



**WOMEN'S LEGAL SERVICE (SA)**  
Achieving justice for women

# 2018 - 2019 ANNUAL REPORT



## **Head Office**

Women's Legal Service (SA)  
151 Franklin Street  
ADELAIDE SA 5000

## **Patron**

The Hon. Dr Robyn Layton AO QC

## **Hours of Business**

Monday to Friday 9.00 am to 5.00 pm

Phone: (08) 8231 8929  
Free call: 1800 655 037  
Fax: (08) 8221 5737  
Email: [wls@wlssa.org.au](mailto:wls@wlssa.org.au)  
Web: [www.wlssa.org.au](http://www.wlssa.org.au)

## **Intake Line**

Hours of business, Monday to Friday 10.00 am to 4.00 pm  
Phone: (08) 8231 8929  
Free call: 1800 555 850

## **Rural Women's Outreach Program (RWOP)**

Free call: 1800 55 850

## **Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Women's Program (IWOP)**

Phone: (08) 8231 8929  
Free call: 1800 555 850

## **Family Law & Family Violence Program**

Phone: (08) 8231 8929  
Free call: 1800 555 850

## **InDIGO**

PO Box 41  
Christies Beach SA 5165

Email: [indigo@wlssa.org.au](mailto:indigo@wlssa.org.au)  
Phone: (08) 8284 2427

## **Women's Legal Service SA receives funding from:**

- Commonwealth Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet
- Commonwealth Attorney General's Department
- Commonwealth Department of Social Services
- South Australian Attorney General's Department

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Women's Legal Service (SA) respectfully acknowledges the past and present traditional custodians of the lands on which we meet and provide services to the community. It is a privilege to be standing on and working on Aboriginal countries across South Australia.

We also acknowledge the contributions of Aboriginal Australians and non-Aboriginal to reducing barriers to accessing the legal system for women and children in this country we all live in and share together.





# CONTENTS

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Acknowledgement of Country	3
Chairperson & CEO Report	6
Who We Are	8
Creating Positive Change	11
Board Of Directors	12
Staff Team 2018 - 2019	13
Our Legal Programs	14
Non-Legal Support Services	20
Volunteer Program	21
Community Legal Education	23
Partnerships & Collaborations	24
Community Impact	25
Outreach Locations	26
Savings to the Community	28
Our Client Stories	29
Warm Up & Serve	38
Events	41
Financials	42
Thank You	43

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# CHAIRPERSON & CEO REPORT

The Board of Directors has undertaken with staff and volunteers a considerable amount of work over the past 12 months.

A major piece of work was the collaborative development of our Strategic Plan, and Business Plan over a period of 3 face to face meetings and with considerable work behind the scenes. The Strategic Plan will provide the organisation with the focus that it needs over the course of the next 3 years in what will be a challenging but exciting time for the organisation. Our strategic Plan has 3 major components which are:

1. Profile of Women's Legal Service (SA) across South Australia;
2. Best practice legal services for women who face complex and vulnerable circumstances; and,
3. Collaborative effort for women's justice and safety.

Each of the priorities can be easily measured by Women's Legal Service (SA) through linked impact and process indicators.

In addition to this significant piece of work Women's Legal Service (SA) has continued to work on providing services to the community and

in particular to vulnerable women and children. Women's Legal Service (SA) has just finalised its innovative Ask Maria project which provides an online platform and resource for women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to access mainstream services in regional areas providing support to women and children fleeing family violence.

During 2018-2019, Women's Legal Service (SA) provided services to:

- 2880 women were assisted,
- 3832 Legal advices, and
- 741 cases were open during 2018-2019.

Our staff with the support of community services and government agencies ensured that any woman regardless of where she lives in South Australia could access legal information, advice, and assistance. This year we added the Women's and Children's Hospital to our outreach location. This collaboration would not have been possible without the support of the Youth and Women's Safety and Wellbeing Division.

The work that has been undertaken over the 12-month period has been strengthened by our commitment to ensuring that a trauma informed

practice informs our further delivery of service. This commitment means that we will ensure that a trauma informed practices and procedures inform the way that we work with women and children, communities, and other stakeholders. Staff and volunteers have been undergoing training in this area and there have already been modifications to the manner in which we work and our office environment to ensure that we are more responsive to and supportive of the women and children accessing our services. We will continue strengthening this work over the next few years.

We would like to thank our supporters and volunteers including Board members for their generous and continued support of Women's Legal Service (SA). We would not have been able to carry out our valuable work without this continued support.

We look forward to having a wonderful year in 2020 as we celebrate our 25th anniversary.



**Lisa McClure**  
2018-2019 Chairperson of the Board



**Zita Ngor**  
Chief Executive Officer

# WHO WE ARE

Women's Legal Service SA is a community legal centre focusing on meeting the legal needs of vulnerable women in South Australia in a holistic and empowering manner. We are an independent, not-for-profit, politically unaligned, and secular community organisation based in South Australia.

Our Vision	Our Mission	Our Values
Achieving justice for women	Providing women and their families in vulnerable situations with state-wide access to justice in a holistic, empowering, culturally competent, and confidential manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Justice</li><li>• Transparency</li><li>• Commitment</li><li>• Respect</li><li>• Empowerment</li><li>• Excellence</li><li>• Teamwork</li><li>• Leadership</li></ul>



# MISSION » DIRECTION » ACTION

1. We provide legal services to benefit women in SA
2. We give legal information to all women in SA
3. We give legal advice to all women in SA
4. We case manage women who do not meet the Legal Services Commission eligibility criteria and cannot afford private legal services.
5. We prioritise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women; CALD women; rural, regional, and remote women; women experiencing family violence, women living with disabilities and women with children.
6. We educate the community about legal issues that impact women
7. We promote women's access to the law
8. We gather resources to deliver our mission
9. We do our best to deliver high quality services tailored to the needs of women in SA

## Incorporation & Charity Status

Women's Legal Service is a public company limited by guarantee under the Corporations Act from 04 November 2016.

It is also a registered charity with the Australian Charities & Not for Profits Commission from 03rd of December 2012.

## Tax Concessions

Women's Legal Service is a Public Benevolent Institution (PBI) and endorsed by the Australian Taxation Office as:

- A Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR); and
- An income tax exempt charity.

## About the Annual Report

This Annual Report covers activities & performance for the period 01 July 2018 to 30 June 2019, our financial year.

The Annual Report is one of the ways in which we seek to ensure our accountability and transparency obligations to all our stakeholders, including our members, partners and supporters.

# CREATING POSITIVE CHANGE

Safe, happy, vibrant and egalitarian communities that ensure access to justice for all members.

## ONE

### Women's Legal Service SA Outputs

- a. Legal education workshops & sessions
- b. Advocacy and law reform on issues of importance to women and their families
- c. State-wide delivery of free legal information, legal advice, legal assistance and representation
- d. Partnerships and collaborations with community services, government agencies and educational institutions
- e. Volunteer program

## TWO

### Shifts in Community Capacity & Conditions

1. Legal education
  - a. Increased understanding of legal system by vulnerable women and their families
  - b. Increased confidence in legal system by vulnerable women and their families
  - c. Women/and their children feel confident in seeking legal help in the future
  - d. Women are better equipped to navigate the legal system
  - e. Increased capacity of service providers to identify legal issues and make appropriate referrals
  - f. Increased understanding of the legal system and implications on the lives and decisions by vulnerable women and their families
2. Advocacy
  - a. Strengthened partnerships with government
  - b. Strengthened partnerships with the not-for-profit sector
  - c. Increase in understanding of and the minimisation of unfair/unequal gendered impacts of legislative drafting and law making
3. Access to free legal services
  - a. Increased access to legal services
  - b. Women and their families participate with and use the legal system to achieve positive outcomes
  - c. Improved legal access and protections for vulnerable members of the community
  - d. Increased gender equity within the family and community
4. Partnerships & collaborations
  - a. Strengthened partnerships with government
  - b. Strengthened partnerships with the not-for-profit sector
  - c. Government, services and agencies are more responsive to the legal needs of women and their families
  - d. Increased transparency & accountability of government

# THREE

## Community Impact

1. Greater movement towards gender equity
2. Women /and their families have:
  - a. Decreased stress and anxiety
  - b. Improved financial wellbeing
3. Increased personal safety and decreased social exclusion/isolation
4. Community
  - a. Increased collaboration between services and agencies
  - b. Enhanced service responses to vulnerable members of the community
  - c. Increased individual and community wellbeing.
5. Justice System & Services
  - a. Improved development of legal policy and practice
  - b. Improved access to justice for vulnerable members of the community
6. Volunteers
  - a. Improved professional development within the legal sector
  - b. Greater understanding of the challenges faced by women in accessing justice



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

If you would like to be a Women's Legal Service (SA) board member, please email [secretary@wlssa.org.au](mailto:secretary@wlssa.org.au).



***Lisa McClure***

Chairperson



***Cheryl Cook***

Treasurer



***Anna-Maria Murphy***

(resigned Feb 2019)  
Secretary/ Board Member



***Peter Wilson***

Board Member



***Mark Quaglia***

Board Member

# STAFF TEAM 2018 - 2019

Chief Executive Officer – Zita Ngor

Principal Solicitor – Jody Knighton

Finance & Operations Manager – Julia Nitschke

## Women's Specialist Service

Senior Solicitor – Kathryn Stavrou (parental leave March 2019)

Senior Solicitor – Jodie McRae (Commenced March 2019)

Solicitor – Alexandra Psarras

Solicitor – Daniella Cutufia

Solicitor – Barbara Hancock

Solicitor – Lucinda Reu

Community Worker/Para-Legal – Celine Graham

Projects Officer/Solicitor – Chloe Fragos

Intake Officers – Danielle O'Loughlin

Intake Officers – Pina Ortuso

## Family Law & Family Violence Program

Senior Solicitor – Jessica Tucker (departed April 2019)

Solicitor – Paula Raphael

Senior Solicitor - Jodie McRae (April 2019)

## InDIGO

Program Coordinator – Kalyani Desai (departed March 2019)

Senior Solicitor – Jodie McRae (departed March 2019)

Solicitor – Kylee Wastell (sick leave Oct 2018)

Solicitor – Chloe Goldsworthy (commenced April 2019)

Solicitor – Holly McCoy (commenced May 2019)

Family Advocate – Rebecca Dempsey

Family Advocate – Linley Belford (commenced April 2019)

# OUR LEGAL PROGRAMS

*Women's Legal Service (SA) has four main programs*





## Women's Specialist Program

The Women's Specialist Program is funded to provide a state-wide service to women across South Australia.

The outreach locations for the Women's Legal Specialist Program reflects the wide geographic footprint of the program.

### The 2018-2019 outreach locations were:

#### Metropolitan Outreaches

- Elizabeth (Elizabeth Rise Community Centre)
- Port Adelaide Women's Health Service
- Women's & Children's Hospital
- Woodcroft Library
- Victor Harbour

#### Rural, Regional & Remote Outreaches

- Berri & surrounding regions
- Ceduna & surrounding regions
- Coober Pedy & surrounding regions
- Mount Gambier
- Murray Bridge & Mannum
- Port Augusta & surrounding regions
- Port Lincoln & surrounding regions
- Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands

At the outreach locations there has been an increase in demand for the services. The increase in demand has corresponded with an increase in women seeking legal representation for property matters. The program has also seen a demand in urgent children applications to the federal circuit court, due to a child or children being unilaterally removed from the care of primary parent.

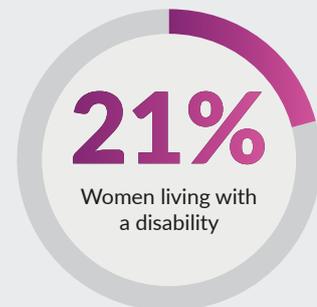
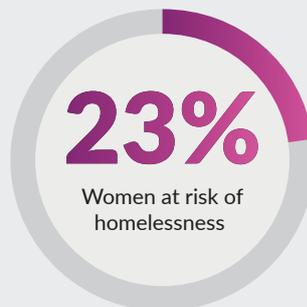
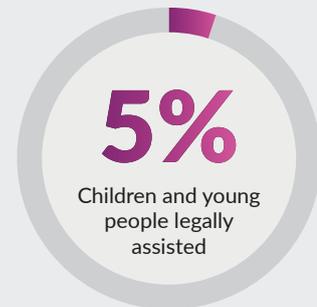
In addition, the Women's Specialist Program has also worked to strengthen its' relationship with Primary Health Network providers. These relationships have been crucial in ensuring that women receive early and timely legal advice about their legal and non-legal issues.

The focus on providing women with early and timely legal information and advice is part of the move by the Women's Legal Service (SA) to be a trauma informed legal practice. Being a trauma informed legal practice will enable the service to meet client's needs in a more holistic manner. The expansion of the non-legal support services within Women's Legal Service is part of our service's commitment, to achieving this outcome.

Who are the programs clients?

# 2428

## Total number of women assisted.



Services Provided:

# 3140

Legal advices

# 259

Number of cases opened during the financial year

# 55

Legal Assistance provided to clients

# 10

Non-legal assistance services

# 533

women living in rural, regional and remote areas were legally assisted

# 681

legal assistance services were provided

Top 10 problem types

Child residency, Property in marriage, Family or domestic violence, Separation, Divorce, Property de facto, Child protection application/orders, Family or domestic violence order, Child protection other, child support other.

## InDIGO – Domestic Violence Hub

The InDIGO program assists victims of domestic and family violence in the southern suburbs of Adelaide. The team consist of 2 full time Solicitors and 2 part-time Family Advocates. InDIGO will also shortly be providing women and their families with access to financial services as well. The domestic violence hubs of which InDIGO is one of two located in South Australia, enable women and their families fleeing family violence to be able to receive legal support within a holistic framework.

The program is physically located within the southern suburbs. It provides services to women living and/or working in the council areas of Mitcham Council, City of Onkaparinga, Marion Council and Holdfast Bay.

InDIGO is heavily connected and engaged within the southern suburbs. InDIGO delivers a component of the Women are Strong in collaboration with a number of agencies including Anglicare & Taikurrendi Children and Family Centre. InDIGO is also involved in a number of networks and committees in the southern suburbs including the Onkaparinga Collaborative Action Group and the Southern Domestic Violence Action Group.

Who are the programs clients?

# 172

## Total number of women assisted.



Services Provided:

# 240

Legal advices

# 53

Number of cases opened during the financial year

# 27

Duty Lawyer Services

# 77

Non-legal assistance services

# 18

legal assistance services were provided

Top 10 problem types

Child residency, Family or domestic violence order, Family or domestic violence, property in marriage, property de facto, parenting plan, separation, Miscellaneous offences, Divorce, Sexual assault related offences

## Family Law & Family Violence (FLFV) Program

The Family Law & Family Violence Program, is a small team within Women's Legal Service (SA) that provides legal assistance to women fleeing family violence and requiring family law assistance.

Women coming to the service have often suffered through numerous family violence relationships before breaking the cycle through legal advice and legal assistance. Educating and empowering women is a vital part of the FLFV Program. This approach enables clients to move forward in their lives while feeling protected and supported by the law. This is paramount where there are children involved in the court proceedings.

Women connect with the program either through a domestic violence service, homelessness gateway program, SAPOL, mediation or counselling service. They often have faced significant barriers to accessing the legal system. These barriers include poverty, drug and alcohol dependency, lack of knowledge of legal choices, lack of family support, and ingrained values around gender and parenting models. The specialist service understands and responds in a supportive manner that is essential to rebuilding confidence in the legal system and legal protections.

### Who are the programs clients?



### Services Provided

**221**

Women legally assisted

**245**

Legal advices

**56**

Cases opened during 2018-2019

**4**

Legal Tasks



## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women’s Program

The Women’s Legal Service (SA), established the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Women’s Program during the 90s to provide specific assistance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women across South Australia.

The program recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women face multiple barriers in accessing services let alone the legal system. These barriers can be systemic barriers such as institutionalised racism, entrenched social disadvantage and intergenerational trauma. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander program aims to work towards the removal of these and other barriers by working alongside Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander women to support them in engaging in a meaningful and empowering way with the legal system.

During 2018 – 2019 Legal and support services were provided in relation to the following matters:

- Divorce;
- Intervention orders;
- Parenting orders;
- Property settlements;
- Child protection; and
- Discrimination.

The list provided is by no means exhaustive.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women’s Project also provided education to women and the community, in relation to legal matters affecting them.

### Who are the programs clients?

# 182 Total number of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Women Assisted



### Services Provided

**221**

Women legally assisted

**245**

Legal advices

**56**

Cases opened during 2018-2019

**4**

Legal Tasks

### Top 10 problem types:

Child residency, Family or domestic violence, child protection application/ orders, child protection other, property in marriage, Divorce, Family or domestic violence order, Separation, Child Support other, Property de facto.

# NON-LEGAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Women’s Legal Service (SA) support services are expanding. For many women who access the Women’s Legal Service (SA), it is often more important to address immediate social needs such as housing, family violence counselling or mental health prior to addressing legal needs. This approach ensures better legal outcomes for the women and their families.

The support services are crucial in providing women with the support to address their social issues. Women are supported and securely linked in with appropriate support services in their local area. Where possible and where resources are available referrals are made to long term supports. This is to ensure that women and their families continue to receive the necessary support even after their immediate needs and legal issues have been addressed prior to addressing legal issues so as to obtain better legal outcomes. Anecdotal evidence points to the fact that better outcomes are achieved by reducing associated trauma and yielding better long-term outcomes. This is to ensure that women and their families continue to receive the necessary support even after their immediate needs and legal issues have been addressed. The results obtained demonstrate that better outcomes are achieved by reducing associated trauma and yield better long-term outcomes.

During 2019-2020, financial services will be incorporated into the support service offerings at InDIGO. It is not unusual for many women fleeing family violence to have financial issues that they need to address. Women’s Legal Service (SA) looks forward to the inclusion of this service as there is a desperate need for access to financial support services in South Australia.

During the 2018-2019 year some of the support services provided included support services were provided:

**94**

Discrete non legal support

**66**

Counselling

**3**

Ongoing non -legal support

**10**

Safety planning

**2**

Practical assistance

**97**

support services provided to women





## VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Women's Legal Service (SA) provides meaningful and flexible opportunities for those interested in volunteering their time and unique talents. Volunteers are an essential and integral part of our service and enable us to help more women across the South Australia.

Women's Legal Service (SA) volunteer program has grown from strength to strength in the 18/19 year. We have implemented a twice-yearly intake to ensure consistent service delivery. The participants of this twice-yearly intake have access to training that will enhance their abilities in responding to women accessing our service.

We ensure the social and emotional wellbeing of our volunteers by ensuring that all volunteers have access to our employee assistance program, training and debriefing. This is particularly important as many of the women seek assistance disclose distressing situations of family violence and child abuse.

Women's Legal Service (SA) has now broadened opportunity legal students by offering Practical Legal Training/GDLP placements. We have had 4 students from Flinders University and the University of South Australia undertake placement. Students are exposed to the day to day trials of a community legal service that is fast passed. Given the ongoing funding crisis to the community legal service sector, programs such as this provide the invaluable assistance required to meet demand.

# 5,928

volunteer hours contributed for 2018/2019

# \$186,732

worth of pro bono hours donated by volunteers

# 42

Volunteers

### We thank the following firms, barristers, and chambers for their assistance during 2018/2019

- Mark Boehm, William Light Chambers
- David John Childs, Elizabeth Evatt Chambers
- Meredith Dickson, Elizabeth Evatt Chambers
- Dora Fuda, Barrister
- Andrea Horvat, William Light Chambers
- Vanessa Lee, William Light Chambers
- Jordan Lewis, William Light Chambers
- Vanessa Lindsay, Barrister
- Claire O'Connor SC, Villeneuve Smith Chambers
- Daniel Praolini, Campbell Chambers
- Rose-Marie Read, Legoe Chambers
- James Robinson, William Light Chambers
- Heather Stokes, Legoe Chambers
- Anderson's Solicitors

## Volunteer Case Study

Chloe was forced to leave her home due to her abusive husband. At the time Chloe contacted WLSSA, she was on the verge of homelessness, and due to the marital home being in her name, did not qualify for Housing SA assistance. The Domestic Violence Shelter was providing temporary accommodation, but Chloe was under pressure to find a place to live. The basic Centrelink Payments she was receiving fortnightly would barely cover the cost of a rental property leaving her with very limited options. Unfortunately, WLSSA was unable to assist with the housing matter, however we were able to refer her on, for which she was very grateful.

What greatly affected me was Chloe's response to the Service being able to provide her an appointment regarding the property of the marriage, given that she is suffering with homelessness and a zero bank balance, whilst her abuser doesn't have to worry about his living situation or where his next pay check will come from. Chloe was overcome with gratitude and broke down to tears, being so thankful that we could provide her with an appointment where we will assist her with her next steps. It's moments like this where you realise the value of a service like Women's Legal and the importance it has in today's society.

*If you would like to volunteer at Women's Legal Service SA in relation to administration, legal, event planning, fundraising, marketing, and public relations, please email Women's Legal Service (SA)@Women's Legal Service (SA)sa.org.au*





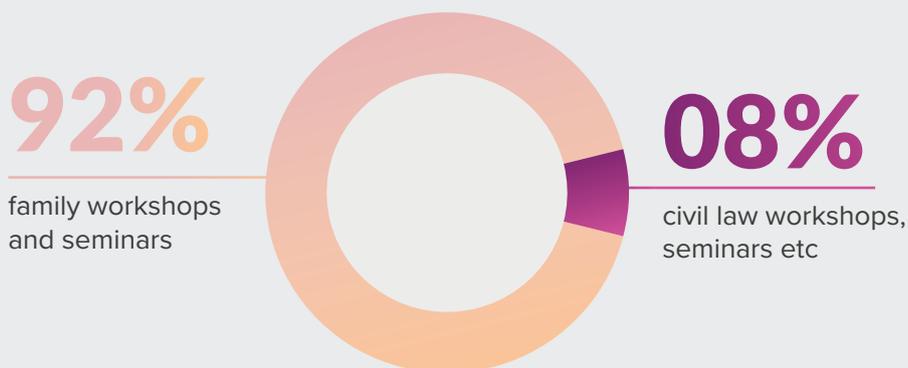
# COMMUNITY LEGAL EDUCATION

Women's Legal Service (SA) community legal education program is designed with two simple aims in mind:

1. to provide women and their families with the information they need to make informed decisions about their lives in a way that is appropriate, engaging, and informative.
2. to increase the capacity of agencies, organisations, and services to better understand the law and to better assist women and their families in navigating the legal system.

Of the workshops held during 2018-2019

**89** community legal education projects, workshops and seminar held



In 2018-2019 we were guest speakers at the following conferences and forums

- Magistrates Conference,
- Overcoming Indigenous Family Violence Forum,
- International Women's Day Forum - Australian Migrant Resource Centre,
- #MeToo But What Can We Do? YWCA Sheleads Twilight Event.

# PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS

We spend a significant amount of time in building and nurturing relationships with a broad range of agencies and services to ensure that together we are best placed to assist and support women and children in a holistic manner.

In addition, we seek to develop connections and start conversations that lead to meaningful outcomes for the broader community. Over the past 12 months, members of Women's Legal Service (SA) have sat on many local, regional, and national bodies, networks and forums that strive to improve outcomes for the broader community. Some of the groups, networks, and communities with whom we have a close relationship with are:

- National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC)
- South Australian Legal Assistance Forum
- Onkaparinga Collaborative Action Group
- Family Law Pathways
- Women's Legal Services Australia
- South Australian Council of Community Legal Centres
- committed to Safety Key Partner Network
- Family Violence Court Users Meeting
- National Advocacy Group on Women on Temporary Visas Experiencing Violence.

Referrals to Women's Legal Service (SA) were received from many sources including:

- Other community legal centres
- Other community support services
- Counselling services
- Family relationship centres
- Health providers (doctors, nurses, paramedics,
- alcohol, and drug counsellor)
- Internet
- Police
- Legal Services Commission of South Australia
- Friend, relative or neighbour

4763 referrals made by Women's Legal Service (SA) to various services including:

- Other community legal centres
- Other community support services (e.g. youth worker, disability worker etc.)
- Family Law Courts
- Magistrates Court
- Family Relationship Centres
- Domestic Violence Services
- Government Departments
- Legal Services Commission of South Australia
- SAPOL
- Private legal practitioners



# COMMUNITY IMPACT

Yearly Snapshot 2018-2019

## 2880 women assisted.



### Services Provided:

**3832**

Legal advices

**399**

Cases opened during the financial year

**97**

Support services provided

**4763**

Referrals to other services

**83**

legal assistance services were provided

### Main referral sources from and to include:

Community Support Services

Centrelink

Police

Child Support Agency

Court/Tribunal &

Community legal centres and the Legal Services Commission of South Australia

# 89

## Total number of projects and community legal education delivered.

# OUTREACH LOCATIONS

## Rural, Regional & Remote



## Metropolitan



# SAVINGS TO THE COMMUNITY

In 2012 the prevalence of legal need in South Australia was approximately 47%.

Pleasence states that:

*... vulnerability to justiciable problems is ... cumulative. Each time a person experiences a problem the likelihood of experiencing an additional problem increases; not just as a consequence of initial vulnerability; but also as a consequence of the increased vulnerability brought about by the impact of initial problems.*

In South Australia legal issues are often clustered into three broad categories:

Cluster One	Cluster Two	Cluster Three
Consumer	Credit/ Debt	Employment
Crime	Family	Health
Government	Rights	Personal Injury
Housing	Money	

Many women who seek help from Women's Legal Service (SA) present with more than one legal problem. Often women require assistance in relation to not only family law matters, but also in relation to child protection, housing, debt and intervention orders. The cluster two box is quite a common combination for many women seeking help.

Women's Legal Service (SA) assistance to vulnerable women in South Australia results in substantial savings in relation to co-morbidity and the economic impact of family violence.

***For every woman who is a victim of domestic violence who receives ongoing assistance, there is a saving of \$21,648.00 to the community each year.***

***"I would like you to know how much I appreciate the help you have given through the family court now I can worry less and concentrate more on looking after my children. Thank you so much for being my lawyer and helping me through it all"***  
***Feedback from C.S***

# OUR CLIENT STORIES



## JANET

Janet was a client from country South Australia. She recently separated from her husband of 25 years. He lived in the marital family home in a nearby country town. Janet was 58 years old and left the violent relationship with nothing. The husband kept promising to pay her out of the family home, but he was unemployed and was incapable of getting a bank loan. He was also suffering from depression and substance abuse. A desperate Janet who was struggling to get on her feet financially, finally approached a private lawyer who referred her to Women's Legal Service (SA).

Over the following 12 months, Women's Legal Service (SA) assisted Janet with legal advice and representation in relation to the matrimonial property settlement. During negotiations he refused to sell the home. Eventually we managed to negotiate with him to secure a personal loan, when he found work as a labourer. A super split that gave Janet higher proportion was also agreed upon. Women's Legal Service (SA) assistance helped Janet be able to get on her feet and she was able to work closely with a lawyer without having to pay additional expenses to travel to Adelaide for legal assistance.





## RENEE

Renee grew up in a refugee camp in Bangladesh. She comes from a minority group that is persecuted. Her family escaped their country of birth and travelled to Bangladesh. They travelled to Malaysia and lived for the following 10 years in a refugee camp in Kualur Lumpur. When Renee was 16, she came to Australia by boat. She spent three months in detention on Christmas Island.

In the camp she met and married her husband who was also a refugee. They were moved to a detention centre in Victoria before being granted bridging visas. They set up home in country Victoria and had two children. The husband had serious anger issues and the violence increased over time. He was finally arrested and incarcerated in the Victorian Prison System. Renee took this opportunity to flee to South Australia where she had relatives and safe accommodation.

Renee was referred to WLSSA by (ARA), the Australian Refugee Association to assist with her divorce. It was important for Renee to be legally divorced from her husband as culturally he was able to have control over her and the children. In Renee's community she would not be recognised as an independent woman without the divorce. Women's Legal Service (SA) assisted Renee with the divorce which was complicated by the fact that she did not have documentation for her marriage although it was recognised by the Department of Home Affairs. The divorce was granted by the family law courts and Renee's ex-husband was deported. Renee is now in a new relationship. She feels happier, safe and supported in this relationship.

## TANIA

Tania was a client from a local country town. She grew up in a small country town where everybody knew each other. She was sexually assaulted by a family 'friend' when she was 12 to 16. This family 'friend' was a trusted and respected person. Tania never told anyone about the sexual assault until she was 30 years old. As a result of the

abuse that Tania had suffered she had grown up as a confused and angry young girl. She entered the drug scene and would engage in prostitution to be able to buy more drugs. Tania could not see a way out of this situation until she commenced a serious relationship with a client.

She gave up drugs and the sex industry. She married the client and they had a young son. However, the relationship was not healthy. Tania suffered constant put downs and humiliation which increased her feelings of low self-worth. Her past would constantly be thrown in her face even though she was working hard to be a positive role model for her child. When the emotional abuse turned violent, she reported to the police and an Intervention Order was put in place protecting her from her ex-husband who moved away. Tania called Women's Legal Service (SA) for legal advice. She had been served court documents by her ex-husband who wanted to spend alternate weekends with their child. Women's Legal Service (SA) agreed to assist Tania.

During the process of drafting documents, Women's Legal Service (SA) was able to enter into negotiations with her ex-husband's lawyer. Through these negotiations consent minutes agreed upon. Both parties agreed to enrol in a parenting course to help them co-parent and model appropriate behaviours in front of their child. By providing Tania with access to legal and non-legal supports at the Women's Legal Service (SA) she is now living independently and co-parenting with her ex-husband. The Intervention Order remains in place to protect Tania from any further violence and abuse.



## ALICE

Alice called 000 and sought assistance from the police after another night of abuse from her husband. Police arrived and after telling Alice there was not much they would do because Mike denied any abuse and there were no visible injuries on Alice.

Mike knew what to say to Police and Mike had told Alice he knew how to manipulate people. So, while Mike stayed in the joint home, Police had told Alice she could decide to leave with the children to a shelter to be safe. Alice was given no alternative by Police other than to leave that night. Alice knew only too well what would happen once Police left if she decided to stay.

Alice called the Women's Safety Services. She fled that night with her young children in her arms. Alice cannot remember much of how she managed to leave that night but all she could remember was grabbing the children and running.

Alice found herself living in an emergency shelter with two young children fearing for her life. Due to the hurry in which Alice had left the family home, she found out that she realised that she had left all of her and the children's belongings, including her mobile telephone and laptop behind.

Mike was really good with technology. He knew all of Alice's accounts and passwords. He was able to track her down using technology. As a result, Alice and the children had to move to three different emergency shelters. Police were called each time Mike turned up the emergency shelters causing a disturbance. Despite this fact, Police did not arrest Mike. Sadly, Police told Alice, Mike just wanted to see 'his' children and that he was a 'good' bloke. Alice felt defeated. Who could help her? Who would believe her?

In desperation Alice considered returning home to live with Mike. It was only her young children that convinced her to keep away from Mike. The children had also been targets of Mike's abuse. Mike had repeatedly told Alice he would kill her and the children if she ever left him. Alice decided instead to move in with her parents in the hope that Mike would keep away. The abuse did not stop and instead Mike turned to stalking Alice at every opportunity.

Alice was a working woman who needed to work in order to support her young children. Mike would cruise through the carpark and foyer of Alice's workplace on average 20 times a day. While her employer was understanding, Alice worried that Mike's stalking and harassment would eventually lead to her losing her job. Mike found Alice once again and this time he had turned up uninvited at her parent's home. Police were called but when Alice spoke to Police, she was told yet again told there was nothing they would do to help her.

A desperate Alice came to the Indigo Program having been told by Women's Safety Services that our service could help her in times of crisis. The Indigo Program staff sat with Alice and staff were able to take the time to listen to her story. The Legal staff and the Family Advocate were able to work closely together to also help Alice, to stabilise her housing and seek avenues for counselling for trauma.

Indigo Program staff were able to advise Alice that they would help her to liaise with SA Police about reporting the stalking behaviour of Mike and also the possibility of an Intervention Order. Unfortunately, Police were not willing to charge Mike in relation to the Stalking despite the clear evidence to support the charge and Police were not willing to protect Alice with an Intervention Order. Despite Alice's feelings of disappointment with the Police, Indigo Program staff were able to reassure Alice they would be there to assist her. During the Court proceedings, the judicial officer expressed surprise with the lack of support given to Alice by SA Police, despite the clear evidence of abuse and stalking by Mike. The evidence included numerous Reports of Police attendances filed, footage of Mike repeatedly attending and making a nuisance of himself at Alice's workplace and even Child Protection reports made by the Children's school in relation to abuse directed at the children.

Luckily, the Indigo Program were there for Alice and the Indigo Program were able to successfully gain a Final Intervention Order protection Alice. Indigo Program and the Women's Legal Service will continue to support Alice with her property settlement and any other legal issues that might arise, after Alice was advised by SA Police to leave the joint home and leave all of her belongings behind.



## EVITA

Indigenous woman – separated from partner – false allegations of violence against her resulted in an aggravated assault charge:

### Facts:

Evita came to see us because the police arrested her following an argument she had regarding their child. SAPOL arrested her and charged her with aggravated assault and an intervention order was issued with her as the defendant. She was pregnant at the time of the alleged offence.

In actual fact the allegation giving rise to the charges against Evita were fabricated. The alleged assault was fabricated as part of ongoing family violence perpetrated by the protected person. The protected person was her ex-defacto partner. She separated from him due to family violence. When she separated from him, he realised that he no longer had any control over her. During a disagreement regarding parenting matters involving their children, he realised that he wasn't going to get his way. When he left the house after she had told him 'no', he drove straight to the police. He wanted her to be charged and for her to get fired from her place of work. She needs to have a clean criminal record and no history of assaults on her criminal record in order to keep her job.

Women's Legal Service (SA) agreed to help Evita. We negotiated with police prosecution and set out the history of the relationship including the numerous times police attended due to domestic violence as a result of the 'protected' person's violence. We also provided the number of assault charges levelled against the 'protected' person where Evita was the victim. At the pre-trial conference due to the evidence and inconsistencies in the 'protected' person's evidence, police dropped the charges. Evita was extremely relieved because without her employment her children and her would have become homeless.

## JANE

When Jane was a teenager, she had a baby to her boyfriend. They eventually broke up and, after experiencing difficulties with making arrangements for the care of the baby, Orders were made by the Family Court. The arrangement allowed the father to spend 3 days a fortnight with the child. This arrangement lasted for a period of 8 years.

Towards the end of that 8-year period, the father's mental health deteriorated. On some occasions he was unable to spend time with the child because of his mental health. He also was having increasingly volatile relationships with defacto partners and was without stable accommodation for significant periods of time. Jane could never be sure where her daughter would stay when in the father's care. Jane was however worried about breaching the court orders, so she did not stop her daughter from spending time with her father.

As her daughter grew up, it was discovered that she had learning deficiencies. Despite a formal diagnosis the father refused to believe that their daughter had learning difficulties. He would therefore refuse to read any materials or follow any recommendations to assist their daughter. This issue caused a lot of arguments.

At the last handover, the father did not appear with their daughter at the agreed time. Jane waited for 15 minutes before trying to call. She made several attempts to call him, but his phone was switched off. Jane finally called his family out of desperation. They were unable to provide her with any details as to his location or whether their daughter was safe. Jane called the police who said they were unable to assist because this was a 'family matter.' Jane was referred by a family member to go and get help from the Women's Legal Service (SA).

Due to the concerns around the safety and wellbeing of the child, Women's Legal Service (SA) assisted Jane with an application for an urgent recovery order. The father was served with the court documents. We were able to have the child returned into her care on the first court date. The matter proceeded through court but eventually Jane was able to obtain orders that allowed her daughter to spend time with the father in a safe and supportive environment.



## REBECCA

Rebecca first came to Indigo after leaving her family home with her 8-year-old son in the weeks prior, following a domestic violence incident with her partner. The Police attended the home, but no intervention order or charges were laid at the time. Rebecca sought legal advice from the Indigo Solicitor (Sol) and was supported by the Family Advocate (FA) in the appointment as she was highly emotional, traumatised, anxious, and now also homeless with her child.

The FA was able to attend SAPOL Family Violence Unit with Rebecca to advocate for a police officer issued intervention order. The FA spent two hours with Rebecca at the police station going through the history of the relationship which had been tumultuous and violent, although the client had been too afraid to involve the police up until that last incident. The police were not able to assist with an intervention order as there was not enough evidence for their Prosecution. SAPOL encouraged Rebecca to apply for a private intervention order.

Rebecca was very overwhelmed at this point and in the weeks thereafter did not have capacity to engage with the program Sol to complete an affidavit and private application. She became very unwell, exacerbating her existing anxiety disorder and depression. Rebecca had been staying with friends with her son after leaving the family home, but they were friends of the partner and this option became inappropriate and unsafe. The FA was able to refer Rebecca into Homelessness Services, securing emergency accommodation for a few weeks where both she and her son could stabilise. Through regular phone support from the FA, Rebecca was then able to attend an appointment with the Sol to complete her affidavit and a private intervention order application was lodged in the court. The FA and Sol attended court with Rebecca on the first hearing, where an interim order was granted.

The interim order was later contested and adjourned for 4 weeks for the partner to seek legal advice. During this 4 weeks, Rebecca's mental health again declined. The FA was able to liaise with Rebecca's mental health worker about her current vulnerability and they kept in touch during this period. The FA was also able to attend a housing service intake appointment with Rebecca and write a support letter for securing longer term accommodation, and also liaise with the school regarding the wellbeing of the child.

Rebecca did not have to attend court again, but the Sol appeared on her behalf. On the next occasion the order was confirmed with both she and the child named as Protected Persons. The final support avenue of the FA was to refer both Rebecca and her son into counselling and the file was then closed.

Indigo is unique in that it offers a short-term collaborative case management approach that holistically addresses the broader social context of domestic and family violence within the legal realm. Through advocacy, referral and practical and emotional support, the FA addressed the impacts of domestic violence, such as homelessness, mental health issues and children's needs. This created capacity for Rebecca to engage with the Sol to utilise legal support, through advice, preparing of her affidavit and private application for an intervention order and finally court representation.





## GRACE

Grace was an unemployed lady with a diagnosed mental health disorder. When she had been in an unwell state, she had purchased an expensive lounge chair for her home. Using money allocated for household bills, she paid a large deposit. She was required to pay the rest after the item was made and to be delivered some weeks later. When Grace was well, she realised that she didn't need or even like the couch but more importantly she could not afford it. She could not afford to have given the deposit to the store either. She knew that her poor mental state had been a trigger for the unwise purchase.

Because of her strong anxiety, she had her case worker assist her in asking to have the sale overturned and the deposit returned to her. The store initially refused, but after further discussion offered to cancel the sale and refund a small portion of the deposit. Grace and her case worker tried to negotiate further as Grace was already in financial difficulty. The deposit sum was over \$800.00, and Grace's only income was disability pension. The contact with the store became strained and eventually she was unable to speak or receive a response from the relevant people.

Grace was referred to Women's Legal Service (SA) by her case worker. We agreed to help Grace with this matter. We sent a letter to the store manager explaining the situation and our involvement. The store responded with an agreement to refund the full deposit. Grace was happy with the result because she had been unable to pay her rent due to the purchase of the lounge.

# WARM UP & SERVE

August 2018, was the first time that Women's Legal Service (SA) held what would become the first of an annual fundraiser for Women's Legal Service (SA). The support from the community was overwhelming.

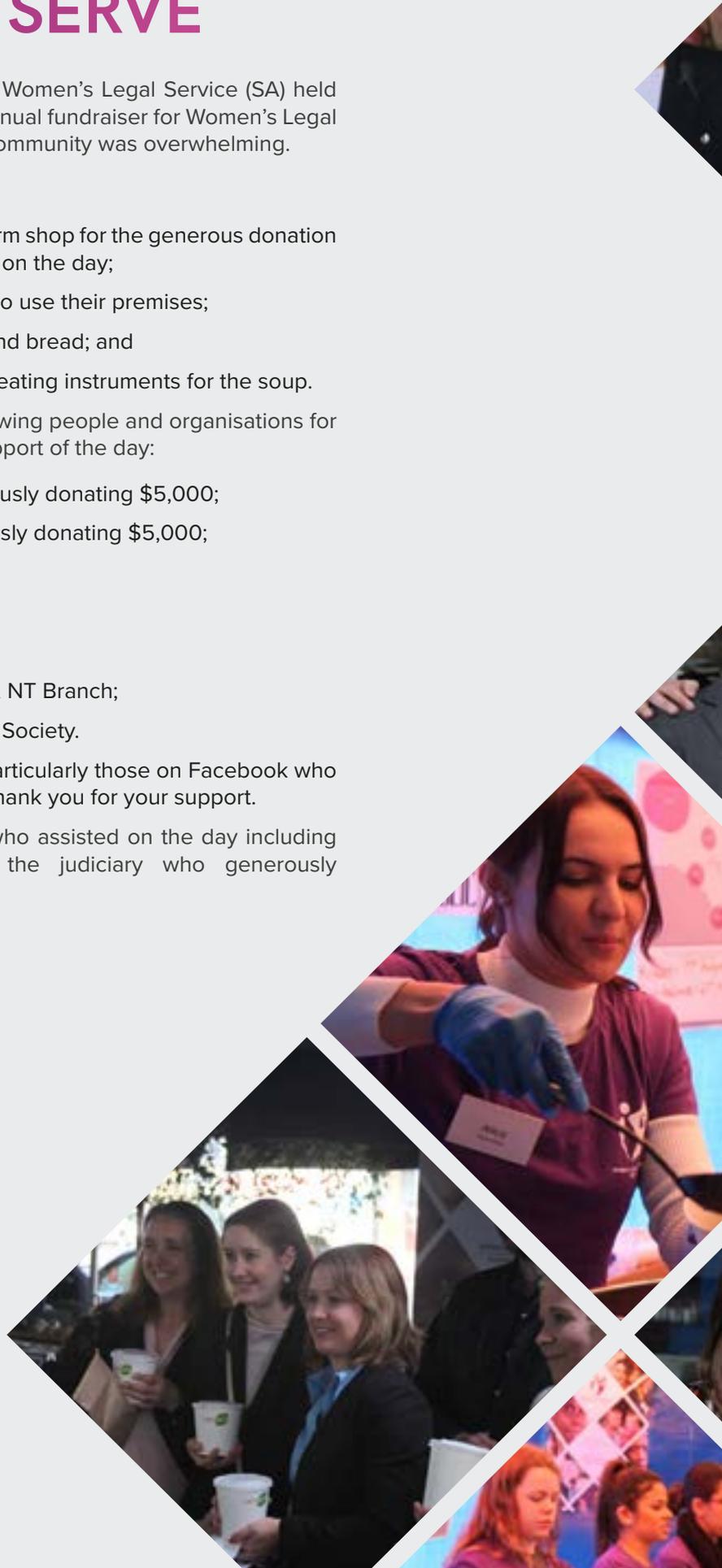
We would like to thank:

- Maggie Beer & Maggie Beer's Farm shop for the generous donation of soups, garnishing and servers on the day;
- The Public Caffe for allowing us to use their premises;
- Skala Bakery for donating rolls and bread; and
- Oven Hire for their donation of heating instruments for the soup.

We would also like to thank the following people and organisations for their generous contributions and support of the day:

- Hai Sam Construction for generously donating \$5,000;
- Andersons Solicitors for generously donating \$5,000;
- Margaret Nyland AM;
- Piper Aldermans;
- Frances Bedford MP ;
- Australian Services Union – SA & NT Branch;
- Adelaide University Law Student Society.
- Finally, to all of our supporters particularly those on Facebook who helped to spread the news, we thank you for your support.

A big thank you to the volunteers who assisted on the day including parliamentarians & members of the judiciary who generously volunteered to serve soup.







# QUIZ NIGHT!

Planning the  
Quiz Night  
event for your  
club

Contact us on  
01203 222222 or  
01203 222222

MOLEY  
MOLEY  
FOOTBALL



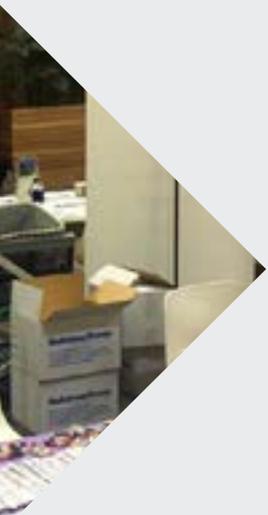
## EVENTS

Over the course of 2018-2019, Women's Legal Service (SA) hosted and participated in a number of events. Some of these events were held in collaboration with other stakeholders. A symposium was held on changing community attitudes to family violence. Over one hundred individuals from community services, agencies and general members of the community attended the event at the University of South Australia. Women's Legal Service (SA) also participated in community expos across the state. This was a joint initiative with Soroptimist. Over one hundred individuals from community services, agencies and general members of the community attended the event.

Another big event that showcased the fun side of Women's Legal Service was our biannual Quiz night. The event was attended by over 130 people. A symposium was held on changing community attitudes to family violence. Over one hundred individuals from community services, agencies and general members of the community attended the event at the University of South Australia. Women's Legal Service (SA) also participated in community expos across the state.

We would like to thank the following individuals and organisations for their generous donations of items for the raffle prize and secret auction:

- Penfolds Barossa Cellar Door
- Andersons Solicitors
- Pride Advice
- Evo Hair
- JamFactory
- WOMADelaide
- Leatherworks Adelaide
- Gerard McCabe Jewellers
- Irene Grant & Associates Public Accountants
- Port Adelaide Football Club
- Barossa Fine Foods
- Meg Michelle
- George Douvartzidis (RAW Artist)
- Serena Ken – Tjala Arts Amala
- The HandleBar – Australia's Pedal Pub
- Holey Moley Golf Club – Adelaide
- Adventure Kayaking SA
- Adventure Rooms Adelaide
- Food Tours Australia
- Lush Adelaide
- Mega Adventure Adelaide
- Yummy Snack Foods
- Romley Estate Olive Oil
- TFE Solutions
- Menz FruChocs
- Coopers Brewery
- Spring Gully Foods
- Judge Charlotte Kelly
- Seppeltsfield Rd Distillers
- Farrell Clare Valley
- Hill of Grace Restaurant at Adelaide Oval



# FINANCIALS

*Consolidated Finances (from profit and loss statements)*

## INCOME

Commonwealth Attorney General & South Australian Attorney General	\$671,150
Commonwealth Attorney General General Family Violence & Family Law	\$273,871
Commonwealth Attorney General - InDIGO	\$350,000
Funding from Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet	\$127,027
Safer Pathways - DSS	\$90,313
Donations & other income	\$48,252
Consolidated Finances (from profit and loss statements)	

<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$1,560,612</b>
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## EXPENSES

Total Salaries & On-Costs	\$1,154,553
Staff Training	\$20,581
Total Rent & Office Overheads	\$129,895
Office Expenses	\$53,302
Insurance	\$3,261
Library, Resources, Subscriptions & Professional Fees	\$22,815
Finance, Audit & Accounting	\$11,151
Communications	\$30,612
Programming & Planning Costs	\$122,033
Travel	\$90,950
Client Disbursements	\$20,653
Legal Fees	\$17,054
Total Depreciation	\$14,593
Other Costs	\$52,490

<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$1,743,944</b>
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<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>\$44,562</b>
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Detailed Annual Financial Statement Y19 available upon request or on our website at [www.wlssa.org.au](http://www.wlssa.org.au).

If you would like to donate to Women's Legal Service SA, please email [wls@wlssa.org.au](mailto:wls@wlssa.org.au) or visit our website at [www.wlssa.org.au](http://www.wlssa.org.au).

# THANK YOU

The success Women's Legal Service has had and continues to experience is due largely to the support it has from members of the legal profession and the community. Without the continued support of such a broad cross section of the community, many women seeking assistance at such a crucial period of their lives would be unable to access legal support. This year in particular we would like to thank Anderson's Solicitors who have partnered with Women's Legal Service (SA) to provide more services to disadvantaged women.

We would like to thank every one of our valued supporters for each vital dollar donated this year, for letters of support and for your continued support of Women's Legal Service. Without your valuable contributions Women's Legal Service would not have been able to assist the 3,000 women who sought our help in the past 12 months.

***"Women's legal service without a doubt is saving lives!! They were the ONLY ones able to offer me any hope after being turned away by countless others.***

***I was turned away not due to my dire financial circumstances; however, it was due to being the defendant on a vexatious intervention order taken out by an abusive ex-partner.***

***My case didn't fit into any funding boxes with ... however due to women's legal services vast experience of dealing with abusive men they could see it was a text book case of a man using his power and the legal system to continue the domestic abuse I had already suffered.***

***With his ultimate goal being to destroy me and my mental health.***

***Without women's legal service I hate to think what my mental health would look like now.***

***I have no doubt I would possibly be homeless and my child taken away.***

***Instead I am now over half way through my Uni degree and looking forward to graduating and starting my career.***

***Everyday I am thankful for Women's Legal Service."***

***- Social media post from a woman***



## Women's Legal Service SA

151 Franklin Street  
ADELAIDE SA 5000

Phone: (08) 8231 8929  
Free call: 1800 555 850  
Email: [wls@wlssa.org.au](mailto:wls@wlssa.org.au)  
Web: [www.wlssa.org.au](http://www.wlssa.org.au)

