Victoria Law Foundation

Annual Report 2025-26

The office of Victoria Law Foundation is on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. We acknowledge their history, culture and Elders past and present.

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Cover photo: Melanie Rygl, Grants Director, and Rebecca Hicks, Education Director

Contents

02 About Victorian Law Foundation

03 From the Chair

05 Our Board

06 From the Executive Director

08 Activity snapshot

10 Function highlights

13 Understand

19 Enable

40 Perform

46 Our people

49 Financial reports

About Victorian Law Foundation

Victoria Law Foundation (VLF) works to help Victorians understand the law, recognise legal problems, and access the support they need.

Established under its own Act of Parliament, the VLF has served Victoria for 59 years. Our role has evolved, but our vision remains the same: fair, equitable, and accessible justice for all Victorians.

We work in research, education, and grants to contribute to the development of an effective civil justice system for the Victorian community, as guided by the *Victoria Law Foundation Act 2009* (Vic).

The report follows our three strategic pillars: Understand, Enable, and Perform. These pillars show how our work connects across our functions and across the justice and community sectors. With the breadth and depth of our work supported by these pillars, we support better justice by building evidence, enabling people and organisations to act, and strengthening the foundations that support lasting impact.

From the Chair

The Annual Report provides the opportunity to stand back from daily tasks and reflect on what has been achieved. VLF has completed another highly productive year in its main activities of research, education, and grant-making. The three functions interconnect in important ways and showcase VLF's versatility and the exceptional quality of its work.

After the sweeping Public Understanding of Law Survey, VLF engaged closely with the legal assistance sector to complete its next major study. *Measure for Measure: A People-Centred Approach to Tailoring Justice* showcases the breadth of successful community legal services on the ground, offers valuable insights into their commonalities, and then posits a higher systemic perspective on existing legal services, and their challenges and adequacy. It makes significant contributions at both micro and macro levels. This work adds much to service and policy development and is only possible with the independence and rigour VLF gives.

The ever-changing funding environment ensures the popularity of VLF grants, with increasing numbers of applications each year. The decisions of the Board's Grants Subgroup are difficult with so many proposals worthy of support, but the level of interest and volume are also heartening. Designing and delivering projects which will enhance the work of the applicant organisation and the sector makes a great contribution and generates its own momentum of continuous improvement. VLF plays a valuable part in sustaining that cycle.

A fundamental pillar in our democratic system is access to justice, which provides fair resolution of legal disputes. No one is above the law, and everyone has rights under it. At a time when voices of discontent with current arrangements for government and justice grow louder, it is all the more critical to ensure that as many people as possible understand the objectives and substance of our law, and how to navigate their way to and through legal resources. Providing information and guidance in familiar settings like schools, libraries, and neighbourhood houses is a direct contribution to the health of our community. This is the mission of VLF's work in education. Support can be library story-time with new parents and toddlers, two-day programs for high school students, or sessions dealing with employment problems. All of it assists in meeting contemporary need in ways which resonate with most Victorians.

As you will see from this report, across the functions of VLF there is a consistent commitment to quality and usefulness. The ability to determine how contributions are best made is a very valuable asset, and one for which we acknowledge the support of the Victorian Legal Services Board and the Victorian Government.

Finally, of the responsibilities of the Board, selection of the Executive Director and financial oversight are generally seen as the most important. This year, VLF has selected a new Executive Director who will take the reins in July 2026. I take this opportunity to thank Lynne Haultain for nine years of outstanding commitment and enormous service to VLF and wish her well for the future, and to warmly welcome Dr Rebekah Farrell as our new Executive Director. Thank you also to my fellow Board members for their deep expertise, time, and collegiality, and to the staff team for their ongoing energy and passion for VLF's work.

The Honourable Greg Garde AO RFD
Chair, Victorian Law Foundation

Our Board

Greg Garde

Peter Caillard

Stephen Roche

Melissa Castan

Gerry Bean

Rowan McRae

Tania McKenna

Thérèse McCarthy

Chris Young KC

Sharika Jeyakumar

An eight-person board governs Victoria Law Foundation.

Board members hold honorary positions and are appointed under the *Victoria Law Foundation Act 2009* (Vic).

The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Victoria nominates the Chair of the Board. The Victorian Bar, the Law Institute of Victoria, the Courts Council, the Board of Victoria Legal Aid, and the Federation of Community Legal Centres (Victoria) Inc. each nominate a member, and the Attorney-General of Victoria appoints two members. Apart from the Chair, all members serve three-year terms.

Victoria Law Foundation Board

Left to right

The Honourable Justice Garde AO RFD, Chair

Peter Caillard (until March 2026)

Stephen Roche

Professor Melissa Castan

Dr Gerry Bean

Rowan McRae (until April 2026)

Tania McKenna

Her Honour Magistrate Thérèse McCarthy

Chris Young KC (from April 2026)

Sharika Jeyakumar (from April 2026)

Board Observer - non voting member

Molly Hoffman (until December 2025)

Ilya Maer (from January 2026)

Research Subgroup

Professor Melissa Castan, Chair

The Honourable Justice Garde AO RFD

Rowan McRae (until April 2026)

Tania McKenna

Lynne Haultain

Sharika Jeyakumar (from April 2026)

Ilya Maer (from June 2026)

Human Resources Subgroup

Professor Melissa Castan, Chair

The Honourable Justice Garde AO RFD

Dr Gerry Bean

Audit, Finance and Risk Subgroup

Stephen Roche, Chair

Dr Gerry Bean

The Honourable Justice Garde AO RFD

Peter Caillard (until March 2026)

Chris Young KC (from April 2026)

Lynne Haultain

Molly Hoffman (until December 2025)

Grants Subgroup

Peter Caillard, Chair (until March 2026)

Dr Gerry Bean

Chris Young KC (from April 2026)

Lynne Haultain

Molly Hoffman (until December 2025)

From the Executive Director

The image of the ecosystem is a powerful one—it brings to mind David Attenborough exploring the complexity of life on Earth, or a video of brain synapse activity. It's all about connection and transfer.

In the law, it's a relatively new way of thinking about the interplay in the web of legislation, experience, and institutions. Understanding the ecosystem requires us to see the interrelations from above, to map the flows of people, process, information, and insights, and importantly, to recognise where key links are weak or non-existent. This perspective is not only useful; it's become essential to any serious effort to address access to justice.

The ecosystem view remains central to our research at VLF. Starting with the Data Mapping reports, through the groundbreaking Public Understanding of Law Survey work, and on to our recent *Measure for Measure: A People-Centred Approach to Tailoring Justice* (Measure for Measure), we will continue to emphasise the reality of complex life and press for better responses from our justice institutions.

Measure for Measure, launched in April, explored the ingredients seen to bring success in delivering effective legal services to people in need. The work built a picture of the ecosystem of organisations, behaviours, and referrals, which thrive (or don't) in an environment of capability. The People-Centred Justice Model which emerged from this work begins to systematically name and chart what could help to make justice accessible. As always, the report prompts more questions than it answers, but it's a valuable start in turning attention to a much broader view of our legal world.

We also tweak the threads of the web through our work in education and grants, supporting others to build and strengthen critical links so Victorians know more about our law and how to navigate it.

For the first time this year, VLF has given $1m in grants. While the number is impressive, it's equally critical that we're supporting the right work. We are constantly scanning this particular ecosystem of appetite, funding, capability, and need, and adjusting our approach to ensure best impact.

The view of the ecosystem from education is different again. Central to this mission is equipping Victorians with the tools to see the legal dimensions when problems arise and know where to go for information and advice. Victorian Law Week lights up the ecosystem for all to see; around 120 events statewide this year, plus a highly successful social media campaign, targeting the everyday legal problems we know are incredibly prevalent across the state. Our long-standing work in schools is vital too in laying down pathways for each new generation so they can navigate the inevitable legal issues, and/or set their sights on a career in the law.

Victoria is blessed with the pre-conditions to both better understand and respond to our justice ecosystem. We have a strong and deeply committed legal assistance sector, a progressive private sector, and access to project funding through VLF and the Victorian Legal Services Board, as well as ongoing government support. These are not common to all jurisdictions and not to be underestimated. But nor can the review and revision ever stop, because that's another thing about ecosystems: they are perpetually in a state of flux through all sorts of factors: institutional, relational, and personal.

VLF will continue to play an important role in scanning the reality, building the evidence, and supporting progress. Thank you to our outstanding staff team, insightful Board, and the generous support of the Victorian Legal Services Board. It's been a deep privilege to spend the last nine years in your company, and I look forward enormously to watching the great developments from here as I hand the baton to Dr Rebekah Farrell.

Lynne Haultain
Executive Director
September 2026

Activity snapshot

Building legal capability across Victoria

658 registrations across 4 research-focused webinars

83 registrations for Enhancing Engagement webinar

125 Law Week events

4 research publications released

9
Major Grants awarded

11
Everyday Legal Grants awarded

3,548
Research publication downloads

3,573
Education resource downloads

125
Law Week events organised by 146 organisations

29
Metro, Regional and Classroom Law Talks reaching 1500 students

634
Legal Laneway Breakfast CBD registrations

Function highlights

Research

In 2025-26, VLF Research continued building our work to understand legal need and capability, measure and learn what works to meet the legal need and capability, and develop our knowledge translation to support actionable practice and policy initiatives to improve Victorians' access to justice.

We reoriented the focus of our research to further apply insights from our Public Understanding of Law Survey reports and papers, and our Data Mapping Project reports. This foundational research continues to be a focus of widespread interest and dissemination, and came together to inspire our recent project, *Measure for Measure: A People-Centred Approach to Tailoring Justice.*

With stronger insight into how community legal need and capability affect how people interact with legal services and justice institutions, and what happens when they do, the research sits alongside new understanding and approaches to realising access to justice. To date, greater emphasis has been placed on access and not enough on just resolution and outcomes. In Victoria, we know much more about need than we know about what works to meet diversity of need across the community.

New insights point to benefits of people-centred approaches; ones that are not only people-centred in terms of the services and assistance afforded and the operation of justice institutions, but also the information and data available to monitor operation, performance, and outcomes. Examining the justice available to people through an ecosystem lens highlights systemic constraints and opportunities, and just how hard the journey to justice is for many in the community. The upcoming International Access to Justice Forum 2026 we will co-host with Monash University in Melbourne this October will afford a unique opportunity to bring cutting-edge understanding of access to justice research and practice to Victoria.

Education

This year, a continued collaborative approach has enabled the Education and Events team to take established programs, that support Victorians in identifying legal problems, into diverse communities. Guided by insights from the Public Understanding of Law Survey, the priority was to support Victorians to recognise and manage with confidence d everyday legal problems.

The Legal Laneway Breakfast series marked the beginning of the legal year, expanding to Ballarat, Horsham and Shepparton. Victorian Law Week remained central to this work under the Where Law Meets Life strategy, delivered in partnership with 146 organisations across 125 events in metropolitan (52%) and regional Victoria (48%).

The schools program continued to be a key strength, particularly through Metro and Regional Law Talks, delivered in partnership with courts, community legal centres, government, local community organisations, and the legal profession. The Education Forum also provided a quarterly opportunity for organisations across the justice sector to exchange ideas, share knowledge, and strengthen professional networks, with 34 organisations participating.

Initiatives such as the Law and You Forum, The Price is Wrong!, reflected a focus on practical and relevant public education. The internship program also continued to grow as an important pathway into the sector, supported by a strong and expanding alumni network.

The year reinforced the importance of partnership-led, statewide, and accessible delivery. Planning has also commenced to update and expand Victoria's Legal System, including new digital assets to support access and learning. This will guide the next phase of work, with a focus on deepening partnerships, strengthening resources, and increasing impact and access across Victoria.

Grants

This year, we increased our grants funding to invest in research, data capability and community legal initiatives in the Victorian legal assistance sector. Through a $1 million grants budget, we strengthened our contribution to improving Victorians' ability to access legal help and navigate the justice system.

We have taken a more deliberate approach to our engagement with funded organisations. This happens at key points throughout the grants cycle. We offer feedback on proposals before applications are submitted, and on unsuccessful applications, and funded organisations are offered guidance from our different function areas, in particular research and communications. We also work alongside grant recipients at the conclusion of projects to help share project outputs, outcomes, and insights across the sector.

Our in-person meet-and-greet with newly announced Major Grant recipients, together with online lunch meetings focused on project progress, created opportunities for shared learning, connection, and a better understanding of the challenges and successes emerging across funded projects.

This work reinforces the value of building stronger relationships with funded organisations beyond the provision of financial support alone. These experiences have demonstrated the broader role the Grants Program can play in supporting collaboration, learning, and impact across the sector. They have also shaped a more connected and responsive approach to our work, which will continue to inform how we support grant recipients in the year ahead.

Business Services

Business Services kept VLF running smoothly during a year of growth, change and transition. In 2025/2026, the team supported the Board and organisation through the recruitment and appointment of a new Executive Director, while also supporting recruitment, onboarding and day-to-day workforce needs across VLF's largest team to date.

The team managed and improved the core systems that support VLF's work, including finance, people and culture, information technology, risk management, governance and office operations. Cyber security and the safe use of technology remained important areas of focus. This included work on cyber maturity, staff awareness, IT planning, artificial intelligence governance, AI principles and end-user security.

Business Services also supported flexible work arrangements, psychosocial health and safety, records and archives management, and practical improvements to how the organisation works. These activities helped provide a stable base for staff and the Board during a busy period. In the year ahead, the team will continue to support VLF through change while building stronger systems, skills and governance for the future.

Strategy and Engagement

In 2024–25 we began our shift from a traditional Communications function to a broader Strategy and Engagement function, expanding our role in supporting VLF's priorities. In 2025–26, we built on this with a refreshed brand, consolidated our online presence by bringing the Public Understanding of Law Survey into the VLF website, and placed growing emphasis on translating our research for practical use by the sector. We also supported key initiatives including our Legal Laneway Breakfast, a social media campaign alongside Law Week, and the launch of the Measure for Measure report.

Over the next 12 months, we will focus on strengthening the team and building capability. As we prepare to set our Strategic Priorities for 2027–30, we will develop a long-term Communication and Engagement Strategy. This will use an audience-centred approach and include clear principles and processes to guide our work.

We will also deliver major systems improvements, including upgrades to our websites and customer relationship management system. We will place greater emphasis on understanding and responding to the needs of the sector, strengthening our reputation, and supporting our program teams to deliver their priorities.

We look forward to contributing to key upcoming initiatives including the International Access to Justice Forum 2026 and VLF's 60th anniversary.

Understand

We deepened our understanding of how people engage with civil law through rigorous research and meaningful collaboration.

Investigate how Victorians engage with their civil law and share our knowledge to improve access to justice.

Understanding legal need requires attention to the patterns, pathways, and relationships that shape how people experience the law and the justice ecosystem. Through research, data, and sector knowledge, we help make those patterns more visible and more useful to the people designing services, shaping policy, and supporting communities.

This year, our work under our Understand pillar helped turn evidence into shared language and practical insight. It showed the value of looking across the justice ecosystem: not only at individual problems or services, but at the connections, gaps, and conditions that influence whether people can get the help they need.

Exploring connections and impact

Looking at responses to legal need at a community level, we investigated what is seen to be working and the factors that contribute to perceived success in meeting legal need across Victoria. Continuing to draw insights from the rich Public Understanding of Law Survey dataset, we reported how disadvantage and family problems are related to the problems people are likely to experience and the justice outcomes they receive.

Exploring legal need, capability, and multiple disadvantage

The release of Justice at a disadvantage: What we know now about legal need, capability and multiple disadvantage deepened shared understanding of how disadvantage shapes legal need and legal capability in Victoria.

Drawing on the Public Understanding of Law Survey dataset, the paper examined how experience of disadvantage affects people's experience of everyday legal problems. It found that disadvantage has a compounding effect; as the number of indicators increases, so too does the likelihood of experiencing legal problems, the severity of their impacts, and the difficulty of resolving them.

The findings show that people experiencing multiple disadvantage face a disproportionate share of legal problems, particularly in areas such as housing, government payments, debt and money, family issues, and public services. They are also more likely to experience adverse consequences, including stress, ill health, damage to relationships, loss of employment, and having to move home.

At the same time, the research highlights that unmet legal need is not confined to the most disadvantaged Victorians. Many people who do not meet traditional markers of disadvantage have low legal capability and struggle to recognise, act on, and resolve legal problems.

These findings strengthen the evidence base for policy, service design, and collaboration across Victoria's justice and community sectors. They help organisations connect disadvantage, legal capability, and service pathways, supporting responses that address compounding barriers while also building people's ability to recognise and act on legal problems.

Prevalence, impact and outcomes of family problems

Two companion Public Understanding of Law Survey briefs provided a closer look at how Victorians experience, navigate, and resolve family problems. Taking a focused view of the Public Understanding of Law Survey reports and data, with some new analysis, Prevalence and impact of family problems and Resolution and outcomes of family problems provide an accessible brief for services and policymakers working to improve outcomes for people experiencing family problems.

Family problems encompass a wide range of issues arising from family relationships that can create some of the most significant and transformative experiences of people's lives. The briefs show that family problems, while less common than some other legal issues, are among the most severe and enduring. Many remain unresolved for years, and people experiencing them report significant consequences, including stress, damaged relationships, harassment, threats, or assault. The research also shows that family problems often occur alongside other legal issues, including housing, debt, government payments, and consumer problems.

The findings point to high levels of unmet legal need, despite many people using courts, tribunals, mediation, and other dispute resolution processes and legal services. They also highlight the relationship between family problems and indicators of disadvantage, including financial distress, mental distress, single parenthood, and disability.

Measure for Measure

The culmination of a major research project, *Measure for Measure: A People-Centred Approach to Tailoring Justice*, explores what is seen to help legal services respond effectively to legal need. Building on the Public Understanding of Law Survey and earlier Data Mapping work, the report examined 66 initiatives across 31 organisations, including legal assistance services, courts, tribunals, pro bono providers, and other justice organisations.

The research brought together the knowledge and experience of practitioners to understand not only what is seen to work, but what may be needed to sustain, measure, and scale people-centred justice.

The findings show that responses perceived as effective are often tailored, collaborative, and grounded in trust. They also show that initiatives seen as successful depend on strong organisational foundations, purposeful design, accessible pathways, person-led support, continuity, and learning. These elements were brought together in an exploratory People-Centred Justice Model, providing a practical framework to inform service design, evaluation, and further inquiry.

The report launch event created space for participating agencies and stakeholders to reflect on the findings, test the model against their own experience, and consider what is needed to improve coordination across the system. It reinforced that individual initiatives can be effective, but greater visibility is needed of how they interact, align, and where gaps persist.

Measure for Measure strengthened the evidence base for people-centred justice by making visible the practices seen to be working across Victoria. Its value lies in giving services, funders, and policymakers a shared language for tailoring support, understanding interdependence, and identifying where stronger coordination could improve outcomes.

Turning evidence into action

Our role is not only to produce evidence, but to make evidence useful. We translate research into practical concepts, tools, and opportunities that help policymakers, services, and communities apply insight to planning, service design, and better responses to legal need.

Bridging evidence and action

Commencing in 2026, When Law Meets Life: A practical guide to legal capability and need will focus on research translation and sector capability building. With delivery set for late 2026, the project will provide an accessible primer that connects the justice and community sectors to relevant research and strengthens evidence-informed planning and decision-making.

This work strengthens the bridge between evidence and action by making legal need and legal capability concepts easier to understand and apply. It draws on multidisciplinary strengths across research and communications to give services and policymakers further material to support practice, planning, training, and decision-making.

Mapping legal problems across Victoria

Working collaboratively with the Legal Services Research Centre at the Victorian Legal Services Board, we contributed to the development of the Small Area Modelling tool for legal need. This freely available interactive mapping tool uses Public Understanding of Law Survey data and Australian Census information to estimate civil legal problem prevalence across Victoria.

The project brought together VLF and Legal Services Research Centre's research expertise. This work translated survey findings into practical geographic insights, showing legal problem likelihood at different levels, including neighbourhoods, postcodes, local government areas, and electorates.

The project expanded how Public Understanding of Law Survey data can be used. It provides the evidence from statewide research findings into a practical tool that can support service planning, resource allocation, legal needs assessments, funding applications, and further research.

A connected and evidence-informed network

The Research Network gives opportunities to share access to justice research and examine emerging questions. This year's program included discussions on housing insecurity and unmet legal need and explored the question of legal dosage: how much legal help is enough, for whom, and in what form.

The network brought together researchers, community legal organisations, specialist services, evaluation practitioners, and people with direct experience of legal problems. Contributors included speakers and participants from across Victorian, national, and international justice and community sectors.

These conversations, with attendees from Victoria and beyond, contribute to a more connected and evidence-informed network of peers. They help practitioners, researchers, and policy stakeholders build shared language, test ideas, and identify questions for future research, service design, and collaboration.

Shaping policy and practice

We use sector networks and involvement in committees, communities of practice, and working groups of various kinds as knowledge and feedback loops, not just forums for participation and dissemination. They help us test research against practice, understand emerging needs, and improve how our education, grants, and communications work support people and organisations across the justice system.

National and Victorian forums

The VLF is actively involved at both state and federal levels with implementation of the *National Access to Justice Partnership Agreement 2025–30* (the NAJP). The NAJP, the main national policy instrument for the provision of legal assistance services in Australia, replaced the National Legal Assistance Partnership 2020–25 (NLAP). VLF is a member of the National NAJP Advisory Group and the Victorian NAJP Governance Committee.

The NAJP is entering its second year of operation and includes three areas of long-term policy reform to strengthen the provision of legal assistance across the country. VLF is represented in the Ntional NAJP Data and Outcomes Working Group. The working group advises on the development of the new National Legal Assistance Data Strategy 2026–30 and Outcomes Framework.

Our efforts around national agreements are long-standing, with much of our research (Public Understanding of Law Survey, Data Mapping, and the Workforce Survey, in particular) cited in the Independent Review of the NLAP by Dr Warren Mundy, and the development and implementation of the NAJP. Our ongoing participation is an important opportunity to support stronger evidence and capability, contributing to better data collection and use across the sector, embedding these practices for decades to come.

We are also a member of the Victorian Collaborative Planning Committee; the representative body for organisations involved in legal assistance. Again, our research and perspectives are highly valued in shaping the provision of services across the state.

Community Development and Community Legal Education Working Groups

We continued to participate in the Community Development and Community Legal Education Working Group; a sector forum that brings together legal assistance workers, educators, and advocates committed to helping people understand and use the law in everyday life.

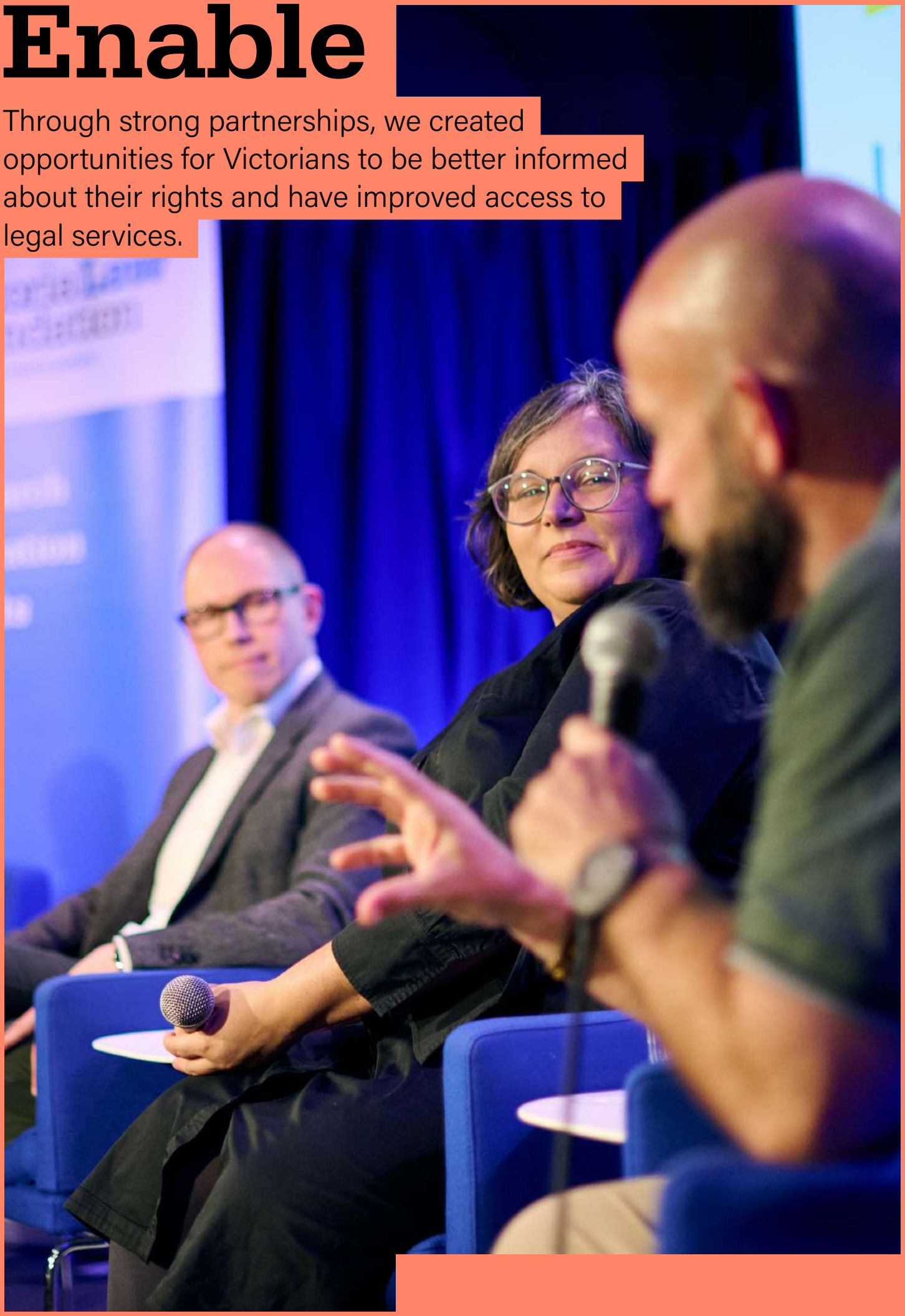
Attending is both a privilege and a practical way to stay connected with the people designing and delivering community legal education across Victoria. It helps us understand what is working, what communities need, and how research and resources can be made more useful in practice.

This year, our researchers presented insights from the Public Understanding of Law Survey and Measure for Measure, sharing evidence about legal capability, unmet need, and people-centred justice with practitioners who can then use and test those ideas against real community and practice experience. These presentations are an important form of knowledge exchange: they allow us to share findings, hear direct feedback, and learn how research can be framed, translated, and applied more effectively.

Participation in the working group strengthens relationships with community legal educators and gives us practical insight into how knowledge moves through the sector. These conversations create a dialogue between research, education, and practice, helping turn evidence into better resources, clearer communication, and more useful support for community legal capability.

Enable

Through strong partnerships, we created opportunities for Victorians to be better informed about their rights and have improved access to legal services.



Partner with the justice and community sectors to better engage with the people of Victoria and respond effectively to legal need and capability.

Evidence only creates change when people and organisations can use it. Through funding, education, events, resources, and partnerships, we help turn knowledge into practical action. This work supports capability where it is needed: in services, schools, communities, professional networks, and the many places where legal problems first appear.

This year, our work under the Enable pillar strengthened relationships and resources that allow learning to travel further. It supported partners to test ideas, share what they learned, and connect people with clearer pathways to legal information, support, and participation.

Funding capability and change

Through Major Grants, we invested in projects that build capability to understand and respond to legal need. In 2025–26, we offered Major Grants for the second time under the new structure, with an increased funding pool of $900,000.

Nine projects were funded to conduct research, build data capability, and pilot legal interventions. Projects respond to a range of issues including migrant and refugee women's experiences of legal services, consumer disputes, climate and disaster-related legal need, police accountability, women's experience of child protection, citizenship barriers for young people, renters' pathways, and organisational data capability.

Grants help the sector move from evidence to action. By supporting organisations to test ideas, strengthen practice, and generate new insights, the Major Grants program helps funded organisations better understand and respond to legal need in the communities they serve.

The year also showed the value of working with grant recipients beyond the funding decision. We offered feedback to unsuccessful applicants through meetings with organisations following the announcement of grants. This resulted in several projects reframed and funded through Everyday Legal Grants, maintaining momentum for good projects to be supported in a resource-limited environment.

The Major Grants program created value beyond individual projects by combining funding with guidance, relationship-building and opportunities for shared learning. It connected funded organisations with research, communications support, and peer insight, helping project knowledge travel further and strengthening capability in areas of shared need.

Major Grants

Organisation	Project Title	Total Allocated
Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights Inc	Strengthening equitable access to justice: Migrant and refugee Muslim women's experiences with free legal services	**$100,000**
Consumer Action Law Centre	Balancing VCAT's scales of justice	**$99,966**
Eastern Community Legal Centre Inc	Climate and Disaster Legal Data Project	**$100,000**
Human Rights Law Centre Ltd	Excessive by Force: Police Weapons impacts in Victoria	**$100,000**
Inner Melbourne Community Legal Inc	Police Accountability Worker Intake and Advice Line	**$100,000**
Law and Advocacy Centre for Women Ltd	Women's Experiences of the Intersection between the Child Protection and Criminal Legal Systems	**$100,000**
Northern Community Legal Centre Inc	The Citizenship Key: Legal Support for Young People Eligible for Australian Citizenship	**$100,000**
Tenants Victoria Ltd	Exploring the legal pathways of renters - Developing innovative methods for service and system feedback	**$99,990**
Westjustice (Western Community Legal Centre LTD)	Uplifting Data Capability, Maximising Impact	**$100,000**
	Total	**$899,956**

Supporting funded organisations to share and learn

We strengthened support for Major Grant recipients by creating more opportunities for connection, learning, and practical guidance beyond the funding decision. A dedicated Microsoft Teams channel was established for the 2024–25 Major Grant cohort, and online lunch and learn meetings gave recipients a place to share project progress, discuss challenges, and identify opportunities for collaboration.

The work involved grant recipients from across Victoria's legal assistance sector, alongside staff from Grants, Research, and Strategy and Engagement. In November, all 2024–25 funded organisations were represented at the second online lunch, where each shared progress, wins, and roadblocks. In February, we hosted a meet-and-greet for the 2025–26 Major Grant recipients, bringing the new cohort together to share what led them to their projects and begin building relationships for the life of the grants.

The year reinforced that grant relationships are strongest when they are active, practical, and mutual. Recipients identified common challenges, including staffing pressures and participant recruitment, as well as opportunities to collaborate and apply project findings. The meet-and-greet also showed the value of bringing different projects into the same room: while each organisation was responding to a specific issue, the cohort shared a commitment to evidence-driven change grounded in data, lived experience, and community insight.

This mattered because funding alone is not enough to build lasting capability. Many grant-funded projects are complex, involving research, community engagement, participant recruitment, service design, and knowledge translation. By staying connected with recipients throughout the grants cycle, we helped organisations access relevant support, learn from each other, and make better use of research, communications, and evaluation expertise.

Everyday Legal Grants

Everyday Legal Grants help organisations respond to specific legal needs, test practical ideas, and build capability for future work. Providing up to $10,000 for civil legal projects, the program supports focused community interventions, plain-language resources, multilingual referral tools, and legal education materials and components that extend or complement larger initiatives. Everyday Legal Grants help organisations test ideas and develop evidence that can support larger future projects.

Some projects are built on previous grant-funded work, helping organisations sustain momentum and deepen impact. Others respond to tightly defined needs for communities, including young people, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, local residents, and people navigating specialist legal issues.

Everyday Legal Grants

Organisation	Project Title	Total Allocated
Court Network Inc	Developing 'Your Day in Court – Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT)' resource	**$10,000**
Dallas Neighbourhood House Inc	Community Support 3047 legal information day	**$4,988**
Fitzroy Legal Service Inc	Night Service Intake Digital Uplift - scoping and planning of a new online intake and triage form	**$10,000**
Human Rights Law Centre Ltd	Know your rights: ABF workplace raids resource development	**$10,000**
Melbourne Activist Legal Support	Victorian Social Movement legal needs assessment	**$10,000**
Mental Health Legal Centre Inc	Consultation with people in prison to inform community legal information and education	**$9,990**
Muslim Legal Network Inc	MyJusticePath: Smart triage + multilingual legal referrals for culturally diverse Victorians	**$10,000**
RMIT University	Visualising Public Legal Information: Using graphic narratives to address community legal information need on personal safety intervention orders	**$10,000**
Southside Justice Inc	Delivery of the Sex Worker Legal Program	**$9,990**
Whittlesea Community Connections Inc	Understanding what works in preventing difficulties related to infringements and fines, debt matters and motor vehicle accidents for new arrival and migrant communities	**$10,000**
Youthlaw (Young People's Legal Rights Centre)	Development of a new resource: Before you apply for a Personal Safety Information Order (PSIO): Options for resolving school and peer disputes	**$10,000**
	Total	**$104,968**

New resource on research

The Grants research library makes it easier to find, use, and build on evidence generated through funded projects. Developed this year, the webpage brings together research publications from VLF-funded work in one accessible place, helping organisations see what has already been explored, what has been learnt, and where future projects could go next.

The library supports action by connecting grant-funded knowledge with the people who can apply it. It helps applicants strengthen proposals, supports funded organisations to share learning, and gives the wider justice and community sectors a clearer pathway into practical evidence. The library also reinforces the value of evidence-informed work. As we ask grant recipients to ground projects in research, we also help make that research easier to access, translate, and use.

The library turns individual project output into a shared resource, making funded evidence easier to find, promote, and use, to support better services, stronger partnerships, and more effective responses to legal need.

Building capability where people need it

We enable young people, students, and educators to build legal capability by making the law easier to connect with everyday life. This work brings together education, research, communications, events, and sector partners to strengthen legal literacy, connect students with the justice system, and build evidence about what young people need to recognise, navigate, and respond to legal problems.

Schools Law Talks

Our Schools Law Talks program helped students connect classroom learning with the justice system in action. Through Classroom, Metro, and Regional Law Talks, students heard directly from judges, barristers, solicitors, court staff, and justice organisations about rights, institutions, careers, and the role of law in everyday life.

The program prioritised access for students who may have fewer opportunities to engage with legal professionals, including regional schools and schools serving lower socio-economic communities. Sessions were delivered in classrooms, courts, and dedicated student programs, including Metro Law Talks at the County Court and Regional Law Talks in Bendigo, Ballarat, Ararat, and Stawell.

To support future capability and the foundations of good democracy, young people need more than curriculum knowledge. They need practical, trusted, and relatable information about how the law works, where to find help, and the many opportunities to participate in justice-related work. Throughout the year, sessions covered VCE Legal Studies, juries, courts, rights at work, law reform, careers, and access to justice.

The program also showed the value of place-based and experiential learning. Court visits, guided tours, jury selection observations, and conversations with practitioners helped students see the justice system as real, relevant, and open to them.

Schools Law Talks contribute to a stronger legal education system by bringing together schools, courts, legal professionals, community organisations, and volunteers. The program connects curriculum learning with real justice settings, supports young people to understand their rights and responsibilities, and strengthens links between education, community, and the legal sector.

Activity snapshot

Classroom Law talks

25 Completed

23 Schools

854 Students

Metro Law talks

2 Completed

8 Schools

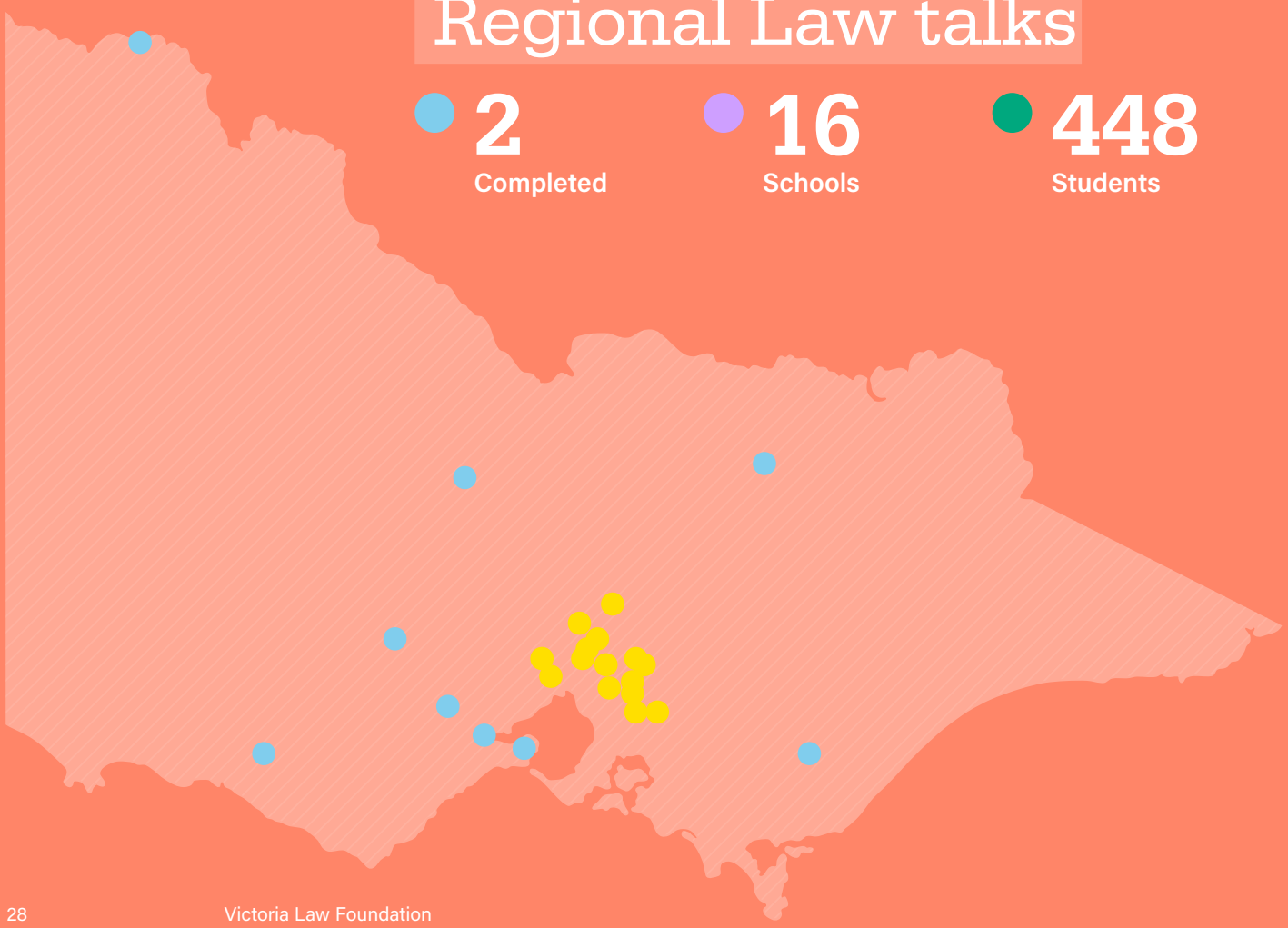
228 Students

Regional Law talks

2 Completed

16 Schools

448 Students



Law and You Forum

The Law and You Forum continued our long-running commitment to public legal education by creating a space for Victorians to explore legal issues that affect everyday life. This year's forum, The Price is Wrong! Gouging, Shrinkflation and Consumer Law, focused on consumer rights in the context of cost-of-living pressures and was delivered as a hybrid event, at the Wheeler Centre and online.

The event brought together expertise from regulation, policy research, and frontline financial counselling. Panellists Timothy Stargatt from Consumer Affairs Victoria, Erin Turner from the Consumer Policy Research Centre, and Josh Barnes from Meli helped unpack how consumer law works in practice, where people can turn for help, and why some problems remain difficult to resolve.

We know from the Public Understanding of Law Survey that consumer issues are among the most common legal problems people experience, yet many people do not identify them as legal or feel confident taking action. The Forum highlighted the gap between rights on paper and outcomes in real life. Participants heard that consumer protections provide important safeguards, but pathways to resolution can be fragmented, time-consuming, and difficult to navigate. The discussion also pointed to emerging pressures, including digital subscriptions; buy now, pay later products; planned obsolescence; and shrinkflation, which can make it harder for people to understand their options or challenge unfair outcomes.

The Law and You Forum translated a complex and timely area of law into practical guidance, helping build public capability to recognise problems, take early steps, and access appropriate support. It also connected community experience with regulators and frontline services, reinforcing the value of clear information and shared responsibility in making the law work in everyday life.

In Conversation

Through the In Conversation series, we have made the justice system more visible and understandable by bringing leading legal voices into public discussion. This year's event, Courts, Community and Confidence: A conversation with the Chief Justice, featured Chief Justice Richard Niall of the Supreme Court of Victoria.

The discussion explored the role of courts in community life, public trust, judicial leadership, access to justice, and the continuing importance of human judgement in the law. It connected the Chief Justice's reflections on institutional leadership with our research on legal need, legal capability, and the barriers people face in recognising and resolving legal problems.

Confidence in justice institutions depends on more than just legal decisions. It also depends on whether people understand what courts do, the principles that guide them and the support available when legal problems arise. The conversation highlighted the value of openness, consistency, and community engagement in building trust.

It also reinforced that many legal problems are shaped by complex social circumstances, and that while technology and artificial intelligence may change parts of legal practice, human judgement, context, and discretion remain central to fair decision-making.

School education resources

We continued to develop clear, practical education resources that help students, teachers, and the wider community understand Victoria's legal system. This year, we created refreshed materials for VCE Legal Studies, including factsheets on The Mabo Case: From Terra Nullius to Native Title and Two Results, Many Questions. Updated content, case studies, and illustrations made these resources more accessible and useful in the classroom.

The work brought together education, communications, events, learning design, and subject-matter expertise, including collaboration with Dr Bryan Keon-Cohen. We also adapted public-facing content for younger audiences, with education edits of the In Conversation video helping teachers reuse event content in curriculum settings.

This approach reflects the value of designing once and using well. By improving existing resources, developing new materials, and extending the life of public programs, we increased the reach and usefulness of our education work. The refreshed resources sit alongside Victoria's Legal Sector, our simple guide to the structures and functions of the justice system. Together, these resources connect education, events, and communications so teachers can bring law to life and students can build legal capability.

VLF intern alumni

Our internship program and alumni network help build future capability across Victoria's justice system. Each year, law students gain practical experience across our research, education, and grants work. Interns take part in site visits, sector introductions, and projects that connect their current learning with real-world legal need. Since 2002, more than 400 students have participated, with many moving into justice sector careers. The alumni network extends this connection, creating opportunities for former interns to reconnect, mentor, share knowledge, and support future VLF events and engagement.

Voices from VLF alumni

"The internship was incredibly valuable, both personally and professionally. It gave me confidence, a stronger sense of direction, and opened up opportunities that I would not have otherwise had. I felt genuinely supported by the team with staff taking the time to build meaningful connections with me and introduce me to their professional networks."

— Deanna Caputo, Intern 2026

"Entering my internship at the Victoria Law Foundation, I initially expected to observe experienced professionals and gain insights into the VLF's role in advancing access to justice. However, I soon found myself actively contributing to projects, developing practical skills, and engaging with the legal systems in ways I had not anticipated. Throughout my internship, I had the opportunity to meet key stakeholders and attend numerous site visits. This allowed me to observe and learn firsthand the unique challenges faced by different organisations and individuals, along with the important role that each has in improving access to justice."

—Linda Ly, Intern 2026

More than moments, building a movement

Law Week

Victorian Law Week 2026 helped people across Victoria recognise legal issues in everyday life, find expert help, and understand how to take the next step. Under the theme Where law meets life, we worked with new and returning event organisers to deliver a statewide program that connected legal information with familiar places, trusted voices, and practical conversations.

The program brought together community legal centres, courts, libraries, neighbourhood houses, regulators, professional bodies, local organisations, and volunteers. These relationships were central to the week's reach and relevance. Returning organisers brought experience and community trust, while new organisers added fresh perspectives, local knowledge, and different ways to engage people with the law.

The program combined in-person events, live online sessions, on-demand resources, and a coordinated communications campaign to reach people in different ways in communities across Victoria. This year, Victorian Law Week delivered 125 events and activities, involved 146 organisations, welcomed more than 80,000 unique visitors to the website, and generated more than 2.1 million paid social media impressions. Almost half of all in-person events were delivered in regional Victoria, reflecting the program's ongoing commitment to meeting people where they are.

The year reinforced that Law Week works best when we support a movement, not just a moment. Event organisers shaped sessions around local needs, helping people ask questions, recognise problems earlier, and connect with appropriate support. Social media videos were viewed more than 900,000 times and more than 80,000 website visits showed how digital and local activity can work together to extend reach.

Victorian Law Week strengthens the relationships and platforms that make legal information easier to find, more locally relevant, and more likely to reach people before problems escalate.

Grant support

Community-based delivery was also a key feature of the program. Through the Neighbourhood Houses Victoria funding allocation, 21 organisations received Neighbourhood House funding support to deliver Law Week activities. Reported Neighbourhood Houses Victoria Law Week events reached 1,006 community members, supporting local access to legal information through trusted and familiar community settings.

Community Legal Centres were also supported to participate in Law Week, with 27 centres eligible for grant support.

Voices from Law Week

“It was wonderful to see the attendees walking out knowing who to call, equipped with tools to help them navigate specific situations and where to go in our community for professional, legal support. me to their professional networks.”

—Bonnie Doon Community Group

“Victorian Law Week shows what is possible when the legal, community, and education sectors work together. In 2026, our sponsors and partners helped bring practical legal information to communities across Victoria, through local events, regional programs, court-based activities, online resources, and digital campaigns. Their support helped make the law more visible, understandable, and connected to everyday life.”

— Rebecca Hicks, Education Director
Victoria Law Foundation

“For many people—particularly those from culturally diverse backgrounds—legal information can feel overwhelming or hard to navigate... Hearing this information explained in plain language made it more accessible and easier to apply in real life. ”

—Louise, Multicultural Community Centre

“Participants reported feeling more informed, empowered, and connected to local services and community networks.”

—Nhill Neighbourhood House
Learning Centre

Sponsorship

Sponsors contributed to Victorian Law Week 2026 through financial support, sector leadership, direct program delivery, subject-matter expertise, regional engagement, online education, promotional support, and trusted community networks. Their involvement helped extend the reach of the program and reinforced a shared commitment across the justice sector to improving public understanding of the law.

We acknowledge the support of:

Major sponsors

- Department of Justice and Community Safety
- Victoria Legal Aid
- Federation of Community Legal Centres Victoria
- Victorian Legal Services Board + Commissioner

Sponsors

- Law Institute of Victoria
- Deakin Law School
- Victorian Bar
- Victorian Ombudsman

Community Law Talks

Community Law Talks extended the reach of Law Week by creating a local bridge between the law, the community, and the organisations that know people's needs best. Delivered in the Wimmera region in September and at the Bendigo Library during Victorian Law Week, the program brought legal information into a welcoming community space and connected people with practical help on everyday legal problems.

We worked with frontline legal, justice, and community partners to design a cohesive and locally relevant program. Partners included ARC Justice, Victoria Legal Aid, the Victorian Ombudsman, Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria, Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman, Young Workers Centre, Working Women's Centre, Victoria Police, Local law associations, Headspace, and regional Libraries. Their expertise helped ensure each session reflected real community issues and offered clear, useful pathways to support.

Running across multiple days, the event program was designed to meet people across different stages of life, from young children and families to young adults, workers, and community members dealing with complaints or employment issues. Sessions covered story-based learning, growing up and moving out, workplace rights, finding legal information as a recent arrival, making complaints, and local sector networking.

With many organisational relationships developed in previous Law Weeks, these events showed the value of using Law Week as more than a single campaign. With careful planning, strong relationships, and trusted local partners, Community Law Talks helped make legal information more accessible, relevant, and connected to people's everyday lives. It also strengthened relationships across regional legal and community sectors, supporting ongoing collaboration beyond a single week.

Connecting people and organisations

We enable action by bringing people, organisations, and ideas together. We create useful spaces where legal, community, education, and justice partners can connect around shared priorities, exchange knowledge, and build the relationships needed to respond to legal need.

International Access to Justice Forum 2026

Planning advanced this year for the 2026 International Access to Justice Forum: Evidence and Action, which we will host in partnership with Monash University in Melbourne from 28 to 30 October 2026. The Forum will bring together researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and justice system leaders from around the world to explore how evidence can be translated into practical change.

The response to the call for proposals demonstrated the strength of the global access to justice community, with more than 200 submissions from over 30 countries. A Steering Committee of local and international experts is helping shape a program that will connect research, evaluation, data, lived experience, and practice-based insight.

With sector sponsorship, we can facilitate access and inclusion, with early support from sector partners to help reduce barriers to participation.

The Forum creates a shared space for people across the justice system to test ideas, learn from different contexts, and strengthen relationships that can support better responses to legal need. The Melbourne program will also connect international delegates with Victoria's justice sector, including community legal centres, research partners, and local initiatives. By hosting the Forum, we are helping knowledge, evidence, and practice developments move across borders, sectors, and disciplines, contributing to a more connected and action-oriented access to justice community.

Enhancing Engagement

The Enhancing Engagement webinar series helps community legal education practitioners share ideas, approaches, and learn from each other's work. We hosted Moses Florendo from Whittlesea Community Connections and Milly Lefau from South-East Monash Legal Service for Level Up Your Legal Education.

The session explored how play, sport, and scenario-based learning can make legal information more accessible, especially for young people. Moses introduced Fine Your Way Out, a board game designed to help people understand the fines system. Milly shared the development of Sporting Change, which uses sport to open conversations about rights, legal help, and navigating the justice system.

Filmed live on location in the community, the webinar created space for sector connection, reflection, and practical exchange. Feedback highlighted the value of creative, youth-focused tools that lower barriers and spark engagement. We extended the session's impact by sharing supporting resources online, helping practitioners continue applying ideas from the event in their own community legal education work.

Education Forum

The Education Forum helps key connectors across Victoria's justice and education sectors share knowledge and strengthen relationships around legal education.

This year we met several times with 34 forum members from the schools and education sector. The Forum creates practical opportunities for organisations to exchange ideas and improve how legal information reaches students, teachers, and the wider community. Meetings were generously hosted by the Sentencing Advisory Council and the Victorian Law Reform Commission.

The Forum supported organisations to introduce new ideas and improve practice, including through discussion of Law Week formats, feedback on the Victoria's Legal System booklet, and opportunities to contribute to student programs in Horsham and Bendigo. Members highlighted the value of extending legal education beyond the legal sector, using flexible formats, and making content easier to access.

The Forum strengthened connections between organisations that create, teach, and share legal information, helping build a more coordinated approach to public legal education.

Legal Laneway Breakfast

The Legal Laneway Breakfast helps Victoria's legal profession connect over coffee and hear from the legal leadership at the start of the legal year.

We hosted the flagship Melbourne event and supported local organisations to deliver regional breakfasts in Ballarat, Horsham, and Shepparton. Together, these events created welcoming opportunities for legal professionals, courts, government, community organisations, and local partners to reflect on shared priorities, strengthen networks, and prepare for the year ahead.

The Melbourne breakfast attracted more than 300 people this year, including strong representation from across the justice sector as well as government, education, business, and community organisations. The speakers were the Victorian Attorney General Sonya Kilkenny MP, Chief Justice Richard Niall, and the Victorian Legal Services Commissioner Fiona McLeay, who all spoke to the role of the legal profession in upholding the rule of law, maintaining public trust, and supporting access to justice.

Regional breakfasts have been growing for several years, extending the value of these events beyond Melbourne. Allied Justice delivered events in Ballarat and, for the first time, in Horsham, while the Goulburn Valley Law Association hosted the first Shepparton breakfast. These locally led events brought together regional legal and community sectors, supported knowledge sharing, and helped connect local organisations working close to community need.

The Breakfast continues a long-standing contribution to justice and community engagement and collegiality.

Perform

We continue to invest in our high-performing, collaborative team that is recognised for its expertise, integrity, and impact.

Sustain a high-functioning and well-regarded team focused on expertise and collaboration.

The quality of VLF's public contribution depends on the strength of the organisation behind it. Good governance, safe systems, capable people, useful data, and a healthy culture shape how well we can support others, manage risk, and keep improving.

This year, our work through the Perform pillar focused on internal systems which make external value possible. Stronger learning practices, safer digital systems, clearer governance, and shared responsibility help us deliver with care, adapt to change, and contribute more consistently to Victoria's justice ecosystem.

Improving how we work

As an organisation deeply involved in the collection and application of evidence through research, we are equally committed to using it to improve our own work across research, education, grants, business services, and communications.

Impact Study

Gauging the impact of our work is a critical and challenging undertaking across diverse functions. This year we moved to the next stage of our Impact Study to better understand how all our work contributes to legal capability, access to justice, and a stronger justice system. This phase focused on the data we collect, how that is used, and where stronger monitoring, evaluation and learning practices can improve planning and reporting.

Led by the Research team, the work will map data against activities across our function areas and identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities to improve our work and contribution to better access to justice.

Meaningful engagement

This year, we took a more deliberate approach to event design. We considered how launches, forums, webinars, and community events could be more useful, engaging, and memorable in our audiences' busy calendars.

This meant designing events around people's needs, capabilities, and contexts. Community-based events were held in familiar spaces, helping meet people where they are and making legal information feel more relevant and accessible. In-person events were used for what they do best: creating connections, encouraging conversation, and sometimes inviting people beyond their comfort zone. Online events were designed with equal care, using thoughtful structure, presenter selection, and engagement techniques to support participation and focus.

Understanding the role of AI

We began taking a more structured approach to artificial intelligence (AI), balancing practical experimentation with clear governance and guardrails. This work recognises that AI may support productivity and content development, but must be used carefully, with human judgement.

During the year, we developed an AI Roadmap and AI Policy to guide responsible adoption across the organisation. These documents set out how staff can explore emerging tools while protecting privacy, accuracy, transparency and accountability. Limited Copilot licences were also introduced across function areas to test appetite, identify useful applications, and build confidence in low-risk settings.

Reaching more people to support understanding and action

Through research launches, key education events, support for grant-funded projects, and Victorian Law Week, we worked with the sector to amplify expert voices and the experiences of people closest to frontline legal need. Courts, community legal centres, regulators, community organisations, and local partners brought the knowledge, trust, and practical insight needed to make legal information more relevant to everyday life. We contributed communications, events, and research expertise to help build the capacity of our partners.

We are also using digital technology strategically to engage specific audiences. Through short-form video, targeted social media, paid promotion, and clearer digital pathways, we are refining messages for people who may not recognise their problems as legal or know where to start. With our Law Week activation videos, we generated more than 1.2M social media impressions to introduce legal issues as everyday problems we all face and can find help for.

A safe and capable place of work

A safe, capable, and well-supported organisation is better placed to serve the public's interest. This year, we invested in staff learning, digital security, safer workplace practices and more structured approaches to technology, governance, and culture. These foundations help us work responsibly, protect trust, and contribute sustainably across the justice ecosystem.

Staff development and competency

We continued to strengthen staff capability, safety, and inclusion through a structured approach to learning and workplace development. During the year, staff completed equal employment opportunity modules to support a shared understanding of respectful conduct, fairness, and legal obligations in the workplace.

We also began activities to meet new legislative requirements relating to psychosocial hazards. This included staff collaboration, training, risk assessment, and reporting approaches designed to identify risks early and support a safer working environment.

Alongside these initiatives, staff undertook Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies cultural learning to deepen understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, and perspectives.

Together, these activities build the capability we need to work with care, accountability and respect.

Digital security

We continued to strengthen our digital foundations through improved planning, governance, and staff capability. During the year, we drafted an IT Strategy to guide how technology can better support our work over the next three years, including more reliable systems, clearer priorities, and stronger alignment with organisational needs.

Cyber security also remained a key focus. We completed the annual Victorian Government Cyber Maturity Benchmark, helping identify strengths, risks, and areas for further improvement. Staff also completed Phriendly Phishing modules covering AI-powered scams, ransomware in the courts, and multifactor authentication, building practical awareness of current digital risks.

Together with our emerging approach to artificial intelligence, this work supports more confident, secure, and responsible use of technology.

Building a stake in VLF culture

We continued to give staff an active role in shaping the organisation's culture, systems, and ways of working. Through staff working groups, focused on areas including social activity, environmental responsibility, safety and wellbeing, reconciliation, and artificial intelligence, staff were able to contribute ideas, test approaches, and strengthen shared ownership of organisational priorities.

Our people

As of 30 June 2026, VLF employs 29 staff members in full-time, part-time, or casual capacities.

Executive

Lynne Haultain
Executive Director

Dr Hugh M. McDonald
Research Director

Rebecca Hicks
Education Director
(from January 2026)

Melanie Ryg
Grants Director

Rebecca Tattersall
Business and Finance Director

Jen Tucker
Strategy and Engagement Director
(until April 2026)

Research

Dr Hugh M. McDonald
Research Director

Bridget McAloon
Principal Researcher

Dr Bethia Burgess
Senior Researcher

Yolanda Mansfield
Senior Researcher

Dr Zhigang Wei
Data Analyst

Evie Ogier
Research Programs Manager

Marie Baird
Senior Research Advisor
(Secondment from VLA,
from April 2026)

Education

Rebecca Hicks
Education Director
(from January 2026)

Kate Sedgwick
Education and Events Director
(until November 2026)

Vikki Doig
Events Manager

Fabiola Superina
Education Manager

Nikita Batch
Education and Events Coordinator
(until January 2026)

Cindy Huang
Education Coordinator
(from January 2026)

Emma Ngo
Learning Designer
(from January 2026)

Nicolas Tavassoli
Education Officer

Deanna Caputo
Events Officer
(from April 2026)

David Thomson
OAM Teacher-in-Residence

Our people

Grants

Melanie Rygl
Grants Director

Silvie Bernhard
Grants Coordinator

Business Services

Business and Finance Director

Business Support Manager

Human Resources Advisor

Finance Coordinator

Business Support Officer

Administrative Officer

Strategy and Process Consultant
(from May 2026)

Strategy and Engagement

Jen Tucker
Strategy and Engagement Director
(until April 2026)

Jackie Matthews
Production Advisor
(Acting Program Manager
from April 2026)

Leon Meyer
Communications and
Engagement Manager

Ysabel Kershaw
Research and
Communications Coordinator

James Meland
Digital Design Manager
(until May 2026)

Lorin Clarke
Communications Advisor
(from May 2026)

Organisation

Staff work across five functions, equating to 22 full-time equivalent positions, excluding short-term casual staff.

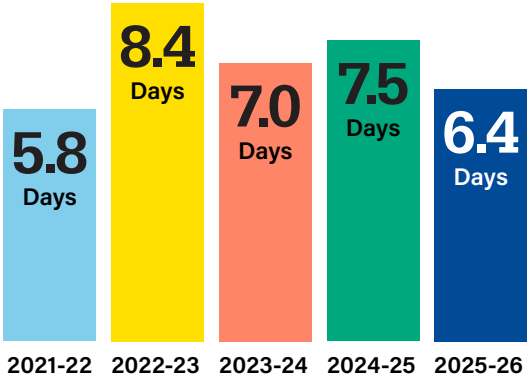
Function	FTE
Executive	1.0
Research	5.6
Education	5.4
Grants	1.6
Business Services	3.8
Strategy and Engagement	4.8

Leave and absenteeism

Absenteeism rates have decreased slightly in this financial year, from 7.5 days personal leave per full-time employee in 2024-25 to 6.4 days in 2025-26.

Days of personal leave per full-time employee

*The average absenteeism level in Australia is 14 days, according to the DHS 2023 Absence management and wellbeing survey report.



Financial Report 2025-26

Income Statement	42
Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income	43
Statement of financial position	44
Statement of changes in equity	45
Statement of cash flows	46
Notes to financial statements	47
Foundation members' declaration	66
Independent auditor's report	67

Note : AI Disclosure

Microsoft Copilot supported the development of this document, including drafting, restructuring, summarising, plain-language editing, and refining the content outline. VLF staff reviewed, edited, and approved the content. VLF is responsible for the final content, accuracy, interpretation, and use of this document.

Income Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2026

	Note	2026 $	2025 $
Revenue and other income			
Legal Services Board Public Purpose Fund	2	4,577,119	3,597,782
Managed funds distributions, dividends and other gains	2	139,617	149,947
Other income	2	204,316	177,624
		4,921,052	3,925,353
Less: expenses			
Administrative expenses		(214,690)	(210,354)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	3	(140,626)	(132,431)
Employee benefits expense		(2,922,303)	(2,181,129)
Finance costs	3	(40,978)	(45,524)
Program expenses		(1,274,496)	(899,048)
Research expenses		(105,307)	(71,828)
Other expenses		(35,432)	(37,312)
		(4,733,832)	(3,577,626)
Surplus from operating activities		187,220	347,727
Unrealised net (loss)/gain in *fair* value of financial assets classified at fair value through profit or loss		(13,397)	(7,253)
Net gain on disposal of financial assets classified at fair value through profit or loss		30,202	
Surplus for the year		230,819	340,474

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income

For the year ended 30 June 2026

	Note	2026 $	2025 $
Surplus for the year		230,819	340,474
Other comprehensive income *Items that will not be reclassified subsequently to profit and loss*			
Unrealised net gain in fair value of financial assets designated at fair value through other comprehensive income		105,587	178,464
Net gain on disposal of financial assets classified at fair value through other comprehensive income		86,080	24,370
		(19,507)	202,834
Other comprehensive income for the year		(19,507)	202,834
Total comprehensive income		211,312	543,308

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Statement of financial position

As at 30 June 2026

	Note	2026 $	2025 $
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	4	854,638	957,982
Trade and other receivables	5	72,262	64,653
Other current assets	6	16,004	1,200
Total Current Assets		942,904	1,023,835
Non-current assets			
Other financial assets	7	5,442,849	4,784,344
Lease assets	8	518,141	635,867
Plant and equipment	9	48,124	37,636
Total Non-current Assets		6,009,114	5,457,847
Total Assets		6,952,018	6,481,682
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	10	262,752	269,100
Lease liabilities	8	112,375	100,374
Provisions	11	963,918	666,127
	12	91,449	
Total Current Liabilities		1,430,494	1,035,601
Non-current liabilities			
Lease liabilities	8	487,096	599,471
Provisions	11	15,614	39,108
Total Non-current Liabilities		502,710	638,579
Total Liabilities		1,933,204	1,674,180
Net Assets		5,018,814	4,807,502
Equity			
Reserves	13	601,551	577,459
Accumulated funds	14	4,417,263	4,230,043
Total Equity		5,018,814	4,807,502

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Statement of changes in equity

For the year ended 30 June 2026

	Financial assets at fair value $	Profits reserve $	Accumulated surplus $	Total equity $
Balance as at 1 July 2024	295,402	86,476	3,882,316	4,264,194
Surplus for the year	-	-	340,474	340,474
Net change in fair value of financial assets designated at fair value through other comprehensive income	178,464	-	-	178,464
Transfer from financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income reserve	-	24,370	-	24,370
Total comprehensive income for the year	178,464	24,370	340,474	543,308
Transfer to reserve	(7,523)	-	7,253	-
Balance as at 30 June 2025	466,613	110,846	4,230,043	4,807,502
Balance as at 1 July 2025	466,613	110,846	4,230,043	4,807,502
Surplus for the year	-	-	230,819	230,819
Net change in fair value of financial assets designated at fair value through other comprehensive income	(105,587)	-	-	(105,587)
Transfer from financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income reserve relating to disposals	-	86,080	-	86,080
Total comprehensive income for the year	(105,587)	86,080	230,819	211,312
Transfer to reserve	13,397	30,202	(43,599)	-
Balance as at 30 June 2026	374,423	227,128	4,417,263	5,018,814

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Statement of cash flows

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Item	Note	2026 $	2025 $
Cash flow from operating activities			
Funding from Legal Services Board Public Purpose Fund		4,577,119	3,597,782
Payments to suppliers and employees		(3,403,659)	(2,696,196)
Payment of approved grants and projects		(893,795)	(488,680)
Interest received		134,901	92,128
Finance costs		(40,978)	(45,524)
Sponsorship, project and other income		117,478	68,876
Net cash provided by operating activities	15(b)	491,066	528,386
Cash flow from investing activities			
Payment for plant and equipment		(33,667)	(20,568)
Proceeds from sale of investments		1,381,972	212,693
Payment for shares and managed fund acquisitions		(2,016,385)	(766,470)
Dividends and distributions received		170,568	149,445
Recoupment of imputation credits received		3,476	17,582
Net cash provided / (used in) by investing activities		(494,036)	(407,318)
Cash flow from financing activities			
Principal portion of lease payments		(100,374)	(85,315)
Net cash used in financing activities		(100,374)	(85,315)
Cash at beginning of the financial year		957,982	922,229
Net increase in cash held		(103,344)	35,753
Cash at end of financial year	15(a)	854,638	957,982

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Notes to financial statements

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 1: Summary of material accounting policies

General information
The financial report is a general purpose financial report that has been prepared in accordance with the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and Australian Accounting Standards, Interpretations and other applicable authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board.

The financial report covers Victoria Law Foundation as an individual entity. Victoria Law Foundation is a body corporate pursuant to the *Victoria Law Foundation Act 2009*. Victoria Law Foundation is a not-forprofit entity for the purpose of preparing the financial statements.

The financial report was approved by the directors on:

Historical Cost Convention
The financial report has been prepared under the historical cost convention, as modified by revaluations to fair value for certain classes of assets and liabilities as described in the accounting policies.

Fair value measurement
For financial reporting purposes, 'fair value' is the price that would be received to sell an asset, or paid to transfer a liability, in an orderly transaction between market participants (under current market conditions) at the measurement date, regardless of whether that price is directly observable or estimated using another valuation technique.

When estimating the fair value of an asset or liability, the entity uses valuation techniques that are appropriate in the circumstances and for which sufficient data are available to measure fair value, maximising the use of relevant observable inputs and minimising the use of unobservable inputs. Inputs to valuation techniques used to measure fair value are categorised into three levels according to the extent to which the inputs are observable:

- Level 1 inputs are quoted prices (unadjusted) in active markets for identical assets or liabilities that the entity can access at the measurement date.
- Level 2 inputs are inputs other than quoted prices included within Level 1 that are observable for the asset or liability, either directly or indirectly.
- Level 3 inputs are unobservable inputs for the asset or liability.

Going Concern
The financial report has been prepared on a going concern basis, which contemplates continuity of normal business activities and the realisation of assets and the settlement of liabilities in the ordinary course of business.

The Foundation is dependent on funding from the Legal Services Board in order to fund the majority of its operations. At the date of this report the members have no reason to believe that this funding will not continue to support the operations of the Foundation into the future.

Notes to financial statements

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 1: Summary of material accounting policies (continued)

New and revised accounting standards effective at 30 June 2026
The Foundation has applied all new and revised Australian Accounting Standards that apply for the first time at 30 June 2025. The application of these Australian Accounting Standards did not have a material impact on the Foundation's financial statements.

Material accounting policies
The following material accounting policies have been applied in the preparation and presentation of the financial report.

(a) Revenue and other income

Funding revenue received from the Legal Services Board Public Purpose Fund is brought to account upon receipt. Dividend and other distribution revenue is recognised when the right to receive a dividend or other distribution is established.

Interest revenue is measured in accordance with the effective interest method.

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

(b) Provisions

Provisions are recognised when the Foundation 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.

The amount recognised as a provision is the best estimate of the expenditure required to settle the present obligation at the end of the reporting period.

(c) Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, demand deposits, short-term deposits with an original maturity of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities in the statement of financial position.

(d) Grants Provided

The Foundation brings into account as a provision all amounts approved under the Foundation's Grants Program. Recognition of the provision occurs when the formal approval of a grant is given by the Foundation and an acceptance of conditions of grant is signed by the grant recipient.

Notes to financial statements

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 1: Summary of material accounting policies (continued)

(e) Taxation

Income Tax

No provision for income tax has been raised as the Foundation is exempt from income tax under Division 50 of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.*

(f) Financial instruments

Initial recognition and measurement

Financial assets and financial liabilities are recognised when the Foundation becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument. For financial assets, this is equivalent to the date that the Foundation commits itself to either the purchase or sale of the asset (i.e. trade date accounting is adopted).

Financial instruments are initially measured at fair value adjusted for transaction costs, except where the instrument is classified as fair value through profit or loss, in which case transaction costs are immediately recognised as expenses in profit or loss.

Classification of financial assets

Financial assets recognised by the Foundation are subsequently measured in their entirety at either amortised cost or fair value, subject to their classification and whether the Foundation irrevocably designates the financial asset on initial recognition at fair value through other comprehensive income (FVtOCI) in accordance with the relevant criteria in AASB 9.

Financial assets not irrevocably designated on initial recognition at FVtOCI are classified as subsequently measured at amortised cost, FVtOCI or fair value through profit or loss (FVtPL) on the basis of both:
(a) the Foundation's business model for managing the financial assets; and
(b) the contractual cash flow characteristics of the financial asset.

Trade and other receivables

Trade and other receivables arise from the Foundation's transactions with its customers and are normally settled within 30 days.

Consistent with both the Foundation's business model for managing the financial assets and the contractual cash flow characteristics of the assets, trade and other receivables are subsequently measured at amortised cost.

Corporate bonds

Corporate bonds are debt instruments issued by both listed and unlisted companies, and are classified (and measured) at fair value through other comprehensive income on the basis that:

(a) they are held within a business model whose objective is achieved by the Foundation both collecting contractual cash flows and selling the financial assets; and
(b) the contractual terms of the financial asset give rise on specified dates to cash flows that are solely payments of principal and interest on the principal amount outstanding.

Notes to financial statements

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 1: Summary of material accounting policies (continued)

(f) Financial instruments (Continued)

Equity instruments

Equity instruments comprise ordinary shares in listed entities that are not held for trading. On initial recognition, investments identified by the Foundation as equity instruments are irrevocably designated (and measured) at fair value through other comprehensive income. This election has been made as the members believe that to otherwise recognise changes in the fair value of these investments in profit or loss would be inconsistent with the objective of holding these investments.

Investments in Managed Funds

Investments in Managed Funds where the units held are redeemable directly to the Fund are classified and subsequently measured at fair value through profit or loss.

(g) Plant and equipment

Each class of plant and equipment is measured at cost or fair value less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation and any accumulated impairment losses.

Plant and equipment

Plant and equipment is measured on the cost basis.

Depreciation

The depreciable amount of all plant and equipment is depreciated over their estimated useful lives commencing from the time the asset is held available for use, consistent with the estimated consumption of the economic benefits embodied in the asset.

Leasehold improvements

Leasehold improvements are depreciated over the shorter of either the unexpired period of the lease or the estimated useful lives of the improvements.

Class of fixed asset	Depreciation rates	Depreciation basis
Leasehold improvements at cost	13%	Straight line
Furniture, fixtures and fittings at cost	11 - 33%	Straight line
Computer equipment at cost	10 - 33%	Straight line
Library at cost	5%	Straight line

Library

The cost of purchases which represent long term holdings of the library are capitalised and subsequently depreciated. Expenditure on library materials of a short term reference nature are expensed in the year of purchase.

Notes to financial statements

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 1: Summary of material accounting policies (continued)

(h) Impairment of non-financial assets

All non-financial assets, including property, plant and equipment, lease assets and other intangible assets, are tested for impairment whenever events or circumstances indicate that the asset may be impaired.

For impairment assessment purposes, assets are generally grouped at the lowest levels for which there are largely independent cash inflows ('cash generating units'). Accordingly, most assets are tested for impairment at the cash generating unit level. An impairment loss is recognised when the carrying amount of an asset or cash generating unit (to which the asset belongs) exceeds its recoverable amount.

(i) Leases

Lease assets are measured at cost less accumulated depreciation and any accumulated impairment losses.

Lease assets are depreciated over the shorter of the lease term and the estimated useful life of the underlying asset, on a basis that is consistent with the expected pattern of consumption of the economic benefits embodied in the underlying asset.

Lease liabilities are measured at the present value of the remaining lease payments. Interest expense on lease liabilities is recognised in profit or loss. Variable lease payments not included in the measurement of lease liabilities are recognised as an expense in the period in which they are incurred.

Lease payments made in relation to leases of 12-months or less and leases of low value assets (for which a lease asset and a lease liability has not been recognised) are recognised as an expense on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

(j) Employee benefits

Short-term employee benefits
Provisions for short-term employee benefits, including annual leave that are expected to be settled wholly within twelve months after the end of the reporting period, are measured at the (undiscounted) amount of the benefit expected to be paid.

Long-term employee benefits
Provisions for other long-term employee benefits, including long service leave and annual leave that are not expected to be settled wholly within twelve months after the end of the reporting period, are measured at the present value of the expected benefit to be paid in respect of the services provided by employees up to the reporting date.

(k) Borrowing costs

Borrowing costs, including interest and other finance costs, that are directly attributable to the acquisition, construction or production of a qualifying asset are included in the cost of that asset. All other borrowing costs are recognised in profit or loss.

Notes to financial statements

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 1: Summary of material accounting policies (continued)

(l) Goods and services tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and purchased assets are recognised net of the amount of GST.

The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the taxation authority is included as part of receivables and payables in the Statement of Financial Position.

Cash flows are presented in the statement of cash flows on a gross basis, except for the GST component of investing and financing activities, which are disclosed as operating cash flows.

(m) Comparatives

Where necessary, comparative information has been reclassified and repositioned for consistency with current year disclosures.

	2026 $	2025 $
Note 2: Revenue and Other Income		
Legal Services Board Public Purpose Fund	4,577,119	3,597,782
Managed funds distributions, dividends and other gains	139,617	149,947
Other income		
Imputation credits refund	19,415	17,582
Sponsorship and project income	50,000	60,500
Interest income	134,901	92,198
Sundry income	-	7,414
	204,316	177,624
	4,921,052	3,925,353

(a) Economic dependency

The Foundation is dependent on funding from the Legal Services Board in order to fund the majority of its operations. This funding has been committed for the financial year ending 30 June 2027. The members of the Foundation have no reason to believe that the funding will not continue beyond this period.

Notes to financial statements

For the year ended 30 June 2026

	2026 $	2025 $
Note 3: Surplus From Operating Activities		
Surplus from operating activities has been determined after:		
Finance costs	40,978	45,524
Depreciation		
— leasehold improvements	636	636
— furniture and fittings	685	668
— computer equipment	21,579	18,517
	22,900	19,821
Amortisation of leased assets	117,726	112,610
Employee benefits		
— Short term benefits	2,544,382	1,957,435
— Superannuation guarantee contributions	302,404	217,777
— Other employee benefits	75,517	5,917
	2,922,303	2,181,129
Remuneration of auditors for *Pitcher Partners (Melbourne)* Audit and assurance services — Audit of the financial report	29,850	28,990
Note 4: Cash and cash equivalents		
Cash at bank	854,638	957,982
Note 5: Trade and other Receivables		
CURRENT		
Trade debtors	23,971	-
GST receivable	31,999	33,349
Other debtors	16,292	31,304
	72,262	64,653
Note 6: Other current assets		
CURRENT		
Prepayments	16,004	1,200

Notes to financial statements

For the year ended 30 June 2026

	2026 $	2025 $
Note 7: Other financial assets		
NON-CURRENT		
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss		
Managed funds	894,345	1,118,793
Financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income		
Domestic and foreign equities	2,194,108	1,884,158
Fixed interest	2,354.396	1,781,393
	5,442,849	4,784,344

Basis of determing fair value
All assets listed above are measured and recognised as Level 1 assets under the fair value measurement hierarchy. All Foundation investment assets are measured based on available quoted prices traded on active financial markets.

Note 8: Lease Assets and Lease Liabilities		
(a) Lease assets		
Buildings under lease		
At cost	850,187	850,187
Accumulated amortisation	(338,982)	(223,238)
	511,205	626,949
Office equipment under lease		
At cost	9,909	9,909
Accumulated amortisation	(2,973)	(991)
	6,936	8,918
Total carrying amount of lease assets	518,141	635,867

Notes to financial statements

For the year ended 30 June 2026

	2026 $	2025 $
Note 8: Lease Assets and Lease Liabilities (continued)		
Reconciliations Reconciliation of the carry amount of lease assets at the beginning and end of the financial year:		
Buildings		
Opening carrying amount	626,949	716,221
Additions	-	22,347
Amortisation	(115,744)	(111,619)
Closing carrying amount	511,205	626,949
Office equipment		
Opening carrying amount	8,918	-
Additions	-	9,909
Amortisation	(1,982)	(991)
Closing carrying amount	6,936	8,918
(b) Lease liabilities		
CURRENT		
Lease liability - buildings	110,400	98,518
Lease liability - office equipment	1,975	1,856
	112,375	100,374
NON-CURRENT		
Lease liability - buildings	481,612	592,012
Lease liability - office equipment	5,484	7,459
	487,096	599,471
Total carrying amount of lease liabilities	599,471	699,845
(c) Lease expenses and cashflows		
Amortisation expense on lease assets	117,726	112,610
Interest expense on lease liabilities	40,978	45,524
Cash outflow in relation to leases	141,352	130,839

Notes to financial statements

For the year ended 30 June 2026

	2026 $	2025 $
Note 9: Plant and equipment		
Leasehold improvements at cost	4,890	4,890
Less accumulated depreciation	(1,829)	(1,194)
	3,061	3,696
Library at cost	-	-
Less accumulated depreciation	-	-
	-	-
Furniture, fixtures and fittings at cost	35,932	32,838
Less accumulated depreciation	(30,479)	(29,794)
	5,453	3,044
Computer equipment at cost	122,472	110,753
Less accumulated depreciation	(82,862)	(79,857)
	39,610	30,896
Total plant and equipment	48,124	37,636
(a) Reconciliations Reconciliation of the carrying amounts of plant and equipment at the beginning and end of the current financial year		
Leasehold improvements		
Opening carrying amount	3,696	4,332
Depreciation expense	(635)	(558)
Closing carrying amount	3,061	4,332
Furniture, fixtures and fittings		
Opening carrying amount	3,044	953
Additions	3,095	2,706
Depreciation expense	(686)	(615)
Closing carrying amount	5,453	3,044

Notes to financial statements

For the year ended 30 June 2026

		2026 $	2025 $
Note 9: Plant and equipment (Continued)			
(a) Reconciliations (Continued)			
Computer equipment			
Opening carrying amount		30,986	31,876
Additions		30,572	17,862
Disposals		(279)	(325)
Depreciation expense		(21,579)	(18,517)
Closing carrying amount		39,610	30,896
Total plant and equipment			
Carrying amount at 1 July		37,636	37,912
Additions		33,667	20,568
Disposals		(279)	(1,023)
Depreciation expense		(22,900)	(19,821)
Carrying amount at 30 June		48,124	37,636
Note 10: Trade & other payables			
CURRENT			
Unsecured liabilities			
Trade creditors		70,854	45,839
Sundry creditors and accruals		191,898	223,261
		262,752	269,100
Note 11: Provisions			
CURRENT			
Employee benefits	(a)	399,245	321,874
Provision for approved grants		564,673	344,253
		963,918	666,127
NON-CURRENT			
Employee benefits	(a)	15,614	28,336
Provision for approved grants		-	10,772
		15,614	39,108
(a) Aggregate employee benefits liability		414,859	350,210

Notes to financial statements

For the year ended 30 June 2026

	2026 $	2025 $
Note 12: Other Liabilities		
CURRENT		
Deferred sponsorship income	91,449	-

Note 13: Reserves		
Financial assets revaluation reserve	374,423	466,613
Profits reserve	227,128	110,846
	601,551	577,459

Financial assets revaluation reserve is used to record the unrealised movements in fair values of financial assets.

The profits reserve is used to record realised gains / (losses) made on the disposal of financial assets.

Note 14: Accumulated funds		
Accumulated funds at the beginning of the financial year	4,230,043	3,882,316
Surplus attributable to the members of the entity	230,819	340,474
Transfers (from) / to reserves	43,599	7,253
	4,417,263	4,230,043

Notes to financial statements

For the year ended 30 June 2026

	2026 $	2025 $
Note 15: Cash Flow information		
(a) Reconciliation of cash Cash at the end of the financial year as shown in the Statement of Cash Flows is reconciled to the related items in the Statement of Financial Position as follows:		
Cash at bank	854,638	957,982
	854,638	957,982
(b) Reconciliation of cash flow from operations with surplus		
Surplus from ordinary activities	230,819	340,474
Adjustments and non-cash items		
Amortisation	117,726	112,610
Depreciation	22,900	19,821
Net loss on disposal of plant and equipment	1279	1,023
Non-cash movement in investments	(43,599)	7,253
Reclassification of dividends and distributions received to investing activities	(139,617)	(149,947)
Reclassification of recoupment of imputation credits received to investing activities	(19,415))	(17,582)
Changes in operating assets and liabilities		
(Increase) / decrease in receivables	(22,621)	(718)
(Increase) / decrease in other assets	(14,804)	(730)
Increase / (decrease) in payables	(6,348)	16,992
Decrease in other liabilities	91,449	(92)
(Decrease) / increase in payables	64,649	(5,539)
Increase / (decrease) in grant provisions	209,648	204,821
	260,247	187,912
Cash flows from operating activities	491,066	528,386

Notes to financial statements

For the year ended 30 June 2026

	2026 $	2025 $
Note 15: Cash Flow information		
(a) Reconciliation of cash Cash at the end of the financial year as shown in the Statement of Cash Flows is reconciled to the related items in the Statement of Financial Position as follows:		
Cash at bank	854,638	957,982
	854,638	957,982
(b) Reconciliation of cash flow from operations with surplus		
Surplus from ordinary activities	230,819	340,474
Adjustments and non-cash items		
Amortisation	117,726	112,610
Depreciation	22,900	19,821
Net loss on disposal of plant and equipment	279	1,023
Non-cash movement in investments	(43,599)	7,253
Reclassification of dividends and distributions received to investing activities	(139,617)	(149,947)
Reclassification of recoupment of imputation credits received to investing activities	(19,415)	(17,582)
Changes in operating assets and liabilities		
(Increase) / decrease in receivables	(22,621)	(718)
(Increase) / decrease in other assets	(14,804)	(730)
Increase / (decrease) in payables	(6,348)	16,992
Decrease in other liabilities	91,448	(92)
(Decrease) / increase in payables	64,649	(5,539)
Increase / (decrease) in grant provisions	204,648	204,821
	260,247	187,912
Cash flows from operating activities	491,066	528,386

Notes to financial statements

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 16: Financial risk management

The Foundation is exposed to the following financial risks in respect to the financial instruments that it held at the end of the reporting period:

(a) interest rate risk
(b) credit risk
(c) liquidity risk
(d) market price risk
(e) fair values

The Foundation's board has overall responsibility for identifying and managing operational and financial risks.

The Foundation does not use derivative instruments to manage risks associated with its financial instruments.

(a) Interest rate risk

The Foundation is exposed to interest rate risk in relation to its financial instruments. Interest rate risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate as a result of changes in market interest rates.

All investments held by the Foundation are non-interest bearing except for cash and fixed interest financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income.

The effective weighted average interest rate on cash is 2.34% (2025: 2.69%). Fixed interest investments have a fair value of $2,354,396 (2025: $$1,781,393) which is subject to fluctuations as a result of interest rate risk.

The impact of reasonably possible movements in interest rates at year end are not considered to be material.
No other financial assets or financial liabilities are expected to be exposed to interest rate risk.

(b) Credit risk

Credit risk is the risk that one party to a financial instrument will cause a financial loss for the other party by failing to discharge an obligation.

The maximum exposure to credit risk, excluding the value of any collateral or other security, at balance date of recognised financial assets is the carrying amount of those assets, net of any provisions for impairment of those assets, as disclosed in statement of financial position and notes to financial statements.

The Foundation does not have any material credit risk exposure to any single counterparty or group of counterparties under financial instruments entered into by the Foundation.

Notes to financial statements

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 16: Financial risk management (continued)

(i) Cash deposits
Credit risk for cash deposits is managed by holding all cash deposits with major Australian banks.

(ii) Receivables from contracts with customers
The Foundation does not have any material receivables from contracts with customers.

(iii) Other financial instruments
Credit risk for financial instruments is managed by holding a diversified portfolio of investments.

(c) Liquidity risk

Liquidity risk is the risk that an entity will encounter difficulty in meeting obligations associated with financial liabilities.

The Foundation manages liquidity risk by the monitoring of cash and working capital balances in conjunction with the Foundation's detailed budget. When necessary cash may be sourced from liquidation of other financial assets, but only with board approval.

The following table outlines the Foundation's remaining contractual maturities for non-derivative financial instruments. The amounts presented in the table are the undiscounted contractual cash flows of the financial liabilities, allocated to time bands based on the earliest date on which the Foundation can be required to pay.

	<12 months	1–5 years	Total contractual cash flows	Carrying amount
Year ended 30 June 2025				
Cash and cash equivalents	854,638	-	854,638	957,982
Receivables	72,262	-	72,262	64,653
Other financial assets	-	4,784,344	5,442,849	4,784,344
Payables	(262,752)	-	(262,752)	(269,100)
Lease liabilities	(112,375)	(599,471)	(599,471)	(699,845)
Net maturities	551,773	4,184,873	5,507,526	4,838,034
Year ended 30 June 2024				
Cash and cash equivalents	957,982	-	957,982	957,982
Receivables	64,653	-	64,653	64,653
Other financial assets	-	4,784,344	4,784,344	4,784,344
Payables	(269,100)	-	(269,100)	(269,100)
Lease liabilities	(100,374)	(599,471)	(699,845)	(699,845)
Net maturities	653,161	4,184,873	4,838,034	4,838,034

Notes to financial statements

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 16: Financial risk management (continued)

(d) Other market risk

Other market risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market prices (other than those arising from interest rate risk or currency risk).

The Foundation may have a material exposure to market price risk.

Sensitivity

Managed funds are measured at fair value through profit or loss. Equity instruments and corporate bonds are measured at fair value through other comprehensive income. If market prices were to increase / decrease by 5% from the prices observable at the reporting date, assuming all other variables remain constant, then the impact on profit for the year and equity is as follows:

+ / - 5% price variation	**2026** **$**	**2025** **$**
Impact on profit	44,717	55,940
Impact on equity	227,425	183,278

(e) Fair values compared with carrying amounts

The fair value of financial assets and financial liabilities approximates their carrying amounts as disclosed in the statement of financial position and notes to financial statements.

Notes to financial statements

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 17: Fair value measurement

(a) Fair Value Hierarchy

The following table provides the fair value classification of those assets and liabilities held by the Foundation that are measured either on a recurring or non-recurring basis at fair value.

	Level 1 $	Level 2 $	Level 3 $	Total $
2026				
Recurring fair value measurements				
Financial assets				
Financial assets at fair value				
Domestic and foreign equities	2,194,108	-	-	2,194,108
Fixed interest	2,354,396	-	-	2,354,396
Managed funds	896,345	-	-	896,345
Total financial assets	5,442,849	-	-	5,442,849
2025				
Recurring fair value measurements				
Financial assets				
Financial assets at fair value				
Domestic and foreign equities	1,884,158	-	-	1,884,158
Fixed interest	1,781,393	-	-	1,781,393
Managed funds	1,118,793	-	-	1,118,793
Total financial assets	4,784,344	-	-	4,784,344

(b) Transfers between recurring level 1 and level 2 fair value measurements

There were no transfers between level 1 and level 2 during the year.

Notes to financial statements

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 18: Related party transactions

(a) Transactions with other related parties

Victoria Law Foundation board members are also connected with the following organisations which provided or received payments (exclusive of GST) as documented below:

Law Institute of Victoria provided sponsorship income of $5,000 during the 2026 financial year (2025: $5,000). Victoria Law Foundation paid rent & occupancy fees of $139,050 to Law Institute of Victoria during the 2026 financial year (2025: $129,688). Victoria Law Foundation paid membership and events fees of $1,336 to Law Institute of Victoria during the 2026 financial year (2025: $1,039). Victoria Law Foundation paid room hire and catering fees of $5,043 to Law Institute of Victoria during the 2026 financial year (2025: $5,994). Victoria Law Foundation paid repairs and other fees of $828 to Law Institute of Victoria during the 2026 financial year (2025: $NIL). Dr Gerry Bean is a Member of the Law Institute of Victoria.

Victoria Bar Association provided sponsorship income of $5,000 during the 2026 financial year (2025: $5,500). Peter Caillard and Chris Young are Members of the Victoria Bar Association.

Federation of Community Legal Centres provided sponsorship income of $15,317 during the 2026 financial year (2025: $10,000). Victoria Law Foundation paid $10,455 to the Federation of Community Legal Centres for the provision of 3 Plain Language training sessions during the 2026 financial year (2025: $NIL). Tania McKenna is the nominee to the Foundation Board of the Federation of Community Legal Centres.

Northern Community Legal Centre provided sponsorship income of $1,339 during the 2026 financial year (2025: $NIL). Tania McKenna is the Deputy CEO of Northern Community Legal Centre.

Victoria Legal Aid provided sponsorship income of $10,000 during the 2026 financial year (2025: $10,000). Victoria Law Foundation paid $27,229 to Victoria Legal Aid for the secondment of staff during the 2026 financial year (2025: $NIL). Victoria Law Foundation provided support of $5,000 to Victoria Legal Aid for a staff member to attend a conference during 2025 the prior financial year. Rowan McRae and Sharika Jeyakumar are staff members of Victoria Legal Aid.

The related parties disclosed above are not involved in the decisions with respect to the approval of grants to their related organisations.

	2026 $	2025 $
Note 19: Key management personnel compensation		
Compensation received by key management personnel of the Foundation	284,739	272,800
	284,739	272,800

Notes to financial statements

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 20: Events subsequent to reporting date

On 9 July 2026, the Foundation received confirmation from the Legal Services Board regarding funding allocation for the fiscal year 2027. The approved funding amount is $4,788,582.

There has been no other matters or circumstances, which has arisen since 30 June 2026 that has significantly affected or may significantly affect:

(a) the operations, in financial years subsequent to 30 June 2026, of the Foundation, or
(b) the results of those operations, or
(c) the state of affairs, in financial years subsequent to 30 June 2026, of the Foundation.

Note 21: Foundation details

The principal place of business of the Foundation is:

Victoria Law Foundation
Level 13
140 William Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

Foundation members' declaration

The members of the Foundation declare that:

1. In the members opinion, the financial statements and notes thereto, as set out on pages 1 - 25, satisfy the requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and the Victoria Law Foundation Act 2009,* including:

   (a) complying with Australian Accounting Standards and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulations 2022;* and

   (b) giving a true and fair view of the financial position as at 30 June 2026 and performance for the year ended on that date of the Foundation.

2. In the members opinion there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Foundation will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable. Signed in accordance with subsection 60.15(2) of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulations 2022.*

Stephen Roche
Member

Greg Garde
Member

Dated this 22nd day of September 2026

PITCHER PARTNERS

VICTORIA LAW FOUNDATION
ABN: 64 131 425 884

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT
TO THE MEMBERS OF VICTORIA LAW FOUNDATION

Opinion

We have audited the financial report of Victoria Law Foundation ("the Foundation"), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2026, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements including material accounting policy information, and the Foundation members' declaration.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of Victoria Law Foundation, is in accordance with the *Victoria Law Foundation Act 2009*, including:

(a) giving a true and fair view of the Foundation's financial position as at 30 June 2026 and of its financial performance for the year then ended; and

(b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulations 2022*.

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 Foundation in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* ("ACNC Act") and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)* ("the Code") that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

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

Other Information

The members are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Foundation's annual report for the year ended 30 June 2026, but does not include the financial report and our auditor's report thereon.

Our opinion on the financial report does not cover the other information and accordingly we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial report, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial report or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

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VICTORIA LAW FOUNDATION
ABN: 64 131 425 884

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT
TO THE MEMBERS OF VICTORIA LAW FOUNDATION

Other Information (Continued)

If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

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

Management is responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards, *Victoria Law Foundation Act 2009* and the ACNC Act, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

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

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Foundation's financial reporting process.

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 the 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 this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Foundation's internal control.

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INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT
TO THE MEMBERS OF VICTORIA LAW FOUNDATION

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report (Continued)

- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the members.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the members' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Foundation's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Foundation to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with the members regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Independence

We confirm that the independence declaration required by the ACNC Act, which has been given to the members, would be in the same terms if given to the members as at the time of this auditor's report.

B POWERS
Partner

PITCHER PARTNERS
Melbourne

Date: 23 September, 2026

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Victoria Law Foundation

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Victoria Law Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation supporting better justice for all Victorians through research, education and grants.