

# ANNUAL REPORT

COMMUNITY JUSTICE SERVICES SA LTD

2023



# OUR OFFICES

## COMMUNITY JUSTICE SERVICES SA

1300 850 650

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



**Southern**  
Community  
Justice Centre

### SOUTHERN COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTRE

**Located at:** 40 Beach Road Christies Beach SA 5165

**Telephone:** (08) 8384 5222 / 1300 850 650

**Email:** [southern@communityjustice.org.au](mailto:southern@communityjustice.org.au)



**Limestone Coast**  
Community  
Justice Centre

### LIMESTONE COAST COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTRE

**Located at:** 8A Commercial Street West Mount Gambier SA 5290

**Telephone:** (08) 8723 1396 / 1300 850 650

**Email:** [limestone@communityjustice.org.au](mailto:limestone@communityjustice.org.au)



**Riverland**  
Community  
Justice Centre

### RIVERLAND COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTRE

**Located at:** 9 Kay Ave Berri SA 5343

**Telephone:** (08) 8582 4998 / 1300 850 650

**Email:** [riverland@communityjustice.org.au](mailto:riverland@communityjustice.org.au)

# CONTENTS

OUR TEAM .....	2
CHAIRPERSONS REPORT .....	3
CEO REPORT .....	4
OUR VISION .....	5
SNAPSHOT OF OUR CLIENTS & OUR SERVICES .....	6
SOUTHERN COMMUNITY JUSTICE .....	9
LIMESTONE COAST COMMUNITY JUSTICE .....	11
RIVERLAND COMMUNITY JUSTICE .....	13
FAMILY LAW & ADVOCACY GUIDANCE SERVICES (FLAGS) .....	15
DISASTER SUPPORT LEGAL PROGRAM .....	18
MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM .....	20
WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY / MEASURING IMPACT .....	22
VOLUNTEERS .....	23
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW .....	24
DIRECTOR'S REPORT .....	25

# OUR TEAM

## BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Michael Donald, **Chairperson**

Ross Savvas, **Treasurer**

Rene Earles

Kate Brett

Rachel Allen appointed 30 May 2023

Angela Kain appointed 30 May 2023

Gregory Parker appointed 27 June 2023

Fiona Endacott appointed 27 June 2023

Barbara Wendland (resigned 1/2/2023) / Carla Dent, Secretary / Public Officer

Resigned - Minerva Nasser-Eddine (13/07/2023), Julie-Ann Simkin (13/07/2023)

## EXECUTIVE

Catherine McMorrine, **CEO & Principal Solicitor**

Quenby Purdie, **Finance Officer (25/2/2023)**

Barbara Wendland, **Operations Manager (16/2/2023)**

## TEAM MEMBERS

### SOUTHERN COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTRE

Natalia Kasprzyk, Senior Solicitor & Program Coordinator

Jessica Wakelam Solicitor

Harley Vincent, Solicitor

Cody McFarlane, Junior Solicitor

Jessica Tite, Junior Solicitor

Jacqui Nuske, Community Engagement officer & Junior Solicitor

Crystal Williams, Family Advocate

Jasmine Dallimore, Paralegal

Michelle Leddra, Intake Coordinator

Tahlia Ferreira, intake officer

Sharee Koot, intake officer

### LIMESTONE COAST COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTRE

Katherine Davies, Senior Solicitor

Jessica Feast, Solicitor,

Kate Luey, Solicitor

Carla Dent, Intake Officer

Victoria Burford-Snow, Mental Health Support Clinician

### RIVERLAND COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTRE

Georgina Portus, Solicitor

Zoe Servin, Intake Officer

Paul Hills, Mental health Support Clinician

# CHAIR'S REPORT 2023

The staff and volunteers of Community Justice Services SA Ltd continue to deliver a wide range of diverse services to the community and there are two programs that are noteworthy in the current social and weather situation. The Family Law/ Family Violence service is critical in assisting those who are vulnerable in situations of family breakdown and associated family violence.

After the devastating bushfires of the 2019 / 2020 season, which claimed three lives and destroyed over 1100 homes and other buildings, Community Legal Centres SA (CLCSA) was funded to deliver much needed legal support to impacted families. In 2021 Community Justice Services SA (CJSSA) was fortunate to have received the residual funding to continue the great work undertaken by CLCSA. The Bushfire Legal Community Program with CJSSA continued the regional coverage and services for those affected by the disaster. With the Murray River flood from November 2022 to February 2023 this scheme was changed to the Disaster Legal Support Program to assist in legal matters from the flooding that affected thousands of private homes and agricultural land. The Disaster Legal Support Program provides free legal help and community legal education to affected communities of those affected by disasters.

This is my final report, as after more than a decade of service as a member of the Board of the CJSSA and its predecessor, the Southern Community Justice Service, I have decided to retire and have tendered my resignation from the Board. It is important that organisations constantly adapt to the changing environment and the management and staff of Community Justice Services SA Ltd have continually reviewed and modified their structure and service offerings as needs and community expectations have evolved. This is also true of the members of the Board and over the last several months we have refreshed and reinvigorated the composition of the Board to assist in guiding Community Justice Services SA Ltd to better focus on and manage client and community services into the future.

I firmly believe the management, staff and volunteers of Community Justice Services SA Ltd, across the three areas of metropolitan Adelaide, the Riverland, and the Limestone Coast, possess the dedication and commitment to continue to provide quality legal and community support services to South Australians.

On behalf of the Board of Community Justice Services SA Ltd, I thank the management, staff and volunteers for their continued efforts and hard work over the last year and wish them every success for the future.

**MICHAEL DONALD**

**Chairperson**

# CEO'S REPORT 2022-2023

Community Justice Services SA staff, volunteers and Board of Directors have once again shown great resilience, professionalism, and compassion during this last year. I am extremely grateful and privileged to be working with a fantastic team. As always, the support and professionalism of the team throughout all sites and programs is outstanding.

Since 1 July 2022 Community Justice continued to deliver services in the Riverland, Southeast and Southern regions. Our very successful outreach programs have continued throughout all regions ensuring greater coverage to the community including a new location at Yankalilla. It has also been great to be able to continue to develop and implement new specialist programs including the Disaster Legal Support Program, Family Law representation Program and the mental health support program.

Some key focus areas for this last year have been to: -

- Continue to create a flexible and supportive workplace for all staff.
- Prioritise the wellbeing of staff and volunteers.
- Increase social media awareness for communities and community engagement.

Our key partnerships have also continued throughout this period including partnerships with Legal Services Commission, Noarlunga Family Relationship Centre, and AC Care.

During this period our lawyers and intake staff have continued to provide quality and professional assistance to over clients throughout all our regions and within all our current funding categories. From the clients assisted during this period 96.72% of clients were experiencing financial disadvantage and over 34.97% identifying as experiencing some form of family violence.

Legal staff across all regions delivered over 2034 advices and over 236 representation services on a range of legal issues including family law matters (42.33%) relating to parenting disputes, property settlements, divorce, and child support. Criminal matters (42.37%) relating to theft, traffic offences, assault and drink driving offences. As well as civil disputes (14.4%) involving motor vehicle accident property damage, debt recovery, contracts, both domestic and non-domestic intervention orders.

We have also been very fortunate to be able to continue our volunteer program throughout this period following a short hiatus due to still feeling the aftershocks of the global pandemic. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our amazing volunteer law students, volunteer solicitors and Placement Students for their vital assistance to our service this year. This is an invaluable contribution and an essential component of our service delivery this year.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank both the Commonwealth and State Attorney-Generals' Departments for their ongoing support and funding.

**CATHERINE McMORRINE**

**CEO**

# OUR VISION

CJSSA aims to make access to justice available to all those in the community who would otherwise not have access to services by prioritising services and programs to those denied access to justice due to social or economic disadvantages which restrict their ability to exercise their legal rights. CJSSA aims to create a community that respects and upholds fairness, justice and human rights.

## WHO WE ARE

Community Justice Services SA Ltd (CJSSA) operates as a not-for-profit Community Legal Centre providing support to individuals and communities since 1982. Currently operating as, Southern Community Justice Centre, Limestone Coast Community Justice Centre and Riverland Community Justice Centre. CJSSA provides justice services including advocacy, advice, information, referrals, and education for individuals and community living in, inner southern, outer southern, Southeast and Riverland regions of South Australia.

## WHAT WE DO

- 1 LEGAL ADVICE
- 2 INFORMATION AND REFERRALS
- 3 ONGOING ASSISTANCE AND COURT REPRESENTATION
- 4 FAMILY ADVOCACY AND MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR CURRENT LEGAL CLIENTS
- 5 DISASTER LEGAL ASSISTANCE

## SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES

- 1 Provide quality and streamlined assistance to the South Australian community.
- 2 Continue to and encourage innovation through the development of frameworks to maintain flexibility and remain adaptable to a growing and evolving organisation.
- 3 Maintain a thriving and diverse organisation to support professional client services.
- 4 Collaborate with community sector, Government and other services to deliver support, prevention and early intervention programs/services and to build quality relationships to leverage resources, expertise and knowledge to enhance communities.
- 5 Contribute to strategic advocacy to enhance the wellbeing of communities and individuals experiencing disadvantages

# OUR SERVICES

TOTAL CLIENTS  
**1711**

FAMILY LAW 753  
CIVIL LAW 844  
CRIMINAL LAW 370



LEGAL ADVICE  
**2034**

REFERRALS  
**2317**

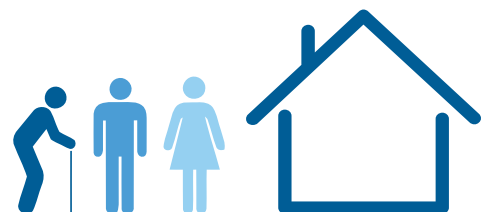
LEGAL TASKS  
**70**

DISPUTE RESOLUTION SERVICES  
**4**

CLE  
RESOURCES **31**  
+ ACTIVITIES **107**

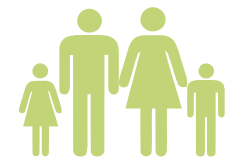
COMMUNITY  
EDUCATION **59**  
+ ACTIVITIES **7**

DISCRETE NON-LEGAL SUPPORT  
**93**

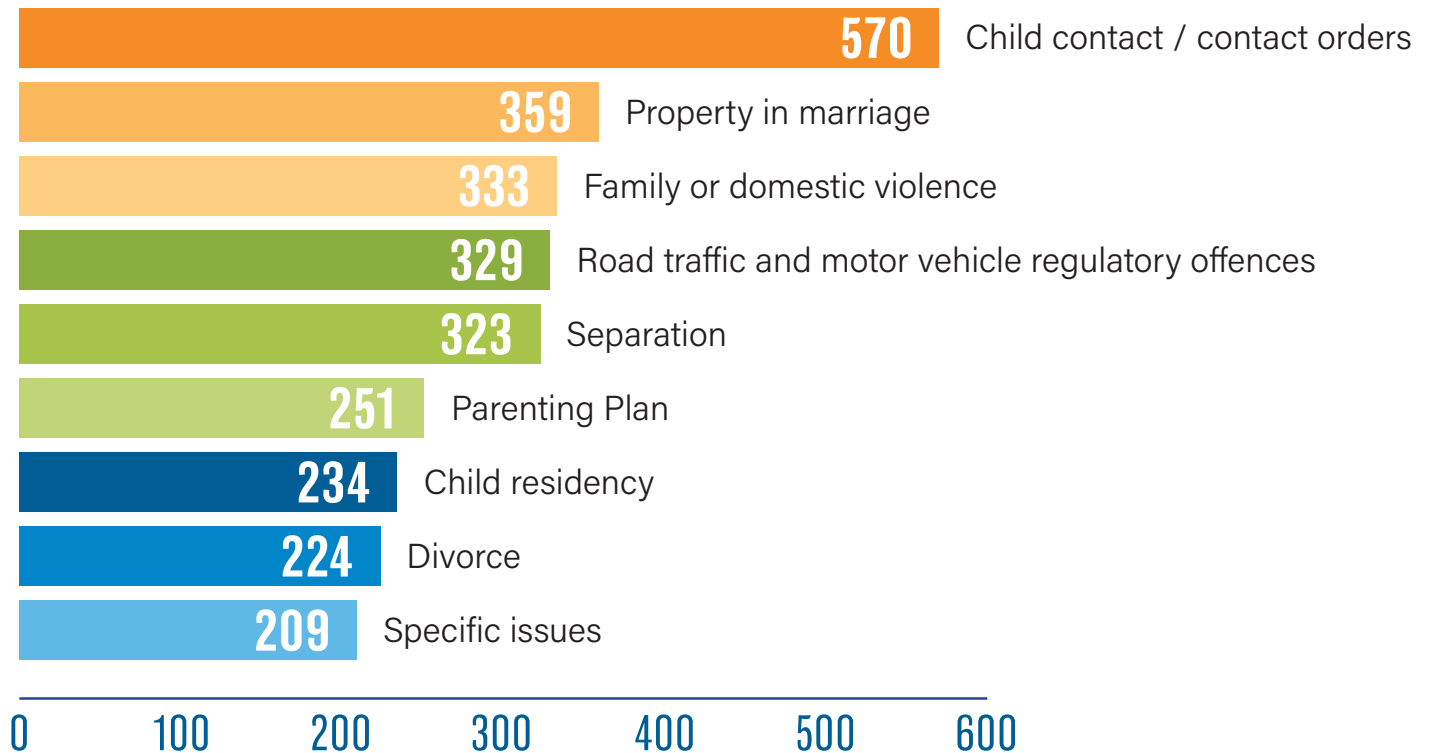




# TOP 10 PROBLEM TYPES



FOR OUR CLIENTS ARE WITHIN THE **FAMILY LAW** AREA



Notably the problem types that have increased over the last financial year include parental abduction 14.6% increase this year, child contact 11.8%, separation 25.1% and in family or domestic violence 30.4% increase, with road and traffic related offences 10.3% decrease. These problem types are reflective to the increase of services provided by our Mental Health Workers, specialist family law program / family advocate and the demand for the provision of these services from CJSSA. This will be supported by the recruitment of a solicitor with the FLAGS program.

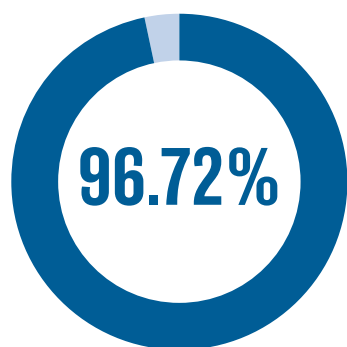


# SNAPSHOT OF OUR CLIENTS

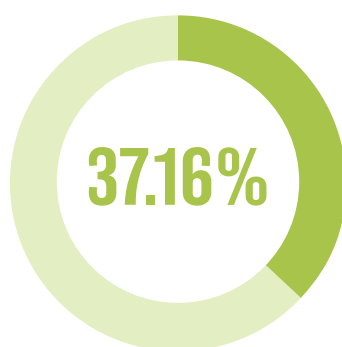
Across all our programs the indicative attribute of the clients in our communities for the 2022/2023 financial years has been financial hardship, mental illness, and experience or at risk of domestic violence. Our mental health workers provide case examples demonstrating the importance of support services and stakeholder engagement to assist those experiencing financial hardship with the resources required for their individual circumstances.

For the 2022/2023 the diversity of CJSSA clients for representation services has highlighted the high number of clients who are financially disadvantaged. This difficulty clients are facing with the impact of the increased cost of living is also reflected in our mental health program report with a number of people engaged in this program who are affected by homelessness.

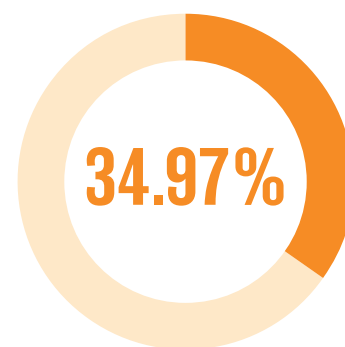
## TOTAL NUMBER REPRESENTATION SERVICES WERE FOR 183 CLIENTS WITH



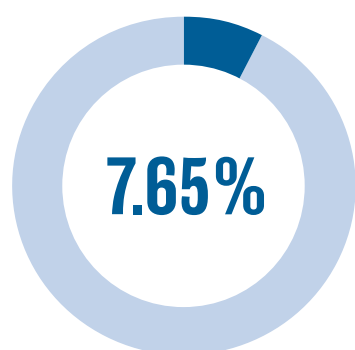
EXPERIENCING FINANCIAL DISADVANTAGE



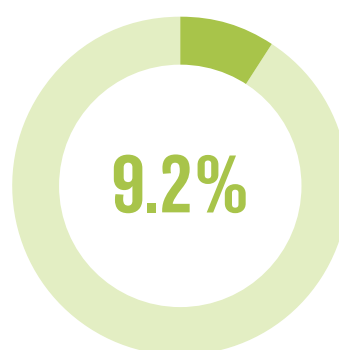
WITH A DISABILITY OR MENTAL ILLNESS



EXPERIENCING OR AT RISK OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



CULTURALLY & LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE



ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

# SOUTHERN COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTRE

## SCJC OVERVIEW 2022/2023

It has been a busy year for staff based at our Christies Beach office with staff delivering services in a range of ways including in person, via telephone, online and at our various outreach locations.

During this period, we welcomed new staff including Cody as our new junior lawyer and said goodbye to Holly, our very dedicated Bushfire legal officer who was based at Christies Beach.

Due to a welcomed increase of funding for new programs we unfortunately did say goodbye to the amazing InDIGO team from Women's Legal Service who were co-locating at our office. Unfortunately, as both services have grown it was not possible to continue being co-located.

Following ongoing impact of the global pandemic in previous years it was great to be able to reestablish our volunteer program and we welcome a number of law student and placement students this year through our ongoing collaborations with Uni SA, Flinders Uni, University of Adelaide and College of Law.

Our solicitors maintained regular provision of services to outreach locations including Marion, Victor Harbor, Kangaroo Island and Murray Bridge, in addition to our ongoing commitments to providing advice services both in person and via telephone. We also added a new outreach location this year for Yankalilla which has increased access to services for the region.

The legal team also delivered a number of Community Legal Education presentations on a range of topics including Wills and Estate, Succession Planning, Family Law, and Intervention Orders.

New networks and collaborations during this period participating in 4H Collective Homelessness network in Onkaparinga and Fleurieu ACD Project in collaboration with local councils.

We also maintained our existing networks with staff participating in the Onkaparinga Collaborative Approach and Southern Domestic Violence Action Group meetings on a regular basis.

### SCJC Team

**491**  
NEW CLIENTS

**248**  
REPEAT CLIENTS

**1087**  
REFERRALS

**856**  
LEGAL ADVICE

**43**  
LEGAL TASKS

**61**  
DISCRETE NON-LEGAL SUPPORT

**65**  
COURT / TRIBUNAL

**70**  
OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

# OUTREACH SERVICES

Outreach services started for the community of Yankalilla in May 2022, with legal services immediately being sourced from the community.



LOCATION	CLIENTS	PROBLEM TYPES
MARION	140	303
VICTOR HARBOR	22	52
YANKALILLA	5	9
MURRAY BRIDGE	34	94



# LIMESTONE COAST COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTRE



## IT HAS BEEN A BIG YEAR FOR THE LIMESTONE COAST COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTRE.

We have had quite a few staff changes in our office. One of our solicitors went back on maternity leave, one of our part-time intake officers who had been with the service for a few years changed careers and our mental health clinician went from part-time to full time hours. We have a final year social work placement student with our volunteer solicitor staying on board to assist the solicitors with files..... plus, we have had a year 10 placement student.

The mental health clinician in our office co-ordinates the mental health program and has shaped the program to what it is today. The office is comfortable for local clients to attend the office to receive support services in a space that is not clinical. Telephone appointments are conducted for clients in outreach locations in the Limestone Coast (Bordertown, Millicent, and Naracoorte) as well as the Southern and Riverland clientele. If outreach is required in person for mental health support, this will be accommodated.

A social work placement student started her final placement block on 26 June 2023 at our office from UniSA and is expected to complete her placement after 6 months. The student works closely with the mental health clinician by delivering mental health support to clients she manages under supervision as well as travelling to outreach areas with the solicitors. The student's attendance varies between a few days a week or full-time when university and work commitments permit. It has been helpful to the solicitors to turn their mind to mental health factors when approaching certain matters.

The Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia continues to travel to Mount Gambier every three months for one week. In partnership with Legal Services Commission our solicitor provides Family Advocacy Support Services (FASS) to clients during this week.

Our service continues its membership of the Limestone Coast Family Violence Action Group, Limestone Coast Community Services Round Table and the Limestone Coast Drug Action Team, with our Solicitor, Katherine Davies, continuing her Secretarial role for the Family Violence Action Group. Our mental health clinician also participates in local community groups such as the Drug Action Team and Mount Gambier Round Table.

**326**  
NEW CLIENTS

**170**  
REPEAT CLIENTS

**643**  
REFERRALS

**620**  
LEGAL ADVICE

**54**  
COURT / TRIBUNAL

**18**  
LEGAL TASKS

**21**  
DISCRETE NON-LEGAL SUPPORT

**25**  
OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

## CASE STUDY

A grandparent, "Charlie" was assisted with negotiating consent orders to get equal shared parental responsibility for the grandchildren. The grandchildren primarily lived with "Charlie" for a long period of time. "Charlie" was unable to make the legal decisions involved with parental responsibility such as those for education and schooling, and medical treatment by doctors. "Charlie" needed the legal authority to make these decisions because the local doctors, school and the like would not accept the Charlie's decision.

The consent orders drafted by our office were agreed to by a parent. The proposed orders were submitted to the federal circuit and family court of Australia and the submission of a further affidavit to the court detailing the children's living arrangements for the last few years, the proposed orders were granted.

"Charlie" is now able to make long-term decisions in relation to the grandchildren's care and welfare with the surviving parent.

## MOUNT GAMBIER REGION OUTREACH SERVICES

Our Naracoorte and Bordertown outreaches as duty solicitor for the Magistrates Court of South Australia are still busy and reflective in the outreach services we have provided.

LOCATION	CLIENTS	PROBLEM TYPES
BORDERTOWN	20	40
MOUNT GAMBIER COURT HOUSE	2	2
MOUNT GAMBIER PRISON	22	36
NARACOORTE	30	60

# RIVERLAND COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTRE



The Riverland Community Justice Centre (RCJC) has had a transformative year, driven by the dedication and commitment of its team and the increasing demand for its services. The Riverland Community Justice Centre has had a year of remarkable growth and impact. From providing urgent services in crisis to welcoming a new intake officer, strengthening

collaborative relationships, and participating in outreach, RCJC has been unwavering in its commitment to serving the community. We look forward to building on these achievements in the coming year.

Paul Hill, our dedicated mental health clinician, responded to increased demand from both ongoing and new clients by expanding his availability from one day per week to two. Paul has been instrumental in assisting clients navigate the complex landscapes of legal issues while addressing the underlying mental health challenge that can often act as significant barriers to justice.

In another positive development, we welcomed Zoe to our team as the intake officer. Zoe's extensive local knowledge gained from her previous work at the council has proved to be an invaluable asset. She has seamlessly integrated into our team and has significantly contributed to the effectiveness of our services.

RCJC continued to strengthen its collaborative relationships with key partners throughout the year. Our collaboration with AC Care, particularly in the realm of Tenancy Law Community Legal Education (CLE), has yielded positive outcomes. Our work with Relationships Australia has provided essential support to clients in need of legal guidance. Additionally, our partnership with Headspace/Focus 1 allowed us to offer focused CLEs during a flood event, demonstrating our adaptability in addressing urgent community needs.

Both our mental health clinician and solicitor, Georgina, actively engaged with other service providers at various community events to enhance referral pathways and improve the community's understanding of our services. This outreach has not only strengthened our network but also increased awareness of RCJC's place within the community.

Georgina's presence at the Berri Relief Centre from December to February was essential during a critical period. Subsequently, she worked with the Disaster Legal Support Program to conduct Community Legal Education events along the Murray River, with a specific focus on insurance law. These events not only provided valuable information to the community but also allowed us to promote our general services more widely.

Georgina joined the Riverland Domestic Violence Action Group, underscoring our commitment to addressing critical community issues. This led to our participation in a working group with four other service providers to develop a podcast aimed at Riverland Youth, funded by White Ribbon. This initiative showcases RCJC's dedication to raising awareness and providing support in innovative ways.

Georgina maintained a regular presence at outreach locations in Renmark, Loxton, and Waikerie. Furthermore, efforts were made to reinvigorate face-to-face outreach at the Cadell Training Facility by collaborating with social workers. This ensured that our services are accessible and available to all members of the community.

**168**  
NEW CLIENTS

**69**  
REPEAT CLIENTS

**288**  
REFERRALS

**267**  
LEGAL ADVICE

**11**  
LEGAL TASKS

**6**  
DISCRETE NON-LEGAL SUPPORT

**10**  
COURT / TRIBUNAL

**7**  
OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

## CASE STUDY

Lilly reached out to our organisation seeking assistance for a range of charges, which encompassed property damage, theft, and trespassing. Facing significant barriers to accessing justice, including a mental health diagnosis, and living in a remote area, Lilly was not eligible for legal aid services. To address the root causes of the charges, Lilly collaborated closely with our mental health clinician, who assisted in addressing the behaviours that led to the charges. Moreover, Lilly was referred to community services and received long-term support.

With the guidance and support of the mental health clinician, Lilly was well-prepared for her court date and attended as required.

In the end, Lilly was discharged without further penalties, and the magistrate acknowledged that this favourable outcome was, in large part, attributed to her access to support services and the proactive steps she had taken since the incidents.

## OUTREACH SERVICES

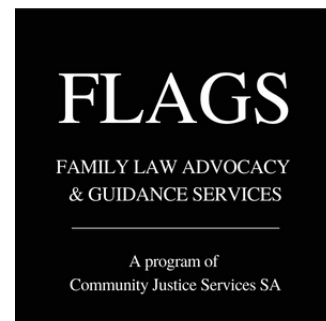
LOCATION	CLIENTS	PROBLEM TYPES
LOXTON	8	18
RENMARK	6	10
RECOVERY CENTRE	6	18
WAIKERIE	4	11
CADELL	2	2



# FAMILY LAW ADVOCACY & GUIDANCE SERVICES

## OVERVIEW

Family Law Advocacy and Guidance Services (FLAGS) is a specialist Family Law Pilot Program that offers free advice and ongoing assistance to eligible members of the community with Family Law issues. The assistance differs from the Generalist/FV funded service provision because FLAGS assists clients with higher earning capacities, more complex and litigious matters who have already spent a significant sum of money on litigation and/or cannot afford private legal representation.



## FROM THE FAMILY ADVOCATE

The Family Advocate from FLAGS provides information, advocacy, support, and referral pathways for clients who present at CJSSA with additional non-legal needs.

Over the 2022/2023 financial year, the Family Advocate worked with 96 clients. Over the six life domains of areas of assistance; Housing, Mental Health, Social/Community, Health, Safety and Financial, these clients were able to self-identify as having a total of 193 needs across these domains. For the same cohort of clients, the Family Advocate identified a total of 298 needs across these domains.

The Family Advocate provided specialised advocacy of referrals, advice, and support over the 2022/2023 financial year. This comprised of advocacy with external services, being provided with information and advice, providing clients with referral pathways to promote self-efficacy, referrals to external agencies, support letters and ongoing support as their legal matter progressed.

The Family Advocate developed resources for clients of CJSSA relating to safety planning for adults and children, developing boundaries and steps for separating safely from an abusive relationship. A small safety corner has been acquired for clients in crisis which includes safe phones, safety planning resources and information, and Escape Bags for women and children fleeing domestic and family violence.

## FROM THE SENIOR SOLICITOR

Over the last financial year, Family Law Advocacy and Guidance Services ("FLAGS") pilot program saw an influx of new clients. Although we do not see the same volume of advice clients as the generalist service, the pattern that has emerged over the last financial year indicates that of the advice appointments made with FLAGS, 99% of the time that advice will be eligible for ongoing assistance and becomes an open file. The majority of eligible clients are in court or at the pre-action steps to initiating proceedings in the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia. (FCFCoA).

Some examples of the types of files FLAGS has opened over the last year can be summarised in the below case study samples. From these case studies we can observe that the files that FLAGS has ranged from moderately to significantly complex. Given their complexity, the volume of open files at a given time needs to be balanced so that we are not in a position where we are having to turn clients away.

# CASE STUDY

## DE FACTO PROPERTY PROCEEDINGS IN THE MOUNT GAMBIER FCFCOA CIRCUIT

Our client - "Gloria" sought our assistance defending FCFCoA proceedings against their ex-partner - "Max" approximately one month before trial. Gloria had spent close to \$15,000 on private lawyers and they could not afford a private lawyer for ongoing representations as their health could not allow them to work. "Gloria" was asset rich but cash poor and arguably, the assets were inflated as a result of the property market after the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Gloria" and "Max" had a relatively short relationship however they had accumulated a significant amount of wealth together in that period of time. "Gloria" has made insignificant non-financial contributions throughout their relationship. We had to familiarise ourselves with this file which had been in Court for the last two years, periods of which "Gloria" was self-represented, and prepare all trial documents for "Gloria". We briefed a barrister for the trial listed in the Mount Gambier Circuit. After approximately 3-4 hours of negotiations, the parties settled the matter.

The senior solicitor did 63.2 hours of work in just over one month. Inclusive of solicitor costs, filing fees and barrister costs, the Service saved this client approximately \$35,000.

# CASE STUDY

## PARENTING

Our client - "Mark" and the other parent - "Rene" had spent \$10,000 on parenting proceedings by the time "Mark" came to see us for assistance late last year. The child of the relationship was in the care of "Mark" due to suffering neglect and exposure to family violence while in "Rene's" care. "Rene" initiated proceedings to have the child returned to "Rene's" care after the child made disclosure.

We engaged a barrister, and the matter went to argument. The child has remained in "Mark's" care, by Court Orders. The child spends time with "Rene" on a limited basis. We further assisted "Mark" with a travel application to take the child on holiday both interstate and internationally which "Rene" opposed. This matter had to go to argument and again a Barrister was briefed. The Court made orders in favour of travel as particularised in "Mark's" application.

A few months after this application was heard, a secondary application was made to suspend "Rene's" time due to the child being exposed to and suffering as a result of family violence in "Rene's" care. "Rene" now spends supervised time with the child and the frequency of this has been significantly reduced. The matter is due for a review in the coming months and trial if it cannot resolve.

In the time we have assisted, we have saved the client approximately \$40,000 in legal fees to date.

Whilst the annual report covers the financial period from 2022/2023, the success of this program for the community should be highlighted. Noting the below financial savings for clients the FLAGS program has to date saved clients totalling \$244, 446 in family law proceedings. This is based on 15 clients with 20 cases.

2 CLIENTS SAVED  
IN EXCESS OF **\$34,000**

10 CLIENTS  
SAVED BETWEEN **\$10,000 - \$20,000**

AVERAGE  
SAVING IS **\$16,296**

**234**  
REFERRALS

**47**  
LEGAL ADVICE

**31**  
REPRESENTATIONS

**16**  
COURT SERVICES

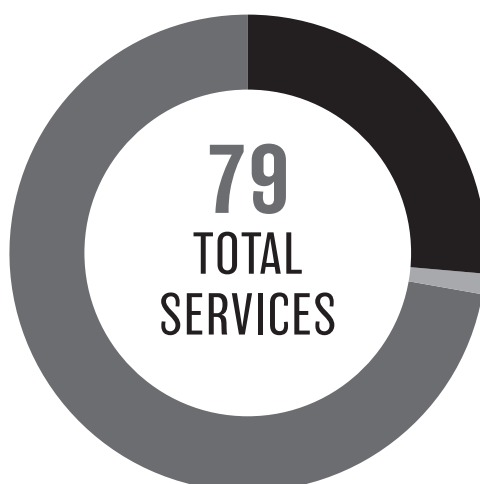
**58**  
DISCRETE NON-LEGAL SUPPORT

**4**  
DISPUTE RESOLUTION SERVICES

**11**  
OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

## FAMILY ADVOCATE

**57** DISCRETE  
NON-LEGAL  
SUPPORT SERVICE



**21** ONGOING NON-LEGAL  
SUPPORT SERVICE

**1** INFORMATION

# DISASTER SUPPORT LEGAL PROGRAM

## OVERVIEW

In the 2022/2023 Financial Year (FY23), DLSP delivered 42 Community Legal Education sessions in metro, regional and remote areas. We have presented to an estimated 447 attendees, including residents, Councils, EMS personnel (e.g., CFS), social services (e.g., Mental Health Workers and Financial Counsellors) and DPC Recovery Officers.

These sessions have also been provided by webinar, allowing for greater access to important prevention and preparedness information for disaster impacted and at-risk communities.

DLSP organised and/or presented several collaborative engagement events at locations including the Limestone Coast, Riverland, Murraylands and the Fleurieu Peninsula. Examples include:

- Disaster Ready Insurance CLE (with CFS, complementing bushfire resilience workshops).
- Insurance and Floods CLE (with Dep. Premier and Cabinet Recovery Committee / Officers).
- Community Resilience BBQ (with Red Cross, SASES, CFS, SA Health and Aust. Defence Force).
- Accidental Counsellor Workshops (with Lifeline and Neami National).
- Community Resilience / Digital Awareness Expos (with NBN Co, WestSide Lawyers and CFS).
- CLE with the Fleurieu Coast Community Network and ACD Working Group.
- Insurance Law for Financial Counsellors (AFCA / SAFCA, planned for FY24).
- Guest appearances at Riverland Small Business Network events.

Our stakeholder engagement and collaboration efforts continued, as regular attendees to local community (e.g., River Murray flood recovery) and Emergency Services events (e.g., the Zone Emergency Management Symposium), we have built and strengthened key relationships and gained invaluable insight into the professional and lived experience of service providers and communities.

In May 2023, we met with the Strategic Operations team at SAFECOM, confirming DLSP as a partner in their inaugural “30 Days in 30 Ways” Disaster Resilience and Preparedness campaign.

In FY23, we distributed over 1000 physical resources across SA, in person and via our collaborative partners, including flyers, fact sheets and magnets on insurance preparedness and resilience. We even handed out 500+ delicious promotional biscuits! We attended regional shows in the Limestone Coast (Field Days, in collaboration with Red Cross) Kangaroo Island (AG Tech Fair) and the Mt Barker show (with CLCSA) and co-organised a free Community Resilience BBQ with Red Cross and Emergency Services in Kingston SE.

We expanded our website to include an online calendar of events, additional downloadable resources, an online mailing list registration and for the first time sent regular e-newsletters and CLE follow-ups via email newsletters.

DLSP was also called upon to contribute to the Australian Pro Bono Centre’s Report, Pro Bono Response to Natural Disasters, and PHD candidate Monica Taylor’s investigation into Climate Crisis & Legal Need.



**42**  
REFERRALS

**27**  
LEGAL ADVICE

**42**  
CLE ACTIVITIES

**11**  
CLE RESOURCES

**63**  
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

## CASE STUDY

James sought our services for guidance regarding a cash settlement offer offered by his insurance company. James had concerns that the insurer had not sufficiently assessed the structural damage caused by the floods. Following our advice, James procured an engineer's report, which was funded by the insurer and substantiated his concerns.

The insurer subsequently extended a revised cash settlement offer. After consulting with our solicitor, it came to light that James had not requested the extra benefit of 10% of the insured amount for debris removal, acting on our counsel, James ultimately reached a cash settlement agreement for the entire insured amount, inclusive of all relevant additional benefits.

## CASE STUDY

Grace found herself at the relief centre in the aftermath of the Murray River Floods. Her main residence had been rendered uninhabitable and was expected to be a total loss for insurance purposes. Fortunately, Grace had insurance coverage for emergency accommodation. However, due to the lack of suitable housing options in the Riverland area, she faced a dilemma. Grace owned an investment property nearby, and she successfully engaged in negotiations with her insurer to have the rental expenses for her investment property covered under her primary residence policy.

In response to the River Murray floods, we had boots on the ground to assist at local Flood Recovery Centres, and provided services to flood-impacted individuals and businesses between November 2022 – June 2023.

# MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM

## OVERVIEW

The mental health program began in mid-2022 and was funded for two Accredited Mental Health Social Workers in Mt Gambier and Riverland, with telehealth options for metro areas. The positions aimed to provide support services with clients who are struggling with mental health issues, and who have engaged a Community Justice Centre Solicitor for legal support. The program provided general support to alleviate distress, alongside a variety of therapeutic interventions through a range of counselling techniques and clinical mental health support including assessment, referral, collaborative care, and mental state monitoring as well as care coordination as required. This enables the client to move through their legal matters with additional support, increased emotional stability and social connection.

Both Mental health workers have noted the importance of the collaborative relationships with other agencies to provide support services to meet the identified needs of clients. This is highlighted in their case studies. Both Victoria and Paul have been actively providing training for the Team to assist the solicitors understanding of the broad range of reasons for making a referral, enhancing the referral process and provision of "skills" to support clients.

International Mental Health Day Toolbox Talk (Beyond Blue) planned for October and Mental health training for accreditation for staff also planned in the latter half of 2023.

## BERRI

In the Riverland CJC employed Paul Hills, who has a background as an Accredited (with the AASW) Mental Health Social Worker and a Mental Health Nurse. The position was initially only established for one day per week, and then increased to two days per week in May 2023. It was clear from the outset that there was a high level of community need and demand, with over 20 referrals in the reporting period. Paul reports on a high level of mental health acuity, with up to half of those referrals having a diagnosed major mental illness, many of whom had limited community supports or poor management of their illness. Also of concern was the significant number of clients who were homeless and in financial distress. These necessitated close partnerships being formed with local community organisations in providing support.

It was also noted from many referrals the significant social (and legal) impact of relationship breakdown: consequent grief and loss, the personal and financial toll of separation, and the stress of emotional estrangement. This reiterates the very close links with organisations, such as Relationships Australia (RASA), Paul has had to establish and sought out professional supervision from RASA for this reason.

## CASE STUDY

"Toni" was diagnosed with bipolar disorder and residing in a caravan after a difficult separation. At the time of referral, the client was quite unstable in their illness and needed a full medication review and needed to re-establish links with doctors and Mental Health service providers, which Paul was able to facilitate. There

was a lot of advocacies with local homelessness services and Housing SA to enable the client to get back into community, and eventually, permanent housing. In the process Paul offered a lot of counselling support with behaviour activation strategies, such as volunteer work and building links with the local community, as well as Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and strategies for managing psychosis.

## MOUNT GAMBIER

In Mount Gambier LCCJC employed Victoria Burford-Snow who has background as an accredited MH social worker (AASW), Bachelor Social Welfare, Bachelor of Social Work and a Master of Forensic Mental Health. Victoria commenced in August 2022 for two days a week and commenced full-time in January 2023, with over 53 referrals during the reporting period. It has been imperative to maintain updated and relevant knowledge of local services for referral purposes, including their program criteria, any costs involved, availability and nature of services, to ensure a 'good fit' and to avoid a decline of the referral, which can place added hardship on the client. This aligns with the importance placed on community service networking and partnerships where only one or two mental health sessions are provided, referrals can be incorporated for ongoing service provision in the community.

Victoria regularly attends the local community service roundtable meetings, and the local Drug Action Team meetings each month, hosted by SAPOL. These meetings provide new information in specific areas and is a valuable opportunity to support networking with other attendees and guest speakers for new programs and any specific criteria. Newly formed 'Private Practice' meetings are useful connections for referral, with forums offered in a collaboration between Ac care, Skylight and Carers SA, for the new programs in a few regional towns within the Limestone Coast. This has proved beneficial as a client is in the process of being referred for their assistance who lives in Bordertown where very few services are available.

## CASE STUDY

"Rex" lives alone in a regional area and has been arrested for various traffic offences and is accessing solicitor support to navigate court. He has been supported in conducting an initial assessment and working collaboratively with other agencies. "Rex" is concerned about his mobility and health issues and is impacted by the prospect of losing his licence. Supports being explored include NDIS, Skylight, Wyatt Trust grant for a gopher and whitegoods loan for a new fridge, 4 Reasons Why charity for a new mattress donation, and perhaps Meals on Wheels for proper nutrition and regularity of meals. Psychosocial support from Skylight can assist in establishing a routine particularly regarding personal hygiene which has become particularly challenging for this client, as early interventions have revealed squalor and hoarding programs might be helpful related to the conditions in the home. All potential interventions however require ongoing collaboration with the client to ensure it remains strengths based and empowering, working with him and not doing everything for him.

## STUDENT PLACEMENT

A partnership has grown between CJSSA and UniSA's Social Work program providing joint benefits for the office and the student gaining knowledge and experience working closely with the team member. The current 4th year Social Work student is halfway through her placement and will then graduate early next year. Early in 2024, UniSA is looking to place another Social Work student at our Mount Gambier office.



# WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY

*A very good service. Very prompt with timing as booked. The reminder txt was helpful too I'm impressed with the all-round general advise and knowledge of the solicitor.*

*Jess has been conducted herself very professionally throughout my dealings. I appreciate her dedication and her high attention to detail.*

*Katherine was very good, and I felt much relieved after I met her.*

*Was very understanding and provided excellent advice.*

*I feel more comfort now after receiving advice.*

*Katherine was amazing, made me feel confident. Thank you :)*

*I found the whole experience was a pleasant one, so professional, pleasant and helpful – very competent and easy to understand. I was very impressed by the professionalism.*

*An excellent presentation, firstly at Goolwa and then at Victor Harbor. Participants at both forums were attentive and asked relevant and interesting questions.*

*– Local JP, Fleurieu Peninsula*

*Audience feedback from DLSP events has been consistently positive, with 126 written feedback forms collected in FY23.*

*Amazing Service! Felt listened to without judgment and lawyer was extremely helpful.*

*Offered mental health help, explained mediation and legal options. Clearly explained various options on how to proceed.*

*Awesome session and information - really appreciate sending someone out to explain the steps to us and what to expect. Thanks.*

*– Flood-impacted Riverland resident*

*Well done to all concerned. Absolutely brilliant session. I would strongly encourage anyone living in a bushfire zone to attend one of these presentations. So much information to hear about and feel so much better equipped to approach home insurance. It was so worthwhile.*

*– Paris Creek resident*



# VOLUNTEERS

CJSSA is extremely grateful to the students and volunteer solicitors who provide valuable input to the service. This financial year we were supported by 4 volunteer university students, and 1 volunteer legal placement student. We were extremely fortunate to have our volunteer legal placement student become a full-time junior solicitor at our Christie's Beach office and the continuing support of a volunteer university student.

At our Mount Gambier office, a volunteer solicitor provided valuable input to the service once a week over the course of the year and continues to provide volunteer support on an ad hoc basis.

Recruitment has continued and a comprehensive engagement strategy is in place for the next financial year. The ongoing high interest and enthusiasm for the volunteer program in 2023 /2024 is showing to be highly successful with a student completing her PLT requirements for her legal experience.

## STUDENTS

Student Volunteers assist with:

- Administration, and data entry
- Assist solicitors with drafting letters and other documents
- Legal research
- Transcribing documents
- Attending court with a solicitor
- Participate in client interviews observing
- Other tasks as required

## “ FEEDBACK

*My volunteer experience has been truly rewarding. I assisted lawyers with a diverse range of legal matters, including civil, property, and family law. My responsibilities included conducting legal research, drafting court documents, and handling correspondence, all of which provided me with valuable insight into the legal process. This experience not only deepened my understanding of the legal field but also instilled in me a sense of purpose and a strong desire to continue contributing to the community through legal aid initiatives.*

*It is worth noting that the staff at the Southern Community Justice Centre were incredibly friendly and supportive, offering guidance, answer questions, and provide assistance. Their welcoming and helpful demeanour created a positive and inclusive environment, making my volunteer journey even more enjoyable. I truly appreciate the support of the staff, which further reinforced the value of the work being done at the centre.*

*Under the supervision and guidance of the solicitors I had access to a wide range of tasks including research, drafting, attending client appointments, attending Court, drafting court documents and correspondence. The program has provided skills, knowledge and first-hand experience, which will be integral for furthering my legal career.*

*The volunteer program provided a supportive environment to learn and develop my legal skills.*

# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2023

	Note	2023 \$	2022 \$
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	6	1,521,134	990,709
Trade and other receivables	7	234,809	243,813
Prepayments		35,764	24,736
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>1,791,707</b>	1,259,258
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Property, plant and equipment	8	88,453	65,100
Right-of-use assets	9	588,374	713,940
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>676,827</b>	
		779,040	
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>2,468,534</b>	2,038,298
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Trade and other payables	10	177,058	138,325
Lease liabilities	9	67,794	92,730
Employee benefits	11	155,010	173,157
Deferred income	12	981,599	435,688
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>1,381,461</b>	839,900
<b>NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Lease liabilities	9	534,319	602,113
Employee benefits	11	75,465	57,720
Long-term provisions	13	60,000	60,000
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT</b>		<b>669,784</b>	719,833
<b>LIABILITIES TOTAL</b>		<b>2,051,245</b>	1,559,733
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>417,289</b>	
		478,565	
<b>EQUITY</b>			
Retained earnings		417,289	
		478,565	
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>		<b>417,289</b>	
		478,565	

# DIRECTOR'S REPORT

## Community Justice Services SA Ltd

ABN 96 663 878 869

### Directors' Report

30 June 2023

#### 2. Operating results and review of operations for the year

##### Review of operations

The Company continued to engage in its principal activities, the results of which are disclosed in the attached financial statements.

##### Operating results

The profit/(loss) of the Company amounted to \$ (61,276) (2022:\$ 10,110).

#### 3. Other items

##### Significant changes in state of affairs

There have been no significant changes in the state of affairs of the Company during the year.

##### Events after the reporting date

No matters or circumstances have arisen since the end of the financial year which significantly affected or may significantly affect the operations of the Company, the results of those operations or the state of affairs of the Company in future financial years.

##### Indemnification and insurance of officers and auditors

No indemnities have been given or insurance premiums paid, during or since the end of the financial year, for any person who is or has been an officer or auditor of Community Justice Services SA Ltd.

##### Auditor's independence declaration

The auditor's independence declaration in accordance with section 60-40 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commissions Act 2012* for the year ended 30 June 2023 has been received and can be found on page 6 of the financial report.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors:

Director: Michael Donald  
Michael Donald

Director: Ross Samuel Savvas  
Ross Samuel Savvas

Dated this 16 day of Nov 2023

