



# **SOUTH WEST**

COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE INC



# **ANNUAL REPORT**

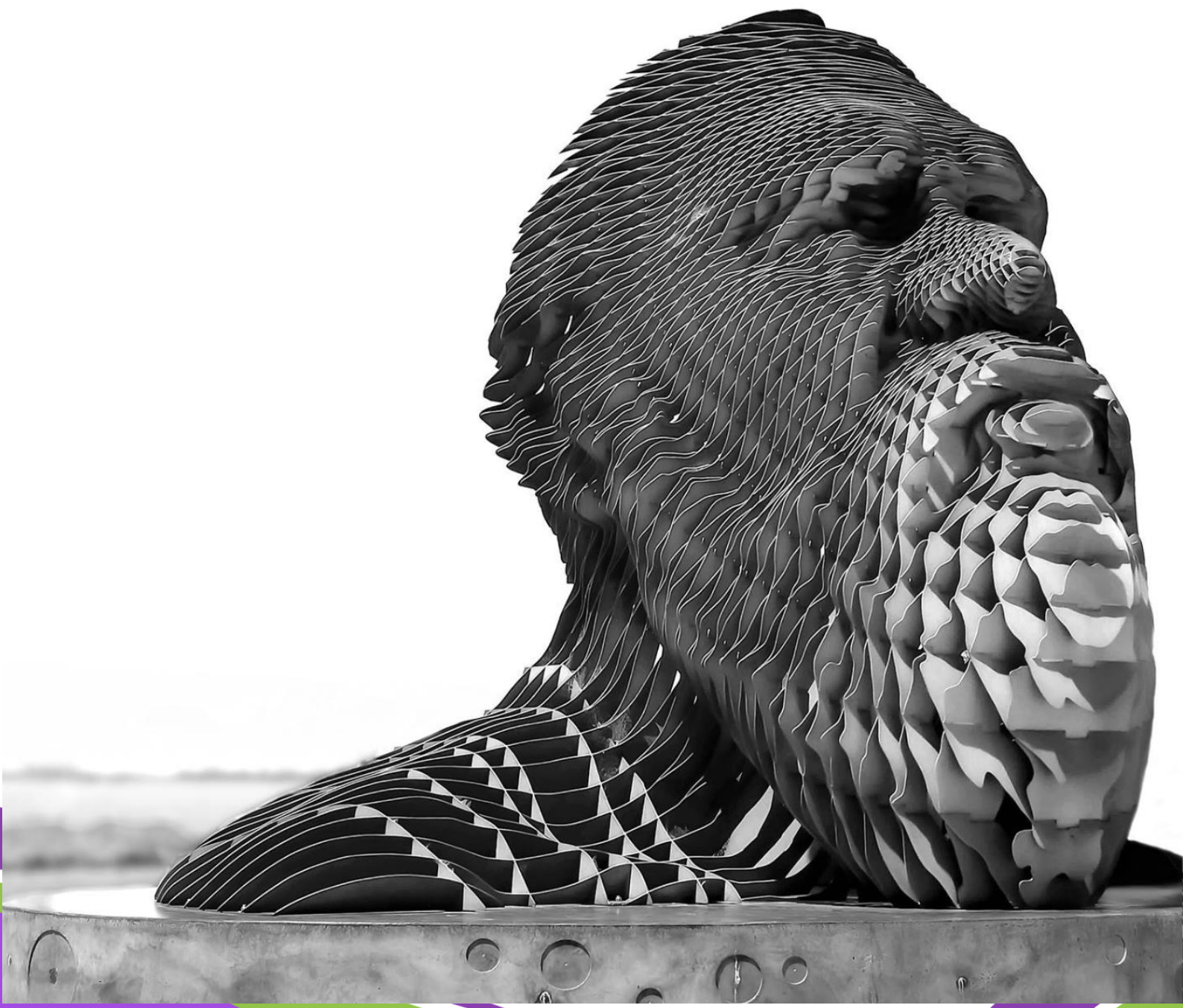
**2022 – 2023**

# ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY



SWCLC acknowledges the traditional custodians of the South West of Western Australia, the Wardandi People of the Noongar Nation, and recognises their continuing connection to land, waterways and community.

We pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging.



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## STRATEGIC PLAN



### *Our Vision*

Equal access for justice for allity.



### *Our Mission*

To Empower our community to achieve fair legal outcomes



### *Our Values*

Courage, Compassion and Committment



## GOALS



### *Service Delivery*

To achieve the greatest impact and best outcomes for the clients within our community.



### *Expertise and Influence*

Increase and enhance our reputation as a critical service and leader within our local and state communities.



### *People and Culture*

To build and retain an engaged, skilled and diverse workforce.



### *financial Management*

To develop a financial business model that ensures sustainability of the organisation.



### *Governance*

To have effective and transparent governance, led by a diverse, skilled and connected board.



## ABOUT US

### South West Community Legal Centre

South West Community Legal Centre Inc. ("SWCLC") is a not for profit community legal centre which provides legal advice and assistance to disadvantaged and vulnerable clients throughout the South West of Western Australia. Our service commenced in 1989 with a weekly pro bono legal clinic offered by local private practitioners. Our service has continued to grow and today we employ 13 staff across our legal and administrative teams. We deliver most of our services from our Bunbury office. We also undertake outreach services at a number of locations throughout the South West, and provide duty lawyer services at the Magistrates Court and Family Court of Western Australia Bunbury circuit. SWCLC is a generalist service, providing advice on many areas of law.

However, our primary practice areas are family law; including parenting arrangements and property settlement, and civil law; including restraining orders and criminal injuries compensation. SWCLC also regularly presents Community Legal Education to the public, community groups and schools, on topics such as family law, future planning (wills, powers of attorney and powers of guardianship) and restraining orders. SWCLC currently receives funding from the Commonwealth and State Governments, and through grants from the Law Society of WA Public Purposes Trust, in addition to one-off grants for smaller projects. SWCLC undertakes a range of projects, and manages the reporting and acquitting of several funding streams, to achieve individual program objectives and client outcomes.



# Meet Our Board



**ACTING BOARD CHAIR**

*Rebecca H*



**BOARD CHAIR**

*Jenny P*



**SECRETARY**

*Lauren H*



**BOARD MEMBER**

*Summer B*



**BOARD MEMBER**

*Renae I*



**BOARD MEMBER**

*Steph J*

# Meet Our Legal Team



PRINCIPAL SOLICITOR

*Renée T*



ACTING MANAGING  
PRINCIPAL SOLICITOR

*Lauren H*



SOLICITOR

*Daniel T*



SOLICITOR

*Michelle G*



SOLICITOR

*Amanda J*



TENANCY ADVOCATE

*Lee E*



SOLICITOR

*Amy C*



SOLICITOR

*Samantha B*



PARALEGAL

*Chelsea K*



PARALEGAL

*Inge S*



VOLUNTEER PARALEGAL

*Maria S*



# Meet Our Admin Team



**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

*Tahleisha M*



**BOOKKEEPER**

*Janice V*



**EXECUTIVE SUPPORT  
OFFICER**

*Crystal P*



**ADMINISTRATION OFFICER**

*Vivienne W*



**ADMINISTRATION TRAINEE**

*Ashley M*



**ADMINISTRATION TRAINEE**

*Chloe B*

## CHAIR PERSON'S REPORT

*The Chair's Report is in two parts. The first part is written by our chair, Jennifer Pickworth who retired on 31 December 2022. The second part is written by our current chair, Rebecca Harnett, who was elected acting chair of the board on and from 1 January 2023.*

### Chair's Report by Jennifer Pickworth

I will confine my comments to a few special issues as the current chair, Rebecca Harnett, was deputy chair for the first six month period. Rebecca is knowledgeable about all the Centre's initiatives and operations during this period and beyond and will deal with them. I would just like to thank a few key, very special people for the enormous efforts they made in the first six month period of the 22-23 year. That period was challenging for the Centre, as board numbers dropped and the position of CEO became vacant. These special people are: Georgia Wilts. Georgia agreed to re-join the board and act as a board member from mid- July 2022 until the AGM in October 2022, when we appointed two new board members. Warmest thanks Georgia for bridging this period and congratulations on your appointment to partnership.

Lauren Howlett. On resignation of our MPS, Lauren (our former Managing Principal Solicitor) agreed to step up and act as MPS until Tahleisha's appointment into the CEO role. Lauren was critical in developing and implementing an organisational re-structure, including splitting the CEO / Principal Solicitor role. The re-structure saw Tahleisha appointed to the CEO role and Renée appointed to the Principal Solicitor role. Warmest thanks Lauren. I'm thrilled to hear you agreed to join the Board and continue your association with the Centre. Georgia and Lauren helped stabilise our organisation during a challenging period. I'm pleased to say the Centre survived the challenges successfully. It now flourishes under Rebecca's stewardship and Tahleisha's management.

### Chair's Report by Rebecca Harnett.

What a year for SWCLC! We find ourselves finally out of enormous COVID challenges and back to business as usual. The last year has seen many changes some big and some not so big within the centre. The appointment of Tahleisha Bennell-Mustica as the CEO of the Centre has created a new and exciting leadership dynamic. Tahleisha brings a depth of knowledge and understanding of SWCLC having been the lead of the centre's administration for 5 years. The board has a strong belief in tapping into knowledge and skills internally and Tahleisha is a wonderful example of this. Tahleisha started with SWCLC as an administration trainee and has demonstrated a capacity to learn and grow within the organisation. She has worked to support local knowledge and build capability that is key to building a robust organisation serving our people regionally. We have seen new board members with the appointment of Renae Issacs-Gutheridge. Renae is a proud Noongar and Yamatji woman from Busselton. We are privileged to have an experienced educator and passionate board member working toward a PhD. The appointment of Renae continues to work toward the centre expanding governance to represent the region. We also had the opportunity to have Stephanie Jackson on the board albeit for a short period of time. Due to her commitments, sadly we have had to say farewell – and we thank her for her contribution and her continued support of the organisation. We are excited to announce that we have been able to keep Lauren Howlett, she has moved from the position of Principal Solicitor to a board member. Lauren is currently based in Sydney and working for the Redfern Legal Service and completing a PhD. Like Tahleisha she holds a deep knowledge of the centre and its workings. We are grateful that she has chosen to continue to contribute to the governance of the organisation and brings a wealth of knowledge from working in other legal systems and spaces that we as an organisation are the beneficiary of. This has enabled the vision of the board and leadership team to create a greater transparent process to engage a more diverse board that will continue to be representative of not only our region but also most importantly our service users.

In April 2023 the centre went through accreditation. The board would like to acknowledge the incredible work of the CEO and Executive Support Officer Crystal who went above and beyond to ensure all documents and processes were available

for accreditation. I think anyone who has been involved in accreditation knows how stressful it can be. With their leadership and contributions from many within the organisation, we are happy to report that the centre has met accreditation standards and are continuing to work on improving areas where we would like to strengthen for the future.

We were fortunate enough to have board member Summer Brinkworth and CEO Tahleisha Bennell-Mustica attend Oxfam Australia's Straight Talk Summit in Canberra. The Straight Talk program connects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to the political system and change making. This week-long program enabled both Summer and Tahleisha to engage in workshops about lobbying, how the parliamentary system works and the opportunity to meet with female federal politicians. More than 50 First Nations women attended the Summit which has provided a broader network for the SWCLC to tap onto the knowledge of First Nations women from around the country and create strong connections with local West Australian politicians such as President of the Senate Sue Lines and Senator Dorinda Cox.

The SWCLC was also lucky enough to see Tahleisha receive a scholarship to attend the hosted by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commissioner June Oscar AO which brought together more than 900 First Nations women to come together and talk about change on a national scale. Tahleisha was able to attend with her SWCLC hat on and represent the work of the centre contributing to elevate the voices of women and girls from the Southwest region. In addition, board member Renae Issacs Guthridge was also in attendance, and we feel privileged to have had two strong women be present and contribute to a national agenda and be able to keep us as an agency abreast of the national political climate.



We have been heavily engaged with the Department of Justice and the 5 pillars. The organisation has continued to work with other community legal centres to explore greater efficiency and collaboration to ensure sustainability and a high level of service delivery to consumers in regional areas. We will continue to be open-minded in this process, however we will always endeavour to work hard to keep you as our community and service users at the heart of any decisions that are made. We thank all our staff, board and members for their continued support and championing of the organisation. As a board we are excited for the year ahead and will continue to work toward equal justice for all. The board is honoured to work with a team of people who are dedicated, compassionate and committed to ensuring that our community receives equal justice in a respectful way. As a board and an organisation, we will continue to reflect on the services we provide, listen to our you our community deeply and work hard to continue to build an innovative organisation that is responsive to the needs of our region.



## MANAGER'S REPORT CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER & PRINCIPAL SOLICITOR TAHLEISHA M & RENÉE T

### Introduction

We are delighted to welcome you to the annual manager's report of South West Community Legal Centre (SWCLC) for the transformative year of 2022-2023. As we gather to reflect on the remarkable journey we have undertaken, we do so with a sense of pride and excitement.

Before we delve into the details of our journey, I would like to extend heartfelt gratitude to our exceptional staff, dedicated board members, and generous funders. It is your unwavering commitment, passion, and support that form the bedrock of our success. Your tireless efforts, dedication, and belief in our mission have been instrumental in making our achievements possible. Together, we are a formidable force for positive change, and we are deeply thankful for your continued partnership.

### Staff Changes

As we reflect on the past year, we acknowledge the departures of several valued team members who have contributed their expertise and dedication to our cause. We bid farewell to Amber, Vicky, Samantha, Lauren, Daniel, Chelsea, and Anna, each of whom brought their unique talents and passion to our organisation. Their contributions will always be remembered and cherished, and we wish them every success in their future endeavours. We also welcomed a new addition to our team. Janice joined us as our new bookkeeper, bringing her wealth of experience and enthusiasm for supporting our financial operations.



## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

### ID Connect – Homelessness Week

Bunbury agencies collaborated to eliminate the obstacle of lacking proper identification, which often hinders people from accessing suitable housing and essential services. This initiative took place at the Salvation Army Homelessness Service and was coordinated by the Zero Project. Participating organisations included SWCLC, City of Bunbury, Department of Communities, Centrelink, Accordwest, Housing Choices, Anglicare, the Salvation Army, and Ruah.

On that day, a wide range of essential services and support was made available to those in need. Attendees had the opportunity to secure their birth certificates, their child's birth certificates, obtain photo identification, acquire a Medicare card, and obtain a Concession card. Moreover, assistance was provided to complete housing applications, ensuring that individuals were one step closer to suitable housing.

In addition to these practical services, valuable advice and support were extended by various agencies, encompassing financial counselling, health services, housing assistance, and overall well-being, all within a safe and nurturing environment. SWCLC sent two of their Lawyers and an administration employee to provide information and brochures on our services and to help any people that might need legal services.

### Halloween

Last year, we embraced the Halloween spirit and decided to bring the spooky celebration right into the office! Our workspace transformed into a thrilling, mysterious realm as employees eagerly prepared their costumes and desks for some Halloween magic. From costume contests to eerie decorations, our office became a haunted hub of excitement.



That Halloween-themed work event was a wickedly good time, fostering team spirit and providing a memorable break from the usual work routine. It was a chance for colleagues to come together, have a blast, and create shared memories that lasted long after the decorations were put away.

### Christmas

In December 2022, SWCLC gathered at Brooklyn 32 Rooftop Bar to celebrate Christmas. It was a fantastic event filled with holiday cheer and great company. With the city skyline as our backdrop, we enjoyed lively conversations, and the warm summer evening. It was a memorable Christmas celebration under the stars. During this the event we thanked Jenny Pickworth for her contributions to the Board as Board chair and we wished her well for her future endeavours.



### International Women's Day

On Wednesday, 8th March, International Women's Day 2023 was celebrated with great enthusiasm. Magistrate Harries and The South West Law Society came together to commemorate the day. It was a momentous occasion where SWCLC staff members attended, adding their presence to the celebration. Together, we honoured the achievements of women across



## WAGIN WOOLORAMA



the globe and reaffirmed our dedication to gender equality and empowerment. It was a memorable event that highlighted the importance of women's contributions in our society.

## Wagin Woolorama

The Wagin Woolorama was an event where SWCLC, Wheatbelt CLC, and Albany CLC joined forces to create a collaborative stall. Together, these community legal centres provided a unique and informative experience for event attendees. Visitors had the opportunity to engage with legal experts and gain information about their rights and available legal services in a friendly and approachable manner. The joint stall was a testament to the strong commitment of these organisations to serve the community. It exemplified their dedication to working together to provide valuable resources and support to those in need.

## Accreditation

We achieved the renewal of our accreditation status and were licensed by the National Accreditation Scheme in April 2023. This quality assurance process recognises good practice in the

delivery of community legal services and gives funding bodies and our clients confidence that we are operating according to a range of organisational and service delivery standards. It is also a testament to the quality of our policies and procedures and the team that implements them.

## Law Week

In May we participated in and provided a number of Community legal education events for Law week. Law Week is an annual event where legal experts and the public come together to promote understanding of the legal system. It includes seminars, workshops, and community programs to emphasize the importance of law, civil rights, and justice. Law Week encourages discussions on legal issues and a better understanding of the legal profession's role in society.

## LAW WEEK 23



## Reconciliation Walk

SWCLC staff actively participated in a meaningful Reconciliation Walk, demonstrating their commitment to fostering unity and understanding within the community. With each step, they contributed to the important journey of reconciliation, acknowledging and respecting the rich Indigenous heritage of Australia. Their participation served as a powerful symbol of solidarity, as they walked together with purpose, embracing the principles of respect, inclusivity, and collaboration. It was a memorable day where SWCLC staff, alongside the community, joined hands to promote reconciliation and celebrate the diversity that makes our nation stronger.

## LEGAL TEAM UPDATE – RENÉE TURNER

This year has seen a lot of changes to the legal team at SWCLC. In the last six months of 2022, we were preparing for our senior solicitor Samantha Bettenay and Acting Principal Solicitor, Lauren Howlett, to leave SWCLC, ramping up our case work with the creation of the Case Work Solicitor positions and adjusting to a split CEO/Principal Solicitor leadership role. We had also been continuing to cement our paralegal case work assistance model.

In October 2022, Selva Stenross commenced as our new Principal Solicitor, however, she moved on from SWCLC just before Christmas 2022. In January 2023 when I commenced as Principal Solicitor, our legal team became very busy managing the case, appointment and court load of the practice with approximately 1.5 less full time equivalent solicitors.

Although those first six months of 2023 felt frantic, I can say that I am very proud of the results we achieved for our clients over that time, such as family law and tenancy litigation settlements and consent orders, as well as the assistance we were able to provide to clients in court.

I believe through the hard work we put in the first half of the year, we have come into the new financial year in a strong position, with good capacity to continue to service our clients with stability, expertise and compassion. We have a strong case workload so that we can provide more fulsome assistance to those clients who need it. We have also been gradually adjusting our appointment load to provide longer appointments to each client and do more task work to follow-up on each appointment. This is in line with the strategic plan of SWCLC as well as a reflection of our trauma informed practice training, where we have been trying to create less client stress as well as a more satisfying work environment for our legal team.

This year we hope to continue our work to help the vulnerable members of our community in Criminal Injuries Compensation, family law, family violence and tenancy matters. We are actively working to ensure that we are managing our case file capacity, have some new legal team members start and look forward to some exciting changes to our service model this year when we take on assisting applicants in family violence restraining order shuttle conferencing in the Bunbury Magistrates' Court. We are also excited to start implementing our new practice management software, Actionstep, this coming year.

Finally, I want to say a big thank you to all of our staff at SWCLC and particularly my legal team members and our CEO Tahleisha. Thank you for the support you have given me to take over this role this year and for putting in the extra effort every day to assist clients when they needed it most.

### Conclusion

Looking back at the past year, the South West Community Legal Centre (SWCLC) has demonstrated a strong commitment to serving our community. The entire SWCLC team has worked exceptionally hard to provide crucial legal assistance, support, and advocacy to our clients.

I would like to acknowledge Crystal, the Executive Support Officer, for her dedication in supporting the administration team and her significant contribution to SWCLC's accreditation. I'd also like to commend Renée Turner, our Principal Solicitor, for consistently going above and beyond. Her recent completion of the PMC Course reflects her continuous professional growth and her unwavering commitment to our clients.

As we look to the future, we're excited about the potential and lasting impact of SWCLC. We firmly believe in our mission to provide essential legal services, empower our clients, and champion social justice.

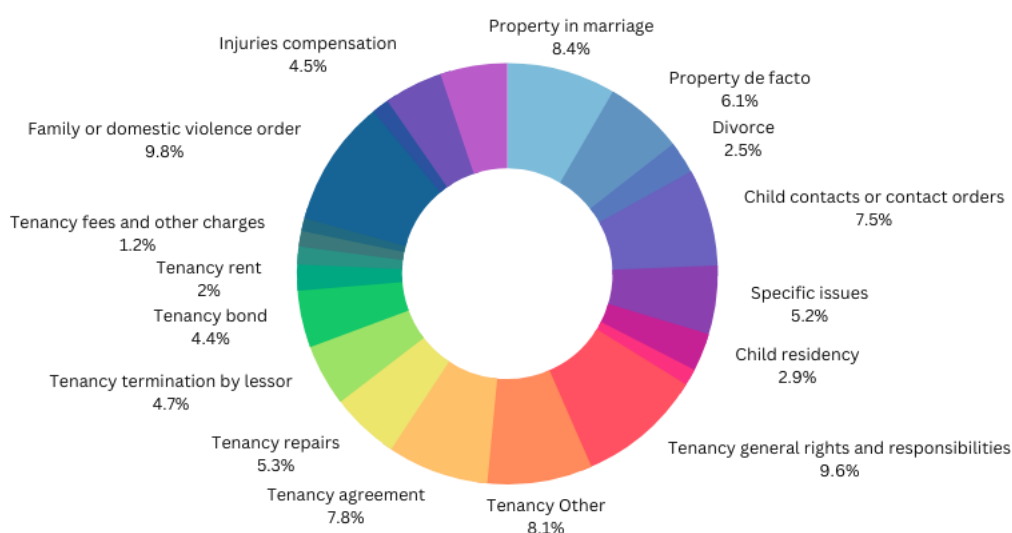
We're incredibly proud of the entire SWCLC team and their hard work, which continues to inspire us. We look forward to achieving even greater success and making a significant, positive impact on our community in the coming years. Together, we're dedicated to making a meaningful difference, and that's something that will continue to guide us into the future.



## SERVICE DELIVERY

SWCLC continued to deliver services primarily in family law, family violence (restraining orders), criminal injuries compensation, tenancy and other civil issues in the 2022/2023 year.

### Top Legal Problem Types



Our core funding from the Department of Justice (“baseline” funding) enables us to deliver our main legal advice service from the Bunbury office, via a mix of phone and in-person appointments. We also deliver a fortnightly outreach service to the South West Refuge (initially funded by a grant from the Chef’s Long Table Luncheon) to provide face to face legal advice to women who reside at the refuge, often due to having to leave their home as a result of family violence.

### Total discrete services delivered





## Client Demographic



## Ongoing legal assistance and representation

In accordance with our strategic plan we continued to focus on offering ongoing legal assistance, including court representation, to high-need clients. This year saw SWCLC open files across a range of matter types, though primarily family law (and particularly property matters). 26 files were closed across the year, being mostly Family Law Property files, whilst a further 13 matters remain ongoing.

### Ongoing Files = 13



*In addition to baseline services delivered from our Bunbury office, SWCLC delivered legal services as part of the following programs:*

## Legal Outreach Program

Our lawyers travelled throughout the South West to deliver legal advice and services to clients in Harvey, Collie, Busselton, Margaret River, Bridgetown and Manjimup. On outreach, our lawyers delivered 381 occasions of legal advice.

## Family Violence Duty Law Service

In collaboration with Waratah, SWCLC provides a duty lawyer, paralegal and counsellor to the Bunbury and Busselton Magistrates courts for the Family Violence Restraining Order lists. This year we provided a duty lawyer service (such as legal advice, negotiations, drafting settlement terms and in-court appearances) on 141 occasions, in addition to 112 referrals to appropriate other services (such as Waratah).

## Family and Advocacy Support Service

SWCLC provides a duty lawyer and paralegal for the Bunbury circuit of the Family Court of WA each month. Despite changes to court listing practices following the introduction of the eCourts portal for filing of Family Court documents, and interruptions to in-person services due to Covid, we provided 32 occasions of duty lawyer service in the Family Court at Bunbury. Often these duty lawyer attendances involve significant negotiation throughout the day, with the aim of reaching interim agreements.

## Tenancy Advice and Education Service

Our tenant advocate remained busy throughout this year as the rental crisis saw many clients unable to remain in their homes, and many having to relocate from the South West due to the lack of affordable housing options. Our tenant advocate provides legal advice over the phone, in addition to a court advocacy service at Bunbury and Busselton Courts. Tenancy advocate delivered 306 instances of advice across the year.

## Advocacy WA

We continued to provide a monthly outreach service to our neighbouring disability advocacy service. Our lawyer attends at the AWA office so that clients can conveniently attend upon their advocate and receive legal advice within the same appointment. Clients can also attend appointments at the SWCLC office accompanied by their advocate.

## CLIENT COMMENTS

"I wanted to take this moment to thank you for your help and assistance with my Claims for Compensation. I am very relieved this day has come. With your much-needed help it's been a long haul but we got there. So, a big thank you for hearing me and acknowledging my words."

"Hi! Just a quick email to let you know my affidavit is all submitted and to thank you again SO MUCH for your help. You're amazing and I could not have done it without you."

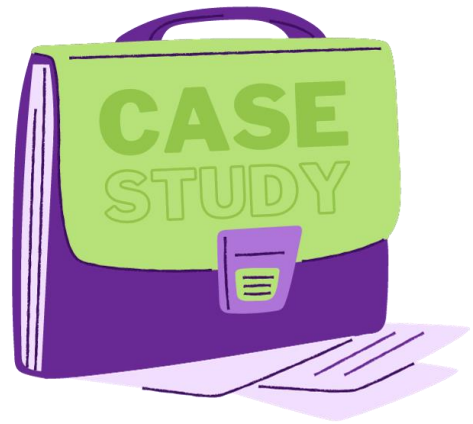
"Thankyou so much for all your help very much appreciated."

"Hi, it was an outstanding effort on your behalf. thanks again for your support I couldn't have got thru it without you. Hope you have a lovely safe Christmas and I look forward to hearing from you soon."

## CASE STUDY | TENANCY

### Nature of Tenancy Issue – Tenancy Termination by Lessor

In this case study, we will explore a scenario where the Tenancy Advocate, provided assistance to a tenant facing potential eviction due to alleged poor property standards. The tenant in question was a Housing Authority tenant, and the Housing Authority sought a court order to terminate their tenancy agreement. The case proceeded to the Magistrates Court, and the role as the Tenancy Advocate was to defend the tenant's rights and help them maintain their tenancy.



### Assistance Provided – Advocacy – Court

The tenant had been living in the property for several years, and during this time, they faced challenges in maintaining the property to reasonable standards of cleanliness. The Housing Authority had issued multiple breach notices to the tenant regarding the condition of the property, citing instances of poor cleanliness. The tenant, despite their best efforts, struggled to meet the expectations set by the Housing Authority. Under the Residential Tenancies Act 1987 WA, both tenants and landlords have rights and responsibilities.

One of the landlord's rights is to seek termination of the tenancy agreement if the tenant breaches their obligations, which may include maintaining the property in a reasonably clean and tidy condition.

The legal issues in this case revolved around the following points:

1. Whether the tenant had indeed breached their obligation to maintain the property in a reasonably clean and tidy condition as per the terms of the tenancy agreement.
2. Whether the Housing Authority had followed the correct procedures in issuing breach notices and seeking termination of the tenancy agreement.

### Preparing the defence

The Tenancy Advocate worked closely with the tenant to gather relevant evidence and documentation. This included photographic evidence of the property's condition, communications with the Housing Authority, and any efforts made by the tenant to improve the property's cleanliness.

### Negotiation with the Housing Authority

Before the case went to court, the Tenancy Advocate attempted to engage in negotiations with the Housing Authority to find a resolution without resorting to litigation. The Tenancy Advocate presented the evidence gathered during the defence preparation to demonstrate that the tenant was making genuine efforts to address the cleanliness issues.

### Representing the Tenant in Court

Despite negotiation efforts, the Housing Authority proceeded with seeking a court order to terminate the tenancy agreement. As the case went to the Magistrates Court, the Tenancy Advocate represented the tenant, arguing that eviction was not an appropriate remedy considering the tenant's efforts and willingness to improve the property's condition.



## Presentation of Evidence

During the court proceedings, the Tenancy Advocate presented the evidence collected earlier, highlighting the tenant's commitment to maintaining the property despite their challenges. The Tenancy Advocate also argued that eviction would cause significant hardship for the tenant, as finding alternative housing might be difficult.

## Proposed Solutions

To address the Housing Authority's concerns, we proposed that the tenancy continue under specific conditions. This included arranging regular inspections to monitor the property's condition and implementing additional support measures to help the tenant maintain a reasonable standard of cleanliness.

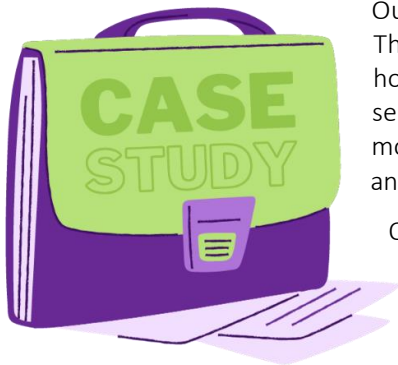
## Outcome

After carefully considering the evidence and arguments presented, the Housing Authority recognised the tenant's genuine efforts to improve the property's cleanliness and acknowledged that termination of the tenancy agreement would result in undue hardship for them.

Instead of terminating the tenancy, the Housing Authority agreed to a Consent Order in which the tenancy continue under the proposed conditions. Regular inspections were scheduled to monitor the property's condition, and the Housing Authority agreed to provide additional support to the tenant to help them maintain the property to reasonable standards.

In this case, the Tenancy Advocate, successfully assisted the tenant in saving their tenancy. By presenting evidence and proposing reasonable solutions, we were able to convince the court and the Housing Authority that termination was not the appropriate course of action. The case highlighted the importance of advocating for tenants' rights and ensuring that eviction is only considered as a last resort after all reasonable efforts have been made to resolve the issues at hand, especially in Housing Authority cases.

## CASE STUDY | FAMILY PROPERTY



Our client and the other party had been in a long term de-facto relationship. They had children together who were now adults. They had purchased a family home ("Family Home") together. The property was in joint names. Upon separation, our client remained living in the family home and the other party moved elsewhere to live near family. The other party subsequently purchased another property.

Our client continued to live in the Family Home and there was a verbal agreement between the parties that our client would keep the Family Home and the other party would keep the property they had purchased.

### Client Expectations

Our client came to SWCLC, wanting to know the process for removing the other party from the certificate of title for the property the parties jointly owned. They wanted to formalise the verbal agreement between the parties but did not know how to do this. The client had been told they needed to get orders from the Family Court of WA (the "Court") so stamp duty was not imposed on the transfer. This daunted the client. When our client approached SWCLC, the time limit of two years to file from separation for de-facto couples had already expired.

Our client was struggling to access legal services as they lived more than 2 hours from our office and could not afford to use the local private lawyers, the closest of which were still some distance from their home. The client was able to use one of our outreach locations to get advice and assistance from our lawyers. The agreement proposed between the parties appeared to be likely to be considered fair and equitable by the Court but the client needed help with the next step.

### Assistance

Our client had very low computer literacy and low capacity generally to progress the matter on their own. This meant our client faced challenges accessing electronic communication from the Court or the other party, and expressed that they could not complete or File a form 11 without assistance from a lawyer, let alone draft a Minute of Consent Orders.

We had several appointments with our client in the outreach location and then assisted the client to finalise the draft documents remotely via email and phone. Once the other party had signed the documents, we assisted our client to file them online with the Court in person in the outreach location.

### Outcome

The orders were made by the Court as the parties had agreed and we then referred the client to a settlement agent near their home to finalise the transfer of the property into their sole name. The transfer is now complete. Our client sent an email to us following completion thanking us very much for all our help.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

I am pleased to provide the Treasurer's Report for the financial year ending 30 June 2023. Members will notice a break-even in funds for the combined statement of profit and loss for the financial year (small surplus of \$1,545). This is in due to \$63,492 unspent Grants carried forwards to 2023/24 financial year to give a break-even result overall. The total income for the year was \$1,194,492 with corresponding total expenditure of \$1,192,947.

An "Unexpended Grants" liability of \$63,492 has been brought to account as at 30 June 2023, recognising that these funds are to be carried forward to the subsequent financial year, and expended in accordance with grant funding requirements. The Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2023 indicates a healthy working capital position with current assets of \$448,164 and corresponding current liabilities of \$185,225. Members' funds as at 30 June 2023 were \$208,709.

The Auditors have provided the Audit report in respect to the financial statements including the following comments:

giving a true and fair view, in all material respects, of the financial position of South West Community Legal Centre Inc. as at 30 June 2023, and of its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended; and

complying with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 1 Associations Incorporation Act (WA) 2015 and Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulations 2022.

## FUNDERS AND GRANT PROVIDERS

*The Board of Management and staff of South West Community Legal Centre Inc. gratefully acknowledge the support of grants and funding from:*



*Thank You*  
FOR YOUR SUPPORT



## OUR PARTNERSHIPS

*We would also like to thank and acknowledge the many agencies we have worked with this year*



*Thank You*  
FOR YOUR SUPPORT



# SOUTH WEST

COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE INC

## WHERE TO FIND US

### Service Information

Monday to Friday

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