

# Annual Report

## 2021–2022

Fitzroy  
Legal  
Service





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# About FLS

The Fitzroy Legal Service is an amalgamation of the **Darebin Community Legal Centre** and **Fitzroy Legal Service** which took effect on 1 February 2019. The amalgamated entity draws on the significant histories and legal assistance services provided by the Darebin Community Legal Centre (established in 1988) and the Fitzroy Legal Service (established in 1972). We work towards a **fairer and more just Victorian community** one in which the legal and broader social system supports equality and justice.



Fitzroy Legal Service Inc. is a merger of Darebin Community Legal Centre and Fitzroy Legal Service.

Reg No. A0105338Y  
ABN 13 421 440 211

## Our Values

**Integrity**

**Courage  
& Passion**

**Empowerment  
& Advocacy**

**Connected to  
Community**

### Our Offices

**279 Spring Street**  
Reservoir 3073  
Ph: (03) 9484 7753  
Fax: (03) 9462 3297

**Level 4, Fitzroy Town Hall**  
PO Box 297, Fitzroy 3065  
Ph: (03) 9419 3744  
Fax: (03) 9416 1124

**Neighbourhood Justice Centre**  
241 Wellington Street, Collingwood 3046  
PO Box 1142, Collingwood 3066  
Ph: (03) 9948 8698

*Fitzroy Legal Service acknowledges that our work takes place on the land of the Kulin Nations.  
We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the Land, and Elders past and present.*



**Staff of Fitzroy Legal Service wish to convey  
our deepest respect and gratitude to Uncle Jack Charles.**

In a relationship that has spanned over fifteen years, we acknowledge Jack's transformative role as a champion of the people locally and across the country. We are so very proud of every collaboration with Uncle – from a packed-out debut screening of *Bastardy* for people who use drugs in the City of Yarra (invitations were distributed through local needle syringe programs, pawn shops and street corners), to advocacy on public drinking laws and criminal record discrimination (including a short film, and prelude to Uncle's tour Jack Charles versus the Crown, which toured internationally over the next decade), to the struggle against legalistic impositions of proof of identity on the dispossessed and stolen generations, to advice and guidance on strategic cases and policy positions impacting communities experiencing homelessness, using drugs and alcohol, and/or in and out of the criminal justice system. We celebrate Uncle's State Funeral heralding Uncle Kutcha Edwards new national anthem (written with the late Judith Durham), showcasing of the Aboriginal flag, celebration of queer identity and culture, a VIP list of our local Aboriginal community, and live streaming into prisons across the state. Your wisdom is carried deep by so many, and we are so very grateful. You are so very alive to us, your vision, wisdom, courage, and we will keep that fire burning.

**Thank You, Uncle Jack.**





# Chair & CEO Report

With the pandemic continuing to impact our lives over this year, it has been truly remarkable to see the quality and quantity of services our staff members have delivered to our community.

This report outlines the many achievements of the FLS team, in support of our vision of a fairer and more just Victorian community, in which our broader social and legal systems support equality and respect for all. We hope the report gives you a picture of the dedication with which our staff and volunteers go about their work. The Board and leadership of the organisation are very proud of the impact of the team's work, and our longstanding leadership in delivering community driven justice, through high-quality services, strong advocacy and social action – with and for those who need it most.

Despite continued challenges, it was an incredibly productive year. In addition to our considerable legal service delivery, and with a new leader at the helm, it has been a time for strengthening our many organisational relationships and partnerships, and building new ones. We could not do the work we do, nor get great social outcomes with and for our clients, without our many partners. There has also been much engagement with policy and decision makers, ensuring that FLS's voice, and that of our community, are heard.

Like many community organisations we have faced some financial challenges, particularly following the disruptions of the last two years. It has been a year of grant writing and advocacy, and investigating and building our fundraising capacity. We saw this pay off in a strengthening of our financial position towards the end of the year and are working hard to embed a robust financial model that will enable us to deliver our core business, as well as invest in the strategic and innovative work that is needed to change our systems and structures to increase fairness for all.

The FLS Board comprises a talented group of people who bring diverse skills and backgrounds to the governance of the organisation in a voluntary capacity. We have been fortunate to have stable Board membership with the exception of Vera Boston finishing up in November 2021. Vera was an important contributor to the Board over many years, playing a critical role in the amalgamation of Fitzroy Legal Service and Darebin Community Legal Centre, and leading the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee as Chair. Vera's good humour, directness and passion for the cause is greatly missed by the Board. A focus for the Board this year was supporting the transition of CEOs at the organisation, and we extend our most sincere thanks once again to Jen Black who held the interim CEO role, and did so with incredible insight and skill.

Staffing has been relatively stable during a time when many people have been inclined to change. However, two of our highly valued and longstanding staff moved on during the year – Jen Black and Megan Pierce. Both have already returned to the organisation in a volunteer capacity in addition to their new roles – underlining the idea that FLS is an organisation that people never really leave! We see this regularly in our incredible volunteers, many of whom remain committed to the organisation over many years. As we closed the year we were pleased to be reconnecting with staff and volunteers face-to-face, and look forward to much more of this in the year ahead.

We commend the FLS Annual Report 2021-2022 to you and are sure you will enjoy reading it.

In December 2022 Fitzroy Legal Service is 50 years strong. We look forward to continuing our ongoing relationships and partnerships, reconnecting with people from our past, and an exciting year of celebrating our rich history.

**Claire Febey**  
FLS Chair



**Kristine Olaris**  
FLS CEO



# Funding & Support

Our core ongoing funding at FLS is provided by the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments via Victoria Legal Aid. We thank them for their ongoing support. We would also like to thank the following organisations and individuals for their contributions.

## Funders

- **Allens** for pro bono support, secretarial assistance and funding the trainee lawyer
- **City of Darebin** for funding support for the East Preston and Northland Youth Outreaches
- **City of Yarra** for funding for the Fitzroy Evening Legal Advice Service and contributing to the legal outreach at the Connie Benn Centre
- **Ethical Jobs** for their matched funding support
- **Federation of Community Legal Centres (VIC)** for funding support via the Integrated Services Fund 2021–2023 for the Darebin Drug Outreach Lawyer Program
- **Commonwealth Government** who fund our Women's Work Without Barriers project and enables our auspice of Voices for Change
- **Court Services Victoria** via the **Neighbourhood Justice Centre** for their contribution towards funding FLS services delivered at the NJC, provision of meeting facilities and support on a range of programs
- **Nelson Alexander Charitable Fund** for support to respond to our IT hardware needs
- **Ramsay Foundation** for funding the 'Lawyers Empowering People' project and for our work to develop a lived experience organisational strategy
- **Victorian Government** for specific grants that support the Yarra Drug Outreach Lawyer Program, Family Law and Family Violence Health Justice Partnerships, Women's Integrated Legal Outreach and the Employment Law Clinic
- **Victorian Legal Services Board Grant Program** for funding the 'Women Transforming Justice' project
- **Victoria Law Foundation** for funding the 'Gendered Injustice' project and the 'Inside the Law: Legal Information for People in Prison' project
- **Collier Charitable Fund** for funding to continue to develop the FLS Leadership Development Program

## Partners

- 3CR Done by Law
- Access Health & Community
- Better Place Australia
- Burnet Institute
- CoHealth
- Council to Homeless Persons
- Croxton School
- Darebin Emergency Relief Network
- Disability Justice Australia
- Queerspace, Drummond Street Services
- Fitzroy Learning Network
- Flat Out
- Harm Reduction Victoria
- Heidelberg Magistrates' Court
- Health Justice Australia
- Human Rights Law Centre
- International Commission for Jurists, Victoria
- JobWatch
- Justice Connect
- Law & Advocacy Centre for Women
- Lawyers for Animals
- Launch Housing
- Liberty Victoria
- The Living Room
- Mercy Hospital for Women
- Melbourne Activist Legal Support
- NEMA Orange Door
- North Richmond Community Health Centre
- NRCH Medically Supervised Injecting Room
- Northland Youth Hub
- Odyssey House
- PANDA
- Philanthropy Australia
- Preston Reservoir Adult Community Education
- RMIT Centre for Innovative Justice
- Social Security Rights Victoria
- Self Advocacy Resource Unit
- St Mary's House of Welcome
- Southside Justice
- St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne
- Tenants Victoria
- VAADA
- VALID
- Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service
- Voices for Change
- Uniting Care ReGen
- Yarra Drug and Health Forum
- Your Community Health
- Youth Projects
- YSAS
- Dr Emma Russell, La Trobe University
- Dr Jennifer Balint, University of Melbourne
- Dr Nesam McMillan, University of Melbourne
- Tamar Hopkins, UNSW
- Scientia Prof Carla Treloar
- Assoc Prof Ted Wilkes AO
- Aunty Vickie Roach
- Aunty Marjorie Thorpe
- Uncle Jack Charles
- Aunty Alma Thorpe
- Julian McMahon AC SC, Victorian Bar
- Julian Murphy, Victorian Bar
- Martin Radzaj, Victorian Bar
- Meghan Fitzgerald, Victorian Bar
- Simon Thomas, Victorian Bar
- Ron Merkel KC, Victorian Bar
- Tom Wood, Victorian Bar
- DLA Piper
- Dentons
- Gagens
- Hall & Willcox
- Herbert Smith Freehills
- King & Wood Mallesons
- Maurice Blackburn
- Phi Finney McDonald

## Substantial pro bono support

- Alyse Mobrici, Victorian Bar
- Anjali Griffiths, Victorian Bar
- Chris Horan KC, Victorian Bar
- Conrad Banasik, Victorian Bar
- Edwina Smith, Victorian Bar
- Emrys Nekvapil, Victorian Bar
- Felicity Gerry QC, Victorian Bar



# Our Services

This year, as FLS recovered from the pandemic, we were able to restore our client-facing services while maintaining flexibility and accessibility. We are grateful for the assistance of our many volunteers and ongoing relationships with agency partners which have enabled us to continue to provide these services.

## Evening Legal Advice Services

We offer free evening legal advice services by phone and from our premises at the Fitzroy Town Hall and Reservoir.

The free evening legal advice service is conducted year-round with significant pro bono support from members of the legal sector (community members, students and practitioners) who volunteer their services to make the law and legal support accessible to members of the community.

### Fitzroy Town Hall

This service is open Monday to Friday evenings by appointment. It is a generalist legal advice service that assists clients with civil, criminal, family, employment and tenancy law.

### Reservoir

This service is open every Tuesday evening and fortnightly on Wednesday evenings.

## Legal Advice and Representation

### Criminal and Family Law practice (Fitzroy Town Hall office)

The practice specialises in criminal law and family law. The practice is funded through grants of legal aid and private client fees with fee structures designed to assist clients ineligible for legal aid.

### Generalist Services (Reservoir office)

We provide assistance to individuals living, working or studying in the City of Darebin through a partnership with Darebin Council, which incorporates outreach services to the East Preston Community Centre and the Northland Youth Hub.

## Outreach Services

We have partnerships with other community organisations to provide legal advice, information and representation services across the Cities of Yarra and Darebin. This year, our outreach services have returned to onsite outreach, and we are once again connecting with our clients face-to-face and reaching those who experience the most barriers to accessing legal assistance.

### Drug Outreach Lawyer Program

The Drug Outreach Lawyer program provides legal services to people who use drugs, assisting with the rehabilitation process and harm minimisation by providing appropriate legal supports to reduce the negative impact of legal problems faced by drug users. The legal support will vary depending on the needs of the person. One off advice may be necessary for one matter where as another person may require extensive court work.

Outreach partners in the City of Yarra include YSAS (Youth Support and Advocacy Services), Living Room (Youth Projects), Inner Space (Co-Health), North Richmond Community Health Centre and Odyssey House. Outreach partners in the City of Darebin include Uniting Care ReGen and YSAS (Youth Support and Advocacy Services).

### Family Violence and Family Law Health Justice Partnerships

We provide assistance to victims/survivors of family violence with family law and family violence matters on an outreach basis through health justice partnerships, including:

- Family law and Family Violence Legal Service - North Richmond Community Health Centre
- LGBTIQA+ Family Violence and Family Law Service - Drummond Street Services
- FLS Legal Health Clinic - Mercy Hospital for Women
- Yarra FLS HJP – Connie Benn Centre, Yarra City
- The NEMA Orange Door

We provide assistance to individuals living, working or studying in the City of Darebin through a partnership with Darebin Council which incorporates outreach services to the East Preston Community Centre and the Northland Youth Hub.

### St Vincent's Hospital Health Justice Partnership

A new pilot partnership with St Vincent's ALERT team, providing a holistic service model of legal services to people who experience homelessness and other systemic disadvantage and require intensive allied health support.

### Women's Integrated Legal Outreach (WILO)

A new pilot program to provide holistic legal services to criminalised women, drawing on our understanding of the common drivers of women's criminalisation, and the co-occurring legal and social needs that women face that either lead to or are a result of their criminalisation. This program provides outreach to agencies who work with criminalised women, including Flat Out.

## Court Services

This year, most of our duty lawyer services were conducted remotely. Our court-based duty lawyers have worked closely with the courts to navigate the most effective ways to continue to provide accessible and high quality legal services to our clients.

### Heidelberg Magistrates' Court

We operate the Darebin Intervention Order Service (DIOS), as part of the Specialist Family Violence Court at Heidelberg Magistrates' Court. We provide a duty lawyer service, inclusive of providing legal advice and representation, to individuals with Family Violence Intervention Order matters listed at this Court. Our service primarily assists Affected Family Members who are victim survivors of family violence, however in matters of where there is a conflict with the Respondent legal services, we assist Respondents. This duty lawyer service is supplemented with assistance to Affected Family Members through a legal outreach at the NEMA Orange Door.

### Neighbourhood Justice Centre

The Neighbourhood Justice Centre (NJC) is Australia's only community justice centre. It is located in Collingwood and services the City of Yarra. The NJC is committed to resolving disputes by addressing the underlying causes of harmful behaviour and tackling social disadvantage. We provide a range of services including:

- legal advice and representation in the following jurisdictions: Magistrates' Court (including the Family Violence Intervention Order List, summary crime), Children's Court, VOCAT and Infringement Court matters;
- assisting with general legal advice to residents from the City of Yarra who attend the NJC; this includes (but is not limited to) advice on matters of criminal law, family law, tenancy, family violence and personal safety; and
- actively contributing to the multi-agency leadership group, to community engagement, community development, community legal education and progress systemic change where appropriate.

## Migrant Employment Law Clinic

The Employment Law Clinic is open to individuals from overseas who have been underpaid or exploited in employment including:

- International students (500 visas);
- People on working holidays (417 and 462 'backpacker' visas);
- Workers invited to Australia through the Temporary Skills Shortage program (TSS visas); and
- Refugee and humanitarian visa-holders.

We assist with issues such as recovery of unpaid wages and entitlements, advice about correct rates of pay, unpaid training, unauthorised deductions from pay, unfair dismissals and breach of general protections laws, sham contracting; and workplace bullying, injuries and discrimination. We do not advise on immigration law.

## Prisoner Advocacy Service

We provide a much-needed service to imprisoned people across the state. Advocating for imprisoned people to have better access to health, information, property rights and generally better conditions continues to form the bulk of the service's work. We also collaborate with other community legal centres and community-based groups who work with imprisoned people to share knowledge and work towards having greater collective impact for our clients.

## Public Interest Work

We work within a community development framework to engage in strategies of empowerment for communities and individuals in their dealings with the law. These strategies include:

- public interest litigation;
- advocacy in areas of policy and law reform;
- partnership building and engagement/collaboration with stakeholders; and
- a wide-reaching community legal education program.

Our staff work across programs to identify trends, legal literacy needs, and law reform priorities for our social justice and advocacy work.

## Publications and Online Resources

We publish and distribute a range of hardcopy and online material including:

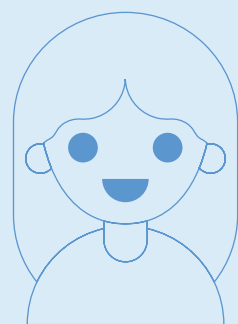
**The Law Handbook (LHB)** – available for sale in hard copy, ebook and individual PDF chapters and free online at <https://fls.org.au/law-handbook/>;

**Activists Rights** – <https://fls.org.au/activist-rights/>;

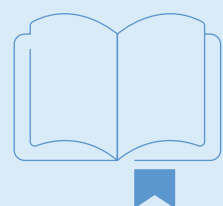
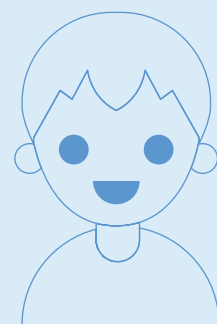
## Financial Counselling

In partnership with Better Place Australia, financial counselling services are provided via the co-location of a financial counsellor at our Fitzroy Town Hall premises.

# Our Impact



**3959**  
clients assisted



**77**

Community Legal Education &  
Community Development activities



More than

**\$600k**

recovered for Employment  
Law Clinic clients since 2017



**320**



volunteers contributed  
their time and expertise

# Our People

## Adam Willson

Senior Drug Outreach Lawyer

## Adrian Snodgrass

Principal Lawyer, Night Service

## Amre Levy

Family Lawyer

## Amy Kirwan

Project Officer

## Anna Caleo

Volunteer Coordinator  
(until June 2022)

## Bethany King

Senior Community Lawyer, NJC

## Brendan Kelly

Finance and Operations Manager

## Deborah Brown

Front Office Support, Reservoir

## Elizabeth Smallwood

Community Outreach Lawyer

## Ella Crotty

Managing Lawyer,  
Family Law and Family Violence  
(until March 2022)

## Elli Bicknell

Project Officer

## Emma Collard

Night Service Admin Officer

## Frances Bain

Managing Lawyer, Criminal  
Outreach & Generalists Services

## Glen Ludbrook

Night Service Coordinator,  
Reservoir

## Grace Pittar

Paralegal, Employment Law  
(until September 2021)

## Hui Zhou

Principal Lawyer,  
Legal Practice

## Jade Lane

Program Coordinator,  
Women's Work Without Barriers  
(from November 2021)

## Jennifer Black

Acting Chief Executive Officer  
(until October 2021)

## Jessica Ness

Volunteer Coordinator  
(from June 2022)

## Joseph Ishow

Community Lawyer,  
Family Law and Family Violence  
(from July 2021)

## Karen Fletcher

Senior Lawyer, Prison Advocacy  
(until October 2021)

## Kathleen O'Callaghan

Outreach Lawyer  
(from February 2022)

## Kristine Olaris

Chief Executive Officer  
(from October 2021)

## Laura Button

Senior Lawyer, Prison Advocacy  
Women's Leadership Program  
Coordinator (until November  
2021)

## Laura Gartland

Client Services &  
Administration Officer

## Lauren Gordon

Senior Community Lawyer

## Linda Waters

Family Violence Lawyer

## Lucy Hopkinson

Senior Women's Criminal  
and Outreach Lawyer  
(from August 2021 until May  
2022)

## Madeleine Lynch

Community Lawyer, Family Law  
and Family Violence

## Madeline White

Community Lawyer, Civil Law  
(until March 2022)

## Mark Rawlings

Night Service Coordinator, Fitzroy

## Matilda Taggart

SFVC Administration Officer  
(until February 2022)  
Lawyer, Family Law and Family  
Violence (from February 2022)

## Megan Pearce

Managing Lawyer, Social Action  
and Public Interest Law

Right: Hui Zhou  
and Elli Bicknell  
presenting Voices  
for Change.





**Meghan Fitzgerald**

Special Counsel

**Miranda Hornung**DOL Program Advocacy Officer  
(until February 2022)**Morgan Nyland**Senior Lawyer,  
Employment Law Clinic**Naomi Saligari**

Law Handbook Editor

**Odette Shenfield**Outreach Lawyer  
(until March 2022)  
Community Lawyer, NJC  
(from March 2022)**Paul Kidd**

Senior Community Lawyer, NJC

**Rafaella Lawrie**Legal Practice Manager  
(until May 2022)  
SFVC Administration Officer  
(from May 2022)**Rebecca Leighton**

Family Law Paralegal

**Rosie Heselev**Community Lawyer, NJC  
(until November 2021)  
Prison Advocacy Lawyer  
(from November 2021)**Sahema Saberi**Trainee Lawyer  
(until January 2022)**Sally Krutsch**Community Lawyer, Family Law  
and Family Violence**Shamila Liyanage**Community Lawyer, Family Law  
and Family Violence  
(until September 2021)  
Managing Lawyer, Family Law  
and Family Violence  
(from September 2021)**Sophie L'Estrange**Community Education and  
Projects Officer**Thea Gibson**

Drug Outreach Lawyer

**Thibaut Clamart**Community Lawyer, NJC  
(from January 2022 until  
February 2022)**Tori Diamond**Legal Practice Manager  
(until May 2022)**Tristan Brumby-Rendell**Trainee Lawyer  
(from February 2022)**Tuvan Vuong**

Finance Officer

**Yasmin Geneva**

Senior Criminal Lawyer

**Dara, Jacqui Bampton, Maya,  
Sara Stilianos, Nina Storey**Women's Leadership Group  
(Until January 2022)**Board of Directors****Claire Febey**

Chair

**Mick Sheehy**

Deputy Chair

**Vera Boston**

(resigned October 2021)

**Chanphyna Bou****Fiona Delahunt****Jeremy Levine****Tony Macvean****Jennifer Tucker****Karri Walker****Board Sub-Committees****Finance, Risk & Audit Committee****Tony Macvean**

Chair

**Vera Boston**

(until October 2021)

**Roslyn Aikman****Peter Loukas****Rebecca Middleton****Naomi Munga****Andrew Webster****Gerry Schembri****People Committee****Fiona Delahunt**

Chair

**Chanphyna Bou****Glenn Caterer****Tim Goodier****Programs & Services Committee****Jeremy Levine**

Chair

**Zeah Behrend****Monique MacRitchie****Mick Sheehy****Rohan Thwaites****Life Members****Sue Bothmann****Brian Collingburn****John Finlayson****Julian Gardner****Tessa Hay****Robin Inglis****Michael Kingston****Henrik Lassen****Trevor Williamson****Brian Wright****Vu Dang****Bruce McBain**

“

In 2020, Darebin CLC and Fitzroy Legal Service merged to bring together two of the longest standing Victorian CLCs in the sector. It is a privilege to work in an organisation that combines such rich institutional, cultural and dedicated histories of engaging with people and law to advance equitable and just social change.

It is good to be part of a team that continues to build on that history and that maintains delivering advice, representation and advocacy to many individual clients who could otherwise not fully or fairly participate in the processes that bring them into contact with police, courts and tribunals.

— Linda

**Below:** FLS senior staff and board members (L to R): Hui Zhou, Fiona Delahunt, Lauren Gordon, Shamila Liyanage, Kristine Olaris, Adrian Snodgrass, Mick Sheehy, Claire Febey, Karri Walker.



# Principal Lawyers' Report

It has been a busy and productive year for FLS's legal practice. We finalised and said a fond goodbye to some projects, evolved others into new iterations, welcomed new ideas, piloted new programs and established new innovative partnerships with local service providers, all against the backdrop of the new world order that is COVID normal.

This year, our lawyers have ridden the wave of moving in and out of lockdowns, maintaining an agility and flexibility to maximise accessibility for clients, while also being aware of health and safety for our organisation and for our community. We have renewed our face-to-face presence in courts across Melbourne, including our duty lawyer services at the Specialist Family Violence Court at Heidelberg and the Neighbourhood Justice Centre, and have returned to face-to-face service at our community-based outreaches.

The transition into a new post-COVID paradigm has been a long one, and will continue to evolve as we learn about the true impacts of the pandemic, including the administration of justice and access to justice impacts that have been faced by our clients. When we reflect on the year that has passed, there are so many lessons, and so many things to celebrate: each client we've been able to assist in small and substantial ways; each time a decision maker has heard about the true impact of a law or policy on our community; each time we've connected with a partner agency and enhanced our practice.

## Some achievements during this period include:

- After four years, we concluded our Women Transforming Justice project. This significant project, led by women with lived experience of criminalisation, helped shape our policy and law reform agenda on bail and women's criminalisation and our service response to women who are criminalised.
- We successfully piloted WILO (Women's Integrated Legal Outreach) to provide a gender-responsive wrap around service for criminalised women.

- We successfully piloted Health Justice Partnerships with St Vincent's and Mercy Hospitals and the Connie Benn Centre.
- We successfully concluded the co-design components of our Lawyers Empowering People project, and developed high-fidelity prototypes of tools that will enhance clients' decision making in legal matters.
- We enhanced our data collection processes, enabling better recording and identification of systemic issues affecting our clients.
- Our teams, across different areas of law, worked closer together, pooling their expertise and providing holistic solutions to clients with complex legal needs.
- We facilitated the giving of evidence of people with lived experience to a variety of bodies, including to the Coroner's Court and to a Parliamentary Inquiry.
- With La Trobe University we published and launched the "Gendered Injustice: The Policing and Criminalisation of Victim-Survivors of Domestic and Family Violence" report. We also worked in partnership with Centre for Innovative Justice and WEst Justice on substantive pieces of research impacting criminalised women, and women experiencing family violence respectively.

Much gratitude to our incredible team of lawyers, paralegals, project and admin workers, and volunteers for their sustained commitment to our clients and community.

**Hui Zhou**  
Principal Lawyer  
Legal Practice

## Night Service

In March this year, after two years of COVID lockdowns, the night service returned to offering face-to-face client contact at our Fitzroy and Reservoir offices. Clients now have the choice when they contact us to speak to a lawyer by phone or in person.

Despite the COVID restrictions the night service assisted 3,064 clients in the 2021-22 financial year.

Night service clients seek help with complex processes at significant times in their lives – family breakdown, eviction, job loss, criminal charges – and the impact of getting the correct advice at the right time can be profound.

We are grateful to our dedicated volunteer lawyers and paralegals who continue to give up their time to assist clients by providing advice about civil, criminal and family law. The night service now has 118 volunteer lawyers and 144 volunteer paralegals donating thousands of hours to help people in need.

Thanks to DLA Piper, Dentons and Lawyers for Animals for supporting the night service throughout the lockdowns.

The administrative team of Em Collard, Charlie Brennan, Jessica Ness, Laura Gartland and Anna Calleo have gone above and beyond in developing new systems for rostering and client intake and fielding enquiries from clients and volunteers.

## Migrant Employment Law Clinic

The Migrant Employment Law Clinic (MELC) was established in 2017 to assist vulnerable migrant workers with claims for unpaid wages, workplace discrimination and harassment and unfair and unlawful dismissal.

This year the MELC represented clients who brought claims for sexual discrimination and harassment, obtained court orders for the recovery of wages, settled multiple underpayment claims and initiated several ongoing claims in the Federal Circuit Court and Family Court in respect of larger underpayment claims seeking penalties against the employer.

The MELC received client referrals from Jobwatch, the Fair Work Ombudsman, Anti-Slavery Australia and the FLS night service. We continue to partner with Hall and Wilcox lawyers who assist us with drafting and preparing claims. The clinic has recovered more than \$600,000 in unpaid wages on behalf of its clients.

**Adrian Snodgrass**  
Principal Lawyer  
Night Service

## Client feedback we've received

“

Never in my life have I dealt with legal experts like the FLS. I cannot believe the work they put in and how empathetic the team are. If you are willing to change your life for the better, and want a team to help you in that journey, please use FLS. I rate the team to be the most intelligent and experts in their field.

“

An amazing group of people who put in an enormous amount of work helping me.

“

The solicitors and lawyers here volunteer their time to help the underprivileged with legal counsel. The matter I needed advice on was a family law matter, and the solicitor that helped me was a family law specialist. His counsel was very professional, wise and useful, and was very much appreciated. I am very glad such a service exists and am very thankful to the volunteers.

“

Thank you for this service – a blessing in my circumstances, and for Bill being patient with my concerns.

“

Have great Handbook online for free or purchase and staff very helpful professional and knowledgeable. A great service for all and always helped in the past.



The lawyers and volunteers of the Criminal Outreach and Generalist Services (COGS) team continued their work across Yarra, Darebin and broader Melbourne in 2021-22, providing legal support and representation (often remotely) across a wide range of issues, through programs long proven – and newly established initiatives.

### Private Practice

Criminal defence has long been a central focus of what we do at FLS – our mission is to achieve the best possible justice outcomes for communities that have historically been overcriminalised and disadvantaged. Our self-funded criminal practice draws on Legal Aid funding to support a greater number of clients in need than would be possible relying solely on core funding, and is also able to provide a low-cost privately funded service for clients who do not qualify for legal aid. The self-funded practice takes referrals from across the state and is focussed on maintaining the high quality of legal work and advocacy that FLS is renowned for.

### Neighbourhood Justice Centre

Celebrating its 15th birthday in 2022, the Neighbourhood Justice Centre is a key resource for community members in the City of Yarra. Its role extends beyond just supporting those with matters before the NJC Magistrates' Court. Uniquely, the NJC delivers true 'community justice', working with community members to collectively problem-solve issues affecting their safety and wellbeing through its peacemaking initiative and community crime prevention programs, and by serving as a focal point for local community planning, as it did in particular during the COVID-19 lockdowns.

Fitzroy Legal Service has played a pivotal role at the NJC since its inception. Lawyers from FLS, together with our colleagues from Victoria Legal Aid, comprise the NJC's dedicated on-site legal team providing duty lawyer and ongoing holistic legal services. The legal team further contributes practitioner insight and expertise towards the operations and strategy of the NJC, and initiates and supports innovative programs promoting access to justice. FLS also draws on its expertise as a locally-based community legal centre to initiate and collaborate with the NJC on a range of community education and development projects.

In 2021-22, FLS's NJC team provided integral support to the NJC to face the challenges of continuing operations in the ongoing pandemic, helping it to quickly pivot and maintain locally-appropriate accessible COVID-safe processes. We contributed

to the development of a new pre-hearing clinic at the NJC, and provided input to the development of a pilot pre-court diversion program. With the return to fully onsite work in 2022, FLS has continued to provide a high level of assistance to people accessing the NJC, while retaining some of the flexibility the courts achieved during the pandemic via tailored technological solutions, such as online hearings. A change in magistrate has helped energise the centre, with a changed perspective and new ideas being trialled. And our team has evolved from a two-person team to three NJC-based lawyers, supported by lawyers from the Family Law and Family Violence team. This has enhanced our ability to provide the best possible advocacy for our clients.

As community lawyers and practitioners of therapeutic justice, FLS remains a strong advocate for and supporter of the NJC model, which strives to address the underlying causes of crime and fulfil the potential of the law to be a healing and regenerative, not merely punitive, institution. We wish the NJC a happy 15th birthday and look forward to supporting its work into the future.



**Right:** FLS NJC staff (L to R): Odette Shenfield, Beth King, Paul Kidd, Tristan Brumby-Rendell.

### St Vincent's Hospital Health Justice Partnership

The Community Outreach Lawyer service commenced its operation in June 2021, starting exclusively as a health-justice partnership with St Vincent's Hospital Complex Care Services with a focus on engaging with clients experiencing homelessness and mental health diagnoses. We continued to attend on-site one day per week at the Assessment, Liaison & Early Referral Team (ALERT) office at St Vincent's, and one day per fortnight alongside the Complex Care team at North Richmond Community Health, including during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have assisted clients with a range of legal matters across criminal law, tenancy, infringements, family violence and VOCAT. Through the integration of legal and health services, clients benefit from close collaboration and joint outreach, with appointments being conducted in clients' homes, other service locations, our own office and over the phone.

### Generalist Team

Based largely in Reservoir, the Generalist team continues its holistic work with clients across a wide range of legal areas, providing representation in crime, infringements, VOCAT and tenancy, and venturing into guardianship and administration and DSP and NDIS appeals at the AAT.

Throughout the pandemic we maintained community partnerships through our outreach service within Darebin, working with various groups through Darebin Emergency Relief Network, and as restrictions lifted, resuming onsite presence at the Northland Youth Hub, among others. We look forward to working with the Darebin Council to ensure the support for vulnerable and young people in Darebin continues.

“

Working at Fitzroy Legal Service for me was about ensuring the great work the founders put in continues, and access to justice for those most vulnerable in our community is still possible.

– Joe



**Above:** Andrew Chan, Manager - ALERT, with Bess Smallwood, FLS outreach lawyer at St Vincent's.



## Happy 21st Birthday to the Drug Outreach Lawyer (DOL) Program!

It has been another very busy year working with our many health partners to assist vulnerable clients, who use drugs, with their legal issues. A range of issues involving everything from Myki fines to serious indictable matters in the County Court and everything in between. There has also had been opportunity to collaborate with the SAPIL team and advocate for change regarding bail reform, stigma and the health services within the prison system who use drugs. Here's to another 21 years and more!!

### DOL

The Fitzroy Legal Service Drug Outreach lawyer is a significant precursor to a wave of justice health projects that have followed in recent years. The genesis for the establishment of the FLS Drug Outreach Lawyer position lay in the heroin glut that had besieged Fitzroy and Collingwood in the early 2000's. The significant strain of a very large population of substance users being processed through the justice system's revolving door highlighted obvious and continuing flaws in both our justice and our health systems.

The establishment of this innovative approach had clear links with the then recently created Yarra Drug and Health Forum which brought together a range of local entities, including residents, police, health services, consumers and workers across many fields, all struggling to make sense of how to reduce the heroin harm that was besetting individuals and the local community alike. As the issues intensified, the Victorian Government established what was known as 'Local initiative funding' to meet local needs and make some headway into addressing these harms. Within this context FLS staff saw clear opportunity to increase service capacity to enhance its legal work by seeking funding to establish an Outreach Legal position. The very clear opportunities arising from outreach work have clearly exceeded expectations. Through the dedicated efforts of specialist focussed staff, endeavours have sought to achieve not only justice outcomes, but a range of other social and health outcomes including on many occasions saving lives. The FLS Drug Outreach Lawyer project has over many years clearly led the way in what can be achieved with focussed legal interventions, achieving significant benefits for extremely stigmatised and marginalised individuals and their needs in a holistic and meaningful way.

**Above:** Adam Willson and Saade Melki

**Below:** Commissioner for Children and Young People Bernie Geary presenting Hui Zhou the Yarra Drug and Health Forum Worker of the Year award, alongside co-recipient Kasey Elmore.



### FLFV Team

Over the year the team has expanded its breadth of services, and focussed on collaboration, capacity building, advocacy and delivering safe and adaptive family law and family violence legal services, noting COVID-19 was particularly challenging for those experiencing family violence in the communities we serve.

Last year over 60% of legal matters in the Fitzroy Legal Service day practice were family violence matters. We delivered a staggering 1,372 family violence duty lawyer services across the Neighbourhood Justice Centre Magistrates' Court and the Specialist Family Violence Court (SFVC) sitting at Heidelberg Magistrates' Court. Our family law and family violence team worked in collaboration with the SFVC project team at Victoria Legal Aid as part of various consultations, to contribute to the development of the model, its safety and accessibility for court users, as well as best practice frameworks for practitioners.

Using hybrid modes of remote and onsite service delivery, we provided family violence and family law outreach as part of our ongoing health justice partnerships (HJPs) with North Richmond Community Health Centre, the NEMA Orange Door, and Queerspace. In September 2021, we re-enlivened a partnership with the Mercy Hospital for Women which was an iteration of a former Darebin CLC HJP. In February, pursuant to the award of a Yarra City 2022 Annual Grant, we commenced a HJP with the Connie Benn Early Learning Centre and the City of Yarra Family, Youth and Maternal Child and Health Services, which built upon valued relationships with these stakeholders formed through previous projects.

The team maintained a substantive family law and family violence caseload and were engaged to act in complex Federal Circuit Court and Family Court of Australia parenting matters, Family Dispute Resolution mediations, and Family Violence Contested Hearings. In September 2021 we launched a Family Law Small Property Pilot program as an initiative to address glaring barriers to legal assistance for those seeking fair financial outcomes in the family law system. The program is tailored for people who experience intersectional disadvantage, have limited assets pools, and/or significant debts, and primarily to those victim survivors of family violence who have been subject to financial abuse.

Drawing from our collective expertise, in February 2022, we collaborated with the SAPIL team to make a submission into the consultation on the Draft National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-23.

### Case Study

Following, a family violence incident at the family home, Anne\* attended a police station to make a report. The other party also went to the station at the same time as her. Arising from interviews given to the police, the police determined Anne was the person most in need of protection and they made an application for a Family Violence Intervention Order (FVIO).

Anne was referred to FLS for legal assistance as part of one of our duty lawyer services on the day of a court hearing. A full no contact FVIO was made on an interim basis for Anne, which included the children to the relationship who had been exposed to family violence.

After this, Anne received correspondence from the other party's lawyer, regarding a property settlement. She had remained living in the former family home, while the other party had been excluded due to the FVIO. An internal referral was made for assistance as part of the property pilot.

The other party subsequently sought time unsupervised and overnight time with the children, and we engaged to assist with parenting matters as well. The other party initiated proceedings in the family law courts and our lawyer was engaged to act for Anne. Our lawyer prepared extensive response documents to file in these proceedings. When the family law matters were heard in Court, our lawyer appeared, and interim orders were made for supervised time only between the children and the other party, and a future hearing date was set.

Some months later the other party made a cross application for a FVIO against Anne. Our lawyer represented Anne, and alerted the Court to history of family violence perpetrated against her, and no interim order was made against her.

Later still, the other party made a further statement to police arising from the family violence incident, and Anne was arrested and charged with an offence. While supported by our criminal law team, our lawyer gave Anne advice prior to her interview with police, and thereafter engaged to act for her in the criminal matter. Our lawyer advocated to police regarding the misidentification and provided context to the incident and related FVIO matters.

When the FVIO matters and criminal matters returned to Court, our lawyer was able to advocate for Anne and make submissions that she had been misidentified as a perpetrator of family violence. The other party's application for an FVIO against Anne was withdrawn, and the FVIO for her and the children's' protection was made final for a 2-year period. The criminal matter was adjourned to a later date and FLS will continue to advocate for Anne.

(\*not client's actual name)



The Social Action and Public Interest Law team have been working on a number of large projects and cases that affect our community. In addition to our prison advocacy and advice line, which serviced over 100 clients in custody and their families, we also focussed on speaking with government and other agencies around the need for bail reform.

Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the Criminal Justice System

In this submission, we focussed on how criminalisation and incarceration harms our clients and their families and undermines the safety of our community. We made recommendations to address the drivers of criminalisation and incarceration. In keeping with this focus, the recommendations in this submission are directed towards:

- reducing our reliance on policing and the criminalisation of social and health problems
- building public housing not prisons
- expanding the availability of community-based and integrated services
- diverting people from contact with the criminal legal system and incarceration
- reforming punitive bail laws and enhancing community-based sentencing

We also facilitated the giving of evidence by women with lived experience of the system, to enable the Inquiry to hear firsthand the ways in which the system failed and caused harm to these women.

Djab Wurrung Trees Case

“

Careful when you walk through this land because a child was born here. Can you feel it?

– Uncle Archie Roach

On 26 October 2020, the ‘directions tree’, a hundreds year old tree of profound cultural significance to custodians of Djab (Djab) Wurrung country, was cut down by Roads Victoria, resulting in protests, and expressions of grief and rage from many including community leaders.

FLS facilitated a rapid referral to Phi Finney McDonald and continued to work towards urgent injunctions and declarations in an expert consultant capacity, along with counsel Ron Merkel KC, Thomas Wood, Edwina Smith and Julian Murphy. FLS took the role of facilitating community engagement and evidence gathering from Djab Wurrung custodians, including custodians who had been living at the site of the birthing trees to protect them from destruction over the course of two years.

Shortly before the trial began, the State provided a letter indicating they would no longer rely on the 2013 cultural heritage management plan in place for the development. Instead, they would generate a new cultural heritage management plan with the new registered Aboriginal party for the area, the Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation. This significantly altered the proceedings which continued into the following year and ultimately resulted in the Hon Justice Forbes delivering a judgement that there was no longer valid subject matter underpinning the dispute. In other words, because the State was no longer relying on the cultural heritage management plan, Justice Forbes ruled that there was no longer an issue in dispute.

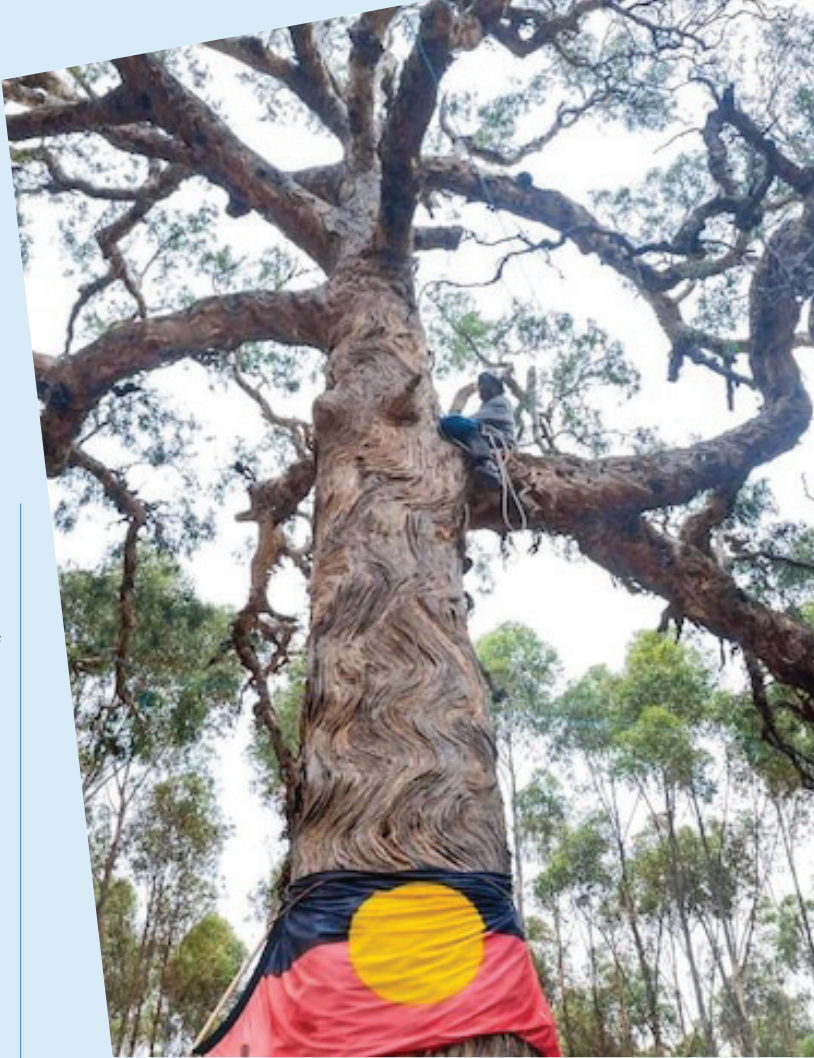
FLS is grateful for the opportunity to work on this proceeding of significant importance to many Aboriginal families from Fitzroy and Collingwood with roots in the Western District, and in the ongoing fight for recognition of irreparable harm and the continuation of harm inflicted by the State on the generations of people deriving from the western districts.

We thank Aunty Alma Thorpe for her generosity and patience in providing a deep historical perspective spanning over one hundred and fifty years (the massacres and removals on Djab Wurrung country, to the Framlingham and Lake Condah missions of the Western District, to Collingwood/ Fitzroy gathering and reconnection places) to inform the proceeding. We would also specifically like to pay respects Uncle Archie Roach, and his vocal public support for this work as a healing and reconnecting opportunity for the local Aboriginal community and the Victorian and Australian community more broadly. Vale Uncle Archie.

“

Baby girl rubbed in the ashes by the billabong, Where she was born, So that she will return... Should I walk softly in a garden of children? Or scream like a madman and go rushing in? No, I’ll remember all the mothers that lay here, And went through the suffering when new life begins.

– Uncle Archie Roach



## Veronica Nelson Inquest

In 2020 FLS was granted interested party status in the Inquest into the Passing of Veronica Nelson. Veronica was a Gunditjmara, Dja Dja Wurrung, Wiradjuri, Yorta Yorta woman who passed at the age of 37 years while imprisoned on remand in Dame Phyllis Frost Centre for low level offences.

Veronica was a much-loved local Aboriginal woman, recognised for her kindness, loyalty, wisdom, and as a holder of cultural knowledge and wisdom. Veronica is survived by her partner Uncle Percy Lovett, mother Aunty Donna Nelson, other elders, siblings, and a large network of family who relied on her and loved her. We express condolences to all affected by her passing under undeniably tragic circumstances.

The basis of FLS's engagement in the proceeding was to provide harm reduction expertise based on the Drug Outreach Lawyer (DOL) program (which has been operating in the local areas for twenty-one years), and the expertise developed through the lived experience program 'Women Transforming Justice' and partnership for service delivery for women impacted by remand processes with the Law and Advocacy Centre for Women. The focus of FLS's role was substantially confined to prevention related concerns, and FLS worked extremely hard to ensure a range of expertise would be available to the Court to enable recommendations that could underpin broad reform to prevent future deaths in similar circumstances.

Evidence was received by the Court from a large number of Aboriginal elders – Aunty Judy Atkinson (author of "Trauma Trails"), Associate Professor Uncle Ted Wilkes, Aunty Marjorie Thorpe (Commission for the Victorian "Bringing Them Home Report"), and Aunty Vickie Roach (author, academic, ex prisoner of Dame Phyllis Frost Centre, ex drug user).

FLS staff member Adam Wilson, senior DOL, provided written evidence to the Court and was part of the Administration of Justice Conclave during the inquest.

FLS also put forward experts Dr Nico Clark (director of the North Richmond Medically Supervised Injecting Centre) and Dr Carla Treloar (expert on the prevalence and impact of stigma against people who use drugs in the provision of health services).

FLS would like to express thanks to all witnesses who gave their time so generously out of respect to Veronica and the critical nature of the issues that gave rise to her death.

We would also like to acknowledge Aunty Vickie Roach, whose cultural expertise as lived experience of the criminal justice system and imprisonment in Dame Phyllis Frost Centre was given great weight and respect in the court proceedings. We thank Aunty Vickie, for her tireless work in fighting for the rights of Aboriginal women captured by the prison system. We are honoured to work with Aunty Vickie, and reproduce a poem authored by her below.

### Patience

We are of this time

Yet we are not

For we are timeless, ageless

And patient

Our bodies comprising

The dna of flora, fauna, rock and stone

And the waters of our rivers and  
oceans are restless

But we are patient

Constructed by this timeless land

From this timeless land

Of this timeless land

We are patient

Our Ancestors watch

As you cage us in cells  
made of stone and metal

Fashioned from the very elements  
of the dna in our blood

Elements that made you rich,  
you think we won't be missed

You're wrong, we are patient

We are ageless, timeless and we've  
always been here

With our Ancestors beside us,  
we have no fear

The end of our Ancestor's patience  
draws near

**Vickie Roach**

13 March 2022

“

Working at FLS is very interesting and satisfying work. Achieving positive outcomes for clients can be particularly rewarding. This is especially when you know it will have a real and meaningful impact on the client's life, and without access to legal representation, the outcome may have been different. It's inspiring to work alongside colleagues with similar values and who are committed to social justice.

– Sally





# Case Studies

## Holistic Service Provision through STV's HJP Program

Robin\* (a pseudonym) is an Aboriginal man who was referred to FLS's Community Outreach Lawyer (CoL) through St Vincent's Hospital's Complex Care Services.

At the time Robin was referred he was in transitional accommodation, however had previously been homeless for several years. He has mental health diagnoses of complex post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, psychosis and polysubstance use. Robin had multiple outstanding criminal matters with no legal representation arranged (one of which was only 2 weeks away). Robin also had nearly \$5000 in outstanding fines.

The health and legal services worked very closely to support Robin. Protocols in place enabled St Vincent's nurses to facilitate client consent forms and even before meeting Robin for the first time the CoL was fully briefed about Robin's personal history, needs and services he engaged with. When Robin missed a criminal court date due to a relapse, the CoL contacted Robin's nurse who located Robin and supported him to attend at both FLS and Robin's GP's offices to get back on track. When it came time for sentencing, the nurse provided a fantastic, detailed support that was commented on specifically by the Magistrate for its helpfulness.

All of Robin's legal matters were successfully resolved. His outstanding criminal matters were consolidated and he was sentenced to a therapeutic Community Corrections Order with no community work hours. His fines have also been withdrawn following a successful special circumstances application made on his behalf.

Within a few months of working with Robin, he made a disclosure to the lawyer about historical sexual abuse he experienced as a child. The CoL referred Robin to CASA. Robin has commented that between the Complex Care Services, his GP, and the CoL, this is the first time he has felt properly supported, which empowered him to make the disclosure. The CoL is now assisting Robin to apply for victim's compensation.

(\*not client's actual name)

## Holistic Service Provision through the newly refunded WILO Program

Steph\* (a pseudonym) was referred to WILO by Flat Out. She was charged with an assault. At the time of the charge Steph had no housing and was sleeping rough in a public place. Her charge directly relates to her vulnerability as a person sleeping in public.

Steph had served multiple periods in custody in the past and since her most recent release from custody had not been able to secure safe and stable accommodation. WILO has worked closely with Flat Out to provide wraparound legal and case management support for Steph, with WILO representing her in her criminal matter and Flat Out providing assertive outreach to assist Steph to address issues that would allow her to obtain and maintain bail. WILO has also worked with Flat Out to enable Steph's complex circumstances be relayed to court, through a comprehensive court support letter.

Since engagement with Flat Out and WILO, Steph has been supported to access housing, has received mental health support and is receiving counselling with respect to her alcohol and other drug dependence. She has also commenced on NDIS and is able to access additional psychosocial supports. This stabilisation of Steph's circumstances has also enabled her to engage with legal processes and to address outstanding legal matters, such as reunification with her children.

“

I am proud to work for an organisation that listens and responds to needs of people in the community.

Our work ranges from legal casework, providing in court services, community outreach services, to broader advocacy and preparing policy submissions; all of which is to ensure that everyone has access to justice and that we are active on issues that affect our clients. This also reflected in our workplace culture, which in my experience has always been about empowerment and inclusivity.

— Matilda



**Above:** Rosie Heselev, Lawyer, Prison Advocacy Program.

**Below:** Trainee Lawyer Tristan Brumby-Rendell at his admission to practice.

# Projects

## Voices for Change

**Voices for Change (VFC)** is an independent self-advocacy and peer support group for people with acquired brain injury (ABI) and criminal justice lived experience. The group is auspiced by Fitzroy Legal Service.

Voices for Change provides its members with the skills, support, resources, and confidence to speak up, have their voice heard, and use their voice for change.

Voices for Change speaks to government and community groups to help:

- Address the discrimination and poor treatment that people with ABI experience in the justice system
- Educate the community about ABI and experiences in the justice system

## What have we been working on?

In 2022 our members have:

- Spoken to new Victorian police recruits and senior sergeants about what it is like to have an ABI
- Spoken to magistrates and court staff at the Neighbourhood Justice Centre about how the court system can be more inclusive of people with ABI (attendance of 65 court staff)
- Consulted with the Just Voices project, led by the Centre for Innovative Justice, on three occasions in relation to training correctional staff to be more inclusive of people with disability
- Presented to the Disability Justice Operational Forum, convened by the Department of Justice and Community Safety, on how policy makers can include people with an ABI
- Presented to the Australian Progress Fellowship Teaching Community about the importance of self-advocacy (attendance of 20 students)
- Attended one-on-one drop-in support sessions with the project worker to get support with
- Skills like applying for passports and completing police checks for volunteer work
- Developed the required skills to organise peer support meetings, including sending out meeting invitations, zoom links, responding to emails from members and starting zoom meeting
- The group's membership has also increased with two new members joining 2022

## Work Without Barriers

Work Without Barriers is an innovative project that utilises codesign methodologies to create safe, flexible and inclusive employment opportunities for people experiencing structural and systemic barriers.

During the project's inception, we hosted codesign workshops with people with identified lived experiences to understand employment barriers and the challenges associated with finding and maintaining stable employment, including workplace stigma and discrimination. The insights generated in these workshops are woven throughout Work Without Barriers' design, enabling the project to centre lived and living experience and recognise its value as a unique form of professional expertise with significant value to the community legal sector.

Over the coming year, we will recruit women and gender-diverse people into 12-month paid employment placements at Fitzroy Legal Service. Participants will work alongside our existing team to gain workplace skills and experience, receive tailored training and support, and provide expertise to strengthen and sustain our capacity to centre lived experience in everything we do. In particular, we will recruit people with experiences of criminalisation and incarceration, homelessness, alcohol and drugs, and/or contact with Child Protection.

As we begin recruiting and onboarding participants, we proudly report that Work Without Barriers is both designed and led by people with these lived experiences. We extend our heartfelt gratitude and recognition to Nadia Gavin, Mel Mueller, Gaby Bee and Liza Desfouli for codesigning the project with us.

### Jade Lane

Program Coordinator,  
Women's Work Without Barriers

“

Fitzroy Legal Service provides essential legal advice and representation to members of the community that may not otherwise be able to obtain advice/representation due to their socio-economic position, cultural or linguistic background or other barriers. Our presence at outreaches and at court through the duty list gives members of the community the opportunity to seek and obtain legal advice in circumstances where it may not otherwise be provided, or even identified as a need.

– **Madeleine**



**Right:** (L to R) Anna Calleo, Brendan Kelly and Kristine Olaris clear the office of old files.



# Volunteer Program

During lockdown we implemented a changeover from our outdated booking system to a new and improved one, helping to streamline new appointments during lockdown and working from home restrictions. This new process, along with the introduction of Airtable into the client booking system, has assisted us to manage the administrative load of bookings post lockdown. The Better Impact system was also introduced to coordinate volunteer rosters and manage inductions.

Following the easing of restrictions towards the end of 2021, FLS saw its volunteers return to the office for the long-awaited face-to-face work to begin again. We also hosted a very successful volunteer week celebration at the Provincial Hotel. Our CEO Kristine Olaris spoke at the event, thanking the volunteers for their contribution to FLS. There were also a number of awards given out to thank our dedicated volunteer base. One of our long-term volunteers Vu Dang celebrated his 10th year with us and in return was given a lifetime membership to FLS.

Our number one priority was and is to reengage with and encourage our volunteer base back to FLS as our annual feedback survey showed that some volunteers were still feeling the isolation of lockdown. Moving forward, the goals we have set out to achieve for the volunteer program include:

1. Increase face-to-face volunteer attendance
2. More training, support and opportunities for new and current volunteers
3. Create a tighter, more connected culture within the volunteer base

**Jessica Ness**  
Volunteer Coordinator

“

**Hi, I'm Jess.**

After Anna left FLS in June, I have stepped into the role of Volunteer Coordinator. I have loved being a part of this organisation and managing such a dedicated volunteer base. I look forward to what is yet to come.

Thanks to the hard work of my predecessor the online volunteer portal, Better Impact, has assisted me to better support the large volunteer base here at FLS with the more efficient rostering and management of volunteer shifts.



## Volunteer Activity

Category	Activity	Hours	Volunteers	Average
Legal Advice Clinic (Night Service-Fitzroy)	Admin Assistant	150.00	8	18.75
	Lawyer (with PC)	122.75	23	5.34
	Lawyer (with PC) from 14/6/23	113.75	27	4.21
	Paralegal	146.50	17	8.62
	Paralegal Assist from 14/6/22	80.55	14	5.75
	<b>Category Total Hours</b>	<b>613.55</b>		
Legal Advice Clinic (Night Service - Reservoir)	Admin Assistant	3.00	1	3.00
	Lawyer (with PC)	24.25	4	6.06
	Paralegal	50.00	5	10.00
	<b>Category Total Hours</b>	<b>77.25</b>		
Day Service – General	Admin Support: Fitzroy Town Hall	153.50	10	15.35
	Project Support Officer (LEPP)	2.83	2	1.42
	Project Support Officer (Voices for Change)	5.50	1	5.50
	Project Support Officer (Women's Work without Barriers)	32.08	1	32.08
	<b>Category Total Hours</b>	<b>193.91</b>		
Internships & Placements	Crime, Outreach, Generalist Services	296.50	4	74.13
	Family Law & Family Violence Team	112.50	1	112.50
	Leo Cussen PLT Placement	56.00	1	56.00
	Neighbourhood Justice Centre	139.50	2	69.75
	RMIT - Professional Writing & Editing	48.00	1	48.00
	Social Action & Public Interest Team	133.50	2	66.75
	<b>Category Total Hours</b>	<b>786.00</b>		
Phone Advice Service	Criminal Law Matters	258.00	13	19.85
	Employment Law Matters	134.00	8	16.75
	Family Law Matters	267.00	11	24.27
	General Civil Law Matters	495.00	31	15.97
	IVO Matters	51.00	4	12.75
	Pro Bono Assist	121.50	11	11.05
	Tenancy Law Matters	90.00	6	15.00
	<b>Category Total Hours</b>	<b>1416.50</b>		
Uncategorised Activities	General Law Clinic - Paralegal	2.00	1	2.00
	<b>Category Total Hours</b>	<b>2.00</b>		

Category	Activity	Hours	Volunteers	Average
Night Service - Fitzroy	Law Clinic - Additional Lawyer	87.00	12	7.25
	Law Clinic - Administration Assistant	117.25	10	11.73
	Law Clinic - Lawyer (PC)	190.00	33	5.76
	Law Clinic - Paralegal	255.87	37	6.92
	Law Clinic - Phone Advice Service	958.00	43	22.28
	Law Clinic - Shadow Shift	18.00	4	4.50
	Migrant Employment Law Clinic	69.00	9	7.67
	Night Service Intake Officer	353.00	14	25.21
	Paralegal, COVID Tenancy, Debt & Employment Clinic	297.50	3	99.17
	Phone Appointments during Lockdown (unscheduled)	33.50	7	4.79
	<b>Category Total Hours</b>	<b>2379.12</b>		
Crime, Outreach & Generalist Services	NJC Paralegal Support Officer	298.50	4	74.63
	Paralegal; Criminal Lawyer	128.00	1	128.00
	Paralegal; Drug Outreach Lawyers	435.50	5	87.10
	Paralegal; Generalist Lawyer/s	332.50	4	83.13
	Paralegal; Women's Crim & Outreach	23.00	2	11.50
	<b>Category Total Hours</b>	<b>1217.50</b>		
Family Law & Family Violence Services	Paralegal; FLFV Team	240.00	6	40.00
	<b>Category Total Hours</b>	<b>240.00</b>		
Social Action & Public Interest Law Team	Paralegal; Prison Advocacy Program	171.50	2	85.75
	Paralegal; SAPIL Support	7.00	1	7.00
	Paralegal; SAPIL Team	87.00	3	29.00
	<b>Category Total Hours</b>	<b>265.50</b>		
<b>TOTAL HOURS</b>		<b>7191.33</b>		



Some quotes from our volunteer base...

“

I've enjoyed the times when the clinic is working at a fast pace. A highlight has been the positive feedback when a nervous client may arrive tense and then leave more at ease and grateful. I believe our first impressions set the tone and I have taken great pride in welcoming clients and helping them settle in. I am enjoying the sharing of knowledge within the team and the fact that we all play a role in helping achieve the objectives of the clinic.

“

It feels satisfying to help someone who needs assistance with the law. Especially in criminal matters when the accused is being charged, and he or she does not know what to do and who to contact.

“

Being part of FLS is a blessing as I am an unemployed lawyer and being able to practice is great. I really enjoy meeting the clients, working with the principal, paralegals and admin. I really enjoy being able to help people with their matters.

“

The staff and volunteers are so friendly and inviting. The working atmosphere is great. As a beginner, I appreciate the patience and kindness I have received.

“

I've only worked one shift but everyone was so lovely and eager to help me learn!

“

A recent case where pensioner from Euroa after having exhausted the legal options for removing another unit's air-conditioning compressor from her land, solved the issue by parking her garbage bins in front of it to render it inoperable. The owners were only allowed onto her land if they agreed to move the compressor. Good clear thinking from a resourceful rural pensioner.

“

Thank you for the continued opportunities. Besides my chance to help others in desperate need, I also get the chance to learn from different cases. I am very grateful to Adrian for his dedication and his readiness to always assist when I need assistance, which he provides with a very calm mind.

“

Volunteering at Fitzroy Legal Service as a paralegal has provided me with a valuable insight into the diverse challenges faced by members of the community. It has been enjoyable working alongside other paralegals and lawyers who have had different life experiences, and the ability to understand first-hand the important role FLS plays in providing an invaluable service to the community has been amazing! Every shift is a learning opportunity and I feel very lucky to have this volunteering experience.

“

My time volunteering at Fitzroy Legal Service has been fantastic. No two shifts are the same, and clients present with a broad variety of issues which makes for an excellent learning experience. Volunteering has broadened my general legal skill set and has strengthened my knowledge of different areas of law. I have also been able to develop a good understanding of how to better understand and mitigate the challenges many people experience when trying to access the justice system. Giving time to FLS is a unique and worthwhile opportunity and I feel grateful that I am able to support the community in this way.

“

I volunteer as a lawyer with the night service as it has allowed me to expand my knowledge of different practice areas. I like volunteering in this role because I get to assist different clients. I may work in family law, criminal law and tenancy law all in one night. The people I work with are passionate about the work they do. Providing pro bono legal services has shown me the importance of the work of the legal assistance sector.

“

Volunteering at the Fitzroy Legal Service has been a really rewarding and enjoyable experience. It is a really great way of complementing my studies, of putting what I have learned into practice, to gain new skills and knowledge, as well as exposing me to a variety of legal issues across many areas of law. It has been an excellent way to meet and network with lawyers and law students. I really enjoy the opportunity to give back to the community and make a positive difference in the lives of the vulnerable and disadvantaged, while working in a friendly, welcoming and supportive environment.

# Volunteers

We acknowledge all the individuals below and any others who have contributed to Fitzroy Legal Service in a volunteer capacity in 2021–2022

## A

Emily Abdilla  
Cjay Aksoyoglu  
Loren Alderuccio  
Dalton Alexander  
Carol Andrades  
Alexandra Aodish  
Zelie Appel  
Paul Arnold  
James Arthur  
Heather Atkins

## B

Georgia Barendse  
Grace Baty  
Henry Bayliss  
Jessica Bazina  
Mark Beaver  
Tai Bell-Liu  
Jack Bennett  
Naz Besavend  
Phillipa Bezas  
Ella Bilton-gough  
Isabelle Binsted  
Aswinee Bissoonauth  
Jennifer Black  
Nicola Bordas  
Tom Borland  
Mariette Bou-Samra  
Grace Bowran-Burge  
Angelica Brigandi  
Isabel Britten-Jones

Laura Brooks  
Rosemary Brooks  
Oscar Brown  
Sophie Buckland  
Christopher Byass

## C

Christina Cane  
Anna Cao  
Janice Chan  
Mike Chaplin  
Nikita Chappell  
Anna Chen  
Daniel Chen  
Esther Chen  
Nate Cheng  
Alice Chernishoff  
Laine Chew  
Raymond Cima  
Thibaut Clamart  
Jacob Clancy  
Sam Clarke  
Millie Clayton  
Liza Clerehan  
Kiara Colantuono  
Courtney Colclough  
Freya Collins Hallahan  
Ben Comerford  
Alex Connolly  
Patrick Costello  
Tahli Craven  
Jessica Crawford

Damien Cremean  
Stephen Cremean  
Grace Cribbes  
Alyssa Croce  
Julie Cui  
Hollie Curtis

## D

Laura D'Aprano  
Claire Dagge  
Matthew Daly  
Nam Dang  
Vu Dang  
Rhia Davies  
Rachel Davis  
Mary De Guzman  
Sarah De Salis  
Nelson Deng  
Brett Denton  
Arusha Dhawan  
Angela Di Carluccio  
Natalie Di Pasquale  
Eve Dickenson  
Michael Dickey  
Phoebe Ding  
Sammy Dixon  
Rebecca Dodd  
Chelsea Doyle  
Teresa Drecala  
Harvey Duckett

## E

Gabrielle Ebeling

Georgia Egan-Griffiths  
Jack Erickson  
Aaron Evans  
Haseeba Faizy  
Zoe Farrell  
James Farrugia  
Ruth Fathers  
Luka Filips  
Alice Fletcher  
Karen Fletcher  
Nuria Florentino

## G

Alessandra Galletti  
Mimma Angelica Garipoli  
Fiona Garton  
Susan Gatford  
Phoebe Gawin  
Emily George  
Wendy George  
Roberto Gerrard-Martinez  
Tiffany Gibbons  
Isabella Gillam  
John Ginnane  
Troy Gittos  
Jai Glennon  
Chris Goddard  
Eva Goodman  
Olivia Grabau  
Lisa Greal  
Ella Greedy  
Philip Gruszka  
Samantha Guo

## H

Ben Hall  
Maille Halloran  
Susan Hamilton-Green  
Saniya Handa  
Gary Hansell  
Ruth Hansen  
Emilie Haranas  
Morgan Hartley-Marschner  
James Hastings  
Thenu Herath  
Alex Hewitt  
Lisa Higgins

Henry Ho  
Irina Hochwald-Jones  
Brittney Hodges  
Quinn Hogan  
Grace Hong  
Winona Horton  
Shannon Hubert  
Ross Hutchins

## I

Victor Ison

## J

Patrick Jarrold  
Amanda Johnson  
Annabelle Jones

## K

Lauren Kapp  
Luke Karakas  
Celil Kardaslar  
Marin Karlos  
Jessica Kassab  
Malek Kazimi  
Michal Kadem  
Jen Keene-McCann  
Louise Kelly  
James Kempster  
Anusha Kenny  
Si Sinem Ketenci  
Joshua Khaw  
Rasha Khoweiss  
Alex Kim  
Daesung Kim  
Jack Kneale  
Nicole Kotsopoulos  
Georgia Koutzoumis  
Anamaria Krunes  
Kerry Ktenas  
Akaash Kumar  
Sanj Kumar  
Sharlene Kuruppuarachchi

## L

Alex Larocca  
Paul Latimer  
Yeann Law  
Eric Lay  
Rebecca Leighton  
Bill Leung

John Leung  
Claudia Levings  
Emily Lewis  
Vivien Lim  
Jessica Liu  
Raymond Lobo  
Glen Ludbrook  
Peter Lynch

## M

Angus Mackey  
Meg Macri  
Monique MacRitchie  
Ananyaa Mahajan  
Troy Maher  
Eaman Mahmoud  
Cheenam Mak  
Karen Mak  
Danijel Malbasa  
Joe Malcolm  
Vanessa Manfrin  
Joshua Markar  
Dru Marsh  
Allie Marshall  
Angelie (Joy) Marshall  
Cass Martin  
Rebecca Martin  
Caroline Marton  
Bruce McBain  
Brigid McCarthy  
Matthew McCarthy  
Georgia McCormick  
Alice McDonald  
Aoife McDonald  
Caitlin McDonough  
Benjamin McGrath  
Liam McLellan  
Kennedy McMaster  
Danie Mellas  
Anton Mifsud  
Leisha Millanta  
Alice Miniou  
Hugo Miric  
Cameron Moir  
Anna Molihan  
Ella Monaghan  
Dhiman Mondal



Adrienne Monger  
 Rose Montgomery  
 Christine Moore  
 Darren Moore  
 Alana Morgante  
 Jeemaan Mougharbel  
 Tamara Mrkic  
 Katie Murphy  
 Odessa Mykytowycz

**N**

Anna Nalpantidis  
 Gabriel Ng  
 Daniel Nguyen  
 Andrew Norris  
 Morgan Nyland

**O**

Isabel O'Connor  
 Eris O'Donnell  
 Hayden O'Halloran  
 Georgina O'Leary  
 Andelka Obradovic  
 Victoria Ocuneva  
 Barbara Osafo-Kwaako

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Andrew Papaleo  
 Losa Pegler  
 Nethmi Perera  
 Tim Peyton  
 Meaghan Philp  
 Sasha Ponniah  
 Laura Portbury  
 Sam Porz  
 Christina Potts  
 Nadia Pradolín  
 Max Pratt  
 Grace Prendergast Kruger  
 Tamara Preuss  
 Olivia Puglisi

**R**

Naveen Raghavan  
 Avanthi Raju  
 Mahindra Ramani  
 Gurdial Singh Ranjit Singh  
 Cate Read  
 Caitlin Reed  
 Monique Rettore

Scott Riches  
 Yasmin Robertson  
 Michaela Romas  
 Fiona Rothville  
 Sam Rowe  
 Ilia Roytberg

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Sarah Sajinovic  
 Saira Saleem  
 Martin Samyia  
 Simran Sandhu  
 Ashvin Sandra Segaran  
 Lisa Santos  
 Anisha Sarib  
 Nathan Savundra-Shepherd  
 Karl Schaffarczyk  
 William Scheidlinger  
 Cosette Schilling  
 Bradley Serry  
 Dev Dutt Sharma  
 Connor Shaw  
 Asheesh Shawel  
 Kade Sheely  
 Elizabeth Shi  
 Lili Sibic  
 Sofia Skobeleva  
 Allana Smith  
 Nhirushni Somasundaram  
 Ahra Son  
 Ishaana Sood  
 Francis Stagg  
 Rebecca Standfield  
 Adele Stefanidis  
 Jeremiah Stevens  
 Monisha Sudarsanan  
 David Suric

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Jeannine Taleyratne  
 Zoe Tapp  
 India Taylor  
 Gabrielle Terliatan  
 Clio Theaker  
 Genevieve Thomas-Walters  
 Hunter Thompson  
 Charlotte Thomson  
 William Tinney

Helen Tiplady  
 Phoebe Tobin-White  
 Claire Topsom  
 Cristina Trafficante  
 Adiam Tsegay  
 Oscar Tuckfield  
 Taylor Turner  
 Nic Tutone

**U**

Bill Unkles

**V**

Talie Van Piper  
 Jo Verity  
 Elizabeth Vu

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 Joyce Wang  
 Yu Wang  
 Nangy Wardak  
 Georgina Warren  
 Olivia Watson  
 Madeline White  
 Meg Whittaker  
 Melissa Wilcox  
 Joely Wilkinson-Hayes  
 Marc Willcox  
 Stan Winford  
 Caitlin Wong  
 Nick Woodforde  
 Holly Woodlock  
 Georga Wootton

**Y**

Carina Yu

**Z**

Bernadette Zaydan  
 Chennie Zhang  
 Catherine Zhou  
 Zoe Zhou  
 Denise Zuo  
 Ned Zvekic

# The Law Handbook

In early 2022 FLS published the 44th edition of The Law Handbook (LHB).

### From strength to strength

One of the strengths of the LHB is that each area of law is updated by senior legal practitioners who specialise in that legal area. For example, in this edition, lawyers from Victoria Legal Aid revised the Legal Aid chapter, the principal solicitor of Tenants Victoria updated the tenancy chapter, the Victorian Legal Services Commissioner oversaw the chapter on legal representation, and the Victorian Health Complaints Commissioner revised the health and the law chapter.

### Accessibility

Once again, this edition of the LHB is highly accessible, being available in a variety of formats, as a hardcopy book, an ebook, as individual PDF chapters, and free online at <https://fls.org.au/law-handbook>.

### Thank you contributors

Producing this book every year would not be possible without the generosity and expertise of our contributors. This year, 83 contributors from the legal sector devoted their time to work on the book. We very much value the outstanding contribution of each and every contributor. For the LHB 2022, magistrates, ombudsmen, commissioners, barristers, law lecturers, partners, principal lawyers and accredited specialists in a range of areas are among the contributors. Some contributors have been writing for the book for decades, while others are new recruits.

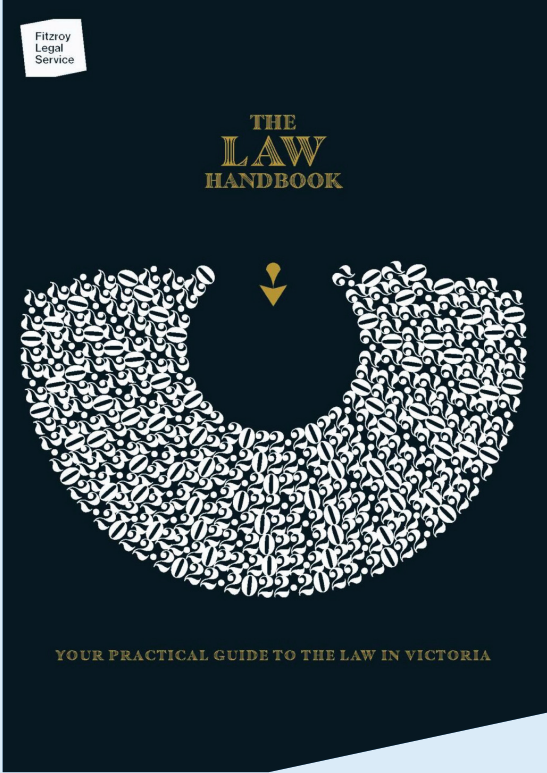
### Thank you freelancers

We would like to thank the freelancers who have dedicated many hours to the LHB 2022; Sandy Cull (cover designer), Puddingburn (compiler of the index and the lists of cases and legislation) and Sunset (the developers of the ebook).

Adrian Snodgrass

Principal Lawyer  
Night Service

*(on behalf of Law Handbook editor Naomi Saligari)*



# People Committee

The People Committee met virtually three times over the 2021/22 reporting period. The Committee currently has five members and is supported by the CEO and Business and Operations Manager who also attended each meeting. Kim Dalzell joined the committee in October 2021 and attended her first meeting in December 2021.

The table below sets out the attendance of members

Name	No. of Meetings attended
Fiona Delahunt	3
Kim Dalzell (Dec 21)	1
Chanphyna Bou	3
Glenn Caterer	2
Tim Goodier	1

The Committee responds to the need to renew policies and recommend new policies and procedures to the Board. Priority for the organisation has been managing the hybrid work environment and ensuring service delivery during lockdowns and the new CEO settling into the organisation. The call on the Committee has therefore been minimal over the reporting period and meetings have constructively focussed on updates on policy reviews in progress and progress on Community Legal Centre's Multi- Business Agreement (MBA) Certified agreement.

At the August 2022 Board meeting it was decided that the People Committee will go on hold subject to a review of committees and any people related matters can be dealt with directly by the Board.

I wish to thank all Committee members for their interest and contribution to FLS and thank Kristine Olaris and Brendan Kelly for their support.

**Fiona Delahunt**  
Chair  
People Committee

# Programs & Services Committee

Established in early 2020, the Programs and Services Committee was tasked with progressing strategic priorities in the newly developed FLS Strategic Plan, in consultation with the CEO and FLS staff.

A key rationale for the Committee's establishment was the desire to create foundational documents (including an organisational Theory of Change and an Outcomes Framework) to ensure that FLS programs and services are robust and high quality, have clear and measurable desired outcomes, and are aligned to achieving FLS's vision and strategic goals.

Over the course of several meetings, the Committee developed FLS's first Theory of Change and Outcomes Framework, endorsed by the Board in late 2021. This work has translated to the FLS Business Plan and supported key conversations and priorities within FLS. Also developed, but not yet endorsed by the Board, was a Strategic Advocacy Framework, which seeks to articulate the characteristics of FLS advocacy and strategic litigation, the organisation's advocacy priorities, and support sound decision-making in these areas.

It is pleasing that, within FLS, work is underway to explore greater opportunity for client voices in program design and evaluation. FLS is building towards the development and evaluation of programs based on outcomes and evidence, with many examples already in place. By identifying, articulating and measuring outcomes and impact, FLS can better design and implement its services to most effectively contribute towards the organisation's vision of a fairer and more just Victorian community.

Despite best intentions and commitment of its members, the P&S Committee did not meet in 2021-22. This was primarily due to the period of change at the CEO level in 2021 and constraints on the organisation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The appointment of the new CEO has provided an important chance for review of the purpose and need for the Committee. At its meeting in August 2022, the FLS Board agreed that the Committee was not required as an ongoing governance group, and that the Committee should be placed into abeyance. The Board will continue to monitor the organisation's progress in implementing improvements to data collection, including client feedback, given that it remains a focus of several priorities in the FLS Strategic Plan.

Thank you to Committee members – Mick Sheehy, Monique MacRitchie, Rohan Thwaites and Zeah Behrend – for their input to this work and for participating on the Committee.

**Jeremy Levine**  
Chair  
Programs and Services Committee



# Finance, Risk & Audit Committee

It is my pleasure, as Chair of the FLS Finance, Risk and Audit Committee (FRAC), to table this report on the activities of the FRAC for the period September 2021 to August 2022 including the 2021/22 financial year.

The purpose of the FRAC as set out in its Charter is to:

“

...assist the board in fulfilling its corporate governance responsibilities by providing oversight and direction in relation to the [FLS] financial reports and other financial information produced by it, auditing and reporting processes generally, and management of...risk.’

At each of its meetings, the primary function of the FRAC is to review the year-to-date profit and loss statement against budget, together with other financial and management reports including the balance sheet and cash flow statement.

Annually, the FRAC:

- recommends the approval of the audited financial statements and receives the auditor’s report - noting any issues of concern and management’s response;
- provides oversight into the development of the budget and recommends a budget to the Board for approval; and
- receives a separate report into the audit of the FLS Legal Practice Trust Fund.

The FRAC also takes responsibility for oversight of risk management (financial and other), including regularly reviewing the organisation’s risk register and response to high level and escalating risks.

The 2021/22 financial year was fiscally challenging. Lockdowns affected our service delivery at the beginning of the year. Previous COVID related support was removed. Private Client work was down on prior years. Increased expenses were incurred, including additional paralegal support, air purifiers and other COVID related expenses, as well as additional technology related expenses.

These and other factors led to a deficit of approximately \$85,000 for the 2021/22 financial year. Whilst disappointing, this deficit was significantly less than budgeted at the start of the year and a reasonable result in the circumstances. We continue to have a balance of approximately \$379,000 in retained earnings, ensuring that the sustainability of FLS is not in issue.

Our auditors did not raise any issues of concern in their audit completion report.

Pleasingly, the 2023 financial year is looking more positive. A small surplus is budgeted, and the year has started strongly.

I believe that, under Kristine Olaris’ stewardship, we are making progress in putting FLS in a position of greater financial strength and capacity. We have broadened our sources of funding, and have brought additional rigour to how we make funding applications and account for project revenue and expenses. I am optimistic that the upcoming 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations will give us further momentum in increasing revenue to support the fulfillment of our objectives.

The FRAC currently has seven Members, five of whom have finance/ accountancy qualifications. The FRAC is supported by Kristine Olaris (Chief Executive Officer) and Brendan Kelly (Finance and Operations Manager), who prepare papers for and attend each meeting. In the relevant period the FRAC has met six times on a Tuesday the week prior to the Board meeting.

The table below sets out the attendance of members of the FRAC at its meetings.

My sincere thanks to Kristine Olaris and Brendan Kelly, together with the whole of the FLS team. We are lucky to have such a committed and high quality team committed to the purpose of FLS. I also would like to acknowledge the contribution of previous finance and audit committee chair Vera Boston, who retired from the Board during the year after many years of outstanding service.

**Tony Macvean**

Chair  
Finance, Audit and Risk Committee

Name	No. of Meetings held	No. of Meetings able to attend
Ros Aikman	4	6
Vera Boston	1	1
Peter Loukas	4	6
Rebecca Middleton	5	6
Naomi Munga	4	6
Gerry Schembri	6	6
Andrew Walker	5	6
Tony Macvean	6	6

## Income And Expenditure Statement

For The Period Ended 30 June 2022

	Note	2022	2021
		\$	\$
<b>Income</b>			
Government Grant - VLA	9	2,369,600	2,689,958
Grants		1,515,709	1,083,348
Practice Income		256,214	231,696
Sales		49,127	62,715
Interest Income		3,601	5,436
Membership Income		3,308	3,745
Miscellaneous Income		<b>74,684</b>	<b>114,270</b>
		<b>4,272,243</b>	<b>4,191,168</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Employee benefits expense		3,760,686	3,498,144
Depreciation & Amortisation		21,601	19,752
Rental and premises expense		169,538	163,927
Office administration expenses		359,379	350,418
Publication expenses		<b>46,087</b>	<b>158,682</b>
		<b>4,357,291</b>	<b>4,190,923</b>
Surplus (Deficit) before income tax		(85,048)	245
Income tax expense	2	–	–
Surplus (Deficit) after income tax		(85,048)	245
Retained Earnings at the beginning of the financial year		<b>455,161</b>	<b>454,916</b>
Retained Earnings at the end of the financial year		<b>370,113</b>	<b>455,161</b>

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## Assets And Liabilities Statement For The Period Ended 30 June 2022

	Note	2022	2021
		\$	\$
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	3	1,831,572	2,164,903
Trade and other receivables	4	253,399	9,190
Inventory		9,354	3,596
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<b>2,094,325</b>	<b>2,177,689</b>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>			
Security Bond		13,126	13,126
Property, plant and equipment	5	61,074	74,573
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>		<b>74,200</b>	<b>87,699</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>2,168,525</b>	<b>2,265,388</b>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Trade and other payables	6	317,967	256,072
Amounts received in advance	7	1,112,896	1,206,361
Provisions	8	281,824	269,846
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>		<b>1,712,687</b>	<b>1,732,279</b>
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>			
Provisions	8	85,725	77,948
<b>Total Liabilities</b>		<b>1,798,412</b>	<b>1,810,227</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		<b>370,113</b>	<b>455,161</b>
<b>Members' Funds</b>			
Retained Earnings		370,113	455,161
<b>Total members' funds</b>		<b>370,113</b>	<b>455,161</b>

## Statement Of Changes In Equity For The Period Ended 30 June 2022

	Retained Earnings	Total
	\$	\$
<b>Balance at 1 July 2020</b>	454,916	454,916
Surplus/(Deficit) attributable to the entity	245	245
<b>Balance at 30 June 2021</b>	455,161	455,161
Surplus/(Deficit) attributable to the entity	(85,048)	(85,048)
<b>Balance at 30 June 2022</b>	<b>370,113</b>	<b>370,113</b>

## Statement Of Cash Flows

### For The Period Ended 30 June 2022

	Note	2022	2021
		\$	\$
<b>Cash Flows From Operating Activities</b>			
Receipts from Government grants		2,369,600	2,689,958
Receipts from customers		139,124	798,664
Other Receipts		1,422,242	1,554,584
Payments to suppliers and employees		(4,259,794)	(4,339,809)
Interest received		3,601	5,436
<b>Net Cash provided by operating activities</b>	10	<b>(325,227)</b>	<b>708,833</b>
<b>Cash Flows From Investing Activities</b>			
Payments for purchase of property and equipment		(8,103)	(15,657)
<b>Net Cash provided by (used in) investing activities</b>		<b>(8,103)</b>	<b>(15,657)</b>
Net increase (decrease) in cash held		(333,330)	693,176
Cash at the beginning of the year		2,164,902	1,471,726
<b>Cash at the end of the year</b>		<b>1,831,572</b>	<b>2,164,902</b>

## Notes To The Financial Statements

### For The Period Ended 30 June 2022

#### Note 1: Statement of Significant Accounting Policies

This financial report is special purpose financial report prepared in order to satisfy the financial

reporting requirements of the Australian Charities and Not for profits Commission Act 2012 . The Board has determined that the association is not a reporting entity.

The financial report has been prepared on an accruals basis and is based on historical costs and does not take into account changing money values or, except where specifically stated, current valuation of non-current assets. The following significant accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless otherwise stated, have been adopted in preparation of this financial report.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the recognition and measurement requirements of the Australian Accounting Standards And Accounting Interpretations, and the disclosure requirements of AASB 101 Presentation of Financial Statements, AASB 107 Statement of Cashflows, AASB 108 Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors and AASB 1054 Australian Disclosures except for AASB16 Leases.

##### a. Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents includes cash on hand, deposits held at call with banks, and other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less.

##### b. Income Tax

The Association is an Income Tax Exempt Charity in terms of Subdivision 50-5 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

##### c. Property, Plant and Equipment

Leasehold improvements and office equipment are carried at cost less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation.

The depreciable amount of all property, plant and equipment is depreciated over the useful lives of the assets to the association commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use. Leasehold Improvements are amortised over the shorter of either the unexpired period of the lease or the estimated useful lives of the improvements.

##### d. Employee Entitlements

Provision is made for the Association's liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered by employees to the end of the reporting period. Employee benefits have been measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liability is settled.

The Association is bound by the Multipurpose Business Agreement, whereby employees' prior service in other CLCs is recognised for purposes of determining accrual of long service leave entitlement. Accordingly where the employee is known to have served in other CLCs for 5 years or more, provision for long service leave is accrued from the commencement of their employment with the Association.

Provision previously recognised for employees who subsequently leave the Association is not reversed at that time because the Association will be required to contribute the accrued entitlement to the then current employer provided they remain eligible for prior service recognition. Where the Association becomes aware that the ex-employee is no longer entitled to prior service recognition the provision is reversed.

Commencing on 1 July 2019, the Victorian Government introduced the Portable Long Service Scheme, administered by the Portable Long Service Authority (PLSA). It covers all community services workers and as such, the Association is covered by the scheme. Effective from 1 July 2019 all future long service leave benefits reside with the PLSA and the Association is required to pay 1.65% of salaries to the PLSA on a quarterly basis. Provisions have been adjusted to include only the portion of leave accrued prior to 30 June 2019 and increased each year to take into account salary movements.

##### e. Inventories

Inventories consist of publications and are measured at the lower cost and net realisable value. Costs are assigned on a specific identification basis and include direct costs and appropriate overheads, if any.



## Notes To The Financial Statements

### For The Period Ended 30 June 2022

#### Note 1: Statement of Significant Accounting Policies (cont.)

##### f. Provisions

Provisions are recognised when the Association has a legal or constructive obligation, as a result of past events, for which it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will result and that outflow can be reliably measured. Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation at the end of the reporting period.

##### g. Impairment of Assets

At the end of each reporting period, the entity reviews the carrying values of its tangible and intangible assets to determine whether there is an indication that those assets have been impaired. If such an indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs to sell and value in use, is compared to the asset's carrying amount. Any excess of the asset's carrying value over its recoverable amount is recognised in the income and expenditure statement.

##### h. Revenue

Grants are recognised on an accrual basis. Any grants received and provided for special purposes are recognised to the extent funds are expended on projects. Grants received for future financial periods are treated as grants in advance under current liabilities to the extent of the unspent grant where there is an obligation to repay the unexpended portion of the grant.

Revenue from membership fees and donations are recognised upon receipt. Revenue from the sale of goods is recognised upon delivery of goods to customers.

Interest revenue is recognised on an accrual basis taking into account the interest rates applicable to the financial assets.

All revenue is stated net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST). All revenue is stated net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST).

##### i. Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO). Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO is included with other receivables or payables in the assets and liabilities statement.

##### j. Economic Dependence

The entity is dependent on Commonwealth and State Government funding for a significant portion of its revenue used to operate its business. At the date of this report, there is inherent uncertainty particularly in view of the current global pandemic, however the Board have no reason to believe this support will not continue.

##### k. COVID19 Disclosure

COVID19 continued to impact on the operations of FLS in this financial year. Significant Government restrictions were imposed in 2021 to assist in stopping the spread of the disease.

These restrictions had minimal operational and financial impact on FLS due to the nature of trade of the entity. COVID19 restrictions forced the closure of the night service due to the inability to hold face to face consultations with clients in. But we were able to pivot the night service and offer telephone consultations to clients and many of our volunteers continued to assist.

##### l. Management Fee Disclosure

There has been a change in the recognition of the Management Fee in the financial statements.

As the management Fee is only an internal allocation between departments that applies an expense and revenue item of equal amount and thus has no effect on the bottom line it was decided to exclude from the financial statements. Disclosing the management fee does in isolation have the effect of overstating revenue and expenses.

Last years' comparative figures have also been adjusted to exclude the management fee.

## Notes To The Financial Statements

### For The Period Ended 30 June 2022

#### Note 2: Income Tax Expense

The Association is an Income Tax Exempt Charity in terms of Subdivision 50-5 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

	2022	2021
	\$	\$

#### Note 3: Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cheques on hand	80	80
Cash at Bank	424,186	761,029
Term Deposit	1,407,306	1,403,793
	<b>1,831,572</b>	<b>2,164,902</b>

#### Note 4: Trade and other receivables

Accounts receivable	256,258	12,049
Provision for doubtful debts	(2,859)	(2,859)
Prepayments	–	–
	<b>253,399</b>	<b>9,190</b>

#### Note 5: Property, plant and equipment

Office Furniture & Equipment - Original Cost	251,302	243,199
Less accumulated depreciation	(190,228)	(168,626)
	<b>61,074</b>	<b>74,573</b>

#### Note 6: Trade and other payables

##### Current

Trade Creditors and accruals	184,808	127,916
Provision for audit fees	6,800	4,500
PAYG and BAS amount Payable	124,067	121,364
SSRV Security Bond Held	2,292	2,292
	<b>317,967</b>	<b>256,072</b>

## Notes To The Financial Statements For The Period Ended 30 June 2022

	2022	2021
	\$	\$
<b>Note 7: Amounts received in advance</b>		
VLA Allowable Surplus	101,562	365,767
Unexpended project funds	1,011,334	840,594
	<b>1,112,896</b>	<b>1,206,361</b>
<b>Note 8: Provisions</b>		
<b>Current</b>		
Employee Entitlements	<b>281,824</b>	<b>269,846</b>
<b>Non-Current</b>		
Employee Entitlements	<b>85,725</b>	<b>77,948</b>
<b>Note 9: Income Government Grant - VLA</b>		
Government Grant - VLA Commonwealth	559,442	961,966
Government Grant - VLA State	1,765,588	1,902,534
Government Grant Brought Forward - VLA	44,570	(174,542)
	<b>2,369,600</b>	<b>2,689,958</b>

## Notes To The Financial Statements For The Period Ended 30 June 2022

	2022	2021
	\$	\$
<b>Note 10: Reconciliation of Cash Flow from</b>		
<b>Operations with Profit from Ordinary</b>		
<b>Activities after Income Tax</b>		
Surplus after income tax	(85,048)	245
Cash flows excluded from operating profit attributable to operating activities		
Non-cash flows in surplus		
– Depreciation	21,601	19,752
Changes in assets and liabilities;		
– (Increase)/decrease in trade and other debtors	(244,207)	398,768
– (Increase)/decrease in inventory	(5,758)	3,009
– Increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables	60,778	67,333
– Increase/(decrease) in amounts received in advance	(93,466)	196,794
– Increase/(decrease) in provisions	20,873	22,932
Net cash provided by Operating Activities	<b>(325,227)</b>	<b>708,833</b>

### Note 11: Going Concern

The members of the Board believe that the application of the going concern basis of accounting is appropriate due to the expected positive cash flows of the association and through the on going support of all funding bodies.

	2022	2021
	\$	\$
<b>Note 12: Operating Lease Commitments</b>		
Operating leases contracted for but not recognised in the financial statements		
Payable - minimum lease payments:		
– no later than 12 months	5,778	5,778
– between 12 months and five years	11,556	17,334
– greater than five years	–	–
	<b>17,334</b>	<b>23,112</b>

There is a 5 year equipment lease for 2 printers which was signed 14 May 2020.

The Association has a lease for its office at 279 Spring St, Reservoir which is due to expire on 17 May 2024.

The Association also has a lease for its office at Level 4 of the Fitzroy Town Hall which expired on 31 August 2018. In accordance with the overholding provision of the Lease, the Association continues to occupy the Premises after the end of the Term subject to the same terms and conditions as contained in the Lease and either party may end this Lease during any period of holding by giving 30 days written notice.



## Statement By Members Of The Board For The Period Ended 30 June 2022

The Board has determined that the association is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

In the opinion of the board the financial report as set out on pages 43 to 51:

1. Presents a true and fair view of the financial position of Fitzroy Legal Service Inc. as at 30 June 2022 and its performance for the year ended on that date.
2. At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that Fitzroy Legal Service Inc. will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

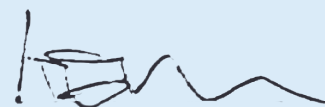
This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Board and is signed for and on behalf of the Board by:

Chair of Board



Dated:

Board Member



Dated:

08/11/2022

## Auditor Independence Declaration To The Directors Of Fitzroy Legal Service Inc.

As lead auditor of Fitzroy Legal Service Inc. for the period ended 30 June 2022, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been:

- a. No contraventions of the auditor independence requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 in relation to the audit; and
- b. No contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.



**Stephen Kirtley**  
Director

Dated this 8<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2022

Davidsons Assurance Services Pty Ltd  
101 West Fyans Street  
Geelong, Victoria 3220

## Independent Auditor's Report To The Members Of Fitzroy Legal Service Inc.

### Opinion

We have audited the financial report of Fitzroy Legal Service Inc. (the association), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2022, the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the declaration by those charged with governance.

In our opinion the financial report of Fitzroy Legal Service Inc. has been prepared in accordance with Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 (ACNC Act), including:

- a. giving a true and fair view of the Fitzroy Legal Service Inc's financial position as at 30 June 2022 and of its financial performance for the year then ended; and
- b. complying with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 1 and Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013.

### Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. We are independent of the Fitzroy Legal Service Inc in accordance with the ACNC Act, the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We confirm that the independence declaration required by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, which has been given to the directors of the Company, would be in the same terms if given to the directors as at the time of this auditor's report.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

### Emphasis of Matter – Basis of Accounting

We draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared for the purposes of fulfilling the Fitzroy Legal Service Inc. financial reporting responsibilities under the ACNC Act. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our report is not modified in respect of this matter.

### Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Report

Management is responsible for the preparation of the financial report in accordance with the ACNC Act, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, management is responsible for assessing the Fitzroy Legal Service Inc's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Fitzroy Legal Service Inc or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Fitzroy Legal Service Inc 's financial reporting process.

## Independent Auditor's Report To The Members Of Fitzroy Legal Service Inc.

### Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial report.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial report is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website at: <http://www.auasb.gov.au/Home.aspx>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.



**Stephen Kirtley**  
Director

Dated this 15<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2022

Davidsons Assurance Services Pty Ltd  
101 West Fyans Street  
Geelong, Victoria 3220



The logo for Fitzroy Legal Service, featuring the text "Fitzroy Legal Service" in white, bold, sans-serif font, set against a dark blue, irregularly shaped background that resembles a folded piece of paper or a stylized book cover.

## Fitzroy Legal Service

Fitzroy Legal Service Inc. is a merger of Darebin Community Legal Centre and Fitzroy Legal Service.

### Our Offices

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#### **279 Spring Street**

Reservoir 3073  
Ph: (03) 9484 7753  
Fax: (03) 9462 3297

#### **Level 4, Fitzroy Town Hall**

PO Box 297, Fitzroy 3065  
Ph: (03) 9419 3744  
Fax: (03) 9416 1124

#### **Neighbourhood Justice Centre**

241 Wellington Street, Collingwood 3046  
PO Box 1142, Collingwood 3066  
Ph: (03) 9948 8698

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