

BAYSIDE COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE

Annual Report 2019 / 2020

Bayside Community Legal Service acknowledges the traditional owners of the lands across Queensland, and in particular the Quandamooka peoples, the traditional owners of this land where our Bayside community is situated. We pay our respect to elders past, present and emerging.

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Monday to Thursday: 9 am to 5 pm

Monday Night Clinic: 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm

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Since 1992, Bayside Community Legal Service has been providing frontline free legal help and services to the Bayside region with legal problems such as divorce, child matters, debt recovery, consumer law, family, crime, domestic violence, neighbourhood disputes, traffic offences. We run a Mediation service to help people resolve these legal problems without going to Court. BCLS also has a number of Community Legal Education projects underway, for example our “Safer Driving” and “Court in the Middle: Domestic Violence and Family law” CLE programs.

Bayside Community Legal Service Inc. (BCLS), provides legal help to people in the Bayside community in areas of law that manage or resolve financial stress, assert individual rights, seek entitlements and to protect against, inform and educate against family and domestic violence and abuse. We do this by educating and guiding our clients who are skilled enough to self-represent, but to also identify and provide representative help for our clients who are unable to advocate for themselves.

The BCLS plan this year was to expand our community reputation and profile, maintain funding stability and increase our capacity in service delivery, particularly targeting the legal activities of mediations, advice, legal task, casework and community legal education.

OUR WORK

Our core legal activities are the provision and delivery of legal advice, legal tasks, casework, mediation, community legal education, referrals and legal education information.

MISSION

Our mission is to maximise access to professional legal advice and assistance on behalf of persons who would otherwise be unable to access such advice or assistance.

VISION

Our vision is to help build a culturally safe, just and inclusive society that values difference and diversity and that recognises and responds to the legal needs of people who are socially or economically disadvantaged.





Bayside Community Legal Service has a rich and long history in delivering legal services, education and assistance to the Bayside community. This past year Bayside Community Legal Service (BCLS) has undergone a transformation centred on delivering improved legal assistance and help to our Bayside community.

It has been an honour and privilege to be able to lead BCLS through these changes. Important organisational change comes with challenges and hard work.

The help we give and the legal services we provide with great skill, professionalism and care are an essential and invaluable service, making BCLS an integral community services provider in the Bayside region. The ongoing success and viability of BCLS though requires careful watch and an enduring capacity to self-improve and embrace change. Since my appointment as President and Volunteer Principal Lawyer in September 2019, self-improvement and change have been at the forefront of our agenda. Aligned with our strategic plan to build our profile, maintain viability and importantly to improve capacity and quality of our legal services, our goal this year has been to equip BCLS with a modernised governance structure, enhanced operating systems and tools designed at enabling the service to deliver quality legal services, adapt and grow those services with our community's legal needs and vulnerabilities and to remain accessible to those most vulnerable in our community.

BCLS, over the past twelve months, adjusted its operational focus with the intention of casting a broad and varied reach into our Community, addressing governance, funding and service delivery. A number of strategies and projects are in place such as additional legal aid work, applications for other grant opportunities both from public sector and private enterprise, and continuing development of stronger collaborations with other complementary organisations whose clients benefit from the legal assistance BCLS delivers.

In December 2019, BCLS submitted a tender for Queensland and Commonwealth legal assistance service delivery funding over 2020-2025. In April 2020, we were advised that our application was only partially successful with 12 months of delivery being granted. We have also received an invitation to submit a further tender in September 2020, for a further four years of funding under that scheme, with a decision being handed down by March 2021.

Whilst COVID presented its own unique challenges, it did not prevent BCLS from stepping up and making further changes required to meet our community's growing and diverse legal needs. Enhancements to our operating systems and communications late 2019, prepared BCLS for 2020 and the arrival of the COVID 19 pandemic. Fortunately, BCLS were in a strong position to meet the challenges that the pandemic presented and service delivery was not interrupted; we were equipped to adapt immediately.

BCLS's evolution this year has been extraordinary. To meet the expectations and requirements of our clients, BCLS has over the course of the past year changed significantly in every aspect of its operations, from its day to day legal service delivery procedures and services offered, including staff changes and growth, technological advancement, system upgrades and a threefold increase in volunteer participation.

A small snapshot includes implementation of legal practice management software and database which integrates with the CLASS database provided by the National Association of Community Legal Centres, the introduction of a new phone system improving outreach and remote accessibility, launch of a new website, online booking capability, language translation capability within the website, upgraded mediation services and expanding the Mediation service reach to other community legal centres and Courts, the reintroduction of legal task and casework for the Centre's more vulnerable clients, the installation of advanced security technology enhancing client and staff

safety, self-awareness and safety training for all staff and volunteers and development of a structured programme for student volunteers focussing on client communication skills, generalist practice and drafting legal communications, are some examples.

BCLS is now moving through 2020 with a strong leadership team comprised of a Principal lawyer and two nominated lawyers sharing the responsibility for the varied and voluminous work performed by over 50 volunteer lawyers, students and mediators. We continue to deliver legal services across our core practice areas and have experienced unprecedented growth in our Mediation service. To complement our new practice management systems we have also improved our intake procedures, data collection, and reporting and client feedback activities. This has resulted in clients being able to access more varied legal service activities and to access those services faster.

Our volunteer lawyers, students and mediators continued to provide critical support in the delivery of BCLS's legal services. Without the support of our volunteer cohort, BCLS could not deliver the legal services it does. To our volunteer cohort, thank you for your tireless and selfless support and services and for the help you give to our clients in the Bayside community.

Our volunteer lawyers generously provide time, skill and expertise to ensure our Monday night advice clinics continue and during COVID, when face to face appointments was not possible, they provided telephone advices from their own homes and work places, day and night.

Our volunteer mediators continued throughout the year to preside over disputes concerning family issues and civil matters. A change in policy early 2020, resulted in our mediators being able to convene mediations in circumstances where there is a history of family violence. Implementing new procedures around issues about safety, security and enhanced IT resources have enabled this shift in policy to occur.

Volunteer law students from QUT, Griffith, UQ and Bond continued to attend the advice clinics and day rosters assisting with legal advice, research and intake for BCLS, working with lawyers and clients gaining invaluable professional practice experience. During COVID our students embarked upon the exercise of updating our CLE resources whilst still assisting with intake. We are thankful for the time and care provided by our student volunteers and are mindful of the responsibility and honour bestowed upon us as work experience educators in their journey into the legal profession.

It is important to reflect on what has been achieved this year and to show thanks and gratitude to those who helped along the way. It is equally important to move forward, striving for continual improvement in our service delivery, ensuring we adapt and grow to meet our Bayside community's growing and ever changing legal needs. The transformation undertaken this past year positions BCLS in a good place to deliver and serve the Bayside community well into the future.

Leeha James
President

Management Committee

Our President, Vice President, Treasurer, as well as one other committee member and our Principal Lawyer hold principal practising certificates issued by the Queensland Law Society. Our management committee includes a diverse range of practice backgrounds and professional experience, including QLS accredited specialists and member of QLS professional committees.

The BCLS Committee meets on a monthly basis, and there are sub-committees formed on an "as needed basis". In 2019-2020 this included the establishment of the following:

- "Constitutional Review" committee which focussed on updating the constitution and structure of the Service;
- "Mediation committee" which focussed on developing and increasing the capacity and reputation of the mediation facility within the Service.

The executive committee meet at least weekly to discuss committee matters and review the progress and direction of the service. The committee focuses on collaborative and supportive decision making. In 2020 our members have engaged with training programs through the QLS, Community Legal Centre's Queensland Legal Aid Queensland. Our committee are obliged to maintain their ongoing understanding of the Service's obligations and responsibilities.

2020 Committee

President	Leeha James
Vice President	Kate Fuller
Treasurer	Paul Coves
Secretary	Amanda Rearden
General Member	Marshall Bostock
General Member	Tracy Lynne Geysen
General Member	Jordan Dyce

Our Team

Principal Lawyer

Leeha James and Laney McQueen

Solicitor Caitlin Downs

Coordinator Damien Owens

BCLS welcomed Laney McQueen and Caitlin Downs to the service. Both lawyers have significant experience in the local area and the administration/management of a community legal centre.

Our Coordinator, Damien Owens continues to be the backbone of the Centre.

Notably, for the first time in its history BCLS now has an employed Principal lawyer. This is reflective of the Centre's commitment to increased capacity in service delivery and practice management improvements.

OUR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteering is not a requirement or an obligation in the legal profession but it is a service that is critically important for vulnerable and disadvantaged people in our community, who cannot afford to pay for legal help or are otherwise unable to access paid legal help. Volunteering provides an opportunity to develop professional skills and networking, but moreover it allows direct access to legal assistance by persons who would otherwise not be able to afford legal assistance.

In 2020, our student, lawyer and mediator volunteer cohort increased significantly. We attribute this to a number of factors including:

1. Increased community between service employees and volunteers;
2. Improved technology;
3. Greater emphasis on networking and collaboration;
4. Provision of professional education programs.

The gift our volunteers provide of time, skill and expertise is given with no expectation of thanks or recognition. Without the tireless efforts and dedication of our volunteers BCLS would not be able to continue to assist and serve those people who seek our help each year. A simple thankyou does not express adequately the gratitude and appreciation deserved, but we thank you for making a difference in the lives of our deserving clients

OUR VOLUNTEERS

Thank You All!

Lawyers

Jacob O'Shaughnessy
Christopher Tuttiet
Jake Gardiner
Paul Flintoft
Patrick Stewart
Farley Tolpin
Robert Tranent
Marshall Bostock
Aimee South

Tracy-Lynne Geysen
Pravinita Singh-Pillay
Leila Aria
Kate Fuller
Paul Coves
Marshall Bostock
Steven Singh
Stephanie Ewart

Mediators

Leigh Avuri
Hadi Matrui
Alison Mcgrath
Janelle Osborne
Pravinita Singh-Pillay
Hugh Thompson
Maria Ganmin
Leila Aria

Alison Berghofer
Marshall Bostock
Gregory Craven
Margo Orbell
Matthew Ray
Peter Richards
Klaudija Tsin
Timothy Wallace
Natalia Wuth
Marie Kelly

Alan Carter
Joseph Cheung

Students

Alec Aikman
Ashleigh Bain
Bobby Nair
Brigid Kelly
Wade
Butterworth
Yale Choi
Trisha Pagliaro

Chelsea Toner
Denis Chen
Donna Harrison
Lucinda Wass
Tobias Kennett
Emma Hambleton
Jeraldine Mow

Eddie Stephen
Elizabeth Hsu
Elly Meshki
Hannah Loviano

Hesh Aiyach
James Hilder
Jonathan Fielder
Jordan Dyce

Justin Christoforou
Leah Carey
Naomi Mccarthy
Rachael Coiffic

Rachael Goodlet
Renee Kemps
Seak Lai
Taia Green

THANK YOU.

MONDAY NIGHT ADVICE CLINICS

BCLS have been running Monday night advice clinics for as long as we can remember. The Advice Clinic night is an integral part of our legal service delivery.

Advice sessions have the most immediate and beneficial impact for our clients, as they are able to meet with a skilled lawyer in their area of legal problem and problem solve the issue in real time.

During COVID 19, this service was adapted so that advices were provided over the phone or via online conferencing platforms. We were also able to be flexible with times and our Monday advice clinic was offered at all times of the day and evenings. Many of our volunteer lawyers were working from home, so were able to assist BCLS clients during business hours, in addition to weeknights. We resumed a COVID 19 compliant version of our Monday night clinic sessions in June 2020, and are now seeing clients face to face when COVID 19 restrictions allow.

On average we assist between 10-12 clients each clinic session. Our volunteer lawyers, accompanied by our volunteer students, assist clients with advice across our big three areas of law - family law, civil law, and criminal law.

Taking time out of their busy schedules, our volunteers have worked together and provided over 1500 hours value of free advice to our clients during this year providing (insert number) advices. A special thank you to lawyers Jacob O'Shaughnessy, Steven Singh, Paul Coves, Marshall Bostock, Stephanie Ewart, and students Alec Aikman, Jordan Dyce, Elly Meshki, Yale Choi, Seak Lai and Ashleigh Bain for the extra time and effort gifted to BCLS over COVID 19.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

In 2020, we were fortunate to host our first professional skills development session. Committee members, employees and volunteers attended a session in risk management and safety at the Wynnum Trailer Boat Club. The session included a presentation from our President regarding personal safety and ethical matters, as well as a specialist presentation from Dr Gavriel Schneider. The feedback from attendees was unanimously positive.

This presentation also provided an excellent networking opportunity, particularly for our new student volunteers.

Our Committee members and staff have attended on average one per month continuing legal education seminars covering areas of law such debt recovery, consumer law, employment law, COVID and the law, and domestic violence and governance and financial management.

In 2020-2021, we hope to provide further networking and professional skills development opportunities including the following:

- Managing risk in mediations – presentation by Dr Farley Tolpen;
- Traffic law and your client – online webinar to be prepared and presented by Kate Fuller

ACCREDITATION PHASE 3

Amanda Reardon stood down as secretary for about six weeks to work on the Accreditation Phase 3 process.

Together with Damien Owens, Coordinator, they worked with ensuring Bayside Community Legal Service's policies, procedures and governance documents were up to date and ready to present to Community Legal Centres Queensland during the sight visit in June.

Bayside has been working with Community Legal Centres Queensland throughout this process to ensure our service is operating to the highest possible national standards for the community legal service sector.





Laney recently joined our team only a couple of weeks ago. Laney brings a wealth of experience in the Community Legal space, having worked in the sector for years. She is also a highly experienced lawyer, with 10 plus years practicing working across all areas of law especially in the spheres of family and criminal law.

Laney is also our Domestic and Family Violence Duty Lawyer, where she provides free legal assistance for people going through domestic violence situations at court.

Welcome to the team!

I am the newly appointed Principal Lawyer at BCLS.

I was formally admitted into the legal profession in Queensland in June 2009. Since that time, I have worked as a criminal lawyer at the Office of the Director of Prosecutions. In 2016, I began my employment with another community legal centre serving disadvantaged and marginalised clients across the Ipswich, Darling Downs and South West Queensland areas.

Over the last four years, I have had the opportunity to assist people in our community by providing advice, assistance, and representation with respect of various legal issues. In addition, I have been able to connect and assist people who are experiencing stress, injustice, trauma and financial disadvantage. I am committed to the principals of social justice and I am passionate about improving the lives of people.

I truly feel at home at community legal and I'm excited to have joined BCLS at a time when we are finding a new direction. Thank you Leeha James and the Management Committee for this opportunity. I look forward to working with you all to ensure BCLC becomes bigger and better!

Laney McQueen
Principal Lawyer

I commenced working at Bayside Community Legal Service in March 2020. Since that time I have been able to provide advice, assistance and support to a variety of clients. I have been fortunate to work alongside the Coordinator, Damien Owens, who is highly dedicated to the service and his skills are highly valued.

As a small service we continue to rely heavily on our volunteer lawyers. The majority of our volunteer lawyers provide Monday evening advices and we also have some who volunteer throughout the week. We are very grateful for the ongoing support and dedication to assisting those in need of legal advice.

The centre continues to provide advice to clients in relation to a range of legal matters, in particular family law and civil law matters. Since commencing work at BCLS I have noticed a high number of advice queries in relation to family law and domestic violence matters. Our solicitors have been providing advice in relation to parenting, property settlement, divorce, child support and domestic violence matters for both aggrieved and respondent client's.

Further, throughout the coronavirus pandemic there has been an increase in queries regarding civil law matters, in particular fencing, peace and good behaviour and debt matters. It is anticipated that there will continue to be high demand for legal advice regarding the areas discussed.

The BCLS mediation service has continued to assist clients achieve outcomes in relation to a variety of areas including family law (parenting and property) and civil matters. We are very thankful for our volunteer mediators and we would not be able to offer such a great service without their support and hard work.

BCLS has also provided duty lawyer services at the Cleveland Magistrates Court once a month since April 2019. We have been providing advice to the Respondents and BCLS continues to provide this service.

The management committee has provided great support to me and it is great to work with a management committee that share the same vision for BCLS. The management committee have been working very hard towards making the centre the best it can be.

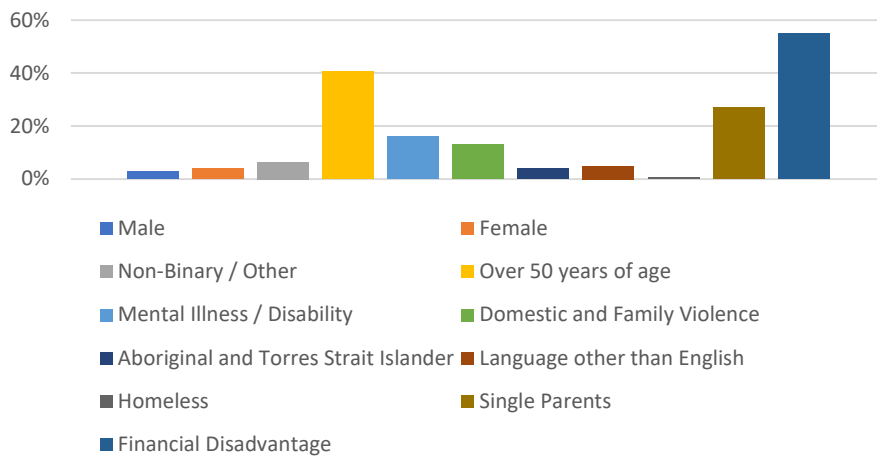


It has been a privilege to work for an organisation who provides advice to all clients, particularly those who are the most vulnerable in the community. I look forward to continuing to provide assistance to those in need and to providing positive outcomes for clients.

Caitlin Downs
Solicitor

KEY STATISTICS

Client Priority Groups



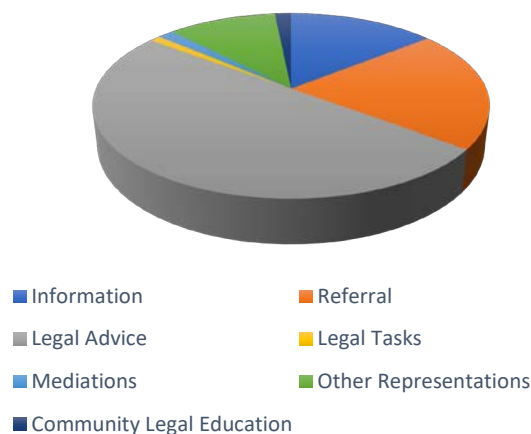
Priority groups we assist

Our clients are mostly financially disadvantaged people over the age of 50 years of age.

We also help a high percentage of single parents, and a growing number of people with mental illness and disabilities.

A strong overlay across the priority groups is **financial disadvantage** effecting more than 55%

Legal Services



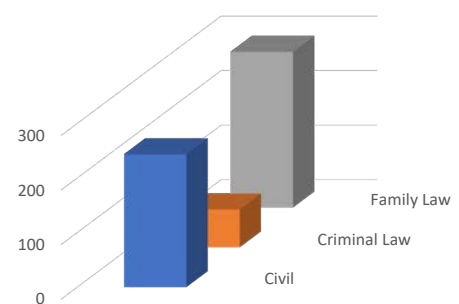
The Big Three

We assist mainly with family law issues such as divorce, separation and domestic violence.

We are also assisting people with civil law issues. These mainly consist of neighbour hood disputes such as fencing issues, overhanging trees and complaints about neighbours.

Our criminal law solicitors assist with traffic offences, domestic violence order breaches, and minor criminal matters, such as low level drug charges or issues such as wilful damage.

Three main areas of law



DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE

Cleveland Domestic & Family Violence Duty Lawyer Service



Since 24 April 2019 we have provided a duty lawyer at the Cleveland court to assist people experiencing domestic and family violence issues.

We have been able to attend 12 such sessions, assisting approximately a total of 100 clients in these matters.

We provide this service in partnership with Legal Aid Queensland.

Queensland Police Referral Service

We also work in partnership with the Queensland Police Service. The Police refer clients to us who are experiencing domestic violence issues. We have been assisting the Police with this since 2017.

Since the service commenced, we have assisted over 380 people through this referral service. These referrals are made when the Police attend a domestic violence matter. It is the local Bayside Police who make these referrals, indicating the substantial numbers of domestic violence within our community.



Community Legal Education Activities

“Court in the Middle: Domestic violence and family law”

In 2020 BCLS established the Court in the Middle program, to provide education and resources for separated families involved in domestic violence proceedings.

The content of the program has been developed by volunteers and staff. Additional funding has been used to fund additional research assistance from university students during the COVID19 program.

The program seeks to inform participants on the following:

- What is domestic violence and why is it relevant
- What is the court process for applying and responding to a domestic violence application
- What is the role of police in the domestic violence process
- What are the legal consequences of a domestic violence order interplay between domestic violence and the family courts
- Interplay between domestic violence and the family courts

Community legal education in recent months has been adjusted due to COVID. Nonetheless, a number of publications were circulated addressing emerging COVID issues around domestic violence, Centrelink and job seeker, superannuation early access, consumer debt and recovery issues, rental and residential issues to name a few. We will continue to produce self-help fact sheets and other publications centred on our core practice areas and that are particular to Bayside.

Led by our Vice President Kate Fuller, BCLS has this year reached out to a large number of social and legal service providers such as the Centre for Women, Legal Aid, Relationships Australia, Safe by the Bay, Salvation Army, Redlands Community Centre, Wynnum Community Place, Local sports clubs, Qld Police Service, Qld Ambulance Service, PCYC's to name a few, to examine and identify current community education legal and service needs within our Bayside community.

As a result BCLS currently has a number of projects on foot such as the "Safer Driver; Safer Roads" Driver Awareness Program and "Court in the Middle" – Domestic Violence and Family Law. Discussions are ongoing with our local courts in relation to integration of these programs with the Courts and our Mediation service.

"Safer Drivers; Safer Roads" Driver awareness program

The Safer Driver; Safer Roads is a joint initiative between BCLS and the Logan Traffic Policing Unity.

The program seeks to cover a gap left by the abolishment of the "Attitudinal Driving Workshop" which was positively promoted by QPS, legal practitioners and, significantly, the court system.

The program seeks to provide driver education and awareness to in turn create safer roads and decreased traffic offending/recidivism.

Both the **"Court in the Middle: Domestic violence and family law"** and the **"Safer Drivers; Safer Roads" Driver awareness program** are being run in conjunction with local venues to ensure affordability and accessibility for participants.

Our CLE is developed based on consideration of our client base, statistics and insight into the local community. We rely on our volunteers, staff and engaging with partnerships to develop and promote our CLE programs.

Why is this important?

"CLE is a recognised early intervention and prevention strategy to reach our clients and the broader community. It supports Commonwealth and Queensland Government legal assistance priorities which focus on:

- *Resolving legal problems early.*
- *Increasing preventative legal services like CLE that inform and build individual and community resilience.*

CLE equips people with the awareness, knowledge and skills needed to deal with legal problems encountered in everyday life."

- Legal Aid Queensland, 2017

Mediation helps people resolve disputes without going to court. BCLS provides a facilitated resolution service that operates within a co-mediation model to enhance the opportunity to resolve disputes between parties.

The Centre does not legally represent either party during a mediation but rather sources and refers people wishing to mediate a dispute to appropriately experienced Mediators from BCLS's mediator volunteer panel. The Centre's employed staff and volunteer lawyers are not permitted to represent any client in a mediation facilitated by BCLS.

BCLS is a training ground for newly accredited Mediators, helping them to gain their required hours to maintain their qualification, and assisting in supervised mediation become FDPR accredited, so they can preside over family law disputes involving children.

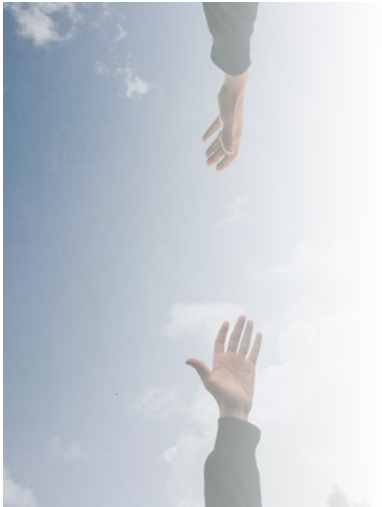
Early 2020, a change in policy was agreed by our Committee, which enables mediation to now be convened in circumstances where there is a history of violence between the parties. This is an important development in our Mediation service given the prevalence of domestic and family violence in our community. The ability to mediate an outcome in a safe and secure environment, even with circumstances of violence in the relationship between the parties, benefits both parties and assists Courts and Tribunals at a State and Federal level as less matters are brought before them.

We have this year concentrated on extending the reach of our Mediation service, offering to accept referrals from other Community Legal Centres and organisations, for example Relationships Australia and LGBTI Legal Services.

During the 2019-2020 year we facilitated 50 mediations, averaging one per week.



HOW WE'VE HELPED



In April 2020 a client sought assistance from us regarding her divorce application. The client had attempted to lodge the application herself and it had been knocked back from the court as it was missing information. The client was required to file Affidavit material to rectify the issues. The client was unable to fund a solicitor privately and was aware that this was not something Legal Aid would fund to assist with. The client was unsure how to draft the material herself and was eager for the Divorce Order to be made. Our solicitor was able to assist the client in preparing the Affidavit and provide guidance about the filing of the material before the Divorce Hearing date. The client was very grateful for the help as she would have struggled to do it on her own with no legal knowledge.

“Please thank Caitlin for her excellent advice.”

This client had a tenancy dispute issue. She had problems with the real estate agency and owner of the unit she was renting. There was significant maintenance issues with the unit, leakages, termites, pests, damage to a washing machine and several other issues. The client had complained to the real estate agency and had still not had the issues resolved. The Retail Tenancies Authority (RTA) advised that she should issue a breach of duty form. BCLS explained to the client the options available to her so that she could rectify the issues such as applying for dispute resolution advice and/or a QCAT application. The client was provided with practical ideas about how to negotiate with the other party via correspondence to avoid the need for litigation. The client thanked our service for the excellent advice received which she followed that resulted in the matter being resolved once and for all.



FROM ONE OF OUR VOLUNTEERS



I am Elly Meshki, a law student at QUT. I am very pleased that I was provided with the opportunity to volunteer at Bayside Community Legal Service (BCLS). I am very grateful that Damien has assisted me to learn so much about many administrative tasks, including using many software and resources available. I have been provided with many meaningful insights and exposures in my volunteering experience in the last six months. BCLS has provided remarkable learning opportunities for me and has assisted me to build practical skills. It is a great opportunity to undertake my volunteering experience at BCLS and explore different areas of law.

Regards,
Elly

PARTNERSHIPS

Thank you!



Community Legal Centres Queensland



Joseph Cheung
Mediation Service



COVES & Co.
LAWYERS & MEDIATORS

TLG Law - Family,
Children and Animal Law



Fuller & White
Solicitors
Justice. Respect. Results.



AVURI LAWYERS



As required under the Associations Incorporations Act 1981 (Qld) I present the report for the financial year ending 30 June 2020.

The Bayside Community Legal Service Inc (BCLS) has undergone change in 2019-2020.

There has been significant organisational renewal, premises and equipment upgrading and technological change. These factors underlie the financial reports and leave the BCLS in a solid position for service growth in the coming 2020-21 financial year.

We have restructured our staffing arrangements and employed a Principal Lawyer to assist with practice management and representative services. These changes will ensure the ongoing financial viability of the BCLS.

The financial reports show that at the end of the 2019-20 financial year, BCLS had an operating deficit of \$17,929.35. It had, however, a current net asset position of \$36,392.00. While Commonwealth and State grant income made up the vast majority of the BCLS revenue stream, there was a notable increase in "other" income category over the 2018-19 financial year, due to the COVID-19 stimulus, service generated and technology grant funding.

The year's expenditure saw the BCLS's investment in new legal practice management software; required security technology; new phone and computer systems; and staff and volunteer training in security, technology, and safety awareness programs. Notably, through these investments BCLS was well positioned to continue its work and service delivery through remote clinics during the Covid-19 shutdowns. This commitment to technology and staff is imperative to the viability and success of the centre.

While recording a deficit, BCLS's year has been one of change and necessary investment. It is the position of the Treasurer and the Committee that such expenditure was necessary and appropriate to ensure the BCLS could continue to operate and expand. It provides the BCLS with a solid foundation to continue its core functions and build for the future.

The audited financial reports which accompany this report reinforce the hard and vital work of its committed staff and volunteers in providing its services to vulnerable people who need legal help throughout the Bayside community.

2020-21 is a year for growth with challenge. It is certain to be a dynamic environment for the BCLS. The 2019-20 financial position and the expenditure and effort of its staff and members to bring the service to the forefront of technology to meet the challenges that will arise in the coming year. In 2021 the BCLS will focus on diversifying its income sources and securing medium to long term funding so that growth and expanded service delivery can be ensured. I look forward to working with all members of the BCLS in the year ahead.

Paul Coves
Treasurer

A big thank you to Boca&Co Accounting!