

# 2023/2024 ANNUAL REPORT

*Strengthening and growing with our community*



*Northern Community Legal Centre would like to acknowledge the Gunung-Willam-Balluk clan of the Wurundjeri people, part of the Kulin Nation, the traditional owners of the land on which our Broadmeadows office stands. Our catchment extends from Seymour on Taungurung Country all the way to Brunswick on Wurundjeri Country. We acknowledge the legacy of colonial resistance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and pay respects to Elders past, present and emerging.*



Northern CLC aims to integrate our organisational values of Respect, Innovation, Connection, Passion and Outstanding Service into all the work we do, to deliver the best social justice outcomes for Melbourne's North-West and Northern growth corridors



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# WHO WE ARE

Northern Community Legal Centre (Northern CLC) provides wrap-around legal services, community education and advocacy to the fast-growing communities of Melbourne's North-West and Northern growth areas.

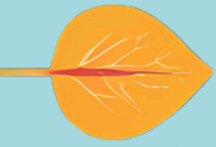
Our vision is to ensure that people in our catchment have access to high quality legal help, advice and justice, and that their rights are protected.

We prioritise the legal needs of people living with multiple forms of disadvantage and marginalisation, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people experiencing mental ill health, disability, or cognitive impairment, people who are homeless, LGBTIQ+SB people, refugee and newly arrived people, victims-survivors of family violence, and young people under 25.

Northern CLC was formed in 2016. In our short lifetime, we've been able to respond to both emerging and escalating community needs. Our catchments of Merri-bek, Hume and Mitchell Shire are home to communities that experience some of the greatest structural and systemic disadvantage in Victoria. The key to our success has been working closely with grassroots community groups, service providers and networks to develop sustainable, community-informed strategies that are responsive to community needs.



*The Northern CLC team at our staff planning day in May 2024.*



# CHAIRPERSON & CEO REPORT

**This year, Northern CLC has built upon our strong foundations by consolidating existing programs, extending models of integrated wrap-around service provision for priority clients, building our evidence base for advocacy, and implementing innovative projects that are responsive to and informed by community need.**



CEO Jenni Smith & Chairperson Louise Gartland

Our service has grown rapidly over the last five years, and that growth continued in 2023–2024. We now employ more than 30 staff across multiple disciplines, including lawyers, family violence case managers, community development specialists and administration staff. This year we have continued to support all teams to work closely together so our work is integrated, aligned and connected.

In 2023–2024, our models of intensive and integrated support to victims/survivors of family violence have not only expanded, but have been recognised for their excellence. Wraparound family violence/migration support program, the Safe Landing Project received the Justice Award for the Victorian Multicultural Awards for Excellence. We extended this project model by formalising a partnership with Safe Steps Family Violence Crisis Response Centre (Safe Steps), providing outreach legal assistance to their crisis accommodation sites in the North. We also implemented the RISE Project, a young women’s economic empowerment project that combines integrated legal assistance for young victims–survivors of family violence with educative programs designed to support young women to assert their right to economic wellbeing. Our community engagement was further strengthened with funding received from Merri-bek City Council to deliver our unique Take the First Step family violence peer education project.

Community-informed research strengthened our advocacy work. In 2023–2024 we finalised two landmark research projects exploring the accessibility of the family violence court system and barriers to participation for victims–survivors of family violence, particularly migrant and refugee women. This research was bolstered by our strong partnership with the Australian Muslim Women’s Centre for Human Rights.

Continuing to strengthen our strategic foundations, we developed a new strategic plan. Informed by our Board, our staff and our community, this plan will guide our work over the next five years as we continue to ensure our organisation’s values – which include respect, innovation, connection, passion and outstanding service – are imbedded in all of our work.

Northern CLC continued to advocate to ensure that the people of Melbourne’s North–West and Northern growth areas have access to high quality legal support and justice, and that their rights are protected. In 2023–2024, this advocacy was rewarded with funding received from the Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner to open a new office site in Wallan, which will strengthen our presence and connection to the local communities in southern Mitchell Shire, enabling us to better respond to local legal need in this rapidly growing population corridor.

We thank all of our funders, in particular Victoria Legal Aid, the Victoria Law Foundation, the Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner, the Department of Justice and Community Safety, the Commonwealth Attorney–General’s Department, and Merri-bek City Council. We acknowledge and are proud of the outstanding work, passion, commitment and professionalism of all our staff, our volunteers, and our Board.



# NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

**In early 2024 we developed a new five-year strategic plan to take us to 2029.**

This is the third strategic plan for Northern CLC since the amalgamation of Broadmeadows and Moreland CLCs in 2016. While our vision and mission remain consistent, we have continued to refine our goals to reflect our expanding reach beyond Melbourne's suburban region. Our subgoals provide a framework that helps us focus on the impact of our work, support staff wellbeing, and build our evidence base for advocacy to address systemic barriers impacting on equal access to justice.

Northern CLC's 2024-2029 Strategic Plan has a focus on delivering services that prevent and respond to the high levels of family violence, financial disadvantage and housing insecurity in our catchment area, particularly for young people, victims-survivors of family violence, migrants and refugees. The 2024-2029 Strategic Plan also responds to the complexities of supporting an expanded workforce with no significant change to core funding, highlighting the importance of using our limited resources effectively and efficiently across our rapidly growing catchment.



## Our Mission

Northern CLC provides legal services and community legal education to people facing systemic barriers to accessing such services in Melbourne's North-West and Northern growth areas, by enabling protection of rights and access to justice.



## Our Vision

The people of Melbourne's North-West and Northern growth areas have access to high-quality legal help, advice and justice, and their rights are protected.



## Our Organisational Values

**Respect:** Acting with integrity, inclusiveness and accountability  
**Innovation:** Using creativity and flexibility to find the best possible solutions for our clients  
**Connection:** Working with our community to achieve shared goals  
**Passion:** Being caring and supportive  
**Outstanding Service:** Delivering beyond expectations

# OUR GOALS



## Respond

Provide consistently high-quality, client-centred and purposeful legal assistance that is responsive to the community's evolving needs.



## Advocate

Collaboratively identify systemic barriers to justice and advocate for structural change.



## Educate and resource

Educate and resource the community to prevent and resolve their own legal issues.



## Partner

Develop and maintain strong collaborative partnerships to holistically meet clients' needs.



## Enhance and sustain

Enhance organisational and financial capacity to meet growing demand.

# OUR SUBGOALS

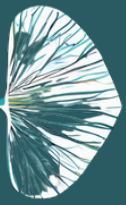
- 1. Deliver a quality holistic service that integrates legal and non-legal support focusing on client needs to our priority groups
- 2. Ensure service delivery optimises accessibility
- 3. Support reciprocal referrals between Northern CLC and our outreach partners
- 4. Provide a culturally responsive service and workplace

- 1. Promote evidence-based outcomes to secure sustainable long-term and ongoing funding that meets the needs of disadvantaged cohorts.
- 2. Strengthen Northern CLC's strategic communications approach and its advocacy and service delivery narrative
- 3. Strengthen relationships with key influencers
- 4. Implement evaluation processes that demonstrate impact

- 1. Target priority clients using a proactive and community-informed approach that responds to legal need
- 2. Prioritise Northern CLC's community legal education focus within needs identified, the outcomes of evaluation processes and our capacity
- 3. Increase the capacity of community partners to identify legal issues and needs
- 4. Provide innovative resources that contribute to community capacity to self-resolve legal problems

- 1. Identify new resource-neutral partnership opportunities (based on a gaps analysis) that align with our work with existing priority client groups, the youth and homelessness sector, and our operations and services
- 2. Consolidate and maintain existing partnerships
- 3. Regularly evaluate partnerships to ensure they are strategic, effective, and responsive to identified priorities
- 4. Reorient partnerships towards homelessness and youth

- 1. Implement systems and processes to support financial sustainability
- 2. Consolidate focus on existing priority clients while looking for innovative opportunities to increase youth and homelessness focus (within existing capacity)
- 3. Prioritise the delivery of systems and processes to support workload sustainability
- 4. Implement an effective Human Resources structure



# LEGAL WORK INFORMED BY OUR COMMUNITY

In 2023–2024, Northern CLC continued to prioritise legal assistance for community members who experience the highest levels of systemic disadvantage, where we can have the greatest impact with finite resources.

Our legal team delivers legal services that are trauma-informed and responsive to the unique cultural contexts and migration experiences of our clients. To support staff development, our legal team participated in a number of professional development activities, including cultural training delivered by the Australian Muslim Women’s Centre for Human Rights. We also ran a Lived Experience Workshop with our Take the First Step Peer Educators, learning from their cultural expertise to inform how our lawyers ask questions about sensitive issues such as family violence and sexual assault. Our Program Integration Coordinator initiated and led regular reflective practice activities to unpack, review and improve our practice when working with clients in crisis and distress. In early 2024, our capacity to efficiently provide integrated legal assistance and capture data related to legal outcomes was bolstered through implementation of a new client software case-management system that enhances collaboration across shared client files.

This year Northern CLC commenced a graduate lawyer program to provide enhanced career opportunities for our volunteer law students and to strengthen our reach and impact. We would like to acknowledge the contribution of all our legal team, including staff, volunteers and students, who go above and beyond to ensure the best possible legal resolution for our clients.



Northern CLC’s legal team & CEO L-R: Luke McLean, Bridget Coutts, Jenni Smith, Oscar Cantieni, Haseeba Faizy & Manolya Ilanli.



# Impact at a glance

## SNAPSHOT

Total number of legal services: **4027**  
(incl secondary consults & non-legal services)

Total clients: **1893**

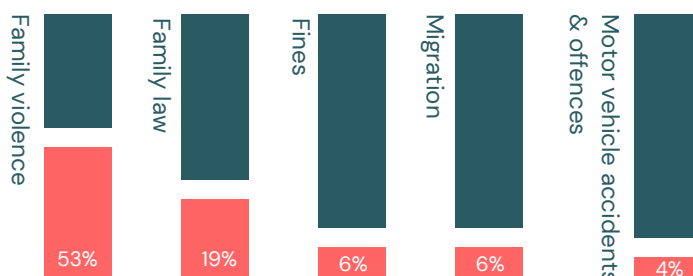
Duty lawyer services: **1049**

Legal advice services: **1426**

Legal tasks: **205**

Referrals to other services: **944**

## TOP 5 LEGAL PROBLEM TYPES



**46%**

of our clients were born outside Australia



**35%**

spoke a language other than English at home



## MIGRATION LAW IMPACTS

- 2 clients granted bridging visas with work rights
- 4 clients granted temporary residency
- 8 clients granted a permanent residency
- 1 client granted Australian Citizenship
- 2 clients received successful outcomes on appeal to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal

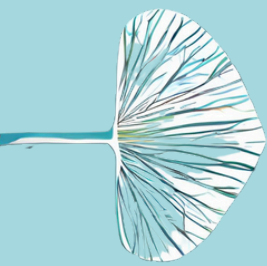
## Nani's story

Nani\* is a young woman in her early twenties from Sudan who arrived in Australia in 2005 as a minor. Both before and after arrival, she experienced significant trauma and undiagnosed mental illness. Between 2016 and 2022, Nani was in a relationship that exposed her to constant and prolonged family violence. Nani used drugs as a way of coping with her circumstances.

In 2021, police were contacted about a family violence incident and attended Nani's home. Despite Nani being the primary victim of family violence, the police charged Nani with property damage and applied for an intervention order against her. This ultimately resulted in a final order against Nani and led to her becoming homeless for several years.

In 2023, Nani was referred to Northern CLC through a local youth refuge. We assisted Nani by providing advice about pending criminal charges and alleged breaches of the intervention order. We agreed to represent Nani in her criminal matter and made lengthy submissions. In light of Nani's age and circumstances, the Magistrate ultimately decided to grant Nani an adjourned undertaking with no conviction. The Court also ordered that Nani complete an anger management course within six months and to be of good behaviour. Nani can now move on from the overhanging criminal charges and focus on her health, wellbeing and recovery.

*\*Details changed*



## Supporting our clients through integrated projects

More than 70 percent of Northern CLC clients identify as victims-survivors of family violence. They experience evolving legal need related to family violence intervention orders, visa concerns, child contact orders, property negotiations, tenancy concerns, debt and victims of crime assistance. Recognising the gendered impacts of family violence in relation to homelessness and economic disadvantage, Northern CLC established new outreach clinics in family violence crisis accommodation sites across our catchment and delivered a suite of family violence projects that extended our capacity to provide wraparound and integrated legal and non-legal support in 2023-2024.



### Safe Landing Project

In 2023-2024, our Safe Landing project assisted 123 clients with more than 200 legal matters. All clients were on temporary visas and were experiencing multiple forms of family violence, including coercive control, visa abuse (threats of deportation), sexual abuse and physical abuse. These clients were experiencing intersecting barriers: 98 percent were financially disadvantaged, approximately 50 percent were homeless or at risk of homelessness, and more than 30 percent had a disability.



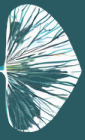
*Receiving the Justice Award at the Victorian Multicultural Awards for Excellence 2023 for our Safe Landing Project.*



### Financial Divide Project

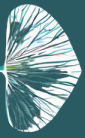
Family violence and financial abuse are key drivers of homelessness. Many Northern CLC clients are left with no access to funds after separation, even if they do have a legal entitlement to family assets.

By providing access to legally assisted, small pool property mediation at Family Relationship Centres, the Financial Divide Project aims to support victims-survivors to swiftly and safely access financial settlements to help them re-settle with their children and avoid experiences of homelessness. This new pilot partnership project commenced in early 2024 and will test a model of accessible, limited legal assistance that avoids the need for expensive litigation.



## Young Women's Economic Empowerment (RISE) Project

Young women report financial abuse and financial dependence as significant barriers to leaving abusive relationships. Launched in November 2023 and funded by the Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner, the RISE (Rights Independence & Self-Empowerment) Project provides targeted legal support and capability building workshops to young women under 25 who are experiencing family violence.



## North-West Enhanced Pathways Project

This maternal child health partnership aims to intervene early when mothers are experiencing family violence and are at risk of child protection intervention. In 2023–2024, our lawyers saw 89 clients referred by and co-case managed with MCH staff. Following participation in Northern CLC training, MCH staff reported a 70 percent increase in their capacity to identify legal issues and refer clients.

*"The partnership with Northern CLC has opened a pathway to legal support I did not know existed. [It has] increased my knowledge and confidence to talk about legal rights with parents. Vulnerable families have received the support they need to advocate for themselves and their families... It has been a gamechanger in giving the support needed to empower parents and keep themselves and their children safe." (Health Practitioner)*

## Mai's story

After arriving in Australia, Mai\* began a relationship with Jim, an Australian citizen, and they had a child. When Mai told her maternal child health nurse about violence in her relationship, they referred her to Northern CLC and to a family violence service for case management.

Mai was on a precarious visa and was concerned about her legal status. Our migration lawyer gave her advice regarding her options for a permanent visa based on the family violence she'd experienced. When Mai told us about a new family violence incident involving Victoria Police and Child Protection, we provided advice on protective steps. Our duty lawyer service helped Mai apply for an interim family violence intervention order. When Jim applied for a cross-order, we advised Mai on her options. We also helped Mai apply to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) to terminate her lease, making Jim solely liable for damage he had caused and reimbursing Mai for her bond. In family law matters, we negotiated with Jim's lawyer on property and parenting issues. We advised Mai on her entitlements and considerations for care arrangements, and corresponded with Jim's lawyer regarding interim parenting arrangements, facilitating a lawyer-assisted family dispute resolution.

With integrated health-justice support, Mai was able to set up a safe and secure future for herself and her child.

*\*Details changed*



# COMMUNITY-INFORMED RESEARCH & ADVOCACY

Northern CLC's catchment is strong, vibrant, multicultural and diverse. It also has one of the fastest growing populations in Victoria and has high rates of family violence, mortgage stress, casualised work, and socio-economic disadvantage. Unmet legal need is significant, and our community experiences a range of structural barriers that impact upon access to just legal outcomes and legal protections.

In 2023–2024, Northern CLC continued to strengthen our client and community-informed advocacy work. We implemented systems that would enable us to flag and act on clients' cases where systemic disadvantage was the catalyst for poor legal outcomes. We collaborated with key stakeholders across the sector to ensure that our advocacy was informed by emerging needs in our catchment. We strengthened our evaluation frameworks to ensure that we had data to demonstrate the impact of systemic gaps.

To inform our advocacy, Northern CLC undertook two landmark research projects in 2023–2024. Funded by the Victoria Law Foundation and in partnership with the Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights (AMWCHR), the Barriers to Access Research Project unpacked the process issues and barriers faced by migrant and refugee women when using online forms to apply to the court for Family Violence Intervention Orders. The Justice at Home Research Project, funded by the Victoria Legal Services Board and Commissioner, explored the experiences of family violence victims-survivors who attend court intervention order hearings remotely.



*Barriers to Access Research Report authors L-R: Kate Hammond (AMWCHR), Jenni Smith & Linnea Burdon-Smith (Northern CLC).*

Our research projects have revealed significant systems failures that are creating barriers to access family violence legal protections for victims/survivors. The research reports were launched in May 2024, containing a series of recommendations and providing an evidence base for advocacy. This advocacy has included meetings with the Magistrate's Court of Victoria (MCV), presenting findings to a Victoria Law Foundation Research Series webinar, providing written feedback to the MCV on the development of new court forms, and the dissemination of the research findings to key stakeholders.

In addition to advocacy with Victorian courts, Northern CLC has prioritised advocacy to the Australian Government for fairer outcomes for women on temporary visas experiencing family violence. With support from the Safe Landing Advisory Committee, we fine-tuned our advocacy positions, identifying key reforms that would lead to safer outcomes for migrant women and children. We have provided policy and law reform submissions to the Department of Home Affairs and provided support to advocacy conducted by the National Advocacy Group on Women on Temporary Visas Experiencing Violence.



## Justice at Home Research Project

The Justice at Home Research Project, funded by the Victoria Legal Services Board and Commissioner, explored the experiences of family violence victims/survivors participating in family violence intervention order (FVIO) hearings remotely. Project participants reported significant benefits of having the option to attend hearings via a weblink, including reduced distress and greater accessibility, autonomy and control. Legal representatives also reported benefits of the online process, including reduced concern for their clients' safety and reduced concern for their own safety.

However, implementation of this reform has been poor, with research participants citing a range of concerning issues, including being treated as less credible victims if participating online; significant wait times and traumatic exposure to other hearings while waiting for their hearing to commence. They also cited difficulties with participating and having a voice; restricted access to and impacted communication with lawyers, interpreters and specialist support; and a lack of information from the court to adequately prepare them for their hearing.

These research findings underpin Northern CLC's advocacy to the MCV to standardise and make transparent processes and practices so that all people – especially women and children from marginalised communities – can participate equally in their hearings.

*"You're just there, it's like you're nothing, but it's all about you. And there's no regard for you as a person... I was a number. No one looked at me... I was totally ignored."* (Victim/survivor)

*"There were completely different outcomes depending on whether the... applicant was there in person or on the screen... you know the same situation playing two very different ways."* (Practitioner)

## Emri's story

After experiencing family violence, Emri was relieved to receive a court date for an intervention order hearing. Scared of seeing the perpetrator in person, she elected to attend remotely and was sent a weblink with instructions to join at 9:30am. On the day of her hearing, Emri logged on at 9:30am but received an error message. After a while the link worked but Emri was confused, as the Magistrate wasn't mentioning her name or application. For an hour she heard lawyers talking about other people's family violence stories, which was very traumatic. As her English wasn't strong, Emri became increasingly distressed thinking she had missed her hearing time. She didn't know who to contact for assistance.

Eventually, a lawyer called Emri to say they were representing her and that the hearing hadn't happened yet. Three hours later, the Magistrate said Emri's name. While an interpreter was present online for her, there was a lot of background noise and Emri couldn't understand a lot of what was being said. At one point she heard a lawyer say her daughter was 12, when in fact she was two. Emri waited for her turn to speak so she could correct the mistake, but soon the Magistrate was talking about other people and the hearing was over. Emri was left not understanding what had happened with her order, who to speak to, or what to do next.

*\*Details changed*



## Barriers to Access Research Project

The Barriers to Access Project was initiated when Northern CLC noted demographic changes in the clients referred to our duty lawyer service, raising concerns that newly arrived women were not applying for family violence intervention orders (FVIOs). Funded by the Victoria Law Foundation and conducted in partnership with the Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights (AMWCHR), the project unpacked the process issues and barriers faced by migrant and refugee women when applying to the court for FVIOs using online forms.

Online forms have become routine across Victoria and are essential to the new model of pre-court engagement and resolution piloted at the Broadmeadows Magistrates Court from 2021. The research found that this systems change has made FVIOs almost inaccessible to people for whom English is an additional language, as the complex forms are only in English and don't allow women to tell their story.

*"If you try to pressure [the court registrar] and say, you know what, we need an intervention order now, and she said, 'Go to the police,'... You go to the police, and police say, 'No, this is not urgent'. You go back to the court." (Victim/survivor)*

*"... We would be very naïve to say that this won't impact anyone's mental health. We're talking about a woman that already has gone through trauma... She's high risk, she's got nothing to protect her." (Practitioner)*

The research showed police and court services often refuse to help victims-survivors with form-filling, shifting this responsibility instead to an under-resourced community sector. With longer wait-times and poorer legal outcomes, some victims/survivors are disengaging from the application process altogether.

The report recommendations, published in 2024, underpin Northern CLC's ongoing advocacy to the MCV to ensure that the FVIO process is equally accessible to all.

## Karim's story

After migrating to Australia and experiencing escalating family violence, Karim left her husband, but continued to face threats from him. She contacted a local service and discovered she could apply for a legal order to keep her safe.

The service sent her a link to an online form, but even using Google Translate Karim struggled to understand it, or how to describe her situation within the format provided. She organised childcare for her daughter and went into the court for help, but the court Registrar just offered an iPad to complete the form and suggested she go to the police if she was unsafe. At the police station, Karim was again told to use the same link. As the police officer did not offer her an interpreter, Karim was unable to communicate why she was so scared. The officer suggested contacting a local service – the same organisation Karim had originally contacted. When she reached out again, they told her they don't assist with form filling.

Karim gave up on seeking legal protection and became extremely anxious and depressed. She was scared to leave the house and considered returning to the relationship, as it felt like the only option available.

*\*Details changed*

# CAPACITY-BUILDING IN OUR COMMUNITY

Northern CLC's approach to community development recognises the importance of delivering accessible information to our community to enable people to prevent, act early, or self-resolve the legal problems that they encounter in everyday life.

Over 2023–2024, we delivered 74 community education workshops across a range of common legal topics. We also delivered 25 workshops to partner agencies for the purpose of building their capacity to identify and refer clients experiencing problems that have a legal solution.

In May 2024, Northern CLC hosted a highly successful Law Week event bringing together family violence service providers, court staff, child protection workers and community members for a discussion on responding to the needs of migrant and refugee women. Northern CLC's Take the First Step Peer Educators participated by asking questions of the panel and leading the community conversation. This event aimed for two-way knowledge sharing: for audience members to learn more about the services available, but also for service providers to learn more about the experience of migrant and refugee women when accessing services. The panel and audience valued the participation of the Member for Broadmeadows, Kathleen Matthews-Ward MP, and Samantha Ratnam, leader of the Victorian Greens.



Family violence lawyer Emma Mackay presenting at our Community Family Violence Forum for Law Week in May 2024.



## Take the First Step Project Merri-bek

In 2023–2024, following a community vote, Northern CLC was funded by Merri-bek City Council and some philanthropic funds to deliver the Take the First Step Project. This iteration of the project was our most successful yet, with 15 culturally diverse women volunteering to become Peer Educators for the purpose of helping Northern CLC get accurate information regarding safety pathways for women who are newly arrived in Australia and who have limited English.

Our Merri-bek Peer Educators spoke a total of 12 different languages, were all born overseas, and were all women who were highly active in their local networks.

Over the course of the project, our Peer Educators participated in a number of awareness – raising activities. They wrote messages of support in their own language that were posted to social media during the Week Without Violence; they brought their family members and children to a 16 Days of Activism event; they participated in a Lived Experience Workshop, providing guidance to Northern CLC lawyers on cultural sensitivities; they co-designed community education materials; and they designed and participated in Northern CLC’s Law Week event.

Northern CLC would like to acknowledge and thank our Take the First Step participants from 2023–2024, whose drive and passion kept us inspired and energised throughout the year.

*“I found it inspiring and eye-opening.”*

*“Hearing others talk about their lived experience and learning from it, including the differences in how cultures view family violence...I found the afternoon session particularly valuable as I had very little knowledge about financial/economic abuse.”*

*“It wasn’t only learning about family violence. It extended my network, and I made some new friends from different countries.”*

*“I genuinely have learnt so much that I didn’t know, including about power and control and why it’s not up to us to encourage a woman to leave.”*

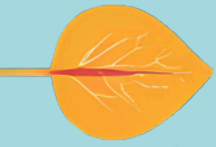
(Merri-bek Peer Educators)



Clockwise from top left: Merri-bek Peer Educators with Week Without Violence t-shirts; Peer Educators at our 16 Days of Activism event; Sarah Hussein with Kathleen Matthews-Ward MP; Peer Educators at the same event.

In 2024–2025, the Take the Next Step Project will build on the success of the model created and refined in the Take the First Step Project. This extension project in Merri-Bek will work with 12 young and diverse women to become Peer Educators, so that they can in turn support, empower, educate and mentor other young women as they transition into adult relationships.

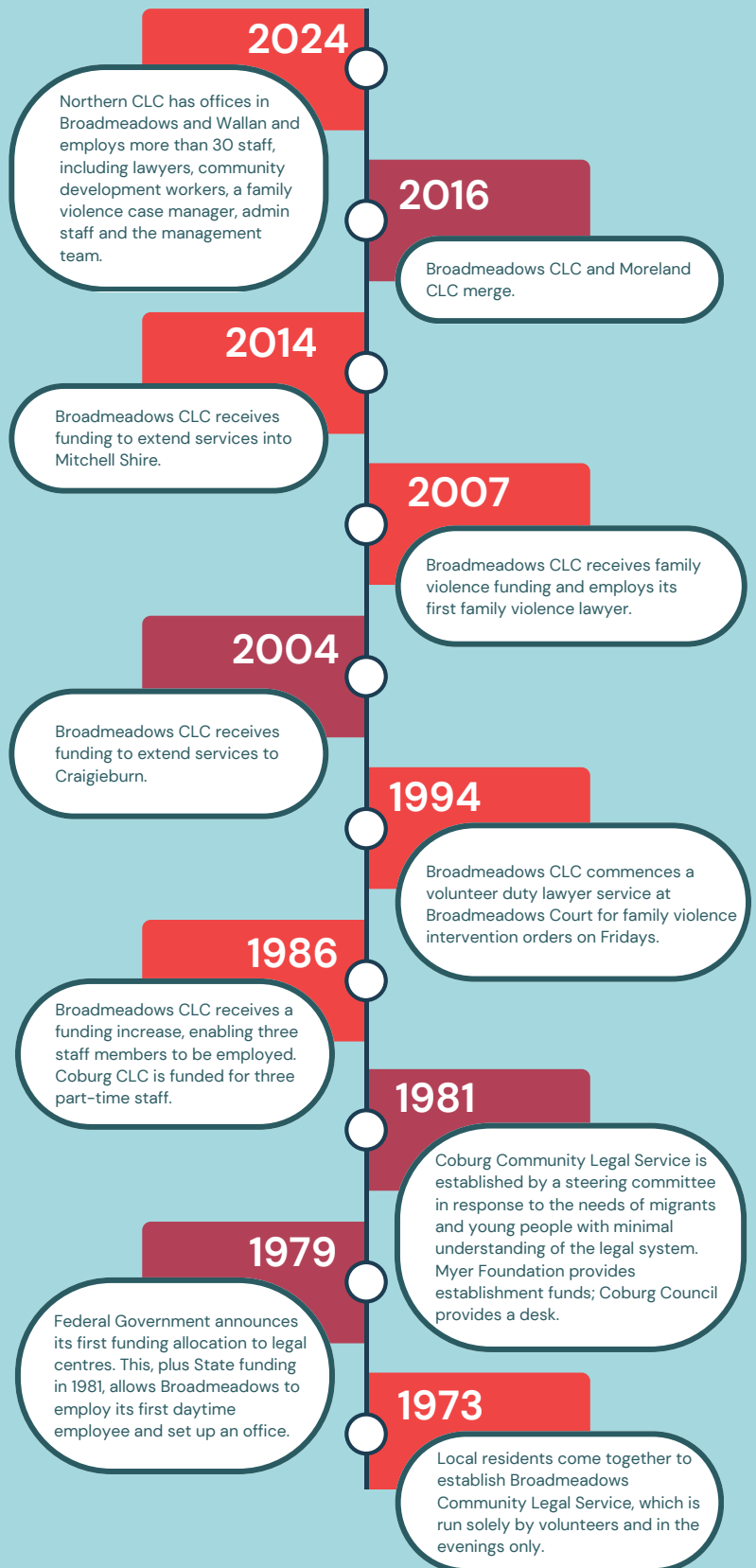


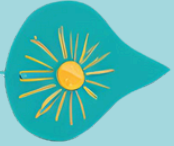


# OUR 50-YEAR JOURNEY

## From strength to strength through community activism.

In November 2023 we celebrated an important anniversary: Northern CLC has been connecting with our communities for 50 years. Over that time our service has evolved and changed. In 2016, two locally based CLCs (Broadmeadows and Moreland) merged to become the Northern Community Legal Centre. In 2024, our centre extended its presence in the community when we received four-year funding from the Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner to open a new office in Wallan, Mitchell Shire. We now have more than 30 staff and a catchment that spans Brunswick to Seymour, incorporating two of Melbourne’s four high-growth population corridors. Our organisation emerged from the commitment of local residents to equal access to justice for all. That commitment continues to guide all our work and future planning.





# FINANCIALS

## Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the financial year ended 30 June 2024.

Our results	2024 \$	2023 \$
Revenue and income	2,503,190	2,373,208
Interest revenue calculated using the effective interest method	3,795	1,503
<b>Expenses</b>		
Corporate and administration expense	(153,047)	(133,383)
Occupancy expense	(16,639)	(9,568)
Employee benefits expense	(2,255,489)	(2,141,156)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	(69,395)	(69,396)
Finance costs	(10,083)	(12,820)
<b>Surplus/(deficit) before income tax expense</b>	2,332	8,388
Income tax expense	-	-
<b>Surplus/(deficit) after income tax expense for the year attributable to the members of Northern Community Legal Centre Incorporated</b>	2,332	8,388
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax	-	-
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year attributable to the members of Northern Community Legal Centre Incorporated</b>	2,332	8,388

## Assets

Current assets	2024 \$	2023 \$
Cash and cash equivalents	2,287,930	1,494,476
Trade and other receivables	63,430	-
Other financial assets	77,939	77,939
<b>Total current assets</b>	2,429,299	1,572,415
<b>Non-current assets</b>		
Right-of-use assets	202,399	271,794
Other	21,500	21,500
<b>Total non-current assets</b>	223,899	293,294
<b>Total assets</b>	2,653,198	1,865,709

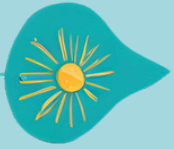
## Liabilities

Current liabilities	2024 \$	2023 \$
Trade and other payables	158,556	137,649
Lease liabilities	72,770	69,921
Employee benefits	282,659	268,174
Income Received in Advance (previously known as Other)	1,350,064	560,378
<b>Total current liabilities</b>	<b>1,864,049</b>	<b>1,036,122</b>
Non-current liabilities		
Lease liabilities	141,202	213,972
Employee benefits	107,516	77,516
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>	<b>248,718</b>	<b>291,488</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>2,112,767</b>	<b>1,327,610</b>

## Equity

Equity	2024 \$	2023 \$
<b>Total equity</b>	<b>540,431</b>	<b>538,099</b>





# OUR PEOPLE

## Board

Lou Gartland  
*Chairperson*

Malek Kazimi  
*Secretary*

Tony Macafee  
*Treasurer*

John Rutherford  
*Board Member*

Nicole King  
*Board Member*

Ajit Singh Chauhan  
*Board Member*

Justin Barbour  
*Board Member*

Jo Malcolm-Black  
*Board Member*

Jan Dundon  
*Board Member*

Angela Bell  
*Board Member*

## Staff

Jenni Smith  
*Chief Executive Officer*

Ally Ahmad  
*Community Development Worker*

Ramise Ali  
*Community Engagement Worker*

Binari Almeida  
*Graduate Lawyer*

Batool Al Sallakh  
*Family Violence Lawyer*

Tichava Batiya  
*Family Violence Lawyer*

Linnea Burdon-Smith  
*Policy & Evaluation Officer*

Audrey Dalton-Power  
*Senior Youth Development Coordinator*

Haseeba Faizy  
*Youth & Family Violence Lawyer*

Katie Fraser  
*Community Legal Education Coordinator*

Chantelle Gianinotti  
*Community Integration Worker*

Emma Henderson  
*Senior Lawyer, Wallan*

Sarah Hussein  
*Community Engagement Worker*

Viyan Issa  
*Graduate Lawyer*

Milka Jankovic  
*Administration Manager*

Yoko Kamada  
*Senior Migration Lawyer*

Emma Mackay  
*Family Violence Lawyer*

Tania McKenna  
*Partnerships & Community Development Manager*

Luke McLean  
*Legal Practice Manager*

Caterina Medici  
*Administration Officer*

Debbie Nader  
*Senior Family Lawyer*

Hilary Newton  
*Paralegal*

Celeste Rebbechi  
*Youth Lawyer*

Alice Richardson  
*Senior Family Lawyer*

Tracey Ryan  
*Senior Project Officer*

Maleeha Saeed  
*Family Violence Lawyer*

Karisse Sinclair  
*Administration Officer*

Rachel Sheehy  
*Project Coordinator*

Cherry Skinner Tarlo  
*Integration Program Coordinator*

Asher Wright  
*Graduate Lawyer*

Thaera Yonan  
*Community Development Worker*

## Casual Staff

Madeleine Checketts  
*Administration Assistant*

Mariyam Fahmy  
*Research Assistant*

Yasemin Habib  
*Administration Assistant*

Hilary Newton  
*Administration Assistant*

Pippa Whishaw  
*Communications Officer*

## Departing Staff

Hannah Barker  
*Family Violence Integration Worker*

Joanna Birtles  
*Senior Project Lawyer*

Oscar Cantieni  
*Youth Lawyer*

Bridget Coutts  
*Family Violence Lawyer*

Cameron Hunter  
*Youth & Family Violence Lawyer*

Manolya Ilanli  
*Family Violence Lawyer*

Lokesh Kashyap  
*Community Lawyer*

Girija Meetina  
*Family Violence Lawyer*

Lloyd Murphy  
*Project Coordinator*

Audrey Dalton-Power  
*Youth Community Development Worker*

Cristina Tambasco  
*Research Officer*

Hannah Gordon  
*Policy & Evaluation Lead*

## Volunteers

Adeola Akintola  
Mustafa Altunbas

Emily Anton  
Kathryn Archer

Rayan Bahsa  
Isabelle Ballek

Ahmed Baroudi  
Jessica Cassar

Madeleine Checketts  
India Cooper

Haseeba Faizy  
Sara Ghosn

Yasemin Habib  
Thilini Hettiarachiye

Viyan Issa  
Mahmoud Kashoa

Nora Khattab  
Indra Liepins

MJ Manalo  
Elsie Millar

Hilary Newton  
Thuc Queyn Ngiyen

Melis Olukolglu  
Sejal Prabhu

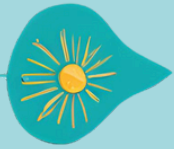
Kristian Ratskos  
Sabahat Rexhep

Declan Roche  
Mitch Ryan

Rachel Sheehy  
Francesca Tomasiello

Kim Vy Ngo  
Bi Tran

David Van Iersel



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- Anasina Gray-Barberio
- Anglicare
- Argo Foundation
- Asylum Seeker Resource Centre
- Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights
- Banksia Gardens
- Berry Street Family Violence Services
- Broadmeadows Magistrate's Court
- Brotherhood of St Laurence, Broadmeadows
- Communities for Children, Uniting
- Corrs Chambers Westgarth
- Court Services Victoria
- Department of Justice and Community Safety
- Didi Bahini Samaj
- Djirra
- DPV Health
- Dr Sabitra Kaphle
- Dr. Heather Douglas, University of Melbourne
- Family Relationship Centre, Broadmeadows – MacKillop Family Services
- Federation of Community Legal Centres
- Fitzroy Legal Service
- Goulburn The Orange Door
- Helen Patsikatheodorou on behalf of Maria Vamvakinou MP
- Hope Street, Brunswick
- Hume City Council
- Hume Merri-bek The Orange Door
- InTouch
- Inner Melbourne Community Legal
- Juno
- Kangan Institute Broadmeadows
- La Trobe University
- Lander & Rogers
- Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation
- Magistrates' Court of Victoria
- MacKillop Family Relationship Centre
- Maternal and Child Health City of Hume, Mitchell Shire and Merri-bek City Councils
- Mehdi Rohani, Barrister
- Melbourne Polytechnic Broadmeadows
- Melbourne Women's Fund
- Mercy Foundation
- Merri-bek City Council
- Merri-bek Family Violence Network
- Mitchell Shire
- Monash Law Clinics
- Nexus Primary Health
- Oorja Foundation
- Pascoe Vale Girls College
- Refugee Legal
- Russell Kennedy Lawyers
- Safe and Equal
- Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre
- Salvation Army
- Samantha Ratnam, Greens MLC
- South-East Monash Legal Service
- Spectrum
- StreetSmart
- Sunbury Cobaw Community Health Centre
- Sunshine Family Relationship Centre
- Talei Richards
- Tony Mount, Cadence Property
- The University of Melbourne
- Trudie Balthazaar
- United Imans & Duaat Victoria
- Uniting
- Victoria Law Foundation
- Victoria Legal Aid
- Victorian Legal Services Board & Commissioner
- Victoria Police
- VincentCare
- West Heidelberg Community Legal Service
- WEstjustice
- WIRE
- Women's Health in the North
- Women's Legal Service Victoria




*Strengthening and growing with our community*

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