



**PRIORITIES
2023-24**

About Community Legal WA

Community Legal WA is the peak body for community legal centres in WA. Our purpose is to support our members and work for a fair WA, where everybody has access to justice.

About Community Legal Centres

Community legal centres are independent community organisations that provide free or low-cost legal help to people when they need it most. There are 26 community legal centres (CLCs) across WA. CLCs support some of the most vulnerable Western Australians to access help and to prevent legal problems getting worse – keeping people in work, families in their homes and kids safe.

1 Sustainable CLCs

WA needs strong, sustainable community legal centres so that people can access legal help, when and where they need it.

We are calling for:

- ▶ Increased investment in community legal centres, for a thriving legal assistance sector that meets the legal assistance needs of all Western Australians, including those living in rural and remote areas.
- ▶ Sustainable investment to ensure long term viability and enable services to plan, grow and perform prevention and early intervention activities like community legal education and law reform.
- ▶ Indexation to ensure funding keeps pace with cost increases.



We are always trying to strike the right balance between helping many people a little (advice and tasks) and helping fewer people a lot (ongoing and representation) ...and we have to decide who to turn away...

CLWA member, 2022 State Budget Submission consultation



2 Integrated Services

Integrated services and partnerships improve outcomes by helping people access the services and support they need.

We are calling for:

- ▶ Government investment to support the development of integrated service approaches, including case management, collaboration and partnerships, to improve people's access to holistic and wraparound services.



The multiple, intersecting health, legal and social problems faced by many in Australia are complex, as are the service systems that exist to address them. It is collaborative solutions that can make a real difference here.

Tessa Boyd-Caine, CEO, Health Justice Australia



3 Tenancy Focus

Tenancy support, advice and advocacy helps ensure people have a place to call home.

We are calling for:

- ▶ Increased, sustainable investment in tenancy advice and education services to meet need across WA.
- ▶ Indexation to ensure funding keeps pace with cost increases.
- ▶ Investment in education and support for tenants on changes to the Residential Tenancies Act.



Housing was one of the top 5 issues for CLC clients in 2021-22, accounting for roughly 1/4 of all Legal Advice and almost 1/2 of duty lawyer services provided by CLCs that year.



4 Strengthened ACCOs

Strengthened Aboriginal community controlled organisations and more culturally responsive mainstream services lead to better outcomes for Aboriginal people.

We are calling for:

- ▶ State government investment in culturally responsive and accessible legal help for Aboriginal people, through funding for Family Violence Prevention Legal Services.
- ▶ The state government to work collaboratively to ensure self-determination underpins the development and delivery of legal assistance services for Aboriginal people.



Closing the Gap Target 13: By 2031, the rate of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is reduced at least by 50%, as progress towards zero.



5 Climate Justice

Including legal assistance services in climate adaptation and disaster response planning is essential for responses that meet the needs of communities and individuals.

We are calling for:

- ▶ The WA state government to recognise the role of legal assistance providers in climate change adaptation and disaster preparedness and response, and to resource CLCs for this work.
- ▶ Government investment to scope and develop the role of WA CLCs in climate justice, and to help identify and address new legal assistance demands from climate change, supporting community resilience.



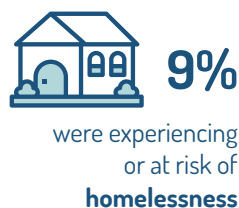
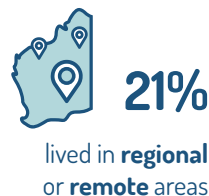
Climate change is already causing a shift in legal demands, changes in the law, and the emergence of novel, complex questions of law across multiple practice areas (Taylor & Lay, 2022).



THE PEOPLE WE HELP

WA CLCs helped more than 23,500 people last year. Of these people:

The top 6 legal issues for clients who accessed CLC support last year were:



- ▶ Family and domestic violence
- ▶ Family law (property)
- ▶ Parenting arrangements
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Employment Law
- ▶ Wills/probate