claim to the Australian Human Rights Commission, and when this did not resolve the issue, we filed the matter in court. With the support of pro bono counsel, the case was resolved through court-ordered mediation. David received significant financial compensation.

*Name changed



Sean Stimson and Seri Feldman-Gubbay after giving evidence to NSW Parliament’s inquiry into the modern slavery risks

RLC in the media Should we ban non-compete clauses?

► [Listen to ABC Radio National’s Law Report](#)

Seri Feldman-Gubbay, senior solicitor with Redfern Legal Centre’s Employment Rights Legal Service, spoke to ABC Radio National’s Law Report, ABC News Channel, Triple J’s Hack program, and The Guardian about the federal government’s announcement that it will ban non-compete clauses for workers earning under \$175,000.

Case study

With the assistance of pro bono counsel, Dilan Mahendra, we achieved a ground-breaking result for our client in a Federal Court of Australia sexual harassment case, securing the highest award for damages in such a case in Australia. Our client, Biplavi Jarga Magar, was awarded \$160,000 in general damages for sexual harassment, \$130,000 for past and future economic loss, \$10,000 in general damages for victimisation, and \$5,000 in aggravated damages due to the way the other side defended the case.

We successfully argued that our client’s former boss at Mad Mex (the ‘respondent’) sexually harassed her on multiple occasions and unlawfully victimised her by threatening to sue her for defamation after she complained to the franchisor’s HR department about the sexual harassment. We also successfully argued that the way the respondent defended the claim, including by suggesting that by continuing to attend work during the period of harassment, and by ‘liking chaos’, the sexual harassment either did not happen, or if it did, would not have offended our client, relied on antiquated views about how people respond to sexual harassment. For those arguments, the respondent was ordered to pay aggravated damages.

Our client, an international student with no income and significant mental health diagnoses, would have had no viable path to justice without the support of Redfern Legal Centre and pro bono counsel. Despite legal intimidation at every step of these proceedings, Ms Magar persisted. This decision vindicates Ms Magar against spurious arguments raised in the employer’s defence – that because she had previously suffered from mental illnesses, she couldn’t possibly be telling the truth now. The Court unequivocally rejected that argument and found Ms Magar’s evidence to be truthful, evocative, and compelling.

*Name changed

With the introduction of the Department of Home Affairs’ Workplace Justice Visa (WJV) Pilot, temporary visa holders who are subjected to workplace exploitation are now able to remain in Australia to pursue their workplace exploitation claims.

To apply for the WJV, a worker must obtain certification from an ‘authorised third party’ (ATP). Certification involves a detailed analysis of the worker’s case and evidence, legal advice, and an assessment of the worker’s eligibility under the relevant policy requirements. If eligible, the ATP provides a statutory declaration confirming that workplace exploitation has occurred. Migrant workers must apply for the WJV within 28 days of their visa expiring, making these requests urgent.

Redfern Legal Centre is the only non-union ATP in NSW and has been inundated with requests for assistance. Since the launch of the WJV Pilot, we have assisted with over 75 unique WJV inquiries and issued more than 40 WJV certifications.

We remain committed to delivering community legal education through our work in the Employment Rights Legal Service (ERLS). This year, we hosted an underpayments webinar that drew over 100 attendees, alongside several seminars across the state designed to enhance employment law knowledge and capacity within other community legal centres (CLCs).

In April 2025, we made a written submission and presented evidence at the NSW Parliament’s inquiry into the modern slavery risks faced by migrant workers in rural and regional areas. We advocated for essential reforms to the *Modern Slavery Act*, *Work Health and Safety Act*, and *Residential Tenancies Act*, aiming to give victims of modern slavery greater legal avenues to seek justice against exploitative employers.

In May 2025, we made a submission to the NSW Parliament’s inquiry into proposed changes to the *Workers Compensation Act*. Following the Inquiry, the NSW Government chose not to move forward with the proposed changes and instead called for further submissions on an amended bill. In July 2025, we submitted a further response on behalf of the ERLS, opposing the amendments, which would strip workers with psychological injuries of their entitlements under workers’ compensation.



Seri Feldman-Gubbay and Emily Dong from the Employment Law Legal Practice



Seri Feldman-Gubbay and Joe Murphy with Biplavi Jarga Magar and legal team

RLC in the media

Migrant exploitation experts call for increase to services accredited with certifying Workplace Justice Visas

► Seri Feldman-Gubbay on ABC News

Seri Feldman-Gubbay was interviewed by the ABC about an increase in assistance for requests related to employment law saying it was likely driven by a number of factors, including the cost of living.

“I think people are feeling the crunch of the economy, and a lot of people, particularly migrants... I guess are questioning the rates that they’re receiving,” Ms Feldman-Gubbay said.

Seri told ABC the Workplace Justice Visa pilot, introduced by the Australian government in September, had also resulted in an increase in referrals.

“That enables migrant workers whose visa is expiring to obtain a new visa specifically to pursue a workplace exploitation claim,” she said.

But as one of the few services that is an accredited third party to certify a Workplace Justice Visa, Ms Feldman-Gubbay said the service needed more funding.

“We receive funding to service migrant workers in New South Wales, but specifically for the Workplace Justice Visa work, we don’t receive specific funding,” she said.

“Because those matters are often very urgent and time sensitive... we need to be better funded to better service our clients.

Seri Feldman-Gubbay spoke to FBI radio to explain changes to costs in federal discrimination claims and presented about those changes at a community legal education seminar.



“I’m very appreciative that Redfern Legal Centre was considerate of my safety and were very proactive in making sure I felt confident in my proceedings”

Client quote

Inner Sydney Tenants' Advice and Advocacy Service

Redfern Legal Centre offers legal support on tenancy and housing issues through the Inner Sydney Tenants' Advice and Advocacy Service (ISTAAS). We provide legal advice, advocacy, and representation, engage in policy reform, and educate the community on tenancy law through our community legal education program.

Our Inner Sydney Tenants' Advice and Advocacy Service:

- Conducted nearly 1,500 individual advice sessions this year.
- Through ongoing advice and assistance, helped 45 tenants avoid eviction.
- Helped 5 boarding house residents facing eviction due to redevelopment. Our advocacy and representation prevented the residents from becoming homeless. We achieved a significant extension of time for residents to remain in their homes, allowing them enough time to secure other stable housing. Residents were also compensated for their relocation costs.
- Assisted over 80 public housing tenants in our local area with repair and maintenance issues.
- 2 orders for money obtained (totalling \$12,371).
- 1 social housing tenancy debt reduced from over \$72,000 to nil.

Case study

We assisted Gabby*, a public housing tenant, with a compensation claim made by Homes NSW, alleging tenant damage to her public housing premises. Gabby, a young First Nations single mother, was seven months pregnant with her second child and had recently completed a rehabilitation program. While in rehabilitation, her home, already in a significant state of disrepair, was broken into, vandalised, and severely damaged, rendering it uninhabitable.

Homes NSW initiated NCAT proceedings against Gabby, seeking over \$70,000 for the alleged damage. We advocated for her relocation to suitable accommodation and represented her in the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. The case went to a formal hearing, where we presented evidence that challenged Homes NSW's claims of tenant responsibility.

Homes NSW had no clear evidence linking our client to the damage. We argued that, given the home's pre-existing disrepair and her report of the break-in while she was in rehab, other plausible explanations for the damage existed. In these circumstances, we contended that the Tribunal could not conclusively determine the tenant's responsibility for the damage. Ultimately, the Tribunal dismissed Homes NSW's entire application.

By the time of the hearing, Gabby had given birth to her second child and was living in safe, secure accommodation. Thanks to our representation, Gabby was debt-free and able to move forward with her life.

*Name changed



Thank you sign from boarding house residents to RLC



RLC staff at Tenancy outreach Summer on the Green

Case study

In September 2024, we began working with residents of a boarding house on Selwyn Street in Paddington. The boarding houses were home to about 30 men experiencing financial and other disadvantages. Many of them had lived there for decades, with some residing since the 1970s. These men relied on each other and their community for support. The properties had been sold to a developer who was in dispute with the local council over plans to convert the buildings into luxury townhouses.

The residents were informed that the boarding houses would be closed, and they would be evicted by December 2024.

We made submissions to the Land and Environment Court, highlighting the impact this development would have on both the local community and the residents, as well as the broader loss of affordable housing in the area. Additionally, we initiated legal proceedings on behalf of a group of residents, asserting their rights to remain in their homes.

Thanks to the combined advocacy of Redfern Legal Centre, the Newtown Neighbourhood Centre, and local community members, the boarding houses were kept open for an additional seven months, giving residents enough time to secure alternative accommodation.

The developer's appeal to the Land and Environment Court was heard in May 2025 but was ultimately unsuccessful. Although this decision came too late for the Selwyn Street residents, as all had already moved to new housing by the time the ruling was handed down, the decision marks a significant victory in the ongoing effort to preserve affordable housing and prevent the displacement of low-income tenants in Inner Sydney.



Alison Mackey helps celebrate an end to no-grounds evictions

One of the most common issues we continue to advise on is the need for repairs in public housing.

Given the persistence of this problem, we've been leading an advocacy campaign to improve maintenance outcomes for public housing tenants. In May, we met with Housing Minister Rose Jackson, alongside representatives from the Tenants' Union and the Eastern Area Tenants' Service. We presented case studies and statistics from the tenancy network, showing that despite changes to Homes NSW's customer service model and maintenance contracts, tenants are still facing major maintenance problems. Several commitments were made during the meeting, including. The Minister was receptive to our concerns and committed to steps to improve contractor performance, enhance processes for closing work orders, and establish new escalation pathways. We will continue advocating for systemic improvements to ensure public housing is maintained to a safe and healthy standard.

The redevelopment of the Waterloo public housing estate has been in the planning stages for over a decade. In February 2025, tenants in Waterloo South who were subject to relocation received their letters. Redfern Legal Centre's Independent Tenant Advocate assists tenants in navigating the relocation process and advocates for their housing needs as they are offered alternative accommodation. We were pleased to welcome Christie McDonald, who brings extensive experience in social work roles within the housing and homelessness sectors to this role. In addition to assisting individual tenants with the relocation process, Christie attends multiple outreach events each week in and around the Waterloo estate. These include OzHarvest at the Waterloo Neighbourhood Centre, Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation, Waterloo Connect, First Nations Barbecues, and regular morning teas at Counterpoint.



Alison Mackey speaks at a renters' rights forum

RLC in the media

Advocating for tenants facing eviction

▶ Camilla Pandolfini quoted in The Guardian

Ned Cooke, Team Leader of ISTAAS, appeared on ABC News advocating for residents of the Selwyn Street Boarding houses who were facing eviction.

Camilla Pandolfini was quoted in The Guardian on tenants being evicted in the lead up to the introduction of reforms.

Camilla Pandolfini, the Chief Executive Officer of Redfern Legal Centre, which runs the Inner Sydney Tenants' Advice and Advocacy Service, said her team was preparing to assist an influx of tenants served no-grounds termination notices before the reforms commence.

Pandolfini said there was an increase in inquiries from tenants evicted without cause – typically after challenging a rent increase – when the reforms were announced in July 2024.

“We can reasonably expect a similar spike, which may continue until 18 May, as landlords are still able to evict tenants under the old rules until that date,” she said.

Ned Cooke, Team Leader of ISTAAS, appeared on ABC News advocating for residents of the Selwyn Street Boarding houses who were facing eviction.

“Your service has made a huge difference in my ability to advocate for myself and access legal assistance.”

Client quote



“Redfern Legal Centre is supportive, understanding, empathetic, kind, and proactive. I sincerely thank you for your meaningful support in empowering me”

Client quote

Community Legal Education

Redfern Legal Centre delivers Community Legal Education (CLE) to the community, community workers, and lawyers to build capacity in the sector, educate and empower people to understand their rights and responsibilities, and take action to improve their wellbeing and achieve justice.

“This session was very useful for me. I was not familiar with the topic and now I feel much more confident.”

Client quote

All our legal practices contribute to this work, both proactive CLE – webinars promoted across NSW and Australia – and responsive CLE – webinars and in-person sessions for local and statewide groups who approach Redfern Legal Centre. Most webinars are recorded and available on demand on our website.

During the year we delivered the following webinars to 1,280 people:

Money Matters in NSW Social Housing

Drugs and NSW Police Powers

Terminations of Residential Tenancies in NSW (and how to challenge them)

Fines and Penalty Notices in NSW (part 1): Disputing the Fine

Domestic Violence & Tenancy in NSW

Help! My Client has Problem Debts #1: Internal Dispute Resolution

Help! My Client has Problem Debts #3: Strategies for Dispute Resolution

Financial abuse in family law: Understanding the new reforms

Underpaid at work? Know your rights

Our Staff

2024-2025

Alexis Goodstone

Principal Solicitor

Alison Mackey

Solicitor | Inner Sydney Tenants' Advice and Advocacy Service

Anthony Lovett

Solicitor | Employment Law | Employment Rights Legal Service

Amelia Klein

Supervising Solicitor | Financial Abuse Service NSW

Amy Shang

Legal Administrative Officer | Health Justice Partnership

Ashleigh Bridge

Solicitor | Health Justice Partnership (HJP)

Betty Lim

Social Worker | Intake Team

Camilla Pandolfini

Chief Executive Officer

Cate Hewett

Chief Operations Officer

Catherine Liebel

Senior Family Law Solicitor | Financial Abuse Service NSW

Christie McDonald

Independent Tenants' Advocate | Waterloo Relocations

Emily Perrins

Legal Administrative Assistant

Francesco Terranova

Solicitor | Credit, Debt and Consumer Law

Gail Brennan

Generalist Solicitor | First Nations Practice

Gayatri Nair

Policy and Capacity Building Officer | Financial Abuse Service NSW

Grace Cameron-Lee

Solicitor | Police Powers and Administrative Law

Grace McInerny

Casual Employment Practice Paralegal

Henrietta McRae

Financial Counsellor | Financial Abuse Service NSW

Jadyn Bryant-Smith

Intake Supervisor

Jasmine Opdam

Senior Policy & Advocacy Officer | Financial Abuse Service NSW

Jemima Gaunt

Senior Social Worker | Financial Abuse Service NSW

Jillian Wyatt

Senior Financial Counsellor | Financial Abuse Service NSW

Joe Murphy

Solicitor | Employment Law | Employment Rights Legal Service

Josh Raj

Solicitor | Police Powers and Administrative Law

Julia McClelland

Company & Tax Solicitor | Financial Abuse Service NSW

Keanna Lau

Legal Support Officer | Financial Abuse Service NSW

Laura Bianchi

Managing Solicitor | Financial Abuse Service NSW

Lauren Gillin

Media and Communications Manager

Lauren Howlett

Credit & Debt Solicitor | Financial Abuse Service NSW

Leanne O'Reilly

Solicitor | Inner Sydney Tenants' Advice & Advocacy Service (ISTAAS)

Lehi Dudley

Legal Assistant

Lucy Nadj

Solicitor | Health Justice Partnership (HJP) | Royal Prince Alfred Hospital

Maria Monastiri

Solicitor & Accredited Family Law Specialist | Financial Abuse Service NSW

Melanie King

Legal Support Officer | Financial Abuse Service NSW

Maikai (Mike) Yang

Legal Assistant

Ned Cooke

Team Leader | Inner Sydney Tenancy Advice & Advocacy Service (ISTAAS)

Nick Manning

Community Engagement and Education Officer | Intake Manager

Nurses Kurucuk

Casual Intake Supervisor

Phill Byrne

Operations and IT Support Officer

Rebecca Campbell

Credit & Debt Solicitor | Financial Abuse Service NSW

Rashini Fernando

Senior Solicitor | Health Justice Partnership (HJP)

Samantha Lee

Supervising Solicitor | Police Powers and Administrative Law

Sean Stimson

Senior Solicitor | International Student Legal Service NSW

Seri Feldman-Gubbay

Senior Solicitor | Employment Law | Employment Rights Legal Service

Sharmilla Bargon

Senior Solicitor | Employment Law | Employment Rights Legal Service

Shawna Pope

First Nations Engagement Officer | First Nations Justice

Shivank Ganesh

Legal Assistant

Tara Stone

Social Worker | Financial Abuse Service NSW

Tobias Elliott-Orr

First Nations Solicitor | First Nations Justice

Wendy Wang

Administration Officer



Our Board of Directors

Alexandra Finlay
(completed their term October 2024)

Ben Lipschitz
(completed their term October 2024)

Craig Young
(completed their term November 2024)

Laura Lombardo

Gemma McKinnon

Greg Masters
(completed their term February 2024)

Rose Khalilzadeh

Kerry O'Brien

Emma Maple-Brown

Tony Frost

Naysla Edwards



Our Funding Partners

RLC receives funding and in-kind support from a range of sources. We thank these departments, organisations and individuals for their ongoing support:

Redfern Legal Centre's **Generalist legal service, Police Accountability Practice, Health Justice Partnership, Employment practice** and the **Employment Rights Legal Service**, a collaboration with Kingsford Legal Centre and Inner City Legal Centre is funded by the Funded by the Community Legal Centres Program administered by Legal Aid NSW.

NSW Fair Trading funds the **Inner Sydney Tenants' Advice and Advocacy Service**.

Study NSW funds the **International Student Legal Service NSW**.

The **Financial Abuse Service NSW** is funded by the NSW Government.

The **Financial Abuse Service** is a proud partner of CommBank Next Chapter. Ecstra Foundation provide a grant for policy, law reform and capacity-building work.

City of Sydney provides RLC with premises at Redfern Town Hall.

Homes NSW funds an Independent Tenant Advocate to assist Waterloo tenants relocating.

City of Sydney funds assistance to Waterloo tenants relocating.

Grants and donations

Redfern Legal Centre thanks the following organisations for their support:

The University of NSW continued to support course modules on Police Powers.

The University of Sydney Law School funds Social Justice clinical placements.

UTS funds students to undertake a placement through their Legal Internship Program.

Microsoft provides discounted software.

A bequest, distribution from a trust, and donations have enabled us to continue our First Nations Justice Practice

Many individuals and supporter organisations provided generous donations, including DLA Piper, Salesforce and Colin Biggers & Paisley

Clayton Utz Foundation provided a grant for a paralegal for our Health Justice Partnership.

Amex funds our planning for First Nations Engagement.

Thompson Reuters prints our annual report.

Partnerships

Redfern Legal Centre is highly appreciative of the assistance and partnership of the firms and individual lawyers who support Redfern Legal Centre to provide trauma-informed and responsive legal assistance. The invaluable time, skill and expertise of our volunteer lawyers contributes to our free legal information, advice and casework as well as our law reform, policy and advocacy.

Pro bono and volunteer contributions expand our impact and achieve access to justice for people facing discrimination, exploitation and abuse. We could not meet the incredible demand for legal assistance without the invaluable assistance of the firms and individual lawyers who work with us.

Each and every contribution assists to create positive change for the communities we work with.



Ashurst



CLAYTON UTZ



DENTONS



KING & WOOD
MALLESONS
金杜律师事务所

JOHNSON
WINTER
SLATTERY

LANDER
& ROGERS

LEGALVISION®

MAKINSON d'APICE
LAWYERS



RK
Russell Kennedy



Watts McCray
LAWYERS

WK WOTTON
KEARNEY

Our volunteers

In the 2024-25 financial year our volunteer team included:

109 student volunteers (intake)

267 volunteer lawyers

Our volunteers speak 29 languages

Our volunteers, including intake volunteers, contributed 4,000 hours

Volunteer lawyers contributed 4317 hours of pro bono assistance



RLC staff and volunteers



Jasmine Opdam and Laura Bianchi

Volunteer lawyers and students

Aamir Khan	Geri Friend-Ngui	Lehi Dudley	Renz Hernandez
Alison Elliott	Grace McInerney	Lia Kingston	Rhiannon Noble
Amelia Cameron	Hayley Dobbin	Liz Stanaway	Ruby Martin
Amy Papandreas	Helen Hasek	Luan Emma Whitworth	Ryan Ho
Anna O’Rourke	Hilda Law	Lucy McCoy	Sahana Subramanian
Asha Beatty	Hilda Law	Lucy Zheng	Sarah Morton-Ramwell
Ashraf Olife	Ikbol Rishi	Luke Salt	Selina Ngo
Ben Carmichael	Iris Rad	Madeleine Kan	Shivank Ganesh
Bryan Do	James Huang	Madeleine Molnar	Sienna Mackey
Camilla Keenan	James Lombardo	Madeline (Maddy) White	Skye Owen
Carolina Arricobene	Janvi Umrigar	Maikai (Mike) Yang	Sodany Tong
Cathie Day	Jennifer Dai	Marie Stanbouli	Sophie Harben
Chanelle Sleiman	Joy Shin	Mark James Cohen	Sophie Margossian
Cheryl Chua	Julia Chang	Maxine Bartu	Susan Cooper
Christopher Cavaiola	Kartikey Sudiv Tripathi	Mehaa Iyer	Sweta Narayan
Claire Phua	Kate Eastaugh	Mehak Verma	Tazin Saiyed
Daniel Richards	Kate Mitchell	Natalie Lambropoulos	Teresa (Tess) Balodis
Edwina Wang	Kathleen Field	Nellie Clark-Boyce	Tesni Paewai
Elise Gooley	Katya Karanfilovski	Nicola Krishnan	Tiarn Johannesen
Elise Inger	Keanna Lau	Nurses Kurucuk	Tina Huang
Elizabeth Myers	Keanna Lau	Olivia Tan	Tram Tran
Eloise Morrison	Kevin Wei	Peter Anderson	Vanessa Ryan
Emma Page	Kora Iansa	Philippa Howse	Veeleshni Samy
Emma Peers Tejero	Kristiana Tala Margate	Pratik Ambani	Virginia Hong
Fiona Zafirakos	Kyra Sumner	Rachel Duong	Yalda Nozad Mojaver
Georgia Edwards	Lara Finlayson	Rajaswi Regmi	Ying Zi (Amy) Shang

Barristers

Dilan Mahendra
Felicity Graham
Ghassan Kassisieh
Justin Pen
Kate Eastman AM SC
Kylie Nomchong SC
Leah Reid
Oshie Fagir
Philip Boncardo
Kate Richardson SC
Timothy Smartt
Adam Hochroth
Patricia Lane
Greg James AM KC
Bart Dziubinski
Stephen Puttick

Academics

Associate Professor
Ann Kayis-Kumar
Associate Professor
Vivien Chen
Dr Jennifer Davidson
Dr Vicki Sentas
Professor Luke McNamara
Dr Elyse Methven
Ben Mostyn
Dr Julia Quilter

Thank you

The Financial Abuse Service NSW thanks Ray Mainsbridge, Tony Frost and the UNSW Tax and Business Advisory Clinic for their valuable assistance and support in the creation of the innovative Company and Tax practice.

Redfern Legal Centre would like to thank Justin Sires, Founder and Managing Director of Five at Heart, for the generous donation of bike racks and lockers, along with their installation and Ashley Jane Casey and her team at FF&3 for their incredible support in providing office furniture, computer equipment, and kitchen appliances as well as arranging free delivery to our site.

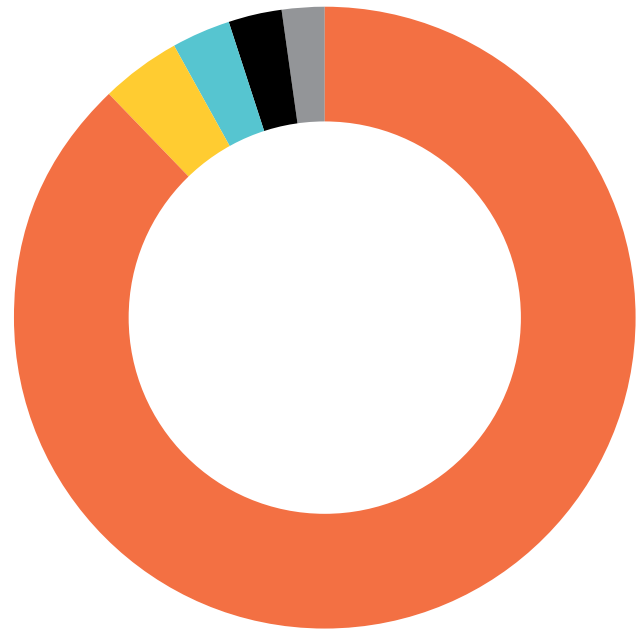
Financials

Income

Redfern Legal Centre achieved significant financial growth this year, with total income growing by 17% to \$5.6 million. The organisation ended the year with a \$123k surplus, which has enabled its buffer of reserves to appropriately grow in step with the organisation’s size. While RLC is primarily funded from government, its grant sources are diverse which adds to its overall financial resilience. As with previous years, RLC’s expenditure is overwhelmingly directed to staffing costs, and the organisation maintained robust overhead cost controls, enabled by operational efficiencies. Redfern Legal Centre has total reserves of \$1.5 million, which are held to mitigate any future financial shocks and ensure continuity of its service delivery. Its cash balances are stable at around \$3 million, which provide sound liquidity and solvency. Looking ahead, the organisation expects continued steady growth into the 2025-26 financial year, driven by welcome increases to some of its government funded programs and minor deferred funds from the last financial year.

Funding Sources 2024-25

Government Funding	\$4,938,477
Philanthropic and Corporate	\$239,033
Donations	\$155,694
Contract fees and Consultancy	\$181,875
Other Income	\$86,801
Total	\$5,601,881

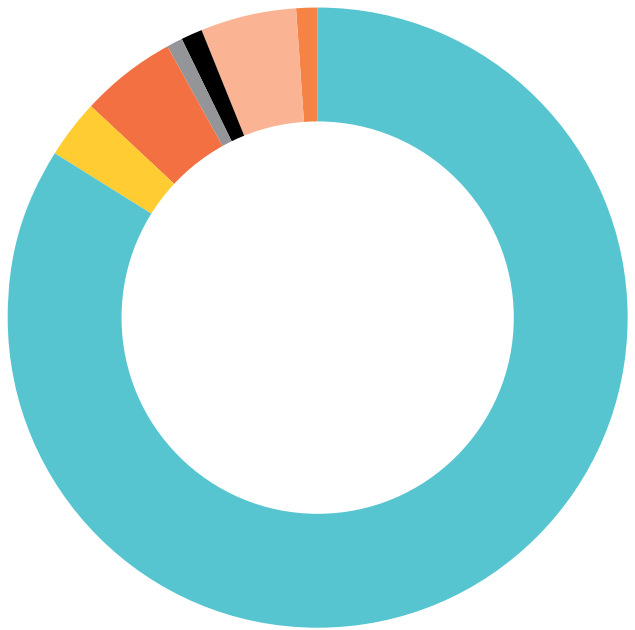


- Government funding: 88%
- Philanthropic and Corporate funding: 4%
- Donations: 3%
- Contract fees and consultancy: 3%
- Other income: 2%

Expenditure

Program Costs 2024-25

Employees	\$4,587,395
Expert services	\$183,620
Occupancy, depreciation and amortisation	\$299,796
Staff training and memberships	\$38,597
Insurance	\$30,367
Administration	\$256,855
Other	\$82,396
Total	\$5,479,025



- Employees: 84%
- Expert services: 3%
- Occupancy, depreciation and amortisation: 5%
- Staff training and memberships: 1%
- Insurance: 1%
- Administration: 5%
- Other: 1%

Donate to support our work

At Redfern Legal Centre, we've helped thousands of people access justice through our day-to-day work and achieved significant wins in policy, advocacy, and systemic change.

None of this would be possible without you.

Your support makes a tangible difference – helping people in crisis, influencing policy, and creating lasting positive change.



If you believe in access to justice for all, please consider making a donation to Redfern Legal Centre today.

Thank you for your continued support for the clients and communities we work with.

**Please donate online at
➤ rlc.org.au/donate**

**Donations of \$2 and over
are tax deductible.**



“As a victim of domestic violence and financial abuse for almost 17 years, I have reached out to many services... Redfern Legal Centre [is] the only [one] who has listened to my desperate situation and offered me the help I needed. It will change my desperate situation for my children and me”

Client quote



**Redfern
Legal
Centre**

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www.rlc.org.au