SOUTH WEST



ANNUAL REPORT

2025-2026

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

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

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





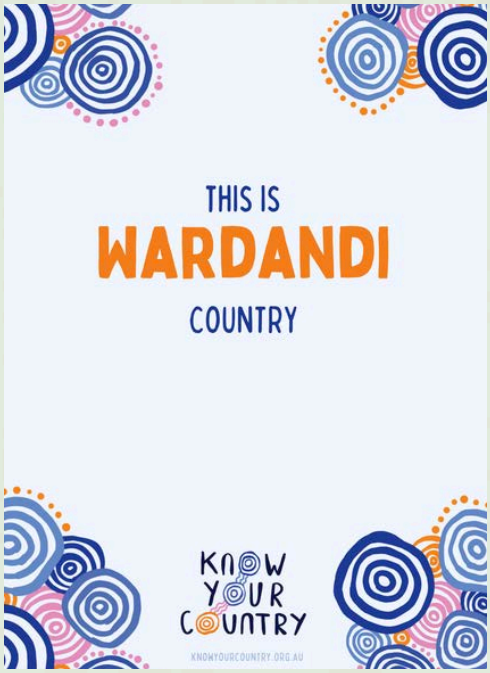


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VISION

Fair access to justice



MISSION

To provide accessible, high-quality support and advocacy to individuals and communities across the South West to achieve fair and just legal outcomes



VALUES

Courage, Compassion and Commitment



OBJECTIVES

Our Services: *Delivering the best possible outcomes for clients*

Our People: *Supporting and growing a skilled, passionate and dedicated team*

Our Presence: *Enhancing awareness and our standing as a community leader*

Our Foundations: *Ensuring strong governance, systems and financial performance*

SOUTH WEST
COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE INC

About Us

South West Community Legal Centre

South West Community Legal Centre Inc. (“SWCLC”) is a not for profit community legal centre which provides legal advice and assistance to disadvantaged and vulnerable clients throughout the South West of Western Australia.

Our service commenced in 1989 with a weekly pro bono legal clinic offered by local private practitioners. Our service has continued to grow and in the financial year of 2025 to 2026, we employed 18 staff across our legal and administrative teams. We deliver most of our services from our Bunbury office.

We also undertake outreach services at a number of locations throughout the South West, and provide duty lawyer services at the Magistrates Court and Family Court of Western Australia Bunbury circuit.

SWCLC is a generalist service, providing advice on many areas of law. However, our primary practice areas are family law; including parenting arrangements and property settlement, and civil law; including restraining orders Tenancy Advocacy Services for tenants and criminal injuries compensation. SWCLC also regularly presents Community Legal Education to the public, community groups and schools, on topics such as family law, and restraining orders.

SWCLC currently receives funding from the Commonwealth and State Governments, and through grants from the Law Society of WA Public Purposes Trust, in addition to one-off grants for smaller projects.

SWCLC undertakes a range of projects, and manages the reporting and acquitting of several funding streams, to achieve individual program objectives and client outcomes.



Meet Current Board



BOARD CHAIR

Renae T



TREASURER

Stella H



SECRETARY

Louise F



BOARD MEMBER

Susan V



BOARD MEMBER

Leandra M



BOARD MEMBER

Amy B

farewell

Outgoing Board



DEPUTY CHAIR

Summer B



BOARD MEMBER

Cassidy G



BOARD MEMBER

Gee M



BOARD MEMBER

Matelina B

Meet Our Legal Team



PRINCIPAL SOLICITOR

Renée T



SENIOR SOLICITOR

Eleanor Y



SOLICITOR

Michelle G



SOLICITOR

Amanda J



SENIOR TENANCY ADVOCATE

Lee E



TENANCY ADVOCATE

Hannah M

Meet

Our Legal Team



SOLICITOR

Jenny F



SOLICITOR

Shakti S



PARALEGAL

Inge S



PARALEGAL

Pam W



PARALEGAL

Rosario B



PARALEGAL

Leela B

Meet
Our Admin Team



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
(On Maternity Leave)

Tahleisha M



ADMINISTRATION MANAGER

Kerry L



FINANCE MANAGER

Vicki C



ADMINISTRATION OFFICER

Cheryl W



ADMINISTRATION OFFICER

Crystal J

Chair's Report by Renae I

On behalf of the Board, it is a pleasure to present this year's Chair's Report for the South West Community Legal Centre (SWCLC). SWCLC conducts its work on Wardandi, Wilman, Kaneang and Pindjarup Countries, part of the Noongar / Bibbulmun Nation. The Board pays its respects to all Noongar / Bibbulmun Elders past and present, acknowledges the continuing connection of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Country, and recognises that sovereignty was never ceded.

This was the first full year of the Strategic Plan 2025–2028, and this report is structured around its four objectives.

Our Services: delivering the best possible outcomes for clients

Demand for free legal help across the South West has not eased. Housing pressure, cost of living and family violence continue to bring people to the Centre. Despite working at capacity throughout the year, legal and professional staff have maintained a steady, high-quality service to vulnerable community members who often have nowhere else to turn. The Board acknowledges the ongoing resilience and commitment of all SWCLC staff.

Our People: supporting and growing a skilled, passionate and dedicated team

Retaining experienced staff in regional community legal centres remains one of the sector's biggest challenges, and this year the Board acted on it directly. A remuneration review was undertaken, and salaries were adjusted where needed to bring them closer to comparable roles in other community and public legal services. Staff bonuses were also paid under the Employee Retention Policy.

The Board confirmed CEO Tahleisha M on a permanent, ongoing contract, and in recent months supported Renée T and Eleanor Y to share the Principal Solicitor role. A Paid Parental Leave Policy was introduced, in line with practice across the sector, to better support staff and their families.

Our Presence: enhancing awareness and our standing as a community leader

SWCLC recently launched a new website, making it easier for community members, referrers and partners to find the Centre and understand its services.

SWCLC also continued its involvement in the Regional Alliance of Justice Associations (RAJA). This year RAJA adopted its own constitution, which SWCLC has endorsed. The Board has committed to supporting the Alliance, both in principle and financially, with that commitment subject to regular review. Through RAJA, SWCLC works with other regional centres on shared advocacy and long-term sustainability while retaining its local identity and decision-making.

Chair's Report by Renae I

Our Governance: ensuring strong governance, systems and financial performance

This year the Board strengthened SWCLC's governance foundations considerably. The Centre passed accreditation, and the remaining minor actions are on track for completion by February 2027. Risk and Finance Committees were formed, giving dedicated oversight to these two critical areas. A constitutional review is under way with the assistance of Renée T, to ensure the Centre's governing document reflects current law and practice. Key policies were also reviewed and updated, including finance, reserves, employee retention, ICT and conflict of interest.

Financial management has also improved. Funds were placed on term deposit, regular cash flow forecasting was introduced, and the budget was revised to reflect additional funding and updated expenditure allocations. The Board particularly acknowledges Finance Manager, Vicki C, whose careful management has kept the Centre within budget. Vicki's diligence has given the Board confidence that decisions such as the remuneration review are financially sound and consistent with its fiduciary duties.

Our Board

This year has been one of significant change on the Board. Matelina B, Cassidy G and Gee M stepped down for personal reasons, and the Board thanks each of them for their contribution. Summer B stepped down as Deputy Chair after several terms of service, and the Board is very grateful for her long-term commitment to the Centre.

During this period of change, Susan D-V, Louise F and Stella H provided much-needed steadiness. Amy B and Leandra H joined the Board mid-year and have been welcome additions. As of this AGM, Susan (Board Member) and Stella (Treasurer) are stepping down, with sincere thanks for their commitment over the past two years. In recent months the Board has welcomed Chealsea C, Whitney G-H and Vanessa B.

Recruitment for a Treasurer and Deputy Chair is under way. The Board's focus is on building a stable membership with complementary skills and knowledge, and on supporting new members, including those keen to learn about governance and contribute to community organisations.

Looking ahead

As SWCLC enters the second year of the Strategic Plan, the Board's priority is consolidation. This means bedding down the new Risk and Finance Committees, supporting newer Board members to grow into their roles, and working closely with the CEO to strengthen financial sustainability and the conditions staff need to meet ongoing demand.

Thank you

Sincere thanks go to the leadership team, legal and professional staff, funders and partners for their contribution this year, and in particular to those who volunteer their time, including Board members past and present. The Board looks forward to building on this year's progress in 2026–2027.

Renae I, Chairperson

Managers' Report by Chief Executive Officer

I am pleased to present the CEO Report for South West Community Legal Centre (SWCLC) for the financial year 2025–2026.

This year has been one of growth, adaptation, and continued commitment to ensuring access to justice for people across the South West. As we reflect on the achievements and challenges of the past twelve months, I am proud of the dedication, resilience, and professionalism demonstrated by our staff, volunteers, and Board in supporting some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

Our work throughout the year has continued to reinforce the important role SWCLC plays in providing accessible legal assistance, advocacy, community legal education, and support services. The increasing complexity of client needs, combined with ongoing social and economic pressures facing our community, has highlighted the importance of maintaining responsive and client-centred services.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to our Board of Management for their governance, leadership, and ongoing commitment to the strategic direction of the organisation. Their guidance and support have been invaluable throughout the year and have helped position SWCLC for continued success into the future.

Our achievements would not have been possible without the exceptional efforts of our dedicated staff and volunteers. Every team member contributes to creating a service that is compassionate, professional, and focused on achieving meaningful outcomes for our clients. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to our Administration and Legal teams for their unwavering commitment and tireless work throughout the year. Their expertise, flexibility, and willingness to go above and beyond continue to make a significant difference in the lives of the people we assist. SWCLC also acknowledges and thanks our funding partners and stakeholders for their continued support and confidence in our work.

This year we had Hannah M and Jenny F join our organisation, and we thank each of them for the skills, knowledge, and enthusiasm they have brought to the organisation. We also acknowledge those team members who have moved on during the year and thank them for their contributions to SWCLC and the positive impact they have had on our clients and colleagues.

Throughout 2025–2026, SWCLC has continued to focus on strengthening service delivery, enhancing organisational sustainability, and improving systems and processes to support both staff and clients. We have also continued to identify opportunities for collaboration and innovation to ensure our services remain accessible, effective, and responsive to community needs.

Managers' Report by Chief Executive Officer cont.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to delivering high quality legal services, advocating for vulnerable and disadvantaged community members, and building a strong and sustainable organisation that can continue to meet the evolving needs of the South West. While challenges remain, we are confident in our ability to adapt, grow, and continue making a positive difference in the lives of those who seek our assistance.

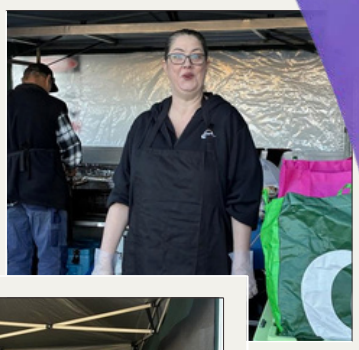
Please enjoy the highlights, stories, and service delivery statistics included throughout this Annual Report, which demonstrate the breadth and impact of our work over the past year. I am proud of what we have achieved together and look forward to the opportunities that the coming year will bring.

Thank you for your continued support of South West Community Legal Centre.



Staff Highlights of the Year

Staff Bunnings Sausage Sizzle





August 2025

South West Community Legal Centre team rolled up their sleeves and spent the day at Bunnings Bunbury running a fundraising sausage sizzle, raising over $1,000.

The day was a fantastic success, with staff working together to keep the BBQ running smoothly, cook sausages and onions, prepare rolls, and serve the many community members who stopped by to support the cause. It was a busy day, but everyone pitched in and worked hard to make it happen.

Beyond the funds raised, the sausage sizzle proved to be a wonderful team-building opportunity. Staff enjoyed spending time together outside their usual roles, sharing plenty of laughs while working towards a common goal. The teamwork, cooperation and positive energy on display throughout the day reflected the strong culture that exists within SWCLC.

A huge thank you to everyone who volunteered their time and effort, and to the members of the community who supported us. We are proud to have raised over $1,000 for charity and look forward to participating in similar events in the future.

It was a rewarding day, a great opportunity to give back to the community, and a reminder of what can be achieved when we work together as a team.

Our team that attended: Eleanor, Amanda, Pam, Cheryl, Crystal and some partners.





April 2026

Staff Quiz Night

Recently, a team from South West Community Legal Centre participated in the Quiz Night at Treendale, enjoying an evening of friendly competition, laughter and team building.

While we may not have taken home the trophy this time, we certainly had a lot of fun testing our knowledge, working together and sharing plenty of laughs along the way. The evening provided a fantastic opportunity for staff from different areas of the organisation to connect outside the workplace and strengthen working relationships.

A highlight of the night was the fabulous food, which was enjoyed by all and added to the relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere.

At SWCLC, we recognise the importance of creating opportunities for staff to connect, collaborate and support one another. Events such as these are a great reminder that strong teams are built not only through the work we do every day, but also through the relationships we develop along the way.

Thank you to everyone who attended and represented SWCLC.

Staff: Pam, Eleanor, Cheryl, Kerry, Tahleisha & Summer.

SWCLC Highlights of the Year

Bunbury Catholic College Presentation

March2026



Eleanor with BCC Staff

Senior Solicitor Eleanor Y recently attended Bunbury Catholic College to speak with students about careers in law and her experience working in the legal profession.

Eleanor provided an overview of the legal profession, shared her personal pathway into law, and discussed the education, training and qualifications required to become a solicitor in Western Australia. She also outlined the day-to-day responsibilities of lawyers, including client work, legal research, providing advice, preparing documents, negotiation and advocacy.

Drawing on her experience at South West Community Legal Centre, Eleanor highlighted the rewarding nature of helping people navigate legal issues and access justice. Students were encouraged to explore the diverse opportunities available within the legal profession and had the opportunity to ask questions about legal careers, study pathways and working in law.

The session was well received and provided valuable insight into the legal profession. South West Community Legal Centre appreciates the opportunity to support career education initiatives and inspire young people to consider careers in law.

Bunbury Public Libraries

E-Courts Community Legal Education

Paralegal Rosario B has been delivering E-Courts assistance sessions at the Bunbury Community Library, supporting community members to navigate online court processes.

In the past 12 months to June 2026 more than 26 individuals have received one-on-one assistance, with feedback indicating increased confidence in managing their legal matters.

The program has reduced barriers for self-represented litigants, improved digital and legal literacy, and strengthened SWCLC's visibility and role within the community.





Portal Assistance

SWCLC Highlights of the Year

TAFE - Margaret River CLE

Eleanor Y, Senior Solicitor at South West Community Legal Centre, recently attended the Margaret River TAFE Campus to deliver a Community Legal Education (CLE) session to participants in the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP).

The session included a short PowerPoint presentation introducing South West Community Legal Centre and the services available to members of the community. Eleanor provided information about the role of community legal centres, the types of legal matters the service can assist with, and how individuals can access legal support when needed.

A particular area of interest for the students was understanding “what are legal problems” and how to identify situations where legal advice or assistance may be helpful.

Following the presentation, Eleanor facilitated a question-and-answer session, providing students with the opportunity to ask questions and discuss topics relevant to their circumstances and interests. Students were engaged throughout the session and appreciated the opportunity to learn more about their rights, responsibilities, and the legal support services available within the South West community.

The session helped increase awareness of legal issues and available pathways for assistance, while supporting participants to build confidence in recognising legal problems and knowing where to seek help. South West Community Legal Centre values the opportunity to connect with community groups and provide accessible legal education that empowers individuals to access information and support when needed.



May 2026

TAFE - Busselton CLE

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In March, Senior Solicitor Eleanor Y delivered a Community Legal Education (CLE) session to students at Busselton TAFE, providing an overview of the services and support available through South West Community Legal Centre.

Using an interactive PowerPoint presentation, Eleanor explained the Centre's role within the community, the legal matters we can assist with, and our referral and intake processes. Students learned about a range of legal issues supported by SWCLC, as well as non-legal matters where clients may be connected with appropriate external services, including counselling, mediation and dispute resolution, real estate and conveyancing professionals, and other specialist support services.

The session highlighted the importance of early access to legal information and the value of referrals in addressing underlying issues that may impact clients' wellbeing and circumstances. The presentation was well received, with student feedback surveys reflecting strong engagement and positive responses to the information provided.

South West Community Legal Centre appreciates the opportunity to work with local education providers to increase community awareness of legal services and pathways to support.



March 2026

Principal Solicitor's Report by Renée T

Introduction

I have had the privilege of another year as Principal Solicitor at South West Community Legal Centre in 2025-2026. As I reflect on the past year, I am very thankful to say that I commence the new year with my colleague, Eleanor, with whom I have now commenced sharing the Principal Solicitor role. A burden shared is a burden halved and I thank the Board, Tahleisha and staff for supporting this novel approach to the Principal Solicitor role, a role which I can now approach with renewed vigour for 2026-2027.

At the end of another year at SWCLC, as always, I want to extend a huge thank you to our staff who work tirelessly to give people in the South West who are going through very difficult periods of their life the legal support, whether great or small, to move forward in their lives. I would also like to express how very proud I am of the wrap around services we have been providing to clients over the past year through the Safe Support Program and the paralegal teams' thorough client follow-up process. I believe these initiatives allow so many clients to remain engaged and supported throughout the course of their legal matters, especially when they are not case file clients.

The Year that Was

The legal team has seen some turnover, but over all has remained fairly steady over 2025-2026. Early in the period, we said goodbye to our restricted practitioner Paramdeep G, and soon thereafter welcomed Jenny F who commenced with us as a volunteer to complete her Practical Legal Training. Jenny has since been admitted to practice as a lawyer and we are very pleased to say, has now joined us as a member of the team as a restricted practitioner. We said goodbye to Shakti S, our pro bono secondee lawyer from Gilchrist Connell in April 2026, and Amy C, our solicitor who was on maternity leave resigned from her position in May 2026.

In the first half of 2026, our excellent Tenancy Advocate, Lee E, made the decision to take a working sabbatical, and rather than lose him, he has reduced hours and is continuing to work remotely for us overseas. Hannah M, an experienced property manager joined the team as Tenancy Advocate before Lee left and has taken to advocacy work like a duck to water.

Other notable events through the year include:

- Michelle, Eleanor and I attending the Community Legal Centres Australia Conference in Canberra, which was a fantastic opportunity to learn new things, meet new people and reflect on what we do;
- Preparing for and passing our accreditation;
- Being part of the planning, launch and inaugural membership of Regional Alliance of Justice Associations, which has been a long time in planning;
- Welcoming UWA students Damien and Jamie for a month to assist us and learn about working at a CLC. A big thank you to Regional Alliance of Justice Associations and UWA for organising this program.

Principal Solicitor's Report by Renée

Legal Work

I am very proud to say that the SWCLC team has delivered over the past 12 months:
- More than 250 duty lawyer services
- More than 50 tenancy duty advocate services
- More than 750 legal advice services
- More than 250 legal tasks
- Almost 200 tenancy advice services
- Representing at FVRO shuttle conferences

We also took on 35 case files and closed 44 of them over the year, which represents a huge number of people in the South West who received significant help with their Family Law, Restraining Order or Criminal Injuries Compensation matters.

This looks like clients:
- who had no access to their finances after separation, while their ex-spouse retained all or the majority, getting a fair settlement and being able to buy or rent a house, put food on the table and provide for their children without stress.
- who had been through extremely traumatic assaults and injuries getting compensation paid out.
- who had been isolated from their children getting to see them again.
- whose childrens' safety was protected when there were risk concerns with a parent.
- Finally getting ongoing legal representation and assistance when they had been told "we can't help you" over and over.

Conclusion

There is such a high level of need in our community for the work we do for our clients. Trying to meet demand is like drinking from a firehose, which can be a taxing environment to work in, so I would personally like to thank our legal team for the incredible commitment and dedication you show to our clients. I would also like to give my sincere gratitude to our admin and management team, without whom I am confident there would be no legal services delivered. Thank you also to our fantastic board, volunteers and funders, without whom we would not be able to continue.



Treasurers Report

I am pleased to provide the Treasurer's Report for the financial year ending 30 June 2026. Members will notice a break-even in funds for the combined statement of profit and loss for the financial year (small surplus of $18,878).

An "Unexpended Grants" liability of $253,569 has been brought to account as at 30 June 2026, recognising that these funds are to be carried forward to the subsequent financial year, and expended in accordance with grant funding requirements.

The total revenue for the year was $79,314 above budget this is the result of receiving an additional $51,333 from the Department of Justice ($30,000 fuel crisis, one-off resource payment and increased indexation). Interest received was also higher than budgeted.

The expenses were $50,364 under budget; the main area of the surplus is attributable to lower staffing costs due to difficulty in staff retentions. The lower than budgeted staff numbers are reflected in lower payroll, staff development, and program travel costs.

The Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2026 indicates a healthy working capital position with current assets of $873,000 and current liabilities of $511,000. Members' funds as at 30 June 2026 were $248,557.

The Auditors have given the Audit report in respect to the financial statement the comments as follows:

i) giving a true and fair view, in all material respects, of the financial position of South West Community Legal Centre Inc. as at 30 June 2026, and of its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended; and

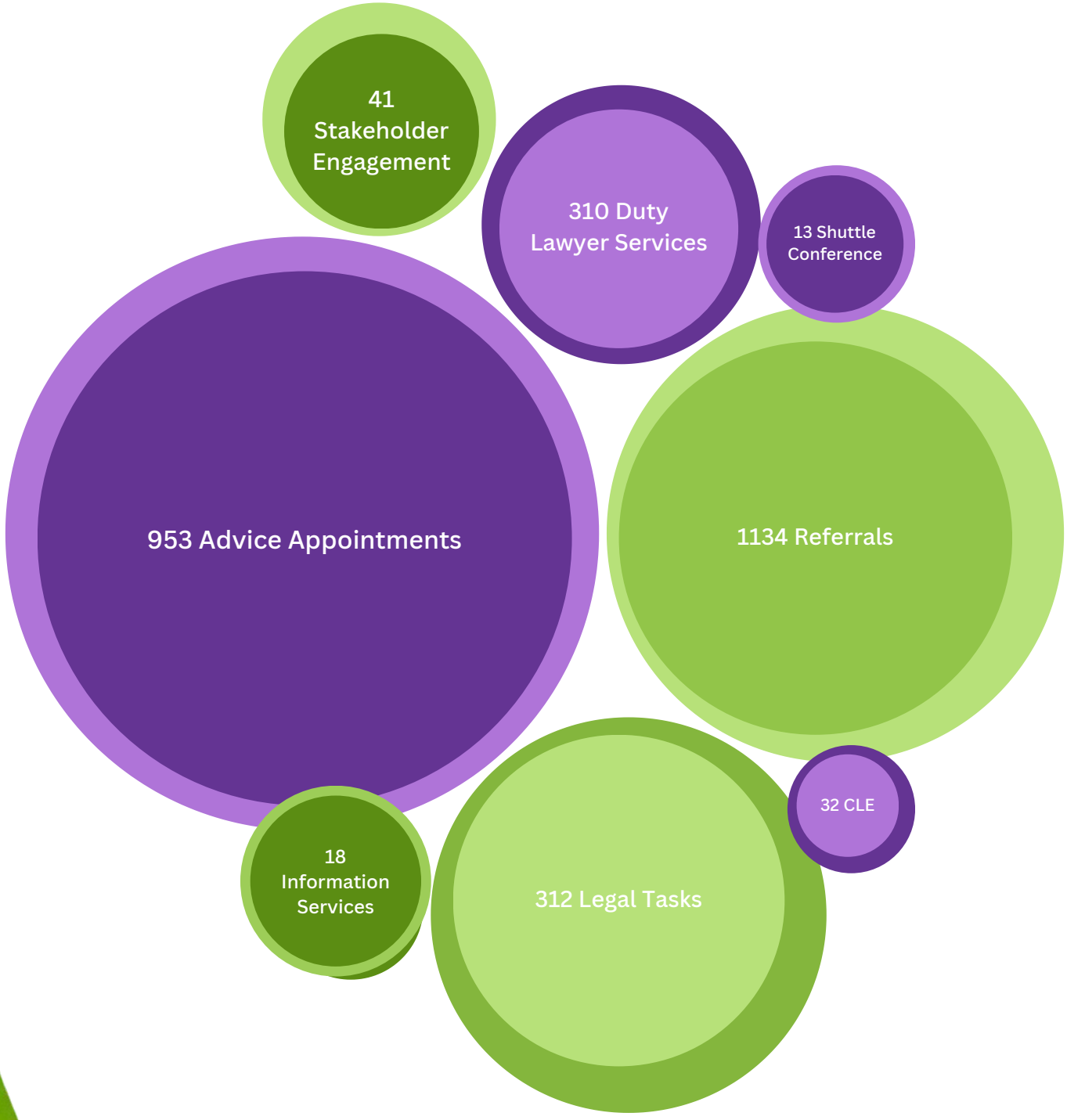
ii) complying with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 1 Associations Incorporation Act (WA) 2015 and Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulations 2022.



Service Delivery

Legal Services Statistics

With support from our funding bodies, in the 2025/2026 financial year SWCLC was able to deliver the following services across all funding streams:

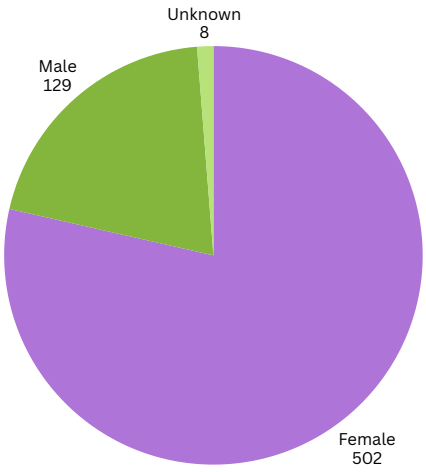


Service Delivery

About our Clients

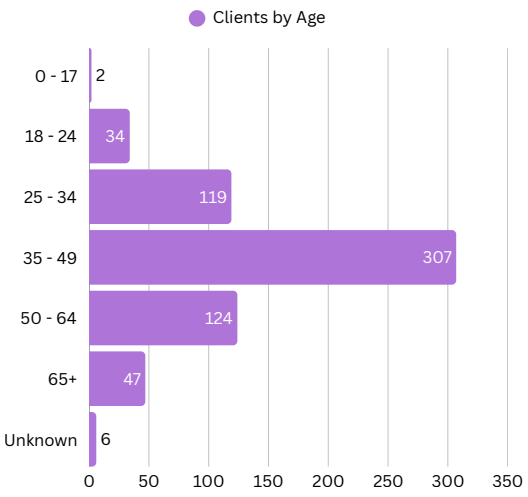
We are proud to continue supporting clients within our South West community. Over the past 12 months, SWCLC helped 639 people with various legal matters. Our clients experience many challenges, including financial disadvantage, experience of family violence, disability, mental illness or homelessness.

Clients By Gender





Clients By Age





Client Demographics

91.2% Experienced Financial Disadvantage

25.2% Live with Disability or Mental Illness

27.2% Experienced/ at Risk of Homelessness

7.6% Identified as First Nations

57.4% Experienced Family Domestic Violence

Who We Could Not Help
Sadly, we turned away 681 potential clients in the past financial year.

Service Delivery

Legal Services

Restraining Order Duty Lawyer Service

In partnership with Waratah Support Services, SWCLC was able to provide integrated Duty Lawyer and Social support services to clients affected by family violence. SWCLC was able to offer a weekly duty lawyer service in the Bunbury Magistrates Courts and fortnightly services in the Busselton Magistrates Court.

Family Advocacy Support Services- Duty Lawyer

During the 2025/2026 financial year, SWCLC again partnered with Waratah Support Services to deliver integrated social and legal for self-represented litigants in Family Court matters. SWCLC provided advice, assisted with negotiations, drafted documents and represented multiple clients during the Family Court of Western Australia Bunbury circuits.

Shuttle Conferencing

SWCLC provides assistance to clients attending Magistrates Court Shuttle Conferences. As at 30 June 2026, SWCLC had provided assistance in 13 Shuttle Conferences, and have assisted clients to agree 8 Conduct Agreement orders, 2 Undertakings and the cancellation of 2 Family Violence Restraining Order applications.

Community Legal Education

During the 2025-2026 financial year, SWCLC provided 11 Community Legal Education (CLE) activities. During the 2025-2026 financial year, SWCLC partnered with the Western Australian Family Pathways Network to deliver 'Walk in their Shoes' Tours. These tours explain the paths that clients take during Restraining Order matters, and separately through the Family Court.

Outreach

SWCLC continued to provide in person and remote assistance to clients located all over the South West. Over the past 12 months, SWCLC traveled to Harvey, Collie, Manjimup, Bridgetown, Margaret River, and Busselton to deliver face to face legal services.

Tenancy

This year has been as busy as ever for the Tenancy Team at South West Community Legal Centre, as we continue to support and advocate for tenants across our region. Unfortunately, the South West continues to experience an accommodation crisis, with many tenants facing ongoing uncertainty and challenges in securing and maintaining safe, affordable housing. Many clients remain hesitant to pursue tenancy matters for fear of jeopardising their existing tenancy. Despite these concerns, we have supported and empowered a number of tenants to better understand their rights, stand up for themselves and take steps towards resolving their tenancy issues.

We are also pleased to have expanded our Tenancy Team this year. Lee has stepped into the role of Senior Tenancy Advocate, alongside Leela, our full-time Tenancy Paralegal, and Hannah, who has joined the team as our new Tenancy Advocate. Hannah brings a wealth of knowledge and practical experience from her background in property management, further strengthening our team's capacity to provide informed, accessible and effective support to tenants in our community. As the housing crisis continues to place pressure on renters, we remain committed to ensuring tenants know their rights and have access to the support and advocacy they need.

CLIENT FEEDBACK

“As this chapter comes to an end, I wanted to take a moment to sincerely thank each of you for your support, guidance, and hard work throughout this journey.
What seemed impossible at times became achievable because of your dedication, professionalism, and belief in helping people through difficult circumstances. Your efforts have made a meaningful difference in both my life and my daughter’s life, and for that we will always be grateful.
Thank you for standing beside us, for your patience, your kindness, and for helping us reach this outcome. This settlement is more than a financial result—it gives us the opportunity to move forward, rebuild, and create a brighter future.
From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for everything you have done for us.”

“Hannah M was an absolute pleasure to have with me during this process. She has a wealth of knowledge and her professionalism was impeccable. She explained everything clearly and made sure I was comfortable throughout the process. Thank you for making a stressful situation manageable and for reducing my significant anxiety around it. Hannah made a massive difference for me today. Thank you.”

“It's very professional and helpful, thanks to my lawyer and the service very much.”!

“And thank you so much for providing extra support with me on parental matters. I'm in tears as we speak cause I'm so grateful for this. Thank you so much.”

“Thankyou so much for all your hard work, I couldn't have done it without you and really appreciate it.
Its a huge weight lifted being debt free. I can't thankyou enough !!”

“I was thoroughly impressed with Amanda's efficiency, knowledge of procedures, her conduct and also the extremely quick responses when I have left a voice message. My legal issue is now resolved. I am very happy to recommend these services.”

“Your services are very helpful. Thank you.”

“I want to thank Amanda J and all at SWCLC for all the legal help, all the emotional and all the understanding and empathy they have shown towards me. I could not have done it without them. Unfortunately, I may well have to use your services again as my case remains unresolved. Thank you all.”

“It’s a great service thank you.”

“Its a big improvement already COMPARED to other organisations!”

Thanks so much again, I’d be a mess and lost without your support! Thankyou so so soooo much! 🙏❤️❤️



Case Study: NAJP Baseline Funding

Family Law Property File Client Matter

Background:

Jane* was referred to South West Community Legal Centre (SWCLC) in 2025 by a Refuge.
At the time, Jane had fled her husband of approximately 5 years, Bob*, and their former marital home in Karratha because of Bob's significant family violence, including threats to kill Jane. Jane had taken their children, with her and limited personal belongings. English is Jane's second language, and she has limited family support in Australia. At that time, Jane was not working in paid employment being a full-time carer for her children. Jane felt alone and isolated, hundreds of kilometres from her family home, with little support around. Jane had minimal resources and few allies. Jane also felt that there was a cultural stigma attached to her decision to leave the marriage.
Jane was also concerned because the main asset of the parties, a property in Karratha, was titled to Bob's name. Jane believed that he was very close to selling the property and was concerned that Bob, who had ties to Sweden, would sell the properties, retain all the proceeds and leave the country.
Bob had threatened to kill Jane if she tried to seek a property settlement against him.

Client Needs and Vulnerability Context:

Jane is a young woman from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse background with limited family or social support. Jane is a single parent caring for 2 young children and has limited financial resources.
Jane has been relocated to a completely different suburb over 200kms from her former home, with little connection to the region. She has also experienced significant family violence and suffers from ongoing depression and anxiety. The children were also showing signs of trauma.
Jane presented with multiple, intersecting vulnerabilities that required sensitive and trauma-informed legal support. In addition to navigating several legal issues, Jane was also resolving many other social needs, such as sourcing longer-term accommodation for herself and her children, as well as obtaining social security payments, and family violence counselling for herself and her children.
SWCLC worked well with Jane and the Refuge to manage the resolution of many of Jane's legal and social issues, pacing the appointments with Jane so as not to over-whelm her.
Recognising Janes vulnerability and support needs, she was internally referred to SWCLC's Safe Support Program. Safe Support is a SWCLC initiative that is designed to support our most vulnerable and at-risk clients through tailored non-legal referrals to relevant services while Jane navigates the legal system.

Assistance Provided by SWCLC

Property Settlement Matter:

Due to Jane's concerns about Bob's intention to imminently sell the house, SWCLC urgently worked with Jane to lodge a caveat with Landgate, thereby preventing Bob from selling the property prior to the resolution of property proceedings.

Case Study: Cont.

Family Law Property File Client Matter

SWCLC then instituted urgent Family Court of Western Australia proceedings on Jane's behalf to seek further injunctive relief preventing Bob from selling the former home, and additional orders that Jane receive an appropriate share of the marital asset pool and spousal maintenance.
SWCLC worked with Jane to negotiate a successful property settlement agreement in which Jane retained the majority of the assets.

Family Violence Restraining Order ('FVRO') Matter:

Prior to SWCLC assisting Jane, she had previously applied for, and obtained, a 12-month restraining order against Bob. However, over the course of SWCLC's engagement with Jane, this order was due to expire.
SWCLC worked with Jane to apply to extend the restraining order.
SWCLC took care to ensure that at no stage during the FVRO proceedings, were Jane or her childrens' confidential address details disclosed to Bob.
SWCLC also liaised with the Western Australian Police to communicate details about Bob's known location to ensure that he was able to successfully served with Jane's application for a new FVRO.

Legal Process and Challenges:

Jane's legal matters were complicated by the fact that English was her second language, that she had considerable demands on her time, limited capacity and a range of intersecting vulnerabilities. Jane had also experienced significant family violence which had caused her to experience anxiety, depression and the stress of the legal matters would often cause Jane to experience panic attacks during legal appointments.
A substantial amount of time and care was dedicated to maintaining a safe and supportive environment to engage with Jane. Care was taken to ensure that appointments were delivered in person wherever possible, that Jane had enough time to ask questions and legal concepts were explained slowly and clearly.
Given the highly confidential nature of Jane and Her children's current address, every document that left the office, was checked very carefully to ensure it did not contain any sensitive information. To assuage Jane's fears, she was also given the opportunity to examine documents and correspondence before they were exchanged.
As part of our SAFE SUPPORT program SWCLC made numerous warm referrals to various local agencies, for Jane and her children to receive family violence counselling and for Jane to receive financial counselling.

Outcomes and impact:

As a result of SWCLC's assistance, Jane was able to obtain ongoing protection for herself and her children against Bob's family violence.
She was also able to achieve a fair and just distribution of the marital assets before they were disposed of by Bob. Jane is now in a position to be able to financially support herself and her children well into the future, potentially even through the purchase of another home.
This is hugely impactful for Jane and her children as their short-term supported accommodation organised by the Refuge was due to terminate within weeks, which would have rendered Jane and her children homeless.

Case Study: Cont.

Family Law Property File Client Matter

Jane was ecstatic and overwhelmed with the outcome, and wrote an email of thanks saying:

"As this chapter comes to an end, I wanted to take a moment to sincerely thank each of you for your support, guidance, and hard work throughout this journey.
What seemed impossible at times became achievable because of your dedication, professionalism, and belief in helping people through difficult circumstances. Your efforts have made a meaningful difference in both my life and my children's life, and for that we will always be grateful.
Thank you for standing beside us, for your patience, your kindness, and for helping us reach this outcome. This settlement is more than a financial result—it gives us the opportunity to move forward, rebuild, and create a brighter future.
From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for everything you have done for us".

*Names Changed to protect identity





Case Study: NLAP Baseline Funding

VRO, Tanancy, Safe Support Client Matter

Background to Matter:

Allegra* first engaged with South West Community Legal Centre (SWCLC) in March 2026 through the Duty Lawyer Services for Restraining Order Matters at Bunbury Regional Court.

Allegra applied for restraining order against a former partner, Jonas*, at her Department of Housing residence in Bunbury.

Allegra disclosed to SWCLC duty lawyer that she and her twelve-year-old child, Ashley*, had experienced family and domestic violence perpetrated by Jonas. Allegra alleged that the Jonas had sexually assaulted Ashley. She also reported that the Jonas had engaged in a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour, including sending threatening messages, monitoring and questioning her movements.

Allegra later discovered that the Jonas had been accessing her mobile phone, emails, text messages, and social media accounts without her knowledge or consent, further contributing to her concerns for her safety and privacy.

Client Needs and Vulnerability Context:

Allegra is an Aboriginal woman who identifies as neurodivergent. She is a single mother and the sole carer of her children, including her 12 year old daughter, Ashley. Allegra experiences significant financial hardship, as she is currently unemployed and provides full-time care for her children.

Allegra presented with multiple, intersecting vulnerabilities that required sensitive and trauma-informed legal support. In addition to navigating several legal issues, Allegra's neurodivergence impacted her ability to engage with legal processes and retain information. As a result, legal advice and instructions needed to be communicated in a clear, simple, and structured manner, with information repeated where necessary to ensure understanding. It was also evident that Allegra benefited from regular follow-up contact to monitor the progress of her legal matters, revisit key information, and check-in on Allegra’s wellbeing.

Recognising Allegra's vulnerability and support needs, she was internally referred to SWCLC's Safe Support Program. Safe Support is a SWCLC initiative that is designed to support our most vulnerable and at-risk clients through tailored non-legal referrals to relevant services while Allegra navigates the legal system. This holistic approach helped address barriers to Allegra's participation in legal processes and promoted her ongoing safety and wellbeing.

SWCLC assisted Allegra in her application for a Restraining Order against her former partner of her Department of Housing residence. Allegra was represented by a SWCLC Duty Lawyer at the ex parte hearing in the Bunbury Regional Court.

At the hearing, Allegra was granted a two-year Interim Family Violence Restraining Order (FVRO). The respondent did not object to the order, and it was subsequently made final.

Following the conclusion of the FVRO proceedings, Allegra also obtained further advice relation to the some of the terms of the order and in particular, how the parties could safely exchange personal belongings, pursuant to the terms of the FVRO.

Case Study Cont.

VRO, Tenancy, Safe Support Client Matter

Safe Support Matter:

Addressing Allegra's vulnerability and the complexity of her circumstances, Allegra was internal referred to SWCLC's Safe Support Program.

An in-person appointment was held with Allegra and the Safe Support team. During this appointment, Safe Support staff supported Allegra through multiple warm and cold referrals:

Westnet Phone Referral

Safe Support staff assisted Allegra to obtain a mobile phone through the South West Aboriginal Medical Service (SWAMS). This provided Allegra with a safe and reliable means of communication and enabled her to reset her passwords and secure her personal accounts following concerns about unauthorised access by the Jonas.

Daisy App

Allegra was also provided with information on the DaisyApp which is a free, confidential mobile app that connects people experiencing FDV with local support services, safety information, and crisis assistance.

Harbour Refuge

Allegra was referred to Harbour Refuge's Safe at Home service for additional FDV support and safety planning. The service contacted Allegra and provided advice regarding available accommodation and safety options.

Internal Referral to the Tenancy Team

As Allegra reported feeling unsafe in her Department of Housing residence following the FDV, she was internally referred to SWCLC's Tenancy Team for tenancy advice and advocacy.

Tenancy Matter:

During her tenancy appointment, Allegra sought advice regarding her rights to request enhanced security measures at her residence, assistance with managing the respondent's remaining belongings, and support to apply for an urgent priority transfer to alternative public housing.

The Tenancy Advocate provided advice regarding the Department of Housing's Family and Domestic Violence Policy and undertook advocacy on Allegra's behalf through direct communications with the Housing Officer. The advocate also submitted a letter of support for Allegra's request for an urgent transfer.

As a result of this advocacy, Allegra was placed on the priority waitlist for an urgent housing transfer.

Through the Thrive Program, Allegra has received ongoing support and practical assistance, including help arranging the removal and disposal of the respondent's remaining belongings from the property.

Legal Process and Challenges:

Allegra's legal matters were complicated by her limited capacity and the intersecting vulnerabilities she faced. As a young parent experiencing significant trauma and stress, Allegra often became overwhelmed and found it difficult to provide clear and consistent instructions, which at times limited the legal assistance that could be provided.

Case Study Cont.

VRO, Tanancy, Safe Support Client Matter

A substantial amount of time and care was dedicated to maintaining safe and effective communication with Allegra. This included confirming when it was SAFE to contact her, clarifying instructions, and regularly obtaining updates on her matters to ensure her legal needs were accurately understood and addressed.
Throughout the process, SWCLC acted as a consistent point of contact for Allegra, communicating with external organisations and relaying this information back to Allegra. This coordinated approach allowed Allegra to receive legal advice while also accessing practical and social supports within the community, helping to address the broader challenges affecting her safety, wellbeing, and housing stability.

Outcomes and Impact:

Allegra successfully obtained a two-year Final Violence Restraining Order against the Jonas. SWCLC supported her throughout this process, including providing duty lawyer assistance at Bunbury Court.
Allegra has received comprehensive tenancy advice regarding her rights as a tenant in Department of Communities housing. She has been placed on the urgent transfer waitlist, ensuring her housing needs are prioritised.
Their initial assistance included helping Allegra dispose of the Jonas's unwanted belongings, reducing both physical and emotional stresses.
Allegra is also engaged in counselling through SWAMS, where she reports feeling supported, heard, and advocated for.
The SWCLC Safe Support team continues to check in with Allegra regularly to ensure she feels safe and adequately supported. She has been reminded that she can contact SWCLC at any time for further legal advice or assistance.
Allegra consistently provides positive feedback to SWCLC staff, expressing gratitude for both the legal support and the ongoing follow-up contact.
Despite continuing to navigate the intersecting challenges of being a young neurodivergent Aboriginal single mother who has experienced significant trauma, Allegra is now linked with relevant services offering sustained support for both her and her daughter. These coordinated interventions have strengthened her safety, stability, and confidence in accessing help when needed.

*All names and identifying details have been changed to protect confidentiality.

SOUTH WEST
COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE INC

OUR FUNDERS

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

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

LEGAL AID WESTERN AUSTRALIA

THE LAW SOCIETY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA PUBLIC PURPOSES TRUST

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY, MINES, INDUSTRY REGULATION AND SAFETY

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITIES WOMEN'S GRANTS FOR A STRONGER FUTURE

Thank You

For your ongoing support

SOUTH WEST
COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE INC

OUR PARTNERSHIPS

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

WARATAH SUPPORT CENTRE

HARBOUR REFUGE INC.

ADVOCACY WA INC.

LEGAL AID WESTERN AUSTRALIA

COMMUNITY LEGAL WESTERN AUSTRALIA

COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES AUSTRALIA

GREAT SOUTHERN COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES

REGIONAL ALLIANCE OF JUSTICE ASSOCIATIONS (RAJA)

Thank You

For your ongoing support

WHERE TO FIND US

SERVICE INFORMATION

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Thursday 9am - 3pm
Friday 9am - 2pm

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SOUTH WEST
COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE INC

Financial Report

Please see attached document





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